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Representing the Natural World: The Uruguayan Novel at the Turn  
of the Twentieth Century (1888-1916)

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Spanish

by

Brian David Fox

June 2013

Dissertation Committee:

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Dr. Alessandro Fornazzari

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The Dissertation of Brian David Fox is approved:

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Committee Chairperson

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## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Representing the Natural World: The Uruguayan Novel at the Turn  
of the Twentieth Century (1888-1916)

by

Brian David Fox

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in Spanish  
University of California, Riverside, June 2013  
Dr. Raymond Leslie Williams, Chairperson

This dissertation, “Representing the Natural World: The Uruguayan Novel at the Turn of the Twentieth Century (1888-1916),” studies the importance of the natural world in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Uruguayan novel. This study carries out the first critical analysis of the Uruguayan novel of this period using an ecocritical approach. This study is based largely on “ecocriticism” and emphasizes the importance of the natural environment with the purpose of caring for and preserving it. I argue that practices that began to be put into use during the time period that this study analyzes are anti-environmental and lead eventually to the environmental crisis that we have been experiencing in full force since the 1970s. This dissertation exposes how certain

environmental conflicts arise in the various novelistic worlds studied. Each chapter embraces a different perspective in regard to these environmentally-based conflicts: struggle for independence, urban/rural conflicts, relationship between characters and the natural world, and how the natural world affects characters' psychological development. The pioneering work of Lawrence Buell in his The Environmental Imagination (1995) figures prominently as a theoretical basis for this study, but is complemented both by the environmentally-conscious work of Eduardo Galeano and by the work of various North American ecocritical theorists. This dissertation finds that the Uruguayan novel from the time period indicated is highly pertinent to the theme of the natural environment and that the natural world appears in a number of different forms in the four novels that this study explores. This study contributes to the already great body of ecocritical writing by exploring a specific facet of Latin American literature, the Uruguayan novel, in environmental terms.



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## **Chapter I: Introduction**

In this chapter I begin by introducing and surveying recent trends in ecocritical thought that will serve as an important theoretical base for this study. Next, I provide an overview of the four novels to be studied and the environmental concepts that accompany them. In this same section, I also outline, very schematically, a history of the environment in Uruguayan literature. Then, I enter into a study of social attitudes toward modernization and technology in Uruguay.<sup>1</sup> Finally, I review previous criticism of the Uruguayan novel, especially what critics have contributed regarding Uruguayan literature and the environment.

### **Introduction to Ecocriticism**

Ecocriticism is the study of natural and constructed environments in literature. The ecocritical trend began in the 1990s with the work of Lawrence Buell. His book The Environmental Imagination (1995) established parameters for this movement in literary criticism, together with Cheryl Glotfelty's The Ecocriticism Reader (1996). These initial efforts formed what was later called "first wave" ecocriticism, a view that did not recognize the close symbiotic relationships between human and nature. Instead: "first wave" ecocriticism separated the human from the nonhuman.<sup>2</sup> "Second wave" ecocriticism, on the other hand, deconstructs the paradigm of "pristine" and "pure" nature and promotes a view that humans are just another species in the ecosystem. It also claims that the idea that humans dominate nature must be rethought. In both "waves" presented here, there is an acknowledgement of crisis and a call to manage that crisis, which has been answered from many different perspectives.

In Latin American scholarship, Eduardo Galeano, Ángel Rama, Jonathan Tittler, Jorge Marcone, Jennifer L. French, Ana María Vara, Adrian Taylor Kane, and others address the environment. Galeano's perspective, in Las venas abiertas de América Latina (1971), while clearly environmental, is also economic. He divides the world into a two-part colonial scheme consisting of economic winners and losers. Palaversich describes this binary division as “un círculo vicioso de explotación y confrontación entre los buenos (el pueblo latinoamericano) y los malos (colonizadores, las fuerzas extranjeras y sus aliados domésticos)” (citado en Vara 13). From this dualism emerges the possibility of a treatment of the environment in Latin America that prizes natural resources and protects them from foreign interest.

Indeed, Galeano is very aware of the role that the environment plays in this colonial scheme. The environment, as the basis for all natural resources, comes to the forefront in Galeano, since the role of economic loser also translates into the role of servant to the colonial powers of Europe and the United States: “la región sigue trabajando de sirvienta. Continúa existiendo al servicio de las necesidades ajenas, como fuente y reserva del petróleo y el hierro, el cobre y la carne, las frutas y el café, las materias primas y los alimentos” (15). Galeano's intentional grouping of various natural resources (copper and meat, for example) demonstrates the way in which natural resources become little more than means for profit, with little attention paid to either the function of the natural resource or the location in which it is produced.

Thus, Galeano traces the way in which foreign powers appropriate natural resources in Latin America. This is of environmental concern because natural resources

necessarily spring from the natural environment. This appropriation of natural resources is a summarily human accomplishment because of the way that the natural resources fall prey to the needs of the human race. In this way, the environmental situation in Latin America concerning natural resources is one that promotes a separation between human and non-human, a claim that is sustained by “first wave” ecocriticism.

However, Galeano’s cause is not only to expose the pillage of a continent but also to bring to light how humans themselves are being misappropriated by the current system. He tells of how children are malnourished and starving in Latin America because the majority of profits from sale of natural resources go to foreign economies. In this sense, Galeano’s argument is, in the end, a humanistic one since he tracks the effects of environmental exploitation upon humankind. It is here that Ana María Vara observes the central metaphor of Galeano’s book: “‘las venas abiertas’ alude a la doble explotación de naturaleza y personas...” (14). This exploitation can be seen throughout all of Latin America. In the case of Uruguay, Galeano’s homeland, he notes: “Uruguay está vacío y sus praderas fértiles podrían dar de comer una población infinitamente mayor que la que hoy padece, sobre su suelo, tantas penurias” (21). Galeano sees, in the case of Uruguay, a chance for growth and improvement, but he insists that the suffering that is currently taking place because of foreign investments must end.

In a collection of ecological essays (some previously published and some not) called Úselo y tírelo (1994), Galeano discusses environmental exploitation in Latin America. He paints Latin America as a world much less detrimental to the environment than that of North America. However, in a way similar to his argument in Las venas

abiertas, he explains that the presence of North American corporations and their economic systems in Latin America is detrimental to the majority of Latin Americans: “El *american way of life*, fundado en el privilegio del despilfarro, sólo puede ser practicado por las minorías dominantes en los países dominados” (123-24). The ironic “privilege” to waste is reserved for a minute few.

Corporations from North America can be counted among these few. Galeano describes the emigration of North American policies and practices into the Latin American economic system:

Atraídas por los salarios enanos y la libertad de contaminación, varias corporaciones norteamericanas han atravesado la frontera con México en estos últimos años. La ciudad fronteriza de Matamoros es uno de los lugares donde las consecuencias están a la vista: el agua potable es miles de veces más tóxica que en los Estados Unidos. Según un reciente estudio del Texas Center for Policy Studies, el agua está seis mil veces peor en los alrededores de la planta de la General Motors, y tiene un nivel cincuenta mil veces más tóxico que el promedio norteamericano en el río donde arroja sus desechos la Stepan Chemical. (147)

The less environmentally detrimental lifestyle of the average Latin American functions here to permit the wastefulness of the North American corporate presence in México. The benefits that these corporations reap are both economic and legal, as they make a large profit and contaminate the environment in ways that would be illegal in the United States. In addition, Galeano observes the hypocrisy of governmental policy in the difference between North and South.<sup>3</sup> In North America the use of catalytic converters is obligatory and leaded gasoline is prohibited. Neither of these legal requirements are in effect in Latin America (161). Although the average Latin American person uses less energy and creates less waste than the average North American, Latin Americans fall prey to more relaxed environmental policies, which corporations from the United States exploit.

Galeano's message is at times more universal, as in his observations on automobile pollution: "El automóvil, máquina de ganar tiempo, devora el tiempo humano. Nacido para servirnos, nos pone a su servicio: nos obliga a trabajar más y más horas para poder alimentarlo, nos roba el espacio y nos envenena el aire" (160). Through an argument that appeals not only to our sense of environmental responsibility but also our sense of time management, he justifies how a reversal takes place in that a technology that was supposed to help us is really hindering us in multiple ways. Just like with air pollution, he makes a remark on the creation of garbage that goes beyond a mere condemnation of poor environmental practices: he implicates in a very profound manner, just like he does in Las venas abiertas, the exploitation of human life: "El norte del mundo genera basura en cantidades asombrosas. El sur del mundo genera marginados. ¿Qué destino tienen los sobrantes humanos? El sistema los invita a desaparecer, les dice: "Ustedes no existen" (173). Although he locates marginalization in the South, it is clear that the creation of marginalities takes into question influences from the North as well. Overall, Galeano's critique of North American consumerist culture is acute and deserves the attention of ecocritics everywhere.

The work of Ángel Rama, in a collection of essays compiled by Pablo Rocca, references the idea of "letras camperas" (Literatura 43). He remarks regarding this idea that literature can be built around a rural aesthetic, one that glorifies the natural world (Literatura 43). He furthers this remark by claiming that Acevedo Díaz and Reyles do not belong to "literatura campera" because they are intellectuals who lived in the city (Literatura 43). These observations show that a discussion of the importance of the rural

world in Uruguayan literature of this time exists. Rama, in fact, shows an interest in the natural world and the changes it underwent during the period of industrialization in Las máscaras democráticas del modernismo (1985). Rama's book focuses on relatively the same time period (1870-1920) that this dissertation analyzes. In his discussion about how the stylistic movement of *modernismo* was influenced by political movements toward democracy, Rama refers to the Industrial Revolution as a process that accompanied the Naturalism of Zola in the sense that both the Industrial Revolution and Zola's Naturalism depend on the power of science to dictate methods and values (53).<sup>4</sup>

Rama illustrates *modernismo*'s relationship with democracy by employing ideas of two thinkers: Tocqueville and Nietzsche. Rama claims that Tocqueville set the groundwork for Rama's theory by linking democracy and individualism. Rama then claims that Nietzsche completed Rama's theory by writing about democracy and representation. This link between democracy and representation is what Rama uses as the basis of his theory that democracy and modernism are interrelated. This suggestion incorporates the Industrial Revolution (because *modernismo* is influenced by industrialism) and shows that *modernismo* is a literary representation of the changes that took place in society because of the Industrial Revolution. Rama describes how democracy, too, is part of this ideological scheme to explain the roots of *modernismo*:

De ahí surge la oposición generalizada en que resultan agrupadas fuerzas entre sí adversas: los retrasados románticos, los conservadores, los liberales, las viejas fuerzas del orden, pero también los positivistas y racionalistas, el grueso de los ilustrados que en la medida en que se habían consagrado a una tarea educativa en beneficio de las jóvenes generaciones, sintieron el fracaso y la traición. (45)



Despite and because of great social differences in the classes of people mentioned above, democracy and *modernismo* are essential to the work of Rama.

Rama uses the image of the “ventana enrejada transformada en balcón” to illustrate how democracy and modernization interact: “Si la imagen de la ventana enrejada transformada en balcón define la metamorfosis urbana con su tránsito al democratismo burgués, otra insistente define los verdaderos ideales de la modernización, el oro” (143). The ownership and protection of private property, then, contributes to democratic society in Rama’s scheme, suggesting that to modernize is to permit on a social level the ownership of property. Rama refers to those who submit to this condition as being “fatalmente americanos” because he associates the rise of democracy with the industrialization of the Americas (72). He explains the following: “cuando los modernistas asumieron con desparpajo democrático las máscaras europeas, dejaron que fluyera libremente una dicción americana, traduciendo en sus obras refinadas un imaginario americano” (169). The American intention to reify European culture in the New World generated new forms of art rather than replicas.

Rama continues with the discourse about modernization when he claims in Los gauchipolíticos rioplatenses (1976) that by way of industrial development “una burguesía nacional industrializadora, los variados estratos de las clases medias y las reclamaciones del proletariado naciente” emerged (7). He adds that the Southern Cone during this period was a center of industrial development.

One Southern Cone author, Horacio Quiroga, has been the primary subject of several recent ecocritical studies because of the portrayal of the natural world in his short

stories. “El hombre muerto” is one of these short stories. In it, the protagonist trips and falls on his machete, wounding himself fatally. Jonathan Tittler observes, concerning the way that the short story is narrated, the following: “[w]hat bears all the signs of tragedy for the man [the protagonist], however, is no more than a routine day for the cosmos, which continues its cycles of life and death, creation and destruction, with absolute impassivity” (16). The narrator’s focus on the impassive natural world subverts the common Western paradigm of human superiority to nature and expresses what Tittler calls Quiroga’s “eco-wisdom” (16).

Bridgette W. Gunnels, in her recent criticism of Quiroga’s “Anaconda” and “Regreso de Anaconda,” analyzes Quiroga’s treatment of the intrusion of a group of humans with the purpose of developing a snakebite vaccine upon a jungle habitat. She assesses this fictive situation, drawing attention to the way that Quiroga gives voice and intelligence to the animals present in the story, especially to the snakes. In a tone similar to Tittler’s above, she observes about Quiroga and these two works the following: “[o]ne of the most important lessons that Misiones [the Argentinian jungle where Quiroga lived for many years] instilled in this Uruguayan author was that human beings, despite their many ‘advantages’ (science, technology), are still a part of the natural life, death, decomposition cycle that maintains the ecological equilibrium of this planet” (4). By drawing attention to natural cycles, Gunnels and Tittler express the importance and even primacy of the natural world in these selected short stories of Horacio Quiroga.

Jorge Marcone provides an ecocritical analysis of another work of Latin American narrative: Rómulo Gallegos’ *Canaima* (1935). In his book chapter, he describes

the “return” of Marcos Vargas, the novel’s protagonist, to the jungle because of his aversion to industrial development. Marcone observes the following: “the ‘return’ to nature in regional and jungle novels shares many ideologemes with contemporary environmentalism” (166). Vargas thus becomes a prototype for the environmentalist’s distaste for urban development. Marcone contends, however, that Vargas’ desertion of urbanity is also a desertion of environmentalism: “In Canaima, Marcos Vargas’s desertion from the ranks of development and environmentalism is not a case of desperate fall into barbarism, as ideologues would have us believe. His ‘jungle fever’ is simply a modern subject’s response to the processes of modernization and to development policies” (171). Without the threat of environmental demise, environmentalism can’t exist. Vargas, in his refusal to participate in modern society, refuses to take part in the environmentalist movement, as well.

The European colonial legacy also contributed to the modern society on which Rama and Marcone remark. Jennifer L. French, writing in terms of Horacio Quiroga, observes the following:

[w]hat develops is a dialogue about colonialism that thousands of Europeans were undertaking in Latin America and their nations’ official empires overseas. In other words, Quiroga actively contests the Europeans’ ability to establish the conditions of modernity in Latin America and other parts of the periphery and articulates his own ideas of a progressive, redemptive colonization. (49)

Quiroga’s own version of the colonial legacy shows a type of literary “return” to the jungle, a “return” that Quiroga mirrored in his move to the jungles of Argentina’s Misiones province. French continues to observe the following: “[t]hese stories vividly convey the intense relationship among land, labor, and capital in the colonial jungle,

where the power exerted by metropolitan capital extracts surplus value by deforming beyond all reason the ‘natural’ interaction between local people and their environment” (54-55). Part of modernization, perhaps unanticipated by Rama, then, is the deformation of natural relationships between “local people and their environment.” Beyond “land, labor, and capital,” geography affects the colonial Latin American world. French states the following: “La vorágine picks up the trope of mapping the jungle as a figure for extending national sovereignty into the troubled periphery” (130). The act of naming creates a condition in which colonial modes of capitalism could thrive. The jungle is more comprehensible when it has been mapped and named.

Ana María Vara, in her recent doctoral dissertation on anti-imperialism in Latin American literature, provides the basis for a solution to the oppression that takes place under imperial rule. She remarks: “...nos interesa analizar el surgimiento...de un discurso de denuncia anti-imperialista sobre los recursos naturales, que encarna un sistema, el que hemos dado en llamar contradiscurso neocolonial de los recursos naturales, aproximando las nociones de imperialismo y neocolonialismo” (7). Vara refers to Las venas abiertas as one perspective on how to get out of the current crisis. She explains the following: “[e]n el modo torrencial de acumular información, Las venas abiertas transmite cierta ansiedad por persuadir y deja en evidencia que fue pensada como un proyecto totalizador de desmitificación” (12). For Vara, the role of Galeano’s book, which was written in three months, is to sweepingly demystify the exploitation of the native riches of Latin America, referred to also, in persistently colonial terms as “los trofeos de la conquista” (Galeano 15).<sup>5</sup>

Galeano writes with a style that evokes meaning beyond the mere surface value of his sentences. As Vara puts it: “Las venas abiertas es a la vez una obra argumentativa y narrativa, política y lírica, informativa y emotiva” (11). He not only presents facts and figures, he also stylizes them in such a way that they cause an identification within the reader. Ángel Rama adds that Las venas abiertas is “un ensayo narrativo o una novela ensayística que definió su nuevo nivel de conocimiento dentro de una clima emocional” (citado en Vara 11). Thus, it is clear that not only the content, but also the style of Las venas abiertas de América Latina contributes to our overall understanding of the work and its implications for Latin America.

Beyond the work of Galeano, there are several writers who have contributed to the analysis of the environment in Latin American literature.<sup>6</sup> Adrian Taylor Kane deals with the rupture that took place in the twentieth century between regionalist/naturalist fiction and avant-garde/modern fiction. He explains that with the advent of modern Latin American literature comes a rupture with outright praise of nature and the natural world, especially in the form of Vicente Huidobro’s *creacionismo*, an ethos that replaces Mother Nature with the poet as ultimate creator. In this scenario, which is summarily modern because of the emphasis placed on artistic creation, representations of urban spaces become natural as natural beauty is redefined. As Kane’s article states: “According to this view, modernity offers a new form of beauty, and the role of the vanguardist is to create an artistic or literary rendering of it. For the *Estridentistas*, even exhaust fumes are beautiful because they reek of modernity” (51). This upheaval regarding the meaning of nature and beauty is strongly linked with modern industrialization and the growth of the

modern city, both of which are processes that destroy the natural environment and threaten to culminate (and, in fact, have already culminated) in crises that could wipe out populations of both humans and animals. Paradoxically, Kane observes that we welcome progress and modernity, but that progress and modernity bring pain and suffering.

Gustavo Llarull essays (and subverts) the sometimes-described continuum between good nature on one hand and bad technology on the other. He explains how all life processes in María (Jorge Isaacs, 1867) are described in terms of natural imagery. In other words, María's symbolic vocabulary is replete with metaphors from the natural world. Indeed, because it is a Romantic work, nature is always "in accord with the emotions and sentiments of the characters" and an "always-positive, comforting force" (Llarull 91). In Mantra (Rodrigo Fresán, 2001), the reverse is true: life processes are described in terms of technology. As Llarull puts it: "Memory and identity, but also communication, among other key features of human life, are transfigured by and described in terms of technology and mass-media" (104-05). What was described in terms of nature in María is described with equal bravado in terms of technology in Mantra. Finally, Llarull presents us with a middle-ground, Cien años de soledad (Gabriel García Márquez, 1967). In this novel neither nature nor technology is involved in an ethical binary. Nature has the power to destroy (thus it is evil as well as good) and technology has the power to help (so it is not only bad, but also good). Llarull concludes by observing that the ethical ambivalence presented in Cien años de soledad should act as a guide for our appropriations of nature and technology.

For another perspective on Romanticism and the environment, and to begin a Latin American ecocritical theory, we turn to Graham Huggan, who presents a view of how ecocriticism's roots are in Romanticism. He states:

The teleology sometimes set up between Romanticism and ecocriticism...is thus somewhat misleading, although it is generally acknowledged that Green Romanticism is the basis for any historically informed ecocriticism, just as Romanticism at large is imbricated with some of the central tenets of ecology, e.g. the notions of interdependence and intersubjectivity, and with the idea—though one persistently disputed within both Romantic and ecological movements—of an organic connection to, and continuum with, the natural world. (4)

These central tenets of ecology that Romanticism helped birth show up within contemporary ecocriticism in different forms, both for and against. Huggan's perspective comes out as middle-of-the-road regarding Romanticism in environmental criticism. He states: "Regular complaints continue to be made about Romanticism's elitism, eurocentrism and regressivism; nonetheless, the consensus view seems to be that reappraisal, rather than mute acceptance or premature dismissal, might be best suited to understanding the impact of Romantic legacies on Green thinking in the modern globalized world" (5). Huggan claims that, while we cannot completely forget Romanticism, we must reappraise it in light of the "globalized world."

In order to portray how this reappraisal of Romantic values comes to be, he subverts the work of his fellow postcolonialists. He expounds: "A better approach perhaps is to show how ecologically-minded postcolonial writers and thinkers self-consciously transform Romantic legacies even as they embrace and extend them" (7). He claims that Romanticism is converting itself into something new to accommodate the contemporary age. To expand his defense of the validity of Romanticism in the

contemporary age, Huggan quotes Shirley Walker on organicism: “the Romantic doctrine of organicism: the notion that there is an organic relationship between the work of art, with its genesis in the unconscious level of the psyche and its subsequent shaping and development at a more conscious level, and the germination and evolution of a living plant” (Huggan 8). The connection that Walker makes here is particularly prescient to ecocriticism in that it demonstrates an alliance or, better, a coexistence of art and nature.

Another view of how Romanticism is related to the central tenets of ecology is proffered by John Parham. He remarks on ecocriticism’s allegiance with Romanticism through the trope of “place”: “In developing thematic interests derived from [transcendentalist] writing—in agricultural landscapes, wilderness, mountains, etc.—ecocriticism’s confrontation with critical theory often took the generic form of a reassertion of ‘place’ against the postmodernist construction of ‘space’” (25). Here Parham acknowledges the centrality of Romanticism in the formation of an ecocritical mindset, at least, a mindset bent on ecology and preservation. He observes the following:

[m]ore recent ecocritics, however, have attacked, scathingly in some cases, this stance towards theory and have pinpointed three specific areas: the equation of scientific ecology to outdated notions of ‘balance’ or ‘harmony’ (now discredited by a postmodern ecology that emphasizes flux and contingency), a simplistic division between nature and culture or—with regard to strategies of representation—mimesis and construction, and a failure to develop the social and political dimensions of ecocriticism. (25)

The dichotomy that Parham illustrates between transcendental—Romantic—approaches to ecology and the more contemporary ecocritical principles figures largely in terms of first, second, and even third wave ecocriticisms.



Simon C. Estok outlines how ecology was affected by an event that followed Romanticism in the West—the Industrial Revolution: “Among the many paradigmatic shifts and lurches occasioned by the Industrial Revolution was the redefinition of nature from participative subject and organism in an organic community to the status of pure object, a machine that ideally could be intimately and infinitely controlled and forced to spit out products in the service of an increasingly utilitarian capitalist economy” (211). Estok claims that the Industrial Revolution is responsible for the objectification of nature. However, Vernon Gras pinpoints two other forces that have contributed to this particular ideological equivocation. Gras claims that two “obstacles for human ecology” are “fundamentalist world religions” and “postmodern insistence on the social creation of reality, with its corollary of inescapable subjectivity” (1). Other writers, to be sure, have said much about this “postmodern insistence” that Gras highlights, but, for now, we will focus on what Gras has to contribute, accompanied by a few observations from Serenella Iovino. She states the following: “postmodern and ecological thought have been (and still are) considered by environmental philosophers and literary critics to be at odds with each other” (33). Gras explains the problem of fundamental world religions with regard to the environment by showing what these religions do: “Through divine revelation or mystical intuition, they are in possession of a totalized picture of the cosmos and our relation to it. Each offers a grand narrative in and through which individuals can find their direction and salvation” (1-2). These grand narratives, he argues, form the basis for an ideology, dangerous to the preservation of the environment, that humans were given the environment in order to dominate and enslave it.

A term for this dangerous ideology has been coined by Estok: *ecophobia*. He explains:

If ecocriticism is committed to making connections, then it is committed to recognizing that control of the natural environment, understood as a god-given right in western culture, implies ecophobia, just as the use of African slaves implies racism, as rape implies misogyny, as fag-bashing implies homophobia, and as animal exploitation implies speciesism. If ecocriticism is committed to making connections, then it is committed to recognizing that these issues...are thoroughly interwoven with each other and must eventually be looked at together. (207-08)

In addition to giving a name to the problem, Estok intends *ecophobia* to be part of the solution: “A viable ecocritical methodology...must begin with discussions of ecophobia, must recognize that ecophobia is rooted in and dependent on anthropocentric arrogance and speciesism, on the ethical position that humanity is outside of and exempt from the laws of nature” (216-17). From here we can trace the similarities between Gras’ “fundamentalist world religions” and Estok’s *ecophobia*. Both of them operate from the detrimental assumption that man was created to dominate nature.

One solution that Gras proposes is: “Why not create an open-ended, poetic religion that renews itself in the way science and literature renew themselves?” (2) Such a proposal characterizes a symbiosis between dominant and emergent cultural structures or perhaps even the residual and the dominant in that it marries religion with progressivity. His claim, while it may fall on hardened hearts in the fundamentalist religious communities, is a suggestion that would usher in a new era of religious practice beneficial for modern day problems like that of the preservation and maintenance of the environment.

As we have seen, postmodernists do not escape the critique of Gras. He claims the following: “[f]or [postmodernists], the culture/nature opposition cannot be overcome. Thus, the human sciences embrace cultural dialogism and leave physical nature to technological control and exploitation” (3). In doing so, he illustrates the gap that exists between academic scholarship (based on words) and physical nature (based on lifeforms and their material environment). One example of this postmodern gap is the “ecopoetry” championed by Jonathan Bate in his The Song of the Earth (2002). Gras observes the following: “[e]copoetry, according to Bate, is that work of art or poesis which, in speaking, can ‘save’ the earth. ‘Save’ here is meant in the sense of not enframing or reducing nature to a ‘thing’ or commodity as technology does” (3). The problem here, as Gras points out, is that ecopoetry remains a textual artifact and that, in light of postmodernist deconstruction, does nothing to actually ‘save’ the planet. My contention, and that of other ecocritics like Serenella Iovino, is that other textual approaches besides the postmodern exist and that these approaches would see ecopoetry as valuable to the preservation of the planet because of the influence it can have over the human mind to take action that benefits the planet. Gras describes the theory of Catherine E. Rigby: “Thus, to achieve connection to and with nature and yet uphold the postmodern mantra that one cannot jump the culture/nature gap, the artist must produce a self-reflexive text that reveals itself to be an artefact, not a self-disclosure of nature. [...] ‘It becomes a discourse of the secluded, what lies outside all enframing, social systems, language’” (Gras 4). This “discourse of the secluded” does not take away the fact that, in a

postmodern sense, a poem (even an environmental poem) remains a textual artifact, incapable of inspiring action to preserve the physical world.

Another attitude that has arisen from postmodernity is expressed by Dana Phillips: that nature is voiceless without humans. Gras paraphrases: “[Nature] will always be entwined with human interest—so much so, that nature, whenever it appears in a discourse, needs to be deconstructed to reveal some kind of human manipulation behind it” (5). Both of these attitudes contribute to what Gras calls: “Obstacles to an Ecological Culture.”

Gras, like many other critics similarly do, provides a solution for wrong attitudes toward the environment. He refers to an article by Gianni Vattimo and paraphrases Vattimo’s solution how “a referential awareness to our temporal, mortal existence allows Heidegger’s different access to the life and death cycles of nature: i.e. to process and change. Culture is no longer hermetically sealed off forever from nature but rejoins it in open-ended dialogue” (5). This removal of the seal that binds apart nature and culture is the solution that Gras proposes. Iovino echoes this proposition when she points out: “At the same time, ecology, taken as a model of dynamic interrelatedness, becomes a useful interpretive framework for the dialectic of social structures and political phenomena” (35). She explains that such interrelatedness already exists in literature: “From Thoreau to Melville to Franz Kafka, William Faulkner, Jorge Luis Borges, Clarice Lispector, Italo Calvino, Anna Maria Ortese: nature and non-human animals are narrated in a way that does not imply a hierarchy but, rather, a complexity of interdependent languages” (44).

For that, Iovino's claim supports the solution provided by Gras, which leads us into the sphere of "complexity theory," as described by Gras.

Gras finds that the open-ended, ever-renewing dialogue that he proposes as a solution to the non-ecological mindset is a cousin to a social theory once called "chaos theory," but now more popularly referred to as "complexity theory." Without actually mentioning "complexity theory," he explains it by stating the following:

[w]e are entering a new era of non-linear network culture which is non-deterministic and which will replace the simpler deterministic Newtonian model. Cultural dialogism finds its continuity principle in ecological dialogism, retains its imaginative freedom, and loses its rootless historicism. Religion will have to shed its transcendental past, embrace divine immanence, and adopt a narrative that, like science and literature, can change itself with history. (8)

The renewal that Gras proposes for religion will have to apply to the mindset of all people, as well, but he is clear to point out that we already have our model in science and literature. I refer to this model of offering sweeping, grand solutions for ecological problems as "utopian."

Ecocriticism's relation to some concepts of postmodernism reveals both affinities and discrepancies. Jonathan Coope questions postmodernism's reluctance to embrace ecology as a topic of discourse and refers to two early postmodernists who did include the environment in their discourses: Theodore Roszak and Charlene Spretnak. He presents the following: "when every other aspect of life seems to be acquiring its 'green' variant—from ecotourism to ecoterrorism—postmodernism still appears ecologically under-dimensioned" (78). Coope's point is valid in the face of our ecological crisis: with the growth of the importance of the environment in our daily lives, why hasn't postmodernism accepted ecology's rightful place within its discourse? Anne Maxwell

adds to this argument by claiming that ecocriticism and postmodernism share certain traits: “That is to say, both ecocriticism and postcolonial literary criticism focus on the way we treat the ‘other,’ whether a racial or cultural other, or other life forms that have been historically referred to as ‘nature.’ (19). Postmodernism, with its focus on the diversity of every viewpoint, should recognize the viewpoint of other-than-human life forms and the physical environment in general.

Coope argues that, according to Roszak, postmodernism has appropriated Enlightenment values of science: “The scientific reality principle, according to Roszak, has helped shape the boundaries of perhaps even our most intimate experience, by depreciating our capacity for wonder and progressively estranging us from the magic of the natural environment” (81). The alternative that Coope offers to a scientific basis for reality is one of more mystical proportions. This view, while not necessarily fundamentally religious, does carry traces of a pre-scientific religiosity. By quoting Roszak, he echoes Vernon Gras’ statement about how postmodernism creates and maintains a gap between nature and culture: “we have learned to deny the facts of our feeling, the reality of our intuitive powers. We split the “inside” from the “outside” and then denigrate the subjective, insisting that it is fantasy wholly of our own arbitrary invention. That is how we deafen ourselves to the voice of the sacred, to the language of the Earth” (82). This statement goes beyond the simple nature/culture gap. It explains how the postmodern view of “culture” (the production of subjective viewpoints) becomes decadent and chastises its own inventiveness, calling it fantasy. Coope’s other postmodern ecological hero’s view, that of Charlene Spretnak, develops the argument of

Roszak: “Spretnak thus regards the idea that the ‘ego’ is an isolated entity separate from cosmos and environment as an illusion—albeit an extremely commonplace one—to which our culture has normalised us experientially” (84). The “ego,” then, is seen as an agent that perpetuates the split that occurs between “inside” and “outside.” Spretnak goes on to theorize that because of this socially constructed split: “experiences of inter-relatedness are frequently denied or repressed in modernity” (Coope 83). This repression, to Spretnak, is an enemy that can be overcome. Her view is the following: “we come to know the larger reality of humanity, Earth and cosmos ‘through the body, not by escaping the personal to an abstract system’” (Coope 83). Thus, Spretnak points to the body as our ultimate gauge and conduit for reality.

Coope addresses the other end of the spectrum, as many contemporary critics do.

He explains as follows:

However, in reacting against scientism, Critchley notes that there is an equally dangerous cultural tendency among continental philosophers to abandon science and to embrace obscurantism. By which he means, the tendency to explain everything in terms of ‘one big thing,’ a force or entity ‘so vast and vague as to explain everything and nothing at all’: “‘being’ in Heidegger: “the real” in Lacan: “power” in Foucault: “the other” in Levinas: “*différance*” in Derrida’ etc. (83)

This obscurantism, because of its vagueness, can be applied to the relation of any two concepts or genres. I, however, would argue that to marvel at the magic of the natural world in itself is not obscurantism because a simple marveling does not attempt to explain everything or anything.

If we see the interrelatedness of which Spretnak speaks as a form of awareness about how the self is part of the whole, then we see how a remark by Lawrence Buell,

who figures greatly in Terry Gifford's work, explains the contemporary critical approach to the environment:

Nevertheless, awareness, Buell points out, now needs to work both ways, towards nature and towards culture's making of place: 'the emergence of contemporary environmental criticism is in part the story of an evolution from imaging life-in-place as deference to the claims of (natural) environment towards an understanding of place-making as a culturally inflected process in which nature and culture must be seen as a mutuality rather than as separate domains.' (Gifford 18)

By using terms like "imaging," "place-making," "culturally inflected process" Buell makes it clear that he is speaking of literary criticism and not just one's personal relationship with the environment (although these two concepts are closely related, as well). Gifford explains that ecocriticism is an interdisciplinary practice that covers "ecofeminism, toxic texts, urban nature, Darwinism, ethnic literatures, environmental justice and virtual environments..." (15). He includes the fact that ecocriticism's "emphasis on interdisciplinarity assumes that the humanities and science should be in dialogue and that its debates should be informed equally by critical and creative activity" (15). Playing tangentially off of this affirmation, Gifford cites Buell again: "unless ecocriticism can squarely address the question of *how* nature matters for those readers, critics, teachers and students for whom environmental concern does not mean nature preservation first and foremost and for whom nature writing, nature poetry and wilderness narrative do not seem the most compelling forms of environmental imagination, then the movement may fission and wane" (Gifford 20). Thus, ecocriticism depends on its interdisciplinarity in order to survive as a movement.



Estok's evaluation of what ecocriticism must do to survive is: "Certainly, if ecocriticism can be said to have begun to founder, it can be said to have done so for two main reasons: (1) its failures to theorize itself adequately and (2) its failures to live up to its initial activist promises" (206). However, Buell is confident when he suggests, as cited by Gifford: "that if it does as much as feminism and postcolonialism, for example, to alter the terms in which cultural enquiry is conducted this would be an admirable and achievable long-term contribution" (23). The truth is that ecocriticism, while a substantial discipline on its own, has teamed up with both feminism and postcolonialism to form part of a vanguard of literary criticism.

An interview conducted with Buell by Chinese ecocritical scholar Sheng Anfeng delves deeper into Buell's contributions to ecocriticism. A point that Buell makes right away is that ecocriticism can be a sweeping field—everything can be reinterpreted in terms of the environment: "...I think we need to hold ourselves accountable for rereading literary history and discourse in the light of environmental history and discourse as eco-discourse" (Sheng 7). This way, even pre-crisis literature and criticism can come to point to or project that crisis in which we now find ourselves concerning the Earth.

Buell is commonly cited as identifying the first and second "waves" ecocriticism. It is Adamson and Slovic, however, who put it simply: "'First wave' environmental criticism concerns itself with conventional nature writing and conservation-oriented environmentalism, which traces its origins to the work of Emerson, Muir, and Thoreau" (Adamson 6). "First wave" criticism, as set forth in the introduction to Buell's 1995 book, The Environmental Imagination, is more limited in its approach than "second

wave.” Texts taken into consideration have to refer directly to literature that expounds nature and conservationism. However, Buell, in his interview with Sheng, describes the transition process between first and second waves: “I believed then and continue to believe that such an ethical/aesthetical reevaluation will be necessary for planetary survival. Pursuit of this project, however, led me to take a too limiting view of what I allowed to count as ‘an environmental text,’ such that in practice I limited my field of examination too much to writing about the other-than-human world, and to the genres of nature writing and nature poetry” (Sheng 8). Buell now sees that “the environment” can be interpreted more broadly, as he reveals in the following definition of “second wave” ecocriticism:

[It is] ecocriticism committed to tracking scandalous inequalities that have disproportionately created human health hazards for poor, minority, and otherwise marginalized population groups. My broader argument here (which some may consider controversial), is that because that state and fate of all the world’s peoples are intertwined as the result of sharing an increasingly common environment in an increasingly globalized world, in principle there is no environmental immunity anywhere from the forms of immiserization that are suffered most spectacularly and scandalously by society [*sic*] losers. (Sheng 9)

Thus, in its second “wave,” ecocriticism takes a more social and political stance regarding the environment in literature. To add to what Buell observes in the Sheng interview, Adamson and Slovic quote him on issues that second wave ecocriticism addresses: “the seventeen Principles of Environmental Justice”; “issues of environmental welfare and equity”; “critique of the demographic homogeneity of traditional environmental movements and academic environmental studies” (6). In its second “wave,” ecocriticism has become more aware of issues that, while they are still blatantly centered on the environment, extend beyond the world of ecology and preservation.

In response to Buell's first and second "waves," Adamson and Slovic develop the theory of a "*third wave*" of environmental criticism that builds upon the previous two. Their claim is not completely justified because some of the issues they ascribe to "third wave" criticism could equally be categorized under "second wave." Just like "second wave" criticism: "third wave" claims to integrate human issues into the environmental picture. Adamson and Slovic point out the term "environmental refugees," coined in the documentary The 11<sup>th</sup> Hour (5). Referring to people as displaced because of an environmental issue is one of "third wave" ecocriticism's characteristics. Indeed, the definition that the two authors offer makes it clear that this type of ecocriticism is highly concerned with human issues: "[Third wave ecocriticism] recognizes ethnic and national particularities and yet transcends ethnic and national boundaries; this third wave explores all facets of human experience from an environmental viewpoint" (Adamson 6-7).

Because "third wave" ecocriticism is so focused on the human, it is beneficial to analyze a few of its different manifestations. An example given by Adamson and Slovic is jazz musician, poet, and human rights activist Jayne Cortez: "[she] encourages audiences to see their own physicality as linked to the rest of nature; Cortez's poetry displays what Ruffin calls a 'human-centered' approach to ecological subjects which reveals the disparities in the experience of being human" (13). Patrick Curry also provides an example of how humans are central to the discourse of the environment in the coining of his term "ecocentrism." "Ecocentrism" locates value and/or agency within nature as such, including (but not limited to) humanity: what David Abram aptly calls a 'more-than-human world'" (Curry 54). Here we can see the "more-than-human" world (a

model that integrates humans and environment) in contrast to the dichotomy between human and nature established by “first wave” ecocriticism of Buell where the environment is described as being anything that is nonhuman.

Patrick Curry makes the point that discourse is to be valued over language, for only with discourse can we address environmental issues. He condemns postmodern deconstructionist reductionism: “...for if discourse is reduced to language, then *ipso facto* all meaning is reserved for humanity alone; since nonhuman nature does not and cannot use words, it is rendered silent, meaningless, and alien” (Curry 58). Curry wants to give nonhuman nature a voice by ensuring that our scholarly debates do not reduce themselves to bickering about language. Keough refers to this need for a voice for nonhuman nature as a “conversation,” citing David Abram: “David Abram has argued that the rest of nature has to be part of this shared conversation and that in fact it is a modernist ruse to pretend nature is not inescapably part of the conversation” (Keough 67). The reference to a “modernist ruse” here is an attempt to categorize the practice of denying the rest of nature a voice as being regressive. To this regressivism we can link “first wave” ecocriticism. Both modernism and “first wave” ecocriticism reserve for the environment conditions that it must fulfill: it must be pristine and it must be separate from the human world. For this reason, scholars of the environment have moved on to *postmodern* outlooks and *second* and *third* “wave” ecocritical arguments. Keough emphasizes the importance of recognizing nature’s voice: “The earth’s ecosystems permit our survival but do not depend upon us for their survival” (68). While this may be true in general, a

more postmodern analysis would add that, because humans and the earth's ecosystems are intertwined, it is difficult to extract them from each other.

Many writers who could easily claim to be part of "first wave" ecocriticism have made great strides toward environmental sustainability, in fact, they are the pioneers of such practices: "Heise notes that environmental nonfiction writers and poets such as Aldo Leopold, Scott Russell Sanders, Gary Snyder, and Wendell Berry valorize a return to the local that prizes ecologically sustainable occupancy of a site and such activities as 'building one's own home or working one's own farm' and aspiring to 'self-sufficiency in terms of energy and food'" (Adamson 14). One model for such a return to the local can be found in the environmental practices of indigenous communities: "In 'Born Out of the Creek Landscape: Reconstructing Community and Continuance in Craig Womack's *Drowning in Fire*,' John Gamber also illustrates why indigenous peoples, even in the age of globalization, continue to see their communities as offering potential models for an ecological awareness rooted in a local place" (Adamson 16). Certainly the ecological awareness that these models would provide would be a step in the right direction for locating and understanding the place of an individual or community within the environment.

Such placement is not always easy to delineate: "In The Future of Environmental Criticism, Buell calls on ecocritics to begin accounting for the ways in which migration and diaspora complicate traditional understandings of sense of place..." (Adamson 16). Migration and diaspora must also be seen as indications of place. Their nomadic characters simply define a different kind of place-making that needs to be accounted for.

Here we can look to “complexity theory” to confirm Buell’s call for a realistic assessment of how we think about place: our vision of the future will have to be based on the complexities of environmental reality. Concerning the need for a relation to emerge between humanity and place, Adamson and Slovic conclude the following: “even in the face of the large-scale effects of globalization, human relationships to specific places and to other-than-human beings can and should be maintained” (17).

Adamson and Slovic also go on to provide examples of environmental organizations that are making people aware of the importance of place in their everyday lives. In contrast to some of the utopian models for environmental preservation, these groups are producing realistic change within the communities that they serve: “Green for All, a national organization dedicated to building an inclusive green economy strong enough to lift people out of poverty, and other grassroots groups including Green Guerillas and WE ACT, New York City groups that help people fight environmental racism and create more livable neighborhoods, see ‘nature’ all around them in the urban places they inhabit” (Adamson 20). Such projects, because they benefit both the environment and the people who live within it, can be seen as truly second and third “wave” endeavors. These community-building groups, because they are based on the inherent link between humans and their environment, are successful in creating more pleasant and livable communities: “These kinds of greening and mural projects, which transform vacant lots all across the nation into playgrounds and community gardens, are redefining ‘nature’ and ‘environment’ to mean, to use the words from the website of WE ACT, ‘the places we live, work, play, pray and learn’” (Adamson 20-21). By redefining

“nature” and “environment” these groups are also educating community members to be stewards of their environment, no matter of what that environment is made.

Janice Tanemura points to specific problems in her view of biopower, which serves as a guide for how problems of ethnicity and the environment can be solved. She points out the following: “[p]opulation growth has massive environmental consequences. According to Paul Crutzen, we now live in an age in which the earth’s destiny appears to be totally determined by human behavior” (Tanemura 303). Here, biopower creates the basis for environmental preservation by representing various ethnic groups that make up state power: “The renewed interest in regionalism and race—what Horace Kallen theorized as ‘cultural pluralism’—valorized the distinct cultures and ethnicities that made up the nation, and participated in the agenda of biopower by preserving ‘natural’ spaces and identities within the nation-state and culturally promoting the belief that the state’s purpose was to reinforce the well-being of its people” (Tanemura 308). The characteristics that Tanemura sets forth for community well-being are similar to those of the groups about which Adamson and Slovic write. It adds to their discourse by promoting the naturalness of the existence of different ethnicities: “I argue that biopower’s institutionalization of the imperative for ethnic life both produces and preserves ethnic difference as a form of human nature identical to the nature found within the geographic difference of California” (Tanemura 307). Tanemura’s perspective shows that human promotion of culture has its parallel in environmental production. This parallel relationship between culture and environment can also be applied to sexuality.

Timothy Morton extends this argument to include a queer perspective. He finds that differing human sexualities have precursors in the other-than-human world. His argument of how the other-than-human confirms the sexuality of people of the queer community is valid for contemporary ecocriticism. What he proposes is similar to the discourse on Estok's term "ecophobia":

Excluding pollution is part of performing Nature as pristine, wild, immediate, and pure. To have subjects and objects one must have abjects to vomit or excrete. By repressing the abject, environmentalisms—I am not denoting particular movements but suggesting affinities with, say, heterosexism or racism—claiming to subvert or reconcile the subject-object manifold only produce a new and improved brand of Nature. (Morton 274)

The relation that Morton describes between Nature and how it is portrayed in the Humanities reveals that often good-intentioned critics can aid the repression of the abject. Anne Maxwell observes: "[nature writers] have consistently portrayed nature in terms of the wilderness untouched by human hands, or rural spaces that have been only superficially cultivated. Nature is seen as more authentic than culture; moreover, instead of being examined as a biological process, nature has been consistently portrayed in terms of its visual or aesthetic properties" (17). Maxwell's acute observation lays bare the reality that "first wave" criticism was limited in its scope. Her argument is similar to Buell's argument for a "second wave" of environmental criticism: for the practice to survive, it must evolve.

Morton paints the natural world as queer-friendly. He claims the following: "[t]he story of evolution is a story of diverse life-forms cooperating with one another" (276). His message is that an observation of the natural world should lead to a greater tolerance of sexual diversity. He refers to the history of sexuality from a biological standpoint:



“Heterosexual reproduction is a late addition to an ocean of asexual division” (276).

Morton considers asexual division as another reason to champion sexual diversity among humans.

Morton also quips that ecophobic outlooks toward Nature are perpetuated:

“Nature looks natural because it keeps going, and going, and going, like the undead, and because we keep on looking away, framing it, sizing it up” (279). Our continual aesthetization of Nature keeps it from being seen as integral to the processes of evolution and diversity. The message that diverse sexualities are acceptable in nature is impeded by our constant objectification of Nature as art. He proposes a concept central to his book-length work (Ecology without Nature) on the subject: “dark ecology.” He explains: “Instead of perpetuating metaphors of depth and authenticity (as in deep ecology), we might aim for something profound yet ironic, neither nihilistic nor solipsistic, but aware like a character in a noir movie of her or his entanglement in and with life-forms” (Morton 279). “Dark ecology” is, then, a parody of its precursor “deep ecology” in that, with a touch of postmodern humor, it becomes aware of itself and its condition of being inextricable from the rest of nature. It also seems to be a form of ecology that takes into consideration the question of desire.

Desire is the element that Morton considers essential to an environmentalism that does not repress the abject of society. As Morton shows: “Desire is inescapable in an ecology that values intimacy with strangers over holistic belonging” (279). Desire is the way that Morton outlines for an organism to individualize itself, to establish its identity. In doing so, he subverts the idea of organicism (another term for the aesthetization of

nature): “Organicism wants nature ‘untouched,’ subject to no desire: it puts desire under erasure, since its concern for ‘virginity’ is in fact a desire” (279). By subverting organicism, he paves the way for desire to reveal itself as the motivator of evolution and diversity. In a similar manner, he claims the following: “[t]ree hugging is indeed a form of eroticism, not a chaste Natural unperformance” (280). With the establishment of desire as a motivator in evolution, Morton shows how sexual diversity will perpetuate itself as long as there is desire for it to do so.

The ecocritical field is, indeed, full of complaints about the state in which modernity and modernism have left the environment and environmental discourse. Patrick Curry defines the problem as such: “Now it can hardly be doubted that the modernist rationalisation of the natural world, its consequent disenchantment, and its subsequent commodification play an integral role in driving the ongoing global ecocrisis” (54). The ecocrisis, thus, is a result of modernity’s poor management of the environment and its discourse. Curry argues for a redress of these missteps through ecopluralism, a blending of postmodern non-essentialism and ecocentrism (51). Postmodern non-essentialism (the belief that multiple perspectives are equally valid in relation to one another) combines with ecocentrism (the belief that the environment should be of central importance to any theoretical outlook) to produce ecopluralism (the belief that all lifeforms are valid expressions of nature). Curry adds the following: “[e]copluralism...suggests a world about which conclusions, connections and alliances in pursuit of resolutions—both substantive and strategic—will always be more-or-less

unstable, partial and provisional” (56). This instability is a byproduct of non-essentialism and characterizes the postmodern outlook in general.

To be more specific about modernity’s problems, Curry brings up the subject of technology and its applications to the environment: “The problem, of course, is the bloated techno-humanism, so very far from humane, that now functions as the ideology of modernity” (61). The idea that we as humans are better off with technology than without it typifies our current age. Curry’s disapproval is echoed by Noel Keough in what he calls “technosystemic control of human agency” (66). With this term Keough indicates that human agency (dominated by an ideology that substitutes technology for more organic approaches to the environment) is losing touch with the natural environments that surround it. Technology, in fact, becomes an ideology in and of itself: its mere use promotes further abuse of human agency (which leads to further abuse of the environment). Keough explains further: “Today the global economy is the imagined optimum, and similarly, technology in service of the global economy is imagined and created to serve the global scaling of the economy” (73). Thus, the global economy becomes the enemy of the environment, with technology as its minion.

The attraction of technology is its ability to modify and, many would opine, improve our lives. However, its unmitigated use permits the emergence of a fatal disadvantage. As Keough puts it: “...technology allows us the temporary ability to live beyond our means as a species and ignore the ongoing evolutionary adaptive processes that shape life and which as a species we have to respond to in order to remain a viable species” (73). These cues that Keough speaks of, the “ongoing evolutionary adaptive

processes,” are essential to our development as a species and as part of the ecosystem. Which brings us to the ultimate reality of a technologically-driven society: “Practices cease to be centered around world-revealing things, instead becoming centered on objects that produce what we want without our attention, aid, or skill, and thus without our joy” (Keough 74). The consequences that Keough predicts (and sets forth in the present) for our technology-devouring society are dire and should initiate within us a desire for awareness concerning how the technology we use on a daily basis affects our responsibilities as parts of the ecosystem. Such an awareness will bring new thoughts concerning nature, about which Curry states: “But people *will* think about nature, so it is helpful to have available a good way of thinking about it: one that is more open to the experience of it and encouraging of resistance to its destruction” (64). Such a statement forms part of the utopian gospel that Keough sets forth.

He treats the topic of sustainability of the environment and asks some central questions:

I argue that a truly sustainable alternative must reject technosystemic control of human agency and embrace the lifeworld in defense of sustaining ecological communities. It must orient a determined pursuit of Paulo Freire’s central quest to understand ‘what it is to be human,’ attend to the simple question posed by Aidan Davison: ‘How are we to live?’ and also must ask the question that nobody asked in Rio: what is it we want to sustain? (Keough 66)

Terms like “lifeworld” and “ecological communities,” however vague, are central to his argument, which is to provide an alternative to the global economy that emphasizes community over political boundaries: “...I am arguing that human existence is not dependent upon the existence of nation-states or global governance, but upon the existence of sustaining ecological communities” (Keough 67). He goes on to describe

attributes that such communities would nurture: “...creativity, love, and improvisation” (71). One utopian aspect of such communities is that political boundaries would spring up between various communities and skirmishes would arise that would displace “creativity, love, and improvisation” as central governing tenets.

Nevertheless, a community of the sort that Keough describes would have the advantage of being more dedicated to its relationship with the place it inhabits. As David Seamon speculates: ““A key question is whether rootedness in place promotes more efficient use of energy, space and environment than today’s predominant place relationship which emphasizes spatial mobility and the frequent destruction of unique places”” (Keough 72). We can draw from this that current practices concerning place, practices fueled by the use of technology, would have to be repressed in order to create an ambience that would value a place-relationship like the one about which Seamon speculates.

Keough incorporates an ethical perspective by tapping into the theory of Robert Sack: ““...it is impossible to know what is an instance of something as complex as a moral or immoral act without examining the details of its occurrence in a place”” (75). Thus, ethics is defined in relation to place; ethics will differ depending on the place in which they are practiced. Applied to Keough’s theory of communities, this would mean that each community would have its particular ethical code, based on place. This is mediated by Aidan Davison, who adds the following: ““ethical action is first and foremost an attempt to open up possibilities, to enrich the world”” (Keough 76). A world

in which place determines ethics is then a world with numerous possibilities, a rich world.

The ethical vein of ecocriticism continues with Serenella Iovino. She quotes Glen Love: “Teaching and studying literature without reference to the natural conditions of the world and the basic ecological principles that underlie all life seems increasingly shortsighted, incongruous” (30). Indeed, Iovino defines ecocriticism as “a critical discipline whose major stance is basically an ethical one and which is driven by the idea of literature and culture as ‘ecological’” (Iovino 30). Because ecocriticism is “basically ethical,” it should manifest itself in our daily lives in the form of practices that promote environmental well-being.

The current outlook toward the state of our environment is, and should be, one of crisis. Iovino makes it clear that the crisis is immanent and that it takes place on the global and local levels, simultaneously: “In the age of ecological crisis, literature can choose to be ethically ‘charged,’ and to communicate an idea of responsibility. In the age of ecological crisis, this responsibility is global. What is endangered is not only ‘nature’ in general but local natures in particular” (Iovino 31). Keough’s communities, then, become one way to accept global responsibility by acting locally. John Parham applies this theory of responsibility to poetics:

Having drawn attention to the way in which our understanding of environment issues has been shaped by literary metaphors—‘pastoral,’ ‘wilderness,’ ‘apocalypse’—Garrard argues that the ‘contingency and indeterminacy’ of postmodern ecology will generate a new ‘poetics of responsibility’ which, he elaborates, would recognize, and continually re-examine, the linguistic and cultural tropes and metaphors that, in conceptualising our place within the natural system, impact upon areas such as scientific practice and political decision-making. (Parham 27)

Two ways of acting out this responsibility are, thus, in “scientific practice” and in “political decision-making,” both of which will very likely be subversive to current orders.

The idea of subverting the dominant order, present in Keough, is also applicable in the theory of Iovino, which christens the current environmental movement a subversive one: “Ever since its first, seminal steps in the USA with Henry David Thoreau, Aldo Leopold, Rachel Carson, and finally its flourishing in the early 1970s, environmental culture has been based on an ethic that aimed at overthrowing the traditional order, a ‘subversive’ ethic” (34). Combining the ethical nature of ecocriticism with its existence as a discourse of crisis, environmentalism asks everyone to take part in preserving our surroundings. Indeed, Iovino claims that the end product of ecocriticism should be a feeling of obligation or zeal to help the environment:

If postmodernism has been able to transform philosophy, as Richard Rorty said, into a ‘literary genre,’ in the age of ecological crisis and culture, literature can be turned *once again* into a form of philosophical discourse: an educational and reflexive form, which is ethical in that it provides meaningful representations of the world and produces, by virtue of these representations, awareness about values. (42)

As we have seen, awareness is one of the key values championed by environmentalists seeking maintenance and preservation of the ecosystem. Martin Ryle adds the following:

[E]cocriticism needs to reconcile a ‘nature-endorsing’ approach, that focuses on writing which reactivates the ‘love of nature’ in human consciousness, with a ‘nature-sceptical’ approach that in deconstructing ‘the uses to which “nature” is being put in the text,’ might, in this context, help indicate those literary sources that depict nature as part of a critique of, or that, alternatively, help us to re-imagine, political economy on an ecological basis. (Parham 33)

This “love of nature” provides the motivation for change, while the “nature-sceptical’ approach provides awareness and discernment concerning the messages that a text is proposing about the environment, with the ultimate goal of making political economy part of the environment and not the other way around. Ecocriticism, as a type of literary criticism, must draw from the literature it examines messages about how to better steward the environment.

One such message comes from Iovino and her practice of non-anthropocentric humanism: “Humanism presupposes both a civic ethic and an emancipatory framework, and in so doing it can be seen as the condition for an inclusive ethic of culture. What I call a ‘culture of co-presence’: namely, one that would put humans and nature together in the same emancipatory discourse, is what I mean here by an extended, non-anthropocentric humanism” (32). Iovino sees the benefits of humanism, but combines them with an ecocentric outlook that prizes the ecosystem and its myriad constituents as having equal value compared to human life: “Embedding humanism in an ecological paradigm means, in fact, giving humans not simply the feeling of their intellectual independence from dogmas and authorities but, most of all, the awareness of their ecological interdependence in a context subsistent on the difference of its elements” (Iovino 32-33). Non-anthropocentric humanism, then, follows the pattern of postmodern ethics by valuing the differences between various elements in an ecological system. Ultimately, the goal should be to motivate a redress of current problems with the physical environment itself. There is a symbiosis between the environment and what’s written about it, but we must remember to regard the physical environment with as much care as



we do its linguistic and discursive representations. As Kate Soper reminds us: “it is not language which has a hole in its ozone layer; and the real thing continues to be polluted and degraded even as we refine our deconstructive insights at the level of the signifier” (Iovino 33).

Ecocriticism’s claims to centrality in the field of literary criticism ring true because of the environmental crisis in progress to the degree that it is on par with other current crises like racism, homophobia, and misogyny. “Second wave” ecocriticism, in particular, deals with these issues in that it takes into question the human element within the environment. Compared with “first wave” ecocriticism: “second wave” is more versatile and more applicable to a wide range of disciplines. Interdisciplinarity is a key to both first and second “wave” ecocriticisms and it is another way by which ecocriticism can come out of the “first wave” shell that limits it to nature writing. Similarly, ecocriticism has undergone a shift from its origins in Romanticism (ecology being a discipline based on Romantic values) to its more current state as a postmodern discourse. Throughout the body of environmental criticism exist various solutions and suggestions for the betterment of our environment, which range from realistic applications to idealistic utopias.

### **Overview of Novels and Uruguayan Environmental History**

Uruguayan fiction from the turn of the twentieth century has a particular affinity for focusing on the natural world. Selected works of Eduardo Acevedo Díaz, Carlos Reyles, and Javier de Viana express, in different degrees, humans’ relationships with the natural world. Many times these relationships include discussions of not only urban life,

but also modernization practices and new technology. In the case of Acevedo Díaz, nature is an object over which to be fought. The conflict of Ismael (1888) arises because Spain claims possession of the Uruguayan territory which is also contested by Uruguayans who have lived there for generations, including gauchos like the main character, Ismael Velarde. As a historical treatment of the Batalla de Las Piedras (1811), Ismael arouses patriotic feelings in the hearts of its Uruguayan readers and capitalizes on the fact that the territory of Uruguay, in all its natural glory, belongs to Uruguayans.

Carlos Reyles' El terruño (1916) deals with humans' relationship with the natural world in that it starkly contrasts behaviors and worldviews of people from the country versus people from the city. Reyles' vision is that Uruguay's economy needs to be fueled by landowners who provide for those who depend upon them. This issue is illustrated in Reyles' La raza de Caín (1900), and is discussed in detail in Chapter Five of this dissertation. In El terruño doña Ángela, also known as Mamagela, functions as Reyles' representation of private control of the Uruguayan countryside. Her ideology contrasts sharply with that of Temístocles Pérez y González, known as Tocles, who is a university professor from the city. In the opinion of both Mamagela and the implied author, Tocles demonstrates characteristics of laziness and uselessness. Tocles, however, is a dynamic character and, by the end of the novel, there are suggestions that he may be changing into someone more usefully aware of the importance of the rural world.

Javier de Viana's Gaucha (1899) serves as the most profoundly involved in the natural world of the four novels discussed here. The *bañado* de Gutiérrez serves as a location around which the entire plot of the novel develops. The natural world receives

myriad descriptions and functions intimately in the lives of all the main characters. Juana, for whom the novel is titled, is possessed by an unshakeable melancholy that accompanies her throughout the course of the book. Her illness seems to be related to the natural world, her sexuality, and a morbid interest in death. The novel expresses the idea that the cruel and merciless gaucho, seen in both don Zoilo and, to a greater extent, el rubio Lorenzo, is slowly disappearing from the countryside. The final theme that the novel expresses, however, is that the wild and criminally adventurous gaucho still rules the unbounded countryside of Uruguay.

The final novel discussed in this dissertation is the aforementioned La raza de Caín. This novel clearly contains the least amount of references to the natural world, as it is summarily a psychological novel. However, the psychologies present in the novel rely heavily on the psychological differences between characters from the country and characters from the *pueblo*. The discussion, while clearly unique and independent from that which takes place in the chapter on El terruño, shares certain similarities such as the implied author's intention to glorify landowners at the expense of peasants and non-landowning country folk.

Theoretically speaking, Chapter Two deals with Lawrence Buell's idea of "New World Pastoral" in Ismael.<sup>7</sup> He analyzes the concept of "pastoral," which has existed since classical Greek and Roman days, in terms of the newly discovered lands of America. His proposition is that European minds looking toward the New World saw a land fresh with natural resources to plunder. The desire to possess this land, then, was a central motivating factor in the journeys of explorers and, later, colonists. The idea that

the land was pure and untouched permeates writings of the time. What is more, this perception of the unblemished nature of the new lands completely ignores the idea that it may already be inhabited. Ismael's treatment of New World Pastoral describes the conflict at the very end of its existence in Uruguay—just as this nation is coming to no longer depend on colonial powers for support.

Chapter Three discusses the topic of urban and rural spaces and the differences between them in El terruño (1916). The conflict present in El terruño is one that glorifies the rural while condemning the urban for its uselessness. The novel culminates in a civil war that places *blancos* (a political party more associated with the country) against *colorados* (a party more in line with the city). Uruguay, being a country with but one large city, becomes a nation of contrasts between city and country. Montevideo, in the south, harbors universities like the one at which Tocles teaches. The rest of the country, made of smaller cities and rural areas, is described by the implied author to be healthy because of the open air and fresh meat that can be experienced there.

Chapter Four is an analysis of the various forms of representation of the natural world in Viana's Gaucha (1899). The connection between implied author and natural world is evident in the many descriptions of countryside present in the novel. The Gutiérrez *bañado* is described extensively four separate times in the novel, lending it a central role in the way the natural world is represented in the novel. Additionally, each character has a particular relationship with the natural world, a relationship that affects how it is represented. In contrast to how many Romantic novels portray characters that tend to see their emotional states reflected in the natural world, in Gaucha the natural

world is reflected in the emotional states of its characters. Representation of the natural world is important in Gaucha ultimately because the natural world is one, along with Lorenzo and his gang of bandits, of the few survivors.

Chapter Five deals with the topic of nature and psychology in La raza de Caín (1900). There are several connections between the novel studied here (Reyles' La raza de Caín) and the other Reyles novel apparent in this dissertation, El terruño. Both novels concern themselves with the conflict of urban and rural. However, La raza de Caín concerns itself with an intermediary between the two: the *pueblo*. A crucial difference between the two novels is that the rural world is disparaged in La raza de Caín, while it is lauded in El terruño. The novel is intrinsically psychological, and, for that reason, the discussion that results takes into account the psychologies of the various characters and associates those psychologies with whether the character is from the country or the *pueblo/city*. The European city of Paris is seen as the center of civilization and each of the main characters has visited the city at least once.

The history of representations of the natural world in literature is extensive. British critic Raymond Williams observes the following: “[i]n the long history of human settlements, this connection between the land from which directly or indirectly we all get our living and the achievements of human society has been deeply known” (1). Williams signals the foundational importance of the natural world in human society. Arturo Sergio Visca complements Williams’ observation and expresses it in Uruguayan terms: “...lo más significativo y valioso de la novela y el cuento nacional se ha nutrido, salvo pocas excepciones, de ese humus propicio para la elaboración de un mundo narrativo que es la

vida y el escenario proporcionados por la campaña uruguaya” (1). That much Uruguayan literature has its basis in this country’s natural landscape shows that Uruguayan social reality cannot really be separated from the natural world. We can, thus, put Williams’ statement in Uruguayan terms and conclude that the natural world, as represented in the novels in question in this dissertation, requires us to care for it. The fragility of the natural world (when compared with the highly destructive forces of modernization) demands a kind and caring approach when it comes to making appropriations for the natural world in Uruguayan society.

The theme of the exaltation of the natural world and natural life goes back more than 2,000 years to the Roman poet Horace’s *Beatus ille*.... The idea that it is better to live among pure and clean nature than in the crowded and dirty city is extolled in this poem, translated to Spanish by Fray Luis de León during the Renaissance. Buell elaborates about the role of nature in literature of antiquity: “In Greco-Roman literature, pastoral both satirized and replicated the hyper-civilization of urban life by portraying suppositious shepherds and other rustics in such stylized attitudes as playful exuberance and amatory despair” (31-32). Buell’s demonstration, then, shows that nature in classical times was just as important as it is now.

In the colonial period nature played a highly important role, both as the object of New World Pastoral mentioned above and as an alter-ego for European imaginations to ponder. Verdesio affirms that Europeans looking toward the New World adopted “una perspectiva...que percibe al Uruguay y sus habitantes como alteridades” (165). This perspective allowed Europeans to deprecate Uruguayans and other inhabitants of the

Americas because they did not see them as equal to themselves. Indeed, it was the European soldiers who experienced closeness with Latin American inhabitants. Although they were the ones who physically brought exploited natural resources back to the Old World, they received almost nothing in return: “Poco o nada reciben los soldados, que han lamido este oro, lo han mordido, lo han pesado en la palma de la mano, han dormido con él bajo la cabeza y le han contado sus sueños de revancha” (Galeano Memoria 1: 81). In the monarchical political system of Europe of the time, proximity had much less to do with richness than sovereignty. For this reason, neither Latin American inhabitants nor the soldiers who opposed them saw the lion’s share of the economic rewards that were available. The economic proceeds, in fact, funded other projects that interested the monarchies of Europe: “El rescate de Atahualpa financiará las guerras santas contra la media luna del Islam, que ha llegado hasta las puertas de Viena, y contra las herejes que siguen a Lutero en Alemania” (Galeano Memoria 1: 108). The richness of Latin America in terms of natural resources provides the capital for religiously-motivated clashes. The mines of Potosí, of course, were central to the accumulation of wealth that the European governments experienced during this time. Galeano calls Potosí “la octava maravilla del mundo” and describes how “[i]ncesantes caravanas de llamas y mulas llevan al puerto de Arica la plata que, por todas sus bocas, sangra el cerro de Potosí. Al cabo de larga navegación, los lingotes se vuelcan en Europa para financiar, allá, la guerra, la paz y el progreso” (Galeano Memoria 1:197). The newly-found richness of the New World traveled across the ocean and provided the means for European social advancement.

In Latin America, efforts were being enacted on the ground to enforce this policy of extracting riches and sending them back to Europe. Lope de Aguirre describes in a letter to King Phillip II of Spain: “Ya de hecho habemos alcanzado en este reino cuán cruel eres y quebrantador de fe y palabra, y así tenemos en esta tierra tus promesas por de menos crédito que los libros de Martín Lutero” (Galeano Memoria 1: 156). The discourse, then, of a cruel monarch waiting to punish those who do not obey materializes in the New World. Aguirre goes on to plead that the king not be cruel with him and his fellow vassals, that they might share in the richness being divided up among European powers. As Galeano points out, such dissuasion against disobedience to the king resulted in situations like the following regarding ancient Guatemalan dance traditions:

“Proclaman los frailes que ya no hay memoria ni rastro de los ritos y antiguas costumbres de la región de la Verapaz, pero se gastan la voz los pregoneros anunciando, en las plazas, los sucesivos edictos de prohibición” (Galeano Memoria 1: 233). Not only the obliteration of such traditions, but also the enforcement of said obliteration was exercised by a distant monarch who feared losing any of the material treasures his soldiers and explorers had discovered.

With respect to slavery, the sale of African slaves was widespread and not limited to any one nation. Galeano describes the situation as follows:

Los portugueses cazan y venden negros por medio de la Compañía de Guinea. La Real Compañía Africana opera en provecho de la corona inglesa. El pabellón francés navega en los barcos de la Compañía del Senegal. Prospera la Compañía Holandesa de las Indias Occidentales. La empresa danesa especializada en el tráfico de esclavos se llama también Compañía de las Indias Occidentales; y la Compañía de la Mar del Sur da de ganar a los suecos. (Memoria 1: 297)



At the very least, Spain, Portugal, England, France, Holland, Denmark, and Sweden prospered from the slave trade.

As the colonial period drew to a close in Uruguay, Galeano describes how “[l]os gauchos, *hombres sueltos* que el latifundio usa y expulsa, juntan lanzas en torno a José Artigas. Se encienden las llanuras al este del río Uruguay” (*Memoria* 2:129). The topic of the gaucho joining forces with the struggle for independence resurges in Eduardo Acevedo Díaz’s *Ismael* (1888), studied in great detail in this dissertation. Artigas’ fight to liberate Uruguay from Spanish control was immensely aided by gauchos, who were as adapted to waging war as they were to living off the land. The gauchos’ aversion to said *latifundios* was a motivating factor for them to join forces with Artigas.

Moving even closer to the period in question, we find that the discourse of “civilization and barbarity” emerges clearly on the political scene. “Civilization and barbarity” has to do with the subject of the natural world in that “civilization” refers to the modernized and industrialized city, while “barbarity” refers to the untamed wilderness especially characteristic of European visions of the New World. Verdesio claims that this opposing binary pair became part of Uruguay’s national character long before the construction of industrialized cities. The European imagination, indeed, saw “barbarity” as “una situación rural en que el desorden, el caos, la matanza indiscriminada de ganado, sumados a la falta de parroquias y alimento espiritual (con su efecto disciplinador), redondean un estado general que el observador europeo cataloga como barbarie” (Verdesio 157-58). Verdesio’s impression of “barbarity” is closely related with Uruguay’s rural world and the *gauchos* that inhabited it. Along with *gauchos*, Native

Americans of the River Plate area were deemed barbaric and, therefore, inferior, as a result of this bipolar division. Verdesio observes: “La alteridad humana, por ejemplo, no queda ya limitada a los escasos indígenas que poblaban las ribera [*sic*] norte del Plata. Ahora lo percibido (y construido) como Otro es toda una sociedad, con sus divisiones diastráticas, étnicas y de sexo” (165-66). The combination of various “barbaric” peoples in the River Plate area resulted in a heterogeneous class of people, all considered “barbaric.” It seems that, in this way, the European imagination categorized as inferior all peoples proceeding from or related to the rural world. Verdesio relates:

De modo que la peculiaridad de estos textos consiste en la novedad de algunos de los referentes que introducen: a diferencia de los otros viajeros, sus representaciones no se limitan a la vida urbana, sino que se extienden a la de su correlato rural, su opuesto: la campaña gaucha. Por este motivo, se percibe en ellos el valor oposicional de los constructos campo/ciudad en la construcción de la alteridad; es decir, su papel en la construcción de los referentes civilización y barbarie. (165)

The ideological continuum of civilization-barbarity developed, then, into a general notion of city and country, a theme taken up in all four novels of this dissertation. As Bollo remarks, novels that deal with the theme of city and country are profoundly American<sup>8</sup> because of the way that European colonization of the Americas developed—it proceeded from the cities of Europe to the American countryside (33).

Andrés Bello’s “Alocución a la poesía” demonstrates this pattern of European civilization of the New World. He opens his poem:

Divina Poesía,  
tú de la soledad habitadora,  
a consultar tus cantos enseñada  
con el silencio de la selva umbría,  
tú a quien la verde gruta fue morada,  
y el eco de los montes compañía;

tiempo es que dejes ya la culta Europa,  
que tu nativa rustiquez desama,  
y dirijas el vuelo adonde te abre  
el mundo de Colón su grande escena. (Bello)

The natural world in Bello's vision of Latin American literature is important in that it receives attention alongside this literature. The speaker's call to abandon Europe indicates that the speaker no longer wants to associate with that continent and its imposition of the ideological polarity of civilization-barbarity. While recognizing that the European discovery of the New World was an important event in world history, he calls on Poetry to attend to the description of the natural world of the Americas rather than look back to the Old World. His desire to extol the virtues of Latin America resounds in the following passage in which he names Latin American places:

Ni sepultada quedará en olvido  
la Paz que tantos claros hijos llora,  
ni Santacruz, ni menos Chiquisaca,  
ni Cochabamba, que de patrio celo  
ejemplos memorables atesora,  
ni Potosí de minas no tan rico  
como de nobles pechos, ni Arequipa,  
que de Vizcardo con razón se alaba,  
ni a la que el Rímac las murallas lava,  
que de los reyes fue, ya de sí propia,  
ni la ciudad que dio a los Incas cuna,  
leyes al sur, y que si aún gime esclava,  
virtud no le faltó, sino fortuna. (Bello)

The act of specifically naming a great number of Latin American locations demonstrates the speaker's desire to evoke landscapes that are purely Latin American, that purposefully lack European character. He exhorts the people of Latin America to embrace their own land and their own customs resounds. His mention of the Incas

further this plan and bolsters the argument that America has its own history separate of European influence.

José Enrique Rodó continues this line of thinking in his essay Ariel (1900). He claims that, because of its relative youth, Latin America is full of optimistic energy. He argues that this energy must be focused on the development of cities, which in turn produce “high culture.” Another of Rodó’s metaphors for Latin America’s budding independence from Spain and Portugal is light. He proposes that, because of its location in history, Latin America will be the greatest propagator of democracy and enlightened values. He warns against capitalistic materialism of the United States, and instead argues more along the lines of what British scholar Raymond Williams writes: “On the country has gathered the idea of a natural way of life: of peace, innocence, and simple virtue. On the city has gathered the idea of an achieved centre: of learning, communication, light” (1). Williams’ affirmation that the city is a center of, among other things, light, demonstrates Rodó’s own values toward this positive, and seemingly wholly American, characteristic. Williams’ division between city and country, like Rodó’s, does not account for environmental pollution and destruction that takes place at the hands of European and American cities. The glorification of the city has positive effects, then, on the development of a characteristically Latin American high culture, but ignores the need to preserve and conserve the natural world upon which the city depends for its livelihood.

Speaking in terms now of the literary period upon which this dissertation focuses (1888-1916), this comparison of city and country comes out in the figure of the gaucho and his compatriot in the United States, the cowboy. Both parties experienced the

changes that the Industrial Revolution brought about: “También el *cowboy*, campeón de la conquista del Oeste, ángel de justicia o bandolero vengador, se hace soldado o peón obediente de horarios. El alambre de púas avanza a un ritmo de mil kilómetros por día y los trenes frigoríficos atraviesan las grandes llanuras de los Estados Unidos” (Galeano Memoria 2: 269). The domestication of the cowboy, just like that of the *gaucho*, was a byproduct of advancing industrialism. His former status as champion of the Wild West is wrested from him by industrial development. Just like in Uruguay, the establishment of fencing limited greatly the scope of the cowboy’s wanderings. Along with wire fencing, the arrival of the railroad influenced how the wild territories of the Americas developed:

El ferrocarril, serpiente sin escamas, tiene la cola en Mérida y el largo cuerpo crece hacia Chan Santa Cruz. La cabeza llega a Santa María y salta a Hobompich y de Hobompich a Tabi, doble lengua de hierro, veloz, voraz; rompiendo selva, cortando tierra, acosa, acomete y muerde: en su marcha fulgurante va tragando indios libres y cagando esclavos. (Galeano Memoria 2:315)

Galeano’s description of the railroad as a serpent echoes beyond the recent European invasion of the Americas and aligns the railroad with a more ancient cosmology, belittling it in the face of aeons that have passed in the history of the American continent. The violence that accompanies the railroad’s construction is also indicated by Galeano as being somewhat like that of a voracious beast. The railroad’s destruction of jungle and enslavement of Native Americans, however, is likened, more appropriately, to the forward and deliberate march of an army. Another technological development that came out during this period and that Galeano associates with death is the automobile: “El automóvil, bestia rugidora, pega su primer zarpazo de muerte en Montevideo. Un inerte caminante cae aplastado al cruzar una esquina del centro” (Memoria 3: 11). Galeano

refers not only to death from accidents (as the one described above), but also a death to the natural environment through air pollution. Just like the railroad, the car receives a metaphorical treatment that likens it to a natural being, albeit a destructive one.

Another form of natural environment destruction was the rubber industry that proliferated in Brazil and Peru during this period. Answering the question: “who worked in the rubber forests?” Galeano answers:

En el Brasil, los flagelados de las sequías del nordeste. Desde aquellos desiertos, vienen los campesinos hasta estos pantanos donde es preciso volverse pez. En cárcel verde los encierran por contrato, y temprano llega la muerte a salvarlos de la esclavitud y la espantosa soledad. En el Perú, los brazos son indios. Muchas tribus caen aniquiladas en esta edad de la goma, que tan eterna parece. (Memoria 2:299)

The rubber industry did not only destroy parts of the jungle in which it took place, it also achieved the tragic annihilation of tribes native to the Amazon forest. Mario Vargas Llosa's El sueño del celta is a more recent novelistic critique of the rubber industry in early twentieth-century Peru. An act that speaks of the use of force to achieve one's goals has to do with the Panama canal. Galeano describes how “Roosevelt envía unos cuantos *marines* y hace la independencia de Panamá. Y así se convierte en país aparte esta provincia, por obra y gracia de los Estados Unidos y sus buques de guerra” (Memoria 3: 9). The United States' military might at the turn of the twentieth century was enough to wrench Panama from its status as a Colombian province.

According to Javier Taks, a specialist in Uruguayan rural anthropology, Uruguay entered into an urban crisis that lasted from about 1955 to about 1970.<sup>9</sup> During this period Uruguay gained consciousness of the environmental problems starting to arise as a result of industrialization. After a period of cruel, restrictive dictatorship from 1973 to 1985,

Uruguay emerged into an age of ecopastoralism in which consciousness of the fragility of the natural environment came to the forefront and the movement to preserve took full effect. Taks associates this ecopastoral movement to the time period studied in this dissertation because this time period, as will be observed, was a period of great literary interest in the natural world, even while the nation was rapidly industrializing. Lawrence Buell remarks on pastoralism from a United States perspective when he observes:

The ‘age of ecology,’ as Donald Worster has termed the present era, may not lead to more than a marginal change in social attitudes toward or public policy concerning further technological buildup; but even if it doesn’t, indeed perhaps especially if it doesn’t, pastoralism is sure to remain a luminous ideal and to retain the capacity to assume oppositional forms for some time to come. (51)

Uruguay and the United States, in this example, share a consciousness of the natural world that leads to a need to change social attitudes and modify public policy.

“Ecopastoralism,” then, signifies a consciousness of the natural world as an entity that depends upon humans just as much as humans depend upon it. Buell’s claim that pastoralism will remain a luminous ideal because of the way it contrasts the world of technological development is useful for this dissertation in the way that it opposes the urban world of technological development with the beauty of the natural world.

Literature from other Latin American countries represented the natural world in similar ways. In Manuel Gálvez’s La maestra normal (1914; Argentina) a theme similar to that expressed in Viana’s Gaucha emerges in which the main character suffers from a type of melancholy that is closely associated with the natural world. Instead of the natural world reflecting a character’s emotional state, the emotional state is influenced by the way that the natural world already is. The main character, Julio Solís, is a literary artist

whose creations mirror the depression that he feels, indicating that his melancholy inspires his artistic endeavors. He misses his hometown of Paraná, with its river and mountains, and the novel is a chronicle of these homesick emotions. A conflict arises between Solís and Gabriel Quiroga, who is from the city of La Rioja, Argentina, to which Solís has migrated. The conflict centers, like El terruño around the dialectic of country versus city, but, more specifically speaking, it deals with the question of whether gaucho life or city life is a better method of building character.

Environmental topics also arise in a prominent Mexican novel of this period, Federico Gamboa's Suprema ley (1896). One of the key topics discussed is the positivism of the main character, Julio Ortegá, and his friends, who work in the Belem prison in Mexico City. Their positive view of science and technological development contrasts the corruption and unethical crowding in the prison. Nature, however, together with technology, is also praised as being a positive force. Even the city itself, seen at a distance, is described as being part of nature and, therefore, good. According to Buell's theory of the pastoral, the novel exemplifies the goodness of nature and its antithesis in the urban institution of the prison. The overarching theme, of the novel, in turn, is that love is the ultimate law of the universe, a love that surpasses terrenal situations like both imprisonment and technological development.

The Mexican Emilio Rabasa's El cuarto poder (1888) evokes the theme of writing and creativity as it relates to the natural environment. The novel actually experiments with modernistic techniques and modes of thinking in the first chapter. The author as creator is compared to God in both a Modernistic sense and in a journalistic one. In both



cases, the writer creates a reality in which the reader, in turn, becomes immersed. What the writer writes determines the thoughts of the eventual reader. In this sense, the writer becomes a creator of whatever type of reality emerges from his pen, including representations of the natural world. The novel is conscious of the power that writing has over its audience and the title of the novel refers to the power that journalism has to shape popular opinion and promote the ideals of a government in power. Modernistic and journalistic writing play important roles throughout the novel and represent a clash that is not resolved. El cuarto poder is a prime example from the literature of this period in Latin America of how nature influences writers. The natural world receives its most important treatment in the relationship of the main character, Juan Quiñones, and his girlfriend, Remedios. The novel climaxes with the presentation by Juan to Remedios of some verses he has written that associate her with the natural world. Thus, the trope of writer as a creator with the power to construct worlds comes full circle as Juan evokes the natural world in his descriptions of Remedios.

A final example of nature in related literature comes from Mexican writer Heriberto Frías' Tomochic (1895). The people of Tomochic, a valley in the Mexican province of Chihuahua, unsuccessfully defend their town against the forces of Porfirio Díaz. Tomochic, the setting of the novel, is part of a good-evil binary that develops throughout the novel. On one side are the people of Tomochic, who are God-fearing. Their faith in God causes them to see their cause as good, while the cause of the invading forces of General Díaz is evil. The little town in the valley is thus a source of good morality that can be associated with the natural world in the sense that the people of the

valley are fighting for their freedom, which means they are fighting for their ability to live peacefully in their valley. The protagonist, Miguel Mercado, is the only surviving fighter on the side of Tomochic. He must, then, bear alone the burden of the town's loss of the freedom for which they were fighting. Nature, in this sense, becomes a melancholy witness to the battles that take place and, in a sense, foreshadows the defeat of the Noveno Batallón of Tomochic. This novel relates most closely to Ismael in that it involves two sides warring for control of a piece of land. In Ismael the Uruguayan contingent is victorious and earn their freedom. In Tomochic the invading forces of General Díaz are victorious and represent a step backwards in the fight for liberty.

One of the unifying factors among the three authors in question (Eduardo Acevedo Díaz, Carlos Reyles, and Javier de Viana) is that all three write about the Uruguayan countryside.<sup>10</sup> which, according to popular saying, is “suavemente ondulado.” Because of this similarity in natural environment, the three authors represented can be seen as writing more or less about the same land. The specific environments contrast each other at times (e.g. Viana's *bañado* and Reyles' *pueblo*), but they all refer ultimately to life in the Uruguayan countryside. This type of natural environment contrasts that written about by Horacio Quiroga, the canonical compatriot of the three authors studied here. His environmental subject material often includes a jungle atmosphere, based on the fact that he lived much of his life in the jungles of Misiones, a province of northern Argentina. As Assunção observes: “Viana, Reyles, Acevedo Díaz, [sic] ven en la campaña y su gente la médula de la nación y exaltan el nombre de los gauchos y de los paisanos, sus costumbres y propiedades...” (5). Uruguayan nationhood, expressed in the work of these three

writers, is inextricably linked with the type of countryside that exists throughout most of Uruguay and the people that inhabit it. Gauchos and paisanos figure greatly in the work of these writers because of their close identification with the land. Uruguayan identity, although it is becoming more urban, can never be separated from the contribution of the cultures of gauchos and paisanos. The Semana Criolla, an event that takes place every Fall in Montevideo, is a demonstration of various rural skills whose practice lends identity to Uruguay as a nation.

Further comparison of the three authors reveals that they do harbor differences as well, especially in terms of literary style. Pereda Valdés signals one of these differences when, referring to Reyles, he writes: “Esta manera de pintar con palabras aguzando los contrastes violentos, empleando a menudo arcaísmos, es característica de su estilo barroco, que difiere de la naturalidad y sencillez realista de Acevedo Díaz y de Javier de Viana” (539). Pereda Valdés sees Reyles as a more artistically embellished writer than the other two. While Pereda Valdés recognizes Reyles’ more baroque style, he clarifies that Viana and Acevedo Díaz are much more realistic in their narrative styles. I would add that Viana’s realism is the typical Naturalism-Realism found in much Latin American fiction of the period since he portrays his characters and their settings with a zeal for scientific observation, and Acevedo Díaz’s realism is a Romantic realism, since he relies deeply on the Romanticism of the Uruguayan struggle for independence from Spain and, later, Brazil. Of the three writers featured here, Javier de Viana is closest to nature. It is his writing that captures in greatest volume descriptions of the natural world and its people.

A tendency to portray characters who form a locus around which the rest of the narrative revolves is apparent in the works of both Viana and Reyles. Reyles' Mamagela and his don Pedro Crocker, together with Viana's don Zoilo, form a triumvirate of characters who are as central to the narration as the natural world itself. Reyles' Mamagela and his don Pedro are, in fact, the greatest examples of this tactic of creating characters who function as axes around which the rest of the narrative revolves. Mamagela, of El terruño, and her *pulpería*: "El Ombú," provide many characters with sustenance and employment. The reader gains the perspective that it is Mamagela's efforts that hold the fibers of the narrative together. A similar case is evident in La raza de Caín, where the novelistic world centers around the philanthropy of don Pedro. His provision extends not only to his own family, but also to transplanted characters from the countryside who depend on him to stay in the *pueblo* and also to travel to far-off destinations like Paris. Don Zoilo, from Gaucha, lives next to the *bañado* of Gutiérrez. His positioning in relation to the natural world helps him to act as a centerpiece in Viana's narrative strategy. Lucio and Juana's romantic relationship develops because of the *bañado*, and the two of them eventually meet their demise because of don Zoilo's association with the bandit Lorenzo. Don Zoilo's intrinsic connection with the natural world makes him a central character to the novel, but he differs from Mamagela and don Pedro in that he does not work to support and give to others.

Reyles' convictions about how the rural world should be managed extend beyond his fiction. In fact, it can be said that his fiction is a portrayal of his beliefs about how the rural world of Uruguay should be governed. His essay "El ideal nuevo" urges "the

formation of a ‘Liga de Trabajo’ to act as a political-economic force for the national benefit” (Maule 43). Echoes of Mamagela and don Pedro can be seen in this “Liga de Trabajo,” which has the benefit of the nation as a whole as its objective. Reyles, especially earlier in his career as a writer, embraced positivism as a way to advance the Uruguayan national project. A passage from his first novel, *Beba* (1894), shows Reyles’ initial efforts to organize a plan based on furthering the rural cause in Uruguay:

El afán de este [Gustavo Ribeiro, the protagonist] en ennoblecer el trabajo y elevarlo a la categoría de una ocupación racional, de mejorar sin descanso los ganados, persiguiendo un ideal de formas que no concluía de obtener, y más que nada, el tenaz empeño que lo animaba de dar al traste con lo malo, viejo y rutinario, y en su contra favorecer todo lo que fuera adelanto, progreso, rica novedad, buscando incesantemente dilatar el campo de acción de los criaderos y descubrirles horizontes llenos de promesas para que se decidieran a secundarlo en su tarea de reformador inteligente, que tanto le había de agradecer el país cuando conociera la grandeza de su obra...eran para los Benavente delirios de los cuales se burlaban. (Reyles qtd. in Allen 93)

Early signs of Reyles’ plan for the betterment of Uruguayan rural society are apparent in Ribeiro. The plan includes techniques from Europe, like the cross-breeding of cattle. The science of this pursuit cannot be denied in the language of the above passage. The idea of eliminating the negative and embracing the positive is directly related to positivistic ideals that were very popular at the time in Europe. An embrace of technology, cattle-breeding technology, for example, kept Uruguay, in this fictional example, abreast of the international markets for livestock.

### **Modernization and Technology in Uruguay**

The turn of the twentieth century was a period of great technological change in Uruguay. The natural world was transformed both by exploitation and by technological improvement. Cases of exploitation were harder to identify while they were in their initial

stages, but have become more apparent as time has revealed the finiteness of the world's natural resources.

Attitudes toward modernization of the countryside in Uruguay abound in both periodical and non-periodical form. This study intends to make a broad survey of newspapers and magazines from 1880-1920 as well as more recently published books that deal with this topic and time period. Issues to which I allude in this chapter are foreign influence on rural industry, capitalism, landowner-peasant relations, railroads, ports, livestock, meat, agriculture, plagues, roads, more rustic modes of transportation, animal traps, electricity, water, telegraph, telephone, and aviation.

### **Ideologies Behind the Process of Uruguayan Modernization**

The turn of the twentieth century in Latin America was a time of progress. One of the dominant social attitudes of this era in Uruguay was Positivism, the idea that social problems can be solved primarily through science and technology. In this way, the natural world became marginalized or ignored because social progress was deemed important enough to cast environmental concerns into the background of society's agenda. The development of a pair of "sensibilities" (the "barbarous" sensibility and the "civilized" sensibility) by José Pedro Barrán in his Historia de la sensibilidad en el Uruguay (1989-90) illustrates just how the rural environment came to be marginalized by the implementation of technology. Consequently, the "barbarous" sensibility, more in line with nature and natural processes, was replaced by the "civilized" sensibility, which sought to improve upon nature, often destroying it in the process.

Jorge Ruffinelli explains some of the social, economic and political conditions that reigned in Uruguay and other countries under Western influence during this time period. He claims:

El positivismo en filosofía, en la misma raíz del racionalismo y el culto por la ciencia; el evolucionismo en biología; el agnosticismo y el materialismo ateo en religión; el liberalismo y algunas corrientes anarquistas en la política, más una 'fe' casi religiosa en la democracia; el simbolismo y el parnasianismo en la estética; el dandysmo en ciertas costumbres; éstos son elementos a tomar en cuenta para referirse al ambiente intelectual en que se formó y vivió Rodó. (14)

Ruffinelli calls these elements of culture the “intellectual environment” of the times.

Many, if not all, of the elements in his list are ideological commodities from Europe.

Another attempt to define the same intellectual climate was made by José Pedro Barrán, who describes the intellectual ambience of this period as “la época de la vergüenza, la culpa y la disciplina” (Historia de la sensibilidad 2: 11). While Rodó saw the turn of the twentieth century as a period of promising optimism and youthful energy in Ariel (1900), Barrán looks back and sees a culture becoming gradually more obsessed with the control of ulterior, barbaric urges, many of which he identifies with the natural world. Another attempt to define this particular intellectual period was made by Ralph Waldo Emerson as cited by Leo Marx: “Years later, in describing the intellectual climate of this period, Emerson stressed the pervasive sense of ‘detachment.’ He found it reflected everywhere: in Kant, Goethe’s Faust, and in the mood generated by the advance of capitalist power” (178). The “detachment” that Emerson describes could be attributed to or could result from the chain of events that leads from barbarity to civilization in Barrán’s scheme.

Periodical publications like newspapers and magazines accompanied this chain of events. Gustavo Verdesio mentions the following about the colonial period in Uruguay:

“[o]tra característica de este momento histórico es que está documentado en forma muy fragmentaria” (64). The rise of the newspaper, then, in the nineteenth century, was an achievement that went alongside the industrialization of Uruguay. The fact that many newspapers and newspaper articles from El Paysandú, for example, have to do with urban concerns demonstrates that newspapers themselves are urban inventions, that the people of the city have created newspapers to provide information that seems less necessary in the countryside: “La prensa, pues, refleja el carácter de la época, discutiéndolo todo y siendo síntesis completa del movimiento humano en todas sus manifestaciones, valiéndose para ello del lenguaje sencillo, aunque no siempre castizo” (Araújo 302). The “character of the epoch,” the desire, as described by Barrán, to discipline barbaric impulses is then present in the character of the newspapers of the time. Newspapers also served as facilitators in the distribution of information important to the city dweller. For example, El siglo is full of brief notes about the state of the bus system, electric power plants in the same way that El día and others kept the reader up to date on the situation of the trains.

The desire to modernize is central to international politics of the time. Sabani Leguizamón describes Uruguay’s particular situation: “Una región cosmopolita como el Río de la Plata, susceptible a tantas influencias extranjeras, ya no podía sentirse exclusivamente identificada con la tradición castellana. Había llegado la hora de liberarse culturalmente de España, de modernizarse, de cambiar” (19-20). The desire to modernize, then, comes with an impulse to expand upon foreign influences, to look not only to Spain, but to Europe and North America for influence regarding how to embrace technological



advancement that seemed so desirable to the budding nation; and one of the reasons for such development was immigration. As Kleinpenning suggests: “These roads, railway lines and settlements—together with arable farming and the cattle ranches—form the concrete expression of the occupation and colonisation process in the landscape” (3). Immigration (in the sense of Sarmiento’s “gobernar es poblar”) can be seen as the force behind the industrial expansion that Uruguay experienced during these years.

### **The Discourse of Nature with Civilization/Barbarity**

What was the situation in Uruguay before this industrial expansion? Barrán provides one answer in his Historia de la sensibilidad en el Uruguay: “Una primera comprobación: la naturaleza dominaba al hombre” (1: 17). In the scheme of Barrán’s all-encompassing theory of “sensibilities,” Uruguayan history represents a shift from “barbaric” to “civilized.” As such, the idea that nature dominated man could only be derived from an epoch that preceded the rise of the “civilized” sensibility. Barrán explains the state of the countryside before industrialization came to be: “El Uruguay de 1800 o 1860 no tenía casi puentes, ni un solo kilómetro de vías férreas, los ríos separaban las regiones en el invierno durante meses, las diligencias demoraban cuatro o cinco días en unir Montevideo con la no muy lejana Tacuarembó” (1: 17). According to Barrán, Uruguay was in a state of *barbarie* that modernization disrupted in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Englishman John Hale Murray offers further evidence of the state of the rural countryside in his 1871 Uruguayan travelogue, which acts as a snapshot of Uruguayan rural society before many technological advances had arrived. His account, intended to

boost immigration, depicts Uruguay as empty and full of opportunities: “It is entirely a pasture country, without trees, except the solitary omboo, growing by a rancho, poesta, or estanzia, which serves as a landmark; and such woods that are there are invariably by the sides of the rivers” (63). His focus on the “ombú” tree belies an affinity with the rural countryside. The “ombú” also appears in Carlos Reyles’ El terruño (1916) as a symbol of man and nature working together in harmony. What is more, Murray’s account, because it documents an earlier historical period, includes more dealings with Indians than newspaper accounts that came later (1880-1920). As immigration and genocide obliterated the population of native Uruguayans, ranching and farming technology also took hold.

The rural population still maintained a bond with the natural environment: “La población rural, entonces, está en directa relación con la tierra, porque la madre tierra es, en definitiva, la única creadora y manufacturadora de las plantas y de los animales” (Solari 17). The idea that nature is personified as a nurturing mother still held sway, and evidence of this can be found even in newspapers of the time. An article in La campaña from 1914 describes Uruguay’s forests: “El bosque es sin duda alguna el purificador de la atmósfera, y el regulador de la temperatura...” (“El árbol” 3). The importance of trees to the sustainability of the environment was a known fact even as unsustainable technology was gaining ground and taking hold of the city and country alike. An article in El Paysandú of 1891 makes a claim that could be called foundational for the work of environmentalists that were emerging then and were to emerge in the twentieth century: “es la campaña que mayor suma de recursos aporta anualmente a las arcas del tesoro

público, es ella la que en todos los momentos con más abundancia concurre á la satisfaccian [sic] de las necesidades pecuniarias del gobierno. Por eso hemos dicho que no se la considere sino como filón explotable” (“En pró de la campaña” 1). This article expresses the necessity to maintain the natural environment (here: natural resources) not only for its own sake, but also for economic and governmental reasons. The call to not neglect the maintenance of the environment is clear, even if the dangers of such neglect have yet to be seen.

A further call against neglect of the environment takes said dangers into more consideration: “Los mayores y mejores de sus tesoros, no son los diamantes del Brasil, el oro del Paseo o la plata del Potosí; cuando esos manantiales de riqueza en cierto modo ficticia, estén totalmente agotados, el tesoro viviente de la espléndida vegetación americana, se habrá multiplicado al infinito por poco que lo defienda la humana prudencia” (“Una gran riqueza americana” 201). The fact that the article calls for human responsibility in the care of the environment shows that there was a consciousness of the limited and sometimes fragile character of the natural environment, especially when it concerns the issue of human survival on Earth.

The extent to which nature should be exploited was a topic of debate around the turn of the twentieth century in Uruguay. Some followed the example of Natura, a magazine dedicated to “la propaganda del método natural de vida: higiene—temperancia—vegetarianismo.” Natura was clearly against the lifestyle of the rugged, barbaric gaucho<sup>11</sup> and included even the eating of meat in its list of practices that should be eliminated in favor of more “civilized” behavior: “Esa campaña carnívora, la tierra del

asado y del churrasco, es una perpetua amenaza para la civilización” (“El medio de salvación” 17). The gaucho was not only associated with carnivorism and the slaughter of cattle, but also with a violent lifestyle. An article in Natura treats both of these subjects: “...No es una digresión mencionar los horrores de la guerra a propósito de las hecatombes de animales y de los banquetes para los carnívoros” (Reclus 59-60). Violence, whether propagated by war or by the slaughter of animals, was an excess that “civilized” society could not accept.<sup>12</sup>

Barrán remarks on the social relations that the violence of barbaric society engenders, calling it: “una sociedad que practicó la violencia física y la justificó como el gran método de dominio del Estado sobre sus súbditos y de los amos (padres, maestros, patrones) sobre sus subordinados (hijos, niños y sirvientes...” (Historia de la sensibilidad 1: 14). Proponents of “civilization” supported the idea that the domination of one class at the hands of another was a barbaric practice that should be extricated and eliminated from society.

However, the crux of Barrán’s argument is that “barbarity” is “la sensibilidad de los ‘excesos’ en el juego y el ocio (su consecuencia improductiva), en la sexualidad, en la violencia, en la exhibición ‘irrespetuosa’ de la muerte...” (Historia de la sensibilidad 1: 15).<sup>13</sup> However, the slaughter and exploitation of livestock continued because the economy was based on the profitability of these practices: “Esta fue una economía cuya producción se basaba en la matanza de ganado vacuno y cuyo sencillo instrumental consistía en cuchillo, lazo, boleadoras, desjarretador y, naturalmente, el caballo” (Barrán Historia de la sensibilidad 1: 37). There is, indeed, in this arrangement a paradox,

namely, that progress and civilization (advances in the technology of cultivating livestock) lead to barbarism in the continued, violent slaughter of said livestock.

Aside from this paradox, the proponents of civilization intended to civilize (or “discipline”) barbaric elements of society. Specifically speaking: “[s]e sublevaban las pulsiones de todos, la ‘carnalidad,’ pero también se sublevaban temporariamente los oprimidos, los que lo estaban mucho y los que lo estaban poco: negros, criados, sectores populares, marginados, locos, niños, jóvenes, mujeres. Por eso las autoridades de la sociedad, los ancianos, el clero, ‘los devotos,’ los políticos, los ricos, llamaban ‘bárbaro’ al Carnaval y procuraban ‘civilizarlo.’” (Barrán Historia de la sensibilidad 1: 120). One strategy, as has been mentioned, was death and the threat of death (Barrán Historia de la sensibilidad 1: 234). Certainly any conflict between warring sensibilities should definitely result, partially, in death. However, groups represented by magazines such as Natura put their hope in the idea that “una vida natural” is the cure for all vices: “El pensar honrado, *la comida natural y temperante, apuntando al vegetarianismo, el sol y el aire libre, el acostarse y levantarse temprano, la hidroterapia*, los procedimientos de desinfección vastamente vulgarizados, etc...” (“El carácter nacional” 7, italics in original).<sup>14</sup> The idea that a return to nature and natural processes is healthy and beneficial echoes the statements quoted above concerning the preservation of nature for the sake of the human race’s survival on Earth. Living naturally, in the manner expressed in Natura, could be seen as an early gesture of solidarity towards sustainable practices and an enlightened approach towards managing the environment.

At any rate, the “barbaric” sensibility slowly gave way to the more “civilized” one while, at the same time, technological development, in the form of modernization, took hold of Uruguay. As Barrán nears that conclusion of his monograph, he states: “La ‘modernidad,’ o sea el trabajo, el dinero y la sociedad autoritaria y de clases, fue contemporánea de la seriedad en la actitud del cuerpo y del alma porque la seriedad se asocia con las restricciones y prohibiciones, siempre acompaña los gestos de la intimidación, el miedo y el poder” (Historia de la sensibilidad 2: 208). *Seriedad*, then, was a mode of existing that accompanied not only the transformation from “barbaric” to “civilized,” but also the industrialization of Uruguay and its transformation into a modern nation. As can be seen: “intimidation, fear, and power” are some of the results of this dual transformation on a national level.

### **Progress and its Relation to Modernization in Uruguay**

In general: “progress” refers to economic growth, technological development, and even social evolution. In terms of this study, it refers to the modernization and sometimes destruction of the natural environment. Kleinpenning, in his geographical monograph on the Uruguayan immigration boom, relates his top three most radical changes to the countryside in the second half of the nineteenth century in Uruguay: crossbreeding of livestock, expansion of sheep-farming in 1860s and 70s, and implementation of wire fencing (132). These changes affected the environment in both positive and negative ways: “these changes [“breed improvement and the fencing of the grazing lands”] created work and therefore stimulated the occupation of the country, but also caused serious social problems and the expulsion of labour” (132). Industrialization, then, and the

transformation of the Uruguayan countryside can be seen as a complex process, but one that progresses gradually toward the proliferation of industry and the urban.

An early call to progress comes from La industria, a Montevideo magazine of the late nineteenth century:

Es menester que haya más cerebros que idéen máquinas simplificadoras de la labor; i espíritus positivos que resuelvan problemas económicos; i actividades que se apliquen á la implantación de industrias desconocidas entre nosotros, y voluntades que sepan valorar las muchas riquezas naturales del país que hasta el día existen inexploradas; i manos hábiles que den formas á nuestras ricas tierras de modelados i espíritus progresistas que arranquen á la ganadería de su estado casi rutinario, mejorando con tino científico las razas, dando como al magno problema del envío de ganado en pie á los mercados consumidores del extranjero. (“Nos esterilizamos—más ruido de motores—menos títulos académicos” 21)

The article calls for “positive spirits” to transform the national economy. A “positive spirit,” then, would be one that trusts science and technology to bring the greatest good to society. The idea that economic expansion would come from those who embrace positivistic ideals shows how closely the ideas and science and progress were linked.

Although progress is often linked to urban development, it was also an important factor in rural society. For example, the majority of the articles in newspapers and magazines related to rural subjects during this time period have to do with how to better cultivate crops and livestock. Articles like “Plantación de arboledas” and “La destrucción de las hormigas—Indicaciones prácticas” act as points of reference for the rural landowner interested in expanding his enterprise (10). Numerous similar studies show the link between rural production and the forces of progress and modernization. The word “rural” itself generally refers to the idea that the natural environment is undergoing some sort of process of modification or modernization. The government, too, was behind said

rural developments: “Este empeño gubernamental en pro del mejoramiento de nuestra campaña es tan honroso y plausible como el de que acabamos de dar cuenta” (“El progreso nacional” 3). It is likely that any government would support a program of rural development that would bring such “progress” and prosperity to the nation.

Even during this period, however, there were indications that the nation had not yet achieved a level of “progress” that Uruguayan intellectuals considered satisfactory. As an article in La industria relates: “No hemos alcanzado ante aquellos que nos miran y contemplan, el título enorgullecedor de pueblo verdaderamente adelantado y progresista” (“Los grandes problemas nacionales” 141). This article reveals a paradox of the world of modern progress: that a society can seemingly never feel that it has achieved a level of technological development that satisfies everyone. Technology always promises new innovations for the rural countryside and better ways to accomplish tasks of rural economic production.

In one example, such innovation was found to be lacking: “Vivimos todavía en la época troglodítica en materia de regadío...” (“Problemas rurales” 4). Even as late as 1917 (the year of this article) the Uruguayan countryside continued to experience a lack of development in the area of irrigation. One year later, Ecos del progreso, a Salto newspaper, put forth a similar message: “Cuesta convencer, en nuestro país, aún a las clases más cultas, de la necesidad patriótica de realizar ciertas obras que están vinculadas al progreso científico e intensivo de la comunidad” (“El riego y las industrias rurales” 1). “Scientific progress,” in this case the improvement of rural irrigation, was considered a patriotic duty. This linking of progress with nationalism shows how governments



motivated their citizens to embrace progress, which in turn would bring economic prosperity to the country. Irrigation was actually one of the later developments to take place in the countryside. This is probably due to the fact that Uruguay is much more geographically suited to raising livestock than to growing crops.

Progress was not limited to the rural sector. The building of a bridge in a department neighboring Montevideo was considered a work that represented great progress: “El puente cuya construcción acaba de terminarse en el departamento vecino es no sólo una conquista de la viabilidad regional, sino también un motivo de orgullo legítimo para el país” (“Fiestas del progreso” 3). The bridge, an object of pride for Uruguayans, represents progress in that it links two pieces of land that previously were not connected. Progress, in the same way, makes connections and facilitates processes that previously were more difficult to realize. The newspapers of the time emphasized greatly the magnitude of such an accomplishment. About “la inauguración oficial y solemne del gran puente que allá acaba de ser construido,” El día reported the following: “se trata de una obra de verdadera magnitud cuyas proporciones denotan por sí solas la importancia que han venido asumiendo en el país, todos los problemas relativos á la vialidad general, y la atención que se les presta” (“El progreso nacional” 3). The article, then, also recognizes the bridge’s symbolic meaning as not only a work of technical precision that demonstrates the latest scientific technology, but also a work that brings people and communities together.

An organization that lead the drive to implement science and technology into the everyday lives of Uruguayans was the Asociación Rural del Uruguay (ARU). Founded on

October 5, 1871, the ARU was considered a “poderosa institución que marcha á la cabeza, como elemento dirigente, del movimiento agrario de todo el país, al cual contribuyen no poco las numerosas asociaciones de igual carácter existentes en el resto de la República” (Araújo 181). The ARU, as head of rural industry in Uruguay, had a commitment to oversee the technological development and domination of the natural environment. One of the ways that the Asociación directed this drive to modernize was through its magazine: “In March 1872 the Asociación published a *Revista* for the first time. The paper rapidly played an increasingly important role in the diffusion of modern knowledge...” (Kleinpenning 139). The magazine, Asociación Rural del Uruguay: Revista quincenal dedicada a la defensa de los derechos e intereses rurales, was a way for the Asociación to shape and organize rural development. It accomplished this task by addressing itself to rural landowners who it knew would agree with and propagate the message of technological development and modernization.

Novelist Carlos Reyles was a very active representative of the Asociación. Reyles wrote letters to the ARU, such as one published in the November 15, 1883 edition of the magazine about agricultural plagues (“La langosta” 651). He didn’t, however, limit his participation to writing letters. As an article in El estanciero expressed, Carlos Reyles was “el que más ha bregado desde hace largos años por la concentración bajo una misma bandera de los elementos rurales, y que constituye el verdadero gestor de la idea, en frases más simples, el padre de la criatura” (“La Federación Rural—Los sentimientos de la campaña exteriorizados en la asamblea del 27” 11). His leadership extended beyond the political field through his novels. El terruño, through the character of Mamagela,

promotes the idea that humans and nature can successfully live in harmony with each other and mutually benefit each other. He expresses his vision in an article from El estanciero: “Si el comercio, la industria, la banca, formaran parte del gobierno central ó estuviesen en amigable contacto con él, ejercerían, en la campaña, toda la influencia de la ‘Comisión Nacional de Fomento Rural’ en las zonas que recorre el ferrocarril asociado á los planes de ella por razones á la vez interesadas y altruístas” (Reyles “La Federación Rural” 7). His idea of national harmony requires the cooperation (and centralization) of several sectors of the economy. Above all, the development of the rural countryside was central to Reyles’ idea of progress and happiness.

The magazine of the ARU also progressed throughout its life as a publication, mirroring the technological development of the countryside that it addressed. Starting from 1900 it became monthly instead of biweekly; it grew to be more scientific, more complex, and to contain more photos, more tables, longer articles and a column by scientist Dr. J. Schroeder. A link between nature and this trend toward the scientific can be seen in the magazine La campaña, which makes just such a comparison: “El bosque es el gran laboratorio químico de la Naturaleza y el que asegura la existencia del hombre, puesto que alimenta sus ganados, proporcionándoles excelente abrigo en invierno, y sombra con su tupido follaje en verano” (“El árbol” 3). The image of the forest as a laboratory shows how positivistic ideas of the triumph of science infiltrated discourse about nature. The idea that science consists of man observing nature is inverted and the forest becomes a laboratory for the experimentation of natural laws.

From this inversion of roles eventually emerged, in Europe, the social reality of the rural serving the urban. Farms became increasingly subservient to the demands of the urban population and the urban population came to depend upon the rural for sustenance. An element of this social reality was that in Great Britain “[b]y the middle of the nineteenth century the urban population exceeded the rural population: the first time in human history that this had ever been so” (Williams 217). This turning point in Western history deeply affected the rural environment because the city continued to produce technology that revolutionized the way that rural processes took place. Barrán’s Historia de la sensibilidad en el Uruguay can be cited here as another indicator of the transformation from rural to urban. In the epoch of the “barbaric” sensibility, the rural environment was at the center of the process of economic production. As Uruguay moved toward a “civilized” sensibility, the urban began to dominate and move to the center of the productive process.

British scholar Raymond Williams associates the city with capitalism but observes that the processes underlying this association began in rural society (292-93). In other words, the two cooperate: the country depends upon technology to feed urban population centers that could not survive without the support of said rural areas. As Williams states: “The Industrial Revolution not only transformed both city and country; it was based on a highly developed agrarian capitalism, with a very early disappearance of the traditional peasantry” (2). The disappearance of the peasantry was one of the results of the implementation of farming technology upon the rural mode of production. The arrival of new technology, praised by supporters of positivism, diminished the role of the

traditional rural peasant. The existence of “agrarian capitalism” itself is evidence of the uneasy partnership between the urban and rural worlds, and Williams emphasizes the presence of “agrarian capitalism” in the way that those in power do business: “What the oil companies do, what the mining companies do, is what landlords did, what plantation owners did and do” (293). That is, capitalism found its way into rural ways of life, first through figures like landowners and plantation owners and later through more specialized industries (Williams cites oil and coal), and came to dominate through the power of capital.

Regarding the progress fueled by this capital in Uruguay (much of which was foreign in origin), Barrán describes how modernization brought about a change in social attitudes and manners:

Llama la atención que estas tres décadas claves en que la sociedad generó una nueva sensibilidad (1860-1890), sean aquellas mismas en que el Uruguay se ‘modernizó,’ es decir, acompasó su evolución demográfica, tecnológica, económica, política, social y cultural a la de Europa capitalista, entrando a formar parte plenamente de su círculo de influencia directa.<sup>15</sup> (Historia de la sensibilidad 2: 15)

This change in social orientation would accompany Uruguay beginning in the late nineteenth century through its entire modernization process, and the fact that Uruguay developed a sensibility similar to that of capitalist Europe shows just how much influence the Old Continent held over financial and social dealings in the New.<sup>16</sup>

The United States also exerted an influential role over Uruguay’s developing social and financial realities. The Salto newspaper Ecos del progreso referred to the United States as “aquella gran democracia donde se gesta en estos momentos los nuevos destinos de la humanidad libre” (“Nuestro país en Estados Unidos” 1). Such a position

centers the future of not only Uruguay, but also the entire world, on the United States in both political and social terms. Newspapers like El día expressed the popular opinion that the United States was a country whose people were bent on succeeding economically:

...como hay en América una actividad comercial é industrial muy intensa, la América se presenta para muchos europeos como un país en que todo el mundo solo piensa en ganar dinero, en que el dinero ha perdido su carácter de medio para transformarse en [illegible] en que el valor social de los hombres se mide por su riqueza. (Ferrero 6)

The legend of the United States as a nation of people who only thought about money pervaded public opinion and generated attitudes that then manifested themselves in official discourse.

The stories about money-hungry capitalists from the United States were not completely misleading because North American investors invested heavily in the meat industry of the River Plate; and their reasons for investing weren't just to take advantage of Uruguay's rich supply of livestock: "El Río de la Plata ofrecía también otra nación vigente en Norteamérica: su barato mano de obra" (Barrán Historia rural 4: 215). The cheap labor that could be obtained from the River Plate area was an added bonus to the cornucopia of natural resources available in this region. North American "materialism," as was called the desire to accumulate money and material things, entered the South American sphere of business, influenced attitudes, and infiltrated Uruguay's national self-image through newspaper reports similar to the one quoted above.

However, this materialism was cut with an interest in academia and the intellectual analysis of pertinent subjects. Speaking about the then president of Harvard University, an article in El día states: "El público tiene tal veneración por [Mr. Moraga] y

tan alto concepto de su saber que siempre desea conocer su opinión sobre todas las grandes cuestiones nacionales: sobre el aumento de la criminalidad, como sobre el hundimiento del itismo de Panamá ó la destrucción de los bosques” (Ferrero 6). North American culture, taken from a foreign perspective, consists of an economic materialism and an admirable capacity for knowledge about social and political issues.

Both materialism and knowledge fit within a category that Barrán describes, in Marxian terms, as “bourgeois.” Bourgeois society accompanied the rise of capitalism and is described by the former in the following way: “El burgués necesitaba la intimidad. El pudor personal, hecho de ocultamientos y recatos ante sentimientos y hechos que el hombre ‘civilizado’ no quería ni oír mencionarse a sí mismo, era un escudo protector de la personalidad, a menudo el secreto de la fuerza y el dominio del burgués” (Barrán Historia de la sensibilidad 2: 262). This bourgeois sensibility came from abroad and was brought in just like the capital that accompanied it.

North American products also found acceptance in the Uruguayan market not only for rural technology, but also for urban improvement and other markets. As one Uruguayan observer of the time pointed out, these products were abundant:

...hoy nuestros campos se labran con instrumentos agrícolas fabricados en Norte América, nuestras escuelas se rigen por sus sistemas de enseñanza, nos iluminamos con sus petróleos, las construcciones urbanas y rurales utilizan sus maderas, empezamos a abrigarnos con sus tejidos de algodón, sus máquinas funcionan en nuestros establecimientos industriales y empleamos sus aparatos científicos.<sup>17</sup>

The influx of goods from North America, along with the influence of capitalism that came with them, produced, according to Barrán and Nahum in the third volume of their

Historia rural del Uruguay moderno, a dependence on other nations that Uruguay was to experience through this entire time period.

### **Foreign Influence on Ideology**

Indeed, the source of many of these concepts of “progress” was is North America. The same article cited above contains phrases that allude to this reality like: “aquel país de monumentales iniciativas de progreso” and: “la influencia fecunda del capital” (Swift 339). It is clear also that the United States desired to be influential in this way: “Norte América, que tanto desea expandir su acción comercial por la América del Sur para competir con las naciones europeas que han sido y son nuestras proveedoras de artículos manufacturados en general, tiene una buena parte de las exportaciones en el renglón que nos ocupa, y cuyo valor total asciende a 1:572.054 pesos oro” (“La situación económica” 3). Europe and North America formed a chain of influence that pervaded the market for manufactured goods in South America, including Uruguay.

The newspapers, in fact, were full of small articles about the industry of technology from Europe, North America, and other foreign sources. The newspaper El Paysandú reports, for example, on “El nuevo fusil alemán.” Notably, the newspapers in the more rural areas (like Paysandú) are not very different from those of Montevideo and they actually have a lot to do with what is going on in Montevideo. Another example of technology reporting from the same newspaper is the article about a new “Submarino portugués.” Brief articles inform the reader of the quickly-changing world of technology that is coming into existence. Another article describes the implementation of a subterranean telephone and focuses on the quantitative details: “Los conductos serán del



tipo de barro inglés vidriado, de los conocidos con el nombre de <<Patent Sykes>> y de varios diámetros que oscilarán entre 4 y 3 pulgadas en su parte interior” (“El teléfono subterráneo—Algunos detalles gráficos” 5). Further articles expose local steamship accidents and mention the death of North American passengers and describe (again, using scientific language) how a steamship ran into another steamship and obtained “una avería en el costado de babor, cerca de la popa y á la altura del cintón.” A final demonstration of the state of international cooperation regarding technology can be seen in the fact that the damaged Uruguayan steamship went for repairs in Buenos Aires.

Foreign presence was not just financial and technological in Uruguay. An anonymous article in La nación reported on the activities of a German naval station in the River Plate:

En el breve tiempo que hace residencia entre nosotros la distinguida oficialidad de la fragata Vineta y la corbeta Freya, han levantado planos de nuestros puertos, sus canales de entrada, fondos sobre las costas, anotaciones de la inexactitud de las luces de los faros de guía, planos de la ciudad y sus inmediaciones, de sus caminos principales ó estratégicos, de sus ferrocarriles y sus tranvías, puntos aparentes de defensa, edificios públicos, estado de su guarnición, nombre de las autoridades del país y personas principales... (“La estación naval alemana” 1)

The German presence appears in the article as not only the presence of foreign naval technology (in the form of the two seafaring vessels) but also a sense of malaise concerning the activities of said intruders; the recording of the information is implicitly expressed in the article as threatening, as far as national security is concerned.

From evidence found in the newspapers of the time, we can observe that foreign presence was a given in Uruguay’s process of modernization. Many Uruguayan industries would not have been able to function if it weren’t for the presence of outside nations.

However, Uruguay seemed to hold a captivating power over foreign nations in the sense that it was a source of great natural richness that appeared to be untapped. An anonymous news article in La nación of Montevideo describes Uruguay's ability to "...atraer hacia él las miradas de todos los hombres emprendedores que buscan una tierra más virgen y más vasta..." ("La República Oriental del Uruguay" 1). The evocation of land as virgin recalls New World Pastoral, a concept that will be taken up in Chapter Two. Uruguay was described in an anonymous editorial article from the same year as "favorecido por la naturaleza" ("Propaganda en el exterior" 1). A country like Uruguay, favored by nature, would certainly become the focal point of foreign attention in the form of financial investment.

Uruguay, recovering from the financial crisis of 1890, had already conveniently formed governmental ties with sources of foreign capital, despite the tendency of such foreign sources to exploit the natural environment: "Los capitalistas verán la conveniencia que encontrarían, explotando sus riquezas al amparo de las garantías que ofrece un gobierno de orden y de progreso" ("La República Oriental del Uruguay" 1). In the name of progress, Uruguay allowed its lands to be pilfered by foreign business.

Barrán and Nahum describe how the recovery from the crisis of 1890 further entered Uruguay into the international market:

El precio de la tierra retomó nuevamente el camino del ascenso ininterrumpido, que sólo la crisis había llegado a detener. Las cotizaciones de nuestros productos en el mercado internacional, aunque con ciertas alternativas, se elevaron. La coyuntura de la economía capitalista mundial había iniciado un nuevo ciclo de expansión que también nos incluyó. (Barrán Historia rural 3: 9)

The inclusion of Uruguay, in the late nineteenth century, in the cycle of international capitalism paved the way for technological development and modernization that followed shortly thereafter. Given Uruguay's seemingly untouched natural resources, investors saw much promise in the prospects that Uruguay had to offer.

According to one anonymous editorial article, such promise had the power to “despertar en los capitalistas europeos el noble deseo de obtener mayores lucros” (“Propaganda en el exterior” 1). The drive to earn more profit continued to bring capital to the land of Uruguay. Additionally, Uruguayans discovered that the best way to attract business was to advertise. As the same article states: “Lo que es necesario es que esas condiciones sean conocidas.” The call for Uruguayans to advertise the profitability of their country's natural resources to foreign capital resounded. The evidence that foreign investment was beneficial for Uruguay can be seen in attitudes expressed in other newspaper articles. One article refers optimistically to the organization of a nation like France when it remarks in passing: “...en Francia, como en cualquier país europeo bien organizado, son raros, excepcionales los casos...” (“Un extranjero” 1). Not only France, but also every European country, is lauded as well-organized. The European model of national organization came to be the model that Uruguay followed.

The newspapers also praised the relationship between Uruguay's natural richness and investors from foreign nations. Promises of happiness and easy access to riches abound in anonymous editorial articles such as this one: “Las riquezas que se fundan en los productos en la tierra hacen felices y poderosas á las naciones y á los individuos que las cultivan” (“La viña y el olivo en el Estado Oriental” 1), and anonymous news articles

like this one: "...este país del Uruguay es el más rico de Sud América con relación al número de sus habitantes, y es el país de mayor producción, de modo que todo le será fácil, si tiene la suerte de ser dirigido por buenos y honrados administradores y por recios y prudentes hombres políticos" ("Las obras del puerto—Visita del señor Allard al presidente de la República" 1). The task of extracting and cultivating that richness, however, appeared to fall to foreigners.<sup>18</sup>

It was not only capital, but also knowledge, that gave foreigners and newly arrived immigrants an advantage over the native and *criollo* populations of Uruguay: "Livestock farmers of British, French or other foreign origin could relatively easily establish a sheep farm, because many of them—in contrast to the Creoles—had the knowledge required for the satisfactory operation of such an enterprise" (Kleinpenning 136-37). The rural upper class utilized this knowledge, along with capital from their original countries, to gain possession of Uruguayan natural richness.

### **Landowner-Peasant Relations**

Barrán and Nahum, in their seven-volume Historia rural del Uruguay moderno (1967-78) (and especially in volume 4), critique this *alta clase rural*, but Kleinpenning paints them in a more favorable light. Regarding the system of laws that were developed to govern rural activities (known as the "Código Rural") he observes:

The code was a systematised series of provisions which were designed not only to provide greater certainty in the field of landownership (through *deslinde*, *amojonamiento*, registration of titles and fencing), and in relation to livestock (obligation to mark livestock, penalties for cattle thefts), but also to bringing greater order and security to the countryside. (Kleinpenning 140)

His appraisal of the “order and security” that this set of laws brought to the countryside neglects to address the situation of the lower classes, who were often in a repressive relationship with their bosses and landowners. This neglect was certainly also the dominant attitude of social relations of the time in the rural countryside. However, Kleinpenning also refers to an adverse effect of the modernization that the upper classes brought to the countryside: wire fencing made it easier for large landowners to establish themselves; it also led, however, to the disappearance of the gaucho who relied on unfenced lands for his livelihood (Kleinpenning 151). The conflict between landowners and peasants is intertwined with the history of rural Uruguay in a way that shows the development of the countryside alongside the exploitation of its workers.

Newspapers and magazines of the time contributed to the exploitation of workers of the countryside. By promoting informational interchange in a form that excluded illiterate workers, newspapers and magazines exploited this class of people. Titles of magazines like El estanciero and El hacendado suggest that the intended reader was a landowner. Moreover, only landowners had the financial resources to support such magazines, and such support could only be returned with content designed for landowners (Barrán Historia rural, volume 4).<sup>19</sup> Regarding illiteracy, Barrán and Nahum make the following observation: “[e]l sistema económico vigente engendró no sólo la miseria sino también el analfabetismo” (4: 44). Barrán continues to explain that illiteracy leads to ignorance and ignorance to wrong understanding, on the part of the workers, of the politico-economic situation to which they are subjected. José Antonio Escudero, in the Quinto Congreso Rural Anual, expressed: “Necesitan luz, la luz de la instrucción, el

ambiente civilizador, más luz, siempre luz” (García Acevedo 22). One could easily read this call for the light of understanding as a call for the expansion of literacy to people of the countryside, a condition that the landowning rural elite may have opposed.

The importance of the rural landowner to maintaining these relations of power cannot be overlooked. As Barrán and Nahum relate: “El Uruguay del siglo XX sería el Uruguay de los estancieros como el Uruguay del siglo XIX había sido el Uruguay de los comerciantes” (Barrán Historia rural 2: 11). The *estancieros*, by controlling how ranching and farming practices were carried out, determined to a large degree how rural business was conducted. *Arrendamiento*, the practice of renting out parcels of land to small ranch and farm owners, was one such aspect of agrarian business in Uruguay. John Murray describes the situation of *arrendamiento*:

The estancia farm itself, which we may call the squire’s estate, is occupied either by the proprietor himself of this large tract of ground of one or more square leagues, or he is the renter of it, and, as such, he lives in the estancia house. He lets out the surrounding parts of his land to different shepherds, who are his tenants, each of such pieces having a poesta, or two-roomed shepherd’s cottage, upon it. An estate of three leagues will, for instance, have thirty or more poesta lots in it. These poestas, with their portion of land, will generally be let to men who will buy a flock of sheep of the Estanziero, which in these times he is very glad to sell to them. He himself retains the land immediately around the estancia house for two or three of his own flocks. A flock will number from 800-1200, or even more, of ewes of different ages, and a few wethers, called capones. (177)

*Estancieros* controlled the *arrendamiento* process and made possible the renting of land to the smaller “shepherds,” as Murray describes them. This way of doing business made life difficult for those renting the land because *arrendamiento* was a costly endeavor. An anonymous editorial reads: “Los trabajadores de la tierra, nuestros escasos agricultores, no tienen ya qué hacer, frente a los exorbitantes precios de los arrendamientos, hecho que

ha venido a unirse como una nueva calamidad a las recientes pérdidas de cosechas” (“La situación económica y el malestar reinante” 1). The reigning bad feeling attributed to the double responsibility of paying the rent and suffering crop failure was an issue that left workers without options, without possible solutions, and without help from their landowners.

These workers, when left without jobs, of course, became a problem for landowners. As Oddone expresses in a prefatory note to Daniel García Acevedo’s El pauperismo rural en el Uruguay de 1910: “En 1877, en plena expansión del alambrado, Domingo Ordoña advertía (como también lo hará Cluzeau-Mortet) acerca de la peligrosa situación de aquella gente ‘sin familia, hogar, ni porvenir,’ empujados por la miseria hacia la delincuencia y la degradación moral” (vi). The danger that vagrants posed to landowners was acute enough to engender a law against vagrancy: “Esta Ley de 1 de diciembre de 1829, que declara delito leve de vagancia, es de grande interés, pues que explica el alcance que la Asamblea Constituyente dio al carácter de ‘notoriamente vago’” (García Acevedo 14). The law, passed in 1829, was still in effect in 1910, the year of García Acevedo’s report. He argues that the law should be revised and that “la cuestión de si la vagancia puede o no ser castigado” should be reconsidered (García Acevedo 15).

The call to better serve the underprivileged populations of rural Uruguay is evident in García Acevedo’s report. 1910 was an important year for landowner/peasant relations, as is evidenced in the “patriótica introducción” that José Antonio Escudero, one of the members of the Quinto Congreso Rural Anual, delivered: “Invito a ustedes a que

resolvamos en este acto, que el primer tema a tratarse en nuestros Congresos futuros, sea el de considerar la situación de la gente pobre de la campaña y buscar los medios de remediarla en lo posible” (García Acevedo 22). Through speeches like these, the poor rural laborer increasingly became a topic of discussion and as a possibility for social improvement. As Barrán recognizes: “El pobre a imagen y semejanza de Cristo se había transformado en el obrero a quién se debía dar empleo” (Historia de la sensibilidad 2: 41). The plight of rural laborers was infused with religious meaning that could then be used to bring about crusades for the rights of the poor and demoralized worker. Because of these sentiments, the countryside witnessed “la conversión del trabajo en mito salvador del hombre” (Barrán Historia de la sensibilidad 2: 41). The new plan to deal with vagrants was not to imprison them, but to give them jobs.

Five years later, however, the problem did not seem to have changed, according to an anonymous editorial: “Las precarias condiciones de la vida obrera en campaña, y el descuidado trato de que son objeto esos modestos y sufridos jornaleros rurales, constituye una causa digna de ser estudiada, propendiéndose como es lógico, á darle una solución conciliadora, que, sin lesionar los intereses de unos, propicie la comodidad para los otros” (“La vida de los obreros rurales” 3). Although the situation seemed not to have changed, it can be observed that the rural peasant’s stature was growing in importance in the minds of more elite individuals.

One reason for this growing eminence of the rural worker is expressed in a letter from Gilberto Costa to García Acevedo: “los hijos del país aptos para el trabajo, no teniendo ocupación emigran, y los que no se dedican al juego, que por desgracia también



abunda bastante en nuestra campaña, haciendo perder por completo los hábitos del trabajo que dignifican y engrandecen los pueblos” (65). Costa’s statement that, without jobs, rural farmworkers often emigrate was viewed as another reason to better accommodate workers. A letter from N. Balbela (hijo) gives the following suggestion regarding how to deal with the unemployed worker:

Una vez obtenida una tarifa baja, que seguro se conseguiría, por cuanto hoy los ferrocarriles no transportan un sólo grano de cereales, y una vez que se fomente la agricultura, por poco que cobre, tendría una entrada y después el aumento del pueblo trabajador, porque el que produce consume, y vendría el aumento de pasajeros y mercaderías. (García Acevedo 117)

The idea to involve the railroads in the improvement of the rural worker’s economic conditions could be considered mutual because it would benefit both workers and the railroad industry. Perhaps the most audacious of plans suggested within García Acevedo’s 1910 report is to be found in the letter of Carlos Cash, which states:

Nuestra gente de campaña sacándola de los trabajos habituales de campo, lo único que le sería tolerable y que podría hacer camino con posibles posibilidades de éxito, sería la agricultura; buenas colonias hábilmente administradas, y situadas sobre vías fáciles de conducción, proporcionándoles terrenos en condiciones liberales y con el aliciente de hacerse propietarios con un poco de perseverancia y energía, seguramente sería un medio de corregir y mejorar su situación. (García Acevedo 128)

Cash feels that it is agricultural work that holds the power to save the out-of-work laborer. His vision includes appropriations of land for every peasant tempered with dedication and energy on the part of the peasant. The ease of implementation of this vision would depend on the willingness of the big landowners to give away their land to lesser individuals.

Although the Asociación Rural del Uruguay was known as a landholders' association, it did support, according to García Acevedo, the cause of the rural poor: "...la Asociación Rural del Uruguay, en varias oportunidades, puso su valiosa influencia a favor de la mejora de la situación de la campaña, molestanda por la plaga que crecía rápidamente así que el tiempo pasaba" (22)<sup>20</sup>. Perhaps one of the reasons for the interest of the ARU in the conditions of the poor is that their fate was tied up in that of agricultural production: "...el gran problema nacional, no de hoy, sino de más de medio siglo, es aumentar la producción" (García Acevedo 30). If there were a way to augment agricultural production while benefitting the plight of the common worker, then its implementation would be prudent to any rural businessman, a statement to which the "Comisión de Estudios para mejorar la situación de la gente pobre de campaña" fully agreed: "El propósito primordial de la Comisión es, pues, estudiar los medios para inducir al trabajo al hijo del país que no lo practica, y mejorar las condiciones de la vida en la campaña para que a ella vuelvan los compatriotas que la han abandonado" (García Acevedo 31). Once again, putting the "hijo del país" to work appears as the most common mode of salvation in rural Uruguay.

Despite the many efforts to bridge the gap between *estanciero* and *pobrerío*, an economic and social schism remained. The *estancieros* owned a great percentage of Uruguay's material wealth, and this wealth had brought peace, or a semblance of peace, to the countryside. The objective of the *estancieros* was to maintain this peace and avoid going to war against the poor and disenfranchised *pobrerío*. As Barrán and Nahum describe: "El ganado se mestizaba, la estancia era alambrada y el país cruzado por

ferrocarriles y líneas telegráficas y telefónicas. Al mismo tiempo, los grandes estancieros se apoderaban de los últimos restos de la tierra fiscal. Era su necesidad, y la de la economía relativamente modernizada que habían creado, la paz” (Barrán Historia rural 4: 10).

However, this “peace” of the *estancieros* was an uneasy one: “Mientras los hacendados se recuperaban de la crisis del noventa y consolidaban su dominio sobre la tierra, el obrero recibía salarios cada día más bajos o era simplemente echado de los fundos” (Barrán Historia rural 4: 21). The lack of economic wealth to be distributed among the poor was a source of inequality. Barrán and Nahum describe the “miseria” of the *pueblos de ratas* where many poor people banded together to live (Historia rural 2: 334). Although this banding together probably led to even more misery, it also inevitably led to shared sentiments regarding economic inequality and the need for a revolution.

The *estancieros*, fearing such a revolution, attempted to keep the rural *campesinos* in their place. However, these rural peasants never quite developed the solidarity and never quite emerged from their socio-political ignorance to become a class of people that could operate independently of the higher classes. Barrán and Nahum describe the process that engendered these conditions:

La ganadería extensiva provocó el aislamiento de las peonadas, la hacienda modernizada por el alambramiento y otras mejoras técnicas, la desocupación. Trabajadores esparcidos, y paisanos despedidos concentrados en los ejidos de las ciudades del interior y los ‘pueblos de las ratas,’ no alcanzaron a ser nunca una clase ‘para sí,’ con conciencia de sus intereses y de su oposición frontal a los terratenientes. (Historia rural 4: 9)

The revolutions of 1897 and 1904, led by Aparicio Saravia, were a failure for the rural *campesino*.

The upper classes were also subject to a governing factor, one that has already been discussed in this chapter: the need for “progress.” It was this need to be defined on European and North American terms that created Uruguay’s dependence, on a national level, on other nations for its sense of national identity and value. As Barrán and Nahum summarize:

La demanda externa nos exigió, imperiosa, el mestizaje del bovino. La comercialización de la producción rural y el transporte de la misma (desde la estancia a Montevideo en los ferrocarriles británicos, y desde ésta a los centros de consumo imperiales en los navíos europeos) estaban ambos en manos del extranjero. (*Historia rural* 3: 10)

All of these technological innovations, in the name of progress, produced an economic and social situation that benefitted a few at the expense of many.

### **Uruguayan Industry**

Orestes Araújo describes two ways in which Uruguay was self-sufficient or at least competed with foreign powers in terms of production.<sup>21</sup> He cites the prolific nature of Uruguayan industry, along with protectionist legislation, as the causes for industrial proliferation in the country:

Las grandes empresas industriales que años después siguieron á las anteriores, como líneas de vapores fluviales, ferrocarriles, telégrafos, gas, aguas corrientes, tranvías de sangre, y alguna que otra más, así como la promulgación de leyes de carácter esencialmente proteccionista, vinieron á aumentar el número de las industrias con muchas otras que en la actualidad distraen fuertes capitales dan trabajo bien recompensado á miles de artífices y obreros, y hacen una competencia victoriosa á los productos similares de procedencia extranjera. (Araújo 207)

Uruguay’s participation in the international economy was not limited to the cycle of investment and exploitation of foreign nations. It also was based on Uruguay’s capacity to produce goods that could compete on an international level. Araújo outlines the most

productive examples of these goods that came from Uruguayan industries and competed in the international markets:

...las empresas realmente importantes...son los ferrocarriles que recorren la mayor parte de su territorio y que pronto lo recorrerán todo; las poderosas líneas de navegación fluvial é interoceánica; los cables y telégrafos; sus fuertes asociaciones bancarias, sus tranvías y alumbrado eléctricos, sus servicios telefónicos, de cloacas, gas y aguas corrientes; las colosales obras realizadas en el puerto de Montevideo, uno de los mejores de la América del Sud; su saladero Liebig's; sus fábricas de papel, de paños de azúcar y otras ya citadas; su gran dique abierto en la roca, sus ricas minas de oro de Rivera, sus canteras de grantio y otras muchas industrias fabriles y manufactureras que rápidamente se van extendiendo por todas las comarcas de la República. (Araújo 214-15)

The richness of Uruguayan industry, even in the face of a market capitalism that eliminated small players, prevailed due to the variety of markets in which its products participated.

## **Technologies Implemented During Modernization**

### **Railroads**

One of the pioneers of the development of the railway industry was Zenón Rodríguez, who contracted the *Compañía del Ferrocarril Central del Uruguay* to carry out his plans, starting in 1866 (Kleinpenning 283). Three years later, as an anonymous retrospective article from 1916 points out: “En 1869 se inauguró el primer ferrocarril del Uruguay, habilitándose la línea entre Montevideo y Las Piedras, de 19 kilómetros de extensión” (“Los ferrocarriles uruguayos” 1). Barrán gives the year 1860 as the turning point between “barbaric” and “civilized” sensibilities, and it is no coincidence that the implementation of railways began around this time as well.

Misemer describes how railroad construction and national identity converged in Argentina:

Railways on the pampas were constructed on a terraplein above the ground and therefore served as elevated signs of recognition through the mobile demarcation of frontiers. In first reducing the pampas to an empty space, and then by remaking them into a new slate upon which to show images of power and progress, Argentina transformed the space of national territory via technological progress. (124)

The elevated nature of the railway acted not only functionally, but also as a symbol of how the rural countryside was dominated. It is clear that what Misemer calls “the space of national territory” was, in many ways, the rural environment being transformed by this technology.

The length of Uruguay’s railroad lines at 2576 kilometers, earning 80 million *pesos* annually.<sup>22</sup> The attitude of the public toward this accomplishment is one of national pride. However, the transformation of the natural environment, which took place in order for railway technology to be installed, goes unrecognized and is not included in the official reports, of which, according to Misemer, there are many. The theme of national pride was also in place because Uruguay was one of the first South American countries to establish a railway system: “Cuando muchos países hispanoamericanos carecían de medios modernos de comunicación y transporte, el Uruguay, merced á la iniciativa de una empresa británica y a las grandes y numerosas facilidades que le brindaron los Poderes públicos de la Nación, empezó a gozar de los beneficios que proporciona la posesión de líneas férreas” (Araújo 265).<sup>23</sup> These benefits, as we will see, included the establishment of new population centers, the imposition of a mode of transport that, according to some, equalized social differences, and, of course, the rise of a more efficient mode of transportation.

As Barrán and Nahum express, the railroad, at least at first, had to be forced upon the countryside: “Desde ese ángulo *y en estos años*, el auge ferroviario— aunque con el correr del tiempo se reveló útil a la economía rural— fue un hecho impuesto a la campaña” (2: 531). Seen from this perspective, a pattern emerges in the sense that technology, which by nature is an urban creation, has to be, at first, forcibly imposed upon the rural landscape. Technology is by no means a natural occurrence in the rural areas and must be transplanted into said areas before the slow process of adjustment that always accompanies a transplant of any sort can begin. As this particular technological transplant took root, one can observe the effects of its entrenchment: “The building of railways from the end of the 1860s resulted in a considerably more wide-reaching development of the territory and furthered the creation of new—albeit small—population centers. The improvement and building of roads also formed part of this continuing development” (Kleinpenning 267). Railroad technology began to take hold and society began to feel the effect of its efficiency and power in transportation.

The growth of Uruguay’s railroad system can be compared to that of the United States, which took place some years earlier, chronologically speaking. As Leo Marx states: “Between 1830 and 1860 the nation [the United States] was to put down more than 30,000 miles of railroad track, pivot of the transportation revolution which in turn quickened industrialization” (Marx 180). His claim that the railroads “quickened industrialization” is accurate in terms of Uruguay as well. Leather and wool were some of the first industries to take advantage of the speed and efficiency of Uruguay’s railway system. According to Barrán and Nahum:

Los cueros y la lana dependían más que otros productos del ferrocarril. No podían venir caminando al mercado de consumo y exportación que era Montevideo, como el ganado en pie, y valían mucho más que los cereales por lo que el flete ferroviario no les era prohibitivo. Varias razones reforzaron esta relación: gran capacidad de carga del vagón, mejor preservación del producto que en la carreta y mayor velocidad de transporte que permitía aprovechar una suba de precios en el mercado capitalino. (3: 438)

The numerous advantages laid out by Barrán and Nahum provide numerous reasons for why railroads came to dominate so many aspects of rural life in Uruguay. A further reason is provided by Marx: “The new inventions hold the promise of natural unity and, even more exciting, social equality. Nothing could be as important to the ‘great mass of the community’ as this innovation ‘calculated...to equalize the condition of men.’ It is a mode of conveyance available to rich and poor alike, and he is pleased to report that the people regard it as their own” (210). The universality of trains is just one more cause for their great and complex success on an international scale.

Trains were rife with their negative aspects as well. Barrán and Nahum document the drawbacks in the case of Uruguay:

Desde los años del auge ferroviario, en la década del 80 en adelante, el ferrocarril recibió críticas masivas de parte de todos sus usuarios. Elevadas tarifas, pocos y deficientes vagones, horarios caprichosos, enormes demoras y lentitud de trenes, fueron los principales motivos de queja del productor que lo usaba para trasladar sus frutos, del comerciante que por ese medio recibía sus artículos y del pasajero que creía estar abordando un sistema rápido y confortable de transporte. (3: 446)

The reality of the railroad industry, in this sense, was different from the idealized view that trains were the undeniable and unrivaled portent of the future. Although they did completely change the transportation and business industries, they came with their own problems. While nature continued to silently be exploited by the expansion of the railway



system in Uruguay, the human element came to confound it, according to the criticism that Barrán and Nahum document in their work cited above.

Furthermore, in terms of Uruguay's greatest industry, cattle farming, the railroad did not seem to offer much of an advantage: "Si la base de nuestra riqueza económica era la ganadería, el país contaba con la ventaja de que ese ganado era también capaz de transportarse por sí mismo (el único fruto de cuatro patas, al decir de Sarmiento), y por lo tanto, el ferrocarril no le era imprescindible" (Barrán Historia rural 2: 552). Additionally, even if cattle farmers used the Uruguayan rail system, the process would still be delayed by the slowness of another technology related to the raising of livestock: the *saladero* (Barrán Historia rural 2: 551-52). The salting of beef took long enough that the increase in velocity that the railroad provided did not have an effect on the overall process.

Despite these drawbacks, trains continued to dominate the countryside and create economic growth. Newspapers, as well, were conscious of the importance of the railway system and kept the public up to date on railway-related news. Brief, anonymous news articles were common in newspapers of Montevideo and other small urban centers throughout the country. One such article relates a railway accident that occurred with a "tren de carga" on the Northwest railway line. The documentation shows that the public was interested in trains not only as a means for transportation but also as a social attraction, something that inspires emotion in the participant. At this point in time there is less documentation of and less interest in the destruction that modernizing technologies were releasing upon the natural environment. Despite some of the examples cited in this

chapter, it would take many more decades (until the 1970s) for the environment to register as a topic for which there is a significant social interest or preoccupation.

### **Rustic Modes of Transportation and Technology**

More rustic modes of transportation, however, because of their lower cost, retained status for many *hacendados* as a viable method for conducting products to market: “A pesar de todo esto, como el mismo documento transcrito lo aclara, para el hacendado era más económico el medio de transporte tradicional—la tropa para el ganado en pie, la carreta para la lana y los cueros secos—que el moderno: el ferrocarril” (Barrán Historia rural 2: 622). Indeed, the railroad, although it transported many goods across the countryside, did not completely eliminate other more rustic forms of transport.

One of the most simple and most popular methods of transport in the rural areas of Uruguay was the “carreta.”<sup>24</sup> Bouton describes it as a “[c]arro todo de madera tirado por bueyes” (130). The “carreta,” as mentioned above, was useful for the transportation of wool and leather. It was popular among *hacendados* because of its economy. A more formal mode of transport was the “diligencia.” They were, according to Bouton: “vehículos...muy grandes y en lugar de tener a los costados cortinas de hule o cuero, llevaban ventanillas con vidrios. De cuatro ruedas muy altas y divididos en dos o tres cuerpos o departamentos” (141). The glass-paned windows of the “diligencia” made it a higher-class mode of conveyance, suitable for transportation between towns on roads developed for this purpose.

In his desire to completely address the material elements of rural life, Bouton includes a section, full of diagrams, on animal traps and how to make them. One example

that he includes is the “cimbra,” “un lazo hecho de cerda, que se coloca en la punta de una caña larga; rodeando la perdiz, trátase de ponérselo en el pescuezo. También se hacen arcos de alambre, colocándolos en los caminos que hacen las vacas y ovejas en dirección a la aguada, tapados de lazos de erda trenzada (cimbras). Se usa también la cimbra de caña para la caza de loros y otras aves” (266). His description of the “caza de pájaros con lazo” comes from the same section: “si se ata un lazo en el lugar donde se acostumbra poner varjones como soporte de las mantas, en un poste o árbol adecuado, por medio de su presilla y el otro extremo o sea el de la argolla, atado fuertemente y bien tirante debajo del alero, tenemos una trampa preparada” (275). The inclusion of these traps in a book about rural life in Uruguay shows that technology existed on many levels, not only the grandiose level of the railroads, but also the level of rustic modes of transport and animal traps devised by hand.

### **The Port of Montevideo**

Another more grandiose implementation of technology upon the natural environment was the Port of Montevideo, as well as other Uruguayan ports. Although Uruguay often looked to the exterior for much of the support it received, an anonymous news article in La nación recounts how much of the work done on the Port of Montevideo had its origin within the country:

Las obras portuarias han podido inaugurarse y pueden ejecutarse confiadamente, sin que el país haya tenido que apelar á auxilios de exterior: el puerto se está construyendo con recursos propios del país, sin violencia para nadie, sin dificultades financieras, y con la seguridad de que estos recursos no han de faltar, aun cuando las exigencias de la construcción obligasen a hacer uso de una mayor latitud del tiempo. (“Las obras del puerto—Visita del señor Allard al presidente de la República” 1)

Araújo's statement in 1913 about Uruguay's self-sufficiency has its antecedent in this newspaper article about the port from 1903. The article mentions a lack of violence which, in a human sense, is apparent, but the violence committed against nature to build this port was significant. The convenience and efficiency of the port comes at the expense of a natural world that is shaped by and conforms to the design of humans.

Indeed, it is humans who impose industrial activity upon the natural coastline: "La empresa del Puerto de Montevideo ha entrado en un franco período de actividad y da impulso a sus trabajos, deseando responder á los deseos del pueblo y del Gobierno" ("Puerto de Montevideo—instalaciones y trabajos nuevos" 1). The people and the government are cited as the propulsive forces behind the erection of the port. It would be impossible to imagine the port of Montevideo as a naturally occurring phenomenon. The port's value is one way to measure its importance not only to humans, but also on the level of the natural world that became displaced by its construction: "El valor de las obras está estimado próximamente en 2.500.000 libras, no incluyendo railway, líneas, grúas, depósitos y otras instalaciones necesarias para la explotación del puerto" ("Puerto de Montevideo" 1). The value of the port can also be measured also in terms of the debt that it owes to the natural world for its existence.

One problem that arose in the construction of the port was its insufficient depth at certain locations. Here humans and nature were at odds. The natural depth of the bay in which the port was being installed was not great enough to accommodate some of the larger steamships. The problem is described in the following anonymous news article: "Los grandes vapores tienen que andar fuera del puerto, por no haber en este bastante

hondura para ellos, y esto hace que tengan que trasbordar sus cargas, lo que causa grandes gastos y demora para los negocios en general, sobre todo en los malos tiempos, cuando el mar está tempestuoso” (“Puerto de Montevideo” 1). In the name of business, then, the designers of the port decided to dredge the bay floor. Additionally, part of the problem as noted in the article is that bad weather increases the loss of time and money. This can be seen as yet another way in which humans and nature are at odds when the implementation of technology upon the natural world is at stake.

As the anonymous article “Profundidad del puerto” expounds, the bay would have to be dredged in order to accommodate larger vessels. The imperiousness of the port project and its executors regarding this topic can be seen in the language of the following citation:

Como es sabido, los buques de gran calado no pueden aún llegar á las dársenas por falta de profundidad, pero este inconveniente no ha de durar mucho, pues, con la ejecución del contrato últimamente sancionado, se va a dragar el puerto á la profundidad debida y pronto podrá contemplarse la hermosa realidad de ver los grandes transatlánticos atracados á los muelles interiores del puerto. (“Los progresos del Puerto—Nuevas habilitaciones” 4)

That “this inconvenience isn’t going to last long” shows the power of the technology used to build the port and the confidence of those wielding the technology. The pleasure that the article promises upon completion of the dredging is further evidence of the human desire to dominate the landscape and impose a will upon the natural world.

Like any such imposition of human will upon a natural environment that seems passive yet is buzzing with life and substance, the solution of one problem engenders another problem:

Una comisión de vecinos de Los Pocitos y Ramírez se apersonará el lunes al presidente de la Junta, doctor Heguy, pidiéndole interponga sus buenos oficios ante la comisión técnica del puerto a fin de que esta obligue á la empresa constructora del mismo, que no se descargue el lodo que se extrae de la bahía en las proximidades de la ciudad, pues se da el caso de que se ponen imposibles las playas.<sup>25</sup> (“Los residuos de dragado” 1)

That the mud from the dredging should not be deposited on nearby beaches is another example of how nature’s materiality acts as a silent protest against the violence committed by humans on nature. The fact that to dispose of the mud from the bay floor requires extra effort shows the resiliency of nature and its power to get in the way of humans’ greatest aspirations.

The newspapers, of course, were conscious of the struggle between human and nature, at least from the human point of view. The following anonymous news article focuses on the human side of the encounter: “No debemos olvidar que el estudio de la ingeniería hidráulica es uno de los más difíciles, por los obstáculos que encuentra el hombre para aplicar sus conocimientos” (“Las obras del puerto adelantan—una nueva draga” 1). The “application” of “knowledge” is cited above, but the space upon which this “knowledge” is being “applied” is not recognized. The newspapers have not at all memorialized whatever natural space used to occur before the implementation of, in this case, hydraulic engineering.

Although nature continues its protest, the efforts of the hydraulic engineers do prevail. The port is constructed and, from the point of view of the designers, human technology has triumphed. The satisfaction of a job completed is evident in the following anonymous news article:

Una vez concluidas las obras, el puerto de Montevideo comprenderá en el antepuerto 126 hectáreas de área superficial, accesible en todo tiempo por un canal de 200 metros de ancho, perfectamente dragado para buques de 7,50 metros de calado. Estará protegido contra los vientos por dos rompeolas de 850 metros y 1500 respectivamente con bloques de cemento, constituyendo seguro y confortable refugio para la navegación.<sup>26</sup> (“Puerto de Montevideo” 1)

The scientific description of the dimensions of the completed port adds to the character of this particular industrial achievement. The numerical terms in which it is described add to the general sense that a significant amount of calculation was necessary for this project’s completion. Referring back to what has been said about progress in this chapter, the port, as completed task, represents, in a tangible way, progress, as this anonymous news article expresses about the illumination of the port that was completed six years later: “Todo aquello, sometido á una dirección inteligente, deja una gran impresión de progreso. La instalación demuestra que no se repara en gastos ni se escatiman actividades, cuando se trata, como en el caso presente, de dar impulsión a una obra beneficiosa para el país” (“La iluminación del Puerto” 4). The benefit that the nation feels at having successfully illuminated the port is evidence of the preference that people felt toward industrial advancement instead of preservation and appreciation of the common denominator to any work of progress: the natural world.

The Port, of course, was not just a demonstration of the latest concepts in engineering; it also functioned as a center for trade. Indeed, the motivation for building such a port could only be garnered due to the profit it would promise to bring the nation. Again, Uruguay looked to the exterior for financial interest. For example, the Uruguayan Consular General in Great Britain published an article in London’s Commerce magazine, announcing the completion of the port and soliciting trade. An anonymous editorial

article in La nación of Montevideo similarly demonstrates Uruguayan interests in exporting meat to Great Britain and Argentina (“Los puertos ingleses” 1).

Newspapers reporting on the Port of Montevideo concurrently reported on the implementation of maritime technology in other Uruguayan centers of trade, as well as abroad. In the middle of the reporting that went on in La nación on the Port of Montevideo, an anonymous news article reported: “El gobierno de los Estados Unidos ha aceptado oficialmente la oferta que le hizo la compañía del canal de Panamá, de cederle todos sus derechos y propiedades, por la suma de cuarenta millones de dollars” (“El canal de Panamá—la oferta de venta aceptada” 1).

Speaking in terms of Uruguay, three other ports get mentioned in El día in the month of May of 1909. El Puerto de La Paloma, which was in the process of being conceived, appears in a letter to the President of the Republic: “Dicho puerto solucionará en parte el grave problema de la vialidad y servirá de factor eficiente para múltiples industrias que redundarán en beneficio de la ganadería y la agricultura promoviendo á la vez el trabajo y el bienestar de las clases menos favorecidas de la fortuna” (“El puerto de la Paloma” 4). The letter refers to economic benefits that would be accessible to less wealthy farmers and ranchers. The conception of a port as a source of financial wealth is emphasized and reiterated here.

The other two ports that receive attention are those of Maldonado and Punta del Este. The article that mentions both of them praises the benefits and good reputation they bring to the nation. The benefits concerning the Port of Maldonado could be distributed to other departments, as well: “El puerto de Maldonado es beneficioso para el



departamento mismo de Rocha, si el ferrocarril en construcción continuara hasta allá como tarde ó temprano ha de realizarse” (“Un bohemio que escribe sobre puertos” 5).

The article states that the port and the railroad working together promise to bring great business to that area of Uruguay. The attention paid to the port of Punta del Este is more a matter of national pride (the economic benefits going unspoken). The port is described as follows:

[e]s la avanzada del Uruguay hacia el mar. Es la carretera (digámoslo así) por donde caminan todos los vapores que nos comunican con Europa. Es el primer puerto, abrigo, y faro que buscan los navegantes, tanto para el estuario como de paso hacia el Sur en busca del Pacífico. Es la posada donde en los días de peligro (muy frecuentes en estas aguas) arriban los prudentes capitanes. ¡Por algo los lobos del mar han convertido en paraje de refugio la rocosa isla que lleva su nombre! (“Un bohemio que escribe sobre puertos” 5)

The purposes that the port of Punta del Este serves are multiple, and all of them are a source of patriotism for the author of the article. The port is praised, above all, for its power to overcome the dangers and vicissitudes posed by nature that confront those who journey by sea.

### **Livestock**

On land, much effort was successfully spent on the raising of livestock, especially cattle. The practice was introduced, according to Verdesio, in 1617, with some of the same motivations that initially brought settlers from Europe to the New World: “Me refiero por un lado, a la representación de las tierras uruguayas como objeto de deseo; por otro, a la introducción del ganado vacuno (y un poco más tarde, equino), que transformaría por completo la vida futura de los habitantes (naturales y trasplantados) de las tierras del Uruguay” (109). The representation of Uruguay as a land of fulfilled

desires is a likely precedent to the introduction of livestock in the sense that Uruguay as a geographic region was very suitable for cattle ranching: “Extensive cattle ranching can...be practised on the thin, stony soils. As a result...as much as 80 per cent of the national territory...is suitable for production” (Kleinpenning 8-9). The desires of Uruguay’s early European settlers found their expression in these “thin, stony soils.” Their dreams became reality based on what the land of Uruguay materially had to offer. As Verdesio relates: “Desde ese entonces las tierras del Uruguay ya no fueron las mismas” (94-95). The way that the natural environment was utilized would be forever altered by the introduction of livestock.

The livestock itself was to be altered as well. Sabani Leguizamón describes the event (as well as others that occurred concurrently with it) in somewhat literary terms:

La primera gran transformación se percibe en el medio rural (Reyles dejará constancia de ello en Beba y Primitivo) con la mestización del ganado, el cercamiento de los campos y la creciente mecanización de su explotación, hechos que, según Barrán, señalan el ‘origen de la sustitución del estanciero caudillo por el estanciero empresario.’ (17)

Reyles’ fictionalization of the hybridization of livestock serves as another indicator of attitudes toward the natural environment and modernization at that period in Uruguay. Barrán’s observation of how the *caudillo* was replaced with the *estanciero* shows how rural business came to dominate the countryside more and more.

Crossbreeding was one of the main strategies used to produce the best livestock. Some of the most popular new breeds to emerge in the realm of cattle were Durham and Hereford (Barrán Historia rural 2: 219). Scientifically-minded livestock owners also experimented with sheep, as an anonymous feature article from El Paysandú recounts:

“Siempre cruzando sus ovejas con la selección y cuidado más constantes, al fin constituyó una raza perfeccionada distinta a las demás—de carácter informe, gran tamaño, largura de lana y aptitud para engordar” (“La ganadería en Paysandú” 1). Both the desire for fine animals and the pursuit of science turned crossbreeding of livestock into a type of technology manipulation—livestock was seen as a natural field upon which the crossbreeder could experiment and apply his theories.

While often technological progress is represented as sweeping through a nation rapidly and without concern for the natural environment, sometimes the process is slow: “Por razones zootécnicas, el mestizaje era un proceso de por sí más lento que el cercamiento de los campos o el afianzamiento del ovino; y por lo tanto no pudo realizarse en cinco o en diez años como se realizaron estos” (Barrán Historia rural 2: 220). Beyond simply pragmatic considerations of how much time it would take to develop a new breed, one had to consider the broader question of whether mixing is at all advantageous, that is: “...si se debe ó no modificar el ganado criollo por la introducción de sangre Durham ú otra de las razas perfeccionadas” (Herrera 68). Two camps developed regarding this question: one claiming that *criollo* (unmixed; natural) breeds were best and another claiming that hybridization improved output of livestock.

The process of hybridization can easily be seen as a process related to progress and modernization. To scientifically blend and analyze multiple races of bovines was a modernizing process because it is the imposition of crossbreeding technology upon a race of naturally occurring livestock. The camp that sponsors the maintenance of the *criollo* race of cattle is then, relationally speaking, more in line with accepting what nature

innately produces. As Alfredo de Herrera states: “negar las ventajas del cruzamiento de la raza criolla con la Durham...es negar el progreso y hacer daño á la hasta ahora principal industria del país” (69). That the crossbreeding of cattle is an attempt to progress technologically and economically is doubtless. Araújo expresses this sentiment in the following: “...los estancieros están convencidos de que sólo el refinamiento de sus haciendas los pondrá en condiciones de obtener mayores ventajas y de luchar en los mercados extranjeros con productos similares de otros países” (165). The desire of the *estancieros* to remain relevant in foreign markets drives them to embrace practices like the mixing of livestock breeds with the goal of perfecting a breed of cattle.

Neither were horses not exposed to the scientific process of crossbreeding. L. Rodríguez Diez explains how land has become more expensive and that this creates a difficulty in the maintenance of a stable of horses on a ranch.<sup>27</sup> He remarks that the lack of horses in general in the countryside diminishes their strength as a breed. He refers to the *criollo* breeds of horse, stating: “El caballo criollo ha perdido su fogosidad, alzada y vigor; cualidades que lo eran reconocidas” (1). This loss of prominence in livestock couldn’t be tolerated by those who lived off of the strength and reputation of their livestock. Rodríguez Diez makes it clear in the following: “[I]a agricultura, el movimiento de tranvías, de diligencias y del carroteo, exigen caballos robustos y de fuerza” (1). Just like cattle, horses were needed to be economically viable, and crossbreeding was one of the possibilities open to *estancieros*.

In addition to the crossbreeding of cattle, Sabani Leguizamón cites the fencing of the countryside as another transformation that took place in rural Uruguay of this time.

*Alambramiento*, as it is called, was important to the countryside because it changed how agricultural business was conducted and created a standard to which rural businessmen and workers had to conform. The *Código Rural* was central in the implementation of fences in the countryside. An anonymous news article reproduces article 313 of the *Código*: “El vecino que intente cercar o zanjear solicitará previamente permiso de la Municipalidad o Comisión Auxiliar, por si esta tuviese alguna razón especial para oponerse al cerramiento, bajo multa de seis pesos por cuadra lineal ó sean 85 m. 90 cts.” (241).<sup>28</sup> The imposition of a requirement for permission to build a fence runs parallel in many ways to modernization. Whereas, before the *Código Rural*, fencing was up to the discretion of the person building the fence, it now depended also on an outside power to approve such action. With the *Código Rural* the natural world was submitted to the more modern, urban ideas of permission and governmental approval that took away some of the wildness of the rural landscape.

While fencing controlled livestock and revolutionized the raising of livestock, infectious disease was another topic that concerned ranchers. Articles like “Enfermedades contagiosas en los ganados del Salto,” by Domingo Ordoñana, the president of the association, use specialized, scientific language to describe how disease can spread among livestock. Articles like “Cómo deben preservarse á las ovejas de los abrojos” work toward the cause of eliminating these diseases (Beybeder 387). Another disease common in sheep was the *lombriz*. It is described in an anonymous news article as a pest that leaves its eggs in water especially water that is “fangosa, borrosa y en mal estado” (“Las lombrices en las ovejas” 1)<sup>29</sup>. Standing water that is not consistently maintained acts as

another source of plague. An anonymous article from the same newspaper describes the damage that the *lombriz* can wreak upon the sheep population of Uruguay. The article states that of the 26,286,298 sheep in the country, eight to ten million are lost every year to this plague. Fortunately for livestock owners, scientists have developed a vaccine that would decrease the amount of infected animals. An anonymous news article explains vaccination of livestock specifically and in detail (“La vacuna polivalente contra la Tristeza” 1)<sup>30</sup>. In addition to safeguarding livestock from “Tristeza,” ranchers also looked to evade the damage that naturally occurring diseases like *abrojos* and *lombrices* could release upon their livestock. These diseases are another demonstration of how nature continually works to undermine the civilizing processes of humans.

A final note on livestock in Uruguay has to do with how wool was processed. Murray reports the following: “[t]he wool of this country, when exported, contains a heavy per-centage of grease and dirt, which has to be washed out when it comes to Europe. In Australia, they wash the wool, which increases its value. But the scarcity of labourers here renders this too expensive” (Murray 184). The process, then, of washing wool can be seen as allied with the effort to modernize and civilize. Wool does not wash itself naturally, so the process of washing it is an act against the natural order of things. Such an act requires human labor, which was lacking in Uruguay. Barrán and Nahum remark on the scarcity of laborers: “Efecto secundario de la guerra civil, pero que trabó la labor ganadera en 1896 y 1897, fue la escasez de mano de obra que sintieron los hacendados” (4: 99). The *hacendados* depended on labor to realize their projects of

domination of the natural world. Without it, nature would triumph and a “barbaric” sensibility would supposedly return.

### **The Meat Industry**

Human innovation also dominated the world of meat exportation in Uruguay. The *saladero* was one of the great inventions of the meat industry of the nineteenth century:

[El saladero] [f]ue la única industria importante que tuvimos en el siglo XIX, la única ‘fábrica’: convirtió la carne en tasajo, saló el cuero, aprovechó la grasa, los huesos, la sangre, el estiércol. Todo en medio de un primitivismo tecnológico donde predominaba el cuchillo y la destreza personal, y cuya única excepción eran los digeridores de grasa accionados por máquinas a vapor. Fue, por tanto, mitad fábrica y mitad estancia, así como sus trabajadores mitad obreros y mitad peones. Fue, finalmente, la respuesta más racional que el medio pudo ofrecer al mercado exterior que requería nuestros productos. (Barrán Historia rural 3: 307)

The capability of the *saladero* to utilize every part of the animal was the key to its success. However, its technological primitivism left room for improvement. One attempt to improve upon the *saladero* was the use of boric acid to conserve meat: “[E]l preservativo se introduce en el animal todavía vivo, y por medio del corazón es enviado á través de los vasos sanguíneos á todas las partes del cuerpo del animal” (“Conservación de las carnes” 19). The boric acid technology used nature to accomplish its purpose in the sense that it depended on the heart of the living animal to distribute the chemical to every part of the body.

The advent of *frigoríficos* transformed the industry and, logically, initiated a crisis in the meat-drying industry (Barrán Historia rural 4: 240). The *saladero* technology that had reigned during the nineteenth century made way for the more modern capability to preserve meat at cool temperatures for long periods of time (long enough to cross an ocean, for example). Barrán and Nahum explain the facility with which the *frigorífico*

took over: “Sobre ese telón de fondo se colocaba el número de mestizos que los hacendados producían y que por razones de costo, el frigorífico podía abonar y el saladero no” (4: 241). The lower cost of the *frigorífico*, in addition to its ease of operation, helped the new technology to triumph, in 1903, according to Kleinpenning (166).

Evidence that the *frigorífico* industry was advancing can be observed in an anonymous editorial article about the transportation of refrigerated meat by boat. The technology continued to progress until, as Kleinpenning observes: “There were sufficient frigoríficos at the end of the 1920s to process all the beef, cattle and sheep. With the exception of Liebig’s plant, they were all situated near the port of Montevideo, which, thanks to the construction of roads and railways at that time, had become accessible from the interior” (167). The Uruguayan meat industry, then, depended not only on *frigorífico* technology, but also on roads and railways to transport the product from the interior to the ports for export. An anonymous news article explains the sum total of the exportation of meat to Great Britain not only in South American terms, but also taking into consideration Australia and New Zealand: “Dice el informe que durante el año 1913 se importaron á Londres las siguientes cantidades: De un total de 8,329,114 reses de carnero congelados, 2,381,357 se exportaron de Australia, 5,092,094 de Nueva Zelandia y 865,703 de Sud América, cantidad nunca superada hasta ahora...” (“Exportación de carnes a Inglaterra—Resultados de una investigación profiláctica” 3).<sup>31</sup> Progress, measured in numbers, came to be apparent in the sheer quantity of exports achieved by the South American and, by extension, Uruguayan meat industries.



The success of rural industry, however, also depended upon dairy products. As an anonymous news article observes:

En la evolución de la leche el procedimiento natural es primero la crema y luego el de la mantequilla. Pero el hombre, demostrando casi siempre deseos de apartarse de la rutina de la Naturaleza, ha invertido este orden y ahora él convierte la mantequilla en crema. Y con este procedimiento, si damos fe a lo que se dice, él ha llegado a producir una crema mejor y mucho más agradable al paladar.<sup>32</sup> (“Cremas y mantecas—Manipulación de la leche” 10)

Much thought and experimentation went into the production of, in this example, cream and butter. The fact that the article mentions the way that humans depart from the natural order shows that society of that time was aware of the conflict between humans and nature, even if it was not conscious of the damage that this battle would eventually cause to the natural environment.

### **Agriculture**

“Cultivar el suelo es servir la patria” reads the 1915 slogan of the magazine El estanciero. Indeed, modern agriculture was involved, like other contemporary industries, in the idea of national progress. While not as prolific an industry as that of livestock in Uruguay, agriculture contributed to the national economy in a significant way. According to an anonymous book review, agriculture in Uruguay “ha sido y es entre todas las industrias, la que mejor base presenta para el progreso de un país nuevo como el nuestro...” (“Un libro importante” 46-47). Although it was less prolific than the aforementioned raising of livestock, agriculture received equal amounts of attention from the press. The idea that agriculture could bring progress to a nation was a particularly important topic during that period, lauded by one newspaper as “una nueva época de progreso, más positivo, más real que el progreso pronunciado el 88 y 89 por las

iniciativas del financista Reus” (“Nuestra agricultura” 1). Apparently, agriculture could be counted on to a greater degree than economic speculation to provide progress to Uruguay.

Much of the success of the agricultural sector depended on the farmer himself and a government that, to a certain extent, supported him. As an anonymous editorial article expresses: “La profesión de agricultor ha sido considerada, durante largo tiempo, como patrimonio reservado para las inteligencias medias, por no decir mediocres, teníase por carrera que no exigía preparación alguna científica, ni vocación bien definida” (“Cómo se llega á ser agricultor” 7). The article, then, is being written to defend the importance for the farmer of a background in science, yet another demonstration of the positivistic link between agricultural progress and science. An anonymous editorial article describes the ascent of agriculture to a new level of importance: “rústica primero, y la científica y perfeccionada después” (“La viña y el olivo en el Estado Oriental” 1).<sup>33</sup> Thus, agriculture develops according to the same pattern as the one described by Barrán in Historia de la sensibilidad en el Uruguay: an initial period of “barbarity” is eventually replaced by a more “civilized” period. In support of this theory, Kleinpenning observes that many improvements to crop farming were made in the 1860s and 70s and that they continued to at least 1915 (193). The government supported such agricultural advances with laws that made it beneficial to farm (although government activity was minimal when compared to nations like Argentina, Paraguay, Chile, Brasil) (Kleinpenning 193).

In general terms, the Uruguay of this period can be divided into three geographical areas according to the type of agriculture practiced. The southern part of

Uruguay consisted of *chacras* (small farms) and *tambos* (dairy farms). To the southwest and west, along the banks of the Río Uruguay, lay the best soil, especially for cultivation of sheep. The novel El terruño, by Carlos Reyles, takes place in this agricultural zone. The third area falls to the north of the Río Negro, along the border with Brazil. Around the turn of the twentieth century, this area was the most economically disparate area of Uruguay, with powerful *latifundistas* ruling over the peasants who worked for them. Such inequity was the cause of revolutions led by the *caudillo* Aparicio Saravia (Bustamante).

Nevertheless, agriculture in Uruguay was more limited than in the other surrounding countries mentioned above. According to Kleinpenning, farming colonies existed mainly in the South and Southwest (216). He continues by observing the following: “no more than about 28 per cent of the economically active population was employed in agriculture in 1908” (Kleinpenning 217). While a minority of the Uruguayan population practiced agriculture, it was still a significant portion of the national workforce as a whole. Agriculture experienced its greatest surge in development during the first decade of the new century. Under Batlle y Ordóñez agriculture grew 82% from 1903 to 1908 and 12% from 1908 to 1914. Again, while agriculture was not the most prominent of industries in Uruguay, it held enough sway to affect and be affected by the national development that took place in that first decade: “...por estos años el Uruguay fue un país en expansión y también la agricultura fue arrastrada hacia un mayor desarrollo” (Barrán Historia rural 7: 10). The development of Uruguay’s primary industry had a definite impact on agriculture, as well: “El desarrollo de una ganadería mejorada con la cría de puros y mestizos también incidió sobre la expansión agrícola a requererle

mayores cantidades de forrajes” (Barrán Historia rural 7: 11). The interplay between livestock and agriculture was beneficial for the developing nation as a whole.

An anonymous news article details the construction of silos to preserve wheat, a technology that came from the United States and Western Europe (“Un gran progreso agrícola” 87-89)<sup>34</sup>. We can observe, once again, that foreign influence was crucial to the expansion of rural technology within Uruguay. Other articles suggest a similar dependence on science for the advancement of agriculture. Significantly, nature is called, by one anonymous journalistic observer: “el laboratorio de la naturaleza” (“Cómo se llega á ser agricultor” 7). Experiments that took place in such a “laboratory” were exposed in article titles like: “La influencia del calor sobre las plantas” (367-70), about how to better preserve crops during the hot months of the year; and “Progresos de la mecánica industrial: Dos poderosos auxiliares del moderno agricultor” (3), about the advantages of using mills and seed-sorters. The advantages that the mindful farmer can reap from scientifically observing the countryside multiply when the amount of progress that can be gained from reading newspapers and magazines is taken into consideration as well. Newspapers in particular strove to keep the public informed about the latest agricultural developments, not only in terms of technology, but also concerning movements of the natural world. An anonymous editorial article describes: “No pueden ser más desconsoladoras las noticias que se reciben de distintos puntos del departamento de la Colonia, respecto á la gran sequía que van experimentando la mayoría de los campos” (“El estado de los campos” 5). Informing the public about the state of the rural environment was a job that various Uruguayan periodicals of the time assumed.

Not only the newspapers, but also the government was conversant with the latest developments. We can see traces of the government's involvement in the way that it banned exportation of wheat and flour as well as made the process of *emparve* obligatory among farmers. An anonymous news article explains: "el abrigo de la simpática bandera proteccionista de nuestras industrias agrarias y anexas, suele cobijarse el interés ilícito, el afán inmoderado de ganancias de los acaparadores y exportadores, que hacen del trigo un juego de Bolsa, y para quienes el hambre del pueblo resulta un elemento explotable en provecho propio" ("El trigo y la harina: exportación prohibida" 1). Regarding the production of grains, the government acted in the nation's best interest, especially considering the plight of the rural workers who faced hunger at the expense of market capitalism.

*Emparve*, a beneficial process in the world of agriculture at that time, is a process through which the damage of humidity is removed from crops. The same article describes other benefits as well:

El emparve sazona el grano, dándole su madurez completa, y completa su color y brillantez externa que es el signo de esa madurez, pero él cumple, particularmente, una misión mucho más importante, y es la de garantizar al labrador contra todas las contingencias del tiempo, estando asegurado que una vez emparvado el trigo no sufrirá ninguna alteración desfavorable en sus condiciones intrínsecas, ni en su valor comercial, dentro de las condiciones generales del mercado. ("El emparve de los trigos" 5)

In other words, the process of *emparve* appears to be highly beneficial not only for the crop, but also for the laborer. Perhaps for this reason, the government declared *emparve* obligatory ("El emparve de los trigos--opiniones favorables" 4).

Other diseases affected crops as well; *langosta* (locusts) was one of the most detrimental. *Langosta* was so destructive that there came to be an organization devoted to its extinction: la Comisión Central de Extinción de la Langosta (“La langosta—Reunión de la Comisión Central” 4). The commission was central enough to the project of eradicating the *langosta* that it appeared in newspapers like El día of 1909: “La langosta sigue su devastadora marcha por la República. Las comunicaciones últimamente recibidas por la Comisión Central dicen haber aparecido el acridio en Santa Lucía (departamento de Canelones), en la 11.a y 15.a secciones de Colonia y en Rivera” (“La langosta—Invasión a todo el país—Informaciones oficiales” 4). The efforts of the commission were echoed by those of the ARU, which published the following in its magazine:

La Asociación Rural del Uruguay busca también con marcado interés, explicaciones racionales de la aparición y termino de la plaga de langosta, las causas determinantes del estado alotrópico en la materia organizada, la acción de los fluidos impodiderados sobre la organización embrionaria y aun el estado patológico de los vegetales llamados á servir de alimento á la plaga... (Ordoñana 91)

The scientific language of the quotation supports the idea that organizations like the ARU and the Comisión Central de Extinción de la Langosta wielded science as a weapon against the destructive forces of nature, which included agricultural plagues. Other diseases that wheat farmers had to deal with on a regular basis were *caries*, *carbón*, and *pietín*, referred to as “enfermedades de origen vegetal” (“El trigo—sobre sus enfermedades” 11). The variety of diseases that could arise in crops is a testament to the complexity of the natural world, even when it is submitted to processes of modernization and improvement.

## Roads

The condition of the majority of highways at this time was poor in Uruguay. Barrán and Nahum state the following: “Las deficiencias de las vías de comunicación terrestre siguieron siendo en este período un pesado obstáculo para el desarrollo de la producción rural; más para la agrícola que para la ganadera” (7: 159). The fact that roads served as an “obstacle” is very telling for the physical condition they must have been in. That the deficiency in roads affected more agriculture than livestock shows that agriculture required greater use of roads within the country. The dilapidated state of the roads in Uruguay continues to be underlined by Barrán and Nahum. They express how the dirt roads could not support the weight of the vehicles that were being sent from farms to railroad stations:

Si el alargamiento de las distancias a recorrer ya era un inconveniente grave, había que sumarle otro no menos desalentador: el pésimo estado de los caminos. Los únicos medios de conducción a las estaciones ferroviarias eran las pesadas carreteras de cuatro ruedas que podían cargar hasta 2 y 3.000 kilos. Pero ese peso, sobre caminos de tierra, los destrozaba en forma constante, no alcanzando los recursos municipales para proveer a su permanente reparación. (7: 162)

The lack of funds, also, prevented roads from being improved, showing that modernization sometimes could not find a way into the lives of Uruguayan people because of a lack of economic resources.

An anonymous editorial article calls for important city streets to lose their provincial character and be paved with more city-like materials:

Y esta es la hora en que todavía esperamos que nuestras principales avenidas, como 18 de Julio y nuestras principales vías de tránsito y de paseo, como 25 de Mayo, Sarandí, etc., pierdan su aspecto aldeano, de abandono y de desuso, con la sustitución, al menos en sus trayectos de tráfico mayor, del primitivo adoquín irregular que ostentan por el asfalto, la madera, el <<vulkanol>> ó cualquier otro

elemento similar, que no sea atrozmente ruidoso é intolerable, desde el punto de vista del confort y de la estética. (“El pavimento urbano” 1)

The inclusion of “asfalto” and “vulkanol” as possible paving materials shows that the writers of the article were interested in newly-developed chemicals. The desire to repave important Montevideo streets, as expressed in a daily newspaper of the city, shows that the drive to modernize had become entrenched in the public’s consciousness.

### **Electricity and Water**

It was mandated in 1903 for electricity to be installed in every house, even in the countryside (“El impuesto de alumbrado” 1). The imposition of electricity upon everyone shows the value that was placed on modernization and the desire to modernize. The use of electricity within the city became even more widespread as electric tram lines crossed Montevideo, causing observant newspaper reporters to make comparisons with the city of Paris (“Los eléctricos en todas partes” 5). The dreams that many city planners had of modernizing Montevideo came from practices already in place in Europe.

Electricity, along with gasoline, permeated the nation in many forms, including gas lighting and, of course, electric power stations. “Wizard” gas lighting, which was to replace candles or kerosene lamps, was introduced (“El problema de la luz en la campaña—plenamente resuelto”). Not only small sources of power were the topic of newspapers’ observation, but also large sources like the electric power plant in Salto. Improvements made to this plant in 1909 were as follows: “Se colocará: un gran dinero Siemens-Schuckert con un poder de 250 caballos, además de los grandes dinamos de la misma fábrica colocados actualmente; una batería de acumuladores sistema <<Tudor>> de un poder de 3000 amper-horas, compuesta de 140 elementos” (“Reforma de la usina



eléctrica del Salto” 4). The complexity and power of this description of improvements made to a power plant illustrates the complexity and power of modernization in Uruguay.

Equipment to conduct water through the city was in development during this period of heavy modernization. As an anonymous news article reported: “El señor Intendente de la capital en el interesantísimo reportaje que publicamos el día mismo de su llegada de Inglaterra anunció que una de sus primeras preocupaciones sería la provisión abundante de agua para el municipio” (“El problema del agua” 1). The goal of providing water to the entire city was a priority for the mayor. The article mentions that he has just returned from England, showing, again, the role that industrialized foreign nations played in motivating modernization efforts.

### **Communications Technology**

Telephone and telegraph innovations were not foreign to Uruguay. As Araújo claims in 1913: “Ningún país sudamericano dispone de una red telegráfica tan completa como el Uruguay...” (269). National pride was a key element of Uruguay’s embrace of the latest industrial technology. Sometimes the installation of this technology came in tandem. As Kleinpenning explains: “The majority of the telegraph lines were installed at the same time as the railways, so that the second telegraph link was laid at the same time as the building of the first section of the *Ferrocarril Central del Uruguay* from Bella Vista to Las Piedras” (282). The unity of telegraph and railway lines shows how sometimes modernization projects can be installed simultaneously, contributing to the advancement of technology of a nation. Technology, however, was also installed in

segments greater than just one nation could support. Murray claims, for example, that telegraph lines will soon reach across the Pacific and across South America, as well.

### **Other Technologies**

Less quotidian aspects of modernization included forms of transportation like gyroscopic automobiles and planes. As an anonymous news article explains: “El giróscopo, libre de tomar movimientos de precisión, no solo ejerce el efecto de un estabilizador, sino que impide las oscilaciones según la voluntad del conductor” (“Los autos giroscópicos—Un ideal de economía” 6). The precision and economy of the gyroscopic automobile, however, soon lost its appeal and, as the article describes: “pasaba al limbo de las cosas abandonadas” (“Los autos giroscópicos—Un ideal de economía” 6).

Airplanes and space shuttles were not so readily abandoned. Uruguayan innovators directed their attention abroad, to France, and its aeronautical innovations: “Con la actividad extraordinaria que siempre han demostrado los franceses cuando se trata de improvisar ciudades efímeras de Exposición Universal o de fiesta nacional, un verdadero modelo de metrópoli futura para aeronautas, ha surgido en el espacio de tres meses en los alrededores de París entre Juvis y Lavigny, en la línea del Sud Expresso” (Wisky 6). Reports like this and the one above show that modernization was taking place not only in the field of everyday technology, but also in areas a little more distanced from the daily norm.

Humans, in their fervor to obtain the latest technology, also realize that they need natural spaces to inhabit, like parks in a city. This co-permeation of urban and rural is taken up by Aldo Solari, when he writes:

En los últimos veinte años [1948-68] muchas objeciones se han levantado contra la concepción dicotómica [de lo urbano y lo rural]. Todas ellas parten de una idea que, aunque no estaba ausente de los autores que crearon la distinción clásica, no adquiriría en éstos el relieve que sus críticos consideran legítimo; parten, en el fondo, de la observación de que entre el medio rural y el medio urbano existe una gradación infinita. En otras palabras, estamos frente a un continuo. Desde la habitación rural aislada hasta la gran ciudad, existen una multitud de escalones intermedios que van creando una transición insensible entre el medio rural propiamente dicho y el medio urbano. (23)

The two environments, then, can sometimes inhabit the same space, but the need for a distinction between urban and rural still exists.

In 1891 the city of Paysandú attempted to install *plátano* trees near the city center. According to an anonymous news article, certain difficulties arose right away, like the difficulty of incorporating something wild in an urban space, of watering the plants, and of arranging enough space for the trees' roots to completely expand as they grew. The article stresses these difficulties as follows:

[E]sos plátanos que tan lozanos se desarrollan y tan benéficamente protegen co [sic] su sombra y saludables condiciones al hombre, morirán envenados o faltos de agua, o si viven será vegetando raquílica y mezquinamente, y en tal caso los habitantes de Paysandú jamás llegarán a admirar en su recinto árboles de talla gigantesca, robusto tronco y tupida y extensa sombra, como admiran extasiados los que hayan visitado alguna gran ciudad europea, formando colosales bóvedas de verdura en muchas de sus avenidas y paseos. (“Los plátanos de la calle 18 de Julio” 1)

The fact that the trees could not survive in the city shows that urban and rural cannot completely intermingle as theorized. In this case the urban environment drowned out the attempt to install an element from the rural countryside. Perhaps, as technology

improved, this type of substitution became more possible and an intermingling of urban and rural would become possible as it is in the present day.

### **Previous Scholarship**

Scholars of Latin American literature have offered valuable but limited attention to the natural world in Uruguayan fiction of this period. Anderson Imbert contributes perhaps most comprehensively to this discussion because he remarks upon all three authors in question. He expresses the centrality of the gaucho in Uruguay's national formation when he states how Acevedo Díaz's work is "romántica en la exaltación heroica, mítica, de la formación gaucha de su país" (179). By acknowledging one of Acevedo Díaz's primary narrative styles (Romanticism), Anderson Imbert emphasizes the importance of the gaucho in that work. His observations on Viana's contributions to the discussion of the natural world, however, are limited to a single-word reference to Viana's chosen topic and style: "regionalista" (246). As brief as this observation may be, it shows how Anderson Imbert is aware of the important dialogue between literature and the environment. With respect to Reyles, he shows his awareness of the importance of the natural world by remarking: "la realidad que noveló con más firmeza fué la del campo uruguayo" (246). In this way we see that Reyles' central reality, like those of Acevedo Díaz and Viana as well, was the Uruguayan rural countryside.

In addition, Anderson Imbert discusses several other Uruguayan authors of the time. He remarks briefly on Juan Zorrilla de San Martín, Horacio Quiroga, Delmira Agustini, and Juana Ibarbourou's dedication to the natural environment. He observes that the *mestizaje* of the main character of Zorrilla de San Martín's epic poem *Tabaré* (1888):

“Tabaré [el personaje principal], pues, aparece en el filo de dos creaciones: la raza charrúa, que es naturaleza, y la raza española, que es espíritu” (194). In this sense, Tabaré embodies the racial blending of colony and colonizer.

Anderson Imbert briefly essays Horacio Quiroga, Delmira Agustini, and Juana de Ibarbourou’s devotion to the natural world—some more intensely than others. About Quiroga he states: “Y este hombre Quiroga, para quien la naturaleza era un tema literario, no tenía nada de primitivo. Era autor de compleja espiritualidad, refinado en su cultura, con una mórbida organización nerviosa” (243). Anderson Imbert, then, associates the natural world with primitivism in his critique of Quiroga and his work. As cited in the above paragraph, Anderson Imbert opposes nature/materiality with culture/spirituality. As a result he neglects the possible existence of spirituality in nature and materiality in culture. His ignorance of this important possibility in environmental literary discourse can be attributed to the fact that he lived before the environmental crisis became a popular topic of discussion. Furthermore, this ignorance can perhaps also be seen in his assessment of Agustini, about whom he states: “Delmira Agustini fue así, como una orquídea, húmeda y caliente” (270). Rather than address the natural world in her poetry, he, in a moment of his own poetic embellishment, uses a metaphor taken from the natural world. His comparison of the poet to a flower evokes the natural world, although it does not claim that represented nature exists in her poetry; while flowers and sexuality can be construed as environmental topics, this does not necessarily mean that critics of Latin American literature like Anderson Imbert perceive nature in Agustini’s highly sexual poems. About one of Agustini’s successors, Juana de Ibarbourou, Anderson Imbert

relates that critics associate her and her work with “imágenes de lo vegetal y lo animal en el goce de existir” (270). Unfortunately, he does not further discuss the role of these elements of nature in Ibarbourou’s poetry.

A more diverse approach to the three authors featured in this dissertation is taken up by William H. Katra.<sup>35</sup> Regarding Reyles and Viana, he observes that their writings express “the disdain for what they perceived as the lazy, indolent, often violent gaucho farmhands” (537). These two authors’ aristocratic upbringings cause them to see, in Katra’s estimation, the negative qualities of gaucho life. A further observation that Katra makes regarding Viana is the following: “[h]is claustrophobic determinism shrouded them in brutal instincts and offensive vices” (537). Katra continues by calling the two writers’ works “racist” in terms of their depiction of the gaucho farmhands so important to rural life in Uruguay (537). Katra makes a similar observation in reference to Tabaré when he states: “Zorrilla’s aesthetic cultivation of the exotic Tabaré...could only have been written in a land where the natives had already disappeared” (536). This observation shows that literature from this period that deals with the natural world can be racial in that Zorrilla de San Martín would not have produced the same text had he been able to connect with and experience the Native Uruguayans who were gruesomely eliminated from the country by General Fructuoso Rivera and others.

Although, like Katra, she does not remark on the natural world in the work of Acevedo Díaz, Jean Franco proposes a similar critique of Viana and Reyles when she states:

The stories of the Uruguayan Javier de Viana and of his compatriot Carlos Reyles (1868-1938) had explicit moral and national messages about the value of honest

labour on the land as a means of national regeneration. Paternalistic education of country people was expected to raise the general level of the country.<sup>36</sup> (182-83)

Franco suggests that Viana and Reyles' aristocratic upbringings gave them the perspective they needed in order to see the economic advantage that education of country people would bring to Uruguay. Her assessment of this education as "paternalistic" shows that it is meant to keep landowners in control, with their peons (former gauchos) subordinate to them. Indeed, the manner in which Franco treats the rural question in Reyles is through economic and power relations, for example, when she explains that El terruño's ideological basis is that the good landowner is foundational for the Uruguayan state.

Adding to the discussion on Reyles' materialism is John Brushwood, who observes that, for Reyles: "The goal of living is the accumulation of power and money" (11).<sup>37</sup> Brushwood limits his observations on Uruguayan literature to the description of how a continuum develops between Romanticism and Naturalism through which Spanish-American novels of this period traveled.<sup>38</sup>

About the three authors featured here, Franco does not mention further their commitment to representing the natural world. However, she does address the natural environment in the work of Horacio Quiroga (along with regionalists José Eustacio Rivera, Ricardo Güiraldes, and Rómulo Gallegos). She observes, claiming Quiroga as her prime example (together with Rivera), that a "realisation of the hostility of the environment and the fragility of the civilised fringe was an important stage of Spanish American consciousness" (149). Indeed, Quiroga's consciousness was influenced greatly by the environment in which he lived. The jungles of Misiones province in northeastern

Argentina serve as a backdrop for many of his stories. Franco observes the following: “tropical conditions provide the background for two of his favourite themes—the demonstration of man’s true worth in the face of natural hazards and the incalculability of natural forces which made it difficult for human reason or will to prevail” (152).

Uruguayan critic Alberto Zum Felde also contributes limited observations on the matter of the natural world. He does mention the importance of gauchos in the writings of Acevedo Díaz, Reyles, and Viana but does not remark on the significance of the natural world itself.<sup>39</sup> He mentions briefly that Ismael Velarde “da el carácter y el sentido de su raza, de su ambiente, de su época” (175-76).<sup>40</sup> In this way he recognizes, like other critics, the centrality of the gaucho in the Uruguayan struggle for independence. Furthermore, although he dedicates a chapter to every important Uruguayan literary contributor of this period, he neglects to mention the importance of the natural world in these literary examples.

Zum Felde addresses more steadily the topic of the natural world in his book on Spanish American narrative. He remarks: “Faltando en la literatura uruguaya, como en otras de las nacionales americanas, el gran poema épico representativo de la gesta emancipadora y del ciclo guerrero-gauchesco de su historia, la novela de Acevedo Díaz viene a cumplir en cierto modo esa función” (59).<sup>41</sup> In this way, Ismael complies with the idea that every nation should have a work of art that can be considered “epic” for that nation. Zum Felde shifts his focus to Viana and draws a contrast: “La visión de ese campo se ha transformado totalmente [en las obras de Viana]; el gaucho miserable que aquí aparece no es ni la sombra del que nos da Ismael” (122-23).<sup>42</sup> That the notion that



the gauchos of Acevedo Díaz's and Viana's works serve different purposes reveals Zum Felde's awareness of the variety of gaucho life represented in Uruguayan literature of this time. He continues to draw this contrast when he says: "El gaucho de Acevedo Díaz es un tipo retrospectivo, el de la primera mitad del XIX" (123).<sup>43</sup> Acevedo Díaz's version of the gaucho comes from a time when gauchos were still abundant in the Uruguayan countryside; landowners' pieces of land had not yet been fenced off and gauchos had not yet been forced to serve landowners on a particular piece of land, or *pago*.

Zum Felde's assessment of Reyles reveals a perspective significantly different than the one proposed in this dissertation. He states that Reyles' work is "la gran excepción al predominio de la temática campera en la narrativa uruguaya..." (126). In spite of this statement, Zum Felde acknowledges first that Beba (Reyles' first novel) is most closely linked with the rural environment. He then continues to explain how El terruño also expresses a predilection for rural settings. He states: "En 1916 reanuda el tema rural con su nueva novela El terruño, título que expresa su vuelta a la tierra, diosa literaria suprema de esta América..." (129). Thus, although Zum Felde seems to claim that Reyles was not concerned with representing the natural world in his novels, he ends up demonstrating that the natural world plays an important role in this author's works. He then draws a parallel between the two Reyles novels studied in this dissertation, claiming the following: "La tesis de La raza de Caín, tesis irreal, como decíamos, a pesar del realismo teórico del autor, se repite quince años después en El terruño" (130). He then explains that the particular theme that the two works share can be described as "términos antagónicos" (130). He means that there is one set of bipolar opposites in each novel. In

La raza de Caín, we observe idealistic and dreamy Cacio being dominated by practically-minded Arturo Crooker and in El terruño, we see that idealistic and dreamy Tocles is subordinated by practically-minded Mamagela.

John Garganigo's book, Javier de Viana, provides a further example of commentary regarding the natural world in Uruguayan fiction of this period. However, other than a reference to how Gaucha represents the disappearance of the gaucho and his conversion into a peon, this treatment of Javier de Viana and his writing is limited in its attention to the natural world.

Given that criticism regarding the natural world in Uruguayan fiction from the turn of the twentieth century is limited, this dissertation is the first in-depth, book-length study of Uruguayan fiction of this period (1888-1916) using an ecocritical approach.

## **Chapter II: The Pastoral Vision in Ismael, by Eduardo Acevedo Díaz**

Pastoral ideology is a conception of nature that idealizes it to the point of seeing it as pure, pristine, and perfect, ignoring any natural blemishes in the landscape as well as ignoring the influence of modernization. This idealization of nature promises endless bounty, free of technological contamination. It lies at the heart of most arguments for the preservation of nature in that, because of its immaculate state, nature must be proportioned and cordoned off in order to conserve its immaculate essence. Most instances of ecological action are based on the idea that nature should serve as a refuge, a womb or symbolic Eden from which troubles of daily life are temporarily avoided. The pastoral vision has even more negative connotations as expressed in Ismael (1888).

Pastoral ideology has been at the forefront of environmental thought in literature for as long as literature has existed. Lawrence Buell contextualizes this statement when he states: “Insofar as some form of pastoralism is part of the conceptual apparatus of all persons with western educations interested in leading more nature-sensitive lives, it is expected that pastoralism will be part of the unavoidable ground-condition of most of those who read this book” (32). By defining the pastoral within Western tradition, Buell refers specifically to examples from Greco-Roman times that depicted an ideal countryside in which shepherds were at peace with their animals and the surrounding environment. In classical literature, this pristine countryside comes into conflict with urban corruption and contamination.

Buell’s theory of “New World Pastoral” derives from the idea that the New World, seen from European eyes, was a pristine setting, devoid of all signs of civilization

or urban development. Leo Marx describes it in terms of the United States: “Inevitably the European mind was dazzled by the prospect. With an unspoiled hemisphere in view it seemed that mankind might actually realize what had been thought a poetic fantasy” (3). The prospect of an entirely new world replete with natural resources incited the European mind to imagine and idealize.

Eduardo Galeano gives an example of the type of mental projection that took place among European thinkers about the bounties of the New World:

El abogado Antonio de León Pinelo dedicó dos tomos enteros a demostrar que el Edén estaba en América. En El Paraíso en el Nuevo Mundo (Madrid, 1656), incluyó un mapa de América del Sur en el que puede verse, al centro, el jardín del Edén regado por el Amazonas, el Río de la Plata, el Orinoco y el Magdalena. El fruto prohibido era el plátano. El mapa indicaba el lugar exacto donde había partido el Arca de Noé, cuando el Diluvio Universal.<sup>44</sup>

This confluence of Bible mythology and the Americas shows that pastoral ideology was widespread. However, this power never manifests itself in a way that leads to any real material result. British scholar Raymond Williams adds, speaking of the afterlife instead of Eden, that projections of the type mentioned above never come to fruition:

In all recorded literature there had been the land after death: a paradise or a hell. In the centuries of exploration and voyaging, new societies were discovered, for promise or for warning, in new lands: often islands: often the happy island, itself a shaping element in the myth. But within metropolitan experience these models, though widely drawn on, were eventually transformed. Man did not go to his destiny, or discover the fortunate place; he saw, in pride or error, his own capacity for collective transformation of himself and of his world (272).

These projections never come to fruition because of “metropolitan experience,” that is, man’s desire to civilize raw wilderness.

While pastoral ideology indeed fostered many wild and ill-founded projections of lands that had never been seen by Europeans, Buell argues that there was also a practical

element to pastoral thinking: "...and [the Renaissance] thereby helped ensure a future interplay between projected fantasy and responsiveness to actual environments in which pastoral thinking both energized environmental perception and organized that energy into schemas" (54). Once the Americas began to be discovered, certain myths about their alleged bounty came to be either discredited or proven to be more or less true: Latin America during the colonial period became a great source of wealth in terms of natural resources. The pastoral vision of the New World motivated efforts to colonize, which brought about the development of cities built on the European model. The pastoral, thus, is also highly useful for a discussion surrounding conflicts between civilization and barbarity. In this sense pastoral nature comes into conflict with the industrial development that inevitably accompanies the building of cities and the modernization of the rural countryside.

Often these efforts to build cities on the European model destroyed as much as they created. Because Europeans saw the New World as a site for the expression of their cultural will, the idea of the pastoral justified the razing of structures that existed previously. As Galeano explains: "Hoy día, en el Zócalo, la inmensa plaza desnuda del centro de la capital de México, la catedral católica se alza sobre las ruinas del templo más importante de Tenochtitlán, y el palacio del gobierno está emplazado sobre la residencia de Cuauhtémoc, el jefe azteca ahorcado por Cortés" (37). The dream of an immaculate landscape upon which European powers could manifest their territoriality held strong even in the face of the reality that culture and civilization already existed in the Americas.

New World Pastoral not only destroyed, it also contaminated. As Alfred W. Crosby expresses: “It was their germs, not these imperialists themselves, for all their brutality and callousness, that were chiefly responsible for sweeping aside the indigenes and opening the Neo-Europes to demographic takeover” (196).<sup>45</sup> When seen from a microbial point of view, the idea of a pristine New World ready for exploitation makes little sense because these germs are always in the process of growth and decay; they are never static nor fixed. Galeano suggests that this contamination was not entirely undesirable for the foreign invaders: “Las bacterias y los virus fueron los aliados más eficaces. Los europeos traían consigo, como plagas bíblicas, la viruela y el tétanos, varias enfermedades pulmonares, intestinales y venéreas, el tracoma, el tifus, la lepra, la fiebre amarilla, las caries que pudrían las bocas” (35). Illnesses that the New World had never witnessed destroyed the native populations as readily as the leveling of Tenochtitlán, evoking the idea that, as Leo Marx states: “Today, looking back across the great gulf created by industrialism, we can easily see what was wrong with the pastoral theory of America. We say that it embodied a naïve and ultimately static view of history, and so it did” (114). Marx’s view leads to the speculation that pastoral thinking is not useful when it is part of a worldview that is more static and less dynamic.

A final example of the detrimental, sometimes even absurd, results that the pastoral ideal can wreak upon a society is evident in the focal text of this section, Ismael.

The narrator states:

[1]a única manifestación intelectual de aquel tiempo la constituía la Gaceta de Montevideo, periódico que salía por la imprenta enviada por la princesa Carlota, y que llevaba el escudo de armas de la ciudad al frontis, con las banderas británicas abatidas, con arreglo a la real cédula que le acordó ese

honor a mérito de su iniciativa en la reconquista de Buenos Aires, en cuya gloriosa acción fueron cogidos esos trofeos. (315-16)

The reference to the “reconquista” of Buenos Aires evokes confusion in the sense that the “reconquista” was an event that took place in Spain at the end of the medieval period, whereas Buenos Aires was a colonial holding of Spain. The confusion is typical of pastoral idealization: propaganda that is part of one national project (the Spanish reconquest) infiltrates the propaganda of a different project (New World colonialism). If pastoral ideology is based on a vision of pure, unblemished nature, this confusion of projects can lead to disastrous results when the object of pastoral vision is exploited. British scholar Raymond Williams clarifies the matter by placing all conflicts between civilization and barbarity under the category of “imperialism”: “What happened in England has since been happening ever more widely, in new dependent relationships between all industrialised nations and all the other ‘undeveloped’ but economically important lands. This one of the last models of ‘city and country’ is the system we know as imperialism” (279). Thus, the discourse of civilization and barbarity falls under the heading of colonialist and neo-colonialist discourse and can be seen in those terms.

Ismael is the first of Eduardo Acevedo Díaz’s tetralogy of historical novels about the foundation of Uruguayan independence. The other three novels are Nativa (1890), Grito de gloria (1893), Lanza y sable (1914). The plot centers around the Uruguayan quest for independence from Spain and culminates in the historic Batalla de Las Piedras (1811), where the Uruguayan nationals are victorious. Much of the action is taken up in the dynamics of competing political parties (Blanco and Colorado). The historical aspect of the novel is complemented by a love story between Ismael and Felisa, threatened by

Ismael's rival, Jorge Almagro, a Spanish landowner. This rivalry is highlighted by a knife fight between the two as they contend for Felisa's admiration. The action takes a decidedly unexpected turn when Almagro accidentally kills Felisa in a farm machinery accident. This unlucky mishap forms the rest of the novel's plot by instilling in Ismael a deep hatred not only for Almagro but also for the Spanish occupation of Uruguay, a hatred that has its redemption when Ismael kills his rival in battle near the end of the novel.

Through an analysis of the novel's plot, it becomes clear that history was not the only force behind its development. As Doris Sommer has demonstrated, fiction also played an important role in the forging of a national character in Latin America. The mix of history and fiction in these novels, a mix that has been remarked on by most, if not all, critics of these works, is a key characteristic. A basic example of this mixture can be seen in the presence of the fictional Ismael Velarde and the historical general José Gervasio Artigas. The mix of the two genres is due to Acevedo Díaz's enormous commitment to Uruguayan politics. As Arturo Lasplaces puts it: "Acevedo Díaz fué escritor... sólo cuando las circunstancias no le permitieron ser un político o un periodista" (13). Lasplaces is stating that fiction was less important to Acevedo Díaz than the communication of historical fact. Historical fact, however, wasn't enough for him, either. For this reason we find in these works a subtle integration of fact and fiction.

Acevedo Díaz's style of fiction was predominantly Romantic. La Unión, an important Buenos Aires newspaper of the time, eulogized: "[s]u sensibilidad era romántica; pero no vaya a creerse que era el suyo un romanticismo atrasado. Poseía el



sentimiento romántico de lo actual. No se trataba de ese romanticismo literario cuyo objeto es el pasado con formas de pasado y con sentimientos de pasado; era el sentimiento romántico de las cosas del momento, de las tragedias civiles y morales de su hora...” (Acevedo Díaz (H.) 6). Acevedo Díaz, then, was Romantic in his fiction and forward-thinking in his politics. This blending of attributes contributed to the formation of a Uruguayan national identity that Ismael strives to be.

As Carlos J. Alonso remarks, history “depends on modernity for its duration and renewal; but modernity cannot assert itself without being at once swallowed up and reintegrated into a regressive historical process” (18). The tug-of-war that is evident in Alonso’s vision of history also functions in Acevedo Díaz’s fiction, although Alonso’s vision appears to be more circular. In contrast, Acevedo Díaz and sources surrounding him draw a more linear, positivistic, ever-advancing projection in which progress is a central tenet. In Emir Rodríguez Monegal’s analysis, the present and the future are more important than the past, although the past is a crucial starting place: “...Acevedo Díaz busca desentrañar en el pasado los signos profundos del presente y aún del porvenir. Su visión histórica es pasión viva” (23). Rodríguez Monegal’s “pasión viva” could easily be called a “Romanticism of the present.” Whereas most Romanticisms rely on nostalgia for the past, the function of Acevedo Díaz’s Romanticism is to project a vision of the future, a molding of political realities of the present and future.

However, Ismael is not devoid of nostalgic references to the past. Ismael Velarde is a tough, virile gaucho who, with his fellow *matreros*, helps greatly in the project of national liberation. The help of gauchos in the fight for Uruguayan independence in the

early nineteenth century is indisputable, as evidences Rodríguez Monegal: “Pero Ismael es (para Acevedo Díaz) también un gaucho; es también un ejemplar de esa raza bravía que, oscuramente, ayudó a la liberación de la patria, a la creación de la nacionalidad” (30). However, their disappearance from the political milieu is also a fact of the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Edward Larocque Tinker relates that the world’s most famous piece of gaucho literature, Martín Fierro, is “the story of the last stand of a vanishing class” (25). The disappearance of the gaucho is also evident in Rama’s discussion of gaucho poetry, when he states that there are no examples of it from the twentieth century. With this disappearance comes a nostalgia of which Acevedo Díaz was very aware. In this sense, even the nostalgic reference to the gaucho of yore is a tool for the advancement of the Uruguayan political situation of Acevedo Díaz’s time.

Acevedo Díaz wasn’t a gaucho, and this fact only intensifies his use of a gaucho as his main character (Rodríguez Monegal 27). Socially speaking, Acevedo Díaz was much more like Luis María Berón, the protagonist of Nativa and Grito de gloria: “Luis María Berón representa el modelo ejemplar del patricio—y, en parte, del intelectual—; hijo de una familia que habita en Montevideo, realiza un viaje de aprendizaje: abandona la ciudad amurallada para experimentar los sinsabores de la vida en campaña como soldado y luego como matrero” (Basille 53). Interestingly enough, Luis María dies at the end of Grito de gloria, signaling Acevedo Díaz’s developing association with the victorious people of the countryside. However, Basille rightly attests that Luis María is an “alter ego” for Acevedo Díaz (57). In this way, Acevedo Díaz projects his personal

desire to be a gaucho upon his characters in a way that furthers Uruguayan patriotic sentiments.

The narrator of Ismael describes the type of people that Acevedo Díaz was embracing as he abandoned his urban, middle-class upbringing:

Los gauchos indolentes, desidiosos, de tez pálida y ensortijados cabellos, mirar hosco, delgados, esbeltos, que peleaban a cuchillo cuando se les rompía el astil de la lanza y no dejaban con vida al adversario en rabiosa lucha por el suelo, las tenían siempre detrás, para reemplazarlos en la brega, así que eran muertos o heridos, y salir ellas mismas con la piel desgarrada por el puñal o el sable, orgullosas de haber sentido las fuertes emociones del sangriento choque. (213)

The instinctive, emotional gaucho is a perfect fit for a Romantic narrative about the foundation of Uruguayan identity. By way of what Rama says about politics and the gaucho tradition, it is easy to understand why Acevedo Díaz was attracted to the gaucho way of life:

...la gauchesca es una poesía política y revolucionaria producto de la primera integración del creador con un público popular a cuyo conducción y al servicio de cuyos intereses sociales se entrega, ofreciéndole la primera imagen artísticamente válida de su quehacer histórico, o sea situándolo vivamente como el protagonista y promotor de la historia de su tierra. (47)

The gaucho tradition in literature, then, is political; it carries with it a political charge in that it desires revolution and, in the case of Ismael, independence. The desire for independence is at the center of the novel. Acevedo Díaz is not just a literary creator, he is also the forger of a national consciousness:

Acevedo Díaz se acerca a la novela con toda la fuerza de un creador pero movido por el mismo impulso que lo hizo dedicar su vida a la lucha política para desentrañar el significado de nuestra nacionalidad, para comunicar a todas sus compatriotas el sentido de nuestra tradición nacional, para contribuir a la formación de la conciencia de nuestra nacionalidad. (Rodríguez Monegal 64)

Acevedo Díaz dedicated himself to developing the way that people would think about their nation's founding, especially in terms of its character as a nation of *criollos* and *nativos*: “En esto el escritor se adelanta a un movimiento general en la novela contemporánea: la necesidad de nombrar como si fuera por primera vez el mundo americano” (Grudzińska 76). Acevedo Díaz is, in a sense, playing the role of Adam in the Garden of Eden, assigning names to a countryside that was previously untouched and unnamed. This process of assigning names to the natural environment evokes New World Pastoral. Buell asserts: “[New World Pastoral] seems to have more to do with reinvention of the non-European world as a mirror opposite of certain European norms” (68). Here Buell accounts for not only a European appropriation of pastoral nature, but also an appropriation that took place within the United States as it was becoming an independent nation. This statement seems especially true if we think of the mirror that is being held up to European norms as a distorted one, particularly since colonial realities in the New World were distinct from realities on the European continent).

However, Buell's mirror is not the only mirror that is distorted. As Francisco Butazzoni describes in his prologue to *Ismael*: “Hay quienes acusan a Acevedo Díaz, y no sólo a él, de no ser exactos en el relato de la historia nacional, de decir solamente una parte de la verdad, de crear mitos innecesarios y gratuitos” (9). Reflected in Acevedo Díaz's distorted mirror, these “mitos innecesarios y gratuitos” function to bolster Uruguayan national self-consciousness and to unite a memorable storyline with the facts of the struggle for Uruguayan independence.

Ismael is the first of four Acevedo Díaz novels to accomplish this objective. As such, the novel culminates in “la victoria artiguista en Las Piedras” (Basille 41). On the victorious side are Uruguayan nationals, known as “Orientales”: gauchos, *criollos*, and anyone fighting for freedom from Spain. This group of revolutionaries gathered under the Blanco party were also known as “la Banda Oriental.” All these details categorize Ismael as what Carlos Alonso calls a “regionalist” novel. His idea of “regionalist” novel includes three aspects: “spoken language, geographical location and a given human activity” (76). The Spanish language, the country of Uruguay, and the fight for independence give Ismael its character as a “regionalist” novel, according to Alonso’s qualifications. While at the time of the writing of Alonso’s book, the Latin American regionalist novel had exhausted itself, this was not so in Acevedo Díaz’s time (38).

As to “given human activity,” Teresa Basille goes into more depth in her article about the construction of nations in Acevedo Díaz. She separates the concept of “estado” from that of “nación.” “Estado,” for her, is the politics behind the creation of a nation, that is, the desire to be independent, while “nación” is the imaginary contingent, the set of images that creates an identity (39-40). In her chronology, “estado” comes necessarily before “nación.” Adding to this set of concepts is Rama’s terminology concerning those who contributed to the “given human activity” of forging an independence. Those that participated in the emerging Uruguayan nationhood Rama calls “generación nacionalista” (Los gauchipolíticos 8). More specifically, he refers to an emergence, by way of modernization, of “una burguesía nacional industrializadora, los variados estratos de las clases medias y las reclamaciones del proletariado naciente” (7). Rama’s distinction

between “las clases medias” and “el proletariado” coincides with *criollos* and gauchos fighting together for freedom.

In addition to the synthesis of fiction and history in Acevedo Díaz’s novels, these novels also often cast the people as protagonist, although this characteristic emerges more consistently in the second and third novels, Nativa and Grito de gloria. The narrator of Ismael explains it best when he affirms:

El caudillaje, por lo mismo, no fue nunca otra cosa que un cautiverio de voluntades por la coerción decisiva de la audacia, de la intrepidez y del éxito, en la soledad de los campos, en medio de las tinieblas de la ignorancia y del error, lejos de la influencia eficaz de las autoridades, allí donde la libertad indómita tenía por vehículo al potro, por refugio el seno de los bosques, y por tipo genérico al primitivo gaucho de la leyenda heroica. (116)

The people are the protagonist because of the power of collective decision-making, even in the face of rural conditions like “solitude” and “ignorance” mentioned in the quotation. Furthermore, it appears that the narrator is trying to describe a unique kind of mob rule based on the nobility of the gaucho.

Another “group protagonist” that comes from the novels is nature. Arturo Lasplacas describes nature as just that, although in more recent times the idea that nature can be protagonist, even from an ecocritical standpoint, is outdated (28)<sup>46</sup>. Nature does, however, hold a prominent place in the cosmovision of the novel. Acevedo Díaz, in his letters to his wife, Concepción Cuevas, expresses the inspiration that he derives from experiences with nature. About his trip to Paraná he says: “El espectáculo que ofrecía la ribera derecha del magestuoso Paraná, obligaba á la contemplación, apesar de la lobreguez y humedad de la noche” (Galmés 23, original spelling). Later, he exclaims: “La naturaleza sola, sin artificio, hace saltar á chorros la savia de sus mamarías!” (Galmés 26-

27, original spelling). His experiences can be called “pastoral” because of the meanings that he projects upon nature. In the first quotation, he projects “majestad” upon the Paraná River and in the second he feminizes nature by giving it an imaginary feminine body.

Nature in Ismael, however, is not the same as nature itself. There is always a hint of human appropriation to every description of nature that appears in literary form, even if that description serves the purpose of environmental conservation or to public education.<sup>47</sup> This is true because writing and the construction of ideologies are human activities. Buell treats this as a necessary extension of pastoral ideology: “Having complicated the theory of pastoral ideology, we must now confront squarely a more fundamental problem posed by literary theory: its skepticism about how texts can purport to represent environments in the first place when, after all, a text is obviously one thing and the world another” (82). While they are indeed different things, they can work together toward human-centered goals, like war. In this way, nature is, just like writing about nature, subservient to human purposes. An example from the novel comes near the end, when the two sides are preparing to fight: “Presumíase que el día siguiente amanecería sereno, y que habría combate. Se ansiaba por el sol y por la gloria. Las dos cosas debían obtenerse en todo ese día tan suspirado” (292). Here the necessity of the sun for obtaining “gloria” is crucial. The desire for the sun to rise is, in fact, just as great as the desire to succeed in battle—the two are concomitant.

Dreams of glory are central to Ismael for another reason: it is a novel deeply entrenched in the Romantic tradition of the nineteenth century. The debt that Uruguay

owes to Acevedo Díaz's novels is so great that Zum Felde considers them replacements for the epic war poem that Uruguay, according to Zum Felde, otherwise lacks:

Ahora bien; faltando en nuestra literatura el poema epopéyico representativo del ciclo guerrero de nuestra historia, la novela histórica de Acevedo Díaz llena en cierto modo esa función, ya que alienta en ella ese soplo epopéyico, y en sus grandes líneas hállase, en embrión, un *Iliada* o un *Romancero* que no fueron escritos.<sup>48</sup> (51)

The idea that Acevedo Díaz's historical novels could function as the *Iliad* or as a *Romancero* for Uruguay is a Romantic notion. These novels, however, look back to classical European traditions and thus express a multitude of inheritances.

This heterogeneity of literary styles defines *Ismael*. It is a novel located in the transition between Romanticism and Naturalism. As Zum Felde relates: "La obra de Acevedo Díaz se produce en la zona del choque y transición del romanticismo y el realismo, aquí en América, que ocurre precisamente en esos años, entre el 80 y el 90" (qtd. in Visca 24). This thought is seconded by Fernando Ainsa, who states: "...la obra narrativa de Eduardo Acevedo Díaz expresa la lenta transición del romanticismo al naturalismo que caracteriza el período" (139). If this hybridity of literary styles characterizes *Ismael*, it is because *Ismael* is a novel about the conflict between myths based on instincts and history based on scientific research: "En la mejor tradición de la novela histórica del romanticismo, Acevedo Díaz apuesta a la <<inspiración divina>> del escritor como conjurador de la vida oponiéndola a la vocación de <<anatomista>> del historiador" (Ainsa 137). The novel depends on instincts (here referred to as "inspiración divina") for its myth-like quality and on the scientific reserve of an "anatomista" for its historical precision.



The narrator describes Ismael Velarde's generation as being "una generación heroica que todo lo libró al empuje del brazo y a la bravura del instinto..." (66). The heroicism of this generation comes from the Romantic element of its composition. The "bravura del instinto" is also a topic assumed by José Enrique Rodó: "Los hombres y los pueblos trabajan...bajo la inspiración de las ideas, como los irracionales bajo la inspiración de los instintos" (146). Rodó, however, criticizes the "bravura del instinto" as irrational. Rodó's ultimate point in Ariel (1900) is that the place of instinct is not in cities. As the narrator confirms: "Por eso en los campos, en las escenas de la vida de pastoreo y en los aduares mismos de la tribu errante, estos instintos y anhelos eran más acentuados e indómitos que en la ciudad" (27). Instincts, then, are associated with the countryside and, by extension, with Ismael and his victorious gauchos. They are also associated with the Romantic style of the novel, and thus bolster its reputation as a novel of emotions (like glory) that have to do with traditional concepts of warfare.

Because of the victory of the instinctual, Romantic gaucho in Ismael, there arises, paradoxically, a place in society for this once vilified character. Buell relates the following: "[i]n place of his Romantic savagism, which sees Indians as a doomed archaic race because the twain can never meet, Rural Hours envisions a possible integration whereby 'men of Indian blood may be numbered among the wise and the good, laboring on behalf of our common country'" (47). The ability of the Indian to work for a national cause mirrors the value that is entrusted to gauchos like Velarde for their help in securing Uruguay's independence.

While the discussion so far has tended toward seeing Ismael as a work of Romantic literature, there is also a Naturalistic bent to the novel. Indeed, while Ainsa emphasizes that Romantic and Naturalistic sentiments are shared in Ismael, Butazzoni strongly indicates that the novel is more stylistically progressive when he calls it a “vigoroso relato que abandona de forma casi definitiva los moldes románticos para internarse de manera firme y decidida en los dominios del realismo” (14). The fact that critics present multiple assessments of the novel’s style shows that there is room for disagreement on this subject. In fact, Basille sees Naturalism as achieving the same goal that other critics have said pertains to Romanticism: that of supporting the main character and his people: “A partir del naturalismo la naturaleza—medio que determina al tipo—se vuelve rústica, fiera y salvaje para templar al espíritu semibárbaro del gaucho en la lucha...” (55). Even an objective analysis of nature characteristic of Naturalism reveals it to be a force that mirrors the rustic, wild, and savage gaucho.

Velarde, indeed, is a figure who undergoes a scientifically-charged observation on the part of the implied author. Ismael is, after all, a novel that examines what happens to a member of the gaucho culture when he is exposed to the conditions surrounding Uruguayan national formation. As Rodríguez Monegal expresses:

Aún en aquellos pasajes que muestran a Ismael más de cerca, Acevedo Díaz no pierde el carácter de observador imparcial, de naturalista, de sociólogo positivista, que estaba de moda en la novela finisecular europea. Pero tanto en Nativa como en Grito de gloria, el protagonista es un hombre educado, un intelectual montevideano, un observador capaz de contemplar la realidad revolucionaria al tiempo que participa íntimamente en ella. (98)

Acevedo Díaz, as reveals Rodríguez Monegal, falls prey to the positivistic idea that the best science comes from the city, that Naturalism is best exercised from an urban perspective, even if the subject being observed is of a rural nature.

For this reason Rama emphasizes the importance of industrial development in the Southern Cone of the time (Los gauchipolíticos 7). Even if the Spanish forces ultimately were defeated in the lands they had colonized for centuries, they left a legacy of industrial development that continues into the present, with the victorious *criollos* the primary stewards of this legacy. Perhaps for this reason the gaucho began to disappear following the wars of national independence in Latin America: the forces of modernization and positivism from Europe were too strong to be completely denied or reversed, and the gaucho found himself ceding to the advancement of urban ways. Grudzińska confirms the positivism of Acevedo Díaz's historical fiction: "En el caso de Eduardo Acevedo Díaz, también su postura positivista lo conduce a plantear la definición de la independencia uruguaya como consecuencia de la evolución del hombre local inmerso en un medio natural específico" (68). The trust in science that the Enlightenment awakened has led to an industrial revolution that engendered massive depletion and pollution of resources, and we can trace this trend to the present environmental crisis in which we find ourselves.

Returning to the gaucho, we find that, under the scrutinizing microscope of Naturalism, he depends on the natural environment for his livelihood and for his identity. As Lasplaces suggests: "El gaucho, producto sin esfuerzo del medio en que vive, no puede comprenderse sin conocerse el país que lo ha engendrado tanto como al ombú y al puma, a las cuchillas y al pampero" (28). Lasplaces sees the gaucho as a product of his

environment that can't survive without that vital relationship. This dynamic appears in the novel when the narrator observes: "Puma valeroso, bien armado para la lucha, fue el engendro natural de los amores del león ibérico en el desierto que él mismo se hizo alrededor de su guarida, para campear solitario, nostálgico y rugiente" (27). Not only does the narrator associate the gaucho with the puma (an example of the relationship between gaucho and natural environment), he also brings in natural imagery from the Iberian Peninsula: the "león ibérico." The puma becomes an American example of the lion that is deeply intertwined in Spain's own national identity. In this way the colonizing effort seems to take on meaning and lend a sense of identity to the wild countryside that is, at the same time, slowly losing its wild character.

Teresa Basille writes of an "abundancia" of nature, an abundance that, as we will see, becomes exploited (55). Leo Marx echoes the idea that pastoral nature is based on the idea of abundance when he calls the United States "an immense garden of 'incredible abundance'" (37). A good example of this environmental plethora comes rather early in the novel, where the narrator describes a gaucho hideout:

Era un asilo secreto, una guarida inaccesible, un *potrero* en el monte, fresco y fértil, circunvalado de acacias, higuerones, plumerillos y laureles blancos a que daba riego un brazo pequeño del río, y en donde ofrecíanse al alcance de la mano, como pródigos dones de un oasis salvaje, los agrestes frutos del guayabo, el arazá y el pitanga, y líquenes sabrosos, hongos blancos y morados en los troncos del quebracho o del camilón fornido. (79-80)

The long lists of plant life especially contribute to the sense of abundance. The exploitation of this abundance becomes clear, not as much in the novel as in general industrial policies of the time. In this way the novel points to a future calamity that has its initial motivations in the pastoral Uruguayan countryside.

This degradation, however, is not seen immediately. As Basille relates: “la exuberancia de la tierra se convierte en fertilidad agrícola, los animales en ganado y ambos en riqueza para el país exportador” (55). The first steps of the industrial process only convert natural abundance into productive abundance; there is no negative after-effect. Basille continues to describe the processes of modernization at work: “...la modernización de las estancias, los progresos en los modos de industrialización y comercialización, la construcción del puerto de Montevideo, el tendido de redes ferroviarias y la centralización del poder político y económico en la gran urbe capitalina” (55). Basille counters the lists of abundant plant life in Ismael with this list of industrial processes taking shape in the Uruguay of that time. It is clear that the latter is only a result of the former: industrialization and the degradation of the environment are only possible because nature makes them possible.

These lists of the abundance of nature reflect how the novel’s plot develops. Nature is not only an engine for industrial development in the sociopolitical world that Ismael represents, it is also a motor for its novelistic inner-workings. As he relates: “Estas descripciones paisajísticas no son en Ismael un ingrediente tan sólo ornamental, sino que, por lo contrario, se hallan siempre íntimamente vinculadas a la acción y son indispensables para que los personajes y las situaciones alcancen plenitud” (20). Visca’s perception that the descriptive passages of the countryside are more than just ornamental reveals the way that, as we have been describing, nature seems to be playing the role of providing raw material not only for the fires of industrialization, but also for the advancement of the plot. The action takes place on battlefields and in countrysides.

Nature is more than just an ornament because it is witness to the events that comprise human history. More than that, nature stands alone, solitary and impartial witness to the transpirations of war and conflict. It is more than an ornament because it is greater than, but inextricably intertwined with, the human world.

While this uneasy pact between human and nature plays out, there is a greater conflict taking place in Ismael: that between people of the city (*euuropeos*) and people of the country (*nativos* and *criollos*).<sup>49</sup> War, in the novel, is the greatest manifestation of this conflict. Buell's comment regarding this struggle is the following: "[e]ver since an American literary canon began to crystallize, American literature has been considered preoccupied with country and wilderness as setting, theme, and value in contradistinction to society and the urban, notwithstanding the sociological facts of urbanization and industrialization" (33).<sup>50</sup> Buell thus sides with nature and the desire to glorify the countryside in literature. He takes up the cause of nature for nature's sake, a deeply pastoral project. His comment applies to Ismael because of the way that it opposes the city and the country. Ismael is, after all, a novel about a war between civilized and barbaric ways of life, which can easily be seen as urban and rural ways of life.

The key archetypal relationship in Ismael is between Ismael y Almagro; each character is a representation of his side of the battle between Uruguay and Spain. Rómulo Cosse describes them as a "pareja de contrarios complementarios" and adds the following: "[e]s claro que este eje paradigmático integrado por dos polos contradictorios, encarna y materializa todas las tensiones y conflictos que dinamizan el relato" (68). The two warriors come to represent more than just who they are as individuals.<sup>51</sup>

Cosse expands upon the archetypal relationship between Ismael and Almagro by showing the way in which their rivalry generates feelings of nationalistic antagonism. In the worldview of Acevedo Díaz, the concept of nation is often represented as feminine. Thus, the antagonism that Ismael and Almagro feel is due to conflicting ideas of how the nation should define itself. Their conflict is tied up in the differing projections they have, and these projections eventually find their way into their romantic feelings for Felisa. Cosse relates: “Y por si eso fuera poco, todavía está el conflicto despertado por la pasión de Felisa” (68). The desire of each man to possess Felisa is reflected also in each’s desire to form a nation according to his conceptual standards.<sup>52</sup>

There are, then, “good” and “bad” archetypes, moral distinctions of which the implied author of each text is conscious. The formation of national identity, consequently, is tied up in a binary related to how the nation should be formed. Such a binary generates, not only in the reader but also in the characters themselves, strong emotions that play themselves out through the course of the novel. In Ismael we see these emotions played out in Ismael and his hatred for Almagro. The following situation takes place right after Ismael has killed Almagro in battle:

Entonces el gaucho se desmontó sin apuro.  
Llegóse al cuerpo, y lo estuvo mirando un rato con una expresión fría y sañuda, de odio aún no extinguido. (304)

The conflict between city and country (embodied in the Spaniard, Almagro, and the gaucho, Ismael) is central to the text as a whole because of the way that it generates emotion and leads a probable reader to form opinions of his or her own regarding the Uruguayan battle for independence from Spain.

The conflict between city and country, however, begins much earlier, in the opening passage of the novel. At that point the narrator relates: “La ciudad de Montevideo, plaza fuerte destinada a ser el punto de apoyo y resistencia del sistema colonial en esta zona de América, por su posición geográfica, su favorable topografía y sus sólidas almenas” (21). The fact that Montevideo is destined to be a point of both support and resistance in the ensuing battles is indicative of the conflictive nature of this novel. That both sides of the struggle are going to converge upon Montevideo lends to this city an essence that goes beyond its existence as a city. The real source of “city” in this conflict comes from Spain and its desire to civilize the lands and peoples of America. That Montevideo at this point in time is less of a city and more of a battleground is apparent in the narrator’s description a few pages later: “La ciudad...no poseía a principios del siglo ningún palacio o edificio notable” (23). The forces of Spanish civilization and those of the Uruguayan national contingent meet in Montevideo to fight. Thus, because of Montevideo’s underdevelopment, the real source of what a “city” is comes from abroad.

The fact that the battleground is in Uruguay suggests also that *criollos* and *nativos* (including gauchos) were defending their freedom while the foreign Spanish contingent was on the offensive. The nature of this conflictual arrangement generated feelings that were unique to the New World: “La autoridad del monarca, aunque el monarca no reinase, no había sido menoscabada en las colonias regidas por virreyes, y libres hasta entonces de la agresión de Bonaparte. La creación pues, de una Junta, concebible en la metrópoli, iba aquí de golpe contra la regla de hábito y despertaba instintos que no



existían en España...” (Acevedo Díaz 45). Here the “metrópoli” is defined as existing in Europe; and the “instintos” that European forms of governance aroused were a result of European occupation. They could not have existed in Spain because Spain, at that time, was not a colonial holding of any sort. In this way setting and place are crucial to the establishment of norms that then govern how a body of people will act. The pastoral desire of the Spanish colonizers to execute their will upon the purportedly fresh and unblemished lands of the New World was received with a sense of resistance and patriotism that can only result from a colonial situation such as the one that existed in the early nineteenth century in Uruguay.

The narrator’s description of the Franciscan monks in Montevideo provides a revealing example of how influences from Europe (influences that were part of the European colonial inheritance) were infiltrating the religious milieu as well as the political milieu:

Contaminados por el espíritu entusiasta de la época, ...decirse puede, de la escasa ciencia y conocimientos políticos-filosóficos de su tiempo, los conventuales entre los cuales había jóvenes de hermoso talento siguieron afanosos los progresos del movimiento revolucionario, comentando paso a paso los hechos que se producían y que hasta ese instante eran coherentes con los ideales acariciados por todo el elemento criollo. (306)

Positivism was an influence that intruded upon the cosmovision of the New World with the arrival of the Europeans. The belief that science and technology (along with industrialization) would advance the human race was one that infiltrated every aspect of colonial life. Positivism can be seen in environmental terms in that, like the theory of Rodó, it values the cultural and economic production of the city while denigrating rural life.

A review of what Rama calls “literatura superior e inferior” applies to this discussion in that “literatura superior” is a movement more specifically derived from European traditions of writing during the nineteenth century, especially Realism-Naturalism, whereas “literatura inferior” is a style more native to the New World, especially in its popular and folkloric manifestations. “Literatura superior,” then, can be seen as an urban project inspired by the high culture of European cities, while “literatura inferior” derives from rural areas and has a less universal appeal. Rama also identifies two forms of literary production from this time period and associates “high” literature with the city:

...estamos en presencia de una lengua literaria y no de una transposición dialectal. Esa lengua es parte central del proyecto literario y por eso se la puede comparar con la que asumen los poetas modernistas en relación a la habla culta de las ciudades latinoamericanas de fines del siglo XIX: por diferentes que sean, incluso por opuestas que resultan, responden ambas a operaciones literarias, a la necesaria construcción de un ámbito lingüístico (sobre todo lexical, pero también sintáctico) específico para traducir un mensaje artístico. (*Los gauchipolíticos* 32)

Rama associates “high” literature (“habla culta”) with “las ciudades latinoamericanas.”

We can thus see that these two conditions are intrinsically related. Because of this intrinsic relation, we can see that the urban/rural dialogue surrounding Ismael is really very complex. While Europe represents urban development (the rise of the city, technology, and industrialization) and Latin America represents a rural way of life, we must also deal with the existence of Latin American cities and European rural environments.

This complexity also manifests itself within the novel. Ismael is, in general, a work of “literatura superior” in the way that it mimics Romantic and Realist-Naturalist

traditions from Europe. However, in the sense that it is a late example of Romanticism in literature, one can also perceive a certain backwardness in Acevedo Díaz's literary production, stylistically speaking. The fact that he is writing about the history of Uruguay, however, locates his discourse firmly in the specific field of Latin American historical novel. His use of European literary techniques is merely a foil for the broader, more important political message that Uruguay is free and independent.

Furthermore, this conflict engenders, beyond warfare, ideological confusion. Because of the colonial situation in Uruguay, the Uruguayan nationals witnessed an influx of foreign ideas (like positivism mentioned above). The narrator explains:

De ahí, una escena extraña y turbulenta de ideas nuevas y preocupaciones tradicionales, sentimientos y antagonismos profundos, tentativas abortadas, formidables esfuerzos contra la corriente invasora, expansión de ideales hermosos dentro de la misma obra de tres siglos de silencio, relámpagos intensos bañando los reconditos de la vida conventual, resabios en pie terribles y amenazadores y fanatismos ciegos minando en su tapera el suelo firme de la sociedad futura. (28)

This clash of the new and the traditional defines the nation as “extraña y turbulenta.” The fact that this ideological conflict permeated even the religious institutions shows the depth of influence that the colonial powers displayed.

Gustavo Verdesio is also concerned with the problem of “high” and “low” (and thus urban and rural) production in literature.<sup>53</sup> He describes the following: “una escala axiológica que privilegiaba lo escrito sobre lo oral, la ciudad sobre el campo” (168). The idea that written literature is associated with the city and oral literature with the country reflects the discourse of Rama that we have just seen that the producers of literature in writing (like the *modernistas* that he mentions) are concerned and associated with the city. With a similar idea in mind, Verdesio mentions that the gaucho is the “enemigo

mortal de la ciudad letrada y del proyecto europeo civilizacional” (166). By ingressing the “ciudad letrada” into the discussion, Verdesio once again shows how cities and “high” literature are bound up together. As enemy of the “ciudad letrada” and the “proyecto europeo civilizacional,” the gaucho, throughout the course of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, finds that the rural spaces that were his domain are disappearing with the growth of cities.

It is not only the gaucho, however, who is suffering from the imposition of colonial rule. Verdesio expresses the following:

[u]n Otro que se va multiplicando y volviendo más complejo a medida que pasa el tiempo. Al Otro de la primera hora, el indígena, se van sumando otros: los negros esclavos, las estirpes mestizas (el gaucho, por ejemplo), la mujer, casi inexistente (no sólo discursivo sino también ontológicamente) al principio de la conquista: hasta llegar a una alteridad compleja y estratificada, la sociedad colonial, sus ciudades y centros poblados. (168)

The suggestion that the gaucho is disappearing may be true, but in terms of class, all of “los Otros” mentioned above participate in a dialogue about the way that the urban/rural conflict shapes society.

Rama attributes the idea of a middle class to European thinkers. The ideal of economic liberalism, developed in Europe during the Enlightenment and later implemented by the Bourbon kings, was the means by which a middle class came forth. The implementation of the middle class made its way to Latin America, as well. Rama describes it as “...una sola filosofía orientadora: la de un incipiente liberalismo que traducía los intereses del sector avanzado de la burguesía emparentado con el reformismo borbón” (39). What is more, he associates neoclassical art (also from the Enlightenment period) with the middle class, calling it “arte burgués” (42). Thus any Latin American

effort to mimic European neoclassical art is also an attempt to perpetuate the development of a middle class at the expense of the working class. Buell brings nature back into the picture: “Raymond Williams and his successors have shown how even ‘close observers’ of the English countryside have overlooked or prettified the working classes” (62). The working classes, associated here with the English countryside, appear to be obliterated by the resurgence of the middle classes in the same way that the project of civilization in Uruguay was doing away with the gauchos.

Ismael begins, in fact, with a description of the city of Montevideo, an indication that urban development has already taken hold. This description serves to locate the action of the novel and to give the reader a foretaste of the Spanish side of the battle. Although the revolution has not yet begun, an air of forboding fills the colonial city: “[Montevideo] hizo sentir el peso de su influencia y de sus armas en los sucesos de aquella vida tormentosa que precedió al desarrollo fecundo de la idea revolucionaria” (21). For the narrator, life in the city at this moment is tormentous because, although it does not yet seem clear, there is a general sense of unrest between colonizer and colonized. The narrator mentions that the “idea revolucionaria” has not yet reached full development, but it is clear, because of the aforementioned sense of unrest, that a conflict is now unavoidable.

The Spanish contingent is described by the narrator: “persistía casi intacto el espíritu del viejo régimen, la regla del hábito invariable, la costumbre hereditaria pugnando por sofocar la tendencia al cambio, al pretender más de una vez destruir las fuerzas divergentes con su mano de plomo” (21). The “viejo régimen” describes the

colonial Spanish forces and coordinates well with the idea of New World Pastoral. The narrator gives us this description of the personality of the Old World (the “viejo régimen”) so that we can understand the type of ideological body that gave birth to the pastoral vision. The idea, then, of the conflict between Spain and Uruguay as represented in this novel can be seen as a conflict between old and new, a binary that may be useful to understanding the action of the novel.

One of the characteristics of this “viejo régimen” is its resistance to change. Its resistance goes so far as to subjugate new, revolutionary ideas through the use of what the narrator describes as a “mano de plomo.” The reference to the natural world to describe the heavy-handedness of the Spanish presence in Uruguay shows how, while the revolutionary forces are associated with the natural environment more than the colonial forces, the implied author has no qualms about using natural terminology to describe either side of battle. This has interesting implications for the ecocritical analyst in that it shows that although native Uruguayans, like Ismael, are more strongly associated with nature than their Spanish counterparts, nature is used to describe both sides of the conflict because it is implicated in the ideology of each side. The Uruguayans see nature as an ally while the Spanish see it as something to be exploited.

Another image that the narrator appropriates to describe the Spanish forces in Montevideo is that of “un enorme crustáceo que, bien adherido a la roca, resistía impávido y sereno al rudo embate de la corriente” (21-22). The Spanish forces are working to crush the efforts of native Uruguayans to establish their own national identity. That the revolutionary forces are described as a “rudo embate de la corriente” shows how

the implied author, with terms taken from nature, sides with the forces of the revolution by depicting them as an ocean current that does not abate. The narrator does not, however, underestimate the strength of the Spanish side. The narrator expands upon the metaphor of the ocean current: “Esa corriente, con ser poderosa, no podía detenerse a romper su coraza, y pasaba de largo ante el muro sombrío rozándolo en vano con su bullente espuma” (22). That the current does not have the strength to break the crustacean’s shell shows that the two opposing forces could very well be equally matched.

The natural imagery continues as it is used to describe Montevideo’s relationship with Buenos Aires. The narrator calls Montevideo “la pequeña ciudad irritada ante un salto de sorpresa del fiero leopardo inglés sobre su hermana, la heroica Buenos Aires” (22). Again, natural imagery comes to describe international conflict, this time between England and Argentina. That England is represented as a leopard shows how a foreign element can be described with local imagery, indicating that the implied author desires the reader to see the novelistic world in terms that he or she will intuitively understand.

Montevideo, however, is also often described by the narrator in more mechanical, impersonal terms: “Volvieron los portones a cerrarse con rumor de cadenas, reinstaláronse las guardias en baterías, flancos, ángulos y cubos; absorbieron en su ancho vientre las casernas de granito, pólvora y balas” (23). Even the “ancho vientre” mentioned in the quotation is not a natural womb. Instead it is a haven for articles of war like gunpowder and bullets. The narrator characterizes the Spanish armies by their propensity for impersonality in war.

This propensity is described in the following paragraph:

Este asilo de Marte, presentaba en su interior un aspecto extraño: calles angostas y fangosas, verdaderas vías para la marcha de los tercios en columna, entre paralelas de casas bajas con techos de tejas; una plaza sin adornos en que crecía la yerba, en cuyo ángulo a la parte del oeste se elevaba la obra de la Matriz de ladrillo desnudo, teniendo a su frente la mole gris del Cabildo; algo hacia el norte, el convento de San Francisco con sus grandes tapias resguardando el huerto y el cementerio, su plazoleta enrejada, su campanario sin elevación como un nido de cuervos, y sus frailes de capucha y sandalia vagabundos en la sombra, luego, el caserío monótono de techumbre roja, y encima de la ribera arenosa, unas bóvedas cenicientas semejantes a templos orientales, que eran casernas de depósito con su cuerpo de guardia de pardos granaderos. (23-24)

This paragraph establishes Montevideo as a place, space, and future battlefield.

Montevideo, as a place, contrasts with the Uruguayan countryside. The main difference between the two is that the city is quite mechanical in its presentation, while the countryside is alive and vibrant. While the Spanish depend on battlements to wage war, the Uruguayan contingent hides out in the hills, closer to the natural environment. For this reason, among others, they are more connected with nature.

Montevideo, in the paragraph cited above, is described as being an “asilo de Marte.” Thus war is associated with the more mechanical, more impersonal city. In contrast, the countryside can be seen not as a haven for war, but as a living ecosystem that revolts when a more machine-like, unnatural way of life is imposed upon it.

Montevideo, in the above description, seems designed for war: the streets are wide to allow the passing of troops. Other details like the “plaza sin adornos” and the “ladrillo desnudo” of the cathedral are indications of Montevideo’s utilitarian construction at that time.



Another key element mentioned in the paragraph is the convent. Although the friars are on the side of Spain at the beginning of the novel, they are dynamic characters that, by the end of the novel, transfer their allegiance to the Uruguayan cause. A description that accompanies the friars at this point in the novel is the “campanario sin elevación como un nido de cuervos.” The friars, too, at this point in the story, take part in the grey, joyless ambience of colonial Montevideo.

The opening narration continues with a description of the fortress on a nearby hill. The imagery remains dull and colorless:

[D]ivisábase la fortaleza del cerro como el morrión negro de una gigante, aislada, muda, siniestra, verdadera imagen del sistema colonial, con un frente a la vasta zona marina vigilando el paso de las escuadras, cuyo derrotero transmitía su telégrafo de señales, y con otro hacia el desierto al acecho del peligro jamás conjurado de la tierra del charrúa. (24)

This passage portrays the colonial force in Montevideo as a compassionless entity, existing for the purpose of maintaining its dominance through war. The depiction of the fortress on the hill as “el morrión negro de una gigante” shows how the natural environment becomes skewed to the purposes of war. The hill can only be perceived as a giant’s helmet through a perspective imbued with the imminence of military conflict.

A particular neighborhood of Montevideo also evokes the solemn demeanor that war (or impending war) brings: “En este barrio reinaba una soledad profunda, al toque de queda. No eran más alegres otros barrios a esta hora en que hería el aire la campana melancólica y resonaban en los ámbitos apartados el tambor y la trompa” (24). The mention of the “toque de queda” implies a military presence, as does the silence of the streets. The “campana melancólica” indicates the alliance between church and state. The

consecutive mention of church bells and “el tambor y la trompa” shows the cooperation of the two powers. The narrator further describes the “toque de queda” atmosphere that pervades: “El ejercicio de las armas y la función de guerra, casi permanentemente, habían creado hábitos severos: poca diferencia mediaba entre la rigidez del collaría militar, y la dureza del carácter” (26). The bellicose atmosphere extends so far that it becomes more than an imposition; it becomes a habit. Citizens of Montevideo were transformed by the war-like atmosphere that surrounded them.

This opening description precedes any portrayal of characters or countryside. Montevideo, as a place, is the initial image that the reader receives and, in terms of Buell’s *New World Pastoral*, it is an establishment of the Old World’s vision of the New, that is, a virgin landscape that can be possessed through war and religious conversion. Montevideo is a space that was once wild, but has been disciplined. Acevedo Díaz, in Ismael, recounts how Montevideo is reclaimed by the gauchos and the rest of the native contingent. It is a victory for the natural world, as well. Victory brings about a peace that can only be gotten through war—a peace that, possibly, exists between humans and the natural environment as well.

Another factor in the formation of the colonial consciousness of Montevideo of that time is the presence of the Spanish monarchy. This factor contributes specifically to the same war-time habit mentioned above: “La fidelidad ciega a la monarquía, explicábase sin embargo en el vecindario, más por la costumbre de la obediencia que por la espontaneidad del instinto. El hábito disciplinario regía las corrientes de la opinión”

(26). In particular, the monarchy promotes obedience among its subjects, eliminating spontaneity and freedom of opinion.

In direct contrast to the disciplinarian environment inside city walls, the countryside is evoked as a place of freedom and, indeed, pastoral simplicity. The narrator relates:

Por eso en los campos, en las escenas de la vida de pastoreo y en los aduares mismos de la tribu errante, estos instintos y anhelos eran más acentuados e indómitos que en la ciudad. Dentro de los baluartes estaba la represión inmediata, la justicia preventiva, el rigor de la ordenanza; pero, fuera del círculo de piedra—sepulcro de una generación en vida—empezaba la libertad del desierto, esa libertad salvaje que engendra la prepotencia personal, y que en sentir del poeta, plumajeaba airada en la frente de los caciques. (27)

The image of the city as a “sepulcro de una generación en vida” confirms that the military discipline within the confines of the city leads to death, both physically through war and spiritually through the molding of personal habits and public opinion. The instincts and desires that the city represses, however, are free to flourish in the country. In this way, the city of Montevideo becomes a bastion for Spain, the Old World, and colonial ideology, while the Uruguayan countryside represents Uruguay, the New World, and the desire for independence. Inclusively, the freedom of the countryside is described as a “libertad salvaje,” indicating that the pastoral imagination of the Spanish is limited when it sees the Uruguayan natural environment as simply a place of pristine beauty and untapped natural resources. The element of savageness betrays the struggle that the forces of the Uruguayan countryside are going to elicit against the advances of the colonial army of Montevideo.

One important element of the resistance of the people of the countryside was the emergence of a *caudillo*: “Así surgió en la soledad, el caudillo, como el rey que en la leyenda latina amamantó una loba: sin títulos formales, pero con resabios hereditarios” (27). The *caudillo*, however, distinguishes himself from colonial authority figures both by his association with the legend that he was raised by wolves and the fact that he is without “títulos formales.” Both of these conditions generate an air of savageness about him that is unmatched by the leaders of the colonial forces.

The first characters to specifically be introduced in the novel are colonial officials based in Montevideo. Don Francisco Xavier de Elío is described as the following:

[un] militar de escaso criterio, hombre de pasiones destemplados, y carácter violento e inaccesible al debate sereno, de cuyo desequilibrio psíquico-fisiológico resultaba una personalidad perpetuamente reñida con todo lo que era adverso a la causa del rey, y, decirse puede, consigo mismo, en los frecuentes arrebatos y extravíos de sus pasiones. (30)

Although Elío possesses characteristics that compare to the established savageness of the revolutionary *caudillo*, his particular case is different because of the way that the above quotation hints at his disharmony with nature. The savageness of the revolutionary *caudillo* derives from the savageness of nature while Elío appears to be out of tune (“de pasiones destemplados”) with nature. His antagonism toward any discourse against the monarchy is further evidence of the schism between Elío and the revolutionary leader yet unnamed.<sup>54</sup>

In contrast to the character of Elío, the narrator describes Fray Francisco Carballo: “Era un hombre de un físico agradable, blanca epidermis— aunque algo razada por el sol y el viento de los campos—, cuello recto sobre un tronco firme, cabellera de ondas

recogida en trenza de un color casi rubio, y miembros robustos conformados a su pecho saliente, y al dorso fornido” (33). The mention of his skin “razada por el sol y el viento de los campos” foreshadows the change of sentiment that Fray Francisco, along with several of his fellow friars, will effect at the end of the novel. A tactic of the implied author is to identify the protagonists of the novel with the sun and wind of the countryside. Their connection with the natural elements gives them a sensibility that Spain’s colonial representatives in Uruguay lack.

These colonial representatives, instead, become part of the landscape of the cities that contain them. The narrator relates: “Los hombres públicos son, de esta suerte, como estatuas de relieve en los frontispicios de viejas construcciones. Separarlos del muro a que están adheridos, embelleciendo y completando el conjunto del edificio, es cercenar a éste, y mutilar a aquéllos. Se les arranca de su marco natural” (47). Once allied with the colonial forces in the city, it becomes difficult for figures, such as Fray Francisco and his fellow friars, to extract themselves from its governmental framework. For this reason, at the end of the novel, the revolutionary friars are cast out of their cloister and made to seek shelter with the revolutionaries, an action that must carry with it the feelings of displacement described above.

One of the particular elements that unites colonial officials is the Catholic religion. The narrator describes the religious gesture of captain Pacheco: “tras un gesto muy visible, hacía en la boca la señal de la cruz para ahuyentar al espíritu maligno” (51). The old colonial culture, by way of this gesture, imposes itself upon a certain “espíritu maligno” that could easily be described as the pastoral environment outside the

city limits. Because of this clash of cultures (old European culture and new American culture), each side develops strategies to uphold its particular ideological agenda.

Fray Benito shares the theory of Jean Jacques Rousseau about man in a state of nature (57). Fray Francisco considers Rousseau's theory absurd, but Fray Benito comments that for that reason it is useful. The element of Rousseau's theory that Fray Benito lauds has to do, in South American terms, with the vagabond gaucho. Fray Benito's approval of this theory foreshadows his conversion to the revolutionary side of the conflict at the end of the novel.

For the most part, however, Montevideo serves as a bastion of the Spanish. The novel begins first with a description of Montevideo and then with an introduction of the Spanish contingent in Montevideo. This city is then established as the point of encounter, the setting upon which the action will develop. As the novel progresses, we find that there are some inhabitants of the city who, although they vacillate, identify with the revolutionary cause. They are "los hombres de las ciudades, más o menos bien preparados para señalarle rumbos o abrirle ancho cauce, pero irresolutos y llenos de vacilaciones y dudas en los primeros años de lucha..." (63). The friars mentioned above fall into this category, and they are given an important recognition in the last chapter of the novel.

The majority of the revolutionary contingent, however, comes from the country. The narrator describes this body as "las masas campesinas, de propenciones acentuadas a la acción violenta, rápida y aniquiladora con todo el vigor de la rudeza nativa, y el espíritu casi ciego de los instintos conflagrados" (63). The masses of the countryside,

then, possess an instinctual character, a quality that allies them with the natural world because creatures of the natural world are also instinctual and perhaps more violent than their counterparts in the cities.

The *caudillos*, then, as heads of these instinctual, violent masses, have the responsibility of organizing these forces. The narrator states: “los gauchos orientales fueron citados al combate por sus caudillos: las incarnaciones típicas de sus terribles <<amores locales>>” (65). Thus, the masses: “casi ciego[s],” were given a direction and an outlet for their purportedly violent instincts.

One of the first manifestations of the power of the forces of the countryside was the May revolution, which took place “cuando aquella irreductible fuerza divergente, pero no reaccionaria, rompió el viejo molde de la colonia y echó en los surcos abiertos por desoladoras guerras la semilla de una nacionalidad briosa e indomable” (66). The *caudillos*, indeed, can be attributed with making these forces effective in the revolution of May. The masses on their own would not have been successful because they lacked the direction and foresight that their *caudillos* provided. The common gaucho himself, while he perhaps lacked strategic direction, militarily speaking, provided the primordial impetus for the Uruguayan forces. The narrator describes: “El gaucho va a ocupar la escena, a llenarla con sus pasiones primitivas, sus odios y sus amores, sus celos obstinados, sus aventuras de leyenda; pero el gaucho que sólo vive ya en la historia, el engendro maduro de los desiertos y el tipo altivo y errante de un tiempo de transición y transformación étnica” (66). In the same way that the masses of gauchos depend on their *caudillos*, the latter depend equally on the masses to provide the force that eventually

toppled the Spanish colonial regime. The gaucho, however, is an element of history. Although he was crucial to securing Uruguayan independence, the gaucho soon disappeared from the forefront of rural culture. In this way he can be seen as a sacrificial figure, the element that had to give way for Uruguayan nationhood to solidify.

Perhaps the gaucho disappeared because, although colonialism eventually was defeated, its effects could not be completely reversed. If we associate the gaucho with the natural environment in which he appears, we can see that he becomes part of the European pastoral vision. European colonialists dominated not only the natural landscape (and the resources that came from it) but also the gaucho. The following quotation contains an image of how the disappearance of the gaucho can be associated with him being swallowed up by the natural landscape: “un jinete teniendo sobre la rienda su caballo piafador de gran alzada, cabeza pequeña y narices bien abiertas, rojas y espirando vapor por el esfuerzo de la carrera, se dirigía a la selva profunda, que como un festón enorme de verde irisado bordando el horizonte azul se erguía en el valle majestuoso e imponente” (67). The gaucho is doubly connected to the environment in which he exists, both through his horse and through his disappearance into the jungle. His disappearance then, appears to have more to do with a return to pastoral nature than with a defeat at the hands of colonial Spain.

This particular gaucho, however, is Ismael Velarde, the hero of the novel. His introduction prefigures the eventual disappearance of the gaucho after the cause of independence is already won. Velarde’s link with the natural environment is furthered by the narrator: “Sus facciones tostadas por el sol y el viento de los campos, ofrecían sin



embargo, esa gracia y viril hermosura que acentúa más la vida azarosa y errante, transmitiendo a sus rasgos prominentes como una expresión perenne de las melancolías y tristezas del desierto” (68).<sup>55</sup> Like several characters to appear later, including Felisa, Ismael’s countenance is influenced by natural factors like sun and wind. The psychological result of this exposure to nature is melancholy. Perhaps this melancholy functions as a precursor to the eventual, pending demise of the gaucho. Sensing that he will soon return to his pastoral origins, the gaucho’s demeanor is subdued in sadness.

This sadness, however, does not completely describe Ismael. He is also a warrior ready for battle, revealing the reality that the natural environment is not just a pristine backdrop to be infiltrated and dominated. He carries on his person “...una daga de mango de metal detrás, bien al alcance de la diestra; y una pistola de pedernal cerca del arzón con la culata hacia adentro, sujeta al apero sin funda ni carga de repuesto” (69). Ismael is, like the city of Montevideo, ready for war. While Montevideo is machine-driven and without feelings, Ismael is viril and alive—his weapons are at his disposal while Montevideo seems to have an soulless, machine-like mind.

The “ropaje primitivo” of Velarde suggests a relationship between the gaucho and the Spanish colonizers in Uruguay. While Uruguay was being exploited by the Spanish for its environmental richness, the common people of Uruguay, like Ismael, were compelled to reflect a more primitive way of life (70). A quotation from the same paragraph reveals that this relationship was one that could be subverted by the Uruguayan contingent. Velarde “simbolizaba bien el espíritu rebelde el principio de autoridad, y la fuerza de los instintos ocultos, que en una hora histórica como un exceso potente de

energía, llegan a romper con toda obediencia y hacen irrupción, en la medida misma en que han sido comprimidos y sofocados por la tiranía del hábito” (70). Velarde, as the protagonist, symbolizes this desire to subvert the dominant order, a desire that has ecocritical undertones because of the pastoral vision of the colonizers. This desire of Velarde and the Uruguayans to subvert the Spanish regime comes from a rejection of said pastoral vision. The Uruguayan nationals realize that they are not merely a landscape to be dominated; their fight for independence reflects a desire to be seen as more than just owning a natural resource.

Another aspect that sets Velarde and his fellow gauchos apart from the colonial contingent in Montevideo is the language used to describe the movement of troops. The following quotation describes Ismael’s movement through the forest and makes reference to a different type of movement that would belong to the colonial armies: “y desde ese instante, [Ismael] empezó a avanzar paso a paso, caracoleando en prolongada serpental, y deteniéndose a veces ante el obstáculo opuesto por recientes invasiones de vegetación arbórea, o ante curiosas empalizadas que los habitantes desconocidos del bosque levantaban en ciertos lugares, para torcer la marcha de una partida o columna en desfile” (72). The language used to describe Ismael’s movements is grounded in vocabulary from the natural world. His progress through the forest is characterized by words like “caracoleando” and “serpental.” In contrast, the passage refers to nature as invading and causing the path of armies to become twisted. These references propound a less organic connection with nature. That the path of an army would be hindered by outgrowths of vegetation reflects the incompatibility of the colonial army for movement through a

forest. This incapacity reveals the difference between the pastoral vision and the reality of nature. The pastoral vision sees only the ideal; it exists, in fact, in the imagination. The reality of nature, then, is that it does twist and invade, and the logical conclusion that can be drawn from this reality is that those who are better accustomed to negotiating the natural environment will have better chances of success when the battlefield is composed of natural elements.

In addition to plant life, the gauchos also had alliances with the animal world:

El empalme de estas vías tenebrosas, sólo era conocido por el contrabandista o el matrero, a quienes bastaba separar los troncos y el bosque formado por nutridas lianas y ñapindaes dóciles y rastreros, que al enroscarse en los árboles circunvecinos alargaban sus guías enormes por doquiera, para abrirse paso y continuar la ruta, después de recubrir el paraje cuidadosamente. (72)

This passage clarifies the relationship that the “contrabandista o el matrero” has with not only flora, but also fauna. Animals in this passage are on the side of the gauchos, which places them against the colonial establishment of the city.

Another difference between the two sides that will eventually meet in battle is that the Spanish are defined by their dialogue, and the Uruguayans by the way they act. This difference furthers the idea that the colonial contingent operates in a more automated manner whereas the Uruguayan nationals are more in touch with their bodies and more comfortable moving within nature and being a part of it. The implied author supports the organicity of the Uruguayans in that he writes descriptions like the following that only take place when observing the Uruguayan contingent: “marchaba el sol a su ocaso, y sus rayos que bañaban las alturas del bosque diluían apenas en su interior...” (73). The beauty of the forest at sunset is something that is observed only in the company of the

gauchos and their cohort. The verb used to describe the setting of the sun is *marchaba*, which indicates a joining of nature with the nationalist cause. The personification of the sun marching out of sight indicates that, in the cosmovision of the novel, nature sides with the revolutionaries. Nature continues its alliance with the revolutionary cause in the following description of a starry night: “En estos senos oscuros brillaban infinitas fosforescencias, ojos luminosos entre las ramas, ejércitos desordenados de lampíridos que se esparcían en todo el largo del sendero cubriendo el ambiente de fantásticos resplandores” (77). The comparison of stars in the night sky to “ejércitos desordenados” reveals the mindset of the implied author. The image of stars marching across the sky like armies is a result of the fact that the implied author’s mind is influenced by the coming battle.

Punctuating the gaucho’s dominance over the nature that he is so delicately intertwined with is Velarde’s killing of an armadillo and later a tiger (75). The way that Ismael is an integral part of, yet dominates, nature is evident when the narrator states: “Al pie de negros arrayanes solía agitarse algo de invisible y temeroso, que el jinete ahuyentaba a su paso, lanzando un agudo silbido...” (77). Ismael is attuned to the nuances of the forest so that he notices what is “invisible y temeroso.” However, his “agudo silbido” shows his mastery of the environment in which he operates. Further evidence of this mastery comes from his knowledge of the terrain; for example, his knowledge of a certain river crossing: “El jinete volvió a detenerse para observar el sitio, que parecía conocer en sus menores detalles” (78). While he must navigate within nature,

he must also dominate it. The balance of being part of nature and ruling over it is an aspect of Ismael's life as a gaucho.

Ismael's relationship with his horse is also indicative of the struggle to remain part of nature while reigning over it. The narrator describes how "[e]l fugitivo [Ismael] avanzó con sigilo, reprimiendo la impaciencia de su caballo que tropezó con algunos troncos de palmeras que obstruían la senda..." (78). Ismael needs his horse to travel quickly, but the horse needs guidance in order to stay on the path and not fall.

These interactions with nature appear in the text before any words are spoken. The Spanish have already characterized themselves through dialogue, but the Uruguayan nationals, like Velarde, have been defined completely through actions. When words are finally spoken, they are highly specialized words in that they belong to a gaucho dialect that further separates them from their enemies in Montevideo. Their figures of speech take images from nature as their basis. Ismael's horse grows "wings" in order to escape from an unknown threat (80-81). Ismael's interactions with nature continue to underscore the alliance of the Uruguayan cause and nature, an alliance that has its roots in the pastoral vision of the Spanish colonists.

The narrator observes, however, the following: "Ismael era un gauchito sin hogar" (82). Although he is deeply invested in the natural environment, it does not provide for him a place to rest completely. This is perhaps one of the reasons that he fights for independence from Spain. The Spanish occupation keeps Ismael, just like it keeps the reader, in a state of suspense. The only release for this suspense is the Uruguayan victory that is achieved at the end of the book. Ismael fights, in effect, for his independence, but

his independence also means that Uruguay will become for him a home in which he can feel comfortable. The pastoral dream, then, takes a different tack at this juncture because it is now Ismael who is wishing for a return to pristine nature, free of the constant bother of the Spanish colonial apparatus.

One of the differences between the Spanish colonial vision and that of Ismael is that Ismael's is rooted in a "savage" instinct that the Spaniards' doesn't possess. The narrator states: "Aunque errante e indolente, por inclinación y por hábito, cumpliéndose en el y en casi todos los de su época de una manera fatal la ley de la herencia, tenía cierto cariño al trabajo rudo que pone a prueba el músculo y nutre al organismo con jugo salvaje" (82). This "jugo salvaje" that Ismael possesses sets him apart from the Spanish and possibly gives a reason for the victory that he and his compatriots achieve. Since the battle is fought on Uruguayan soil, the revolutionaries' savage connection with the land brings victory.

The narrator continues to describe Ismael's character and comments on two traits that perhaps incompletely make up his savage character: "Sentía pasión por la vida libre, indisciplinada, licenciosa; pero le era también agradable por orgullo de raza que se fiasen de él cuando hacía promesa de sudar en la labor honesta" (82). His unruly passion, together with the pride he takes in honest work, demonstrates how, if his fellow gauchos possess similar qualities, the Batalla de las Piedras is won. The combination of passion and dedication proves to be the crucial element to victory.

One of the contrasts between Ismael and Almagro is social status. While Ismael is a gaucho without a home, Almagro is a landowner and a political figurehead. About

Almagro the narrator says: “A la posesión exclusiva de estos bienes respondían todos los procederes de Jorge Almagro, el mayordomo, desde año atrás; la única heredera había llegado a la pubertad, y él había empezado sus maniobras” (84). The narrator’s tone suggests that Almagro is not only wealthy, but also stingy. Neither do his relations with peasants reveal a man who cares about the land: “Hacía más repelente esta figura, un carácter avieso y tosco propio para la lidia con la hacienda brava. Los peones lo soportaban sencillamente, pocos le querían” (84). Unlike Ismael, he doesn’t work the land or have any basic connection with it, except that it is a source of income for him. In ecocritical terms this demonstrates how the wealthy, already-established landowner and the disenfranchised, homeless gaucho are in conflict over the rights to possess the virgin wilderness, replete with natural resources.

Indeed, the heiress herself, eighteen-year-old Felisa, is the physical manifestation of this conflict. Her allegiance, whether it lies with Almagro or Ismael, determines the outcome of the battle on a symbolic level. If she sides with Almagro, the wealth of the Uruguayan countryside remains with the Spanish. If Ismael wins her heart, the wealth transfers to the national contingent.<sup>56</sup> The narrator’s impression of her, at this point in the novel, is neutral, that is to say, he observes that she possesses traits that could sway her in either direction: “Era nieta de un gallego, capitán de milicias; pero como buena criolla, tenía toda el sabor de la tierra, y los resabios de la taimonía local, que la escasa educación de aquellos tiempos favorecía más bien que extirpaba” (84). As a *criolla*, Felisa embodies the spirit of both sides of the conflict. Her choice between Almagro or Ismael will symbolize the outcome of the conflict between the two military forces. The narrator

assures the reader that Felisa's connection with the Spanish side is not weaker than her connection with the Uruguayan side: "Mas, ese ejemplo, de fidelidad a la monarquía por parte de uno de sus abuelos, no privaba a Felisa de seguir sus impulsos de criolla y de ser ella misma como hemos dicho, un producto indígena o engendro del clima" (87). Her political and familiar ties to Spain keep the reader in suspense as to how the conflict will resolve itself.<sup>57</sup>

The narrator gives clues as to who may be the protagonist and antagonist of the story. He paints Almagro as the antagonist: "Poco tiempo después, Almagro pasó cerca de él [Ismael] y echóle una mirada torcida" (92). Almagro's "mirada torcida" exposes his evil intentions toward Ismael and generates feelings of rivalry between the two men. The twisted nature of Almagro's expression further classifies him as antagonist.

The narrator furthers the mortal rivalry between the two characters by showing Almagro's distaste for Ismael's line of work:

El mayordomo, como todos los peninsulares de su época, tenía un concepto despreciable de los *tupamaros*. Tratándose de un gauchito como Velarde, Jorge empezaba a adunar al desprecio el rencor, sin que él mismo se explicase por qué lo malquería, aun cuando no podía verle sin que a su impresión de desagrado se sucediese como complemento lógico el recuerdo de Felisa. (92)

In addition to not liking Ismael's line of work, Almagro is bad-humored. He lets his dislike of Ismael's occupation cloud his emotions and his affection for Felisa is entangled in these negative feelings.

When the narrator speaks of the gauchos' feelings, on the other hand, although he associates them with barbarity, they retain a positive sensibility:

Escenas como ésta a que nos referimos, de tiempos ya lejanos, tiempos de la primera generación, en que la raza empezaba a sentir el hervor de los instintos



hasta entonces reprimidos, y a desprenderse apenas de su corteza de barbarie—de su piel charrúa, si se nos permite la imagen—animando la escena con la variedad pintoresca del *tupamaro*, eran escenas propias de la índole genial del pueblo, frecuentes y trágicas, sin represión inmediata, en que se adiestraba músculo dándose desarrollo increíble a las pasiones con abandono absoluto del cultivo de la inteligencia y del sentido moral. (116-17)

While neither Almagro's emotions nor those of the gauchos seem to possess much intelligence or moral feeling, the gauchos retain their status as group protagonist by the good-naturedness of their emotions.

Underscoring the good nature of the gauchos is a set of words (“sun,” “wind,” “muscle”) that are repeated whenever the narrator wants to refer to the goodness or authenticity of a character. Characters like Ismael, Aldama, Torgués, and Felisa get characterized by their exposure to sun and wind and, in the cases of the men, by their muscles, developed from a life outdoors. Conversely, Almagro is only characterized by his bad humor. Almagro's lack of exposure to natural elements has spoiled his character, proving that nature is on the side of those who live in harmony with it instead of exploiting it.

Felisa, given this favorable treatment from the implied author, begins to reveal herself slowly as being for the Uruguayan cause. This affinity is developed through her relationship with Ismael. The two companions discover that their love for each other is natural and organic. Felisa's eyes react naturally to the caress of Ismael: “Ismael alargó las manos temblorosas, y empezó a tantear. Ella dejó hacer. Miróle y sonrióle con los ojos húmedos y brillantes” (129). As the love scene progresses, the implied author introduces natural imagery: “...mas ella lo cogió suave con las dos manos de los rulos, y volvió a beber fuego en aquella boca sombreada por un bigotillo negro, con la tenacidad

de una abeja en un pétalo de flor lujurioso” (129). The passion that Ismael and Felisa feel for one another foreshadows the passion that the revolutionaries will display in battle against the Spaniards.

Ismael and Felisa’s love scene is interrupted by Almagro, whose presence then leads to a knife fight between the two men. Almagro, although he sides with the Spanish, who are of a more urban nature than the revolutionaries, is described with natural imagery in the following passage: “Los ojos de Almagro, redondos y fosfóricos como los del ñacurutú brillaban fijos en las tinieblas; estaba él encorvado con las piernas en comba... Su afilada daga, tendida en guardia baja, oscilante como un péndulo en el crispado puño despedía blancos reflejos” (131). The implied author chooses the “ñacurutú,” the Great Horned Owl, to represent Almagro. He chooses to represent Almagro as having animal-like eyes because of the knife fight that is about to ensue. That passion that Almagro feels toward Ismael has awakened from within him a connection to nature that normally does not appear in his character. In this way the narrator shows that passion and nature are linked in the cosmovision of the novel. Earlier, Felisa observes to herself that Almagro has “ojos de basilisco” (88). This appropriation of animal imagery shows that the natural world is also complex like the human world and that there are certain animals, like the basilisk, that could be considered by some evil or bad-intentioned. At any rate, Almagro is also described as “encorvado,” which indicates, together with previous descriptions of him as being “torcido,” his evil nature.

The contingent with the strongest ties to nature is the revolutionary one. The narrator makes use of long passages of metaphoric language to describe how the *matreros*, that is, the revolutionaries, maintain their hideouts secret:

Pero su guarida era rara vez descubierta. Como la araña al esconderse en su cueva cierra la entrada con una puertecilla de tierra dura; como la culebra que no habita en la galería curva que abre en el subsuelo, y sí en el hueco de uno de sus paredes laterales en donde se arolla y enrosca, como el lechuzón que horada la tierra en espiral, hincha la costra y construye sus diversas puertas y ventanas a todos los vientos, para entrarse por una y aparecer por otra; como la nutria, la vizcacha, el zorro cuyos industriosas viviendas sugerían al instinto del hombre sus artimañas para la mayor seguridad del escondrijo, el gaucho selvático buscaba su sitio de reposo allí donde fuera difícil todo acceso a la planta humana....” (141)

All of these examples from the natural world serve to bolster and give repute to the revolutionaries and their methods of waging war. Without imagery from the natural world, their practices of keeping hidden would seem less great, and the fact that the implied author chooses to describe their practice of hiding in specifically natural terms shows that their bond with nature is a strong one, and that it is greater than the bond that the Spanish colonists have with nature.

Indeed, the knife fight between Ismael and Almagro proves to be a crucial juncture for how nature is seen in the novel. The knife fight signals an intensification of the already existant schism between the two sides. The *matreros* develop a fraternal bond that they refer to as “la Hermandad” from the point of the knife fight onward. They also begin to hide out in “[l]os montes extensos del Río Negro,” a location that is deep within the ever-flexible limits of the natural world (148). The Spanish contingent, in contrast, exists primarily in Montevideo and has less ties with raw, unsullied nature.

Another passage that underlines the ties that the *matreros* share with nature is the following: “El observador que no estuviese en el secreto de las astucias y estratagemas usadas por los habitantes de las malezas, difícilmente podría descubrir huella o signo de vida en el mismo centro de sus maniobras aun en caso, inverosímil de que él se hubiese aventurado hasta allí, sin recibir antes un golpe de facón o una descarga de trabuco a quemaropa” (148). The hypothetical observer, uninitiated in the ways of the gauchos, is allied with the Spaniards, who could be called in this instance “city slickers.” The connection that the *matreros* have with nature, indeed, because of the imperceivability that it affords them before Spanish eyes, is crucial to their victory in la Batalla de Las Piedras. In this sense, the Spaniards were outwitted by the very pastoral vision that attracted them to the New World in the first place. The promise of pure, unadulterated nature brought Europeans by the boatload, but the natives’ ability to evade danger through a retreat into nature proved strong enough to outlast the Spanish colonists.

Additionally, the revolutionaries, specifically Ismael and his companion Aldama, have an intuition about the coming battle that seems to come from nature. The narrator describes this as follows: “Ismael y Aldama, por muchos días, hicieron vida de clausura en el monte, resignándose a esperar con paciencia que el país ardiese en guerra, como se ansiaba, y sentíase palpar en la atmósfera inflamada de aquel tiempo” (165). The “atmósfera inflamada” is a metaphor for the intuition that Ismael and Aldama feel through their connection with nature. That a battle is in the near future for these two is evident through signs from the natural world. Not only the natural world, but also the people that populate it are signs of coming war: “La campaña toda estaba llena de

matreros, y era considerable el número de caballos—sus compañeros inseparables—, adiestrados desde potrillos, a la vida azarosa y aventurera de los amos” (178). Instead of starting the sentence with the men, the subject of the sentence is “la campaña.” The description of the ever-present close relationship between man and horse is also present in the sentence, showing that as man and horse populate the countryside, they create the beginnings of the revolutionary effort.<sup>58</sup>

A character that perhaps represents an even closer bond with nature than Ismael is Tacuabé. Described often as *el charrúa* (the name of a Native American tribe of the area), Tacuabé best represents in human form the pastoral ideal of which the explorers and colonists from the Old World were in search: “Sin embargo, después de arrastrarse breves momentos, ya próximo a la cresta de la loma, el charrúa aplicó el oído al suelo, y estúvose escuchando inmóvil por algunos minutos” (190). Whereas Ismael and Aldama see and sense signs of coming war, Tacuabé listens to the Earth, a more intimate gesture, to identify troops marching. He repeats the gesture on page 227: “Tacuabé puso el oído en tierra.”

Troops of both sides, however, are marching and preparing for battle. Many images, including the following, show how battle preparations were intertwined with nature, exposing the pastoral vision as the ideological initiator of this conflict: “La tropa revolucionaria forzando sus marchas, entróse en las serranías de Minas, escurrióse por sus valles prolongados y estrechos, engrosándose aquí y acullá con distintos grupos” (202). Here, as in other places, the marching of the revolutionary troops is likened to the flow of water through a valley. The fact that the revolutionary army seems part of the

natural cycle of drainage shows further the connection that that side of the conflict shares with the natural environment.

Two of the leaders of the revolutionary effort, Félix y Fructuoso Rivera are also tied explicitly by the narrator to nature. The narrator states about Félix: “Como buen engendro del clima, él poseía... algo del puma, del zorro y del ñandú” (204). In addition to showing how Félix is in cooperation with nature, the narrator here contrasts the leaders of the rebel cause to the colonial army leaders who live in the machine-like Montevideo described at the beginning of the novel. About Fructuoso (Frutos) the narrator explains: “Las revoluciones son, en cierta manera, caminos que andan; y Frutos se lanzó a sus olas, solo, pobre, licencioso, sin miedo el contraste, anhelante de impresiones, resuelto, con muecas de desprecio al pasado y mirada de halcón al porvenir, en cuyos senos oscuros se elevarían pedestales a la prepotencia personal” (206). The likening of Fructuoso’s view of the future to that of a hawk shows that he will be a capable leader, unconsciously in tune with nature like the rest of the revolutionary cohort described.

As the rebel effort becomes more and more organized, further differences begin to appear between the two sides. The rebel side embraces a diversity of racial backgrounds: “Blancos, negros, mestizos, bronceados, formaban en las mismas filas” (214). This inclusion runs intuitively against the ideology of the machine-like Spanish contingent that, one can imagine, generates armies composed of troops of the same or similar racial backgrounds. In this case the rebel effort is more racially diverse than the Montevideo-based forces and perhaps thus makes for a greater representation of the human aspect of the natural environment.

The natural world, however, also provides difficulties for the adventurous rebel forces:

Después de largas marchas pausadas, Ismael y sus compañeros penetraron en lo arduo de la región montañosa regada por hondos canales y lagos, cubierto de morros y crestas, valles profundos, esteros y ciénagas, eslabones y estribaderos erizados de riscos, por cuyas sajaduras y barrancos rodaban gruesos caudales entre espumas mujidoras. (226)

The narrator's interest in natural manifestations shows here how pastoral landscape can provide difficulties as well as the richness and bounty of which the colonists were in search. The advancement of the rebel troops pales in comparison with the difficulties they must surmount in crossing these varied landscapes.

Struggles take place on the battlefield as well, though they are first symbolized in the main characters. One of these symbolic conflicts takes place between Jorge Almagro and Felisa: "Jorge la agarró de un brazo con sus dedos de hierro, bien encajados en las carnes, a la atrajo con aire colérico; el mate cayó al suelo; y siguióse una lucha sorda, callados y jadeantes los dos" (254). The depth to which his fingers sink into her flesh indicates the intensity of the struggle. The falling of the mate symbolizes the destruction of the natural environment in which the Spanish plan ultimately results.

The struggle between the two characters is further described: "El cuerpo de la criolla fue una y otra vez levantado como una paja, para caer luego sobre sus pies a plomo, obluetando con energía. En cierto instante ella bajó la cabeza y mordió a Jorge en la mano, zafándose de sus brazos brutales y escurriéndose afuera" (255). The natural imagery continues to dominate the scene, with Felisa being compared both straw and

lead. The contrast in weight of these two natural objects indicates Felisa's flexibility: she can appear light or heavy depending on the requirements of the situation.

Closing in more on the specifics of combat, beyond the symbolic realm evoked by the alignment of characters, we see that the Spanish side prepares for battle differently than the rebel side: "El virrey Elío, bastante alarmado, mandó que se retirasen dentro de muros todos los hombres de armas llevar, así como la mayor cantidad posible de víveres y ganados. Esta orden se hizo extensiva a las familias de los distritos más próximos a la ciudad; todo ello bajo las penas severas que los tercios del rey se encargarían de aplicar" (256). Not only the extensiveness but also the severity of the order falls in contrast to the way that the rebel forces prepare for battle. The colonists revert to the sociopolitical power of the king as a source of authority. The rebels, of a more democratic nature, perhaps saw the natural environment and the resources contained within it as an authority below which they could unite and make war.

We see the characters fall in line with the side that they represent in the larger cosmovision of the novel. In Almagro's case: "[él] se apresuró por su parte a cumplir las prescripciones del bando como buen español" (257). Almagro's devotion to the throne is unquestioned and one can begin to see a direct link between the King of Spain and the pastoral vision that has brought this conflict to a head.

The symbolic importance of Felisa also does not go unnoticed: "Todos los intereses allí reunidos pertenecían a Felisa, única y universal heredera de la viuda de Fuentes; pero esto ¿qué importaba al mayordomo? El desorden de los tiempos no permitía que imperase otra ley que la fuerza" (257). The statement: "Todos los intereses



allí reunidos pertenecían a Felisa,” exposes the centrality of her character. In heterosexist terms, the man she chooses determines the outcome of the battle or, perhaps, vice versa. Her importance to the novel is underlined when we see that she is the “única y universal heredera de la viuda de Fuentes.” The implied author casts the outcome of the Batalla de Las Piedras as one of the central events in the formation of Uruguayan nationhood. The fact that what is to be done about nature is central to this national formation shows how central and how powerful the pastoral vision has been and is in both history and literature.

Felisa’s decision to side with the revolutionaries is foreshadowed and easily understood early in the novel. A continued indication of her dedication to the countryside and the *criollo* cause is seen when the narrator observes: “Tampoco la criolla se entendía en esas cosas; dejaba hacer sin pedir cuentas y sólo vivía del aire y del sol del pago” (257). The simplicity of her life, appreciating the air and the sun of the countryside, reflects the *criollo* dream to be free of Spanish occupation and to live more simply, in touch with the land and far from the monarchical demands that encroach upon such simple desires.<sup>59</sup>

The idea that Felisa is going to join one side or the other receives a drastic shock when Felisa, riding with Almagro, is bucked off of a horse and dies. The shock is particularly drastic because of all the energy that has been invested in the character of Felisa, energy that is expected to be fulfilled at the end of the narration. Ismael hears the news of Felisa’s death and becomes like an element from nature correspondent with the mood that such an event instills in him: “Estaba frío como una piedra” (266). Ismael also

drinks *mate* to begin the process of understanding Felisa's death. This recourse to the natural world (*mate* being an herbal infusion like tea) perhaps helps him recognize that death, even when it is unexpected like Felisa's, is part of the natural cycle that involves all life: "Sorbía a prisa, por lo que llenaba a cada instante la calabaza, que no era grande ni pequeña" (266). His insistent sipping of the *mate*, perhaps an obsessive sipping, indicates his preoccupation with the overwhelming situation. The weather also mimics the dramatic, emotional reaction that Ismael feels: "El viento había calmado un poco, pero seguía lloviendo con fuerza" (267). The persistent rain can be understood as a cleansing agent for the souls that cared about Felisa, or possibly a reaction of emotion on the part of the natural environment.

One of Ismael's emotional reactions is to return to the flourmill on Almagro's *pago*, where he spent happy days with Felisa: "Encaminóse de allí a la tahona a paso rápido, y guarecióse en el cuartito del flanco, antigua escena de sus amores y de sus odios en donde había gustado un goce inolvidable, y donde él creyó un tiempo haber dejado al mayordomo con el riñón partido" (268). The flourmill is a site for both memories of Felisa and of Almagro. While Ismael feels sadness for Felisa, Ismael's hatred for Almagro will only grow from this point onward. Ismael will finally feel vengeance for Felisa's death, which can be seen symbolically as the death of pastoral nature in Uruguay at the hands of the Spaniards. Felisa's death, although it is sudden, can be seen as the gradual fading of the natural environment as a result of modernization.

Although it is often perceived as passive and inconsequential, the natural environment is the central instigator of the conflict in this novel and, in more expansive

terms, the European colonization of the New World. The narrator makes it clear when he observes: “El amor de la tierra virgen en la masa inculta, fue el punto de arranque de la conflagración” (274). The narrator attributes this love to the “masa inculta,” that the masses somehow control the foreign affairs of a nation like Spain. I would argue that this “amor de la tierra virgen” is a product of people in positions of power desiring money and richness.

The narrator continues his discourse on colonialism by saying that the colonial apparatus in its very nature generates conflict because it takes away natural resources from the original inhabitants:

Incubaba en los fondos misteriosos de la evolución natural que trastorna el orden de las cosas y eleva nuevas civilizaciones sobre ruinas de las viejas o caducas, la idea germinaba en un médium perfectamente preparado para un desborde de energía concentrada, pues que el terreno en tres siglos de abono colonial entrañaba el más fecundo semillero de conflictos. (275)

The narrator relates that the ending of one civilization and the beginning of a new one is also part of the natural process. The colonial occupation of the Americas is part of a natural cycle without foreseeable end.

As the narrator relates, conflict is the essence of that cycle:

Si es cierto que toda revolución política y social es un estallido de pasiones y un aborto prodigioso de ideas, suprimidas aquellas se quiebra la fibra y no se encauzan las últimas en la corriente del tiempo. Para que las aguas de los grandes ríos se presenten puras y tranquilas a la mitad de su curso natural y forzoso es que antes se estrellen en los peñascos al rodar por los vertientes, y que resbalen luego en revuelto y espumoso torbellino confundidas con la broza y el lodo de sus oscuros orígenes. (276)

The metaphor of water underlines the narrator’s argument that the natural cycle without end discussed in the previous paragraph is both turbulent at times and peaceful at others.

Its origins in the undergrowth and mud shows that this cycle is as primordial as the origins of the Earth, which brings our argument around once again to the primacy of the natural world in human conflict.

The novel is a succession of events that lead to a final battle at the end. The narrator's repetitive comments of how the "atmósfera" and "la(s) campaña(s)" show signs of war occur throughout the narration. Here is an example that shows how the situation described in Ismael refers back to how the replacement of one civilization by another through war is a function of life that has continued from much earlier times than just the colonial era in the Americas: "La atmósfera estaba así preñada de gérmenes de descomposición e iba hacerse la ruina por doquiera para levantar sobre los despojos la obra de la vida moderna; en medio de combates que debían durar cerca de tres lustros, como aquellos de los cantos de Ariosto" (277). The air of "descomposición" in the atmosphere shows that Ismael takes place during a decadent time. That much of Latin America was in revolt against its colonial governmental installations is reflected in the narrator's comment: "Las campañas se alzaron en armas" (281). The fact that it is the countryside that rises up in arms shows how closely linked humans are with the land they occupy.

The narrator introduces Artigas.<sup>60</sup> From the description that he provides, one might think at first that Artigas could be the leader of any military unit, colonial or rebel. Seemingly the only thing that links him with the natural environment and the cause of the revolutionaries is his barbaric simplicity:

...Artigas era todo un caudillo. No bebía, ni jugaba. Su alimento ordinario aun en medio de los azores de la existencia activa era la carne asada, o el churrasco

puesto en sazón en la ceniza ardiente. Vestía traje sencillo; chaqueta y pantalón de paño fino, botas altas, poncho o capote en el invierno. La misma sencillez en el recado, de buena calidad, pero sin trena, ni lujo. (282)

His manner of seasoning meat in the hot ashes of a fire shows a simplicity that perhaps would not be so apparent in a leader of a more civilized cause. In terms of civilization and barbarity, the colonists can be considered more civilized and the rebels more barbaric.<sup>61</sup>

Artigas is aware of his role in the flow of history so successfully compared with the flow of water. He knows the following:

La revolución necesitaba triunfar sobre el gran peligro permanente del dominio español en Montevideo; o por lo menos aislarlo, sublevando las campañas y dirigiendo las muchedumbres armadas hacia esa plaza fuerte que llegó a contener dentro de sus muros ciclópeos seis mil soldados, cuatrocientos oficiales, seiscientas piezas de artillería, un inmenso parque de petrechos y cien embarcaciones en la rada. (283)

While members of the revolutionary contingent are described, in other passages, as being spontaneous and instinctive and passionate, the colonial troops are described in terms of number. The colonial armies are fighting on behalf of a monarchy in distant Spain. For this reason the countryside means more to the rebel armies; it is their home. The Spaniards are merely there to extract riches from the land and take it back with them to Europe.<sup>62</sup>

When it rains steadily for three and a half days even the rebel armies are affected: “Durante tres días y medio un cierzo helado y el agua que caía copiosa de las nubes acosaron persistente la división en marcha, inundando los terrenos bajos y compeliendo a la tropa a acampar en las lomas donde era casi imposible el vivac bajo tan ruda inclemencia” (285). Nature shows in this instance that it is independent of picking sides

in matters of human affairs, even if one side thinks more favorably of it. The narrator comments: “La división de Maldonado hizo alto cerca de la villa bajo una lluvia densa acompañada de una de esas ventolinhas otoñales que nada desmerecen a las borrascas del invierno” (288). His comparison of the autumn winds to the winter winds shows how, while it may have been cold for the army to endure in that autumn rain, the prospect of war could have possibly been completely absurd in the deep cold of winter, with cold rain or snow.

In contrast to the inclement weather that precedes battle, the day of combat “Llegó, por fin, tranquilo y radiante” (293). The implied author’s intention to evoke a tranquil and radiant day of combat shows how awaited this day is in the minds of the participants and how the battle itself is the climactic culmination of the narrative. It begins with each side maneuvering strategically in order to gain the best position and maintain it:

En sus primeras horas, el comandante en jefe español que, como Artigas, había intentado algunos movimientos para <<batir en detalle>>, tomó la ofensiva resueltamente; y dejando en Las Piedras una gran guardia con un cañón cargado a metralla, dirigióse con cerca de mil hombres de las tres armas y cuatro piezas, al encuentro de Artigas, quien a su vez venía ya en marcha con ánimo de no ceder un palmo de terreno a su infantería veterana. (293)

The narrator refers to the Spanish commander-in-chief and to Artigas. This shows how important leaders are to warfare. Their decisions affect how the natural environment will be treated and who will be making use of it in the future. However, the difference in the way that each leader is treated by the narrator is indicative of the implied author’s own prejudices regarding the subject of Uruguayan independence from Spain: Artigas is called by his name and has sections of the text that are devoted to describing him. The

Spanish commander-in-chief is paid much less attention and doesn't even merit a name throughout the course of the narrative.

When Ismael enters the fight, the reader is reminded of the brewing conflict between the aforementioned character and Almagro: "Jorge Almagro se agitaba a la cabeza en un caballo tordillo negro, y Velarde pudo verle a través de la humaza blanquecina sembrada de fogonazos que se extendía al frente de la línea" (297). The reader sees Almagro through Ismael's eyes, indicating once again the general affinity of the reader and the narrator to the cause of Uruguayan independence. The "humaza blanquecina" through which Ismael sees Almagro gives a natural manifestation of the hatred that now dwells in Ismael's heart.

The action of the novel reaches a high point when Ismael kills Almagro on page 304. Although embittered by the loss of Felisa, the Uruguayan nationals are victorious. In terms of nature, we see that the colonial effort to continue exploiting the people of Uruguay for their natural resources comes to an end. According to the narrator, Almagro's body symbolizes the return of the Spanish to their home country: "El cuerpo de Almagro sacudido en infernal agonía, machucado al fin en las piedras del terreno, hecho una bola sangrienta, pasó rodando sobre los despojos del combate, y al llegar a la línea no era ya más que un montón repugnante de carnes y huesos" (304). The language of this passage shows the significance that this scene lends to the novel as a whole. The narrator's use of "las piedras" to describe the place where Almagro passes away shows that his passing represents also the passing of the Spanish colonial presence from Uruguay because the place of battle, too, is called Las Piedras. Additionally, Almagro's

dead body, pummeled by the action of war, becomes nothing more than a “montón repugnante de carnes y huesos,” showing that his body is now just raw material, soon to return to the earth from which it came. In this sense, Almagro returns to the pastoral landscape that he so desired to possess when he was alive.

As the battle that was long hoped for comes to an end, the narrator is in agreement about the importance of the countryside: “...el desenlace de aquella batalla, de cuyo resultado dependía la suerte de las campañas” (307). The narrator is certain that the control of the rural countryside depends on the outcome of the battle. While the people of the countryside are celebrating, the atmosphere in Montevideo is grim: “Los redobles del tambor se sucedían a cada instante en la ciudadela, y parecía sentirse en la atmósfera el olor de la pólvora de Las Piedras como un anuncio aciago de derrota” (310).<sup>63</sup> The city of Montevideo itself, like the countryside that surrounds it, will be turned over to the nationals.

In this sense, although the battle is quick to take place, its effects linger among the victors: “Todavía arden las venas, bulle el cerebro, el suelo está empapado, fresco está el olor de los cuerpos muertos, la pasión del valor aún palpita fogosa, el sensualismo de mando se acrece e increpa...” (312). The freshness of the odor of dead bodies elicits the reality that the human and natural worlds are two different entities. The manifestation of dead bodies on the battlefield evokes that not only are these two worlds separate, but that they also have shared elements: the decomposition of the dead bodies represents a state of transition between human and natural. The presence of dead bodies at the end of the novel suggests that one of the novel’s messages is that the human and natural worlds are



closer than one would originally imagine. The excitement evoked in this passage is closely linked with the human body, further evidence of the intimacy of nature and humans. The pumping veins and throbbing brains are signs of an intermingling of the two worlds and make a distinction between the two hard to specify.

The attitude of pride, a human trait rather than a natural one, comes as a result of the headiness of victory. The narrator continues:

...los nuevos prestigios, las prepotencias que han surgido en los campos como los árboles indígenas, con raíces profundas, las huestes insubordinadas que se creen con alientos de legiones, la audacia agreste que se alza al nivel de la superioridad moral, los antagonismos crudos formados al calor de la emulación y de la gloria, el celo del pago convertido en fanatismo social y político, en célula latente de repúblicas forjadas a botes de lanza, todo se agolpa y recrudece, se exagera y desarrolla en formas más siniestras a los últimos resplandores del incendio, subdividiendo el principio de autoridad entre los fuertes y reemplazando con las prácticas licenciosas la regla de obediencia, que aparece entonces como ley de odiosa tiranía. (312)

This passage shows that the pride of the pastoral vision, the entitlement to the riches of Uruguay's natural environment that the colonial Spaniards felt, is replaced by a new kind of pride that is best described as an arrogance toward manifestations of the colonial power and authority of which the nationals are giddy to be free. This pride and arrogance comes also with a sense of unity among the victors: "¡Sólo guerras sin cuartel, implacables luchas a cuchillo podían debilitar o destruir ese vínculo formado en los desiertos por la licencia del gaucho errante y la barbarie charrúa!" (312-13) The invocation of the desert brings back the idea of sun and wind, two important natural conditions in the desert, conditions that mold the gaucho spirit. The victors could go back to being gauchos and having knife fights, but they have gained the ownership of their own natural resources, something worth maintaining.

The final group to be swayed by the victory of the Orientales is the monks who remained in Montevideo during the battle. The battle, for the monks, is no more than a disturbance in the distance. The narrator relates Fray Benito's vision of the retreating Spanish forces: "...ocurríasele al fraile que él distinguía en el horizonte—allá donde hervían las irritaciones nativas—una columna espesa de polvo y chispas que levantaban los cascos de los potros, sacudida por un viento caliente de tormenta, y que venía avanzándose desde los aduares solitarios entre siniestros rumores" (313). That the retreating troops were on the horizon shows that they had already been moving for some time. The troops, now retreating from the city they once called home, are getting a sense of what the desert life of the gauchos may have entailed, with its elements of sun and wind.

After this image, the narrative returns to Montevideo and deals specifically with the monks ensconced within. The narrator evokes again the first paragraph of the novel when he relates: "Montevideo, plaza fuerte de primer orden, y desde luego centro importante de arribo, refugio y resistencia del punto de vista estratégico, revestía bajo otro aspecto todas las formas características de una gran aldea rodeada de murallas, donde la vida social por su raquitis y atrofia no trascendía en sus mayores expansiones más allá del foso de los baluartes" (315). The difference between the passage at the beginning of the novel and this passage is that this one paints Montevideo in a much weaker, debilitated position. The colonial spirit that once pervaded this city has been extinguished.

In the final chapter of the novel, the main character becomes Fray Benito. He reflects upon the action of the novel and draws conclusions for the reader:

Los graves sucesos ocurridos en la campaña de menos de dos meses, el estado actual de los espíritus dentro de las murallas, el peligro de nuevas expediciones de ultramar, la energía demoledora de la Junta porteña, el desarrollo asombroso de la acción revolucionaria; todo esto surgía revuelto y rodaba por su cerebro, y veía al fin desenvolverse ante sus ojos aquellos tiempos alumbrados con luz de incendio de sus pasados ensueños, tiempos de perturbación profunda, de ideales soberbios, de instintos y de pasiones poderosas que iban preparando las luchas formidables de organización definitiva. (317)

Fray Benito is conscious that the Batalla de Las Piedras has changed the political layout within Uruguay. The narrator cites the factors listed above and concludes that people like Fray Benito are living in revolutionary times. It seems that, with the Batalla de Las Piedras behind him, Fray Benito is now ready to think about the consequences of the Spanish withdrawal from Uruguay. One of the consequences, for the time being, is revelry in the countryside: “Luego, volvía a caer su pensamiento a plomo con pertinacia en el medium aislado en que vivía, y en las fuerzas sin trabazón ni ligadura disciplinaria que se alzaban en los campos gritando guerra...” (317). Although Fray Benito, since his allegiance has been with the Spanish for the duration of the conflict, feels defeated, he also begins at this point to garner the courage to break with the Spanish colonial establishment and side with the victorious revolutionaries.

The narrator delves deeper into the psychology of the victorious protagonists. Of particular concern is their attitude toward their new ownership and domination of the land of Uruguay: “Insistía esa noche en figurarse a esas fuerzas vencedoras, libres de la tutela severísima, con el desierto por delante, dueñas ya del terreno y de los beneficios del cambio, de una crudeza virgen en el arranque, en la iniciativa y en la acción, abriéndose

rumbos por instinto o por un odio incurable a todo poder absorbente...” (317-18). The freedom that the Uruguayan people feel at their release from Spanish control manifests itself in several ways, many of which are intertwined with the natural environment. In the above passage, the desert represents the freedom that the Uruguayan people feel toward not being under “la tutela severísima” of the colonial religious establishment, including Fray Benito, an establishment that limited the freedom of the people. They now own their own land and are free to cultivate its riches according to their own desires. As the narrator cites, there has occurred a transition of pastoral riches.<sup>64</sup> By “crudeza virgen” the narrator means that nature is not just an untouched vessel to be kept beautiful, but it is also the raw material from which humans construct civilizations.

The newly won freedom of the Uruguayan people reveals itself to be contagious. As Fray Benito comments: “Cuando un día aventuré yo aquí un juicio, diciendo que la iniciativa de Elío era como el primer germen de una idea revolucionaria y fui redargüido, dejé al tiempo que lo confirmase...En ese tiempo estamos, hermanos. En su fórmula aceptada como tal, con otras tendencias y fines, la que ha armado ejércitos, y la ha encerrado en esta jaula de piedra” (319). From his monk’s cell (his “jaula de piedra”), Fray Benito observes, making use of a metaphor from the natural environment, that the Spanish colonial regime was keeping him from being free.

It appears that this restriction on freedom is all that is keeping the Spanish regime alive. As Fray Benito relates: “Rendida la plaza, desaparecería con ella el centro de actividad militar y el nervio de resistencia” (320). With the Spanish forces eradicated

from Montevideo (specifically the Plaza de la Matriz), citizens can ideally choose a life of freedom and democracy.

Uruguay's case is not an isolated one. As Fray Benito relates, Uruguay's fight for independence serves as an example to other nations seeking independence. Fray Benito feels that if he joins the revolutionary cause, others will follow his example and do the same:

Mi afecto decidido por la causa de América, y mi amor por el país en que hemos nacido, no me arrastran hasta el punto de desconocer en la nación que nos ha dado su idioma y sus hábitos buenos y malos, esa virilidad patriótica y esa pasión guerrera perseverante de que ha ofrecido tantas veces, y está dando ahora mismo ejemplos al mundo. (320)

Fray Benito's love for "el país en que hemos nacido" is another indicator of the desire of any people to own their own land and not be ruled from afar by a distant colonial government. While he values this independence that Uruguay has received, he also recognizes that Spanish culture, over the course of several centuries, has pervaded the landscape and become second nature for the inhabitants of this country. The pastoral vision, indeed, is crucial to the legacy that the Spanish left behind: "Una prueba elocuente de ese vigor de raza, y de esa fe en sus destinos, la tenemos en la persistencia obstinada con que sostiene en América sus pretensiones de dominación absoluta..." (320). The persistence of the Spanish must be attributed to the strength of their pastoral vision, their capacity to imagine and desire the richness and resources of foreign lands.

The Spanish regime in Uruguay, however, is retreating. The monks, as well, are searching for ways to ally themselves with the victorious Uruguayans. As the monks, at the end of the novel, lean toward the cause of the Uruguayans, an official of the cloister

dismisses them, proclaiming: “¡Ahora pueden irse con sus matreros!” (323) The official’s language shows that he still despises the opposition and that he will return to Spain disconcerted and disappointed. The power of the pastoral vision shows itself again in that, when the pastoral dream is not achieved, the unfulfilled expectation causes the disappointment that this particular official feels. However, the situation for the monks joining the rebels doesn’t seem any brighter: “Fray Benito[,] que encabezaba el grupo, llevaba sus ojos puestos en el fondo de las tinieblas, cual si allí se bosquejase la imagen de un destino misterioso, de un porvenir preñado de tormentas, bajo cuyo negro dosel aún tardaría mucho en lucir una aurora de paz y ventura!” (323) The darkness of the future for these monks has to do with their previous alliance with the Spanish. However, the peace and fortune that the narrator promises will be part of a natural cycle, once the shame of the monks’ former alliance diminishes.

Fray Benito sets forth the final image of the novel: *sangre*. He states that blood accompanies every great revolution: “La historia prueba que hubo sangre antes de Cristo, en Cristo, y después del sublime apóstol; y ella seguirá derramándose en los tiempos, ya en nombre del odio nunca satisfecho, ya en nombre del ideal nunca alcanzado... La naturaleza humana [la] necesita para perpetuarse, de su propia esencia” (324). Blood falls within the pastoral vision in many ways. The pastoral vision is both an “odio nunca satisfecho” and an “ideal nunca alcanzado.” It is as central to human relations as human nature; it is part of human nature. The narrator concludes with gusto the following: “...la sangre correrá en los años hasta que todo vuelva a su centro, y aun después... ¡Esa es la ley!” (324) Blood, then, is a sign of the interchange of contrasting ideologies, which often

manifests itself in conflict. That this would be “la ley” shows how very central ideologies, especially ideologies about nature, are to the building of nations. As would be extremely clear from an analysis of the effects of colonialism in the Americas, the pastoral vision of the Spanish monarchists in Uruguay forever changed the way that people in this part of the world live, and it continues to shape society all over the world.

In summary, although the Uruguayan nationals were more in touch with the natural environment than their adversaries, they were not merely the object of colonial domination that the Spanish envisioned when they came to conquer South America. They showed that the power of the pastoral vision lies not in its accuracy, but in its capacity to motivate large forces of people and sums of money. Because of the resistance that the Uruguayan nationals set forth, as documented in Ismael, the pastoral vision was shown to be just that: a vision, a projection. Nature, because of the people it has to defend it, is not easily conquered; and the Spanish occupation of Uruguay was eventually rescinded with the Batalla de Las Piedras.

Although the novel begins with images of the Spanish occupation, the bulk of the novel is dedicated to Ismael, his companions and their victory at the hands of the colonial contingent. This personalization of the rebel troops is another way in which the implied author demonstrates that the natural world is not a passive object to be manipulated by foreign powers. While the Spanish armies are described as being mechanical and impersonal, their Uruguayan counterparts have names and personalities. Nature is central enough to the people that inhabit it that they are willing to defend it and spill blood for it. The difference between the two parties that fought in that famous Uruguayan battle is that

the Uruguayans were defending nature and defending their homes while the Spanish were following a vision of nature in which it provides endless, incontaminable bounty for an unlimited amount of life forms that depend on it to survive and to thrive.

Lawrence Buell's "New World Pastoral" describes the process of Uruguayan nationhood, especially in the context of Ismael. Often the implied author also represents the conflict as one of urban colonizer and rural colonized. I would like to suggest what Butazzoni hints at, in his prologue to the novel, that city and country are "[d]os espacios que tienden a converger hacia el final..." (15). This convergence is a merging of opposing forces, a type of mestizaje. I would even like to suggest that mestizaje—or hybridization—is the final result of the battle between city and country. As British scholar Raymond Williams indicates, the separation of country and city really implies interaction and conflict:

It is easy to separate the country and the city and then their modes of literature: the rural or regional; the urban or metropolitan. The existence of just these separated modes, in the twentieth century, is significant in itself, as a way of responding to a connected history. But there are always some writers who insist on the connections, and among these are a few who see the transition itself as decisive, in a complex interaction and conflict of values. (264)

Further evidence that mestizaje is implied in the outcome of this conflict comes from Rodríguez Monegal as he writes about Grito de gloria: "En la batalla de Sarandí con que culmina esta novela y se cierra el volante central del tríptico, Acevedo Díaz enlaza contrapuntísticamente todos estos hilos humanos logrando una trama ceñida en que los distintos colores de la piel crean en definitivo el color múltiple, mestizo, de la patria" (136). Furthermore, it is not only ideology that is undergoing a process of blending. Rodríguez Monegal continues by mentioning a "vínculo de sangre derramada," from



which image he derives the title of his book on Acevedo Díaz's novels, Vínculo de sangre (138). Mestizaje perhaps can be the only answer to a conflict that takes place between warring ideologies. As Rodríguez Monegal concludes, at the end of the novel: "se reanuda la línea de acción montevideana y se enlazan los temas del campo, fuertemente conjugados y resueltos en Las Piedras, con los de la ciudad expectante" (52). Since the novel's action is based out of Montevideo, the capital city becomes the site for said mixing of blood and ideology.

The mestizaje that takes place as a result of Spanish aggression on Uruguayan soil is also part of Rama's discussion. He observes that Uruguayan gaucho poetry "se trata de los primeros ejemplos de mestizaciones literarias que conoce nuestra América" (46). So the tradition of mestizaje is deeply imbedded in Uruguayan literary history, as well—it does not begin or end with Ismael. As the narrator expresses: "La marea humana no tiene orillas" (46). That is to say, there are no boundaries to define race when blood is being mixed on the battlefield. Although this may be true, Fray Benito later states the following: "[I]a fibra de los que se han rebelado es demasiado fuerte para que el triunfo mismo suavice su fiereza" (Acevedo Díaz 324). He is, above all, making a comment about how Ismael's slaying of Almagro did not immediately stave his hatred, but he is also saying that, even in the heat of battle, racial and ideological boundaries and relations remain in place; that, even at the height of the Battle of Las Piedras, the Uruguayans knew they were fighting for independence from the colonial power of Spain.

Acevedo Díaz's involvement in Uruguayan politics greatly influenced his four historical novels. His commitment to politics fueled his desire to write novels about the

Uruguayan national foundation. Romanticism helped him evoke passion for the Uruguayan quest for independence while Realism aided him in the representation of history from a fictional point of view. The concept of New World Pastoral is central to this novel in that it constitutes the European vision of the Americas and it explains how nature was eventually (but not completely) dominated by industrial developments arriving from Europe and North America.

This novel's conflict is also centered around the way in which the main character of Ismael is a fierce, virile gaucho. A quality that the novel exudes comes from the pen of Rubén Darío, who describes Acevedo Díaz's work as "el soplo poético de la vida de la pampa," by which he means to say that gauchos supported the cause of independence but that they are on their way to extinction because of the growth of cities and urban ways of life (Acevedo Díaz (H.) 268). Darío also hints at the idea that while the gaucho is disappearing, he will remain forever in poetry. This is a testament to the gaucho character, a character that, according to Rama: "ha sido derrotada y sometida" (109).

The most appropriate way to understand the novel's conflict and the way that the pastoral vision embodies it is through the eyes of Ismael Velarde and his fellow gauchos. To them, the rural environment is central to their way of life. The threat of Spanish colonialism is a threat that their countrysides will be replaced with cities and all the industrial developments that come with them. Through the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the gaucho slowly disappeared. His disappearance is most prominently recorded in Ricardo Güiraldes' novel Don Segundo Sombra (1928) in which the main character, after a life of becoming acquainted with gaucho traditions, becomes

literate and returns to his position as rural landowner, far from the influence of the rough life of the gaucho.

### **Chapter III: Urban/Rural Conflicts in El terruño, by Carlos Reyles**

The dynamic relationship between nature and society deeply affects fiction in turn-of-the-twentieth-century Uruguay. Carlos Reyles' worldview was that nature exists for the betterment of society: it feeds, clothes, and provides shelter for those who would take advantage of nature's bounty. Nature in itself was not Reyles' principal concern—he was interested more in the way that nature could be appropriated for human use. His worldview is best summarized by Alfonso Llambías de Azevedo, who states: “en la naturaleza todas las especies se devoran; todas las condiciones se devoran en la sociedad” (51). Nature, like society, is a process of production and consumption. As long as nature continues to be bountiful, society will reap benefits. As many environmentalists have pointed out, this attitude, while a common idea for the time period, can also be detrimental in the sense that it assumes that nature will always produce what is necessary for human survival.<sup>65</sup> In more recent times we have found that the natural world may not always be able to sustain the growing demand of a population. The attitude that only hard work is required to provide for society is ill-founded because society must also pay attention to whether their practices are sustainable.<sup>66</sup> In this way we can see in the writings of Reyles the origins of the widely recognized environmental crisis that became full-fledged in the 1970s.

In El terruño (1916), nature is fundamental in organizing the text. A similar, yet more modern, environmental concern appears in Lawrence Buell's seminal ecocritical work, The Environmental Imagination (1995), when Buell cites a proponent of the environment as stating: “we must make the rescue of the environment the central

organizing principle for civilization” (2).<sup>67</sup> El terruño asserts the importance of this statement. This novel witnesses a conflict between different perspectives toward nature. Through a careful presentation of characters, we discover contrasts between different views on how to treat the environment. The environmental theories of Buell, Christopher Manes, and Glen A. Love illuminate the primacy of the environment not only in literature, but in human life. In this chapter, I analyze El terruño from an ecocritical perspective as outlined by these theorists.

El terruño is set in Uruguay, far enough away from Montevideo to be rural, but not so far away that it loses touch with urban ways of life. The novel highlights the conflict between the two environmental spheres. As Sarah Bollo asserts, in El terruño Reyles “analiza nuestros problemas de la oposición de ciudad y campaña, asunto en el cual está escondido todo el porvenir del país” (13). El terruño is indeed a manifesto on how the countryside should best be appropriated for the use of Uruguay’s people.

The three main characters of the novel, doña Ángela (Mamagela; an immigrant from Andalucía, Spain), Temístocles Pérez y González (Tocles), and Primitivo, live in and around “El Ombú,” a local *pulpería* run by Mamagela. Tocles and Primitivo are brothers-in-law given that they are married to Mamagela’s daughters, Amabí y Celedonia, respectively. A portion of the novel is dedicated to Primitivo and the manner in which his life is ruined when his brother, Jaime, seduces Celedonia. As a result of the ensuing conflict between Primitivo and Jaime, Primitivo receives a characteristic scar on his face. This aspect of the novel then follows Primitivo’s decline into madness. He revenges himself against Jaime, but it is not enough to rescue him from his degeneration.

Celedonia dies, and Primitivo, in a gesture of hopelessness, sets fire to his home and dies among the flames. This chapter, however, focuses more on the relationship between Tocles and Mamagela. This relationship, which functions on an ideological level as Reyles' manifesto for rural Uruguay, drives the plot and serves as a vehicle for his opinions about the place of the natural environment in Uruguayan society. Tocles is influenced by Mamagela's solidarity with the land. He tries, for a time, to operate his own farm, but his idle utopianism leads him to failure. He finally becomes, however, as a farmer and politician, thanks to Mamagela's influence.

The external conflict of the novel takes place between political oppositions that have different views of nature. A note that precedes the beginning of the narrative talks about Reyles' essay: "El ideal nuevo," which purports "una unión de las fuerzas económicas del país [de Uruguay]," and the foundation of the Federación Rural. Although these elements don't expressly appear in the narrative, El terruño is a novelization of these events (Reyles 2). Menafra describes the Federación Rural as "la rebelión del campo contra la ciudad, en nombre de nobles ideales" (143). In this way, he notes how Reyles has set up a binary opposition between city and country, an opposition that will come to be represented in some of the novel's characters. Indeed: "El terruño se propone la evocación poderosa del campo, o mejor, de la vida e ideas que el campo infunde en los hombres, en abierta oposición con la ciudad" (Menafra 181). The "life and ideas that the countryside arouses" are the signs that Reyles praises, as we will observe later, the bounty of the natural world, but only to the extent that it can be useful for the purposes of humankind.

El terruño is a work that, although it is set in a pre-crisis epoch, demonstrates the beginnings of the environmental crisis we are currently experiencing. This focus will help develop a more overarching project of analyzing various late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century texts and the way in which they relate to the crisis of the last four decades. In all of this I hope to bring into play what Glen A. Love calls: “recovering the lost social role of literary criticism,” because the way that we critique the environment and its literary representation affects the well-being of that environment (238).

Enrique Anderson Imbert describes Carlos Reyles as the best novelist of the period and praises the realism with which he depicts the Uruguayan countryside and its characters. His comment that Reyles writes “si no las mejores páginas desde un punto de vista estilístico, por lo menos las más duraderas,” demonstrates how writers of fiction from this time period were working to define a national literature, a body of work that would define a nation (247). Reyles’ vision of how the nation should be governed becomes clear in this respect when he promotes, according to John S. Brushwood, the utility of the pragmatic and hard-working subject, represented by Mamagela, compared to the inutility of the intellectual dreamer that we see in Tocles (La novela hispanoamericana 37).

Jean Franco is in agreement with Brushwood that El terruño is a commentary on how the nation of Uruguay can move forward; she sees the novel as a depiction of how the good landowner (again, referring to Mamagela) is foundational for the Uruguayan state. Franco argues one step further by observing the role of the land in the formation and development of the Uruguayan state: “the land offers a permanence and security

against the fluctuations and change of the rest of society, and that it is the duty of the intellectual to go back to the land” (65). Thus the character of Mamagela, as well as her entire clan, including Primitivo, becomes important in that she represents the solidity and reliability of the land. Additionally, Franco not only points out that Tocles is part of the problem in Reyles’ worldview, she also suggests a way for him to redeem himself in terms of national progress: he must go back to the land, which he does with Mamagela’s help at the end of the novel. Concerning the land in El terruño, Torres-Rioseco comments: “...El terruño no es la obra bravía que al lector extranjero espera de estos países nuestros en los cuales parece que fuera de obligación comentar lo grandioso y lo exótico” (64). Rather than glorify the beauty, grandeur, and exoticism of the Uruguayan countryside, Reyles, in El terruño, suggests a way in which humans can take advantage of the land and use it for their own purposes without abusing it (although we can see that the project of modernization that we begin to see signs of in El terruño ultimately leads to the environmental crisis of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century).

Reyles’ affinity for hard work, however, was not an end in itself: he was also a great proponent of materialism. Born into a wealthy family, Reyles continued to believe, through the course of his life, that the possession of material objects was a sign of great achievement. As Luis A. Menafrá puts it: “Estaba dotado de un ansia extraordinaria por la posesión de las cosas, sublimada alternativamente, en prodigiosa capacidad creadora” (14). Moreover, he not only lived out his materialistic inclinations, he also reproduced them in his creative output. For this reason El terruño proposes the idea that a person must work to accumulate material things. Evident in the novel is “...the emphasis [Reyles



places] on wealth as the Aladdin's lamp for strength and power..." (Sisto 457). Reyles' essay "El ideal nuevo" on the importance of the countryside in the economic production of the Uruguayan nation, touches on just that, and, as mentioned, El terruño becomes the novelization of this ideal.

Reyles' preoccupation with the accumulation of wealth also has a racial dynamic. Sisto observes the following about the economic philosophies of Ramiro de Maeztu and Reyles: "Because of the economic situation of the Anglo-Saxon races, both men admired them, Maeztu the English and Reyles the North Americans" (457). Reyles materialistic views, then, go beyond a simple evaluation of material wealth: he respects people of a certain race because of their perceived ability to generate capital and create a wealthy middle class. For this reason Reyles' economic beliefs are tinged with racism. As we have observed in Chapter One, José Enrique Rodó speaks in Ariel against such racial-materialistic views. With Rodó's anti-materialist agenda in mind, I would like to suggest that materialism obstructs the view that we must sustain the environment to ensure the survival of future generations of life on earth. The positivistic opinion that it is best to comply with scientific and technological advances could, in fact, be detrimental to the conservation of the natural world.

As Menafrá relates, Reyles did earn the respect and admiration of the gauchos that he came to know: "Los gauchos lo respetan [a Reyles], porque tiene las cualidades que ellos admiran, y está exento de los vicios que los condenan a vivir en la pobreza y malandanza" (25). However, while it is true that Reyles had a good relationship with the gauchos that he wrote about, this does not necessarily mean that he respected nature to

any degree. Allen remarks that Reyles always had a close relation with the country, but through the eyes of a landowner (91). Furthermore, according to Tinker, gauchos weren't at all advocates for nature or representatives for its conservation. British scholar Raymond Williams argues: "... 'pastoral,' with its once precise meaning, was undergoing in the same period an extraordinary transformation. Its most serious element was a renewed intensity of attention to natural beauty, but this is now the nature of observation, of the scientist or the tourist, rather than of the working countryman" (20). If we take "the working countryman" to mean "the gauchos of the Southern Cone" we can see that it was more the role of "the scientist or the tourist" to involve himself in discourses surrounding pastoralism. Thus Reyles, like the gauchos, cannot be seen as an advocate for the preservation of the natural world. Instead, he must be seen as a shrewd businessman interested in advancing his ideological positions through his fiction.

However, he also innovated stylistically. While he did distinctly work within the realist-naturalist paradigm, he also subverted that dominant literary style. Sabani Leguizamón expresses the following: "su adhesión a las nuevas corrientes finiseculares que en Europa y América intentan superar al realismo imperante..." (32). Traces of the stylistic past, however, are hidden in his innovations. Brushwood comments that, among Spanish American novels of the period: "...there was much naturalism [in these novels], but few of them were naturalist novels; it is also apparent that the influence of naturalism was modified not only by realism but even more by continued commitment to Romanticism" (Genteel Barbarism 17). His comment suggests that novelists of the period were still developing their approaches to novelistic style. It also takes into account that

the turn of the twentieth century was a time of transition for narrative fiction: traces of Romanticism remain in many of the works together with realist and *modernista* techniques.

Another contribution to the dialogue on Reyles' style comes from Torres-Rioseco, who states: "la universalidad de sus temas le da un aspecto eminentemente europeo a toda su labor, europeo antiespañol, si se me permite la expresión" (53). Reyles drew more inspiration from French and Russian realists than he did from Spanish writers like Valera, Pardo Bazán and Galdós. His novel Beba (1894) owes a particular debt to Flaubert's Madame Bovary (61).

Although he was a landowner concerned with the expansion of his own personal wealth, his desire to appreciate new forms of literary expression led him to embrace contemporary attitudes. However, the general source of these attitudes was the United States and Europe. By drawing his influences from abroad, Reyles chose to support the side of European civilization. In El terruño Mamagela's embrace of technology is the novelistic evidence of this choice.

At times Reyles' stylistic preoccupation appears to be simple. Nevertheless, in El terruño, the conflict between urban and rural is actually very complex. Reyles supports a rural approach to nation-building, with the agricultural sector carrying the bulk of the responsibility for growth, but he also supports literary trends from Europe, especially French decadentism, which is a direct link to civilization and urban society. This complexity is captured well by Llambías de Azevedo, who relates: "Unos aprecian El terruño por ser una novela optimista, aún en medio de las desventuras de una campaña

asolada por la revolución y los peligros de la vida nómada; otros la toman como una novela frustrada, por su saturado ‘filosofismo’ y su excesiva ‘literatura,’ sin ahondar mayormente en la realidad social” (45). The complexity of the novel and its relation to the urban/rural conflict remains even in the face of characters who sometimes appear to be one-sided and flat.

Mary-Eleanor Maule observes another factor that lends complexity to the discussion: “Reyles rarely becomes lyrical in respect to the natural world. Rural life is idealized or abstracted repeatedly through Reyles’ works...El embrujo de Sevilla even includes a brief pastoral idyll extolling the wholesome virtues of fresh country air, but its tone is rather one of the city dweller who appreciates the quaintly picturesque” (57). This lack of lyricism shows that El terruño is also complex stylistically in that it incorporates elements of *modernismo* as well as retaining realist-naturalist elements. The idea that the novel idealizes nature parallels Reyles’ belief that hard-working farm communities will be the backbone of the developing Uruguayan nation. I would argue, alongside Maule, that this desire to see Uruguay grow up as a nation of farmers is central to El terruño. “El ideal nuevo,” the essay on which Reyles bases his novel, states clearly that nature is subordinated to the demands of the human race. Even considering, however, the strong bond that Reyles has with the land, Maule affirms the following: “Reyles, however, is incapable of feeling, or at least of expressing, real depth of sentiment in the face of natural beauty” (57-58). This incapacity I attribute to his desire to make his novels, and El terruño in particular, conform to his already mentioned thesis about how the countryside should be managed.

In The Environmental Imagination (1995), Lawrence Buell defines “the environment” as the nonhuman element in nature, a view belonging to the “first wave” of ecocriticism, as set forth in the Introduction. Since the environment is everything nonhuman, Primitivo, a gaucho with close ties to the land, is excluded from this environmental category. However, Buell offers the following view: “human history is implicated in natural history” (7). From natural history comes human history in such a way that the latter depends on the former. Thus, Primitivo demonstrates his strong link with nature by recognizing that he is dependent on nature for his existence. What is more, his name itself suggests a harmonious bond with nature. Reyles’ decision to select such a name reflects his intention to associate Primitivo with the earth. He describes Primitivo as follows: “Era aquel un indiecito de piernas arqueadas, por el uso del caballo, y gordos mofletes, dorados por el sol” (Reyles 44). He is a voluntary participant within nature, and nature leaves its mark upon him in the form of his bowleggedness and his tanned countenance.

Before writing El terruño, Reyles wrote a short work, Primitivo (1896), which has to do with a main character of the same name, who continues to be represented similarly in El terruño.<sup>68</sup> To expand upon the themes of Primitivo, Reyles created the character Tocles that would clash with Primitivo’s affinity with the countryside. The upsurge of Tocles has contributed to a different and more dynamic work in El terruño.

Reyles has been known as a writer who incorporates archetypal characters into his novels. Arturo Sergio Visca in particular comments on Reyles’ tendency to “...enfrentar dialécticamente a dos o más personajes que se oponen antagónicamente ya esa por sus

características psicológicas o por las posturas ideológicas que sostienen...” (28). By doing this, Reyles enforces a doctrine of binary opposites that works to polarize the world into two opposing camps. Mary-Eleanor Maule puts it keenly when she states: “All of Reyles’ early fictional world is peopled largely by those who represent his ideologies and those who do not. The latter become flat, one-dimensional figures who are either caricatures or stock types” (54-55). The character who contrasts Primitivo in this way is Tocles. While Primitivo complies with the idea that human history is implied in natural history, Tocles, who comes from the city, separates the two. Tocles’ understanding comes from a particular type of university education that doesn’t see the link between the human and the natural. He is accustomed to the city, where nature has been suppressed and defeated. Buell’s agenda is closer to Primitivo’s behavior when he states: “the human interest is not understood to be the only legitimate interest” (7). Primitivo sees a world in which both nature and man live in harmony, while Tocles doesn’t recognize this possible coexistence. In general, these two characters embody a conflict between the rural and the urban.

The way in which Primitivo and Tocles behave indicates their divergent visions of nature. The narrator describes Primitivo as follows: “era hombre bueno y simple” (Reyles 50). He is this way because his life is in accord with the earth. Tocles, on the other hand, is “un producto de la universidad” (33). His view of nature organizes itself around the life of the mind. His “tono doctoral” is an indication, in this particular case, of the closed-mindedness toward nature that his education has promoted in him (33). His formation has denied him a more agreeable view toward nature. What the country is for Primitivo, the

university is for Tocles, who is based on an acquaintance of Reyles: “Tocles era un joven contemporáneo suyo, periodista y orador de estruendo, Profesor de Filosofía de la Universidad de Montevideo. Reyles no lo podía ver; le causaba sufrimiento escucharlo” (Menafrá 140). The distaste that Reyles felt for this person influences his portrayal of Tocles in the novel.

Primitivo is a gaucho dedicated to the earth; his desires relate to the land. He observes: “Dentro de poco compraré el campito y haré mi casita...si Dios quiere” (Reyles 73). The plans that he makes are human plans, plans that engender material progress; however, his desire to manage a field of his own reflects his recognition of the important role that nature plays in his life. Primitivo would never go to the city to study or work. His plans, like his character, are simple and do not carry traces of Tocles’ foreignness. Furthermore, his spiritual alignment furthers his dedication to the land. Primitivo, in deferring to God, demonstrates his zeal for nature because God, for Primitivo, is nature’s creator. The foreignness of Tocles, in contrast with the simplicity of Primitivo, creates an intrinsic conflict between the two. The narrator explains their opposition as “el instinto vital y castizo del terruño contra la cultura exótica y el racionalismo prestado del Gobierno” (Reyles 76). Here, the “instinto vital y castizo” finds its manifestation in Primitivo (as well as Mamagela) while “la cultura exótica” has to do with Tocles. El “racionalismo prestado del Gobierno” is the force against which all the people of the countryside organize in battle.

Tocles is an archetypal character in that his personality carries features of the urban environment. Buell characterizes the attitude of Tocles when he mentions “the

assumption that continuous technical proliferation is inevitable and proper” (3). Such an assumption is generally associated with urbanity because the city is a center of technological development. However, although Tocles is of the city, the action in El terruño takes place in the country. For that reason Tocles is outside of his accustomed environment. Buell adds: “[Wordsworth] stood in a no-man’s-land between town and country” just like “all other Anglo-American writers who have taken nature as a subject” (12). In some ways comparable to the American nature writers of the nineteenth century, Tocles straddles the border between these two worlds. This caution toward things of the country, together with his melancholy, brings for Tocles some delusions: “Yo me declaro, en teoría, el apóstol del egoísmo, y, prácticamente, del egoísmo rural, vale decir de la energía castiza de la nación” (Reyles 111). This discourse is an assimilation of his isolated condition in the country together with his condition of being a “miserable soñador” (Rama xv). The importance of this delusional discourse, however, goes further: it is a reflection of his academic training in that he is assimilating ideas and trying to make sense of real and ideal worlds.

Consequently, Menafra describes El terruño as a work “donde se entrecruzan la Realidad y el Ideal...” (136). Tocles struggles to live at peace with the natural environment because it is at odds with ideals that exist only in the mind. In this sense the urban/rural conflict can be seen in terms of ideal/real in that Tocles, a character who comes from the city, is invested in idle intellectual games, while Mamagela deals with and manipulates the physical reality of the countryside. What Crispo Acosta states about Mamagela is: “vive en la realidad de cada momento, con ojos y manos puestos en ella



para conocerla y acomodarla al bien de su casa” (126). Reyles, a proponent of rural life, seeks to degrade not only the urban way of life, but also the baseless idealizations that he believed came with it. As Menafrá adds: “Reyles, a quien muchos tachan de egoísta, se coloca en el ángulo de franca colaboración, tratando de hacer penetrar la vivificadora corriente extranjera, para que lo auténticamente nacional, en el sentido americano, fluya como una secreción natural, emanada de la generosa savia de la raza” (137). Reyles’ *egoísmo* is closely related to the *egoísmo* that Crispo Acosta recognizes in Mamagela: “Digamos también en seguida que el egoísmo en ella defendido no es el de las bestias de presa, indiferente al mal de los otros, sino al contrario, el que, inconsciente de sí, convive y se desvive en el sentimiento de familia y hace de Mamagela una providencia de su casa” (139). Through a parallel established between author and character, we see an enactment of Reyles’ ideology concerning the rural countryside: it is there to provide for the people who care for it.

Reyles’ vision of rural life affects his idea of national consciousness; the attachment he feels for the land creates an identity that is purely *americana*. He is seen by many as being egotistical (and for this reason, responsible, like many, for the current environmental crisis), but his goal is to influence the creation of a nation that can depend upon itself for survival. He desired to oversee a nation that would not fall prey to the manipulative economic domination of North America as described by Galeano. Menafrá explains the conflict of national identity in terms of city and country: “En el fondo, todo el problema se reduce a este infecundo antagonismo entre campo y ciudad, planteado por ésta, que urge resolver en nuestros días, para que la nación encuentre su expresión castiza

en todas sus manifestaciones. Es el problema de América Latina” (143). By describing the urban/rural conflict in terms of national identity, Menafrá underlines how Reyles sees the two as inextricably related. Bollo confirms this view when she calls *El terruño* “la más americana de las novelas de Reyles” (13). Clearly, the novel is *americana* because it embraces the conflict that arises from intentions to modernize the countryside.

Tocles’ idealizations constitute for him a “terruño,” that is, a place in which he can exercise his analytical capacities. In this sense, his idea of “terruño” is in direct contrast to that of Mamagela. He claims: “lo que a mí me estorba para vivir, mis trabas y boleadoras son las tierras y bienes que todos apetecen y que a mí sobre no satisfacerme, me arrancan de mi *terruño* y alejan de mi bien” (Reyles 220). This “terruño,” for many, would be something strange. For Tocles, it is natural. As Ángel Rama states in his prologue, Tocles “se eleva sobre el ambiente natural en que se encuentra para tratar de entender los motivos de la conducta humana y el secreto funcionamiento de la vida” (xxiii). Tocles is a dreamer, but nobody in his immediate surroundings completely realizes it. For that reason Mamagela submits him to her undeserved contempt. An element that contributes to this general contempt towards Tocles is his “incapacidad práctica en los negocios y las aventuras corrientes del mundo” (Reyles 35). While his scholarly endeavors bring him to intellectual heights, he lacks capacity for everyday tasks. The environment, for Tocles, doesn’t have the same fascination as the world of ideas; his wisdom of how to live in the country, with nature, lacks depth.

Another element that Tocles brings to the novel is his melancholy character. As we have seen, Rama labels him a “miserable soñador.” The university has conditioned his

mind to think and imagine. His academic production has trained him to think in a particular way, and from this metaphorical pit his melancholy emerges. Tocles' life has not been tempered by beneficial relations with people nor with the earth. Tocles is even suicidal because he lacks these relationships: "algo se había roto en su alma que lo hacía ajeno a los intereses y las ambiciones comunes" (Reyles 20). Tocles' miserable condition also comes from nature itself: it is part of his character. His character makes him, at times, uncomfortable in the country: "En la glorieta, una gallina, después de poner un huevo, cacareó triunfalmente. Tocles se quedó pensando" (Reyles 178). The everyday occurrences of the country, like the laying of an egg, aren't able to draw Tocles out of his melancholy. The rooster, beyond representing nature, is also a metaphor for Mamagela, because of its productivity. Mamagela is the character that has discovered how to live at peace with the environment. Because of the schism between Mamagela and Tocles' personalities, the former plays a big role in characterizing the latter.

Mamagela's role in the world of El terruño is central. She is the owner of "El Ombú," a place for meeting and lodging around which the novel takes place. It gets its name from a herbaceous tree of Uruguay and Argentina, symbol of the gaucho culture, with a thick trunk, and big, perennial leaves ("Phytolacca dioica"). In the specific case of El terruño, the "ombú" becomes a symbol of the coexistence of man and nature. "El Ombú," like other natural elements that are related with Mamagela, provides comfort in the form of shade: "el sombrero arbolado de 'El Ombú'" (Reyles 233). This comfort is a key aspect of Mamagela's character and her work in the sense that nature, under Mamagela's control, provides tangible benefits that people can experience. For this we

can call Mamagela a moderator between nature and humanity, but always with the overall purpose of benefitting humans.

There is much evidence in El terruño that supports the position of doña Ángela as moderator between the natural and the human. Everything that Mamagela does is connected to nature. She claims: “el que no madruga, no ve salir el sol” (Reyles 18). From the first moments of the day, Mamagela appreciates the signs that nature provides: the sun comes out so that people will wake up. Her attitude that nature exists for the betterment of humans causes Mamagela to be hard-working: “[S]i todos quedasen en sus casitas y trabajaran, este país sería un paraíso” (21). Here we see that Mamagela recognizes a strong bond between the good that the earth can provide and the way in which someone should act because of this; that is, the work ethic that he or she should have. We can see evidence of this work ethic in Mamagela and Amabí’s (her daughter’s) kitchen. The narrator calls it an “amplia habitación donde se respiraba orden y limpieza” (16). Aquí: “orden y limpieza” take on the form of a living creature: they breathe. The narrator emphasizes the closeness between the people of “El Ombú” and the earth. He describes Mamagela as “una gallina que incuba sus huevos” (227). Although Mamagela is a human character and believes in humans’ destiny to dominate the natural world, one can see also that her link with the earth sometimes causes her to seem as if she were part of that natural world.

Although she is a moderator between human and nonhuman, and although she incorporates the earth in her daily activities, one can observe that she sees the earth as an instrument for the betterment of humanity. For that reason the narrator praises Mamagela

for her “robusto realismo” (Reyles 24). Faced with a world of various perspectives about how the environment should be treated, Mamagela chooses the most realistic option, the most sensible option from a humanistic point of view. From there the key image of Mamagela’s realism emerges: “La campaña, aunque no lo digan los doctores, es la vaca lechera de la nación” (29). In this image nature’s role in Mamagela’s life and the lives of the people of “El Ombú” can be seen thus: the rural countryside (and the way in which humans have appropriated it) is central for the survival of the nation: “On the spectrum of Elizabethan images of America the hideous wilderness appears at one end and the garden at the other. The two views are traditionally associated with quite different ideas of man’s basic relation to his environment” (Marx 42). Of the “hideous wilderness” and the “garden,” Mamagela would associate herself with the garden because it is the result of a human effort to civilize and order raw wilderness. For Mamagela, nature is only valuable if it is organized into something humanly useful.

However, from all of this an “espíritu inquieto que no dormía” emerges from “El Ombú” (Reyles 23). This “espíritu inquieto” comes from an anxiety on Mamagela’s part for the appropriations that she has made upon the land. Christopher Manes explains it well when he affirms that literacy and Christian exegesis have mined all spirituality from nature. Thus, this anxiety that Mamagela feels is the product of a spiritual erosion that, although perhaps she does not desire it to be so, she sanctions. Furthermore, it is certain that Mamagela views the country as a gift from God for the destiny of humans. Amabí also envisions things this way when she speaks of “la limosna del pan espiritual” (20).

Manes critiques the attitude that humans are superior to the rest of the natural world. He professes against the “hermetical perspective” in which there exists an anthropomorphous divine being who controls the movements of nature for the benefit of humankind. In the words of Glen A. Love, this “hermetical perspective” constitutes a “narrowly anthropocentric view of what is consequential in life” (229)). Love and Manes share the view that this anthropomorphism is harmful to the health and survival of the environment: “From this hermetical perspective, it was inconceivable that eagles should be autonomous, self-willed subjects, flying high for their own purposes without reference to some celestial intention, which generally had to do with man’s redemption” (Manes 19). According to Manes, human selfishness and avarice for being redeemed are responsible for the loss of a voice that would speak for nature. Instead of hearing the voice of nature, we hear the shout of humans: “¡Aire libre y carne fresca!” (Reyles 149).<sup>69</sup> Manes continues: “From the language of humanism one could easily get the impression that *Homo sapiens* is the only species on the planet worthy of being a topic of discourse” (24). In this humanistic discourse the truth about Mamagela can be seen: she only believes in human issues. Her embrace of nature comes from her need to exploit it in order to survive. For this reason Manes observes: “...we have replaced the search for divine meanings with other ‘transcendental’ concerns such as discerning the evolutionary *telos* of humanity” (20). The “divine meanings,” in this case, imply medieval belief-systems. What Manes means is that this belief system has changed only in name. Still, we, like Mamagela, utilize the earth for our needs, sometimes using it and sometimes abusing it. What results from this practice is the absence of a representative that would

speaking for nature: “But the character of ‘Man’ as the only character with anything to say cuts across these developments and persists, even in the realm of environmental ethics” (Manes 21). We can see that even in the realm of environmental ethics, the idea that it is human destiny to control the land takes precedence.

Love writes about the necessity to mobilize as a society against the destruction of our environment. He states, as quoted above: “The doomsday potentialities are so real and so profoundly important that a ritual chanting of them ought to replace the various nationalistic and spiritual incantations with which we succor ourselves” (226). Here, he is talking about Mamagela and her nationalistic and spiritual activities. Love’s perspective follows the onset of the environmental crisis of the 1970s. In exchange, El terruño takes place before said crisis has really evolved, but many of the characteristics with which we identify the crisis are present in the world of El terruño:

In the face of profound threats to our biological survival, we continue, in the proud tradition of humanism, to, as Ehrenfeld says, ‘love ourselves best of all,’ to celebrate the self-aggrandizing ego and to place self-interest above public interest, even, irrationally enough, in matters of common survival. (Love 226)

The seeds of an environmental crisis are present in the early twentieth century in the attitudes of Mamagela, Amabí, and the majority of the people of “El Ombú.”

Primitivo, however, belongs to a culture that does not know the environmental crisis. Even if he is unable to see all of nature, is able to understand and respect it. An outlook like that of Primitivo opposes what Manes calls the “Modernist” outlook towards nature: “It is as if we had compressed the entire buzzing, howling, gurgling biosphere into the narrow vocabulary of epistemology” (15). Although Primitivo lives before the environmental crisis, it’s possible that he sees signs that indicate the beginnings of such a

crisis: "...there will clearly come a time, and soon, when we will be forced to recognize that human domination—nevermind the subdivisions of human—of the biosphere is the overriding problem" (Love 227). It is also possible that he is thematically in league with "our best western American literature, where writers characteristically push beyond the pastoral conventions to confront the power of a nature which rebuffs society's assumptions of control" (235). Furthermore, Primitivo's outlook toward the environment probably has more to do with that of Native Americans. Manes asks the reader to "[c]ontrast this system of arrangement with the decentered and hence more accurate taxonomy of many Native American tribes who use locutions such as 'four-legged,' 'two-legged,' and 'feathered'" (23). This contrast in both Manes and Love, as well as in the novel, demonstrates an alternative to the attitude that it is the human destiny to control the land. The indigenous attitude mentioned above has more to do with an acceptance of the world that surrounds us.

Something that perhaps Primitivo wouldn't have anticipated is the inundation of contamination in our urban and industrial centers. Love cites Theodore Rozsak: "The problem the biosphere confronts is the convergence of all urban-industrial economies as they thicken and coagulate into a single planet-wide system everywhere devoted to maximum productivity and the unbridled assertion of human dominance" (Love 227). Primitivo wouldn't have predicted this and, additionally, he wouldn't have predicted that the attitudes and actions of his brother-in-law, Tocles, were creating a legacy of environmental destruction by way of urban development. Moreover, as we have seen,



Tocles is the main representative of this urban development (even if he is not conscious of the effects it will have).

Tocles matters to Mamagela because he is Amabí's husband. The reader experiences one aspect further of the characterization of Tocles when his wife observes to her mother: "hoy quiere el sol, mañana la luna" (Reyles 168). She is describing his vacillatory spirit. By citing celestial bodies, Amabí employs examples from nature to describe her feelings about Tocles. Mamagela carries this complaint to Tocles using, like her daughter, terminology from nature: "Cuánta telaraña tienes en la cabeza" (172). It is as if the spiderwebs cause these vacillations of the spirit. An irony is that Mamagela's capacity to assimilate human things and environmental things approximates the same capacity in Tocles. This capacity, for Mamagela, comes from a dedication to the land and the people of the land as we see, for example, in her political activism concerning the "Federación Rural."

Reyles utilizes the presence of Mamagela to characterize Tocles. Thinking about Tocles, she observes: "El hombre no nació para leer, sino para trabajar" (Reyles 12). Mamagela's vision of how a man should behave comes from her bond with the land. Her idea of "working" complies intimately with the land. Like Primitivo, she believes that humans can dominate nature but, at the same time, respect it. Also, her vision of God clashes with Tocles' occupation as a scholar. When he is absent for the blessing of a meal, Mamagela quips: "Tú, que no tienes religión ni crees en nada..." (176). She scolds Tocles according to the vision she has of how humans should behave. Just as Primitivo does, Mamagela sees a strong bond between God and nature; she believes that everything

that a person has belongs to God and, for that reason, that person should give praise to God.

Beyond scorning Tocles for his behavior, Mamagela gives him advice related to her vision of how a person should behave. She observes: “echa raíces en tu terruño y deja que sople el viento” (Reyles 219). Her advice is to live with an interest towards the environment, to not separate the human world from the natural world. She commands Tocles to “deja que sople el viento” because she wants to see Tocles experience the natural world just as it is. The two come to an agreement at the end of the novel when Mamagela realizes the height and depth of Tocles’ intelligence and soul. The end of the novel is a vindication for Tocles: although a bit of melancholy remains for him, he has found a new life in which his consciousness of the environment is central.

One of the goals of the implied author of El terruño is to create a novel in which nature is central. Buell states that nature is central in a text when “[s]ome sense of the environment as a process rather than as a constant or a given is at least implicit in the text” (8). One of the ways, however, in which the implied author can place nature in a primary position is through human consciousness. Buell continues: “Leo Marx’s The Machine in the Garden (1964) advises us that what Thoreau claims ‘about the location of meaning and value’ is ‘that it does not reside in the natural facts or in social institutions or in anything “out there,” but in consciousness,’ in the ‘mythopoeic power of the human mind’” (11). In this way nature is present in the mind of the reader and in the way that he or she approaches a given story. Nature, above all, has to do with the mind in its natural state: consciousness. Furthermore, by way of consciousness, art is created: “art’s capacity

to image and to remythify the natural environment is itself a kind of pastoral project” (31). We can see art as an expression of human consciousness that, when it is pastoral or Naturalistic, incorporates a double-nature: the nature of consciousness functioning as a receptor of the phenomenon of a work of art and the content of the work of art itself and its environmental value.

Something that these works of art portray is silence, or the lack of a voice. Manes describes the process through which “nature has grown silent” (17). He observes that a chain of oppressive occurrences has silenced nature. In a similar vein, Buell cites Tallmadge: “Nature itself is an oppressed and silent class, in need of spokespersons” (20-21). What he means is that those who could speak for nature have remained silent in the matter. They haven’t left space nor consciousness for the expression of nature’s voice: “[T]he status of being a speaking subject is jealously guarded as an exclusively human prerogative” (Manes 15). Here the necessity for a certain type of person, one that sees the history of nature as a crisis, becomes prominent. Such a person would see nature in the way that Manes describes: “...those that see the natural world as inspirited, not just people, but also animals, plants and even inert entities such as stones and rivers are perceived as being articulate and at times intelligible subjects, able to communicate and interact with humans for good or ill” (15). This person would recognize that although nature is omnipresent, it still needs spokespeople.

The above paragraph addresses nature’s silence in terms of the lack of a voice or a spokesperson. El terruño describes the silence of the night, which is similar. The narrator describes a night of pure silence and suggests that the presence of nature, in this case, is

unspoken: “La noche era como un pozo sin fondo, tenebrosa y llena de silencio” (Reyles 155). Even if nature is silent, it is omnipresent. Despite its omnipresence, nature is relegated to a position of silence in the novel through the structure of the chapters. The beginning of chapters Two and Four feature first a character and only afterwards a description of the natural environment. This structure assures that nature is always seen through the eyes of the human who is going to exploit it. In this way the implied author indicates that nature is always in the background of everything that occurs in “El Ombú” and in the countryside in general.

Beyond the descriptions that begin each chapter, the implied author includes a rich array of images that take as their common denominator nature. He evokes “el fuego de los diamantes de Brasil” (72). Here, an image from nature provides a frame so that the reader can see a world beyond the world of El terruño. The implied author also chooses images that represent rare elements of nature that are, for that reason, outside the realm of discourse of the novel: “esmeralda...plata bruñida...polvillo de oro” (72). Also, in the sky are seen “piedras que mueren, el coral, la turquesa,” things that, given their presence in the sky, incite the reader to imagine the exotic images that these words evoke (79). In this way the sky becomes a site for the exercise of pastoral vision. Ángel Rama comments on these descriptions in his prologue: “el preciocismo de sus descripciones que a veces caen en lo pomposo, pero que en otras adquieren una tensión que lo ubica como uno de los mejores prosistas de nuestro modernismo” (Rama xxv). In this way we see that Reyles’ *modernismo* is recognized as being attentive to elements of nature.

Each one of the three main characters of the novel have different views of nature. Primitivo has a positive connection with it, Mamagela a manipulating and exploiting one, and Tocles is ignorant of it to the degree that he also contributes to the coming crisis. In the moment of the novel, however, nature is omnipresent and fresh: “El campo ondulaba suavemente, reverdecido por las fecundas lluvias de la fecunda primavera” (Reyles 72). If we look at nature without, for an moment, looking at the coming crisis, we can see a primacy by the way in which it affects the people of the story. All of the action comes from the manipulation of the source of life which is nature.

In many ways the people depend upon nature for their survival. As we have seen, Mamagela is the greatest representative of this dependence, but the truth is that everyone depends on nature. The dogs mark the hour: “Los canes empezaron a ladrar” (Reyles 225). The characters drink *mate*, a beverage derived from nature and originally associated with the gauchos. Additionally, on a theistic level, there are two distinct—and conflicting—representations of God in the story: the God of human progress and the God of nature. The final part of the novel takes this conflict and manifests it in the form of war. The narrator gives us an image of the situation: “el país entero ardía en guerra” (Reyles 150). This phrase evokes images of fire and destruction. This manifestation of conflict between the land and humans is an indication of the coming environmental crisis. The narrator contrasts the action of the war and the peace of the countryside, but the truth is that, as we have seen, the two come into conflict. An early indicator of this conflict is the juxtaposition of the march of troops and the flow of a river: “Era necesario pasar el río antes que las fuerzas derrotadas se reorganizasen y los alcanzaran” (191). Nature also

demonstrates her power to intervene in the following: “El terreno arenoso y minado de *tucutucos*, hacía penosísima la marcha de los vehículos” (Reyles 193). By including these details, the implied author emphasizes the role that nature plays in war; in this case, the role of impeding military progress. Perhaps this impediment is one way that nature takes for itself a voice, a voice that announces the coming crisis.

Many events that take place in this war require, in a fundamental way, the intervention of nature: “[E]l cuerpo del caudillo, arrastrado en veloz carrera, fue rebotando sobre el suelo hasta quedar convertido en una masa informe” (Reyles 197). It’s easy to take for granted the role that nature plays in this instance, but it is the probably hard, firm-packed ground that made possible the humiliation of this military figure by dragging. In a similar way, the soldiers light fire to the fields: “Una mancha parduzca, rugada costra en la epidermis de la tierra, indicaba el sitio de los ranchos y los bretes” (203). The role of nature in this destructive act is indisputable. Additionally, although it brings about a loss for nature, nature finds a voice in the middle of the events that try to strangle it. After the war, nature demonstrates its resilience by the way in which the ranchers return to their fields: “como los pájaros reconstruyen el nido que el viento deshace” (208). War’s destruction and the ranchers’ peace are both represented by naturalistic images. Nature, above all, continues with its central role in the lives of people that depend on it.

El terruño begins in the early morning hours with a knock on the door of “El Ombú”: “Apenas sonaron, espaciados y quedos, los tres golpes de ordenanza dados en la puerta con los nudillos” (3). The knock not only signifies early-morning alertness but also

an invitation to the reader to enter the novelistic world. This correspondence between fictional action and the metafictional mind of the reader is a characteristic of Reyles' writing that, while extant, is not fully developed. However, this correspondence does show that, while El terruño does propound the ideology of a particular rural lifestyle, it counteracts this ideology by including, at times, metafictional elements like the one discussed here. The significance of such an inclusion on the central conflict of the novel (rural versus urban lifestyles and worldviews) is that, while the novel clearly promotes the fecundity of the rural environment as crucial to the survival and maintenance of Uruguay, the inclusion of such metafictional material shows that the implied author is also concerned with keeping up with the latest literary trends coming from urban centers of culture, especially, in this epoch, Paris. Thus, the novel almost undermines its commitment to the rural cause by embracing literary styles that are urban in nature. However, due to the limited occurrence of these stylistic manifestations, the novel's conflict of identity remains in the background.

The narrator quickly becomes omniscient and distanced from the reader's reality. He describes in detail the rising of Mamagela from bed: "el dolido crujir de los colchones y el agrio rascar del fósforo, como si la buena señora esperase con la caja de ellos en la mano, la hora de levantarse. Por lo demás, nada de esperezos ni modorras para salir de entre mantas" (3). Her quick response to the knocks on the door is just the beginning of an entire novel full of references to her familiarity with the demands of the rural lifestyle. The conflict of the physical world and the ideological world, one of the themes that appears in this novel, is enforced by the description of "el dolido crujir" and "el agrio

rascar.” The material reality of these objects (the mattress is old, worn, and creaky and the match is raspy and sulfurous) help define Mamagela’s personality and its close relation with the material world that she works so hard to shape. The implied author’s praise of her efficiency reveals a predilection for her particular way of life that will be contrasted with the Tocles’ lifestyle.

Her efficiency, novelistically speaking, influences the objects around her: “Las chancletas, alineadas simétricamente, esperaban bostezando la venida de los pies; el batón de lana en invierno, de percal en verano, pero siempre del mismo corte, aguardaba triste el alma que periódicamente lo habitaba, suspendido como el flácido cuerpo de un ahorcado en la perilla de lecho...” (3). That the objects awaiting her use are personified infuses them with a spirit of both camaraderie and also habit. Early rising, propounded in this novel as a tenet of the rural lifestyle, takes on a spiritual character in the way that Mamagela is described as the soul that inhabits the robe. That the robe appears as a dead body hanging from the bedframe disturbs the reader and also shows that Mamagela, in her relationship with the material world of the rural countryside, is a soul that inhabits this material world and gives it meaning and order.

Her ability to impose meaning and order upon the world continues with a description of the marriage bed: “el monumento histórico de la familia, que así llamaba doña Ángela, mitad en serio, mitad en broma, al tálamo nupcial porque en él fueron concebidos y nacieron, unos tras otros, los nueve vástagos que con legítimo orgullo le había dado a su marido” (3). While in the city monuments are usually pieces of sculpture, designed for aesthetic purposes, the historic monument of Mamagela’s family is a bed, a



piece of furniture with a particular everyday purpose. The pride that Mamagela feels for having provided so many children to her husband is evidence of her ability to impose meaning upon the world through actions such as childbirth.

Because of her role as provider of meaning and order, both to herself and to others, she becomes the center of movement, the focal point from which all action proceeds. The narrator expresses “el ajeteo y trajín en que andaba todo el día, como si no le pesasen ni molestaran mayormente el mundo de apretadas grasas y temblorosas pulpas que tenía que poner en movimiento” (4). Mamagela’s day is described as one of movement and of balancing tasks and responsibilities. The productivity of “El Ombú” centers around and depends upon her. Although she delegates work to her many servants and children, she has many responsibilities: “Además de la fabricación de pan y los quehaceres ordinarios: la confección de la manteca, el corte de la leña, la limpieza general, había que hacer las tortas, los buñuelos apetitosos y otras frutas de sartén...” (5). Mamagela’s industriousness defines the particular rural lifestyle that the implied author intends to promote. Other rural lifestyles are presented in the novel, but they will ultimately be shown as flawed or disastrous.

The narrator briefly situates the everyday action of “El Ombú” within the natural environment: “Eran las tres de la madrugada, de una madrugada limpia de nubes, tersa, serena y luciente como las espejadas aguas de las lagunas en las que se mira la sonámbula del cielo” (4). This passage contains a blend of rural and urban elements. The imposition of time (three in the morning) upon the natural scene immediately evokes science and urbanity. Additionally, sleepwalking appears as a theme, generally associated with the

urban world of sleeplessness and late-night activity, throughout the novel. “Las espejadas aguas” also illicit urbanity by referring to Tocles’ thesis (one that he eventually rejects) that each person follows an illusion of that person’s own making. Although the passage describes the natural world, its hidden references to urban thought demonstrate the conflict taking place. However, this infiltration of the urban upon the rural hardly obliterates the power of the rural to exist independently: “Oíase el silencio campesino. Ni una chispa de viento movía la arboleda, la cual proyectaba grandes y fijas sombras en la tierra húmeda. No cacareaban los gallos, no ladraban los perros, no cantaban los grillos; todo dormía en ‘El Ombú’, todo dormía en la campaña llena de misterio y de paz” (4). In this evocation of natural mystery and peace, even the usual sources of rural noise are silenced, showing that the technologies used to cultivate the land have not yet caused nature to reach a point of crisis, a point at which it could not be described in such pastoral terms.

Returning to Mamagela, her imposition of meaning and order extends beyond herself to include others:

Y en tan alta estima tenía los productos de su doméstica industria, y tantas virtudes materiales y aún morales les atribuía, que si alguien faltaba a la fiesta, enviábale religiosamente su porción a donde quiera que el ausente se encontrase, y si este, por caso raro, era hijo, yerno o pariente, iba el obsequio acompañado de cariñosa carta en la que abundaban saludables reflexiones encaminadas, entre otras fines, a apretar los lazos de la familia, de cuyo culto fue siempre doña Ángela devota y celosa defensora. (5)

The high esteem in which she holds the products of her making extends itself boldly and imposes itself upon others. Her perfectionism is evident in both her constancy in sending portions and the tenacity with which she must locate the recipients. A further imposition

of order upon others is apparent in that friends receive portions, but family receives portions and letters. Mamagela holds others in high esteem and feels that she is bettering their lives by imposing her ways upon them. All of these characteristics lend themselves to creating Reyles' ideal vision of how the rural world should be managed and how the people of the countryside should behave.

However, Mamagela's character is well-rounded; she is not a stock character. Her Andalusian origins grant another side to her personality: "Labia y malicia le venían, sin duda, de su estirpe andaluza, y el gusto de discurrir dogmáticamente y pergeñar frases..." (5-6). Mamagela's insistence on caring and providing for those around her has its roots in her familial heritage. Her predilection to deliver thoughts and advice to her kin comes from her Andalusian background and complements her desire to order her own world and the worlds of those around her. What is more, her inherited garrulousness intensifies the amplitude of this desire. She not only imposes order upon others' worlds, she seeks to please them, as well. Mamagela "cogía la guitarra y rasgueaba con andaluz donaire un cielito suave y manso como un sueño, o entonaba alguna décima retozona que hacía desternillar de risa a los mulatos" (8). Her Andalusian inheritance, then, facilitates, and probably even furthers, her desire and ability to please others. She pleases others by evoking "sueño." While "sueño" in this novel is usually associated with Tocles and his philosophical dreaming, the narrator indicates that Mamagela evokes a dream-like atmosphere with her playing. The difference between the dreaming of the two characters is that Tocles dreams for himself and Mamagela evokes dreams for others. This

difference evidences itself throughout the novel and ends up being expounded as the difference between “Good” and “Evil” at the end of the work.

Those that surround Mamagela work hard as well, because of her positive influence. The tallow candles in the following passage indicate the early rising of Mamagela and her servants—the opposite of the late-night meanderings of Tocles, who is yet to be introduced: “La luz macilenta de las velas de sebo alumbraba a medias la espaciosa estancia, ocupada, en gran parte, por una ancha mesa de pino, donde el pardo Sinforoso y la mulata Juana hundían en la blanda masa de puños y los brazos del color y brillo de la caoba pulida por los años” (7). Like Mamagela, the servants begin their day early, making dough. The many years of performing these activities has polished and beautified their appearance, an indication that country life is healthy and beneficial. The spaciousness of the *estancia* and the *anchura* of the pine table also suggest a wholesome atmosphere.

Mamagela does more than just put her children and servants to work; she educates them according to how she was educated: “Mamagela enseñábales, con paciencia digna de alto encomio, la cartilla, el catecismo y el manejo de la escoba y el cucharón, y, por añadidura, a asearse y vestirse con pulcritud” (10). Mamagela shows her dedication to her children’s and servants’ educations with her patience. Her ability to teach reading, religion, household chores, cleanliness and presentability demonstrates a motivation to pass on important traditions to the next generation. The narrator continues: “Y a punto segundo, de nuevo las bautizaba, haciéndoles alguna sabia alteración en el nombre, que de rústico o desgraciado lo tornaba musical o poético” (10). Mamagela’s religious

training, then, involved not just the mind, but also the body. Her teaching and training as a whole furthers the rural cause in that it teaches its students to be self-sufficient and successful while at the same time teaching them not to rely too much on knowledge gained from books. Through education she furthers her own cause and allows for a new generation to continue the traditions in which she herself matured.

A possible source for the desire and patience she shows for education of others is her psychological need for control. As the narrator states: “allí nadie veía ni oía sino por los ojos y los oídos de ella” (9). Mamagela, of course, is successful in her attempts to control her situation, but control of her own situation is not enough; she must delve into the matters of other people to assure herself that reality is under control. From this need derives her obsequious, yet formidable, devotion to the land. It is possible that the implied author sees Mamagela’s personality as necessary to the rural cause, lending itself to the utopic dream voiced by Mamagela and already analyzed in this chapter: “si todos quedasen en sus casitas y trabajaran, este país sería un paraíso” (21). Her need for control expands into this statement, too, in that it reflects her fascistic desire to keep everyone inside their own homes. Mamagela’s desire to order and control her own life as well as the lives of others sets the stage for a conflict with the urban world, a conflict in which Mamagela takes the principal ideological position in the rural cause.

The urban world is slowly introduced into the novel, first by Amabí. Mamagela, of course, is the first to denounce some of the urban practices or non-practices that Amabí exercises. Mamagela exclaims regarding Amabí and Tocles’ abstention from drinking *mate*: “No hay nada como un *cimarrón* para entonar el estómago. Lástima, Amabí, que

hayas perdido la costumbre en Montevideo” (11). Her insistence, whether based on a need for control or a desire for the good of others, or both, furthers the rural cause within the novel. *Mate* is a natural beverage, associated with the gaucho and the rural environment of the Southern Cone. For this reason it is easy to see why Mamagela supports such a drink. She adds: “[s]ólo el mate conserva la frescura del cutis” (11). Her insistence that only *mate* serves to preserve skin quality reveals a thick-headedness that, thanks to a careful implied author, does not get out of control and is balanced by positive qualities. Mamagela continues her harangue regarding *mate*: “Apuesto a que tu marido no toma mate en la ciudad. Por eso está tan enclenque el pobre” (11). She is not sure about Tocles’ customs regarding *mate*, but she assumes that he abstains and then attributes the hypothetical abstention to one of his physical characteristics. However, it is likely that Mamagela’s suspicions are correct, lending more credence to the theory that she is, in many ways, very sensible.

The conversation about *mate* reveals further differences between rural and urban beliefs and practices. Amabí, defending her husband and her newfound urban ways of life, claims: “Para él, tan atareado, el mate es cosa de haraganes, un resto de la pereza nacional” (11-12). Amabí classifies rural people as lazy, contradicting what the reader has learned about Mamagela and adding irony to the situation considering Tocles’ habit of waking up around noon. Amabí continues to defend urban ways in terms of drinking *mate*: “No negarás que eso de meter por turno varias personas la misma bombilla en la boca, es sucio y favorable a la propagación de toda suerte de microbios” (13). The biological understanding that Amabí brings to the argument, a derivative of the influence

of city life, provides a point to the argument that Mamagela is unprepared to defend logically. She counters Amabí's claim by humorously expounding that people in the countryside do not have microbes in their mouths. The humor of this statement sets the stage for the urban-rural conflict that will continue to become apparent through the course of the book. Tocles will be the main character who embodies this conflict, as he is slowly and torturously convinced by Mamagela to embrace a rural way of life.

The narrator continues to emphasize Mamagela's sensibility in his description of her countenance: "...su rostro, muy movable, de ojos grandes, saltones y brillantes como si hechos fueran de porcelana, recorría una verdadera escala de expresiones, que iba desde las muecas y sacadas de lengua del colegial ornando sus mayúsculas, hasta la sonrisa seráfica y el pasmo de los bienaventurados" (15). Mamagela's eyes reveal that her beliefs are as unbendable as porcelain. They also reveal the formation of her character in that porcelain transforms from soft to hard when exposed to fire. The great extent of expressions that her face exhibits also lends credit to the theory that she is a well-rounded individual. She has both the teasing nature of a schoolgirl and the mature peace of a seraph. Her well-roundedness in general is a characteristic that shows the implied author's desire to create a character that represents how the countryside should be managed on an individual level.

The characterization of Mamagela continues as she gives a lesson to Amabí: "Una buena casera, una señora de su casa, sabedora de lo que trae entre manos, debe tener siempre al marido gordo y lúcido" (15). In this example, Mamagela does not pretend to know anything about Amabí's life in the city. She speaks from experience with her own

family. Although the conflict is not expressly mentioned, it is hinted in the differences between Tocles and Mamagela's husband, Papagoyo. Papagoyo's relaxed character complements Mamagela's sometimes overbearing nature—he is happy when he is fat and healthy. Tocles, on the other hand, with his philosophical preoccupations and his capacity as “miserable soñador,” is not satisfied to be just fat and healthy. Mamagela uses a metaphor from nature to describe her time-tested theory: “Con el buche lleno, el palomo no busca otro palomar” (15). Her theory, as simple as it is, works for her, but not for Amabí. What is simple in the rural environment of El terruño, then, is more complex in an urban atmosphere.

The urban atmosphere is slowly infiltrating rural values. Family traditions that have been passed down through the generations are being side-stepped or forgotten completely. Mamagela depicts the erosion of family values as a result of the permeation of urban attitudes: “Y yo estoy viendo que la más pura tradición de la familia va a perderse, si Dios no lo remedia, porque mis hijas no la reciben de mí religiosamente, como yo la recibí de tu abuela, y ésta de la mía, y la mía de no sé qué otra, y así, hasta el principio de la creación” (15-16). Her reference to “el principio de la creación” is summarily a reference to rural life because it can be assumed that “creation” refers to the creation of the natural world. The natural world, then, exists concomitant with family values in Mamagela's worldview.

However, Mamagela's ordered view of how rural life is does not extend universally to every rural situation. In a passage also cited earlier in this chapter, the narrator distinguishes Mamagela's kitchen from the average kitchen in rural Uruguay.



Her kitchen is an “amplia habitación donde se respiraba orden y limpieza, bien al contrario de lo que, por regla general, acontece en las cocinas rurales: criaderos de pulgas, posadas de perros y asilos de cosas sucias” (16). The narrator reveals that Mamagela is the exception, rather than the rule, when it comes to cleanliness. The spaciousness of her kitchen shows that she has a stable income. The way in which “orden” and “limpieza” breathe is evidence of how the kitchen is constantly in use; the items appear as if they had a life of their own. Because most rural kitchens are in a much worse state of repair, Mamagela and her kitchen can be seen as examples of the ideal rural life. Her kitchen also reflects the nineteenth century ideal of “hygiene.”

The well-ordered kitchen is more than an example of rural cleanliness. It is also a refuge from the cold during winter months: “En las crudas madrugadas, mientras afuera ululaba el viento y caía el agua como espesa lluvia de chuzos, allí se reunían patrones y servidores a tomar el mate en amorosa compañía” (16). Despite winter weather, rural values, like drinking *mate* and huddling together from the cold, are enacted. Country values, because of the bitterness of the weather at times, include a fire in the fireplace. The need to band together and enjoy each other’s company is more prominent in rural values because of the power of nature that saturates the rural way of life. In the urban world each individual is more likely to solve his or her own problems alone or in the company of a few. Mamagela’s rural kitchen is described as “...el recinto donde ardía el fuego del hogar en un ambiente de quietud y amor propicio al culto de las virtudes caseras” (17). The atmosphere of the kitchen reflects the rural values of “quietud” and “amor,” values that are necessary for survival in the countryside—“quietud” to remain in

touch with nature and “amor” to bond together against the difficulties that the natural environment can provide. The implements of rural life also contribute to the social values of the countryside:

Sobre todo, las honradas ollas de barro, panzudas, humildes y discretas, daban la nota íntima y familiar, casi tierna, reforzada y subida de punto por el balde de la espumosa leche recién ordeñada y el cesto de las verduras acabadas de arrancar. Ambas cosas, puestas sobre la mesa, no parecía sino que traían a la cocina la placidez pastoril de los corrales y el candor del huerto. (17)

Because of their closeness with the nature from which they come, the “ollas de barro” contribute to rural values by demonstrating the usefulness of things that come from nature. The “ollas” take on human characteristics. The anthropomorphism of these objects shows the tenuous boundary between nature and humanity that exists in the rural countryside. The fresh milk and vegetables on the table are one further indication of the closeness of nature in a rural setting. More than just being food and drink, they are signs of the fragile coexistence between man and nature.

Because it is set in the countryside, El terruño documents country life in much greater detail than that of the city. Our impressions of urban life come from Mamagela’s speculations and from Tocles and Amabí’s experiences there. We also see proponents of the urban in the military forces from the Government that oppose *caudillos* like Aparicio Saravia and the fictional Pantaleón.<sup>70</sup>

The narration continues with further descriptions of daily life in the country: “Mamagela empuñó la larga y lustrosa pala y empezó a meter el pan en el horno. Amabí la ayudaba solícita y gozosa. El calor ponía en sus mejillas, cubiertas de tenue vello, el rojo de los duraznos pelones, y en los ojos, húmedo brillo el color de la masa, fresca y

tierna como las carnes de un infante” (18). In the same sense that the natural world was created, in Mamagela’s view, by an omnipotent being, Mamagela creates bread. The metaphorical image of the dough being like the fresh, tender flesh of an infant is useful here to draw the comparison between the two types of creation taking place in the passage. That the heat from bread-baking evokes such responses in the face of Amabí demonstrates that creation, of any sort, is a process and that it involves certain conditions, like the heat of an oven, to be realized.

The vital interaction between humanity and nature is illustrated in the following passage in which the narrator evokes images of the two realms inextricably intertwined:

Cuando se encaminaron hacia los corrales, era de día claro. El rocío humedecía los opulentos cardos, las borrajas y las ociosas yerbas que lujuriantes crecían alrededor de las casas. A lo lejos, el campo salía de entre las sábanas de la niebla; ésta se levantaba dejando a trechos jirones de tenues gasas enredadas en las matas de pasto. El ganado empezaba a moverse; los pájaros a trinar. De las poblaciones que se divisaban en las cuchillas, subía al cielo lentamente una columna de humo. (18)

A clear day accompanies them as they walk to the corrals. The occurrence of the dew and the plants growing near the houses is another image of how rural civilization has set itself up in the middle of the countryside and created a symbiosis that only with difficulty can be undone. The rising of the clouds in the distance is mirrored, in the next sentence, with the rising of a column of smoke. A comparison of the two rising bodies of air generates, once again, the notion that humanity and nature are inextricably intertwined in the rural countryside because of the way that the fire causing the smoke to rise is both a natural process and something instigated by humans. Despite the closeness of nature that can be experienced in the countryside, the presence of humans and the appropriation of nature

that comes with such a presence creates signs of depletion of resources and the eventual destruction of the natural.

Humanity, then, has its effect on the natural environment in the novel. As Mamagela teaches Amabí, however, nature also has its effect on humans. Amabí tells her mother: “No puedes figurarte, mamita, lo contento que estoy” (19). It is likely that Amabí is referring to her life with Tocles, but Mamagela is quick to interpret Amabí’s statement as a paean to the countryside. She replies: “Es porque vuelves a la vida natural” (19). This misinterpretation of Amabí’s statement further introduces the urban-rural conflict as it appears in the novel. It is a conflict that takes as its central character Tocles. Tocles will become host to the vicious debate between city and country that permeates the novel.

Tocles and Amabí are visiting Mamagela in the countryside and have plans to return to the city. Amabí informs her mother: “Temístocles o Tocles, como tú quieras, no puede renunciar al porvenir que allí le espera en la política y el periodismo” (19). Amabí’s pride in her husband is apparent. His interest in politics and journalism is something that can only be realized in an urban atmosphere. Amabí’s clarification of “Temístocles o Tocles, como tú quieras,” reveals the urban-rural conflict in that Tocles’ full name, Temístocles, he himself associates with his extremely grand impression of himself. His egoism is, in the cosmovision of the novel, to be associated with the urban atmosphere. As we have seen, rural customs have a lot to do with sharing and helping in work and leisure. Urban customs, on the other hand, as evidenced by Tocles’ selfishness, are based on the glorification of the individual. This difference will, by the end of the

novel, become part of a moral classification. Rural customs will become “Good” and urban ones “Evil.”

Amabí’s selfishness is apparent along with Tocles’ as she aggressively expresses her desire to abandon the countryside: “Por mi parte, no me he matado estudiando para salir a la campaña a criar vacas y ovejas” (19). The “por mi parte” reflects, again, an individualistic attitude. Her use of the expression “matarme estudiando” reveals an aggression towards life that can only be nurtured by a city environment. Her use of “salir a la campaña” shows that she views the countryside as extraneous to the city, existing outside of it, ignoring the fact that the country provides the city with the resources it needs to survive.

Amabí announces that Tocles’ mission in life is “luchar por los ideales de su partido” (20). Tocles’ commitment to politics, although details are never provided, ties him to the urban environment. The narrator never mentions what his ideals are, even though we can assume that they derive from the urban-based “Colorado” political party. Tocles himself does mention at one point a set of anti-*caudillo* articles that he has written, which would align him further with the Colorado party, but no detail is given. Because the narrator does not enter into a discussion of Tocles’ politics, we can assume that the implied author is for the countryside (the “Blanco” party). Several other factors contribute to the theory that the implied author favors rural politics: the favorable setting of the novel in the countryside, Mamagela’s dominance of the narrative and its outcome, Tocles’ eventual siding with the rural cause, and the minimalization of anything that has to do with the urban environment.

With respect to Mamagela, she is candid about her opinion of urban-dwellers who don't contribute to the country's well-being: "Te diré: no creo en los políticos, ni en los generales, ni en los doctores de esta tierra; sólo piensan en vivir del presupuesto de la nación" (20). She is firm when she claims that she doesn't believe in politicians, generals, or doctors. Her refusal to believe in the science that people of these professions acknowledge reveals an urge to deny the city and its people any sort of predominance over the countryside and its own. Her choice of the verb "creo" shows that, for her, taking sides in the urban-rural conflict is a matter of faith. While Mamagela puts her faith in the ability of the land to provide for the people, she could never believe in the absolute authority that city-dwellers, in her opinion, attach to such urban figures.

She lets her disapproval of city-dwellers mingle with passive-aggressive posturing, directing her guilt-ridden statement to Tocles, who does not rise from bed until noon. She rejoices: "¡Linda, linda mañanita!" and then adds: "¡Parece mentira que haya personas tan desprovistas de alma y cacumen, que no comprendan esta hermosura, esta delicia, esta poesía natural!" (21) Her use of the word "mentira" refers, again, to matters of faith; specifically, that she is unable to believe that anyone could want to live in the city after experiencing the plentiful bounty of the countryside. Another jab at Tocles is her use of "desprovistas de alma y cacumen." Tocles holds himself in high esteem, especially regarding his poetic soul and his academic intelligence. For Mamagela to degrade him regarding these characteristics, even if he is not within earshot, damages his reputation with others and with himself.

Mamagela's own personal gratitude for the natural world extends to those around her and is the centerpiece for her pro-rural worldview:

Por mi parte, te diré que cuando me siento en el corredor, rodeada de mis flores y de mis pájaros, y contemplo en los potreros las vacas y las ovejitas rumiando tranquilamente, mientras las crías retozan con la barriguita llena, y pienso que no estoy encinta, ni tengo hijos que criar, me paso las horas muertas bañándome en aguas de rosas y dándole gracias a Dios por haber sido tan generoso conmigo.  
(22)

The natural world instills in Mamagela, despite her overbearing nature towards others, a peace and contentment that derives from the vast amount of effort she has put into making “El Ombú” an example of how every rural establishment should function: providing for those around it. She is thankful to God for his generosity, but she also recognizes that she is now reaping the bounty that she herself sowed.

The narrator describes this sowing in part: “Hasta hacía poco ‘El Ombú’ sólo había sido *pulpería* o almacén de campaña; pero por inspiración de la patrona, cuyo espíritu inquieto no dormía, complicóse el negocio de la noche a la mañana, y tomó otros rumbos, con la cría de ovejas merinas de *pedigree*” (23). The development of “El Ombú” from a country store to a fully developed ranch can be attributed almost entirely to Mamagela. Her desire to expand her business opportunities reveals an affinity with rural technology, that is, a desire to embrace technology that, while it is made for the country, comes from the city. Her “espíritu inquieto” is the driving force behind all of this development. Her desire to see the land be used for the benefit of people drives her to make more and produce more, to repay what has been given to her in the first place. Such a desire overlooks the fact that urban innovation and technology is harmful to the natural

environment. It overlooks the fact that, eventually, the ability of the land to provide for those who work it will diminish.

For the present, however, the land is productive and plentiful. Mamagela recognizes this by expressing the following: “[l]a campaña, aunque no lo digan los doctores, es la vaca lechera de la nación. Sí, señores: todos nos nutrimos de ella, desde el presidente de la República hasta el último gaucho. Y bien: mientras en las ciudades discursen y tragan viento o papan moscas, ocupémonos nosotros en doblarle el vellón a las ovejas y el peso a las vacas” (29). She is correct to observe that the rural world is responsible for feeding not only itself, but also the urban world. Her point becomes all the more robust with the metaphor that the countryside is the “vaca lechera” of the nation. Such a metaphor doubles the emphasis of her observation. Her further observation has to do with the inutility of the city and its inhabitants. In Mamagela’s ideal world, as has been mentioned, everyone would own a little piece of land and be responsible for maintaining that land. However, her claim that the rural contingent does all of the work overlooks the fact that the doubling of a sheep’s wool and a cow’s weight requires a scientific approach that usually has its origins in the city. Mamagela deprecates “los doctores,” but it may be those very doctors who are working to provide solutions for the increase of wool and meat.

Ignoring certain symbioses of city and country, Mamagela continues to praise the latter and the expense of the former: “Fijense bien en lo que voy a decir: a nuestros ranchos no llegan los libros, pero llegan los carneros de apretado vellón, y cuando llegan, todo cambia, porque los cuidados prolijos que exigen, nos hacen trabajar con más



empeño e inteligencia” (29). Her argument that books are unnecessary shows that she is unaware of the power that books have to improve a society. It is likely that many of the improvements that she implements in “El Ombú” involve books or were developed using books. One can’t deny that caring for *carneros* is important work, but, without books, it’s unlikely that such care could fully develop. Additionally, there would be little to no literary culture in the countryside without books, and Mamagela would be unable to refer to writings of Teresa de Ávila as she is described as doing in Chapter One.

She does, however, briefly acknowledge her ignorance on certain topics, just long enough to reclaim her audience’s attention: “Acuérdense de lo que les dice una pobre mujer sin luces, sin letras—aquí entornó los ojos y sonrió con grande humildad—, pero a quien el libro de la vida ha enseñado a no confundir la puerta con la ventana...” (29-30). Her reference to “el libro de la vida” exposes her dedication to her own life, the lives of others, the life of the countryside, and the experiences that come from such lives. Even though she is arguing against books, she knows that some in her audience (though they be her children and servants) may give more credence to someone with an academic title or some sort of knowledge base. For this reason she plays upon their expectations briefly and then explains her concept of worldly understanding (to not confuse the door with the window), which serves as a condemnation of urban academic life (especially that of Tocles), that it teaches so much, but it ignores ordinary common sense.

Her discourse continues to evaluate and compare urban and rural values. She expounds:

En efecto: ¿qué vale más: un discurso de cuarenta horas o un carnero de cuarenta libras? Lo primero es puro viento, palabras embusteras que entran por un oído y

salen por el otro; humo que va a las nubes y deja vacías las manos; lo segundo es labor, inteligencia, pan en la casa del pobre, abundancia en la casa del rico, es también plata en el Banco, abono del mundo, semilla de prosperidad; si se echa en la tierra brotan las casitas blancas como palomas, los rodeos de mil cabezas, los ferrocarriles, los palacios, las ciudades, los bosques y el bienestar de las familias.  
(30)

Again, Mamagela uses metaphors from the natural world to convey her argument. El “puro viento” of the forty-hour lecture expresses the intellectual meaninglessness of such an effort. Mamagela’s idea of intelligence is that it serves the rural cause and nothing more. Intelligence for its own sake is, for Mamagela: “puro viento.” Her additional image to describe the uselessness of such a lecture involves “smoke.” She suggests that smoke filters into the atmosphere and becomes nothing. This false belief underlines the principal fault that can be attributed to Mamagela in El terruño: she does not have the foresight to predict the detrimental effect that providing for the people of the world will eventually have on the environment if certain practices are not discarded and others adopted. Her values of “labor, inteligencia,” etc. are all associated with the rural world, which, for her, is the hub of all human existence. As she lists the benefits for humanity that come with rural progress, she is quick to include railroads, palaces, cities, and forests as recipients of the benefits of the rural sector. The ultimate effect of her discourse is to draw attention to the centrality of the rural world in every human endeavor, even if this centrality will eventually result in overpopulation, pollution, and degradation of the environment.

Judging from the reaction of her audience, Mamagela achieves her goal of expressing meaning to others: “Las personas allí presentes pensaban, en el fondo, como ella, y sentían que aquellas palabras, mitad chuscas, mitad graves, no eran viento, sino entrañas vivas de Mamagela, Mamagela en acción, cosas vividas, y por eso, aun

moviendo a risa, convencían y emocionaban” (30-31). They are inclined to believe her argument before she even begins speaking; thus, it means more than just “puro viento” to them. The implied author also helps to bolster Mamagela’s credibility by suggesting that her message comes from her gut, and that it must therefore be genuine and based on her life experiences. The effect that this transmission of experiences has is to evoke emotion from the listeners.

Tocles, however, does not yet share Mamagela’s worldview. The narrator cannily describes him: “La frente demasiado vasta para la cabeza, y la cabeza demasiado voluminosa para el tronco, a su vez demasiado corpulento para las débiles piernecillas que lo sostenían, dabanle la insana apariencia de un grande feto” (33). The general impression that the narrator gives of Tocles is that he is top-heavy, suggesting that more development has taken place in his head than in the rest of his body. Furthermore, his appearance as an overgrown fetus suggests that, while he has matured intellectually, his physical growth has been stunted, insinuating that his attention to matters of the mind has stunted the development of his physical body. His appearance as a fetus also reflects the possibility that he has not yet been born (into the reality of the rural environment).

His overdeveloped mental capacities coincide with his status as a city-dweller. Tocles is the son of a Spanish lawyer (34). As such, he can be associated with the city by both his father’s profession and his nationality. As is the case in Acevedo Díaz’s Ismael (1888), foreigners in Uruguay generally lived in the city. As a lawyer, Tocles’ father would likely have lived in Montevideo. It is likely that the “doctors” that Mamagela

speaks against as a group includes lawyers like Tocles' father. Thus we see the urban-rural conflict take shape in the figures of Mamagela and Tocles.

While Mamagela's impression of the countryside is that it humbles a person and makes him or her realize his or her place in life, Tocles' city upbringing has left him egotistical and self-glorifying. The narrator relates his delusions of grandeur about his name:

El glorioso nombre le hizo creerse en la niñez de una esencia superior a la de los otros mortales, y esta infantil vanidad, gota de agua horadando montañas, determinó luego sus angulosidades de su carácter, exaltado y agresivo, y dio pie a la noble ambición de ser en *la tacita de plata de la América latina*, lo que Aristóteles, Píndaro y Pericles fueron en la inmortal Atenas. (34)

A central aspect of his egotism is his desire for immortality. He not only feels superior to fellow humans, he also feels that his name has destined him for greatness. Using terminology from the natural world, the narrator relates how Tocles' egotism entered into his personality and ultimately made him exalted and aggressive. His desire to be the Latin American Aristotle shows an affinity for European, rather than Native American, cultural roots. While José Martí argues in "Nuestra América" that Latin Americans need to return to their roots, both European and Native American, Tocles sees himself as an extension of the culture of Ancient Greece, further bolstering his connection with the city as opposed to the country.

However, Tocles, being one of the dynamic characters of the novel, soon begins his transformation, which begins as an internal conflict: "Pero desde hacía cosa de un año sospechaba la dolorosa verdad, esa verdad destructiva que la eterna y benéfica ilusión ocultaba cuidadosamente; asaltábanlo de continuo amargas dudas, esas dudas que son

cardos y espinas en las praderas del alma” (35). Tocles discovers that his desires for immortality were an illusion created to hide what are, at this early stage in the novel, doubts without real foundation. The imagination of the narrator refers to “las praderas del alma,” an image that foreshadows Tocles’ eventual conversion into a man of the rural environment. The image shows that these “praderas” will soon be the object of his dedication and devotion.

His internal conflict and his doubts manifest themselves in a series of questions: “¿Soy lo que creí o sólo un iluso? ¿Un vidente o un tragador de viento? ¿Un super-hombre o un *marchand de marrons*?” (35). The binary nature of these questions reveals that Tocles is struggling with Good and Evil. He had previously believed himself a “super-hombre,” among other things, which, in his imagination, represented Good. His current doubts come from the idea that he may not be completely Good, that there is Evil in his nature as well.

Tocles further transforms himself by moving from internal to external processing. He relates his problems to Mamagela, who responds with care. The narrator states: “El sanchopancismo y lenguaje pintoresco de la buena señora lo divertían y eran bálsamo de sus heridas, triaca de los líricos males que lo apenaban” (40). At this point the narrator clarifies the relationship between Tocles and Mamagela as similar to that of Don Quijote and Sancho Panza: Tocles is immersed in his own imagination like Don Quijote and Mamagela, like Sancho, is the voice of sensibility and reason. That her responses to Tocles are like “bálsamo” and “triacas” shows the power of her words to act like natural ointments in the curing of Tocles’ injuries.

Tocles continues to relate his problems, problems whose origin can be found in the urban-rural conflict brewing in him. He observes to Mamagela: “Yo, señora, no soy lo que se llama, con galicismo evidente, un hombre de mundo...” (41). Here, Tocles presents in simple terms his conflict. He has become, through his academic training and self-absorption, a man of letters, but, beyond that, a man who is trapped within his mind. He begins to doubt, however, the sustainability of his condition. Isolated from the world, how will he be successful within it? Perhaps also he starts to see, with this confession, the way that he finally chooses at the end of the novel.

Verbosity is one byproduct of his intensive education. He demonstrates it well in the following passage:

Se trata sólo, doña Ángela, de una cosa baladí, casi ridícula a fuerza de ser nimia, y que, sin embargo, me llena de perplejidades...he vivido quemándome las pestañas sobre los libros, en la austera y casta soledad de mi gabinete, e ignoro ciertas prácticas, ciertos detalles, insignificantes en sí, pero que tratándose de la noche de bodas, pueden tener, y seguramente tienen, capital importancia. (41)

Although he speaks to Mamagela about an issue related to Amabí, his motivation for talking with her is to consider the doubts that have been emerging for him. He admits that he pays more attention to books than to the outside world, including conjugal practices. While he does indeed seek advice on the proper etiquette for marital union, he is equally concerned about his overindulgence in academic pursuits. The urge to leave behind the world of books and embrace country life is slowly manifesting itself in Tocles.

Mamagela’s advice to him regarding marital relations is also double-edged. She tells him: “que te dejes de retóricas y te abandones al instinto natural” (42). She is referring both to how he should act in the bedroom and to how he should become closer

to realizing a life in the country. Mamagela also gives more specific advice: “Amabí te encontrará muy bien en camiseta; tú no tienes, a Dios gracias, vientre ni joroba que ocultar. Además, ella está acostumbrada a esa prenda; es la que han llevado y llevarán siempre porque no son maricas su padre y sus hermanos” (43). The end result of her counseling is to bolster her relationship with Tocles and make further persuasions possible toward his eventual choice of a rural lifestyle. Her comment that Papagoyo and his sons are not “maricas” is one more attempt to corral Tocles into a rural way of life in that she wants Tocles to also be motivated not to “degrade” himself by living an urban lifestyle that, to Mamagela, would compromise his masculinity.

Mamagela dominates the relationships she has with everyone around her. This includes people under her care in “El Ombú” as well as neighbors and others. She is almost always in control of situations through adept social manipulation. The implied author even allows her to dominate the narrative at times. The narrator describes how she makes other people’s business her own: “Doña Ángela tenía el prurito de conocer la vida y milagros de todo el mundo y no perdía ocasión de tomar lenguas e informarse de la condición y manera de vivir de los vecinos particularmente, un poco por curiosidad y otro poco por lo que atañía a los fiados del almacén” (44-45). Although her intentions are laudable, she could also be interpreted as being intrusive, especially if she were not as good-natured and charismatic as she is. Her imperiousness also extends to her own kin. She tells Amabí: “Si quieres ser feliz, no contraríes a tu marido jamás; síguete el humor y dale cuerda, pero las cuentas de la casa llévalas tú” (44). In her desire for control, Mamagela instructs that the husband must be placated because a placated husband is

easier to control. She also suggests that Amabí pay the bills, demonstrating a desire for control and a distrust that anyone else can perform that action with the same success.

Again, Mamagela does not exceed certain boundaries. Her control of others does not extend to levels that would make her unpopular or of bad reputation. She allows her husband, Papagoyo, to have control in the bedroom: "...la cabecera del lecho conyugal, la que bien a las claras decía que no todo había sido evangélica dulzura en la vida del pacífico Papgoyo" (52). The narrator cites the headboard of the marriage bed as a site where Mamagela leaves the matter of control up to another. The names of the matriarch and patriarch, on the other hand, suggest that they are separate entities, that Mamagela, in the daily life of "El Ombú," holds just as much authority (or more) than her husband. The implied author's choice of a woman to exemplify Reyles' ideal rural lifestyle indicates the relationship that he sees between urban and rural societies in that the rural provides for the urban just as a mother provides for her children.

There are other, historically accurate, characters, however, in the novel who have a different view of how rural life should be lived. The *estancieros*, large land-owners, are allied with the city and the city-based Government: "Era el grito desesperado de los estancieros, víctimas de las agitaciones políticas y los desmanes de las hordas partidarias" (55). The difference between the *estancieros* and Mamagela is that Mamagela lives on a small plot of land and provides for herself and those around her. The *estancieros* make money off of others who rent their land from them. The passage calls the *estancieros* victims, but, as Mamagela would say, they are merely reaping the trouble that they sowed by lending out land with interest.



The revolutions that result from these land-owning practices involve the entire country, urban and rural areas alike: “Periódicamente, el país entero se agitaba en hondas convulsiones; los gauchos huían a los montes, emigraban del país, después de haber liquidado a vil precio vacas y ovejas, o engrosaban las filas revolucionarias, la mayor parte de las veces, no por ardiente partidismo, sino para escapar las *levas* del Gobierno...” (55). The narrator describes the “convulsiones” through which the country passes almost as if they were part of an earthquake or some other naturally-occurring disaster. The narrator follows the paths of the gauchos who must abandon their normal practices to avoid being attacked by angry land-owners. The land-owners, while they could theoretically live in rural areas, mostly inhabit cities and administer their lands from afar. Gauchos, who live off the bounty of others, are in danger from a variety of sources, most of which can be avoided by following the paths described above by the narrator.

Signs of war between city and country begin to appear: “Los ejércitos, las huestes vandálicas, eran como mangas de langosta que lo asolaban todo: llevábanse los hombres y los caballos, destruían los alambrados, quemaban los montes, diezmaban las haciendas” (56). Because of the threat that these advancing armies pose for *estancieros*, the implied author employs agricultural imagery to describe their advance. The negative connotation of “mangas de langosta” establishes the revolutionary armies as a pest for *estancieros* to eradicate.<sup>71</sup> The damage that these armies do to livestock and grazing lands shows that destruction of the countryside is a method to unseat the reigning powers in the city and the government.

The narrator places the situation within the confines of “civilization” and “barbarity”: “El respeto de la vida y la propiedad, fundamento y sostén hasta de las más precarias civilizaciones, desaparecía, y en un desate de instintos feroces, todo tornaba a la barbarie” (56). “Civilization” entails, in this case, respect for life and property, while “barbarity” is the disappearance of this value. Forces of the city claim alliance with “civilization,” while at the same time denouncing their foes as “barbaric.” The narrator calls this opposition “[l]a eterna querrela de los partidos tradicionales...no tenía otra solución que la guerra civil...” (56). Because city and country are two elements of the same nation, civil war seems to be the only solution to resolve, or at least manifest, the conflict.

Among the “barbaric” contingent, civil war is only one of the topics of discussion: “Después hablaron de las esquilas, del precio de la lana y de los capones, del engorde tardío de las invernadas y de si el caudillo Saravia se *levantaría* o no se *levantaría*” (58). Although the people of the countryside are considered “barbaric” by their urban neighbors, they submit to the same rules of economy that effect *estancieros* in the city. The price of wool would be of interest to both parties. Whether or not Saravia is going to revolt would also concern members of each contingent. People of the city and the country depend on many similar events and conditions, which is probably what leads to civil wars, as they struggle to possess and control the same resources.

Mamagela is at the center of the discussions mentioned above. Her absence at one meeting in particular leaves a noticeable mark upon the people gathered to discuss: “Cuando no estaba presente doña Ángela—la más campechana y decidora—, aunque

hablase de negocios con Papagoyo, conversación reduciase a un intercambio de cortas preguntas y monosilábicas respuestas” (59). Mamagela establishes herself as the necessary element to many of the operations of “El Ombú.” People depend on her for support and provision. Her opinionated nature, combined with her enthusiasm, make her an easy character for the other inhabitants of “El Ombú” to follow. In Papagoyo, Mamagela has chosen a suitable mate in that he allows her to operate and control. His laid-back nature complements Mamagela’s decisive and active personality.

Although the pair is committed to family values, a quality that city-dwellers perhaps lack in the outlook of the novel, Mamagela recounts how the arrival of the sewing machine is detrimental to these values. The importance that Mamagela places on providing an atmosphere in which family values can thrive comes together with the slow erosion of these values by way of new technology. Technology tends to isolate people and develop their independence. For this reason, people of the city can be seen as more individually independent, whereas people of the country rely on others for help (thus creating the family values in discussion here). The arrival of the sewing machine, however, is a monumental event that leaves its mark upon the people of “El Ombú”: “Pero en aquella ocasión, Mamagela se abstuvo de protestar, porque en la pulpería se vendían las famosas máquinas de coser” (65). *El terruño*, then, is also a witness to the arrival of technology to the countryside and its resultant dissolution of family kinship practices common in rural areas.

The threat of the coming dominance of *estancieros* over the rural environment would be another worry, similar to that of the arrival of technology, for people like

Mamagela, who reside in the country. The differing ideologies of *estancieros* and people like Mamagela creates tension. “El terruño” de Mamagela is a unit of land, an example of how country life should be and how it can be reproduced in exactly the same manner on each new “terruño,” each unit of land. This model is an expression of the implied author’s ideology and contrasts with the model of the *estancieros*. The narrator describes signs of tension: “El ambiente cambiaba; el gaucho de alma potra desaparecía de las estancias junto con las boleadoras y el lazo; los ganados finos desterraban a los criollos, los gringos a los paisanos” (76). The disappearance of the gaucho, due to fear of retribution on the part of the *estancieros*, suggests a coming revolution. The triumph of the science of manufacturing better livestock came first to the city-dwelling *estancieros* (called “gringos” here), giving them the ability to drive out competing *paisanos*.

While the stage is being set for a revolution that will pit city against country, the same conflict is developing in the mind of Tocles. Tocles “sentía que un muro de opuestos conceptos, una infinita distancia mental, lo separaba de aquellos hombres de cinto y golilla, contra cuyos cráneos, de paredes duras y sin resquicios espirituales que dejasen pasar la luz de afuera, las sutiles puntas de su raciocinio se embotarían sin penetrar” (87). Through the use of adjectives before nouns, as well as poetic, erudite language, the narrator achieves a representation of Tocles’ mind. The beginnings of his desire to live a rural lifestyle are evident in his observations of those who already do live that lifestyle. He is interested in and desires to live like “aquellos hombres de cinto y golilla,” but he experiences a rift between himself and them because his mind is different from theirs. Whether Tocles, with his urban university training, can become a *paisano*

who works the land is undecided at this point in the novel. The mental distance he feels between himself and those who he wants to emulate could still be insuperable.

Amabí, his wife, encounters a similar predicament. The influence of urban isolationism is apparent as the narrator relates: “Comprendía, a vuelta de desengaños, que cada criatura es un mundo impenetrable para las otras criaturas, y que el lenguaje, lejos de ponerlas en comunicación, las aisla más, cuando esa comunicación no está preparada de antemano por misteriosas afinidades” (89). The thoughts of both Tocles and Amabí, strongly influenced by the time they have spent in the city, tend toward the individual and his loneliness. Such a prospect would be incomprehensible to a character like Mamagela, who lives every day in the company of those for whom she provides. The idea that language isolates individuals even more embraces an urban pessimism that finds its source in the everyday habits of the typical urban lifestyle.

The distance that Tocles feels from his rural companions does not stall him in his efforts to change. He muses: “La ley de la vida no es la contemplación, sino la acción, y la acción, aunque lo contrario sostengan poetas y filósofos, es por sí sola cosa transcendente, cosa divina...” (90). Although he is still trapped within his own musings, his thoughts reflect a desire to enter into a life of action, which he associates with the rural world. His reference to “poetas y filósofos” is an indication of his knowledge base. He comes to terms with the rural lifestyle he wants to live by way of his knowledge base that has been gained from a university education in the city. He contrasts the aesthetic transcendence of poetry with rural labor and then applies that transcendence to rural ways of life.

He continues to reflect, perhaps influenced by Mamagela, on the uselessness of urban and academic pursuits: “Veo que no soy nada, y que no sirvo para nada, como no sea para embadurnar cuartillas, que nadie lee, o enseñar a otros lo que yo mismo ignoro” (91). Tocles is experimenting with the idea that action gives meaning to a person’s life. His realization that “no sirvo para nada” expresses how he has only been serving himself with his poetic and philosophical meanderings. A life of action, on the contrary, would benefit others and generate meaning for him. By denigrating books (“cuartillas”), Tocles echoes Mamagela’s harangue that a forty-pound *carnero* is infinitely more useful than a forty-hour lecture. In this way, he enforces the idea that, while the country provides for the city, the city does not return the favor.

Mamagela’s influence on Tocles’ thoughts is strong: “A veces, impulsos le daban de quemar los libros e irse a la campaña; pero a raíz de ello, confesábase que la floja voluntad suya desmayaría ante el primer obstáculo, porque a luchar y vencer obstáculos no le había enseñado la cultura universitaria, y, sobre todo, que nunca tendría el valor de proponerle a Amabí semejante aventura” (93-94). The notion of burning books foreshadows the end of the novel when Tocles takes all of his manuscripts and burns them on the front porch of his *hacienda*. What are, at this point in the novel, notions and ideas, become reality for Tocles through his own restlessness combined with Mamagela’s intrafamilial pressure. Between this point in the novel and the end, Tocles learns to dominate “la floja voluntad suya.” Because the weakness of his will is the result of a university education that did not teach firmness of character, such weakness can be associated with the city. Such an association lends even more credence to the thesis of the

implied author that the people of the countryside are the central motivating force behind Uruguayan society.

While both Tocles and Amabí struggle internally with impulses of alienation and isolation, the materiality of the natural world acts as a foil for their emotions. Tocles remarks: “Llueve,” and Amabí responds: “Hace frío” (96). Beyond framing their individual thoughts about the disconnectedness of human nature, the natural world serves as a source of discomfort. They are not adjusted to the countryside, and any change in the weather bothers them because they are closer to the weather than in the city. The terseness of their expressions reflects a lack of enthusiasm for the outside world. The two of them are, together, reserving most of their attentions for thoughts and emotions instead of being part of the greater natural world.

Tocles’ perversity is another sign of his disconnection with the rural environment. In a letter to Papagoyo, Mamagela relates: “...muerde la teta y luego se extraña que no lo dejen mamar” (101). This example from the natural world describes Tocles because, a product of the urban system, he feels entitled to the milk that comes from his mother’s breast. He feels that, even if he bites the breast, he should still receive the nutrients that it provides. In the countryside, where nature is more abundant, it would be clear to the baby not to harm the source of its sustenance. This observation leads Mamagela to exclaim, in her letter: “¡Cuanto más le valiera pensar y vivir como todo el mundo y dejarse de ir en contra la corriente para mostrar que es buen nadador!” (101). Tocles’ upbringing, and his nature, have led him to become the egotistical, self-centered character that he is. To

maintain his independent nature, he must act in a way that sets him apart from others. For Mamagela, this is a fault, and she expresses it as such in her letter.

Following the internal struggle of Tocles as described above, he then vocalizes the tension that he feels and starts to put words to his dream of converting to a rural lifestyle. He relates in a monologue:

...yo seré el sembrador de ideas de esos campos invadidos por los cardos borriqueros de las pasiones políticas; yo seré el libertador de esos esclavos y mártires del doctrinarismo y del caudillaje; yo les mostraré a los mozos de agallas el camino de Damasco, metiéndoles en la sesera el sentido noble de la utilidad, para que no traguen viento como yo tragué, ni se vean desorbitados como yo me vi; yo predicaré con el ejemplo, trabajaré con mis manos.... (109)

His instinct is to use his education and intelligence for the good of the countryside. His appropriation of natural terminology to describe the imagined position he would hold (“sembrador de ideas”) reveals a transformation in his thought process. The adoption of natural vocabulary shows his commitment to and energy for the rural cause. His condescension towards rural inhabitants (by assuming that they need someone to speak for them on a political level) is a product of his ego-centric personality. His actual mission among the rural populations is still vague, and it seems, with his opposition to “caudillaje,” that perhaps he would be working against the goals of most rural people, who want to stand up to *estancieros* and the Uruguayan government. His inclusion of “el camino de Damasco” reveals, humorously, his high opinion of himself—believing that he is like Paul from the Bible. The objective that presents itself as being the most clear for Tocles is a transformation from a useless urban environment to a rural environment that generates real results that can be measured and that benefit people every day. He states: “trabajaré con mis manos...,” showing that physical labor is the counterpart to mental



dreaming. At this juncture we can see that the implied author associates physical labor with the rural environment and mental idleness with the city.

Continuing his address, he adds: “Yo me entiendo: allí están fundidos el macrocosmo y el microcosmo, y también la vida social” (110). Although he speaks of his commitment to helping others and working with his hands, Tocles uses in this quotation a more universal, expansive vocabulary and he talks about things that exist beyond earthly reality. This shows that he is still, due to his accustomed nature, invested in ideas and philosophy, neither of which come from the countryside.

His accustomed nature, indeed, still dictates a good deal of how Tocles behaves. In the aplomb that accompanies his philosophical breakthrough, he walks through the city: “Y ese mismo día, los desocupados paseantes de la calle ‘Sarandí’ vieron con asombro un hombrecillo de chambergo, bombachas gauchas y grandes botas, que se paseaba tomando toda la vereda para sí, arrogante el andar, soberbioso el empaque, y cuyas miradas eran como carteles de desafío” (113). The humor of Tocles’ situation rests on his self-absorption. At this point he has the ideas and the clothes and the motivation that he needs to be successful in the countryside. He just lacks a more humble attitude and experience in the field of rural politics.

Two years pass from Tocles’ initial efforts to transform himself, and the narrator begins to describe the conflict that is increasing between the two principal political parties, Blanco and Colorado: “Mientras la política seguía ahogando las energías nacionales y produciendo agitación vana y ansiedad cierta, los estancieros llevaban a cabo la obra magna de refinar las haciendas, invirtiendo al efecto ingentes capitales”

(124). The energy that politics requires of the nation is hinted at by the narrator as being vain and excessive. The investment of large sums of money by the *estancieros* is of more central concern to the narrator because it is money, among other things, that separates the two sides of the conflict.

Another contribution to the coming conflict is also economic in nature: “Y así iba formándose fuera de la escuela y de toda influencia urbana, un nuevo tipo social, producto exclusivo de la necesidad económica cuyas severas disciplinas hacían de cada gaucha levantisco un paisano trabajador, como la política de cada trabajador un gaucha *alzo*” (124). The narrator states that the emergence of this “nuevo tipo social” is not related to any urban influence, but it is possible that it is the result of the refinement of the haciendas mentioned above. At any rate, the economic difficulties turn into political and social realities that fuel the coming conflict. That *gauchos* are willing to renounce their freedom and come to work on a hacienda is evidence that tensions are mounting.

At “El Ombú,” however, signs of progress are evident, indicating, once again, Mamagela’s adeptness at managing her *terruño*: “En ‘El Ombú’, el progreso saltaba a la vista: los arbolitos dábanle ya sombra y abrigo a las ovejas en todos los potreros; dos de éstos habían sido alfalfados, y otro molino asomaba, por encima del viejo ombú, su rueda inquieta” (124). The use of the diminutive “arbolitos” indicates the implied author’s pleasure with the success of Mamagela’s agricultural endeavors. Beyond the function of being pleasing to the eye, the trees provide benefits to the livestock, as well. The appearance of fields of alfalfa and a new mill indicate the productivity of “El Ombú.”

The plot resumes as Primitivo catches his wife Celedonia committing adultery with his brother and enemy, Jaime. Primitivo receives a scar across his face from a knife wound inflicted by Jaime. He loses interest in life and becomes idle on the land he has recently purchased and named “El Bichadero.” Mamagela takes Celedonia’s side on the matter and insists that Primitivo pardon her. Tocles is in agreement, but he adds, with doctoral swagger, that everyone is deluded by something, that Primitivo is not the only one who is tricked (139-40). Tocles reveals that something remains of his city education when he remarks: “Usted y yo, doña Ángela...somos tan sonámbulos como él, aunque engañados por espejismos diferentes” (141). His retake of the theme of sonambulism reverts the reader to the urban environment of Tocles’ formative years. The idea that everyone is deluded by his or her own false illusions is not an element in the implied author’s vision of the rural world because the rural world is based upon physical appearances and material realities. Mamagela calls Tocles’ mental gymnastics: “tiquis miquis psicológicos,” using the made-up term to suggest the frivolity of Tocles’ proclamations (141). Tocles’ transformation, even in this instance, is being realized through his interaction with Mamagela.

Returning to the subject of Primitivo and Celedonia, Mamagela justifies her behavior (her claim that Primitivo should pardon his wife) using a Biblical reference. Her literary knowledge extends to the Bible, but she uses said knowledge to gain a personal advantage, something more material than knowledge on its own: “Ni tú, ni el mismísimo Salomón, me harán creer que el sacrificarse por los hijos es otra cosa que sacrificio cristiano y caminito del cielo” (142). Mamagela is more committed to material realities

(the needs of her children) than knowledge from books. Her dedication to Christian values is not based on knowledge from the Bible; rather, it is based on everyday sacrifices she makes for those she loves. It is clear that she believes this is the path to Heaven.

She expands upon this point by relating: “Dicen los sabios que el diamante es carbón; bueno: yo les digo a los sabios que quisiera tener muchos carbones de esos y ni una sola de las piedras finas que ellos fabrican, porque nada valen” (142). Her inversion of the values of coal and diamonds is based purely on which is more useful. For Mamagela, if an object has no use, if it cannot further the rural cause, it is worthless. That diamonds and coal are even the same thing is something she leaves to “los sabios.” If a piece of knowledge has no immediate worth for Mamagela, it is not worth knowing.

The novel enters into a period of war. Tocles notices the first manifestation of war in the distance: “¿Ve aquellos puntitos que salen del monte de ‘Los Abrojos’, se mueven en la cuchilla y avanzan hacia este lado?” (145). Perhaps the implied author’s decision to grant Tocles the chance to observe the beginnings of war is an indication of his intention to make Tocles into a character based more on the real world. It is not the idea of war that Tocles notices; it is a manifestation in the physical world—he is paying attention to the world around him. He even associates the movement that he sees with the *caudillo* Pantaleón’s *terruño*: “Los Abrojos.”<sup>72</sup> Tocles continues to think strategically when he observes that they are going to run across the previously mentioned armed troops. He is worried, and rightly so, that a conflict might emerge: “Usted está entre los suyos, no le harán nada, pero a mí...—observó Tocles, recordando ciertos artículos que había

publicado contra el caudillaje” (145). Tocles’ history as a city-dweller with city-dwelling political beliefs becomes a threat for him in the countryside. His only chance for survival is to trust Mamagela, who tells him: “¿No saben que soy más blanca que Aparicio?” (146). The bond between Mamagela and Tocles is strengthened as she takes him under her ideological wing. The support that she lends him continues to nudge him toward the embrace of a rural lifestyle, which he effects at the end of the novel.

Tocles’ urban education, the education he is trying to slough off, differs from the upbringing of many of the members of the column of soldiers that he is about to come across. The narrator describes them as follows:

...centauros de las epopeyas nacionales, que iban a la guerra como a una *corrida* de avestruces y morían en las cuchillas sin saber ni por qué ni para qué; gauchos, en fin, educados en los campamentos y la vagancia, sin apego al pellejo ni ley a cosa alguna, habituados a vivir del abigeato en tiempo de paz y del merodeo a mano armada en tiempo de guerra. (148)

In contrast with Tocles’ philosophical rationalism, these *gauchos* have no concept of that for which they are fighting. They are, in fact, the people to whom Tocles refers in his monologue—those whom he can help by providing them with a political consciousness. This group of horsemen have no qualms about robbing livestock from *haciendas*, and they arm themselves in times of war so as not to be killed by parties who actually know for what they are fighting.

Perhaps for this reason (for their ignorance toward the purpose of their fight) they cause so much damage to property and to the natural environment: “...los ejércitos recorrían la campaña volteando alambrados, diezmando haciendas, talando montes...” (150). In this way, the war affects much more than just those who form part of the death

toll; the land also feels the ravagings of war. The war affects everyone. Peasants who formerly worked the land peaceably are now forced to take sides: "...los peones se iban ya con los blancos, ya con los colorados, o se hacían matreros para no servir; los patrones se refugiaban en las ciudades, y las estancias quedaban abandonadas y como sin alma" (150). The civil war divides the country along party lines. The only other option is to become *matreros* and live off the pillage of others. The abandonment of the countryside by the *estancieros* shows that they are in danger if they remain and that perhaps they never had a vital bond with the country in the first place—that their real home is in the city.

Mamagela and company do not abandon "El Ombú." Instead they arm themselves the best they can. Mamagela's strategy is to hide the livestock indoors with a guard: "De noche, la precavida señora hacía encerrar la *tropilla* en el corral y las ovejas en los bretes, y ponía a uno de los muchachos de centinela con orden de *menearle* bala al cuatrero que se acercase. Pero de poco le valió..." (151). The plans they make do not stop an invasion of "El Ombú." A party of Government soldiers slaughters the livestock while taking prisoner the horses: "dejándoles, en cambio, algunos matungos llenos de mataduras y un burro macilento y taciturno, que se pasaba todo el día parado frente a las casas, amusgando las grandes orejas y meneando el rabo" (151). In other words: "El Ombú" is levelled, and this levelling can be seen as a victory for the Colorado party, which is based in the city and allied with the government.

The raid of "El Ombú" is not limited to livestock, however. The governmental forces also take Mamagela and Papagoyo's children, to serve in the war on the side of the

Colorados. This piece of news horrifies Mamagela, who exclaims about her children “que blancos los había parido y blancos eran” (152). Mamagela’s word, so strong and respected among her kin, has no power over the forces of the government. However, one of her children, El Sacristán, comes to serve on the Blanco side.

The events that take place at “El Ombú” drive Papagoyo to leave the establishment, with Foroso, in search of battle. As he leaves, the narrator observes:

Un nudo le apretó la garganta. Haciendo de tripas corazón, empuñó su viejo lanzón patrio, y despidiéndose con tiernísimas miradas de los objetos que le eran más familiares y caros: la mesa donde escribía desde treinta años atrás, el lustroso palo de descolgar los artículos del techo, la peluda silla de Mamagela, abrió la puerta que daba al campo y echó a andar, apoyándose contra los muros para no caer. (154-55)

Papagoyo leaves “El Ombú” in a state of nostalgia and bitterness. The loss of his children as well as his temporary abandoning of Mamagela and the objects of their home cause the knot that appears in his throat. His departure, with its “tiernísimas miradas,” does give the impression that he may not come back. Neither he nor Foroso knows exactly where they are going to go. Papagoyo explains: “...porque has de saber, Foroso, que yo no voy a la guerra por mi gusto, ni a matar salvajes por odio, ni porque crea que cuando los nuestros estén en el candelero lo harán mejor que los otros, sino por cierto compromiso con mi compadre y porque no diga la gente, que a eso obligan los hijos y los negocios” (155-56). He gives several reasons for why he is not going to war. He is not going for any emotional reason; rather, he is going based on an obligation and for the sake of his reputation. At this point in the novel the difference between city and country has broken down—especially through the subjection of Mamagela and Papagoyo’s children to serve on the Colorado side of the battle. Mamagela’s reason for living is to serve others, and

now she must continue without a good portion of people for which to provide. The Colorados, however, remain the enemy, and we will soon see that Papagoyo gets his revenge killing what he thinks is a Colorado soldier.

Foroso also feels the weight of “El Ombú’s” recent loss. He accompanies Papagoyo out of devotion: “Foroso no iba menos apesadumbrado. La fidelidad, más que el partidismo, que en él era pura cháchara y ocasión de lucir lindas *golillas* celestes, lo constreñían a seguir a su viejo patrón, amén de las bromas y puyas de las mulatas, que de continuo reprochábanle el no haber mostrado en ninguna revolución la hilacha guerrera” (156). Foroso, then, as well as Papagoyo, is not motivated by nationalistic or party sentiments. His dedication to Papagoyo must be attributed, as well, to Mamagela and the care and attention she lavishes upon her servants. His desire to serve Papagoyo is in a certain sense a desire to serve Mamagela; and he serves despite his disinterest in matters related to war.

One of the ways that Foroso serves Papagoyo is by cutting wire fences: “seguirme, y lleva pronta la tenaza de cortar alambre” (157). Their efforts to cut fences show how war has inverted certain country values. Normally, Papagoyo would be the one to maintain his own wire fences, but in the broils of war he is cutting someone else’s fences. About this inversion of values he exclaims: “¡Malditas sean las revoluciones y quien las inventó!” (158). He indicates a distaste for the changes that have taken place in the countryside due to war. The displeasure he shows toward the person who “invented” them shows that psychologically he sees revolutions as a man-made event as opposed to



the natural order of things which he probably, like Mamagela, believes to occur with or without human intervention.

Soon, a lone *jinete* intercepts Papagoyo and Foroso. He appears as a threat by the way that he plants himself in front of the two men: “Muy cerca de las casas, cuando ya se creían salvos, un jinete se plantó delante de ellos cerrándoles el paso. Imposible era desviarse, menos retroceder. Papagoyo se encomendó a la Virgen y arremetió con bríos” (159). The two men go on a mission for a somewhat unclear reason, and as they are about to return they find conflict. This conflict, however, results in an important victory for Papagoyo. Even though it turns out that he really only kills a *burro*, Mamagela keeps the secret from him, and he feels that he has avenged himself against the Colorado forces by killing one of them. His victory is not only a victory for his children, who are taken from him, but also a victory for rural values over urban ones.

His victory comes with the cost of a sickness and a period of recovery: “Desde el lecho, Papagoyo seguía las oraciones emocionado y contrito, removiendo los labios muy de prisa, como las viejas rezadoras. Foroso besó el suelo varias veces; Jua lloró” (161-62). One of the characteristics of the people of the countryside is their active religious practice. As he lies in bed, Papagoyo commends himself into the care of a higher power. The earnestness of his prayers can be seen in the way that he moves his lips. It is not just him who prays: Foroso and Jua also demonstrate their contrition by kissing the floor and crying on his behalf.

Mamagela, in her desire to be in control of the situation, goes to investigate the scene of the battle that took place between Papagoyo and the *jinete*: “Antes de amanecer,

cuando aun todos dormían transidos por los sucesos de la noche, Mamagela abrió el portón sigilosamente y salió al campo, dirigiéndose al sitio donde sospechaba que debía de encontrarse el muerto” (162). She is awake and animated despite the events of the night before, demonstrating her ability to stay clear-headed and to function even in difficult situations. As mentioned above, she discovers that the dead body is the body of a *burro* (163). The immediate result of this discovery is that the family (or what remains of it) does not have to fear Colorado retribution.

This realization relieves Mamagela, but she is strict in enforcing that Papagoyo never know about it: “Es preciso que Goyo siga creyendo en la muerte del salvaje y convencido de que en el monte queda enterrado. Así no volverá más a las andadas, ¿adivinas?” (164). Mamagela hides something from her husband for the good of “El Ombú.” This is a characteristic that the implied author wants to exemplify and instill in those who read El terruño. In this sense Mamagela complies with the doctrine of Tocles that each person is a sleep-walker, following individual illusions. In the case of Tocles, they are illusions that he has set up for himself; in the case of Papagoyo, Mamagela has set up this illusion for him. The difference between these two types of illusion becomes clear and can be seen in terms of the urban and the rural. Urbanity insists on the power of the individual to create his own reality. The rural lifestyle, on the other hand, asserts that one must create realities for others and vice versa. This is the secret of Mamagela’s interference in other characters’ business: she is setting up illusions for them, looking out for their mental well-being. The practice works in the case of Papagoyo: “Por el lado de Papagoyo, estaba tranquila. El buen hombre creía, como en Dios, en el salvaje muerto...”

(166). The illusion that Mamagela provides for Papagoyo creates for him peace, a quality that is much needed in the difficult times that the civil war illicit. It is a peace that can be associated with the countryside because it is based on the idea that the threat from the city (in the form of a Colorado soldier) has been vanquished.

Tocles, in the company of Mamagela, confronts the lack of motivation in his life, which could also be seen as a lack of illusions to pursue. Mamagela observes him, according to the narrator: "...mientras discutían, observaba ella con ojo sagaz el descontento y la marea creciente de pesimismo, que en el alma de su yerno hacían risa y estrago de toda ilusión vividora, de toda esperanza reconfortante, dejándola llena en cambio, de segura y desabrimiento" (167). The "marea creciente de pesimismo" describes Tocles' mental state. As he adjusts to his new life as a rural landowner, he experiences feelings of disenchantment because he is leaving behind his life as a professor in the city. Mamagela responds, according to the narrator, that he is experiencing the following: "...tanta malsana inquietud y pujos de mudanza, lo que ella llamaba la *culequera* del profesor" (167). Mamagela's active imagination, like Tocles', playfully invents new words. While she doesn't understand all of Tocles' musings (she doesn't have the education), she does invent words to describe them. Not only does Tocles adopt some of her rural ideologies, but she also starts to, at least minimally, adopt some of his urban ones.

Tocles does much more adjusting to the rural, however, than Mamagela ever does to the urban. Her stolidity toward all things rural keeps her from adopting any real urban lifestyles and it also keeps Tocles on the path toward embracing the rural. However, it is

a difficult path for him. The narrator observes: “Más que las pérdidas materiales de Tocles, causadas por la guerra, las pestes y, en parte también, por su prurito de reforma y originalidad, la atribulaba aquella incertidumbre y desazón constantes con que él se hacía infeliz y hacía infelices a los suyos” (167). Mamagela realizes that Tocles’ attitudes affect others. The attitude that the difficulties of rural life (war, plague, Tocles’ own obsessions) impose upon him, according to Mamagela’s observation, causes him to negatively affect those that he, in Mamagela’s view, supports and for which he provides. What we will see is that this negative attitude of Tocles soon reaches a critical stage.

Tocles has a difficult experience with how the continued ravagings of war affect his piece of land:

Aquel día, lluvioso y frío, llegó el novel estanciero más descorazonado que de costumbre. Una partida revolucionaria le había carneado el día anterior cien capones y volteado buen trecho de alambrados para hacer fuego con los postes y los *piques*. Y no paraban ahí sus desdichas: la sarna que no podía combatir por falta de peones, cundía en la majada, y la lombriz hacía estragos terribles entre las ovejas, debilitadas por la crudeza del invierno y las enfermedades. (168-69)

He continues to share his troubles with Mamagela, and such sharing helps him to become more and more involved with rural life. The rainy and cold weather emphasizes Tocles’ downcast spirit at this moment in the novel. The narrator describes him as “descorazonado,” indicating that he does possess emotions and that these emotions, if the countryside were benefitting him at the moment, would be positive ones. In this way his bond with the country continues to grow. The slaughter of his *capones*, the cutting of his fences, the fire being set to his land, mange and worms in his livestock, combined with “raw” winter weather, put Tocles at a new psychological low.

These factors lead him into a depression that will serve as a springboard for him once he has passed through its harrowing depths: “Contemplaba sin amor las paredes del rancho, tristes y sordidas; los libros, que ya nada le decían; el rostro cerrado y displicente de Amabí, y se le antojaba que vivía en una tumba rodeado de cosas muertas...” (169). Though he is well-established—he has a home, a family, and a piece of land—he is sad. He is at a point where neither urban nor rural life pleases him. His wife also reflects his melancholy character. At this moment in Tocles’ life cycle, he feels that he is living in a tomb, but as the winter passes he discovers that life returns to the countryside.

In his moment of depression, these difficulties seem insurmountable. Tocles relates: “Estos nublados pasarán y vendrán otros peores, para mí al menos” (171). The negative attitude pursues him, and he has not yet realized that his attitudes affect how those who are close to him see life (even though it is clear from the above quotation that Amabí’s demeanor is at the whim of her husband). Tocles’ statement that, even though these clouds will pass, other worse clouds will come does not reflect the natural order. In the natural world clouds form, and sometimes they thicken, but eventually they disperse and the sky becomes clear. Tocles, who is still adjusting to a rural outlook on life, has not yet learned to trust that the natural order will benefit him eventually. As he quips: “para mí al menos,” he reveals that he thinks his case may be a special one, a remnant of the egotism of his urban personality.

Tocles expands upon this restlessness of spirit: “El daño no está en las cosas, sino en mí...Naturaleza y cultura me empujan por otros caminos: mi voluntad, mal educada, flaquea, y mi escepticismo, fruto indigesto del saber, destruye el ciego tesón que piden

los negocios y hasta la fe que para vivir se necesita” (171-72). He highlights the opposing forces in his internal conflict: nature (the country) and culture (the city). Further, he blames his struggles on his weak will and his skepticism, fruits of his urban upbringing. However, he realizes that perseverance and faith, qualities that come from a rural lifestyle, are necessary for success. In this way he continues on the path that Mamagela lays out for him.

In addition to showing Tocles the path he should take, Mamagela also disparages Tocles’ previous life path. She expresses: “Si ese es el fruto de los libros, prefiero mil veces quedarme borrica como soy” (172). She does not claim that she knows “el fruto de los libros,” but her implication is clear: it is better for a person to not have read books than to have read them. Her self-assurance is also clear. In her claim “prefiero mil veces” we see a character who is completely sure of herself and completely maligned with the urban world and the “book-learning” that accompanies it. Her self-assurance is also clear in her statement “borrica como soy.” Because of her personality (a personality that the implied author associates with the rural environment), she tends to think that her own way of doing things is best. Thus, since she is “borrica,” it must be the optimal way to be.

Her molding of Tocles’ character continues as she berates his theory that everyone is a sleepwalker who follows his or her own illusion of choice: “Muchos, la mayoría, lo saben; el sonambulismo de que hablas, no es general, ni la vida tan atroz como la pintas...” (172). Mamagela states that Tocles, in terms of the worldview of the majority (a construction that only a self-assuredness like Mamagela’s is capable of maintaining), is deluded. She insistently suggests that his thoughts about social reality are

too intense, too demanding. Her argument is that he needs to adopt a more simplified worldview, one that is less belabored by introverted self-absorption.

Mamagela's discipleship of Tocles continues as she explains the proper place for reason and knowledge in country life. She assigns them a place that is more humble than the one proposed by urbanity: "Si la razón y el saber de nada sirvieran, no habríamos salido de salvajes; andaríamos desnudos y comiéndonos crudos unos a otros.... Ponte a amasar conmigo, y verás que a ti te salen *pambazos* indigestos, y a mí panes caseros de lo más fino. Y eso no será por casualidad, sino porque habré obrado con más discernimiento que tú" (172). While recognizing that reason and knowledge are indispensable to life, she demonstrates how they are only a means to an end. This contrasts with Tocles' view (a view that is slowly disappearing from his character) that reason and knowledge are means unto themselves. Mamagela's assertion that the human race has developed beyond a period of savagery evokes the reality that the implied author wants to convey: that country people are not savage and that, rather, they provide for the entire world, urban and rural alike. Her example of the discernment that making bread requires proves again that, for Mamagela, the bread, and the person who receives the bread, is the end product—that knowledge of bread-making in itself is useless.

Tocles responds that his nature leads him down a different life path than the one that Mamagela so easily prescribes. He speaks about those with a similar nature to him: "...Mientras los otros viven, ellos analizan la vida; mientras los otros pasan haciendo piruetas en el carnaval del mundo, ellos no aciertan a ponerse ningún disfraz ni a tomar parte en ninguna broma. Si ríen, desafinan, porque no tienen careta; si lloran también,

porque todo es carnaval” (173). Although he is talking about himself, Tocles uses the personal pronoun “ellos,” demonstrating again the distance that is developing between his old urban way of life and his new rural one. Although he uses “ellos,” one can see that he is still entrenched in his previous way of thinking. His description of how others “live” and people like him “analyze” reveals a distrust of life and a fear of the natural way of living. One of the trials that Tocles faces in his quest to adapt to a rural way of life is to leave behind analysis and take up “life.”

Mamagela is unbending in her rural education of Tocles. She reminds him: “Aquí, donde me ves, también tuve yo mis desvaríos y mis desengaños. De chica quería ser monja y fundadora de órdenes como Santa Teresa; de grandecita, princesa de las ‘Mil y una noches’; de moza, rica y dama principal... Después me casé con Goyo, salimos al campo y empecé a tener hijos y a criarlos... Y aquí me tienes, gorda y contenta” (175). She relates how her life, as well, has been a process of development and adjustment. Mamagela’s sensibility towards Tocles’ predicament provides an excellent witness for the rural way of life. The urban lifestyle perhaps also has its excellent representatives, but they do not appear in this novel. Mamagela’s passage through different developmental inspirations (religious, literary, economic, political) show that she is a fully-developed well-rounded character, perfect for the implied author to use as a model for country living.

Mamagela and Tocles’ discussion turns toward Papagoyo’s adventure and his false belief that he killed a Colorado soldier and that that soldier is buried. The topic of the “burro enterrado” returns. Mamagela emphasizes to Tocles: “...*para vivir, es preciso*



*que cada uno tenga su burro enterrado*” (176). Her message is, paradoxically, that each person has his or her own illusion to follow. The difference between Mamagela’s “burro enterrado” and Tocles’ “sonambulismo,” however, is that, with the “burro enterrado,” somebody else keeps the secret from the person in question, and with Tocles’ “sonambulismo,” the sleep-walker maintains his own illusion. Once again, this shows that, in the cosmovision of the novel, the city is a place of individuality and selfishness while the countryside is one of sharing and providing for others. Both locales require that people have illusions in order to live, but illusions in the countryside (“burros enterrados”) lead a person to a fulfilling destiny while the sonambulism of the city leads to disaster (as evidenced by Tocles’ personality and his mood through the course of most of the book).

However, Tocles adds another take to the theory of the “burro enterrado,” a take that is based on his desire for objective truth:

...le diré que hay dos clases de criaturas: unas que nacen para enterrar el burro; otras, para desenterrarlo. Las primeras constituyen la generalidad; las segundas marcan la excepción; aquéllas triunfan y gozan; éstas luchan y padecen sin triunfar; pero sus torturas son... altamente estimulantes y útiles para el mundo: desenterrando burros podridos, lo obligan a matar y enterrar otros nuevos y así se remudan y están siempre frescas las ilusiones. (177)

His desire to unearth the buried “burros” is a desire to unearth the truth. His desire is perverse because it involves the metaphorical digging up of rotten bodies, but Tocles follows his desire in the name of truth. Truth appears differently depending on whether it is in the country or the city. “City truth” is objective and scientific while “country truth” takes into account the good of other people. In this sense “country truth” is variable depending on the person in question. Papagoyo’s idea that he killed a Colorado soldier is

truth for him because Mamagela has manipulated the situation with his best interest in mind. She reveals the secret of manipulating the truth for the sake of others: “Como todo el mundo, debes sacrificarte por los que viven detrás y que ya te pisan los talones. Es la ley de la vida” (178). Thus, the only objective principle that Mamagela appears to live by is sacrificing herself for the good of others.

El terruño probably takes place during the revolutions of Aparicio Saravia, in 1897 or 1904. The narrator describes the civil war that takes place as “la cruenta lucha de los bandos tradicionales” (179). The description evokes the rawness of country life above the scientific objectivism of the city. The “bloodiness” of war is actually a characteristic more in line with the countryside because it is in the countryside that raw life processes, like birth and slaughter, take place. In an urban environment blood would be of scientific interest, something to be analyzed under a microscope. Another instrument of the city, the newspaper, is unable to capture the rawness of war: “Los periódicos, amordazados por la censura oficial y cohibidos en sus medios naturales de información, sólo traían noticias insulsas o adulteradas” (179). The inability of newspapers to perform their function regarding the war reveals a gap between city and country, a gap that is arguably less prominent as newspapers have improved their investigative and reporting techniques up to the present day. Censure, another tool of the urban, Colorado government, functions similarly by limiting the amount of rawness and bloodiness that reaches the urban observer.

Though the newspapers do not capture it well, the war wreaks havoc on both city and country: “Lo único cierto e indiscutible era que el comercio moría, que las correrías

de los ejércitos arruinaban la campaña y que la desesperación iba echando raíces en todos los pechos” (179). Commerce, although it depends on the rural to function, has its base in the urban environment. While the progress of the war is uncertain, the destruction of the everyday world for both urban and rural inhabitants is imminent. The narrator explains that the result of this destruction is “la desesperación.” The urban-rural conflict shows that not only are the two opposed, as demonstrated in the above paragraph, but they are also delicately intertwined in the world of commerce and in the world of war.

El Sacristán, one of Mamagela’s children forced to serve in battle, demonstrates an unexpected affinity for military life. Fighting on the Blanco side of the conflict, El Sacristán is able to struggle for the party that his parents support. In his letters home, he explains: “Sin embozos ni eufemismos, como la cosa más natural del mundo, hacía el aprendiz de cura muy despiadadas reflexiones sobre la guerra y la matanza, y refería hechos de sangre llevados a término por él, que delataban instintos inhumanos y propensiones harto crueles y bajas” (180). El Sacristán’s letter, then, captures the bloody and explicit world of battle in a way that urban newspapers are unable to do. Fighting for the Blanco cause and sending home graphic letters reveals that El Sacristán is more in line with the rural life cycle than his urban counterparts. El Sacristán goes beyond even Mamagela in his following of the cruel, raw rural lifestyle that is represented in the bloody military conflict.

There is no explanation for El Sacristán’s enjoyment of brutal military life: “Ninguna de ellos acertaba a explicarse cómo aquel muchacho, criado en la doctrina cristiana, y dulce y humilde por naturaleza, mostraba al presente inclinaciones tan ayunas

de morigeración piadosa” (181). The inexplicability of his conversion from “sweet and humble” servant and child to blood-thirsty soldier shows how the shock of sudden independence can change the character and preferences of a young person. The narrator describes El Sacristán as even breaking with Christian values in his embrace of the bloody war scene. The joy that he takes from his military escapades exposes a link between church (his original desired occupation) and military in that both require the blood of others to be spilled.

The bloody war that is being fought takes place between the Uruguayan government and *caudillos* like Pantaleón (186). The novel is like Ismael in that it highlights the role of *caudillos* in the revolutionary effort. The narrator describes Pantaleón’s leadership: “Al frente de la horda, desnudo—como en sus mocedades—de brazo y pierna; sujeta la melena por ancha *bincha* y en la diestra la lanza legendaria, iba el caudillo, arrogante y ceñudo como un guerrero bárbaro” (187). Pantaleón leads his troops from the front, demonstrating his fearlessness—a fearlessness that likely comes from an upbringing in the country, as the passage demonstrates. The entire passage is a testament to the fearlessness and valor of the revolutionary leader. The narrator, using a simile, calls Pantaleón like “un guerrero bárbaro.” This description allies the *caudillo* to the rural cause in that, contrary to what the implied author suggests, the rural countryside is a seat of barbarity.

Another link between the two novels is the presence of blood. In El terruño, like in Ismael, blood is a natural result of warfare. Chapter XIV witnesses much action, and with action comes blood. The narrator relates: “La mancha enorme y ondulante de la

caballada parecía un mar borrascoso” (190). The entire sentence evokes sanguinity: “La mancha enorme y ondulante” creates imagery of blood that is not only widespread and staining the ground, but also flowing violently out of wounds. “De la caballada” expresses the stupidity of spilled blood and adds an associative image of horses lying wounded on the ground. “Parecía un mar borrascoso” evokes the vast quantity of blood shed by both sides of battle. Without mentioning the word “blood,” the narrator deftly creates an image of human suffering in battle.

The grisly nature of war is not limited to images of blood. The narrator utilizes an image from nature: “Los hombres caían como moscas” (189). Such an image draws from the wild and varied insect world; but the implied author’s choice to use a “fly” shows that the men who are falling in battle are common men, that common men exist in both the city and the country and that they are the blood and guts of society. The narrator continues his grisly retort: “Los cuerpos, al caer a tierra, producían como un sordo y fofo crujido; los sablazos se oían como si golpearan en la cáscara sonora del melón” (189). The sounds he uses, while they are not elements of nature themselves, they are products of a human body crunching against the ground and providing resistance to the blow of a saber. The gory manifestations of battle express even further the immediacy of the urban-rural conflict.

On a larger scale, the slaughter of Colorado soldiers by Pantaleón and his forces represents the bloodshed that is necessary to fuel the machine of war. When seen as a machine, war is an urban element; but the slaughter of humans to fuel that machine is representative of rurality. In this metaphor, the rural serves the urban, as Mamagela

claims on numerous occasions. The slaughter at one moment is described in this manner: “...con Pantaleón al frente y detrás unos cincuenta hombres, cayeron sobre un grupo que huía a pie. Y se cansaron de tajar en la carne viva” (190). The merciless slaughter that Pantaleón and his men commit upon hapless Colorado soldiers shows the beginning of the end for the urban contingent.

Amid the fury of battle, the natural world does not cease to impose its own boundaries upon the conflict. The narrator observes: “Era necesario pasar el río antes que las fuerzas derrotadas se reorganizasen y los alcanzaran” (191). The river provides a break in the action, a necessary foe to the progress of battle; a natural element that the Colorado forces can use to their advantage by putting a buffer between themselves and the Blanco side.

The fact that all of this violence and gore is going to end in death, however, is brought to the forefront by two deaths in particular: that of Jaime and that of Pantaleón. Primitivo gets his revenge on Jaime by beheading him in battle (195). The observation of this act by El Sacristán continues the theme of his blood-thirstiness and the idea that accompanies it that religion, warfare, and all human enterprises require blood in some form or other. Pantaleón’s death also reminds the reader of the ultimate result of warfare: “En aquellos supremos instantes de sonambulismo heroico, sintiendo las embriagueces del peligro y la locura de matar, solo pensaba en no caer prisionero, en morir peleando, según la fiera tradición de su raza” (196). Pantaleón appears throughout the entire novel as a ferocious warrior. He is no different in death. The “sonambulismo” of his final battle scene invokes Tocles’ discourse on sleep-walking—that we are all following a different

illusion through life. Perhaps Pantaleón's illusion is the glory of battle; but tragedy follows the glory of battle. Upon Pantaleón's death the narrator states the following: "En aquel trágico momento aparecía el sol por detrás del monte, y las carretas del parque subían las agrias barrancas del otro lado del río" (197). The appearance of the sun demonstrates, however, that death is not the only result of battle—that new life for others also results from it. The emergence of the wagons on the other side of the river signifies the same concept—that there is hope for those who survived and for future generations.

As the battle winds down, the narrator returns his focus to Primitivo and Celedonia. Celedonia dies and Primitivo becomes sad. He sets fire to "El Bichadero," cutting off his own head and dying among the flames, demonstrating how the simple rural dream to own his own ranch and live off of the land comes to an abrupt halt with his reaction to Celedonia's unfaithfulness and her death.

Tocles, and the urban-rural conflict that he embodies, now becomes the focus of the remainder of the novel. The plot terminates as he burns all of his philosophical manuscripts, a gesture that doesn't necessarily place an end to his internal struggle. In elegant discourse he ironically announces his humility: "soy una conciencia errante en el purgatorio del mundo, y al revés de los filistinos y de las personas honradas, me envileceré *públicamente* por no venderle en *secreto* a los sátiros la virtud de mi alma. Ese será mi *crimen radioso*" (205). His claim: "soy una conciencia en el purgatorio del mundo," shows that, while he desires humility, he must first put a material form to his consciousness—he must emerge from purgatory and live upon the ripe, fecund earth. Although he is well-meaning, he eschews, with his vocabulary and his verbosity, his

desire to live a rural lifestyle. His expression, “me envileceré *públicamente* por no venderle en *secreto* a los sátiros la virtud de mi alma,” exposes, again, a superiority-complex in which he imagines himself greater in spirit than those around him. His desire to confess publicly is a gesture that moves him closer to the embrace of a rural lifestyle because it shows his commitment to sharing with and helping others—a requirement of life in the country, according to Mamagela.

In order to achieve a rural nature, Tocles has to subvert his entire urban upbringing. Evidence of this desire to overcome the training of his entire life up to that point comes in the form of internal conflict: “Entonces sentía con viva fuerza, aunque desfalleciendo, las irreductibles contradicciones de su naturaleza, y cuán difícil le sería poner nunca al unísono ideal y acto, egoísmo y desinterés, universo y corazón” (206). His simple recognition of the conflicting ideals in his spirit reveals his intention to change both his personality and his attitude. Tocles represents the clash between urban and rural (a conflict that is equally represented in the civil war). The warring ideals in Tocles’ mind are not only convivial, they also take turns tormenting him with their instability: “Unos días sentíase revolucionario; otros, conservador...” (207). His feelings of “revolucionario” and “conservador” coincide with the two parties at war in Uruguay at that time: the revolutionary Blanco party and the conservative Colorado party.

Meanwhile, the countryside starts to put itself back in order, following the war:

Los ariscos matreros salían de los montes; los emigrados volvían a la tierra; los ganaderos, refugiados en los pueblos y en la capital, tornaban a las desamparadas estancias, reconstruían los alambrados, juntaban las dispersas haciendas y ordenaban, como los pájaros reconstruyen el nido que el viento deshace, lo que la guerra había desquiciado. (208)



The restoration that takes place following the war represents a return of country life to normal. For Tocles, this return to normal indicates that, perhaps with the regeneration that is taking place around him, he can also be influenced by the reigning spirit of camaraderie that is implied in the return of the *matreros* from the hills, the immigrants returning from abroad, and the fixing of the *estancias*.<sup>73</sup> The narrator describes this activity using a rural metaphor of the reconstruction of a bird's nest following a wind storm.

Tocles, however, does not completely comply with this wave of regeneration: “Sólo automáticamente seguía ocupándose en los quehaceres de ‘La Nueva Esperanza’” (209). He conforms with the duties of his ranch, but does so “automatically,” revealing his lingering urban ties in that the “automatic” style of his ranch reparations evokes urban machinery and the emotionless processes, devoid of thought, that it promotes. Further, he is elected deputy of the region as well as president of the “Liga Agraria”—he is going to have more rural responsibilities and more income (210-11). A third responsibility (one that would seemingly be positive to a rural person) is that Mamagela gives Tocles Amabí's inheritance. She underlines the rural nature of this transaction by saying: “cuida mucho ese dinero, Tocles; mira que es nuestro sudor y nuestra sangre lo que te damos” (211). The sweat and blood that produced this money contrasts with the philosophical, immaterial nature of Tocles' reality.

The contrast is so strong that it causes Tocles to cry. Mamagela misinterprets Tocles' tears: she thinks that they are of gratitude, but they are of desperation. Even though Tocles continues to transform himself into a rural character, he and Mamagela do

not connect on an intuitive level (211). This disconnect becomes apparent when she tells Tocles: “Está visto que nuestra familia no saldrá de la oscuridad, ninguno de nuestros hijos le dará lustre. Nos hemos sacrificado inútilmente. Tocles, hijo mío, Dios no te perdonará el que hayas burlado las esperanzas de dos pobres viejos...” (216). She laments the loss of her children; her life appears meaningless because the sacrifices she has made for them now seem to have been nullified. She addresses Tocles as “hijo mío,” as is her custom, and reproaches him for having disparaged others instead of helping them. She feels that her sacrifice has led to nothing and Tocles’ selfishness has now brought him success.

She recognizes, however, that his urban personality is going to cause him problems: “...por inútil rechazaste las vejigas de la región, buenas para mantenerse a flote en todo mar, y sin ellas ni otro asidero que los libros, que más bien te sirven de sobrecarga, te vas al fondo irremisiblemente” (217). Perhaps out of temporary bitterness, Mamagela explains that Tocles relies too much on himself and too little on the resources that the countryside has to offer. Her faith in the countryside continues as she explains to Tocles that the country will support anyone through any type of trial they are facing. While her faith in the countryside is unbending, she takes a moment to deprecate Tocles’ interest in books, saying that they will not help him stay afloat on the rough seas of life.

The argument continues between Tocles and Mamagela, an argument that, as we have observed, ends in Tocles’ commitment to a rural lifestyle. He speaks of sacrifice, but, again, he confuses the meaning of sacrifice and speaks of it in objective, idealistic terms: “Las altas virtudes piden el sacrificio de las pequeñas. Si no hubieran existido

locos como Cristo y Colón, no habrían parecido verdades sublimes ni nuevos continentes” (217). His claim that certain virtues require the sacrifice of smaller ones is a failed attempt to appropriate Mamagela’s terminology of “sacrifice,” which in her sense of the word, is an action that one performs for the well-being of another person. In Tocles’ case “sacrifice” takes place morally, and without reference to the material world. It is a process that requires nothing from him beyond passive thought. His claim that he is like Christ or Columbus offends Mamagela and shows how, rather than taking action that sets him apart like Mamagela, he theorizes his similarity to each of the two figures. He still has an opportunity to choose a life of action, but he has not yet arrived at that milestone.

Mamagela argues similarly that if Tocles were like Christ or Columbus there would be evidence of his powers in physically manifested form: “Siendo tú profeta o descubridor verdadero, las verdades nuevas y las nuevas tierras vendrían a ti, te saldrían al paso, obrarías milagros porque estaba en tu naturaleza hacerlo, como el rosal da rosas y el duraznero *pelones*...” (218). She argues that if he were like Christ or Columbus it would be part of his nature to work miracles or discover new lands. Mamagela uses natural vocabulary (that of “rosales” and “durazneros”) to explain each person’s function in life. She explains that the function is not difficult to understand because it is in a person’s nature to fulfill that function. She adds that it is easiest for one to find his function in the countryside.

The discussion turns to what Mamagela would do in Tocles’ place. She comments: “Me diría: mi familia, mis amigos, mi patria es la tierra, mi tierra; lo que yo

soy, es decir, mis aptitudes, la semilla; no la tiraré al aire fuera de sazón, la echaré a su tiempo en los surcos hondos y recogeré buenas cosechas” (219). Her love for others, her patience, wisdom, and faith help her to realize that there is an appointed time for everything during the various life cycles that come to the forefront in the countryside. Perhaps her discussion with Tocles helps her to realize that the loss of her children is part of one of those life cycles. Her recognition of natural cycles of life echoes the type of thinking that contemporary ecologists promote. In this way Mamagela is not only part of the beginnings of the present environmental crisis, but she also contributes to mentalities that benefit the environment through awareness.

Tocles does not share this worldview. His consciousness is still too self-centered. He describes the dilemma in terms of Mamagela: “Mi ley no es la de Mamagela...” (220). He obeys a different motivation than Mamagela: while Mamagela’s world is one of action in which she helps others, Tocles lives in a world of thought. Mamagela, however, has sympathy for Tocles; she relates: “Me parece que hemos vivido como extraños: él a mil leguas de nosotros y nosotros burlándonos de lo que no entendíamos” (221). She realizes that the different law that Tocles follows causes him to think and act differently. She recognizes that the foreignness of the urban culture that he brings with him to “El Ombú” causes them to ridicule him for what they don’t understand. Although she will never side with Tocles or any other urban influence, she feels sympathy for their differences and for the nature of the conflict.

The conflict culminates when Tocles decides to abandon his rural life with Amabí at “La Nueva Esperanza.” The narrator describes Tocles’ appearance as he packs his

suitcase: “En la frente, espaciosa y un tanto abultada, la luz amarillenta ponía un ósculo de pergamino y hacía resaltar el apretado nacimiento del cabello, que a Tocles le pareció en aquel instante una múltiple barrera de estacas y alambres de púas...a todo razonamiento que viniese de él” (222-23). The play of the light upon Tocles’ forehead suggests a return to books and scholarship, to the urban way of life. The image of fence posts and barbed wire that he synthesizes from a lock of his hair reveals that, once again, he is moving down a path marked with barriers and signs of danger. In his struggle to choose a rural way of life over an urban one he is also dealing with the internal struggle of real versus ideal. He fears the responsibilities that his developing life in the country brings, and he desires, for the moment, to return to an urban setting, where he is free to read books and process ideas.

Soon Mamagela becomes involved again. Her indubitable logic reaches across barriers of urban and rural and reconciles Tocles to his rural responsibilities: “¿Qué voluntad, por imperiosa que sea, puede impedir que los arroyos vayan a los ríos y los ríos vayan al mar?” (226). She is referring to Tocles’ “voluntad,” because she knows in certain matters he is strong-willed (albeit indecisive and conflicted). The power of her logical adage communicates itself to Tocles and he renounces his desire to leave the countryside. In that moment: “Doña Ángela los tuvo a los dos [Tocles y Amabí] en sus robustos brazos, grave y reconcentrada, como una gallina que incubaba sus huevos” (227). Mamagela finds that, even without her grandchildren, she still has a role to play in “El Ombú.” The comfort that she transmutes into the couple renews their interest in each

other and in life. Amabí, then, in a moment of intimacy, reconciles Tocles to his mission in the rural world as ordained by Mamagela.

Although he does accept his duties as *diputado* and *presidente*, he continues to be internally conflicted. His urban upbringing does not release him from its grasp. He continues to struggle with his need to expostulate the world around him: "...seré un criador de ovejas metafísico y un sembrador de ideas ovejero" (230). It becomes clear that Tocles will never completely outgrow his affinity for urbanity and academic scholarship. However, he makes one last gesture to solidify his wish to be at one with the natural world and the processes of cultivation by which humans make use of it. He informs his wife that he will be sitting on the porch until late. As Tocles sits, the narrator observes: "Parecía de día claro. Un airecillo retozón movía las hojas de los árboles y refrescaba la epidermis abrasada de la tierra" (232). Tocles sits and reflects. He reads his old philosophical writings one last time and then destroys them (233). The novel closes with him sitting on the porch of his *hacienda*: "Sus ojos estupefactos, parecían ver lo invisible y descubrir las íntimas y ocultas correspondencias del Bien y del Mal..." (234). According to this passage, the final passage of the work, Tocles brings to the countryside an ability that may be useful, especially if we give credence to Mamagela's worldview, which he adopts. According to the passage, Tocles is able to penetrate the mysteries of Good and Evil because he has already experienced Evil in his selfish search for knowledge that will only benefit himself. He is now ready to embrace Good, to work for the benefit of others and dedicate his time and resources to the betterment of others.

El terruño is Carlos Reyles' testament to rural morality in Uruguay at the turn of the twentieth century. His depiction of the malevolent Temístocles Pérez y González as a threat to the convivial, likeable world of Mamagela and "El Ombú" accounts for much of the work. However, Tocles is a dynamic character. The novel follows his progress from urban hierophant to successful rural politician. The novel is set against a backdrop of civil war. Tocles' internal conflict is mirrored in the two opposing political parties, which stand for urban and rural interests, respectively. El terruño is a *Bildungsroman* for Tocles in that, although it takes place for him later in life, he comes to terms with the "moral universe" of the countryside (with reference to "las íntimas y ocultas correspondencias del Bien y del Mal"). The fact that it does take place later in life for Tocles demonstrates Reyles' view that urban education of the time did not teach its students how to relate with one another; it only teaches theories and facts and encourages isolated scholasticism. Tocles' realization of a fruitful life in the countryside is a result of the efforts of Mamagela to convert him and educate him. Although he may always be conflicted, Tocles emerges from El terruño refreshed and ready for life's trials.

In conclusion, El terruño is the story of Mamagela's shrewd appropriation of the land in Uruguay. It functions as a thesis novel on how Uruguayans should behave and what their values should be concerning the countryside. In Mamagela we see the representation of this thesis. She also represents a synthesis of the conflict between Primitivo and Tocles, the former being a proponent of the land, and the latter being a representative of the city. However, it is worthwhile to note the following: "Tocles no es toda la ciudad, no es toda la cultura ciudadana, aunque sea la sola parte de ella que el

autor ha querido poner en contraste con la vida de campo” (José Enrique Rodó qtd. in Torres-Rioseco 70). Reyles’ process of selecting characters to represent certain elements of Uruguayan society, then, runs the danger of identifying a character like Tocles with all urban life in Uruguay, a danger that threatens to misrepresent the nature of the conflicts that we face today regarding the environment.

Naturalism is an important stylistic influence in El terruño. For that reason “first wave” ecocriticism functions as the best approach to address the environment in this novel. The environment, however, figures greatly in many types of literature. As Manes states: “Attending to ecological knowledge means metaphorically relearning ‘the language of birds’—the passions, pains, and cryptic intents of the other biological communities that surround us and silently interpenetrate our existence” (25). Thus, we can espouse a literary criticism that keeps in mind the environment in whatever text. About the capacity of literature to change attitudes towards the environment, Buell states: “Land reclamation and preservation throughout Denmark...was inspired by literary revivals of saga and folklore that infused erstwhile desolate heathlands with romantic meaning and potential” (3). Similarly, this novel, although it is not a Romantic novel, is charged with the task of infusing the countryside with meaning through characters’ interactions. Beyond taking sides in this situation, Reyles makes a great effort to tell a story full of desire and conflict in which nature is central.



#### **Chapter IV: Looking at Nature: Representation in Gaucha, by Javier de Viana**

This chapter addresses the question of how nature is represented in Javier de Viana's Gaucha (1899). Gaucha embodies the implied author's vision of nature as an object-world that can be reproduced through fiction. Representation in this novel requires the implied author to first visualize the terrain he will be describing, and it helps him to see the relationships that characters have with nature. Viana's own experiences with nature and the people who inhabit it (*gauchos*, *matreros*, *estancieros*) color the novel. Passages on "representation" from Lawrence Buell's The Environmental Imagination (1995) highlight key issues related to representation of the natural world. In taking up "environmental representation," I observe, first, how it is a revelation of the author's mind, the inner landscape of his thoughts and desires. I observe, second, how a representation can never be nature itself, with examples from theoretical and critical sources. I then discuss how what Buell calls "thick description" serves the purpose of environmental literature.<sup>74</sup> From there I observe how fiction is an elaboration upon the physical object-world and how Realism and Naturalism (the dominant styles in the work of Viana) serve the purpose of representing this object-world. Next, I discuss regionalism in Viana's work, including his treatment of the autochthonous language of the *gauchos*. This is followed by a look at how *modernismo* reveals itself in Viana's writing and leads to a longer discussion of how modernization affects and is represented in his work, including the disappearance of the *gaucho*. The analysis of theoretical and critical texts closes with a look at how Viana is an environmentalist in terms of his fiction, especially Gaucha. I dedicate the second half of the chapter to an in-depth study of the novel itself,

paying particular attention to the relationship between nature and the main characters; that is, how they perceive nature and how this affects their personalities and actions. The Romantic idea that nature reflects mood will be contrasted with the Naturalistic idea that nature influences mood.

Gaucha takes place in the countryside of Uruguay and is the story of Juana, a girl who is mature for her age but also troubled by melancholy and desires for death. She is the granddaughter of Luis Valle and Rosa, who spend nothing more than a month together as Luis evades the army that contracted him to fight against his will. Rosa and her older sister care for the injured Luis and he develops an amorous relationship with Rosa. Two generations later, Juana's parents die and she is sent to live with her taciturn, reclusive uncle, don Zoilo, at his *estancia*, el Puesto del Fondo. She comes to know Lucio, who is also an orphan, and they develop a romantic relationship as young adolescents when Lucio brings Juana to el Puesto del Fondo to live with Zoilo. They live far apart, but, when Lucio comes to visit, the *bañado* near Zoilo's home becomes host to their romantic adventures. El rubio Lorenzo, an infamous bandit and friend of don Zoilo, comes to know Juana. On a second visit to el Puesto del Fondo, he finds her alone inside the house and rapes her. She tells Lucio, but he pardons her and they make plans to marry. Lucio and el rubio Lorenzo have a knife-fight, with Lucio wounding el rubio Lorenzo in the neck. The young couple escape only to be encountered days later by el rubio Lorenzo and his band of outlaws who kill Lucio and Zoilo, set fire to el Puesto del Fondo, and pursue Juana into the forest where they rape her and leave her tied to a tree, naked, to die.

Writing about fictional representation in general, Barry López describes how it is, above all, the revelation of an author's mind: "...the speculations, intuitions, and formal ideas we refer to as 'mind' are a set of relationships in the interior landscape with purpose and order" (Buell 83). His evocation of the "interior landscape" demonstrates how landscapes exist not only in the object-world but also in the mind. He implies that there is a difference between the two worlds, a difference that will be analyzed in this chapter. The "purpose and order" that López refers to come from the desires of the mind itself and can be directed to a goal of the person's choosing. In Viana's case, that goal is the countryside of Uruguay, as Franklin Rodríguez asserts in his chapter about Realism in the work of Viana: "The foremost theme of his prose addressed Uruguayan gauchos and their lives in the countryside" (201). Rodríguez notably mentions not only "gauchos" but also "their lives in the countryside," demonstrating how their natural environment is inseparable from their reality as humans.

Francis F. Donahue relates the issue to Viana's own life by explaining the origins of his attraction to rural issues: "Hasta los once años continuó el joven en la finca, sin saber leer ni escribir. Pero leía en la naturaleza, como nos indica él mismo. Cuando resolvieron los padres enviarlo a Montevideo a comenzar los estudios, el joven Viana tenía, en sus propias palabras, 'el alma imbuida de un inmenso amor a lo bello, a lo noble, a lo fuerte y a lo justo'" (404). This "leer en la naturaleza" emphasized the role that the mind plays in the creation of environmental novels like *Gaucha*: it is the source of inspiration and creation. Viana's late development of literacy intensified his early relationship with the countryside and increased the importance of any bonds with the

countryside that were forged early in his life. Viana's devotion to nature, then, was instilled at an early age and remained with him his whole life, as prolific evidence from his writing shows. Carlos Roxlo, in his "Juicio crítico de la obra de Viana," uses more colorful terminology when he states: "Nuestro Viana... conoce bien la vida de los campos en que enflora el ceibal, sabiendo lo que dice el lechuzón que pasa sobre el trébol verde cuando la sombra huye de cuchilla en cuchilla" (vi). Roxlo's imagery evokes the very nature which Viana understood so well.

Roxlo, in the same article, continues his praise of Viana's rural spirit, this time suggesting a relationship between man and nature: "Viana es un profundo conocedor de los dolores y las miserias, de los vicios y las virtudes de nuestra campaña. Todo lo pintoresco y peculiar del decir gaucho su numen lo vierte con fácil donosura en retóricos moldes, y hay en sus paisajes curveos de loma, olor a zarzal y murmullos de río" (viii-ix). This quotation gives us further insight into Viana's purpose as a writer. As a naturalist, in the tradition of Zola, one of his goals was to depict the difficulties of rural life in Uruguay. Roxlo, in reference to Viana's skill as a writer, shows how the difficulties of rural life and the beauty of nature are inextricably intertwined in his writing.

Viana's keen sense of the rural world in turn-of-the-century Uruguay permeates his stories. That the stories from this time period had a long gestation adds to their environmental allure. As Roxlo states: "...los héroes de Viana, antes de vivir en el libro del novelista, vivieron nueve meses en el cerebro de Javier de Viana" (xxxiv). Viana's mind, then, links the exterior reality of the object-world with the literary text with which we are confronted. The importance of Viana's mind is central in that it holds the

memories that are later recorded in his works of fiction. According to Da Rosa, Viana lived on an *estancia* in the same place in which Gaucha takes place: *el Bañado de Gutiérrez* (24). The *bañado* plays an important role in the novel as the home of don Zoilo and Juana that is eventually burned down. It serves, as I argue, as a symbol of Juana's inexplicable melancholy that permeates the novel. The *bañado* is so important that, as Viana relates: "En Gaucha tengo cuatro descripciones de un mismo bañado, lo observé en diferentes horas, en días distintos y con distintos estados de alma" (Cánepa 16). His four separate renderings of the *bañado* are a testament to how important the variations in the natural world are to the production of a literary work. The effect that these variations in nature have on the author's mind shows how environmental detail depends deeply on the content of the author's mind at a given moment of the day.

Although variations of nature upon the same mind produce differing accounts, it is also true that the same natural space is guaranteed to evoke different literary representations from different authors. Some may focus on visual elements, others on auditory and tactile manifestations, and still others on taste and smell, not to mention combinations of all five of these senses. In terms of representation of the natural environment, even the most faithful of realists will never achieve an objective representation. The beauty of the human mind is central to this impossibility.

The attention to detail in the various descriptions of nature that appear in Gaucha executes "literary versions" of that natural world. As Pereda Valdés elaborates: "...estas descripciones no son fantasiosas: corresponden a la realidad de aquellos paisajes como pudimos contrastarlo en nuestros viajes por dichos lugares" (537). He emphasizes the

reality of these literary representations and the way in which, while they are not implacable, they could be used to recognize various locales of the Uruguayan countryside (probably most notably the *bañado de Gutiérrez*). Orcajo Acuña continues Pereda Valdés' assessment that Viana's mastery of literary technique is also a mastery of the natural world that he describes: "Sólo un escritor de vigor mental y de la cultura sólida de de [sic] Viana, siguiendo el método de la belleza emotiva como el postulado de la verdad máxima de su arte, puede trazar la figura,—a veces hiperbólica—de estas naturalezas tan complejas" (33). The function of the mind, in the outlook of these two critics, is nothing more than that of a mirror upon which the natural world can be reflected and faithfully reproduced by a masterful artist, causing one to imagine that the better the artist the more accurate the representation.

In the mind of Viana himself, *Gaucha* was not the masterpiece that certain critics ascribed it to be.<sup>75</sup> Gillcrist expounds upon a passage from Viana's prologue to the second edition of the novel, published in 1901, as follows:

Viana thus compares his work *Gaucha*, not to the lofty oak which lifts its head high for all men to admire, but to the humble and obscure mountain tree. Upon this creature the stranger might look with disdain, but the son of the land considers the hardy mountain *molle* with affection. Like the *molle* that often must spread its roots among the rocks of the mountains, the lesson of *Gaucha* will penetrate its Uruguayan readers so as to achieve lasting improvement for the miserable gaucho. Many conflicts have been witnessed by the humble mountain tree, conflicts among the lowly as well as among those of exalted rank. Similarly, Viana's work must sound the problems of the lowly, just as it must treat the difficulties of the mighty of Uruguay.<sup>76</sup> (35)

The use of natural imagery to describe his opinion of his own work shows how invested Viana was in the natural world. His choice of the *molle* illustrates his state of mind, that is, his devotion to rural ways. Viana no doubt considered himself a "son of the land," a

consideration that must have affected everything that he wrote. Viana's descriptions of the sometimes miserable reality of the rural world resound not as a trumpet call that the whole world will notice, but, in the case of Gaucha, as a humble gesture of hopelessness.

As a further indication of how Viana's state of mind affected the writing of his only novel we can look again to the same prologue. In that prologue Viana describes hearing the story that inspired the writing of Gaucha: "Yo la oí conmovido y emprendí una serie de prolijas investigaciones para cerciorarme de la verdad del relato, concluyendo por adquirir la convicción de que era perfectamente histórico" (García, 30 Oct. 1960). The story fermented in Viana's mind and eventually emerged as the short story: "Margarita blanca," that later developed into Gaucha. The emotion that the story awakened in Viana's mind eventually found its expression in the rolling countryside of Uruguay. In this way the rural world that Viana adored and respected soon came to be the setting for Gaucha.

Viana's interior landscape also affected the second edition of Gaucha through the promotion of primal urges as represented in el rubio Lorenzo. As Carlos Roxlo affirms: "más que una moza en cuyas venas pugnan dos jugos hereditarios y contradictorios, el final segundo responde sumisamente al propósito perseguido por el autor, como imagen del campo en que el partidismo y el vagabundaje perpetúan las llagas del atávico" (Schlickers 181). In other words, Viana's vision of the backwardness of the rural world brought about the devastating actions of el rubio Lorenzo in the last chapter of the second edition.

Representation, of course, then, begins in the mind and then is expressed, in the case of literary representation, in written language. Once nature has been represented on the page it takes on a life of its own, open to scrutiny and a myriad of interpretations. Buell emphasizes the incompatibility of real nature with nature represented on the written page: “No, there is only an image, a symbol, a projection, a persona, a vestige or democratic deformation of the aristocratic pastoral... a contorsion of heptameter” (86). Buell’s argument here is that literature, while it attempts to recreate the object-world, can never be that object-world. Viana was pressured, during his long stay in Buenos Aires, to produce a prolific amount of short stories. He must have exhausted his sources of inspiration for writing about rural Uruguay, resulting in an unnecessary repetition of material. About the question of whether nature is repeatable in Viana’s work, Zum Felde writes: “...obligado a elaborar dos o tres cuentos por semana, sobre el mismo tema campero, publicó mucha cosa insustancial y se repitió bastante” (Zum Felde, Proceso intelectual 153). The insubstantiability of Viana’s short stories can be seen in terms of environmental representation in that he probably started to use the same mental images of the countryside to write multiple stories and create seemingly varied content. The difference between object-world and literary representation can be seen here in that, although Viana’s store of images of nature probably ran out, he continued to produce new material. As a result, many of his stories from this period are repetitious and lack innovation.

Buell mentions above that “persona” is one of the products of literary representation. I would like to relate how the main characters in Gaucha play a part in the



novel's representation of the natural environment. The first issue to be addressed is how, according to Visca, Juana represents a national consciousness: "Juana se convierte no ya en representación de nuestra tierra, en símbolo poético de una realidad agreste y más o menos bucólica, sino en expresión de un estado de la '*conciencia nacional*'" (Visca 48). Visca's use of "conciencia nacional" must be applied to its proper location; Juana is the *rural* "conciencia nacional." As Roxlo observes: "Gaucha es el alma dolorosa de nuestros campesinos" (xxxv). One of the key elements of Juana's character is her dreadful melancholy, referred to as a "melancolía misteriosa" by Schlickers (180). What many critics have observed is that this melancholy functions for Viana as an indication of his view of a broader, more sweeping psychology of rural Uruguay. Juana is not just a symbol of the land; her melancholy makes her also a portentous proponent of national consciousness in that she represents the decline of the gaucho.

Her sickness is unexplainable, as Schlickers relates: "Pese a que la enfermedad extraña de Juana se menciona repetidas veces, queda al fin y al cabo para el narratorio tan inexplicable como para ella misma..." (Schlickers 181). The melancholy plays a central role in the novel's drama, but it is never given a proper origin. Many critics, like Rodríguez Monegal, have ventured to define the source of this malady: "...el personaje (o el autor) parece intuir ahora cuál es la naturaleza del mal: esa inadaptación profunda al medio agreste" (Rodríguez Monegal 21). Juana, although she has always lived in the countryside, seems to be poorly adapted to it. At the very least, Rodríguez Monegal suggests a tenuous relationship between Juana and the natural environment. Juana's

symbolic importance as bearer of national consciousness does not deter her from having a precarious relationship with the land itself.<sup>77</sup>

Juana's appointment as symbol of Uruguayan rural consciousness lends an air of pessimism to the novel. It becomes easy to understand why one would affirm the following: "Gaucha es la retórica positivista sobre el Nihilismo" (Freire 40). Juana's attitude, especially in the final chapters of the novel, after she has been raped by el rubio Lorenzo, is one of fatalistic resignation. It seems that Viana is suggesting the death of rural Uruguay. However, the end of the novel does not focus on the bandits' success in achieving their goal of violating and humiliating Juana; instead, the narrator's attention remains with Juana, tied to a tree. She experiences a "bienestar nunca conocido," a sign that the Uruguayan countryside has the ability to regenerate itself despite a complex system of human relations that includes bandits, *estancieros*, and a growing number of peasants (156).

Despite the moment of optimism at the end, critics have focused on the work's pessimism: "La obra de Javier de Viana, como documento humano y social, deja en la conciencia del lector un sombrío pesimismo.... No es la barbarie primitiva, sana, pujante y heroica, que aparece en Ismael; es una barbarie triste y corrupta, de degeneración" (Zum Felde, Proceso intelectual 156). Although Gaucha was published only eleven years after Ismael, it presents a much more obscure look at the figure of the gaucho. Viana, then, unlike Acevedo Díaz, who sought to glorify the figure of the gaucho, chooses to represent him as brutal and without compassion. Visca sees el rubio Lorenzo as a degenerate descendant of the heroic Ismael: "El rubio Lorenzo, matrero valiente pero

cínico y feroz, es el descendiente degenerado de Ismael, el gaucho heroico creado por Acevedo Díaz; el rubio Lorenzo es el gaucho épico degenerado: las viejas virtudes subsisten en él, pero toman signo negativo” (54). Visca lends el rubio Lorenzo positive characteristics, but explains that these characteristics have been for the most part inverted.

One of the paradoxes of Gaucha is that, although Juana’s death represents the dying of gaucho culture in Uruguay, her passing takes place at the hands of a gaucho. Viana’s message, then, is that the gaucho is destroying himself. As modernization takes place and *estancieros* employ measures like wire fencing, the gaucho finds it less and less possible to earn a living off the livestock of others. Without the cooperation of the *estancieros*, gauchos become less and less able to survive. Their own practices of living off of rich *estancieros*’ bounty ended up harming them when *estancieros* took action against this tenet of gaucho lifestyle. Visca continues in this vein: “Javier de Viana sintetiza en Gaucha su visión de nuestra realidad rural (que para él es casi sinónimo de nuestra realidad nacional)” (61). Juana, then, becomes a symbol of this “realidad rural,” which, for Viana, is also the “realidad nacional.” Again, however, Gaucha is not limited to just representing the land. Visca calls Gaucha an “ensayo de psicología nacional” (62).<sup>78</sup> Psychology plays a significant role in the creation of the novel because it is Juana’s particular psychology that defines Viana’s vision of Uruguayan rural psychology as a whole. Juana, an example of Buell’s “contorsion of heptameter,” functions to propagate Viana’s message of the reality of rural Uruguay and the decline of the gaucho.

Perhaps Viana feels that the disappearance of the gaucho is nothing more than a continuation of the previous disappearance of the native populations of Uruguay: “Al hablar de la ‘literatura nacional’ Viana descubre que no se puede trazar dicha literatura hasta sus raíces por el hecho de que la cultura indígena había sido destruida” (Garganigo 89). According to Garganigo, Uruguay’s national literature has its roots in Native American traditions. Viana, as a rural, regionalist writer, would be especially sensitive to this actuality.

Don Zoilo is the character that most closely approximates Native American culture. Visca describes him as “un ser que deja transcurrir su vida poniéndola al mismo ritmo que el de la naturaleza, dejándose casi conformar por ella...” (54). The closeness of Zoilo’s relationship with nature indicates that he may be a late representative of native culture in Uruguay. However, don Zoilo possesses characteristics that distinguish him as an individual, as well: “El tipo de don Zoilo está pintado con mano maestra. Es más que un hombre; es el alma, hecha carne, de la soledad” (Roxlo xxx). Zoilo, in this case, more than representing native populations that have been destroyed, represents the solitude of nature. His self-sufficiency mirrors the way that nature provides for itself without human interference. As Visca comments: “El don Zoilo de Viana es la inmovilización de la vida en el estadio primario del instinto” (51). Zoilo, then, is much like nature in both his stolidity and in the way that he relies on his instincts.

Turning to Lorenzo, Visca has commented that Lorenzo also relies on an intimate relationship with nature: “Lorenzo Aldama se consubstancia con su ambiente, incluso lo ama y ama la vida que éste le impone. Pero ama al ‘medio’ porque la cerrilidad de éste

concuenda con su propia alma ruda y bárbara y le permite el ejercicio de las energías destructivas que lleva en sí” (54). While Zoilo can be identified as representing lasting, unchangeable nature, Lorenzo represents nature’s more destructive, violent element. For Lorenzo nature is a mirror or reflecting pool for his own violent personality. He sees in nature those elements that most closely define him as a character. According to Visca, Lorenzo is a typical character in Viana’s literary repertoire:

En situaciones bélicas el gaucho de las obras de Javier de Viana no es el gaucho típico de la gesta emancipadora, en el cual hasta la barbarie aparece como purificada al arder en el fuego transfigurador de esa misma gesta, sino el anti-héroe de las guerras civiles, en el cual hasta el coraje indómito se muestra desgradado por la crueldad y la soberbia. En situaciones de paz, el ‘paisano’ que aparece en la obra de Viana no es el ser inocente y puro en su primitivismo que ofrecerán narradores posteriores, sino un ser devorado por la indolencia, la incuria, la desidia, la abulia, la picardía malintencionada y corrompido por el alcoholismo, la prostitución, el caudillaje político y el matonismo. (39)

Visca calls Viana’s gauchos “anti-héroes”; Lorenzo can definitely be considered an anti-hero if we take into account the fact that he is the only main character who does not die in the final chapter. He is further an anti-hero because he causes the deaths of the other main characters. Unlike Ismael Velarde, who embodies a more emancipatory character, Lorenzo wages war not against the unjust rule of a colonial presence but against those who have transgressed his honor and his pride. For this reason Lorenzo is an atypical gaucho in Uruguayan literature of the epoch.

Taking both Zoilo and Lorenzo’s characters in mind, Visca expounds: “Viana, en lo más profundo de sí, sólo siente la atracción de lo hurraño y lo violento. Por esto los personajes más logrados de Gaucha no son Juana y Lucio, sino don Zoilo y el rubio Lorenzo” (50). While one must admit that Viana’s attraction to “lo hurraño y lo violento”

causes him to develop well the characters of don Zoilo and el rubio Lorenzo, one cannot ignore the numerous passages of psychological development that illuminate the characters of Juana and Lucio just as brilliantly as those of don Zoilo and el rubio Lorenzo, especially certain passages that take place between Juana and Lucio in the *bañado*.

Zoilo and Lorenzo, however, are the two characters most closely in touch with the countryside: “Both of these men live off the land, do not answer to anybody but themselves, have no respect for authority, and live as far from modern society as possible” (Shade 123). Juana and Lucio also represent nature, but Juana’s melancholy prevents her from a complete submersion in rural ways and Lucio is more concerned about people than nature. This is not to say, however, that Juana and Lucio are unaccustomed to country life, it is just that they do not represent it as deeply as the other two main characters. The two characters who are closest to the natural environment, Zoilo and Lorenzo, are the least heroic: “Pero en los personajes de Gaucha hay en verdad muy pocas virtudes exaltables” (Visca 44). The lack of virtues in the main characters of Gaucha is a characteristic of Viana’s writing in general.

Viana’s writing attempts to reproduce nature even if, at the same time, nature is unreproducible. Buell argues “...that mimesis itself threatens nature by tempting us to accept cozening copies for the real thing” (103). This perspective highlights the necessity to conserve the natural environment not only in literary representation but also in the wider natural world. However, some novelists—like Guy de Maupassant—claim that it is literature’s role to faithfully reproduce nature: “La tarea del novelista es tratar de

reproducir la naturaleza y el medio ambiente fielmente. Sus creaciones debieran tener una relación perceptible con la realidad” (Garganigo 93-94). In terms of his short stories, Viana complies with this requirement very well. Roxlo indicates that the truthfulness of nature or the faithfulness to nature of a representation is something beyond morality: “El monte, el río, el arroyo y la sierra tampoco son morales, lo que no le impide ser verdaderos” (xxxvi). The accuracy of a literary representation of the natural world, then, can exist without the superfluous imposition of human values upon it. Nature exists before humankind and thus exists independently of such values.

There are also hindrances to the faithful reproduction of the natural world in literature. Rodríguez mentions as one example “pseudo-*criollismo*,” which is described in El Nacional: “En cambio, [...] el gaucho de los dramas criollos es un producto falsificado [...]. Más nocivo que el gaucho real, que es sociológicamente patógeno de por sí. Lo cual no impide que en una época haya tenido virtudes” (201). The creation of false representations of the gaucho and his natural environment implies a danger that we will accept this falsified copy for reality. Viana’s representation of Lorenzo and Zoilo could perhaps be categorized under the label of pseudo-*criollismo* because of their severe violence and unsociability, respectively.

However, Viana takes great care to faithfully represent the dialect of the countryside: “Cuando hablan sus personajes nos parece estar oyendo la lengua viva del campo en boca de paisanos de carne y hueso, y no a través de los esfuerzos de un hombre culto que busca reproducirla” (Serafín J. García, qtd. in Cánepa 37). While García praises Viana for the verisimilitude of the linguistic reproduction in his works, Zum Felde takes

another approach and disparages Viana's efforts: "Tal reproducción fonográfica del lenguaje gauchesco (de una ortografía arbitraria) no es necesario a la caracterización de los personajes, sólo barbariza, oscurece y restringe el relato" (Zum Felde, Proceso intelectual 169). Zum Felde's antagonism toward this particular aspect of Viana's *œuvre* ignores the importance of scientifically reproducing linguistic culture of the countryside. While it is important not to accept representation for reality, those creating representations should still strive to reproduce their subject reliably. According to Roxlo, Viana's writing serves just that purpose:

Viana ve un paisaje, y describe el paisaje como el paisaje es la naturaleza de nuestro pago; pero, al verterle, no hay arruga de árbol ni sombra de risco que no traslade al lienzo, siempre que esta sombra y aquella arruga sean toques hermosos, lo que produce, como resultado, el que la verdad suya nos parezca abultada, por falta de agudeza en la visión nuestra. Y esto, que apenas se nota en sus cuentos, se nota fuertemente en Gaucha. (xix-xx)

Roxlo's description of Viana's creative process praises the dependability of his art, even if it fails to take into account the rift that always forms between nature and representation. However, Roxlo's aforementioned description actually emphasizes the other end of the spectrum: that for every manifestation of the natural world there exists in Viana's work a corresponding literary manifestation.

Roxlo's assessment of Viana's work, although it came before the term existed, echoes Geertz's "thick description." According to Buell, novels like Gaucha are environmentalist novels because of the amount of attention they pay to the natural environment: "The willingness to admit that thick description of the external world can at least sometimes be a strong interest for writers and for readers, even when it also serves ulterior purposes, is particularly crucial in the case of the environmental text" (Buell 90).



Cantonnet remarks: “[s]in ser paisajista, Viana concede importancia capital a los elementos de la naturaleza” (43). Despite his extensive descriptions of the natural world, Cantonnet chooses not to classify Viana as a landscape writer. It is likely that Cantonnet sees Viana as, above all, a naturalist. It is easy, however, to see how Viana could be classified as both a landscape writer and a naturalist. Rodríguez affirms Viana’s naturalist bent: “Viana emphasized the objective observation of the misery of the Uruguayan countryside; his naturalist stories are nothing but the harsh reality of the peasants, who were adversely affected by the changes that took place” (217). I would add that Viana’s “objective observation” is peppered with extremely harsh interpretations of the reality of *paisanos* in the Uruguayan countryside (e.g. the arson, murder, and rape that take place in the final chapter of Gaucha).

Despite the question as to whether Viana is a landscape writer, critics continue to discuss his landscapes. About the landscapes in Gaucha, Pereda Valdés comments: “Aquellos paisajes anegadizos con su flora exótica y raquíica, la que más se parece al ‘sertao’ del Brasil y con su fauna de zancudos y de aves trashumantes, aquellos bañados cercanos al Cebollatí adquieren también un aspecto de paisaje africano” (537). The exoticism of Viana’s descriptions of the Uruguayan countryside can be likened to those of Brazilian and African subjects. Speaking of Viana’s short story “Leopoldo Almeida,” Álvaro Barros-Lémez states: “El autor colocó tantos animales, tantas plantas, tan pormenorizadas descripciones del escenario en que se desarrolla el drama heroico de Almeida, que quizás esa sea la razón central por la cual prefirió no volver a publicarlo como relato unitario y sí utilizarlo como cantera para muchos otros” (68). This quotation,

too, acknowledges the prolificness of Viana's portrayals of the natural environment. Viana's thick description of the natural world is one of the prime characteristics of his fiction.

This thick description is executed not just for aesthetic purposes, but also to advance the plot and develop the characters: "...el paisaje, que aquí ni consiste en un mero telón de fondo, destinado a cumplir funciones decorativas, sino que gravita de continuo sobre los impulsos y los actos humanos, al punto de que estos llegan muchas veces a parecernos determinados y regidos por su influencia, tan poderosa como ineluctable" (García, 27 Nov. 1960). That Viana's landscapes affect and are affected by the characters reveals a symbiosis between the two, in late Romantic fashion. Cantonnet emphasizes the extraordinary nature of Viana's landscapes: "...siempre tiene el paisaje un valor descriptivo extraordinario y deja su huella en las criaturas que se profundizan en él y que, a través del paisaje, parecía que se atreven a mirarse y conocerse más a sí mismas" (50). The landscape is not limited to what Cantonnet calls "valor descriptivo"; it extends to the realm of characterization in which it influences the attitudes and actions of the characters. Schlickers comments similarly on the codependence of landscape and characters: "Las descripciones del paisaje no son nunca gratuitas: aparte de ejercer una función estética y referencial, construyen sobre todo una relación metonímica entre el personaje, su estado de ánimo mental o moral y el medio ambiente" (181). What Cantonnet calls "valor descriptivo" is here named by Schlickers "función estética y referencial." She, like Cantonnet, realizes that Viana's landscapes go beyond just mere

aesthetic representation—they perform the crucial function of aiding in the characters' processes of self-identification.

The importance of the natural world in characters' lives appears again in García. He extends the importance from not only self-identification but also a mystical union between the character and environment: "...ese paisaje desolado, áspero y sombrío que sirve de marco a la intriga novelesca de Gaucha, y con el cual algunos de los más enterizos personajes de la obra...muestra una consustanciación profunda e integral, dándonos por momentos la impresión de que uno y otros son partes constitutivas de una misma entidad" (García, 27 Nov. 1960). Although he describes the natural world of Gaucha as inhospitable, he suggests that the characters blend with this inhospitability. Perhaps he is thinking more specifically about don Zoilo, who, as other critics have mentioned, shares a very close bond with the natural environment. As Visca suggests: "Si para Juana es el estero una fuerza que la atrae con misteriosas fascinaciones que al mismo tiempo la destruyen, para don Zoilo es el bañado su ambiente natural, el aire que respira" (52). Visca identifies, then, two levels of involvement between character and natural environment. He sees Juana as being attracted to the mysterious allure of the swamps, which is a position of intermediate integration between character and environment. He sees don Zoilo, on the other hand, at a very advanced position of integration with the natural world, suggesting that Zoilo is not able to even breathe without it.

Despite the numerous suggestions that characters and natural environment are deeply intertwined, Roxlo observes: "La triunfadora es la tierra nativa, la tierra del pago, la tierra del país, con su hermosura y con sus dolores, con su pretérito montaraz y con su

verba gráfica” (xlii-xliii). Nature triumphs because it is almost the only thing left at the end of the novel: el Puesto del Fondo is in flames, Lucio and Zoilo are dead, Juana is tied to a tree and raped. In this instance, Lorenzo the bandit represents the brute force of nature that results in monstrous violence on all sides. He and his gang are the sole survivors of the conflagration at Puesto del Fondo, which suggests what Roxlo is saying, that nature alone triumphs in the cosmovision of this novel.

One of the ways that nature triumphs, including the case of Gaucha, is through “fiction or distortion.” Buell intimates: “It is not, after all, very hard to show that one of the projects of the environmental text is to render the object-world and that this project is sometimes best achieved through what would seem to be outright fiction or distortion” (103). Continuing, then, with the topic of the “environmental text,” we see that the representation of the natural world is a politically-charged action that has the consequence of promoting the cause of the preservation of natural spaces. Speaking of Gaucha as a fictional text that “renders the object-world,” Orcajo Acuña calls it a “verdadera épica en prosa” (23). From this claim evolves a discussion among various critics about the artistic merits of Gaucha. Roxlo relates: “[s]us hombres y sus cosas son de la patria, que no es un continente ni medio continente, porque mi narrador tiene sobra de ingenio para caer en tamañas torpezas” (ix). Roxlo’s observation that Viana’s characters and his issues come from Uruguay lends support to Orcajo Acuña’s claim that Gaucha is a prose epic and adds the supposition that it is a particularly Uruguayan national epic.

Echoing the call to classify Gaucha as a national epic, Zum Felde states: “[c]on personajes extraordinarios, decoración extraordinaria, y circunstancias extraordinarias, no puede resultar sino una obra de fondo poemático... Antes bien, comprueba que, si tiene menos valor *documental* que las otras narraciones del autor, tiene, en cambio, más valor artístico” (*Crítica* 265). Although Zum Felde derides the novel’s value as a Realistic document compared to the author’s other works—a claim to which I concur—he recognizes the work’s artistic value. His affirmation that Gaucha is poetic lends support to the claim that Gaucha is a “verdadera épica en prosa.” Visca, on the other hand, claims the opposite: “La obra de Javier de Viana hace ostensible en él... una ausencia casi total de auténtica sensibilidad poética (sólo salvada en ocasiones por la fuerza poética de la misma realidad transcrita)” (61). Visca’s statement shows how flexible a literary work like Gaucha can be. While Zum Felde sees Gaucha’s achievement to be artistic, Visca sees it to be in the Realism of its pages. Visca’s view is more in line with Buell’s idea of environmental value. He implies that the artistic value of a literary work is less important to the furthering of the environmentalist cause than a Realistic, documentary representation of the same. In either case, the natural world that appears on the page is nothing more than a “contorsion of heptameter.”

Beyond the question of the relationship between character and landscape, another key issue in the criticism of Javier de Viana’s work is his role as psychologist for his characters, especially in Gaucha. Regarding Viana’s works from the turn of the twentieth century, Visca states: “Sus obras, para bien o para mal, están contaminadas de la necesidad de tomar conciencia de la realidad que les rodea y de adoptar una posición—

afirmativa o negativa—ante ella” (36). The adoption of a moral position on the part of the author seems to be crucial because the natural world is so central in Viana’s works.

Viana’s adoption of a moral position, then, affects how the natural world is seen in the context of the novel or short story. When the author steps outside of the bounds of being merely a story-teller and philosophizes about his characters and their situations, he introduces another possible hindrance to how the natural world is seen in these works of literature: “Como ejemplo pudiera citarse el caso de Gaucha, obra en que él mismo incurre en este error. Al insistir en escribir una obra de tipo ‘roman experimental’ deja que sus divagaciones filosóficas impidan el progreso de la novela” (92). Viana’s attempts to embrace Zola’s theory of the “experimental novel” fail when he gets caught up in the scientific process. Zum Felde is in agreement when he states: “Debido a ello, Viana falla generalmente cuando entra a *explicar* la psicología de sus personajes y a razonar los hechos; todo lo que tiene de *estudio*, como se decía entonces, es la parte negativa y caduca de su obra” (Proceso intelectual 155). Although Viana probably saw his use of Zola’s “experimental” techniques as forward-thinking, critics agree that the adoption of this practice was also a hindrance. It is for this reason that Zum Felde concludes the following about Gaucha: “[e]s precisamente en esta novela... donde la flojedad de Viana como psicologista hace crisis, malogrando, en gran parte, personaje y novela” (Proceso intelectual 166). Viana’s “flojedad” does not permit him to enter the minds of his characters with any penetrating precision. However, his descriptions of the natural world are one of the novel’s great achievements.

Additionally, Cánepa provides an observation that includes a reason for Viana's failure as a psychologist: "Zum Felde señalaba que Viana no es realmente un psicólogo, sino un fuerte pintor objetivo; la verdad íntima de sus personajes hay que buscarla en su acción misma; son reales sus tipos mientras obran, mientras se mueven, mientras hablan ellos mismos; dejan de serlo cuando el autor los analiza y explica" (13). The difference, then, between action and explanation in the novel is the difference between Viana as an objective painter (a role at which he succeeds) and Viana as a psychologist (a role that he fails at because he takes away from the enchantment of the natural world that is otherwise so evident in his writing). Indeed, Viana's failure as a psychologist (and, by extension, as a naturalist) has grave implications:

Viana no era un sociólogo, Viana no era un psicólogo, Viana no era un naturalista. No era Zola, ni siquiera en lo que Zola tiene de más caduco, en su abrumadora manía de teorizar, en su fantasía delirante. Y al no serlo, y al querer serlo, Viana introdujo en la novela un elemento de muerte. (Rodríguez Monegal 22)

The "elemento de muerte" that Rodríguez Monegal speaks of is a suitable name for the topic being discussed here: the excess of explanation and analysis in Gaucha. Rather than leaving the characters to express themselves through words and actions, Viana explains them excessively. Rendering the object-world through fiction requires the faithful reproduction of characters' lives. The "elemento de muerte" in Viana's writing takes away from the verisimilitud of these lives.

Visca divides Gaucha into passages that describe and passages that explain:

En el primer caso [el de "mostrar"] se dan las páginas literariamente excelentes de la novela, las que se suman con justicia, con su recio tono naturalista, a lo mejor de la obra de Viana. En el segundo caso [el de "explicar"] escribe Viana páginas literariamente deleznable, casi abrumadoras, y que sólo se hacen interesantes

cuando, traspasando la letra, nos permiten ver a su través algunos supuestos importantes para la comprensión de su obra. (59)

Viana, in his attempt to execute the Naturalistic science of literature introduced by Zola, outdoes himself and creates a novel with both well-written and poorly-written passages. The division can also be seen in ecocritical terms: “showing” includes “thick descriptions” and true-to-life renderings of the natural world, while “telling” includes passages that try to assign to the natural world a morality or a scientific explanation. Science has its place in environmental literature, but not when it is exaggerated or overwrought. As Visca points out: “Esta dualidad en la estructura de la novela, cuyo autor procura hacer obra de arte al tiempo que rendir casi científicamente su materia narrativa, permite considerar a Gaucha según un doble enfoque” (37). This “doble enfoque” both “shows” nature and “tells” nature, according to whether it is a more artistic or more scientific passage.

Gaucha’s poetic force, however, comes from these descriptions of nature. García writes of “la admirable fuerza de algunos de los retratos humanos que la obra nos brinda, y la presencia viva y absorbente del bárbaro paisaje que sirve de marco a ese drama de soledad, romanticismo enfermizo y hervor de instintos salvajes y desenfrenados” (García, 13 Nov. 1960). Together with Viana’s masterful landscapes comes the strength of his description of characters. García’s praise of these elements of Viana’s writing leads to the recognition that this novel is itself a paean to the loneliness, the romanticism and the savage instincts of the natural world.

An element of Viana’s fiction that takes away from the majesty of his natural descriptions is its structure. Gaucha’s structure does not lend it any poetic achievement:



“La acción es escasa y errática. No tiene continuidad y el ritmo es casual. La inserción de los *racconti* es caprichosa. Los largos análisis psicológicos paralizan a cada rato la acción y estropean el significado de episodios que Viana había conseguido dar, en su peripecia, intensamente” (Rodríguez Monegal 22). Here, Rodríguez Monegal cites several negative aspects of *Gaucha*'s structure. Visca agrees when he adds: “...no hay en ella [*Gaucha*] complejidad formal, ni en la estructura total de la novela (contada casi linealmente) ni en los recursos narrativos de detalle (que se reducen a procurar una vigorosa impresión de realismo)” (58). It can perhaps be implied, from Visca's comment, that the natural world that Viana so intensely desired to represent came to influence his ideas of structure. The lack of “formal complexity” can perhaps be attributed to an opinion that nature is simple and linear (although this opinion fails to hold sway when nature is examined in detail). One of the more likely reasons for *Gaucha*'s formal simplicity, however, comes from Rodríguez Monegal, who explains that, in *Gaucha*: “[e]l cuento se estiró a novela” (Cánepa 18). Viana's strength, of course, is in writing short stories. His one attempt at writing a novel, executed somewhat early in his career, fails on the level of formal complexity. The novel genre, known often for its complexity, forces Viana to adopt techniques he normally would not employ; thus, *Gaucha* retains the feel of a short story in terms of structure.

An important element that affects the content of Viana's novel is Naturalism. Viana is, indeed: “el más genuino representante de la escuela ‘naturalista’ en el Uruguay” (Zum Felde, *Crítica* 258). Despite the criticism that his works are overly Naturalistic, Viana is recognized as the principal proponent of Naturalism in Uruguay. Naturalism in

Latin America was, in fact, more expansive than its counterpart in France, demonstrating a fervent desire to imitate the latest artistic fashions from the Old World. As Ramos indicates: "...el naturalismo francés se limitó a unos diecisiete años, entre 1870 y 1887, mientras que en hispanoamérica duró hasta después de la primera década del nuevo siglo" (334). Naturalism's protraction in Latin America could also be due to a desire for the Latin American individual to understand himself and his surrounding environment in terms of science and rational observation. Ramos defines the "tres aspectos predominantes" of the Naturalist short story: "las descripciones y ámbitos totalmente degradados e inevitables, los personajes deshumanizados que reaccionan bajo estas condiciones y los diálogos limitados" (335). The degradation and dehumanization of Naturalist characters comes through clearly in Viana's fiction. Many of his characters carry the burden of being products of the difficult environments in which history places them: "Llevado del mano del Realismo y por momentos también el naturalismo, siente sobre sí la atracción del terruño y de su gente y busca plasmar en su obra escenas y tipos que los representen" (Assunção 6). Assunção reveals that people of the countryside and the countryside itself are interesting and worth analyzing scientifically. Thus, as the Latin American and, more specifically, Uruguayan literary intellectual came to see, Uruguay's land and its people give it an identity that is foundational.

Thus, the representation of these characters and their land has ecocritical ramifications. Not only must the Naturalistic writer describe objectively, he must also evaluate scientifically his subjects: "[E]l escritor naturalista había de valerse de la observación fría y de los estudios más concienzudos de los seres humanos, así como de

los elementos materiales que han amoldado a esos ‘seres’” (Donahue 406). The adjective that Donahue uses: “fría,” resounds in its close relationship to what Rodríguez Monegal calls “elemento de muerte” (see above). The Naturalistic experimenter must not forget that he is dealing with live subjects who are prone to cycles of advance and decay. These life cycles are important and must not be overlooked. Perhaps Rodríguez Monegal’s observation that Gaucha suffers from an “elemento de muerte” is a more general complaint to be directed at the institution of Naturalism itself.

At any rate, an analysis of humans and their surroundings is the cornerstone of Viana’s Naturalistic analysis. Visca takes the argument one step further when he affirms that the characters of Gaucha are products of their environments, an idea that refers back to Zola (44-45). Other characteristics of Naturalism of which Viana takes advantage are provided by Donahue: “...el uruguayo se va a definir luego como un escritor que aplica a sus cuentos y a su única novela los métodos procedentes del laboratorio, especialmente los principios derivados del medio vital y de la herencia” (404). “Medio vital” and “herencia,” two further characteristics of Naturalism, relate to the theme of nature and representation in that they are necessary elements to an objective, scientific observation of character psychology and behavior.

The claims that Viana failed at Naturalism in writing Gaucha achieve further validation from a statement of the author’s own, from the prologue to the second edition of the novel, in which he writes that Gaucha is an “estudio serio, real, casi científico” (Rodríguez 203). The seriousness of Viana’s attempt to write quality Naturalistic

literature, while noble and profound, exposes what the critics themselves have exposed, that Gaucha is not artfully conceived in a number of ways already discussed.

Viana's revelation in his prologue that he intends to write Naturalistic literature is no surprise if we consider the following:

Para Viana y sus contemporáneos, educados por las teorías positivistas, el naturalismo era la tendencia narrativa principal. [...]. En la producción de estos seguidores se advierte una tendencia determinista, un sentido moral cercano al de Zola, [...] un modo de analizar los problemas sociales con teorías prestadas de las ciencias. (Sum Scott qtd. in Rodríguez 203)

Naturalism, then, became a way to “experiment” with society and to advance hypotheses about how certain people will react in certain situations. In addition to the duality between art and science in Gaucha (that is, aesthetics and Naturalism), Turner signals another useful comparison: “‘La tísica’ [one of Viana's short stories] es, en definitiva, un conjunto sugestivo de tonalidades cambiantes, perfecto fiel de la balanza entre el vuelo de la imaginación creadora y los rigores de la prosa periodística” (429). In this example we can see that, although the two are different: “prosa periodística” is related to naturalist writing. The Naturalist writer strives to take an already existing situation or location (like the *bañado* of Gaucha) and place different characters in that situation to see how they will act. This is like newspaper writing because newspaper writing analyzes what already exists. Naturalism is, however, as a rule, more imaginative because the author has to visualize and invent how his characters are going to act and react.

This does not mean, however, that Naturalism was the only literary style available during the turn of the twentieth century in Latin America: “According to... Alberto Zum Felde, contemporaries refuted the naturalist theses and ‘como teoría literaria: “Le Roman

Experimental” no es ya sino un curioso documento histórico, testimonio de uno de los momentos más aberrantes en la evolución intelectual de Europa” (Rodríguez 203). Zum Felde, a successor of Viana, downplays the importance of Naturalism during Viana’s time. He claims that the practice, even in Europe, was nothing more than an aberration from the mainstream.

Nonetheless, as Gillcrist points out, Viana’s Naturalism served the people of the Uruguayan countryside: “His pen was ever in the service of the oppressed” (Gillcrist 15). His desire to aid this class of people shows how he manipulated Naturalism to serve the particular purpose of exposing the ills of a certain part of society. Gillcrist adds: “But by far the most important social objective of Viana’s literary career was to interest his readers in the misery and decadence of Uruguay’s gauchos...” (16). Gauchos, in particular, along with anyone who crossed paths with gauchos, were Viana’s main theme. This authorial focus brings the natural world to the forefront because of the close relation sustained between gaucho and natural environment.

A specific case of the social importance of Viana’s Naturalism can be found in the short story “Por matar,” as described by Rodríguez in the following:

Once again we are faced with Viana the censor, like Zola, approaching the reality of peasants with a raw naturalist view to denounce what was believed to be their backwardness. The focus on the negative and the social decline serves the opposite function to that which we observed in the stories of Bentos and Teru-terero. Here the naturalist somatic description does not rush towards or anticipate certain behaviors or consequences, as in previous stories. Rather, it is the result of a pathology or an uncontrolled corporeality: that of the young stud, deceiver of young women, obsessed with his looks and with possessing their bodies, which ends up being a reflection, or the monstrous image, of an inconsiderate soul. (215)

While Rodríguez postulates that Viana is denouncing the backwardness of characters in this particular short story, the case with Gaucha is that he is exposing their misery. However, the “pathology...of the young stud” comes through clearly in Gaucha with the character of Lorenzo. The way that, as Rodríguez observes, naturalist tendencies can lead to the revelation of a character’s soul shows how Naturalism is not just an art that concerns itself with appearances. Through dealing scientifically and methodically with superficial details, the naturalist writer comes to profound conclusions. In the case of Gaucha, one of these conclusions is that the countryside is in revolt and that the *bañado* by itself is not enough of a refuge for the characters who would wish to evade this revolt: “As a disciple of Zola, and in line with the philosophy of Determinism, which Naturalism worships, Viana has replaced the free choice of evil by Lorenzo with the ‘fatal embrace’ of Juana’s cruel surroundings” (Gillcrist 38). Juana, in the hands of an author determined to demonstrate her powerlessness, is made to “fatally embrace” her miserable reality as an orphan lost in the cruel countryside. Lorenzo’s “free choice,” on the other hand, shows that the cruel Uruguayan countryside, in the hands of the naturalist Viana, favors those who are cruel and punishes those who are not. Echoes of another nineteenth-century theory resound from the raw Naturalism of this paradigm: Darwin’s “survival of the fittest.”

Besides Naturalism and Darwinism, another movement imported from Europe appears briefly in the work of Viana: Romanticism. As Orcajo Acuña observes: “El gaucho es un personaje romántico (que no se conoce bien), trasplantado al solar americano” (20). The gaucho’s “transplantation” indicates readily that this particular

version of Romanticism, just like the Naturalism that Viana employs, originated elsewhere. Ramos bolsters Orcajo Acuña's observation about Romanticism: "...éstos [los cuentos de Viana] poseen características predominantemente naturalistas, y que no falta en ellos ciertos rasgos románticos e incluso modernistas" (334). The *modernismo* in Viana's work will be taken up below, but it suffices to say that, like almost all Uruguayan fiction of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there was a mixture of Romanticism, Realism-Naturalism, and *modernismo*.

Schlickers instigates a discussion of *criollismo* in Viana's work when she says: "La novelística naturalista-criollista, por el contrario, recurre a los reconocimientos y métodos científicos coetáneos para explicar y criticar el funcionamiento de lo representado en los mundos narrados de manera objetiva y racional" (178). Schlickers reveals that Viana's literary production is not only Naturalistic, but also *criollista*. His dedication to the regional environment is apparent in all of his fiction, and the gaucho is the main character or a central character in all of his works. In all of his literary corpus, Viana strives to advance the consciousness of the regional. His attempts to effect this paradigm work against Buell's observation about regional terrain: "Regional terrain organizes itself for us in the guise of maps and highways; rarely do we bring its topography, system of water courses, vegetation zones, and atmospheric patterns into focus as organizing forces when we drive rapidly through them on our daily commute" (108). Buell's statement originates from a completely different worldview than that of any of Viana's works of fiction. Instead of "maps and highways," gauchos from Viana's literature trust their own memories and instincts. While "regionalism" does exist for the

twenty-first century commuter, it is a conglomerate of concrete and steel instead of natural landmarks as in the works of Viana. While, according to Buell, the twenty-first century automobile commuter rarely takes time to observe the regionality of his environs, the gaucho in Viana's short stories and novel is constantly interacting with every regional aspect of the area. One could surmise that the difference between a vianaesque gaucho and a modern-day freeway commuter is one of rural and urban environments, but the difference is deeper because the two espouse completely different worldviews, as well.

Rodríguez is quick to observe Viana's position as a leading *criollista* writer of the time: "...Viana can be considered a *criollista*, an exponent of a literary trend that was very popular during his time and that focused on depicting what was typically local" (201). His interest in the "typically local" refers to a desire to penetrate the natural environment and observe its effects on the local population of which he was a part. His regionalism shows a concern for the world in which he lived. While he did spend a great deal of time in Buenos Aires, away from the regionality of the rolling Uruguayan countryside, his memories and his desire to recreate that countryside remained throughout his life, augmented by the impressions from his early days growing up in said rural environment. For him to recreate the region in which he grew up shows the intensity with which he lived those years in rural Uruguay: "El regionalismo permite a la musa ser sincera y verídica, porque sólo se traduce a la perfección aquella que se ve y que siente con intensidad" (Roxlo xi). The sincerity and truth with which he writes is an indication of the depth of inspiration that he derives from the natural world.



The beauty of the natural world extends beyond itself when the author achieves supposed “universality.” Viana wrote many stories about the Uruguayan countryside, and made use of many different environmental settings, but each of his stories possesses a “universal” appeal, one that can touch the affections of a reader: “Los matices cambian, pero no la esencia, siendo al regionalismo de los iluminados una de las muchas formas o cantares de lo universal” (Roxlo xiv). Zum Felde examines the “universalism” of the regional and postulates the question: “¿no debe toda obra literaria de cierta categoría aspirar a lo universal, y no es una limitación empequeñecedora de la obra ese alcance exclusivamente regional y tan circunscrito del lenguaje?” (Proceso intelectual 169). Viana’s regionalism, if it measures up to Zum Felde’s characterization of it as an “obra literaria de cierta categoría,” should embody “universal” traits and should represent a theme that can be experienced and understood by any reader, “universally.”

Nevertheless, scholars question how wide the claim of universality can expand when there are limits to universality such as language and nationality. A particular language and the nationality that derives from that language (among other factors) can create an attitude of belonging that is evident in regionalist writing. The question of regionality is so ingrained into the literature of the countryside that it sometimes operates on a level beyond reason. It can, according to Roxlo, combine with patriotism and nationalism to suggest that rationalism is not necessary in a regionalist text: “En las patrias, que son en exceso grandes, lo regional estrangula a lo racional...” (ix). The power of the regional to surpass reason is another example of why, according to Roxlo, Viana’s writing endures. Rodríguez hints, as well, that Viana’s particular brand of

*criollismo* survives today because it is not moralistic or didactic: “*Criollismo* emphasized folklore and the description of rural life and its characters, without the moralistic and didactic objective that was common in the *cuadros de costumbres*” (201). The *cuadros de costumbres* probably do not survive today because they stymie the free-flow of regionalist literary art. By the same token, Viana’s work survives because it side-steps such moralistic and didactic pitfalls, while promoting, at the same time, the reality of the Uruguayan countryside: “El renacimiento de la literatura gauchesca, surge de la necesidad de mantener siempre vivas nuestras tradiciones, combatiendo la errónea tendencia de considerar lo nuestro como inferior a lo extraño” (Assunção 5). For this reason, Viana’s literary production is extremely important: it emphasizes and gives value to that which is genuinely Uruguayan. While Viana embraces European techniques like Naturalism, his subject material is unfailingly regional.

One of Viana’s trademarks, in fact, which plays a part in forming his regionalist work as a whole, is his deft appropriation of country dialects. As Serafín J. García expresses: “De ahí la fuerza verista de sus cuadros de ambiente, a la que contribuyó también en alto grado su dominio del lenguaje criollo, que había llegado a conocer como pocos escritores” (Cánepa 37). The truth with which Viana represents linguistically the men and women who populate his novel and his short stories only furthers his campaign to represent the Uruguayan countryside as a national project. As Zum Felde questions: “¿podía el autor de Campo hacer hablar a sus gauchos en otro lenguaje que no fuera el suyo?” (Crítica 266). The answer to that question is a resounding “no.”

A commonly overlooked aspect of Viana's fiction is its perceptible tendency toward *modernismo*. Tabaré J. Freire's study, *Javier de Viana, modernista* (1957) is a detailed look at the *modernista* aspect in Viana's work. Freire's study is innovative in that it goes against a canon of criticism that classifies Viana's work as realist-naturalist, but it is predictable in the sense that it recognizes a fact about much literature of Latin America of this period, that the dominant narrative style was often a mixture of Romanticism, Realism-Naturalism and *modernismo*. One of the matters that Freire makes clear is the following: "Viana estaba al tanto de las innovaciones formales del Modernismo [sic]" (9). It would have been difficult for Viana to not pay attention to and be affected by such literary innovation. He was so invested in *modernista* tendencies that, as Freire describes: "Javier de Viana, como creador, fue un escritor modernista; como teórico, fue un sostenedor del realismo" (5). The presence of the two narrative styles acknowledged by Freire highlights a compromise in Viana's work, a compromise that was difficult for him to avoid, given the circumstances of literary culture in Uruguay at the time. However, the dominant style in both his novel and short stories is Realism-Naturalism, demonstrating the following: "...el toque de atención para su generación no fue escuchado por Viana" (Freire 9).

Decadentism is one of the key characteristics that Freire cites as pertaining to Viana's particular brand of *modernismo*. Of interest to this study, we learn that Freire purposely leaves out *Gaucha* from his analysis because it is obviously *modernista* in its decadentism and therefore too easy a subject to broach. For Freire, *Gaucha* represents "un decadentismo inseparable de toda actitud vital modernista" (8). The inseparability of

Gaucha from the *modernista* aesthetic attests to the presence of *modernismo* in Viana's work:

A modo de planteo de un futuro trabajo sobre el tema, sobre base documental, recordemos que toda la narrativa de Viana se apoya sobre tipos humanos decadentes—al margen de lo que pueda haber en ellos de haraganería criolla—sobre ambientes ruinosos y sobre momentos caducados cuya lenta aniquilación el escritor narra deleitosamente. Incluso su misma exaltación de valores negativos o simplemente la crisis a que somete algunos de ellos, alcanzaría para el fin propuesto. Y todo esto nos está llevando, de la mano, al texto de Gaucha, al que ya hemos separado del presente trabajo. (Freire 9)

The presence of decadent characters not only in Gaucha, but also in the short stories indicates that the short stories, too, are sites for *modernista* stylization. Not just the characters, but also their surroundings and their time period suggest the presence of *modernismo* in Viana.

Viana held the writing of Carlos Reyles, one of his contemporaries (they were both born in 1868), in high regard, but Reyles' writing included, even more than Viana's own, elements of *modernismo*. There existed between them an inconformity that did not dissuade Viana from admiring his compatriot's writing: "...[S]eñala Viana su desconformidad con las realizaciones de los contemporáneos, a la vez que elogia al estilo de Reyles como superior" (Freire 9). Viana's admission of the superiority of another's work reveals his attitude toward his own work. Viana clearly did not feel that his writing had to supercede all others. The characters that populate his novel and short stories are in general not heroic or exemplary. In "Prosa inútil" Viana states: "[n]osotros, seres enfermizos, raza concluída, sigamos escribiendo prosa inútil" (Freire 12). He reveals the idea that perhaps Realism-Naturalism itself is decadent and must give way to *modernismo*. His image of sick and finished creatures is in line with many of the

characters who inhabit his fiction. The idea that the author is also sick and finished is another indication of the decadentism of Realism-*modernismo* in Latin America. Viana's prose, especially that of his later period, is, in his own words, useless—he writes prolifically, but the representation of nature is not enough to achieve meaningful art, according to him.

Freire quotes Viana as comparing his own writing first to Reyles' and then to other writers', including Rubén Darío. Viana comments that Reyles' La raza de Caín “[e]s moderno, señaladamente moderno; pero no a la manera del último Verlaine, de Mallarmé y Rubén Darío, quienes con sus piruetas clownescas, en su perversión estética, nos hacen reír como ante las idealizaciones infantiles de los primitivos” (10). The exaggerated *modernismo*, according to Viana, of the abovementioned writers is excessive and even inverts itself to become primitive in his view. As Rodríguez Monegal comments: “Ya se trata de Baudelaire que aparece citado en el prólogo, o Darwin al que se echa mano para ilustrar un episodio del racconto de Lorenzo sobre sus fechorías” (22). Rodríguez Monegal, then, acknowledges, like Freire, the elements of *modernismo* present in Viana's work. Freire observes, additionally, that certain elements of Viana's writing are especially *modernista*. He cites “la creación de imágenes” and, especially: “su cromatismo” [el de Viana] as “el más flagrante de sus contactos con el Modernismo [sic]” (15). The employment of images and color in Viana's writing, then, lends itself to *modernista* interpretations as well.

It is clear, however, that Realism and Naturalism are the central tenets to which Viana adhered throughout his entire career. His commitment to Realistic representation

never faltered: “Viana condena a Lugones por haber falsificado la verdad, cargándola de adornos. Al hacer esto ha desfigurado la realidad autóctona pintando un ambiente falso con seres falsos. Se apega Viana al concepto de una literatura regional creada y vista a través de un enfoque telúrico” (Garganigo 91). Although Viana held *modernismo* in high regard (in the case of Reyles) and denigrated himself and others for the “prosa inútil” that they created (especially in terms of Viana’s later writing—everything after Con divisa blanca), he held the Realistic interpretation of the Uruguayan countryside as the very highest value to which a writer could aspire. He referred to Argentina’s national literature as a disaster because of its lack of faithful representation and inclusion of autochthonous details like language and environmental regionality (Garganigo 93-94).

Although Realism-Naturalism is the central tenet of his work, despite claims of the presence of *modernismo*, not even Viana can deny that modernization was a force that affected rural Uruguay. While Viana continued to practice the realist-naturalist style, the countryside all around him was changing drastically. With this in mind, we can see how the evidence of *modernismo* in Viana’s work is perhaps a signal of the modernization that was being effected throughout Uruguay. While Viana’s work is inextricably rooted in place, signs began to show of a growing concern for time over place. As Leonard Luttwack remarks: “a concern for time over place is the mark of civilization...the maturation of an individual is a process of growing away from nature” (Buell 460). Attention was being drawn more and more to advancements in the city, many of which are documented in the Introduction. As the importance of Montevideo grew, the rural world began to serve, more and more, the urban: “En el último tercio del siglo XIX el

Uruguay atraviesa un período donde se observa, cada vez más, la preponderancia de la ciudad-puerto de Montevideo sobre la campaña” (Assunção 3). Assunção even suggests that the city becomes “preponderant,” or superior, to the country. What is undeniable is that Uruguay witnessed a grand amount of change during this time period.

One of the key paradigm shifts that accompanied this change had to do with the rising importance of the urban world and its subsequent dominance over the rural:

La ‘estancia vieja,’ cuna de gauchos y de reses cimarronas, que atraviesan las amplias praderas sin cercar, va a transformarse en una especie de ‘fábrica’ de materias primas para la urbe. La creación de vías férreas facilita las comunicaciones entre la campaña y Montevideo—aumentando al mismo tiempo el centralismo portuario—y propicia la exportación de los productos agropecuarios. (Assunção 3)

Instead of being the center of activity, the rural world came to serve the causes of the urban. The transformation of the *estancias* into fenced properties was an enormous step toward urban supremacy. The arrival of railroads was another salient factor in the transformation of the countryside. The changes that took place in rural Uruguay have their corollary in literary representation. The process of rendering the object world (nature) to fiction is similar to the communication that developed between the countryside and Montevideo. Montevideo could only imagine the countryside through representations provided by authors like Viana. The countryside, on the other hand, was the real, unadulterated natural world, without the interference of representation.

Viana experienced the authentic, vital countryside first, before ever coming to Montevideo:

Los primeros años de Viana transcurren en la campaña. El medio rural muestra incipientes síntomas de prosperidad, producto del espíritu visionario de hombres como Domingo Ordoñana y Carlos Genaro Reyles (padre del escritor), que

propician a través de la creación de la Asociación Rural del Uruguay, la tecnificación, para mejorar las explotaciones ganadera y agrícola. (Assuncão 3)

His familial situation was one that would have supported the growth of communication between city and country and the dominance that was exerted by the city over the country. Furthermore, the growth of the importance of the city in the life of the country was something that improved the quality and quantity of livestock and enriched crop yields. Assuncão's mention of "tecnificación" is one more indicator of the growing importance of modernization in Uruguay during this time period.

The countryside, however, was not the only element that was changing: the gaucho, too, underwent a change in roles: "Era ésa la época en que el gaucho se transformaba—de gaucho a paisano como se ha dicho—, forzado por circunstancias irreversibles, entre las que se contaban el alambramiento de los campos, el ferrocarril, la creciente inmigración (italiana y española sobre todo)" (Cánepa 7). The transformation of the gaucho into *paisano* symbolized the transformation of the countryside on a human level. Because of the factors that Cánepa mentions, gauchos were no longer able to maintain their former lifestyle; they were forced to submit to the will of the *estancieros* and work the land in a more proper fashion.

Viana is aware of the changes taking place in the countryside. As Zum Felde observes, Viana "es el testigo fiel del pasaje de nuestro hombre de campo de gaucho a paisano con toda la carga positiva y negativa que esto conllevó" (Barros-Lémez 64). The "carga positiva y negativa" of this transformation is what results in the raw, stunning drama of Viana's fiction. Viana's commitment to Realism does not permit him to wander from a faithful representation of the true circumstances of the country and its workers:



El paisano degenerado que nos presentan los relatos de Viana, es el producto de ese triste proceso social que trazamos esquemáticamente, y que—por paradójica ironía—no es otro que el proceso del desenvolvimiento mismo del país, dentro de las formas de la civilización europea. En un paralelismo de sentido inverso, a medida que el país ha ido *progresando* ha ido degenerando la población gauchesca. (Zum Felde, Proceso intelectual 160)

Indeed, one can see the inverse relationship between the rise of modernization and the fall of the gaucho. As Garganigo observes, however, the gaucho is an important and irreplaceable messenger. He calls us to not underestimate “...la importancia del gaucho y del medio ambiente en la creación de una obra literaria. Señala al gaucho como puente que establece el contacto cultural y literario entre el pasado y el presente” (93). The study of the gaucho, in both culture and literature, reveals great truths about the history and significance of life in the countryside of Uruguay.

The gaucho can definitely be associated with times previous to the one in question in this dissertation. The gaucho’s heyday comes before the arrival of trains and wire fencing: “...[C]omo explica Pivel Devoto, el país conservaba el sello primitivo y áspero de sus tiempos heroicos, ya que no habían penetrado en él los caminos ni el alambrado ni el ferrocarril” (Cantonnet 13). The “sello primitivo” of which Pivel Devoto writes is the bond between the gaucho and the natural environment. As Roxlo relates, Viana has a goal beyond just Realistically preserving the natural world of rural Uruguay in this time period: “Javier de Viana, apegado al terruño, no es sólo un narrador de cosas del terruño. No se satisface describiendo declives, fotografiando ombúes, o tomando nota de los dichos y los hábitos que se van” (ix). The breaking of the bond that once existed between the gaucho and his natural environment is the source of the profound sadness that can be found in Viana’s works.

The sadness that is expressed in Viana's works can be seen as the conclusion to the scientific process that is the work of Viana. Zum Felde comments on this sadness: "No es la fotografía de la existencia campera cotidiana lo que nos da el autor en ella—eso nos lo da en las narraciones de Campo—sino la esencia de esa vida, el *alma* de una raza que se va" (Zum Felde, Crítica 265). Viana's scientific process, then, is able to draw important conclusions about the life of the gaucho in turn-of-the-century rural Uruguay. Viana "aisló su visión en el cuadro tremendamente sombrío de la decadencia gaucha" (Cantonnet 34). Modernization brings about the decadence of the gaucho, which is one of the central topics in all of his fiction.

Gillcrist signals the accuracy of this statement when she observes: "One of the finest images in the novel is that of the peeling old ceibo tree, bent over the bank of the hidden lagoon, whose thick, yellowed, twisted branches resembled '...una gran bestia muerta de vejez y de fatiga'" (48). The tree, as staunch and stolid as it appears in the novel, is a symbol of the countryside's decadence. According to Gillcrist, the ceibo represents "the atrophied soul of don Zoilo" and the "retrogression of the Uruguayan gaucho" (48). Thus, even nature plays a part in signaling the fading of the gaucho tradition in Uruguay at the hands of modernization. Schlickers confirms this process when she writes: "Debido a la modernización de las estructuras de producción, el campo se despobló: el transporte por vía férrea y la introducción de alambrado, que fijó las posesiones de los latifundistas, llevó el 75% de los peones y gauchos al paro" (177). Figures like don Zoilo and Lorenzo represent the last remaining gauchos who refuse to become *paisanos* and work for an *estanciero*.

Zoilo and Lorenzo, as Cantonnet relates, are heirs of the gaucho tradition. They preserve in their characters the history of the gaucho and the memory of his virility and dominance of the countryside. As she will also suggest, however, the passing of the gaucho is a windfall for Uruguay as a nation:

Ayer y hoy, enfrentamos básicamente a una herencia análoga. Si el gaucho decadente de Viana es heredero de una tradición heroica que se había abierto llena de promesas, el de hoy hereda un principio de siglo que se abría augural: devolución de la soberanía al pueblo, rescate del sentido original y libre del sufragio, eliminación de la explotación del hombre por el hombre, independencia económica del país. (Cantonnet 169)

The difference between the gaucho of Viana's time and the gaucho of the date of Cantonnet's writing (1969) is that many social reforms have been made in the mean time, many initiated by Uruguay's president José Batlle y Ordoñez from 1903-07 and 1911-15. Cantonnet suggests that the decadence of the gaucho was important to the growth of Uruguay. Thus, Viana can be seen as a central player in the rise of the reforms mentioned by Cantonnet because of the way he depicts the social decadence of the gaucho. Zum Felde is quick to analyze, by asking the question: "¿Es acaso el alma de la España trágica, el alma dura y triste de Castilla, lo que muere, perdida en la soledad de una bañado americano?" (*Crítica* 266). He suggests that the passing of the gaucho is perhaps one of the last steps in Uruguay's transition from colonial enterprise to independent nation. The death of Juana, tied to the trunk of a tree in the middle of a swamp, signifies for Zum Felde the passing of the last sign of Spanish control in Uruguay.

Ismael, the heroic gaucho from the fiction of Acevedo Díaz (a fiction that deals with the battles for Uruguayan independence in the early 1800s), on the other hand, is an optimistic character who comes at a much earlier time in the process of Uruguay's

nationhood. As Pereda Valdés states: “El paisano de Viana no es como el gaucho optimista de Acevedo Díaz, que puso su odio o su destreza al servicio de la patria; es el gaucho lamentable de la decadencia, que lleva en su frente bien visible el anuncio de su desaparición cercana e incomprensiva” (Pereda Valdés 537). Ismael has no sensation that he, as a gaucho, is going to be uprooted and converted into a *paisano*. He channels his negative feelings into the revolutionary effort.

One of the most notable short stories from Viana’s second period (1904-1926) is “Facundo Imperial.” In it: “Viana recoge la imagen del gaucho noble, rebelde y fuerte para destruirla y demostrar su perdición—típica del Naturalismo—causada por su impotencia ante la autoridad” (Ramos 340). A gaucho like Ismael, then, in this short story comes to find his destruction and perdition at the hands of a Naturalistic plot development as well as the reality of the times in which Viana writes. Viana was part of the broad movement that Cánepa describes: “Durante el siglo pasado y las cuatro primeras décadas del actual, la narrativa uruguaya buscó sus ambientes, salvo raras excepciones, en el campo y en los hombres que en él vivían. Ese predominio se fue esfumando al desarrollarse poco a poco una abundante narrativa ciudadana, bajo las formas del cuento y de la novela” (Cánepa 8). The primacy of the natural world in Uruguayan fiction from this time period is overwhelming. Among other reasons, this primacy can be attributed to a lack of urban development in the nation in general—there weren’t many urban areas about which to write. What is more, the disappearance of this trend can be attributed to just the opposite: writers began to focus more on the urban world as it became readily available in the form of cities, especially Montevideo. As

Visca argues, the choice between appropriating country or city as fictional subject matter was a difficult one: "...frente a la realidad de su época, [Viana] se sintió como ubicado ante un callejón sin salida: si el campo fue para él la barbarie apenas suavizada por una áspera y fugaz poesía, la ciudad se le mostró tan sólo como generadora de corrupción" (Arturo Sergio Visca, qtd. in Mosquera 79). Perhaps for this reason Viana's literary output is pessimistic. He writes about the countryside, but in a manner that is depressing and forebodes destruction.

Visca, again, remarks on the city-country conflict present in Juana: "...sentimos su misma atracción atávica ante la barbarie y su misma civilizada repugnancia ante ella" (Visca 48). This complex of attraction and repugnance toward the natural world is one of the driving forces of Gaucha; it is what gives Juana her double-persona, which also manifests itself in her mixed lineage (her grandpa is a civilized man from Buenos Aires and her mother is a native of rural Uruguay). The same complex can be found in don Zoilo: "Lo que tiene don Zoilo de enigmático, es lo que tiene de enigmático el bárbaro para el hombre civilizado" (Visca 51). Schlickers confirms that the crisis that modernization brings not only to the narrative, but also to Latin American history, is profound: "La vuelta a lo vernáculo respondió a sí mismo al vertiginoso proceso de modernización. La paulatina incorporación de Latinoamérica a una economía de división internacional del trabajo, la inmigración al Río de la Plata y la consolidación del mundo capitalista moderno transformaron todos los estratos de vida" (177). Schlickers describes a world in which Viana takes refuge in the reality of gaucho life in order to escape the

impending imposition of modernization, an imposition that would eventually become widespread.

Despite the urbanization of society, in fact, primarily because of it, we have witnessed the arrival of environmentalism in literature. As Wendell Berry suggests: “If a *culture* goes for too long . . . without producing poets and others who concern themselves with the problems and proprieties of humanity’s practical connection with nature, then the work of all poets may suffer, and so may nature” (Buell 102-03). In this sense I would like to suggest that Viana, due to his extensive thick descriptions of the natural world present in Gaucha and other works, is an environmentalist, or, at the very least, a proto-environmentalist. His thick descriptions constitute arguments in favor of the natural environment. Reyles, Acevedo Díaz, and Viana are three authors who concern themselves deeply with nature. Although they all write about human characters, great emphasis is placed upon the role of the natural world in these characters’ lives: “El paisaje, obsesivo, omnipresente, no es un mero elemento decorativo: es el fondo indispensable para esta historia trágica, y aunque pueden reprochársele a Viana las reiteraciones, cada una de ellas vale por sí misma” (Cánepa 16). Cánepa cites Viana’s repetitions of certain descriptive passages of nature; these are further evidence of the primacy of the natural world in Viana’s writing.

As an environmental writer, Viana transcends the purely historical. His work is a literary expression of the problem of the natural environment and emerges from history to indicate a direction in which history may choose to travel, in terms of the environment: “Pero, como dice Arturo Sergio Visca, el escritor no es meramente un eco pasivo del

problema que plantea el ámbito histórico; su obra no es simple consecuencia del medio, sino reacción expresada literariamente, de manera determinada, ante el mismo”

(Cantonnet 13). Viana’s writing, in fact, exists as a reaction to how the environment has been treated historically by both the gaucho and the *estanciero*. Indeed, by writing about the past (the “pasado glorioso” as Cantonnet calls it), Viana affects the present, which then extends his legacy into the future, lending his work increased validity:

Viana—y esto tiene que ver con el tema de su vigencia—denuncia una realidad presente y en cierta manera quiere oponerle las virtudes de un pasado glorioso, irrecatable, porque los nuevos tiempos no hacen un cambio de estructuras, antes bien participan de esa corrupción, la provocan y la agravan. (Cantonnet 19-20)

By writing about the glorious past of the gaucho, Viana evokes a sharp contrast with the corruption of the more urbanized present.

However, although Viana writes about the past, his descriptions of nature are rooted deeply in the present:

En Viana la descripción del paisaje—que se subjetiviza a través de la poética objetividad—es también siempre de una austeridad contenida. Todo lo que el autor coloca en él tiene la necesaria presencia de lo conocido y experimentado directamente. Las emociones se revelan en términos de paisaje y entonces, la descripción, sin dejar de ser *normal*, se convierte en un paisaje del *alma*. (Cantonnet 51)

The level of subjectivity that Viana achieves is only due to the objectivity of his scientific observations being applied to the emotional lives of the characters. In this sense Viana’s writing, as a testament to the environment, is, at the same time, a Romantic endeavor in that the landscapes that he describes come to reflect the souls of the characters that inhabit them.

Tension arises between the creation of landscapes that reflect the emotions of the characters and the literary presence of Viana. Orcajo Acuña argues the following:

En Javier de Viana tenemos un narrador que no es del todo literato, cualidad ésta que nos permite hallar en él grandes caudales de emoción. Sus concepciones tienen la simple y honda sensibilidad espiritual del paisano, su inspirada armonía aborigen de hombre fuerte como ‘poste e’ quebracho,’ y su modestia, generosidad y hospitalidad asombrosas en la rudeza y semicivilización del ambiente campero. (11)

The “grandes caudales de emoción” can be seen as manifestations of the intimate bond between Viana’s characters and the natural environment. In this way Viana, in his writing, approaches the topic of the natural environment and, as such, argues for its preservation through the importance that it plays in his characters’ lives. The mere representation of the natural environment, as we have seen, is enough, also, to classify Viana’s writing as environmentalistic. García furthers this affirmation when he asserts the following:

Gaucha es una novela en la cual el paisaje importa acaso más que el hombre. Por el acierto con que ha sido descrito, y por su estrecha relación con los personajes que frente a él se mueven, se ha de salvar del olvido esta obra llena de altibajos, tanto en su ritmo como en su estructura, y recargada de disquisiciones que sólo sirven para perturbar el orden narrativo. (27 Nov. 1960)

That García perhaps finds more value in the landscapes of Gaucha than in its descriptions of characters’ psychologies, shows the precedence of the environment in this work. The varying rhythm and structure, while they cause García to ask for Gaucha’s preservation in the literary canon of Uruguay, also mimic the ups and downs of the natural world and its cycles.

The gazes and attitudes of the four main characters in this novel involve the natural world in profound ways. The natural world affects them deeply as characters. Don



Zoilo and el rubio Lorenzo direct their gazes toward nature; this makes them simple characters and, in a sense, turns them into the vile and unexpected protagonists of the story. Juana also focuses on nature, but in a different way: her view of nature is inextricably bound to a mysterious melancholy that follows her through the pages of Gaucha. Lucio generally focuses on humans, which makes him a nervous character; however, he is at greatest peace when he focuses his gaze on nature. The implied author alternately pairs these characters with each other throughout the course of the novel in order to better exhibit their unique personalities. Although the gaucho is disappearing during the period in which he writes, Viana's narrative is an affirmation of the virility and extraordinary power of the wayward and violent gaucho. Gaucha is indeed propaganda against the vanishing of the gaucho of this period. Above all, I would like to signal how Gaucha functions as a representation of nature in that humans in the novel are secondary and look to nature for their identity.

A further indication that Gaucha is an environmental novel is that it begins with a description of place. The characters who inhabit the place come second and are influenced by that environment. The narrator states: “‘Gutiérrez,’—la sección policial más extensa del departamento de Minas,—fue durante muchos años, cueva de perdularios, refugio de bandoleros y desesperación de policías. Aún hoy suele mentarse su nombre en procesos criminales, formando, con Aceguá y la sierra del Infiernillo, los tres puntos oscuros de la geografía uruguaya” (13). The implied author's choice to begin with a description of place is equaled by his Naturalistic approach. Language like “sección policial,” “departamento de Minas,” “procesos criminales,” and “geografía”

indicate the implied author's scientific approach. His choice to focus on Gutiérrez itself is also Naturalistic in that Gutiérrez is a determined section of land that is easily defined and useful for the isolation of particular characters within it which can lead to a study of their interaction with each other and with the natural environment.

The wildness of Gutiérrez is one of the reasons that Gaucha is a successful portrait of cruel, violent gaucho culture. While modernization is taking place in many parts of Uruguay during this time period, this section of countryside is still unaffected. The narrator relates: "Las vías férreas no han llegado hasta ellos, las líneas telegráficas los orillan, los poblados están distantes y las carreteras escasean" (13). Railway and telegraph lines, along with highways, were scarce in this area, an area barren enough that even villages are far apart. As the narrator has shown, the implied author is aware that such an environment promotes the inhabitation of gauchos and *matreros*. Whether one looks on them favorably or with disdain, the following is clear: "[s]us nombres resuenan siempre que se denuncia la aparición de 'matreros' en la campaña; y cuando se habla de posibles revoluciones, se piensa incesantemente en ellos" (13). The subject of revolutions is popular in Viana's corpus of work, and the gaucho is the central instigator of such revolutions against governmental movements (like those of Batlle y Ordóñez) to liberalize the nation and open it to more cosmopolitan ideas.

It is not the implied author's desire, however, to focus on the modernization of Uruguay (neither its social nor its economic and technological iterations). Instead, as the narrator expresses: "Pero ya los tiempos han cambiado, han desaparecido ciertas causas de orden político, ha aumentado la población, se ha subdividido la propiedad, y es

necesario recurrir a la memoria de los vecinos viejos, para darse cuenta de lo que era ‘Gutiérrez’ pocos lustros ha” (13). The narrator is conscious of the changes taking place in Uruguay during this time, and Gaucha is a literary statement, albeit a solitary one, against the inevitability of such movements.

The narrator continually reminds us of the centrality of nature in the novel. In passages like the following, the narrator sets forth descriptions of the natural world that provide for the reader an immersion into the novelistic world:

Altas y ásperas sierras, por una parte; por otros, campos bajos, salpicados de ‘bañados’ intransitables y estriados de cañadores fangosos; dilatadas selvas de paja brava, achiras y espadañas, cuyos misterios sólo conocen el aperiá y el matrero; sarandizales que miden centenares de metros, formando en invierno imponentes lagunas y terribles lodazales en verano; regatos de monte no tan ancho como sucio; arroyos de honda cuenca y de arboladas riberas, y, finalmente, Cebollatí, el río de largo curso, grueso caudal, rápida corriente, vados difíciles e intrincada selva. La topografía del terreno ayudaba admirablemente a los bandoleros. (13)

The gazes that each character develops in terms of nature all begin with their exposure to the natural world. The variations in terrain demonstrate the wide variety of scenes from which the characters have to choose for the impressions that they make of nature. The terrain described in this passage is particularly supportive of the lifestyles of gauchos and bandits because it provides many hiding and dwelling places.

In contrast to the gauchos and bandits who lived in the wilderness, *estancieros* established for themselves in the same countryside dwellings that resembled castles, lending the reader the idea that this land is the *estancieros*’ kingdom: “Los estancieros habían construído por viviendas, formidables edificios, especie de castillos con recias murallas de piedra a los cuatro vientos, pequeñas ventanas enrejadas y escalera interior

para subir a la azotea, coronada de troneras” (13-14). The establishment of these “castles” among the wilderness shows the danger that said gauchos and bandits pose for the landowner and his possessions. The desire to be impenetrable is clear, especially in the following passage: “Al oscurecer se cerraba la única puerta exterior, atrancándola con fuertes barrotes de hierro” (14). The existence of just one exterior door, enforced with iron, emphasizes the impermeability of these establishments.

Impenetrability is not just a matter of reinforcing the stability of a dwelling place. As the following passage describes, each inhabitant of the *estancia* is armed with a weapon:

Después, cuando llegaba la hora de acostarse, los patrones ponían los fusiles junto a las camas, las pistolas sobre las sillas, bien a mano; mientras los peones depositaban bajo la almohada el largo ‘facón’ afilado y los pesados trabucos naranjeros cargados hasta la boca con balas, clavos y pedazos de olla, ‘cortados.’ (14)

These weapons vary depending on the rank of the bearer. Rifles, pistols, and blades stand available at a moment’s notice. Because of the need to protect the *estancia*, each of its members passes the night restless: “La noche era toda inquietud y sobresaltos, interminable angustia. Por la mañana, al clarecer, se levantaban todavía sacudidos por pesadillas terroríficas, y mientras no se alzaba el sol bañando de luz el campo, no renacían en absoluto la tranquilidad y la confianza” (14). The uneasiness of the *estancia* perhaps reveals the ugly triumph of the renegade gaucho at the end of the novel. The high degree of the *estanciero*’s inability to rest shows the power that the wayward gaucho holds over anyone with property or establishment. Indeed, murder is a common occurrence in the countryside: “Se mataba por disidencias políticas, se mataba por

rivalidades amorosas, y se mataba por gusto, por aprendizaje, por adquirir fama de ‘guapo’” (14). The lack of a need for a reason to kill and the ease with which the countryside’s inhabitants seem to enter into homicide indicates the wildness of the countryside, reinforcing the earlier observation that modernization had not yet reached this area of the nation. That is not to say, however, that the land is in a state of anarchy. Rural factions organize themselves along party lines: “En cada pago moraba un jefe,—un caudillo,—que imperaba como señor feudal, para quien todos los blancos eran buenos, si él era blanco, o todos los colorados eran santos, si él era colorado” (14). The strict adherence to one side or the other of the two-party system indicates an affinity for bipolar thinking in which it is easy to assign classifications of “good” or “evil” to a certain group of people. The implied author, in choosing the word “santos,” reveals the extent to which this bipolar classification is linked with notions of “good” versus “evil.”

This rigid division between two moral opposites, however, loses its intensity when compared to the amount of attention paid by the narrator to the complexity and ambivalence of the natural world. The narrator describes el Puesto del Fondo, don Zoilo’s residence: “El pajonal que borda el arroyo en aquellas parajes, moría a pocos metros de los ranchos que se elevaban sobre una altura entre dos bañados. Cercada, dominada por la paja alta y nutrida, visible apenas desde el campo limpio, la pobre vivienda semejaba más un ‘tucurú’ que una casa” (15). The various manifestations of the natural world work together to form the environment in which el Puesto del Fondo exists. It is hidden from view by the tall straw, seeming to be swallowed up by the natural world. El Puesto del Fondo is, in fact, not only swallowed by nature, but also shaped by it: “Y en las

inmediaciones, ni rastro de caballos, ni de vacaje, ni de majadas: por todas partes el verde desteñado de los bañados, ostentando en su centro la población extraña con sus techos de paja negra, quemada por los soles, podrida por las lluvias, trabajada por los vientos, tristes como una ruina y silencioso como el mismo bañado” (15). The narrator notes that Zoilo’s dwelling is barren of livestock, suggesting that he lives a simple life, uncomplicated by the excess possessions that would preoccupy a large landowner. The description of Zoilo’s black straw roofs demonstrates his relationship with and affinity for the patterns of the natural world. The straw roofs are scorched, putrified, and blown by the elements to the point that they seem sad and silent. These straw roofs, in fact, represent the personality of don Zoilo.

The first description of Zoilo’s personality reveals that he has much in common with his weathered straw rooftops. The narrator observes: “Hosco, taciturno, huraño, rezongón, se había metido en la tapera del Puesto del Fondo...y allí vivía solo y contento, sin más contrariedades que las que le ofrecía la llegada de algún visitante para él siempre importuno” (16). Zoilo’s desire not to be disturbed by visitors reflects his indifference toward fellow humans. Neither is his attitude toward the natural world favorable: he also feels primarily indifference for it. One of Zoilo’s key characteristics is that he is content to be in solitude; his indifference arises when he must confront others. This aspect of his personality reveals how his gaze toward nature is structured: he sees himself as an individual who is doing his part to contribute to rural society (he is a rope-maker). In this sense, he functions as a variation upon Mamagela’s overarching vision of the countryside as a conglomerate of small land owners each working diligently as an individual entity to

further the national campaign (Reyles, El terruño (1916)). Although a similarity can be drawn between the two, Zoilo is clearly more solitary and taciturn than his reylesian counterpart.

Don Zoilo's relationship with the natural world is also organic. His solitary habits have converted him into another element of the natural world, a creature hardly human. Additionally, according to popular opinion (that of "los mozos del pago" (16)), don Zoilo is "más viejo que el tabaco negro";—pero nadie conocía su historia" (16). Zoilo's story, like that of nature, is unknown within popular circles. Zoilo's life story is hidden from view in the same way that it takes the careful observation of a scientist to cull the plot of the natural world's history into view. It is known that Zoilo is old, but his age is not expressed in numbers or years; it is expressed by way of simile. The narrator also, along with those who spread popular opinion described above, agrees that Zoilo's life is not only simple, but also animal-like and instinctual: "Por regla general, amanecían, el caballo comiendo con freno y ensillado cerca de los ranchos, y el jinete tirado en el suelo a poca distancia. . . . Después trabajaba, sin penas ni entusiasmos, en una admirable conformidad e indiferencia de bestia" (16). The similarity of Zoilo's work ethic to that of an animal emphasizes his simplicity and shows that his gaze toward nature is one of integration and organicity. His aversion to other humans is so great that the narrator explains that he is "solo, taciturno, hostil a todos los seres humanos, de los cuales parecía no haber heredado más que la forma" (17). Zoilo is a near approximation of a human who is completely integrated with the natural world that surrounds him. His instinctual

responses are so developed that he seems to be animal in every way except that he inhabits a human body.

However, Zoilo does maintain relationships, albeit minimal ones, with others. As the narrator relates: “No faltaba quien lo supusiese en connivencia con los matreros, y hasta se decía que su único amigo,—si es que don Zoilo podía tener amigos,—era el rubio Lorenzo, bandolero célebre, jefe de una gavilla, audaz como ninguno, feroz como chacal y presumido como mujer” (17). By means of this brief mention on the part of the narrator, el rubio Lorenzo enters the novel before Juana or Lucio. The implied author’s choice to introduce both Zoilo and Lorenzo before introducing the protagonist shows his commitment to that element of the natural world that breeds cruelty and corruption. While el rubio Lorenzo is the agent of these characteristics, he cannot bring his plan to fulfillment without the help of don Zoilo. Zoilo and Lorenzo also share similar views toward nature. They both are represented as being part of it and using it to achieve their purposes. Juana and Lucio on the other hand have more complicated relationships with nature, which affects the way that they look at nature and interact with it.

The narrator is quick, however, to include details of how the two men differ. In the following elaboration of Zoilo’s character, the narrator lists several qualities that contrast with those of el rubio Lorenzo. Zoilo is “[u]n hombre que no tenía mujer, que no jugaba a la ‘taba,’ que no concurría a las carreras y, sobre todo, que no era blanco ni colorado y no amaba la guerra, debía ser, por fuerza, un hombre extraño, distinto de los demás hombres e inferior a ellos: algo semejante al gringo que trabaja y se enriquece” (18). Zoilo’s lack of a political affiliation, in a world where party lines could determine



life or death, is shocking and causes him to be thought of in general as “un hombre extraño.” A key difference between Zoilo and Lorenzo for the purposes of the implied author is Zoilo’s lack of feminine companionship. Although Zoilo is clearly content in his solitude, perhaps there exists in him a hidden impulse that he can only satisfy by helping Lorenzo in his attempts to capture and rape Juana, an act that he succeeds at twice before leaving her to die, tied to a tree. Zoilo’s strangeness also brings about the notion that he may be inferior to others. Zoilo, because of his autochthonous nature, elicits a strong bond with the natural world, a bond that many would take to signify a particular weakness or inferiority. Zoilo, like the stereotype of the “gringo” put forth in the passage, is dedicated to his cause without care given to his relationships with others.

Don Zoilo’s character is further contrasted with others’ when Lucio Díaz comes to visit him at his ranch. In Lucio the implied author introduces the character who is most involved in human affairs. His involvement, however, is not one that he chooses; instead, Lucio suffers from anxiety toward others and, to put it in the narrator’s words, a distaste (“disgusto” (20)) for others. Because Lucio expects courtesy from those with which he comes into contact, his meeting with don Zoilo goes poorly: “El joven, por su parte, tímido y respetuoso,—con esa educación campesina que enseña la veneración del anciano,—pero al mismo tiempo impaciente y turbado por la descortés acogida, tan poco usual en los hábitos camperos, estiró una pierna, hizo sonar la rodaja, tosió...” (18-19). Lucio comes to represent the general expectations of people of the countryside, a role that he will continue to fulfill throughout the novel. The combination of his character as being both “tímido y respetuoso” and “impaciente y turbado” defines him and reveals his gaze

toward nature. His gaze, in reality, is almost always directed toward humans and is only directed toward nature during certain moments in which he feels at peace with the world.

Zoilo, of course, does not need such human relationships to feel in touch with nature. What is more, his particular relationship with nature, as has been mentioned, is a cruel and indifferent one. One symbol of this cruel indifference that surges from his relationship with nature is the *tongorí* knife that he uses in rope-making. The narrator describes it as “un pequeño cuchillo de mango de madera forrado de ‘tongorí,’” with which Zoilo “trabajaba el cuero, redondeando el sitio en que iría el corredor, sin ocuparse para nada del visitante” (19). *Tongorí* is a material that derives from the aorta of a cow. In Zoilo’s hand, it shows not only his connection with the land, but also his resourceful, yet merciless, appropriation of natural resources. This insensitivity is one of the key characteristics that lead him to disregard the wishes of his dying sister Casilda to care for Juana. Zoilo, despite his cruelty and indifference toward others, is an expert rope-maker. The narrator describes his skill: “Levantaba el trenzado con la punta de la lezna, la que luego, y mientras apretaba el punto, ponía entre los dientes; después tornaba a la misma operación, escupiendo al cuero de cuando en cuando para que apretara mejor” (20). The use of teeth and spit in his craft emphasizes further his rawness and organicity.

Meanwhile, Lucio has come to visit don Zoilo to bring news of Casilda’s death and of her desire for Zoilo to care for Juana. Lucio’s mental process while don Zoilo indifferently ignores him creates a stark contrast between the two characters. Lucio feels denigrated by the inattention of Zoilo, but the old *trenzador* is hardly aware of the offense. The narrator describes the discomfort of Lucio: “que hacía una hora... estaba

sentado en un trozo de ceibo, triste, contrariado, violento frente a aquel extraño dueño de casa que no hablaba, que no ofrecía un mate, que no atendía a las visitas y que aparentaba afectarle tanto la muerte de su cuñado y de su hermana como la del primer caballo que ensilló” (20). Lucio’s emotions as Zoilo ignores him range from sadness to violence, accurately revealing Lucio’s character. Lucio, a more socially-adjusted individual, internally condemns Zoilo’s impoliteness and his disregard for family. From this internal act of judgment we can observe further the difference between Lucio’s and Zoilo’s relationships with nature.

The “marcada expresión de disgusto” that develops on Lucio’s face and in his thoughts forebodes the conflict that will arise between him and Lorenzo (20). The early stages of this conflict, however, are already manifest in Lucio’s opinion toward Zoilo. As Lucio prepares to leave el Puesto del Fondo on his first visit, he expects that if Zoilo says anything, it will be “nada más que para proferir una brutal negativa que concluyera de poner de manifiesto el egoísmo y la ruindad de su alma” (21). Lucio’s poor opinion of Zoilo’s spiritual state is another indication that a conflict is to arise (although the conflict between Lucio and Zoilo himself never becomes fully developed). Lucio leaves “disgustado consigo mismo, con el hombre y con el paraje, maldiciendo una y mil veces la hora en que había llegado a la inmunda morada de aquella fiera” (21). Lucio’s disgust with himself is actually a revelation of his twisted relationship with nature. Zoilo’s openness and comfort with the natural world to the point where he appears to be cruel and indifferent to others maddens Lucio and causes him, as he leaves el Puesto del Fondo, to look internally at his own relationship with the natural world. As mentioned,

Lucio feels most comfortable when his thoughts and emotions are synchronized with nature. This usually occurs in moments that he spends with Juana. The irony that Lucio meets Juana by way of don Zoilo carries with it the deeper meaning that perhaps Zoilo's closeness with nature comes to affect Lucio by way of Zoilo's blood relative, Juana.

After Lucio's departure from el Puesto del Fondo, don Zoilo talks to himself about the coming rain, and the narrator describes the fall of night:

La tarde declinaba; el gris metálico del cielo tornabase cada vez más pesado, más uniforme y más triste; y mientras a lo lejos, en el confín, los montes de Cebollatí y de Gutiérrez se iban obscureciendo, trazando un inmenso ángulo negro, a derecha y a izquierda, hacia atrás y hacia adelante, el bañado extendía su enorme superficie plana, igual, quieta, coloreada de un azul pálido desleído, monótono, como un mar que duerme. (21)

Contrary to the traditional Romantic paradigm in which the natural world takes on qualities of a character's emotional state, Zoilo takes on characteristics of the natural world, as has been his practice his whole life. The narrator lends the *bañado*, described as a "superficie plana, igual, quieta, coloreada" and as a "mar que duerme," an air of permanence. The narrator gives the impression that the natural world has always existed and has remained the same, for the course of human history, at least. This permanence then has seeped into Zoilo's character as well. The narrator furthers this point when he says of Zoilo: "Su vida estaba indisolublemente unida a aquel paraje desierto y yermo; su tristeza orgánica, la fría aridez de su alma envejecida sin encantos, se identificaba con la melancólica soledad del bañado" (22). This inversion of affect between the natural world and Zoilo cements Zoilo as part of the natural world itself.

Zoilo's affinity with the natural world extends to the way that he maintains el Puesto del Fondo. As previous passages have suggested, el Puesto del Fondo is not in the

most favorable state of repair, but the narrator also suggests that Zoilo looks to the natural world that surrounds him for materials to repair his dwelling:

El ceñudo morador del Puesto del Fondo sabía encontrar en la maleza un infalible remedio cada vez que algún dolor le aquejaba; cuando los soles o las lluvias abrían un [sic] grieta demasiado grande en las paredes de su covacha, no estaba lejos el lodo reparador; si los vientos arrancaban un haz de paja a la techumbre, fácil le era corregir el desperfecto con sólo andar unos pasos y dar dos golpes de facón en las gramíneas. (22)

The narrator does, however, recognize that the attention that don Zoilo pays to his house is limited. The narrator's use of "un [sic] grieta *demasiado* grande" shows that small cracks in the walls are acceptable for don Zoilo's sense of housekeeping (emphasis mine). We find, of course, that Juana's presence in el Puesto del Fondo counteracts Zoilo's complacency as her attentions to her uncle's dwelling improve its state of repair.

Before Juana arrives, the narrator expresses that Zoilo's relationship with nature is more important to him than keeping his house in immaculate condition: "En aquella soledad, triste y enferma, él vivía a plena vida, y sus bravos pulmones se dilataban a gusto aspirando el aire húmedo, acre, infecto, cargado con todas las pestilencias de las aguas podridas y de las plantas muertas. (22-23). The sometimes acrid, contaminated state of the natural world (especially the *bañado*) does not detain Zoilo from the stolid enjoyment of his relationship with the natural world. As frowning and callous as Zoilo seems to any observer, the narrator makes sure to remark that Zoilo "vivía a plena vida." The use of the word "gusto" in the previous passage is helpful in understanding the difference between Zoilo's character and that of Lucio. While Zoilo, according to the quotation above, feels "gusto" for the natural world, Lucio, on the other hand, tends to feel "disgusto" not toward the natural world, *per se*, but toward society and individuals.

The actual world “disgusto” has been cited above in a description of Lucio’s character and his already observed relationship with don Zoilo evokes this very sensation as well.

The day ends and don Zoilo goes to bed. His particular personality and the organic way in which he synchronizes with nature is apparent also in the narrator’s description of his retiring for the night: “Con su calma habitual arregló la cama, se desnudó, se acostó, y no tardó en sumergirse en profundo sueño, sin preocupaciones, sin recordar un solo instante ni al mozo mensajero, ni a la hermana muerta, ni a la niña abandonada” (23). At the end of the day, Zoilo’s cares slide away as easily as those of a wild animal, functioning on the level of instinct.

However, the next day, don Zoilo makes a journey that changes the course of the novel: he visits the *estancia* where Juana is being kept. The narrator relates: “No era día de ración,—había estado la víspera,—y los peones acostumbrados a la regularidad de sus visitas, lo recibieron con bromas de mal disimulada curiosidad” (23). The regularity of don Zoilo’s visits to “las casas” to obtain rations from his peasants is disturbed by the auspiciousness of this journey. The journey’s importance is signalled by the narrator who asks: “¿Qué sentimiento había nacido en el alma encallecido del huraño solitario?” (24) The narrator up to this point has established the callousness and indifference of don Zoilo in the same way that the natural world can be callous and indifferent to anyone who experiences it first hand. The “sentimiento” that *seems* to have been awakened in Zoilo’s affections awakens the curiosity not only of his peasants, but also of the narrator. The narrator furthers the questioning by asking: “¿Había, por primera vez en su vida, pensado que él también formaba parte del género humano, y debía, él también, aportar algo a la

sociedad y ser, en alguna manera, útil a sus semejantes?” (24) The narrator’s curiosity leads him to speculate that perhaps Zoilo has emerged from his admittedly comfortable state of relations with both nature and other humans.

However, the narrator, after establishing this moment of suspense in the reader, reveals that Zoilo’s instinctual nature (combined with his indifference toward humans) has not been shaken at all: “No; nada de eso. No había hecho ningún análisis, ni había sufrido ningún impresión. ...la necesidad del momento le indicaba lo que debía hacer, y una vez obrado en virtud de esa necesidad, nada de sacar consecuencias, nada de prever resultados” (24). The narrator, then, preserves Zoilo’s image as an unfeeling and instinctual character. The narrator also enters into a brief discussion of Zoilo’s upbringing. He comments: “[s]iempre solo, siempre abandonado, era natural que se acostumbrara a mirar el aislamiento como ley de la vida” (25). Zoilo’s taciturn personality, then, is due not just to his nature, but also to conditions he experienced in his formative years.

Although Lucio, an orphan, must have experienced similar feelings of abandonment, he takes care to distance himself from Zoilo, referring to him as “la fiera del pajonal” (25). It could be said, with this in mind, that perhaps Lucio’s general distaste for Zoilo (discussed above) is a revelation of his desire to eschew their similarity in upbringing. The narrator broaches the subject of Lucio’s upbringing as an orphan: “Él, que había sido criado por los peones de la estancia con un mate por biberón y un trapo por pezón...” (26). The crudeness of Lucio’s childhood, the lack of a nurturing figure, perhaps contributes to Lucio’s disquietude toward others (like Zoilo) and his disharmony

with nature. Ironically, Zoilo, who received a similar pattern of nurture, according to the narrator, elicits a strong bond with the natural environment and does not feel anxiety toward other people like Lucio.

The interaction between Lucio and Zoilo continues when they encounter each other at the Estancia del Ceibo, where Juana is being kept. The narrator describes Lucio's internal conflict: "Aquel primer conflicto produjo un caos en su cerebro, que jamás se había ejercitado en la gimnasia de las ideas. Ni la edad ni la educación habían desarrollado suficientemente su inteligencia para que pudiera soportar esas terribles luchas del espíritu" (26). Lucio, then, is presented, again, as a character with a weak mental and spiritual constitution. The ability for chaos to reign in his mind is evidence of a weak and untested spirit. The narrator cites his youth and his lack of education as causes for his relative inability to function socially. In terms of Lucio's gaze toward nature, his weakness of constitution is a result of him being distracted from an integral bond with nature by his distaste for the people around him, especially Zoilo.

The confrontation of the two men at the Estancia del Ceibo highlights their conflicting personalities: "...los dos hombres se miraron cara a cara y en silencio: el uno con mirada de curioso y desconfiado interrogatorio, el otro con la fría e impenetrable mirada habitual" (27). Lucio's "mirada de...interrogatorio" reveals his feeling that Zoilo has a wrongdoing to confess. Lucio's distaste for Zoilo is perhaps based on a belief that Zoilo is rude and inconsiderate on purpose, when the reality is that Zoilo is simply a bad-tempered and taciturn person. The narrator illustrates this reality by the use of the word "habitual." Through the use of that word, the narrator confirms that Zoilo habitually feels



no concern for others. The trouble that Lucio experiences in social situations, his psychological weakness, is furthered by the following quotation: “Por un fenómeno que no lograba explicarse y que le arrancaba estremecimientos de rabia, su imaginación le alejaba constantemente de la hora actual y se complacía en reconstruir escenas pasadas, hechos lejanos, que, en lugar de ayudarlo en su empeño primordial, le alejaban de él” (27). The narrator describes how Lucio’s imagination gets in the way of his thought processes, which can be seen as a direct result of his aversion toward both nature and people.

The first result to be documented by the narrator of this weakness of constitution in Lucio takes place when he lets don Zoilo take Juana back to el Puesto del Fondo even when he knows, from experience, that Zoilo’s *estancia* will not be a proper place for Juana to continue growing up. The narrator questions the situation as follows:

¿Qué había pasado en el alma del gauchito? ¿Habíase sometido,—en el convencimiento de su impotencia para hallar otra solución,—a la voluntad del trenzador, e iba a entregarle humildemente la niña huérfana que antes se había propuesto disputarle a toda costa? Él no se lo confesaba, no quería confesárselo; pero en realidad, y a su derecho, sentía un intenso placer en que el viejo hubiese ido. Su presencia, sin amenguar la pena que le empargaba, quitóle del alma un peso enorme. (28)

Lucio’s infirmity around other people causes him to lose Juana to don Zoilo. As he experiences the *rencor* that comes with the loss of Juana, we notice further evidence of the schism between Lucio and the natural environment. While the narrator describes nature to be fully flowering and joyful all around him, Lucio experiences very distinct emotions. The narrator describes this schism: “Su corazón experimentaba una dolorosa mordedura ante aquella falta de concierto entre su estado y el medio ambiente” (29).

Lucio, in addition to mourning the fact that don Zoilo has taken Juana to live with him at el Puesto del Fondo, also mourns the fact that the bright, sunny environment evoked by the narrator does not match his disposition, another example of how Viana eschews Romantic literary notions that the natural environment closely corresponds to the emotional state of the main characters. In this sense, among others, Viana is an environmentalist, attributing to the natural environment characteristics that do not necessarily depend on the emotional attitude of a character.

The next set of characters that the narrator compares to one another is Juana and Lucio. Juana enters the story as a woman trapped in a girl's body: "Había notable contraste entre su cuerpo pequeño y endeble,—que no representaba más de diez u once años,—y su aspecto de mujer hecha, perfectamente dueña de sí, su actitud meditabunda y su pacífica resignación" (29). The narrator is careful to classify Juana as possessing the personality traits of a grown woman so that she can contrast Lucio's mental and spiritual immaturity. This immaturity comes to life again as the day in which Zoilo takes away Juana ends: "Y él [Lucio], en vez de dirigirse a la Estancia, tomó campo afuera, hacia la soledad, hacia el desierto, seguro de cometer un crimen si hallaba alguna persona en su camino" (30). Lucio's emotional reaction based on the events of the day is to isolate himself and embrace reckless behavior. His retreat into the wild countryside is not a retreat into a comforting, well-known atmosphere; it is the fleeing of a wounded spirit, unsure of to whom to turn and where to take shelter.

Lucio eventually, however, turns to Juana for spiritual nurturing. One of the more significant activities that bonds together the young playmates is the so-called "jugar a los

muertos,” a game invented by Juana. “Jugar a los muertos” takes place in the *bañado* and simply consists of the two characters lying still on the ground and pretending to be dead. “Jugar a los muertos” comes to symbolize Juana’s relationship with nature—a strange relationship, complicated by a mysterious melancholy that is never explained. Lucio, in his desire to bond with Juana, plays the morbid game: “Al principio a Lucio le pareció aquel juego extraño y feo; más tarde, poco a poco, la tristeza de Juana le fue invadiendo y llegó a encontrar un placer verdadero en languidecer, anonadarse, morir” (35). Lucio, not knowing where to turn in his infirmity, absorbs some of Juana’s sadness, her mysterious sadness that derives from her relationship with nature.

While don Zoilo embraces his stolid, unchanging relationship with nature, Lucio and Juana together experience their mysterious, strange relationships with the natural environment. The uncertainty of adolescence that the two share is a cornerstone upon which the narrator founds their developing views of and gazes toward nature: “Pero extraños recelos, instintivas timideces de la pubertad naciente, les hacían rehuirse al mismo tiempo que se buscaban” (36). Juana and Lucio experience a tentative relationship in which they both desire the adventure of knowing the other, but the security of knowing themselves. Lucio, especially, experiences a great desire to know Juana and use her as a solution to his problems: “No pudiendo fijarlos, darles forma ni nombre, pedía auxilio al misterio que se le presentaba envuelto entre las cinco letras de un nombre: Juana” (36). The mysticism of Lucio’s attempts to incorporate Juana into his life reveals an obsessive tendency, the same tendency that leads Lucio to disregard the taciturn and indifferent character of don Zoilo. The impulse that draws Lucio toward Juana is the same impulse

that causes him to be distrustful of don Zoilo and the natural world in general: “Su cerebro semejaba uno de esos hipódromos mecánicos, donde los mismos caballos recorren siempre la misma pista” (38). The narrator’s metaphor, one of the few manifestations of the world of technology in the novel, reveals the state of Lucio’s mind to be mechanical in its inability to make authentic bonds with nature and with others.

This inability to connect socially and environmentally makes Lucio uneasy and is the key conflict that he experiences throughout the novel: “Puesto que él era distinto de los demás, debía ser un inferior, un imperfecto; pero esa inferioridad, que le torturaba, no podía admitirla para sí, sin hacerla extensiva a su amiga...” (38). Lucio’s philosophical musings, represented here by the narrator, do not lead him to any solution; rather, they lead him to grow further from Juana. However, Lucio also muses that perhaps Juana is different from the rest of humanity in a similar way. The narrator captures his thoughts: “...él no era semejante a los demás hombres, y Juana no era igual a las otras mujeres. Un lazo misterioso los unía a los dos; una mano providencial había vaciado sus almas en un mismo molde, y había roto el molde después” (39). The idea of the broken mold leads back to Romanticism because it suggests the uniqueness of Juana and Lucio, it suggests that they are made of a different mold that can never be repeated in quite the same way. In this way, while each one experiences his or her own individual interior conflict, the narrator continues to suggest that they are inextricably linked by a romantic bond.

This bond works to draw Juana and Lucio together. Although they live at different locations, Lucio makes the journey on horseback to visit Juana. He dresses up for the

journey in his fanciest clothing, perhaps attempting to hide or distract from his

philosophical preoccupations:

El mozo, perfumado profusamente con Agua Florida, estaba elegante y gallardo. Llevaba amplias ‘bombachas’ de merino negro, lustrosas botas de charol, donde lucían las espuelas cuidadosamente fregadas la víspera con la arena fina del arroyo; vistoso poncho gris atigrado, pañuelo de seda anudado al cuello y ‘gacho’ marrón, nuevo, reluciente, armado con coquetería, bajada el ala sobre la frente, y el barboquejo de seda negra caído sobre el mentón. (40)

Although Lucio is a gaucho, he dresses up like a dandy both to impress Juana and, as mentioned, to distract from his internal conflict. According to the description, Lucio lends much thought and preparation to his appearance. His qualms about what others will think of him assault him at every moment. For this reason he chooses to leave early in the morning from the *estancia* where he works: “Lucio había elegido aquella hora matinal para emprender su viaje, porque la distancia era mucha y porque deseaba evitar el encuentro con sus compañeros. Él no ignoraba lo risible de su conducta; pero tanto más infundido y pueril parecía su sufrimiento, tanto más se volvía huraño, díscolo, incapaz de soportar la censura” (40). The narrator makes Lucio’s suffering very clear. His desire to see Juana is equaled only by his desire to resolve the complex of inferiority that he faces.

The variety of vegetation through which he travels is as complex and prolific as the garments he wears: “Un inmenso bosque se extendía delante; una mole de verdura, un completo peñuscamiento de árboles de todas clases, unos bajos y ramosos, otros corpulentos y gallardos; aquí troncos que se cruzan, allí enredaderas que se retuercen; abajo arbustos que se oprimen, arriba hojas y ramas que se mezclan” (40-41). The narrator emphasizes the thickness of the terrain through which Lucio must pass to

encounter Juana. The terrain comes to symbolize the intricacy of their relationship and the richness of their inner lives. It is during this journey that Lucio first catches a glimpse of what it is like to live in harmony with nature: “Lucio gustaba con fruición la embriaguez de aquellos olores, el vértigo de aquel abismo” (41). The word “gustaba” indicates that he takes pleasure from the natural environment; a stark contrast from the “disgusto” that he experienced in company of don Zoilo. The fact that Lucio can appreciate nature shows that he is becoming more aware of the world around him, an accomplishment that works to heal the inferiority that he feels toward himself.

The pleasure with which he experiences nature on his journey is soon equaled by the pleasure of the anticipation of seeing his friend: “Acaso esperaba ver salir, de pronto,—también desgreñada y descalza,—a su inseparable compañera de juegos” (41). The narrator intertwines Lucio’s gradual appreciation for nature with his budding relationship with Juana. As he extends himself toward an appreciation of the natural world, he also reaches out to Juana, both activities from which at certain moments he derives pleasure. However, this process takes place over the course of the novel and never comes to complete fruition. As he approaches el Puesto del Fondo, nature mocks him: “Y el bañado extenso, quieto, mudo, parecía contemplarle taimado, irónico, con su apariencia de apacible tranquilidad” (42). The natural world, perfectly composed and tranquil, seems to silently assault Lucio with its imperturbability.

Lucio reaches el Puesto del Fondo and immediately notices the influence of Juana upon the environment: “Sólo entonces notó que la paja de los techos, dorada y pareja,—una buena paja y una linda quincha,—había quitado a la morada del trenzador, el aspecto

de tapera, que tan desagradablemente le impresionó en su anterior visita” (43). Juana’s improvements upon the ranch counteract the disagreeable aspect that affected Lucio on his previous visit, once again emphasizing how his relationship with Juana brings the ability to reach outside of himself and appreciate the works of others within the beauty of nature.

As Lucio enters the environment of el Puesto del Fondo, he comes into contact with don Zoilo again. Accordingly, the narrator enters into the psyche of don Zoilo to reveal the ways in which it is affected by Juana and Lucio’s presence. One of Zoilo’s thoughts is the following: “[a]l igual de los animales, los hombres. Los que hablan, son los que no sirven” (45). Zoilo’s idea that those who speak are useless seems extreme, but it accurately represents the old man’s outlook. The thought has its application for Lucio, as well. Already troubled by thoughts of inferiority, Lucio is unable to share Zoilo’s opinion. The narrator expounds upon Zoilo’s personal independence and his idealistic egalitarianism that, although he sees people who speak as useless, promotes the idea that every person should contribute their fair share to the greater good. His view of nature is reflected in this outlook, as well, in that he sees all natural manifestations as being of equal value: “...las verdes cuchillas, lucientes y alegres, no eran mejores que su triste bañado silencioso y mustio” (46). Zoilo’s outlook that all of nature is of equal value is an indication of his entrenchment within natural cycles that do not recognize the value of one natural manifestation over another, either.

However, as revealed throughout the narrative, don Zoilo does have affections, albeit distant ones, for both the natural world and for people: “Mientras Lucio preparaba

el mate, don Zoilo se levantó,—fatigado de la silla,—y fue a sentarse en su banquito de ceibo, al sol, en medio de sus guascas y sus herramientas, y desde donde podía ver el bañado, su querido e indispensable bañado, que lucía en aquel admirable día de otoño, templado, sereno y resplandeciente de luz” (50). Captured on a particularly agreeable day, this positive representation of Zoilo’s *bañado* might cause one to think that it is Zoilo’s admiration for his *bañado* that leads him to see it as being on par with the “verdes cuchillas” mentioned earlier by the narrator.

Zoilo’s admiration for his *bañado* and his gaze toward nature in general predominate the parts of the novel in which he plays a part. Lucio, although he is beginning to establish his own gaze toward nature, continues to vilify don Zoilo for his unrepentant and irrevocable bond with nature: “El mozo lo observaba, tratando de explicarse aquel misterioso ser humano, empeñándose en penetrar aquella alma dura y negra; pero sus investigaciones concluían con el convencimiento de que era un hombre malo que le tenía aversión, y nada más” (50). The irony of Lucio’s diagnosis of Zoilo as “un hombre malo que le tenía aversión” is that Zoilo has no aversion to Lucio; rather, Lucio feels aversion to don Zoilo. Zoilo lacks aversion to Lucio because his view is directed toward the natural world; whereas, Lucio’s view is focused on humans (and don Zoilo in particular), and he projects his own emotions onto them.

The crucial element in Lucio’s conversion—one that is not necessarily successful at the end of the novel—from someone who looks to others for his identity to a someone who looks to nature is Juana. The narrator affirms that Lucio “...necesitaba el amor de Juana, todo su amor, para vivir, para calmar la fiebre de su propio amor, la desenfrentada



pasión que ardía en su seno y que sólo ahora comprendía” (52). In particular, the narrator emphasizes Lucio’s need for Juana’s love. The emotions that surge in Lucio because of his inadaptation to the social world find their calming agent in Juana because of the way that she directs his emotions toward nature. Lucio is, in terms of his affections, a child, but his relationship with Juana helps him begin the transition into adolescence: “él también sonrió con su bondadosa sonrisa de niño, el pecho dilatado, el espíritu luminoso en un éxtasis adorable” (52-53). Lucio’s “bondadosa sonrisa de niño” is contrasted with his “espíritu luminoso en un éxtasis adorable.” Although his “éxtasis” is described as “adorable,” we see the emergence of Lucio’s adolescence in his ability to seek the mystical condition of ecstasy. The opening of Lucio’s mind to possible ecstasy coincides with his transformation into adolescence and the beginning of a gaze toward nature that will stabilize his wayward emotions.

Lucio’s wayward emotions are best described by the narrator in terms of a disc: “Su alma era como un disco, blanco de un lado, negro del otro, y volcado incesantemente: sólo así podía explicarse los repentinos y radicales cambios de su estado moral, el inconcebible pasaje,—operado cien veces en el día,—del más grande desconcielo a la más intensa esperanza” (53). Because of the nervousness that is generated when Lucio looks toward other humans for identity and approval, his emotions fly from one extreme to the other. As he slowly steadies himself, with the help of Juana, he discovers that a gaze toward nature relieves the nervousness and anxiety that have become a reality for him. Juana advocates for such a gaze: “Pero el bañado también es lindo. Al principio no me gustaba, y ahora que lo conozco, lo quiero. ¡Si viera cuánta

cosa hay en el bañado!” (53) Juana’s testimony of her own conversion to an appreciation of nature undoubtedly affects Lucio. That Juana has passed from “disgusto” to “gusto” concerning the *bañado* certainly influences Lucio to effect a similar transformation.

Lucio’s attraction to Juana also drives him toward a deeper relationship with the natural world. She is absent from his presence for ten minutes and he feels “...sed de verla, de oírla, de sentirla entrar cada vez más en su cuerpo, infiltrándose en sus tejidos, saturando con su esencia todas las células de su organismo” (54). The infiltration that Lucio experiences due to his attraction to Juana resembles the infiltration of the natural world that is taking place in him simultaneously. However, it is likely that Lucio is unaware of the takeover that the natural world is mobilizing in his being. The narrator observes: “Podía presentarse la ciénaga delante, podía brillar de pronto la blanca quietud de la laguna, él no dejaría de proseguir la marcha, sin una reflexión ni una mirada al obstáculo, mientras flotara ante sus ojos la adorada imagen de aquella que ocupaba todos sus sentimientos” (54). Although he is surrounded by nature, Lucio is more concerned with the journey (and with keeping up with Juana) than with natural immersion. The two, however, go hand in hand and simultaneously interpenetrate Lucio’s reality.

Although she is the leader in terms of Lucio’s conversion to a more nature-conscious lifestyle, Juana also experiences recurrences of old memories related to nature due to Lucio’s reentry into her life: “¡Cuántos recuerdos del pago viejo renacían en su mente en presencia de Lucio!” (55). This quotation reveals that each of the two adolescents feels exhilaration for the presence of the other and for the omnipresence of the natural world. Juana’s own psychological problems also come to the surface in her

adventures with Lucio: "...pero su mente inquieta,—el algo extraño, misterioso y lejano, que tenía como encrustado en el fondo del alma,—se revelaba contra esa indiferencia y trabajaba con penoso afán investigando el obscuro porqué" (57). While Lucio must transition from a vision toward others to a vision toward nature, Juana must overcome this mysterious psychological impediment, which seems to be linked with both her virginity and the natural world.

Often the natural world is idealized as being a pristine environment untouched by human hands and unaffected by human industry. In Juana's case the narrator confirms, as we will see, that she is a virgin, but that she suffers from an unexplainable melancholy. What is more, her unexplainable malady seems to have its source in the natural world. For this reason, virginity and unblemished nature are not the same thing for Juana. The experience of her first winter at el Puesto del Fondo is a trial for her, and certain conditions of that experience resemble the conditions of her unexplainable melancholy highlighted as follows:

Los primeros tiempos pasados en el Puesto del Fondo, en medio del pajonal inundado durante un invierno crudo, sola, aislada, enterrada viva, sin ver otro rostro que el rostro adusto del trenzador, sin oír otra voz que los agrios gruñidos del viejo, fueron para ella terribles tiempos, espantosa prueba impuesta a su alma virgen, inocente y cariñosa, y a su débil ser, a su cuerpo endeble y frágil, de un completo refinamiento femenino. (57-58)

That her experience at el Puesto del Fondo was like being buried alive confirms that her ailment affected her even then. Don Zoilo's presence clearly does not aid the isolation that Juana feels during this period. The narrator mentions that this difficult winter is also a trial for her "alma virgen," but suggests that, in spite of her inexperience and weakness, she showed "un completo refinamiento femenino," revealing that Juana's complexity

derives from her condition of being a virgin yet being highly refined. As we will see, her virginity (and its subsequent loss) is intertwined with her relationship to the natural world and to her strange psychological illness.

Juana continues to show Lucio refinement in the knowledge of medicinal uses of various plants found in that environment:

Ni un momento cesaba de hablar, enumerando las ignoradas riquezas que contenía el bañado. Aquí arrancaba una planta de apio cimarrón, y se empeñaba en disertaciones sobre su virtud en la curación de las heridas; allí descubría una calaguala,—admirable yerba, considerada como el más poderoso de los depurativos conocidos;—más allá encontraba un pipirí,—a cuya acción no había hemorragia rebelde;—y en esa forma continuaba mostrando, sus grandes conocimientos de herborista y su vasta ilustración en materia de medicina casera. (58)

Juana's continual talking reveals an energy that has been awakened due to the presence of Lucio. Although Lucio does not show Juana how to improve her relationship with the natural world, his presence invigorates Juana and drives her to appreciate the natural world in its greatness and complexity. Lucio, of course, takes the role of learner or apprentice to Juana and develops his view of the natural world through a mimicry of her own jubilation toward nature.

As Lucio gains an appreciation of how the natural world can act as the center of his worldview, both adolescents wander closer and closer to confessing their love for one another. Juana offers a branch to Lucio: “Su voz temblaba como su brazo, y en el azul profundo, misterioso y fascinante de sus ojos, había como un deseo de concluir de una vez, de arrancar la confesión esperada y temida” (59). As the young couple meanders through the *bañado* (the most important representation of the natural world in the novel), they not only grow closer to nature, but also to each other. Lucio does, indeed, declare his

love for Juana and her reaction is expressed in terminology that incorporates not only nature, but also humans and human technology: "...y su alma estremeció como el pájaro que oye resonar un tiro en el interior de la selva" (59). The shuddering of Juana's soul like a bird identifies Juana with the natural world that Lucio is being led to embrace. Lucio's own declaration, however, is compared to a shot in the jungle. Through this metaphor, the narrator reveals that love, for Juana, will always be complicated by her mysterious melancholy. However, the metaphor also shows that love and nature concur when Lucio demonstrates his love for Juana—although Juana may never experience peace due to her strange illness, Lucio achieves it by declaring his love for her.

That Lucio comes to embrace a gaze toward nature through his relationship with Juana is illustrated by the following stanza that Lucio repeats from time to time throughout this part of the novel:

El amor es un campo  
tan sin camino,  
que hasta los más baquianos  
pierden el tino. (60)

The metaphor of love as countryside exhibits the transformation that Lucio has undergone because of his relationship with Juana. He now sees life in natural terminology. His transformation (which takes place at the moment that he declares his love for Juana) is so complete that he begins to show signs of harmony with nature:

Para él, la existencia no tenía ni pasado ni porvenir; no le atormentaba la necesidad de análisis, y pobre, sin una propiedad, sin probabilidades de adquirirla, era absolutamente dichoso en la dicha del momento, con esa soberbia indolencia nativa, en esa completa indiferencia fatalista de la raza, para la cual no existe el pavoroso fantasma del mañana. (60)

The harmony that Lucio feels with nature ironically instills within him a sense of being surprisingly similar to that of don Zoilo. The description, although it pertains to Lucio, could easily be substituted for don Zoilo at a different moment in the novel. Lucio's achievement, then, is to become so harmonized with nature that he actually forgets about time, and Juana is the key element that draws him into that psychological state.

The two of them, in fact, experience harmony with nature together, an experience which the narrator evokes in mystical terms: "Convertidos los dos en un mismo y único ser, fundidos en un solo espíritu, observaban el paisaje sin atreverse a pronunciar una palabra que hubiera podido romper el encanto de aquel éxtasis gratisimo" (61). Not only are the two of them in harmony with nature, but they are also joined together in mystic union; their gazes toward nature have merged with their gazes toward each other. The absence of speech, one of the conditions of their transcendent moment together, further illustrates the instinctiveness of this moment that they share.

While their gazes toward nature are unified with their gazes toward each other, the natural environment also envelops and surrounds them. The *bañado* becomes a nursery for this young, budding love because it maintains the conditions necessary for the couple to remain in "éxtasis gratisimo" for a prolonged period of time: "Al norte y al sur, al este y al oeste, por doquiera tendieran la mirada, no veían otra cosa que la incomensurable mar oscura del bañado. Y ni un sonido, ni una voz, ni un canto de ave, ni un rumor de voces, ni un rozamiento de ramas turbaban la tierna melancolía de la tarde" (61). The lack of animal and plant voices intensifies the lack of human speech observed in the previous quotation. That the afternoon is described as possessing a "tierna

melancolía” exposes the inner reality of the couple’s relationship: Lucio looks to Juana and now also to nature for his inspiration in life, but Juana is unsteady because of her melancholy.

However, the reality of this shared moment between the two lovers is that it takes place outside of life: “Desde allí no se veía ninguna vivienda,—ni aun los ranchos del trezador,—ningún grupo de vacunos, ningún rebaño de ovejas, ninguna manifestación de vida. Aquella soledad producía en el alma como un deseo de anonadamiento, de aniquilarse, de desaparecer; se estaba allí como sobre un árido peñasco perdido en la inmensidad del mar” (61). Although Zoilo seems at times to also live outside of life, he has his rope-making business that sustains him and gives him an occupation. Because of this reality, Juana and Lucio cannot continue to exist outside of all responsibility. Juana’s strange melancholy seems to function best in situations like this where life appears to be inconsequential or supplementary. For this reason the narrator, in the above quotation, states that the couple (especially Juana, probably) begins to desire this separation from life to continue, to the extent that they have, as the quotation expresses: “un deseo de anonadamiento, de aniquilarse, de desaparecer.”

Instead, however, Lucio becomes sexually aroused and attempts to force his will upon Juana. Juana’s reaction, after the failed attempt has subsided, falls in line with her strange melancholy: “Entre las pajas, que casi la cubrían, con la rubia cabellera en desorden, muy pálida, muy contraídos los labios delgados, permaneció mirando a su agresor con una terrible expresión de fiereza y de orgullo” (63). Although she is a virgin, she welcomes Lucio’s advance and feels pride that she could be the object of such desire.

However, together with this pride comes her melancholy. Juana's desire to lose her virginity, then, is a sublimation of her desire for death. She thinks that perhaps death of innocence will also mean physical death. However, desire to lose innocence is not her only emotion. She also elicits feelings of doubt concerning Lucio: "Él, el sostén, el auxilio, el amparo, el hombre, el marido,—todo lo que ella había ideado y acariciado,—¿no deseaba otra cosa que el placer brutal?" (64) Juana's psychological portrait is thus complex. Lucio's sexual advance upon her can be seen as a prelude to Lorenzo's multiple advances upon her later in the novel.

Soon it is time for Lucio to leave Juana and return to his duties at the *estancia*. Bolstered by his experiences with Juana, Lucio's view of nature is so positive and strong that he believes it will protect her while they are apart: "Jamás se le ocurrió pensar que ella pudiera olvidarle; nunca imaginó que otros hombres pudieran robarle el único cariño que había hallado en su miserable existencia de expósito" (67). Lucio is unable to imagine that Juana could be harmed because he does not realize that there are those, like Lorenzo, who have power over nature. Lucio's view of nature is limited to what he has learned from Juana, which is that nature can be harmony-inducing in the right circumstances. Lorenzo, on the other hand, has the will to dominate others, which gives him power over their particular gazes toward nature. Lorenzo, along with the omniscient narrator, are the only entities in the novel who actually have power over nature. Lorenzo demonstrates this power most obviously by destroying the relationship between Juana and Lucio. He kills Lucio and rapes Juana, leaving her to die in the forest.



Lucio's departure from el Puesto del Fondo both gives Juana the desire to perform energetically the housekeeping tasks and leaves her with questions and doubts. The narrator conveys Juana's psychological struggles: "¡Oh la pálida estrella que alumbraba la senda de su vida sonriendo con expresión malvada! ...Y su existencia se le aparecía delante, uniforme y quieta, árida y sombría, como inmensa planicie erial" (72). The star's "expresión malvada" refers once more to Juana's melancholy. Without Lucio's presence, Juana loses confidence in their relationship. The narrator's interpretation of her existence as an "inmensa planicie erial" illustrates the stolidity and cheerlessness of her situation at el Puesto del Fondo. The narrator employs natural disaster imagery to illustrate Juana's spiritual state: "El alma de la pobre niña estaba como jardín devastado por el huracán: tiernos tallos trozados, suaves pétalos desgarrados y marchitos..." (72). The use of this imagery is a continuation of the link between nature and Juana's melancholy. The narrator's imagination evokes natural disaster because disaster is built into Juana's personality, especially with the continued evocation of her desire to be dead.

The withering away that Juana experiences due to Lucio's absence is a manifestation of her general morbid desire to pass away. Without his presence, the desire becomes more intense: "Los ojos semejabán una flor cuyos pétalos celestes se fueran descolorando, palideciendo, perdiendo el brillo, día por día, hora por hora, en el vaso que la guarda cautiva..." (73). The natural imagery employed in this passage suggests that, at one point, when Lucio was visiting her, she felt like a brilliant flower. The sense of captivation that she feels working for don Zoilo at el Puesto del Fondo is compared in the passage to that of a flower that wants to be planted but is stuck in a vase. Her melancholy

permeates and: “No podía recordar un solo rasgo de la fisonomía de Lucio; no podía recordar un solo gesto, una entonación de su voz, ningún detalle que lo hiciera presentarse y vivir y aliviarla con su presencia” (73). Although she knows what she wants to remember of Lucio (physiognomy, gestures, voice), she cannot recall specifics, which causes her to sink further into melancholy.

At this point, while Lucio is away, Lorenzo enters the narrative. Through the repetition of the word “fisonomía” when both talking about Lucio (on page 73) and Lorenzo (on page 75), the narrator effects a substitution of one man for the other in Juana’s life. The two men are very different as far as their gazes toward nature are concerned, but they are both sexually interested in Juana. The narrator relates the physiognomy of Lorenzo: “Aquella fisonomía tenía una expresión extraña, mezcla de orgullo, de altivez, de ferocidad y de refinamiento femenino; lo que era aquel gaucho, lo que había sido, lo que seguía siendo” (75). The study of how facial features reveal the personality of a character is important to the narrator and, for our purposes, can perhaps be used to reveal the attitude that a particular character adopts regarding the natural world. Lorenzo’s particular physiognomy reveals his mercilessness (because of the arrogance and ferocity in his face) and his desperation (because of his feminine refinement).<sup>79</sup> These characteristics in Lorenzo cause him to be defiant of the law and its enforcers: “...[L]a autoridad era para él un enemigo, la mano poderosa que pretendía imponer un límite a su voluntad en nombre de la ley, de ese bien común que su individualismo egoísta le impedía comprender” (80). Lorenzo sees authority as an enemy

because he desires to be the sole authority in the countryside. He wants to act upon his cruel and violent instincts and in that way dominate the natural world that surrounds him.

Although Lorenzo visits el Puesto del Fondo once, Juana's relationship with nature is more important. Through her journeys in the *bañado* we learn more about how nature and her melancholy are intertwined. We first see that her melancholy has caused her to become disheveled: "...[P]ero en los últimos tiempos el abatimiento era tan grande, que ya nada le importaba, y salía así, con las ropas mojadas, las mangas de bata remangadas, grasientos los brazos y las manos, en completo desorden la linda cabellera de oro" (85). The depth of Juana's depression comes to light at this moment in the novel when she does not care for her personal appearance. The natural world starts to intertwine itself with her depression when, as she travels through the *bañado*, she sinks deeper into the soft ground with each step that she takes: "El suelo blando, que exhalaba un olor acre de cieno y plantas podridas, cedía a la débil presión de su pequeño pie, que en partes se hundía hasta por encima del tobillo" (86). The sinking in of her feet acts as a metaphor for the depression that continues to swallow her spirit. The metaphorical sinking into dejection reaches a critical stage when she falls into a freezing pool of water: "De repente dió un grito agudo: su pie derecho se deslizó sobre un tronco y todo el cuerpo le siguió, yendo a sumergirse hasta la cintura en un pozo helado" (86). That she sinks up to her waist indicates further the link between virginity and depression because her sexual organs, too, are submitted to this freezing bath. Her depression and her desire to die (or lose her virginity) become one and the same as she slips and falls into the freezing pool. Through all of this imagery and action we see that the *bañado* is swallowing Juana, just

like her depression is swallowing her. Although a *bañado* is literally a swamp or marshland, another possible translation for the word is “depression,” lending even further meaning to Juana’s peregrinations through that particularly significant area of wilderness.

As dusk falls, Juana faints in the *bañado*. Don Zoilo comes to rescue her, following his instincts and his skills as a tracker:

...su oído fino de rastreador escuchaba los pequeños ruidos de la soledad: el quejido de la brisa sobre las puntas de las gramíneas, el crujir de los tallos leñosos al paso de un aperiá, el canto triste y prolongado de un carao, el croar de los sapos, el chirrido de los grillos, en conjunto de voces tenues y lamentables de millares de pequeños organismos perdidos en el seno inmundo del bañado. (88)

The detail with which the narrator enumerates the different sounds that Zoilo perceives shows that his many years of directing his gaze toward nature have resulted in the ability to help others when they are in need. The *bañado*, although described as a “soledad,” appears noisy to the trained ear of don Zoilo. Indeed, the narrator expounds upon the hyperdevelopment of his instinctual side: “La atrofia de sus facultades intelectuales había ido acompañada de una hipertrofia del instinto animal. Lentamente, en el transcurso de los años y ayudado por el medio una evolución regresiva se fue operando en él, hasta convertirlo en el ser primitivo, puro músculo, puro instinto” (89). Zoilo’s character, molded by years of habit and skill formation, comes to serve not only his own well-being, but, in this case, that of Juana as well; the atrophy of Zoilo’s intellectual faculties is not important in the particular case of him rescuing Juana from the *bañado*.

However, the old rope-maker remains a difficult companion with whom to share a house. Juana decides to spend some time at another *estancia*. She reasons: “...varios días alejada del horrible esteral y en compañía de personas menos crueles, más sociables, más

humanas que el trenzador, curarían su inexplicable enfermedad” (93). The objective of her visit is clearly to rid herself of the depression that has seeped in at el Puesto del Fondo, with don Zoilo and the *bañado* to dampen her spirits. As she prepares to travel, she becomes agitated:

Haciendo y deshaciendo el atado de ropas, sus ojos se llenaban de lágrimas. ¿Cómo pudo llegar a aquel estado miserable? ¿Cómo pudo olvidar a Lucio? ¿Cómo pudo dudar? ¿Cómo pudo sufrir pensando que no le amaba, que no podía amarle? Debió de haber estado muy enferma, muy enferma; el aire infecto del bañado debió de haber empozoñado su sangre y ennegrecido sus ideas. (96)

Her suffering accompanies her even as she readies her belongings. Her tears express the disquiet and dejection that she feels. Her doubts about Lucio worsen the situation and make her realize the graveness of her sickness. However, the promise of a new environment still holds sway as she concludes her thoughts by blaming her psychological difficulties on “el aire infecto del bañado.”

As Juana leaves the *bañado* and sets foot on solid ground, because of an optical illusion caused by the dawn, the forest seems to be on fire: “Por largo rato, Juana permaneció fascinada por aquella portentosa visión, indecisa y perpleja, sin darse cuenta del fenómeno y creyendo que realmente ardieran en el bosque los tortuosos coronillas, los viejos guayabos, los duros arrayanes y los secos espinillos” (97). For Juana, the perceived conflagration symbolizes a leaving behind of el Puesto del Fondo. She believes that her journey to the Estancia de López will free her of this emotional baggage that has been aggravated by her stay at don Zoilo’s ranch. Her perception that the forest is truly on fire shows her mental instability and her desire to leave behind her life at el Puesto del Fondo: “Arder, consumirse, desaparecer aquel monte del Cebollatí, aquella selva virgen, espesa,

enmarañada y oscura que ella se había propuesto visitar algún día!” (97) The idea of the virgin jungle burning and impeding any future attempt to visit it reveals again how Juana’s own virginity is tied up with her depression. As she sees the virgin forest burn she imagines her own virginity burning away and taking with it the depression that it seems to cause.

Her desire for death seems to fade away as she travels through the *cuchilla* on her way to the Estancia de López:

Ella, que había deseado la muerte como el supremo bien, el fin de sus torturas y el descanso eterno, aspiraba el aire puro, se bañaba en la luz caliente del sol y sentía hervir su sangre ansiosa de vida... La horripilante pesadilla había pasado llevándose los desconsuelos y desesperaciones, y la esperanza renacía luminosa y cálida como aquel gran sol que ella vio alzarse incendiando los bosques de Cebollatí y Gutiérrez. (99)

It is nature, then, that not only causes her depression, but also alleviates it. The *bañado* has been a great cause of mental illness, but now the freedom of the *cuchilla* through which she travels awakens a desire to live. A direct comparison can be made between the “aire puro” of the *cuchilla* and the “aire infecto” of the *bañado*. Each one has a corresponding effect on Juana’s mental state. The sun plays a central role in Juana’s awakening to life, as well, as it improves her sensitivity toward herself (she feels her blood boil in her veins) and produces the vision of the burning forest expounded in the previous paragraph.

Although Juana is happy for a time, el rubio Lorenzo, who will eventually bring about her demise, re-enters the story. The narrator describes him: “Como el águila, el gaucho gustaba anidar en lo alto. Ave corpulenta y de presa, necesitaba mucho aire, mucha luz y ancho horizonte abierto a sus miradas recelosas y penetrantes” (100).

Lorenzo, then, requires the same air and sun that relieve Juana of her morbid fascination with death. Nature plays an important role in Lorenzo's life even if he eventually lives to dominate and subjugate it. Perhaps for this reason Lorenzo is compared to the eagle, a prominent bird of prey. The last part of the above citation: "sus miradas recelosas y penetrantes," seems to have more to do with Lorenzo as a person than with the metaphorical image of him as an eagle. It seems to suggest the jealousy that he will later act upon by killing Lucio at el Puesto del Fondo. Casiana, Juana's friend in the Estancia de López, is in love with el rubio Lorenzo (105). She exemplifies someone upon whom Lorenzo's "mirada penetrante" is exercised. Their romance is one of instincts and is related to the natural world in that every site of their love has a romantic story to tell: "Cada sitio tenía un recuerdo de amor venturoso; cada ombú, cada eucaliptus y cada tala representaba un testigo de placeres infinitos, de pleno goce de la vida en el amplio desborde de animalidad, en una completa saciedad del instinto" (113). Their relationship contrasts that of Juana and Lucio because the latter relationship has a psychological element to it. Lorenzo's gaze toward nature is a simple one in that he seeks to dominate everyone with whom he comes into contact—a quality that Casiana admires in him. Lucio, on the other hand, looks to Juana for support. It's possible that he sees a parental figure in Juana given that he grew up as an orphan.

Juana's statement about how Lorenzo goes after any woman he can find is frank and shows how, when she is looking at people, she is straightforward. Her gaze toward people produces in her the characteristics of a mature, responsible young woman. When she looks at nature, however, she becomes melancholy. After she has spent some time at

la Estancia de López, melancholy comes to visit her again: “La dulce tranquilidad, el suave adormecimiento de la naturaleza entristecía el alma de Juana” (107). Even an agreeable form of nature (as compared to the infected *bañado* she has currently left behind) elicits in her a sadness. The “adormecimiento” that she experiences perhaps makes her melancholy because of the similarity between sleeping (“adormecimiento”) and death. Nature, in this passage, lulls her into a sleepy mood in which her thoughts become morbid once more.

The narrator describes the fall of dusk: “Gradualmente, de una manera casi imperceptible, el azul del cielo íbase oscureciendo, y al mismo tiempo, con igual gradación, el silencio, la melancolía de la tarde se iba extendiendo, acostándose sobre las lomas, sobre los llanos, sobre los bosques espesos y sobre las turbias cañadas” (107). This passage shows the sensitivity of Juana’s soul, that it is able to perceive the “casi imperceptible” fall of evening. Words like “oscureciendo,” “gradación,” and “extendiendo” show the gradual nature of this natural phenomenon and express how the soul, also, succumbs to illnesses and maladies in a gradual way. A noteworthy aspect of this passage is that, while in Romantic literature nature reflects the emotions of the character, here the character reflects the melancholy that nature is already expressing.

The following quotation illustrates this concept:

La hora triste, el agonizar del día, las tintas diluidas del crepúsculo, la desaparición suave y lenta de la luz que muere, ¿no producían ninguna impresión en el alma de los seres humanos, no infiltraban en sus corazones la dolorosa y sin embargo dulce melancolía que hacía gozar al suyo el misterioso placer del dolor? ... ¿No preocupaba a ninguno de los otros el vuelo incesante e inseguro silencioso y rápido de las aves grises,—miserables almas atormentadas por el remordimiento?...¡Oh, la vida! (108)



The narrator emphasizes the controlling air that the natural world enforces upon the human beings it surrounds, especially Juana. The imagery that he employs refers to death and dying (“el agonizar del día,” “desaparición,” “la luz que muere,” “dolorosa”), but he hints that there is a particular pleasure that can be found in mortality. These concepts, represented in nature, come to affect Juana and cause her to continue in her morbid desires.

The winter passes and spring comes. The natural world continues to inspire the narrator with its resurgence: “Tras los temporales,—las lluvias copiosas, los fríos intensos, los vientos turbios y los cielos oscuros,—la naturaleza resurgía a la vida, a una vida alegre y bulliciosa repleta de promesas, preñado de esperanzas” (109). Juana’s return to el Puesto del Fondo is imminent and, although she is not cured of her ailment, she feels much relieved from her visit to la Estancia de López. Just like Juana’s (partial) recovery, the natural world recovers from the cold and stormy winter months.

Before she leaves, the narrator describes a dinner that takes place at the Estancia de López. The dinner is significant because it showcases some of the rural leaders of the area and the corruption that they embody. The *coronel*, not present at the dinner, is referred to with the epithet: “Así dice el coronel” (111). His authority is taken as the measure of authority against which all other authority is judged. His presence orders the natural world and subjugates it for human domination: “El coronel era el caudillo, el jefe del pago, el que nombraba comisarios, jueces de paz y tenientes alcaldes; el que juzgaba y castigaba, el que era árbitro supremo, el que tenía poder bastante para penar con la muerte una culpa leve y para absolver de toda culpa al más grande delincuente” (111-12).

The *coronel's* great power reminds us of Lorenzo's own power. While the *coronel's* power seems to extend primarily over humans, Lorenzo, as we have seen, exercises power over the natural world (or, he feels at peace with the natural world only when he has subjugated others to his authority).

One might object that Lorenzo is a *bandolero* and shouldn't be compared to a law-abiding caudillo. As we discover, however, all forms of authority in the countryside are corrupt. The narrator describes the *comisario*, who is present at the dinner, as a "bandolero obscuro, autor solamente de dos o tres homicidios, acusado de otros tantos robos y estafas, amén de varias violaciones de pobres mujeres indefensas..." (112). That this *comisario* is appointed by the *coronel* further reveals corruption within the rural system of governance. The narrator also draws attention to the *comisario's* apparently spotless record of only "dos o tres homicidios." This comment in itself reveals the savage nature of life in Gutiérrez of the time. The narrator's laconic tone reveals the mundaneness of the *comisario's* gruesome accomplishments. The natural world in this case provides a haven for characters like the *comisario* and el rubio Lorenzo to utilize brute force to enforce their own wills as law. The corruption is so great that there is no difference between law enforcement and outlaw.

In Chapter XI Juana returns to el Puesto del Fondo. Don Zoilo observes to himself: "Tanta alegría y tanta vida en aquella muchacha, que tres meses antes había salido del rancho mustia, como pájaro enfermo, causóle extrañeza y enojo" (114-15). He notices the change in Juana in natural terms: she is no longer the "pájaro enfermo" that she was before she left. She visits the *bañado* again, but this time with an air of

refreshment and joy. Soon, however, two worlds emerge from the same *bañado*. One: “a dos metros del suelo,” is the refreshing world where “reía la brisa y cabrilleaba la luz” (116). The other is the world of rotting flesh on the floor of the *bañado*, one which the narrator describes as “...exhalando un perfume espeso, acre y capitoso como sudor de mujeres atormentadas por los espamos [sic] de abyecta y crapulosa lujuria” (116). The implied author’s choice of imagery associates this world of death and decomposition with lustful excesses, once again relating Juana’s depression with her own sexuality and showing her desire to either pass away or lose her virginity.

El rubio Lorenzo enters the scene by surprising Juana in her wanderings through the *bañado*. He greets her and refers to her with natural terminology, showing, once again, his desire to dominate the natural world through the domination of people. He says: “¡No te asustés ansina, pichón de calandria!...¿Pensás que te viá matar?...¡Matar a mosa tan linda!...¿Y pa qué, flor de baño, más perfumada que el arrayán?...” (117). His indication that Juana is “más perfumada que el arrayán” refers back to the passage in the previous paragraph where the smell of decomposing bodies is described as being like the sweat of lustful women. Through the use of natural terminology, el rubio Lorenzo applies to Juana what the narrator has said about the smell of lustful women, implicating her in a sexual way that he later uses to his advantage. He also deftly interprets Juana’s mental ailment to his advantage by asking: “¿Pensás que te viá matar?” Juana’s preoccupation with death becomes a tool for Lorenzo to draw closer to Juana and later rape her.

Lorenzo once again gazes upon the natural world with a look that incorporates both the honest, hard-working and the lazy, dishonest worlds at his disposal:

Hacia afuera, más allá del bañado estéril e insalubre, se abría el campo, la inmensa extensión luminosa y libre donde él podría vivir como los demás, abdicando sus pretensiones, domando su orgullo y sometiéndose a la voluntad de sus perseguidores. Por el contrario, hacia atrás estaba el estero fangoso, oscuro, frío y más lejos, la selva, las inmensas frondosidades del Cebollatí, el bosque sombrío, impenetrable, misterioso, asilo natural de los que, como él, hallábanse impelidos por el instinto a la rebelión y a la lucha, incapaces de someterse a la vida regular y ordenada, incapaces de inclinar la cerviz y dejarse uncir al yugo del trabajo para seguir pesadamente el surco, resignados con los chocantes desigualdades que impone la ley de la vida. (120)

The narrator speaks of the “campo” as the place of the normal, honest, hard-working inhabitant of the countryside, the place of those who depend upon the natural world for their basic necessities. Lorenzo, too, depends upon the natural world, but he is unlawful, robbing from those who produce. In the above passage, he considers both possibilities and chooses, once more, the way of the bandit. An important difference between Lorenzo, as a bandit, and the law-abiding landowner is that, while Lorenzo lives to satisfy only himself, the others live for the good of each other (even if they are united against *bandidos* like Lorenzo). For the narrator it is a matter of swallowing one’s pride. *Bandoleros* like Lorenzo take pride in fighting a system that normalizes its members and tries to eliminate differences. The difference in class that exists between *matreros* and landowners is, according to the section above, enforced by “la ley de la vida.” Although the “campo” is immense and free, Lorenzo chooses the dark, cold swamp because in it he can hide.

Although don Zoilo is like the hard-working, landowner class because of his belief that every person should make his or her own contribution to the common good, he resembles more the other men that we have come to know in the novel (122). Although

he could perhaps be seen as an intermediary between lawful and unlawful behavior, the narrator suggests that he is closer to an unlawful alignment:

Sus ojos hablaban el mismo lenguaje que los ojos de Lorenzo, que los del comisario y los de don Diego. La cara tenía la misma falta de expresión,—o mejor,—la misma expresión de indiferencia, de abandono y de desidia que se notaba en el rostro de todos, desde la patrona y Casiana, hasta don Montes y Lucio. (122)

The fact that his eyes “hablaban el mismo lenguaje” as Lorenzo’s shows that he is privy to the same self-serving pride that characterizes Lorenzo and the others. The characteristic “falta de expresión” in Zoilo’s face also indicates an attitude of indifference toward the plights of others. Indeed, the narrator creates a claustrophobic atmosphere with this passage because he shows that just about every character in the novel possesses bad intentions. Even Lucio is briefly mentioned as pertaining to this group of characters: “Sí, el mismo Lucio pertenecía a aquella raza, tenía algo de aquel rebelde empedernido” (122). Juana, too, because of her mysterious and unshakeable melancholy can be associated with or drawn toward the underbelly of rural Uruguayan society.

Although in previous passages the narrator has singled out Lorenzo against a backdrop of normal law-abiding citizens, the narrator later does a similar thing to Juana: “Ella era la única extraña, el único elemento enfermo e inservible en la sociedad en que vivía; por lo tanto era la destinada a desaparecer, mientras la raza, los seres normales y sanos, perdurarían” (122). This being singled out aggravates Juana’s sense of uselessness and increases her depression. The narrator expands upon this observation when he says of Juana: “Su temperamento no podía adaptarse al temperamento de sus semejantes: era una pieza que no encajaba en el engranaje social” (122). While this not being able to fit into

the “engranaje social” seems at the time a characteristic unique to Juana, we find that Lorenzo also struggles with this issue. Although the two both struggle with a similar problem, the solutions they find to this problem are very different.

A related issue with which Juana struggles is doubts about her relationship with Lucio. Her mind polarizes herself and Lucio in the following manner. The narrator relates: “¡qué ridícula unión la de ellos! Uno, puro cuerpo, sensato, equilibrado, razonable, y la otra, puro espíritu, sin noción de lo real, sin equilibrio, sin colocación posible en el medio donde actuaba!...¡Qué ridícula unión!” (123). She considers the relationship ridiculous because she is unwilling to see similarities between the two. Lucio, as “puro cuerpo,” is, to Juana, material reality. In this sense he can be associated with the material reality of the natural world. We receive a confirmation of this association in the same quotation when the narrator says that Juana, Lucio’s opposite, is “sin colocación posible en el medio donde actuaba.” That Juana doesn’t fit into the environment that surrounds her is a further indication of the power that her melancholy holds over her ability to act. The lack of agency that develops from this outlook leads to the indifference that she ends up displaying when Lorenzo comes to rape her.

Paradoxically, the day on which the rape takes place arrives cheerily and with a sense of contentment. Because of the impending violation that is to take place, the happy aspect that the natural world conveys through the narrator can be seen as a perversion, something similar to Juana’s morbid perversion that we have been tracking throughout this novel:

Llegó el domingo, y la naturaleza amaneció vestida de gala. Un cielo límpido, un sol espléndido, una brisa suavísima que venía del campo firme oliendo a trébol y

a margaritos. El bañado parecía de oro; más allá la sierra azul y blanca, envuelta en gases de vapor semejaba quiméricos palacios. Desde lejos, veíanse venir grandes bandadas de garzas blancas y rosadas que se abatían en los charcos junto a las corpulentas cigüeñas y los pardos caraos; oíanse por todas partes los silbidos agudos de los terutereros que volaban persiguiéndose y embistiéndose en alegre juego. De rato en rato pasaban los patos silvestres trazando en el cielo caprichosas líneas quebradas; y de tarde en tarde, cruzaban las águilas volando en lo alto severas y majestuosas. (124)

By describing nature in such positive terms, the narrator goads the reader into thinking something good and hopeful is going to happen. Even the *bañado*, usually described in negative terms, reflects a brilliant disposition. Not only the terrain, but also the animals that inhabit it are of a pleasurable nature. Every sign of optimism, however, is shown to be perverse in light of the horrendous deed that Lorenzo will commit.

His dress and appearance that day mimic the light and cheerful atmosphere expressed above by the narrator: "...al rubio Lorenzo en traje de domingo, muy almidonados y azulados los calzoncillos, bien planchado el chiripá de merino negro, el poncho en el brazo, el sombrero sobre la oreja, aplastando la larga melena enaceitada, y un rojo clavel en los labios" (125). The apparent siding of the natural world with el rubio Lorenzo's cause reflects his close bond with the natural world, even if his overall purpose is to subjugate it. In a manner similar to the narrator, Lorenzo expresses perversity by dressing the way he does on the day of the crime. It is strange that his perversity be supported by the narrator. This support projects the novel as a story in which traditional interpretations of good and evil are suspended.

Juana's reaction to el rubio Lorenzo's approach is also strange: "Sus grandes ojos de un azul límpido y sereno, fijaron en Lorenzo una mirada de absoluta indiferencia" (126). Instead of struggling to defend herself, she abandons herself to her abductor

indifferently. The serenity of her eyes conveys a lack of fear that accompanies a lack of concern for the outcome of the encounter. Juana's melancholy, expounded throughout the novel, causes her to be without a care in the moment of contact with Lorenzo. The importance of Juana's virginity comes to the forefront again in the form of the red carnation that Lorenzo carries in his teeth. The narrator describes how: "...los dientes, castañeteando, trozaron el tronco del clavel rojo, que cayó al suelo como una virgen decapitada" (126). The trope of nature being on Lorenzo's side continues in this passage through the description of his teeth sounding like castanets. An action that could have been explained as repulsive receives treatment as if it were a piece of music, something intentional and socially acceptable.

Juana's rape, combined with her loss of virginity, sets her on a new course in life in a number of ways. The narrator conveys: "De la brutal escena sólo conservaba un recuerdo de dolor y repugnancia y un profundo disgusto de sí misma y de todos los seres humanos" (127). Although she enters the encounter with indifference, she leaves it feeling a "profundo disgusto." Her sexual initiation can be seen as an intensification of her experience with Lucio in the *bañado* when he tried to aggressively kiss her. Lucio's action, seen in light of this more recent encounter, can be seen as a diminutive of the same action. Because of this, to some extent, Lucio and Lorenzo have similar intentions with Juana.

In terms of her relationship with the natural world, Juana's rape does not eliminate her morbid depression. The natural world still causes in her an uneasy feeling and a desire to be dead. After her rape, Juana starts thinking more seriously about Lucio.



Although she believes that he will not accept her, it can be observed that she has a greater desire to settle down and live an ordinary life. Her loss of virginity has passed her through a form of death and rebirth that has changed her outlook toward nature.

The implied author's desire to end the novel with a rape comes through clearly in that, in the first edition of the novel, the story ended with Lorenzo's initial rape of Juana. In the second edition, Juana's entire world is destroyed before she is raped multiple times and left to die tied to a tree. The meaning of the implied author's desire for violation and destruction is perhaps his manner of communicating the process of modernization at this moment in rural Uruguayan history.

Juana's adjusted sense of values following the rape can be seen in terms of the natural world in that she perceives the voices of men and animals coming from the fields all to be the voices of Lucio: "Y todas las voces le parecían a Juana la voz de Lucio, todos los gritos sus gritos" (128). The rural environment, full of men and animals, is taken over for Juana by obsessive memories of Lucio. While Juana's gaze is directed toward nature, her friend Casiana's gaze is fixed only on domestic things. She states: "Yo soy como los perros: no me importa que me griten y me den lazo, con tal que más luego, me mimen un poco..." (130). Her imagination is limited to domestic elements and does not expand to include the natural environment. Juana, on the other hand, lives on a higher plane because of her relationship with nature.

The occasion for Juana to deal with her obsessive thoughts about Lucio finally arrives. Her perception that she and he are on the extreme ends of a continuum comes to the surface again as the couple reunites: "En los ombúes, violenta oposición: luz

blanquísima de un lado, espesa sombra del otro” (132). The bipolarity in Juana’s mind is so marked that the contrast between the two extremes is called “violent” by the narrator. The polar opposites that Juana imagines exist between Lucio and herself are described in terms of light and shadow. Juana’s obsession with death certainly contributes to her perception that she is a representative of shadow while Lucio represents light. Juana’s gaze toward Lucio is intertwined with the natural world: “...a la luz clara y blanca de la luna que hacía más pálido de lo que lo estaba, aquel rostro varonil, marchito y atormentado, ella pudo ver su inmenso sufrimiento. El mozo de ideas oscuras y de palabra torpe, halló elocuencia en su infinita desesperación...” (133). Lucio’s face, illuminated by a natural source of light (the same light with which Juana associates Lucio’s spirit), shows suffering and desperation because Juana denies him the privilege of being with her. Lucio, on a spiritual level, wants to combine his gaze toward people with his gaze toward nature, which can only most easily be achieved through a relationship with Juana.

Juana also suffers, for Lucio and for herself. The light of the moon continues to illuminate the scene:

Junto al enorme tronco de un ombú secular, bañada por la luz blanca de la luna, Juana, pequeña, endeble, delicada, la dorada cabeza caída sobre el pecho, los brazos extendidos a lo largo del cuerpo, en una actitud de suprema dolor, parecía una madona de Botticelli, una figura diáfana, transparente, la vaporosa vestimenta de un alma bajada a la tierra por breves instantes. (134)

The moonlight, associated with Lucio’s spiritual lightness, dominates the scene and illuminates Juana, as well. The narrator compares her to a madonna of Botticelli, which extends her significance to Lucio from representing not only the natural world, but also

now the world of art. In this scene Juana emerges from her role as representative of the natural world and also takes on the significance of a representative of the world of artistic creation. Juana becomes the novel itself in symbolic terms, lending credence to the idea that the novel's title derives from Juana.

While Juana takes on significance in terms of the world of art, the narrator extols the figure of the gaucho as belonging to the natural world. He comments:

La tierra oriental es grande y el oriental todavía cabe en ella. Sobrio, duro para el trabajo, el gaucho es el hijo legítimo del charrúa, indómito, invencible, amando la libertad sobre todo: una raza que es necesario destruir, porque no se puede domar. El gaucho es como un segundón castellano del siglo XVII, que pasaba su vida con las alforjas tan vacías de vituallas como repletas de orgullo. (142-43)

The issue of how modernization threatens the gaucho lifestyle becomes apparent in this passage as freedom becomes harder and harder for the gaucho to maintain. The gaucho, as the ultimate representative of the natural environment, diminishes as the rural world becomes more and more regulated. *Gaucha*, in this sense, is a story of the lives of numerous gauchos (Juana, Lucio, Zoilo, Lorenzo, others) and their last breaths of freedom before rural regulations completely set in.

Juana, as a “gaucha,” expresses her freedom by using terms of domestication upon the wilderness that surrounds her. She affirms: “...el bañado, que es mi jardín...” (144). By calling the *bañado* her “garden” she makes a wild and foreign territory familiar and recognizable. It is possible, however, that this domestication is a signal of the regulation that is reaching the rural world from its source in Montevideo. That the *bañado* can be seen as something regulated and controlled like a garden shows that the

natural world is undergoing changes as it becomes more and more modernized and regulated.

From the beginning of the novel to the end, Juana's melancholy has been a central, driving force of the plot as well as the narrator's psychological meanderings. Her encounter with el rubio Lorenzo does not relieve her of this state of mind. She exclaims to Lucio: "¡Debe ser lindo el morir!....Lucio, ¿a vos te gustaría morir?...¿pero morir...de verdad, para siempre?" (145) The unchanging nature of her affliction can be seen in symbolic terms as the impending doom that is coming for the gauchos of the "tierra oriental" of Uruguay. Her malady is so great that it keeps her from living a normal life. The issue of the slow disappearance of the gaucho is important enough to the implied author that he ingrains it into the psychology of his main character. The narrator conveys Juana's hopelessness at living a normal life when he comments: "No amaba a Lucio, no; no podía amarlo. No podía sentir el amor, no lo sentiría nunca. Su miseria se le mostraba entera y clara; ella no era un ser normal, igual a los otros; no comprendía la existencia, no tenía un sitio en el banquete de la vida" (145-46). Her inability to love Lucio (or anyone for that matter) shows that the imminent disappearance of the gaucho is a catastrophe in the sense that it changes the lives of the many gaucho inhabitants of the Uruguayan countryside. Juana, as main symbolic representative of this class of people, must undergo a morally and psychologically difficult life to convey the message that the gaucho is disappearing.

Juana is a symbolic representative of Lucio, as well, keeping in mind that he, too, is a gaucho. The narrator describes, nearing the end of the narration, their first night

together: “Lucio se había dormido profundamente, y, a su lado, Juana velaba, con los ojos muy abiertos, las pupilas dilatadas, el alma ausente. Hacía ya mucho tiempo que estaba así, mucho tiempo, varias horas quizá...” (147). Lucio sleeps soundly, an indication that he is unaware of the impending doom of his way of life. Juana, although she is dedicated to Lucio, cannot feel love for him because of her position as symbolic spokesperson for her dying class. For the same reason, she is unable to sleep on the first night together with her companion.

At this point the destructive forces that bring about the violent close of the novel are set into action. The men set fire to el Puesto del Fondo, kill Lucio and don Zoilo, and pursue Juana through the forest for several days. As Lorenzo expresses during the hunt for Juana: “La paloma ha volao; pero va herida en el ala y la vamo a encontrar muy cerca” (148). Lorenzo’s depiction of Juana as a pigeon indicates further her role in the novel as a representative of the coming end of the gaucho class (she can even be seen as a messenger pigeon). Lorenzo’s role, together with his gang, is to express the freedom of the gaucho culture, which lives outside of the law that is slowly being imposed upon it from outside.

The tension evoked in the novel at this point is heightened because of the pursuit taking place between el rubio Lorenzo and Juana. The narrator describes how Juana’s entire body is wounded and bleeding:

Los bordes dentados y silicosos cortaban sus manos, y en ocasiones herían su rostro; las raíces, los troncos secos y los picachos lastimaban sus pies desnudos; pero ella, presa de un horrible miedo físico, corría siempre, corría hacia adelante, tratando de escapar a la muralla de fuego que parecía perseguirla. Sus pies y sus piernas sangraban, sus manos y sus brazos sangraban, sangraba su rostro, y hasta

los senos que iban descubiertos, en la semi desnudez que emprendiera la huida, sangraban también. (150)

The blood coming to the surface of her skin signifies that her life is slowly trickling out of her as her pursuers draw closer. Juana, as representative of the natural world, is slowly dying, indicating symbolically the triumph of the civilized world. Again, the foreknowledge of this occurrence is the central cause of the mysterious melancholy that permeates Juana's character for the entire novel.

Juana is not only weak because of the cuts in her skin. Her mind is also becoming unstable: "La extrema debilidad física producíale en los oídos un continuado zumbido, que a cada instante la obligaba a sacudir la cabeza o a espantar con la mano imaginarios insectos" (152). The hallucinations that Juana experiences signal that she is slowly losing touch with reality. Physical weakness combines with mental weakness to create in Juana a desperation from which she will eventually and fruitlessly call on Lorenzo to save her. However, Lorenzo and his gang, as the victors, will not spare Juana by any means. The narrator relates: "...el rubio Lorenzo y sus compañeros han triunfado. Ellos quedan, los fuertes, los representantes de la raza indomable" (152). The "raza indomable" is, of course, the gaucho class; and Lorenzo and his bandits ironically occupy the position of victors. Although they are strong at this moment, they will soon be weakened by further regulations and enforcement from the rural establishment and the urban modernization.

Juana's flight slows and she begins to hallucinate in earnest. The hallucinations are an intensification of the melancholy that has pursued her throughout the entire novel. Since the melancholy represents a foreknowledge of the slipping of the gaucho culture from its position of prominence in rural Uruguayan society, we can say that the added

hallucinations signify an intensified consciousness that the end is near. Juana

hallucinates:

La espesísima alfombra de hierbas apagaba el ruido de sus pasos, y, no obstante la multitud de voces que se confundían en el aire quieto, Juana experimentaba la extraña sensación de un silencio absoluto. Por instantes creía ver formas colosales avanzando hacia ella, enormes árboles que se apartaban de la muralla y echaban a andar lentamente y sin ruido; por momentos imaginaba fantasmas vestidos de blanco, pasando rapidísimos delante de ella y obligándola a cerrar los ojos; más tarde eran luces fugaces que se apagaban antes de que hubiese podido confirmar su existencia; luego era una voz humana, un quejido hondo que brotaba de los peñascos verdinegros. (153)

The contrast between the quietness of the forest and the noise taking place inside Juana's head indicates that the nature of the conflict is psychological. Although Lorenzo and his gang represent the final and ultimate threat of destruction, the psychological malaise that has accompanied Juana throughout the entire novel is the essence of the novel's conflict: the decline of gaucho culture through modernization.

The pursuers finally encounter Juana, after days of tracking, in the forest. The narrator conveys the situation from Juana's point of view: "Juana reconoció sin dificultad al rubio Lorenzo y sus bandidos, pero no tuvo miedo; al contrario, sintió que la alegría de vivir iluminaba su espíritu. En su situación y en el estado de alma en que se hallaba, todo ser humano era una esperanza de salvación" (154). Juana's lack of fear indicates both the perverse melancholy under which she is operating and the indifference that she expressed as Lorenzo raped her for the first time. "La alegría de vivir" illuminates her spirit, a sign that, now that she is about to die, she can finally enjoy life to its fullest. The fact that any human contact at all is a blessing for Juana shows once more how, when her gaze is

directed toward nature, she feels melancholy, but when it is directed toward people, she feels hope and normality.

She calls out to Lorenzo: “¡Sálveme Lorenzo!” (155). Her desire for salvation, that they spare her life, occurs only as an absurd gesture. The statement indicates that the danger is not in Lorenzo and his bandits, but in the natural world that is psychologically closing in around her. Her internal conflict becomes more prominent than the imminent danger of being raped and killed. She is not asking Lorenzo to save her from himself, she wants relief from her tormented psyche. Lorenzo answers her by stating: “Hace dos días que te andamos buscando, yo y mis muchachos; el que más se ha empeñado es éste,—y señaló a un negro bajo, grueso, de cara ancha, abultada, grotesca y temible, especie de fauno etiópico;—él te ha rastreado más que ninguno, y por la ley le corresponde el primer tajo” (155). Lorenzo conveys no sign of sympathy for Juana’s suffering; he is ready to cruelly finish her. Lorenzo’s gaze toward nature determines the order of how Juana’s rape will take place in that the most zealous tracker in his group gets to rape her first.

The natural world plays the role of observer as the men have their way with defenseless Juana: “Arriba, en lo alto, bien en medio del cielo, en el fondo de la bóveda grísea, la luna plena brillaba blanca y pura, iluminando el potrill, los altos árboles seculares y el misterioso grupo de peñas verdinegras” (156). The moon’s location “bien en medio del cielo” situates nature, as it has been situated through the entire novel, at the center of the action. The moon: “blanca y pura,” illuminates the human world below and is the only indication of the natural world’s virgin past.



Juana becomes the central figure of the last few passages of the novel. Juana's cuts and disheveled hair, however, have disappeared from the narrator's descriptions: "Amarrada al árbol, completamente desnuda, las graciosas curvas de su cuerpo, la blancura de su piel, el oro de sus cabellos parecían significar un ideal delicado, una poesía dulce y sensitiva sucumbiendo al abrazo de medio agreste y duro" (156). Juana, although no longer a virgin, joins the moon as symbol of purity and youth. She is, however, tied to a tree and naked, an indication that her purity and youth are fleeting. The moon may continue to illuminate the Uruguayan countryside for ages to come, but the novel closes with an image of the dying Juana, its representative.

Juana, as focal point of the closing passage, dies a pleasurable death: "Un bienestar nunca conocido comenzó a invadirla; el corazón iba latiendo lentamente, los labios se entreabrieron para dar paso a un último suspiro, y la muerte llegó al fin, portadora de la paz eterna, besando con respeto aquella pobre alma atormentada, que se había paseado extraña y sin objeto por la vida" (156). The "bienestar nunca conocido" that invades her is the knowledge that she is going to die and leave behind a life of struggle in which she perhaps never felt welcome or comfortable. Her death, as representation of the dying gaucho culture, comes gradually and without mention of the violence or pain that she must have suffered. Despite the rapes she endures, she continues to feel pleasure that she is finally going to find eternal peace. The narrator describes the coming of death as a respectful kiss, which evokes the kiss that Lucio gives her upon leaving el Puesto del Fondo. This implies that Juana, in her final moments, is thinking of Lucio. Although Juana's life was tormented and difficult, she dies as a representative of

gaucho culture. Her death creates in her a symbol of this culture that is passing away, even if it comes at the hands of a fellow gaucho.

Javier de Viana, through a careful, scientific presentation, establishes in Gaucha a different gaze or attitude toward nature in each of his four main characters. All four characters integrate the natural world into their lives, but each does so in different ways. Don Zoilo lives in harmony with nature and feels only indifference toward other humans. El rubio Lorenzo sees nature as an entity which must be dominated for his own personal triumph. Lucio looks mostly to humans for his identity, but he is only happy when he is looking at nature. Juana's gaze, perhaps the most complex, derives from the way that her melancholy combines with a desire to die and return to nature. Through an adept pairing of different characters at different moments in the novel, the implied author achieves an illumination of each character in comparison with the others. Through the many descriptions of the natural world that occur in Gaucha, we see that the natural world is vital to the existence not only of the independent gaucho, but to the aspiring landowner. While ultimately the gaucho diminishes because of the advances of the landowning class, Gaucha itself is the story of how the gaucho defeats himself in the wild countryside of Uruguay. The landowner wrestles from the gaucho his power over the countryside in a maneuver that will eventually lead to the deterioration of the natural environment as we experience it today in the form of carbon pollution, climate change, crude oil contamination, and deforestation. The disappearance of the gaucho and the rise of the rural landowner in Uruguay is just another segment in the story of how and why we need to preserve the natural environment for ourselves and for future generations.

## Chapter V: Nature and Psychology in La raza de Caín, by Carlos Reyles

La raza de Caín (1900) is not a novel that deals directly with the natural world. Nevertheless, it expounds upon environmental topics through the psychology of its characters, penetrating and exposing their thoughts. The thoughts of Cacio, Guzmán, Menchaca, Sara, Laura, and don Pedro are explored in depth throughout the course of the work. One of the defining features of each character is the distinction between whether he or she is from the *pueblo* (which ironically has many links with modern cities like Montevideo and Paris) or the Uruguayan countryside (which has close associations with the natural world). Characters from the *pueblo* (Sara, Laura, don Pedro, and his son, Arturo) are hard-working and interested in improving the lives of others. Those from the country (Cacio, Guzmán, and Menchaca), however, are perverse, pretentious, and tend toward social destruction. Additionally, the implied author suggests that Uruguayan life during this period is powered by the capital that characters from the *pueblo* possess. These characters then philanthropically give to others, even if those who receive the money are ungrateful or ignorant. The differing psychologies regarding money of those from the *pueblo* and those from the countryside is one of the central aspects of the novel's ideological projection.

La raza de Caín begins in a generally poor and sad *pueblo* in Uruguay at the turn of the twentieth century. The social, moral, and economic poverty of the town is personified in the difference between the main character, Jacinto B. Cacio, who is from the countryside, and the central family of the novel, the Crookers, who are rich and represent social and economic progress. Cacio has a great imagination and, consequently,

can be considered a projection of the author's vision of himself as a writer. Adding to this projection is the puerile and feminine slant of this character, a disposition that lends itself to a form of literary creativity that examines fellow characters' psychologies. In addition to characters' psychologies, the natural environment comes into play here as a form of pastoral inspiration for the author and, on a number of occasions, the natural environment reflects the psychology of the characters. However, don Pedro's interest in the psychologies of his fellow inhabitants of the *pueblo* is also a driving force behind the narrative.

La raza de Caín deals with the contrasting psychologies of Cacio and Arturo, the hard-working, unsentimental son of the Crooker household. Julio Guzmán, from the country, is considered by the narrator to have the same spiritual origins as his compatriot. They identify with each other because of their similar origins, but Guzmán has a bigger heart than that of Cacio. What Cacio lacks in heart, he makes up for in intelligence. Although it wanders in Manichean dualisms, La raza de Caín is a forward-thinking novel in the way that it experiments with the psychology of its various characters. Don Pedro and Arturo are two characters who represent positivistic progress for Uruguay. Reyles, however, does not treat them as the sole protagonists: they are part of a *ménage* of characters whose psychological portraits contribute to the novel as a whole.

The novel actually centers around the philanthropy of don Pedro. His financial support of Cacio, Guzmán, and Menchaca is the force that ties together the work. Cacio returns from Paris and becomes romantically interested in Laura Crooker, don Pedro's niece. Arturo, however, is also interested in the young lady. Laura shows interest in both

suitors but ultimately accepts Arturo's marriage proposal. On the night before the wedding, Cacio sneaks into Laura's bedroom and poisons the milk she is to drink at bedtime. She dies and Cacio surrenders. Guzmán and his wife Amelia fight throughout the course of the novel. Guzmán's lover, Sara la *Taciturna*, returns from Paris and becomes a refuge for him. They decide to commit suicide together, but after Sara kills herself Guzmán cannot bring himself to take his own life. The discourse of the natural world is seen in the novel most clearly in the relationships and social attitudes of characters from the country compared to those of characters from the *pueblo*.

The implied author's intention to represent interior and exterior worlds in the novel is evident throughout the narration. Certain theorists, writing about the natural environment in general, describe such landscape as being both interior and exterior.<sup>80</sup> Cacio and Guzmán, then, can be seen as landscape artists. The Crookers (don Pedro and Arturo), on the other hand, contrast this interest in landscape with an affinity for European manners, an affinity that seeps into the lives of Cacio, Guzmán and Menchaca, as well.

Whether certain characters are from the *pueblo* in which the novel takes place or not is a factor that defines them. David Mazel signals "[t]he way the very idea of environment divides the world into an inside and an outside" (Mazel 140). The characters from the countryside in this novel, then, are automatically excluded from certain social functions, as in the beginning of the novel, when Cacio returns from Paris. He is received in the Crooker household in this way: "le hicieron un recibimiento cordial, pero como á persona de condición inferior" (Reyles 9). Don Pedro, despite his generous philanthropic

efforts, is unable to completely integrate Cacio (among others) into the social hierarchy of the *pueblo* because of the way that place functions in creating “inside” and “outside” realities. Ralph Waldo Emerson takes this division of interior and exterior one step further when he speaks of, according to Scott Slovic, a “‘correspondence’ between the inner self and the outer world, between mind and nature” (Slovic 354). Such divisions can be constructed not only socially, but also on the level of the individual. As we will see, such divisions function in this novel, as well.

Mazel questions such dividing of society and the natural environment. He writes:

Our reading of environmental literature should help us realize that the concerns are not exclusively of the order of ‘Shall these trees be cut?’ or ‘Shall this river be dammed?’—important as such questions are—but also of the order of ‘What has counted as the environment, and what *may* count? Who marks off the conceptual boundaries, and under what authority, and for what reasons? Have those boundaries and that authority been contested, and if so, by whom? With what success, and by virtue of what strategies of resistance?’ (Mazel 143)

La raza de Caín, as a piece of environmental literature, helps us define conceptually what counts as environment. It may be that this novel creates two distinct environments: *pueblo* and countryside. The thrust of the novel would then be the intermingling of these separate spheres of origin. The element in the novel that seems to “mark off the conceptual boundaries” is don Pedro’s philanthropy. Those beings who receive aid from him, as we have seen, are relegated to a lower class than those who are financially independent. Cacio is the principal character who attempts to contest the boundaries that this dialectic sets up, above all in his murder of Laura, who is rich and from the *pueblo*. The murder transcends boundaries of rich and poor, as well as country and city, and

functions to manifest the conflict between these groups that develops through the course of the novel.

Morosoli, talking about people from the rural department of Minas, establishes their inextricable bond with the land:

El minuano evoca el pago, es decir, su tierra, su naturaleza, no su vida o hechos de su vida, porque su tierra anula el hecho en el recuerdo y queda subjetiva y objetiva en la memoria del hombre...Es que el minuano está lleno de su tierra y por contenerla salva su condición de provinciano u hombre del campo, es decir, individuo receptivo de aquellas fuerzas que vienen de la tierra. (48)

For the *minuano*, his “environment” is limited to the land that he works. This paradigm becomes complicated when someone like Cacio comes to the *pueblo*, bringing this paradigm with him. His dependence on the land generates a way of life that then manifests itself in his psychology. The impact of such a psychological formation is profound: “Es un individualista que ya no podrá fundirse con la ciudad pues está sitiado por su propia soledad. El individualismo es un fenómeno que puede explicarse explicando el paisaje. La tierra cuánto más pura—cuanto menos puso el hombre en ella para civilizarla—es más adusta, hasta el punto de hacerse imposible el diálogo con ella” (Morosoli 55). As Morosoli describes, another attribute of a rural person’s psychology is his or her solitude. This corresponds with the natural world in the sense that the subject internalizes the exterior landscape (with its low human population density), which then helps to form his solitary character. Morosoli even goes to the extreme of characterizing the rural environment as incapable of maintaining dialogue with the person who works with it.

Lyon, in his analysis of environmentally-based essays, classifies them under three categories: "...the literature of nature has three main dimensions to it: natural history information, personal responses to nature, and philosophical interpretation of nature" (276). Although he writes about environmental essays, it serves us to also describe La raza de Caín using this system of categorizations. If La raza de Caín were an environmental essay, it would fall under the category of "philosophical interpretation of nature" because it is a philosophical study of how the natural world shapes characters' psychologies.

But the idea that the natural world shapes humans has its corollary: humans shape nature. According to British scholar Raymond Williams, this takes place in two ways:

Two principles of Nature can then be seen simultaneously. There is nature as a principle of order, of which the ordering mind is part, and which human activity, by regulating principles, may then rearrange and control. But there is also nature as a principle of creation, of which the creative mind is part, and from which we may learn the truths of our own sympathetic nature. (127)

Nature as a principle of order, where humans arrange nature according to their preferences and needs, can be associated with the psychology of the *pueblo* in the novel. Nature as a principle of creation, however, associates itself with the creative characters of the novel, Cacio and Guzmán, both of whom are from the countryside. Thus, the *pueblo*, as a manifestation of humans' control over nature, develops the psychologies of its inhabitants to desire control and stability while the countryside develops the psychologies of its inhabitants to desire creation and invention.

The formation of characters from the countryside, contrary to that of characters from the *pueblo*, depends upon natural experience. As Lyon relates: "...experience in



nature—the feel of being outdoors, the pleasure of looking closely, and the sense of revelation in small things closely attended to—takes an equal or almost equal place with the facts themselves” (277). Lyon’s statement leads one to speculate that perhaps Cacio and Guzmán receive their creative natures in part from experience in the natural world. The relationship between creativity and nature has been seen in similar terms by Slovic: “...in order to achieve heightened attentiveness to our place in the natural world—attentiveness to our very existence—we must understand something about the workings of the mind” (351). While the natural world functions as the external stimulus that engenders psychological development, the mind is the corresponding internal stimulus. This theory, of course, supports the conjecture that while the natural world is clearly one form of landscape (the external form), the mind is another, internal, form of landscape. La raza de Caín, by capturing both of these types of environment or landscape, posits itself as an environmental novel.

The implied author does not, however, know the Uruguayan countryside to the extent that it can be fully known. Although Reyles was familiar with the countryside from a landowner’s point of view, the implied author of this novel clearly does not appreciate the positive values that people from the countryside can possess. But the implied author’s central focus is people from the countryside who then transfer to the city or *pueblo*. In this sense, the implied author has to “travel less” to arrive at the destination that he wishes to capture in his narration. Lyon, again, writing about environmental essays, elaborates upon this possibility: “The writer of rambles usually does not travel far, and seldom to wilderness; he or she is primarily interested in a loving study of the

near, and often the pastoral” (Lyon 277,79). In this way the implied author may not be completely informed about rural life, since he only observes those who have consciously decided to move from a rural environment to a more urban situation.

It is possible that the implied author is trying to capture this particular aspect of Uruguayan society from this time. As Leo Marx assesses: “In the age of discovery, however, a note of topographical realism entered pastoral. Writers were increasingly tempted to set the action in a terrain that resembled, if not a real place, then the wish-colored image of a real place” (47). The implied author’s treatment of his novelistic world, although it is of the *pueblo*, holds on to an element of pastoral in that we are hardly ever given topographical reference points. The narrator mentions the names of a couple of streets, but beyond that, it is really the inner landscapes of the characters that receive topographical elaboration and expansion. However, Marx’s statement applies to La raza de Caín in that this novel is a “wish-colored image of a real place.” In this sense, together with the manner in which the implied author treats the particular psychologies of the characters, the novel can be considered Realistic, part of Realism.

In this novel there are also artistic manifestations. Cacio and Guzmán both consider themselves artists, and, since they are from the countryside, we can imagine, based on above passages, that the land and landscapes figure prominently in their artistic vocabulary. As Marx writes:

In the record of Western culture there is nothing to compare with the vogue for landscape that arose in this period. Today it is difficult to realize that Europeans have not always looked upon the landscape as an object of aesthetic interest and delight. But the fact is that landscape painting emerged as a distinct genre only during the Renaissance, and it did not achieve real popularity until the eighteenth

century, when aesthetic interest in natural scenery reached something of a climax. (88-89)

Although he is referring to the rise of landscape painting in the late eighteenth century in the United States, his comment applies to the period of La raza de Caín in that this fervor for landscape painting remained in style and was also highly popular in Europe. Uruguay, like the United States, looked to Europe for some of its cultural inspiration. For this reason, Marx's statement applies to these two particular characters. However, as mentioned, their ties with the land are the most important factor in the definition and development of their artistic palettes. Slovic quotes Berger as saying that nature is a "springboard for introspection" (351). In this sense, Cacio and Guzmán's artistic inclinations are bolstered further by the way that nature draws them into themselves.

Their journey from the country to the *pueblo* highlights how it was baser motives that incited them to move. The two artists, together with Menchaca, can actually be seen as resembling Christopher Columbus in his quest to know and selfishly overpower the inhabitants of the New World:

Columbus's factual report tends to represent the landscape and its inhabitants primarily as potential bearers of gold or as servants. Such a perception of the New World as a set of objects to serve the European newcomers has persisted for half a millennium, and has fitted comfortably with an exploitative relationship between humans and nature. (McDowell 386)

The attitude of Columbus' report parallels the attitudes of Cacio, Guzmán and Menchaca. The difference between the two parties, however, is that Columbus is successful in his efforts to dominate the native populations while the newcomers in La raza de Caín fail to establish themselves within the *pueblo*. The egotism of the three characters from the countryside can be seen as the implied author's condemnation of country-to-city

immigration. Morosoli echoes the opinion of the implied author when he writes: “Así, en este estado viene a la ciudad que se llena de hombres flojos, que sólo desean subsistir” (Morosoli 18). Morosoli, too, then, degrades the rural inhabitant who transfers to the city to find fortune.

Cacio and Guzmán, however, hold on to their childhood impressions of the countryside through their art. Misemer sees this process take place in terms of the budding railroad industry of the River Plate area of that time: “Whereas the train is a symbol of a new temporal and spatial organization that advanced industry and national development, it is also emblematic of the need to hold onto a receding past that slips away in much the same manner as the landscape that disappears through the compartment window or lifetimes passing into the days of yore” (137). The “organization” and “development” that the arrival of the train represents for Uruguay and Argentina can also be seen in terms of the novel as the wealthy and philanthropic don Pedro Crooker and his son, Arturo. However, the “holding on to the past” that Misemer describes can be seen as Cacio and Guzmán’s efforts to make art that represents the landscapes they hold on to in their psyches.

Ángel Rama adds to the discussion the idea of artistic production and, specifically, the Romantic idea of “genius.” He observes:

[E]s fácil reconocer que en ambas zonas (cultura y folklórica) es posible la eventualidad del creador personal dentro de los más variados niveles de mediocridad o excelencia, aunque es menos perceptible la construcción que sobre su tarea ejerce el régimen de transmisión escrita (periódico, revista, libro) que muchos críticos tienden a subestimar sin reconocer su alto poder mientras en cambio lo detectan fácilmente en el régimen de transmisión oral. (20)

For Rama “genius” doesn’t necessarily mean a superior artistic ability. For him, it refers more to the idea of a “personal” creator, one who is in touch with his own psychology. His comment that genius is more easily recognized in folkloric traditions that are transmitted orally than in more “cultured” manifestations, usually written, demonstrates how *pueblo* and country have different standards for artistic production. It is possible that Cacio and Guzmán would be recognized as “geniuses” (according to Rama’s classification standards) much more easily in the country than when they move to the *pueblo*. Menchaca, on the other hand, while not an artist, represents the desire to be a “genius” in the realm of business, a desire that results, for him, in failure.

However, with the subjectification of the artist (in the sense that the genius’ psychological life becomes the subject of his art) leads to an objectification of the natural world. Mazel observes about the landscape that “however much it may be exalted [it] is also passive and objectified, like any other female in patriarchal discourse...” (141). Perhaps for this reason a link can be drawn between genius and moral decrepitude. Cacio and Guzmán’s desires to exalt their own psychological states and perceptions lead to a moral decrepitude that is clearly contrasted by the hard-working, clear-headed ethics of don Pedro and Arturo. The objectification of nature as feminine can be associated with the countryside in this instance because Cacio and Guzmán’s artistic inclinations objectify the natural world while subjectifying their psychological states. The natural world for the Crookers, on the other hand, is a subjective entity in that it provides for the well-being of those who depend upon it. Slovic cites Thoreau as recognizing another way in which the natural world can act as subject. Thoreau states: “I love Nature partly

because she is not man, but a retreat from him” (354). Nature is, in Thoreau’s case, also feminine, but it is not an object that serves the glorification of ego. To seek nature as a retreat from humans is, indeed, the opposite of the journey from the country to the *pueblo* to seek fortune and fame.

To contrast the idea of nature as a refuge from humanity, McDowell cites Bakhtin’s discourse of the “idyll”:

The relationship of time and space in the idyll he [Bakhtin] describes as ‘an organic fastening-down, a grafting of life and its events to a place, to a familiar territory with all its nooks and crannies, its familiar mountains, valleys, fields, rivers and forests, and one’s own home. Idyllic life and its events are inseparable from this concrete, spatial corner of the world.’ (379)

Instead of functioning as a retreat from human activity, Bakhtin sees nature as inextricably interwoven with everyday life. This vision of the natural world objectifies it even less than Thoreau’s vision of it as a retreat. If nature is irrevocably bound with everyday life, there is no way to “escape” to any sort of pastoral setting that would exist separately from everyday life. And if nature is, as Bakhtin proposes, inseparable from human activity, then its unpredictability is something that would figure greatly in everyday life. Natural disasters, for example, do not occur in a bubble, separate from human activity. They often devastate human endeavor:

Dillard and Abbey tend to place special emphasis on the startling, sometimes even desperate, *unpredictability* of the natural world. They capitalize in their essays on the harsh and chilling features of the landscapes they love, recounting with particular avidness experiences in which perception has not been probable and definite. The emotional result is disgust, horror, annoyance, surprise, and almost always (at least in retrospect) satisfaction with the intensity of the experience. (Slovic 356)

Consequently, neither characters from the city nor from the country can escape the devastating effects that the natural world wreaks upon Earth's inhabitants.

Williams adds to the discussion by suggesting the difference between "working country" and "landscape." He claims: "A working country is hardly ever a landscape. The very idea of landscape implies separation and observation" (120). Thus, in addition to Bakhtin's view of the "idyll," which corresponds roughly with Williams' "working country," Williams proposes the category of "landscape," which is the pastoral corollary to "working country." It is something that can be isolated and analyzed, often as a work of art. By taking up the topic of "landscape," he furthers our own exposition of "landscape" as both external projection and internal manifestation. An "external" landscape, if it is taken in the pastoral sense of the word, as Williams would have it, stands on its own and can be analyzed for its aesthetic form and content. One can see how an "internal" landscape can be seen perhaps more as a "working country" in that, as a mental manifestation, it is not on display for critical observation; it is merely a basis for expression. McDowell, in fact, proposes that "nature writing" should be called "landscape writing" because it takes into account the idea that landscape is a projection of the mind and not just a direct copy of the external world. Cacio and Guzmán, as artists, rely on separation and observation to achieve the ends of their art. Thus, while a more productive member of society, like don Pedro, might see nature as an integral part of society, an artist like Cacio or Guzmán might see nature as separate, which enables it to be observed and internalized through art.

To expand upon this idea, we can look at what McDowell writes about “ecological analysis of landscape writing” (372). Ecological analysis of landscape writing in general can be defined as an interpretation of nature writing that emphasizes the author’s commitment to the health and well-being of the natural world. It is an interpretation that projects the importance of preserving the natural world for the enjoyment and survival of the human race as well as for the forms of life that make up and are supported by the natural world. However, McDowell clarifies that “[e]very literary attempt to listen to voices in the landscape or to ‘read the book of nature’ is necessarily anthropocentric” (372). Even ecological and environmental awareness and preservation movements cannot avoid the anthropocentrism of their efforts. Preservation of the natural world, indeed, even in its most zealous forms, relies on the self-centeredness of humans who, graciously, want to pass on a healthy biosphere to their descendants.

But there is a difference between the actual natural world that needs preserving and the version of the natural world that a person carries around in his or her head. As McDowell relates:

Another tendency in criticism of landscape and nature writing is to discover eternal themes and recurring characters in the literature. While an understanding of the integration of natural cycles and rhythms in literature is important...I avoid the myth and symbol school of criticism as much as I can because of the leveling and homogenizing effect of such usually ahistorical approaches, (384)

McDowell’s aversion to “myth and symbol” exposes a proclivity for “external,” real landscape. If we see Cacio and Guzmán as Romantic artists who glorify their own internal landscapes and the myth and symbols that come with that, then we can equally



assign the affinity for the external and real natural world to the more realistic, hard-nosed Crooker family.

McDowell continues to delineate a theory that, for us, classifies differences between city and country people. He clarifies that “[a] human is not only a brain; our senses are continually influencing our intellectual processes. A self-reflexive stance in which the narrator admits his or her presence and participation in the landscape produces a very different narrative and suggests a closer understanding of the elements of the landscape” (387). For our purposes, Cacio and Guzmán represent that individual who relies too greatly on his intellectual faculties and not enough on sensory input. The Crookers, on the other hand, would pay attention to sensory input as well. That the narrator never admits his presence in the narration suggests that he has a greater affinity for the Romantic artists Cacio and Guzmán who glorify their mental faculties at the expense of a more sensible approach to describing nature and creating art.

While characters like Cacio and Guzmán grow up in the countryside, where the natural world is present in physical, external form, it is the goal of the implied author to show how their desire to become successful in the *pueblo* is intertwined with a motivation to create art, a motivation that can be perhaps best described as an effort to repress all forms of nostalgia for the countryside. Morosoli describes the following:

...la enorme multitud de hombres que luego de partir de su pago no regresan más a él. Ni rostros, ni sucesos felices, ni recuerdos amables, ni siquiera la evocación de un paisaje como un llamado de la tierra les golpea el espíritu. Parecen haber huído de un pedazo de su vida. Más que caminantes que buscan un lugar de reposo sedante, parecen fugitivos, desplazados por un enemigo. (55)

Morosoli, like the implied author of La raza de Caín, sees immigrants to the city as senseless and even criminal. It is possible that their artistic productions (about which the novel is nearly silent) are manifestations of the desire to repress their formative years in the countryside. Morosoli adds that “[n]o se vuelven [al campo] porque allá está el drama, la causa, que los trajo aquí, y no quieren volver porque desean—además—tener un camino ideal y andar por él en retornos melancólicos para eludir la realidad sin alegría” (16). The trauma with which immigrants to the city seem to arrive indicates their psychological state. Their desire, as Morosoli describes, to have a “camino ideal” in which they can express emotions of melancholy reflects the unhappiness they feel both in the country and the city. This recourse to an interior landscape of the mind acts as a refuge, something to return to as a symbolic Eden. Art, then, for these characters, is more a refuge than a form of self-expression.

While Cacio and Guzmán are not necessarily “nature writers,” they can be compared to nature writers because of their formation in the countryside. Slovic affirms that “[m]ost nature writers...walk a fine line (or, more accurately, *vacillate*) between rhapsody and detachment, between aesthetic celebration and scientific explanation. And the effort to achieve an equilibrium, a suitable balance of proximity to and distance from nature, results in the prized tension of awareness” (353). As artists, Cacio and Guzmán fulfill both extremes of this continuum of vacillation. As they Romantically glorify their emotional states, they embrace rhapsody, but their intellectual detachment from their subject elicits the opposite reaction: one of isolation and disorientation.

Morosoli, as well, observes the scientific detachment that Slovic describes, and claims:

Para el hombre vulgar, ese buen señor que todo lo tiene ordenado en su vida sin gracia, que tiene orden hasta en su aburrimiento, que sufre sin advertir, somos un poco locos. Condición necesaria para salvarse de la tonta índole del hombre demasiado cuerdo, cuya vida es un bostezo con casilleros de tiempo, para ordenar sus horas de trabajo y de diversiones... En Minas, el eufemismo no cuadra. Allí se dice constantemente al ponderar un hombre: es un loco macanudo. (52)

Because of their flight from the countryside, characters like Cacio, Guzmán, and Menchaca perhaps try to order their lives to the point of absurdity, as Morosoli describes. Especially in the case of Menchaca, there is a desire to impress the people of the *pueblo*, and one way that he attempts to achieve this goal is to order his life and to imitate *ad nauseum* the business and social practices of don Pedro. As Morosoli relates, such thought and planning is classified as insanity in rural places like Minas. In the *pueblo* it is acceptable, which highlights a key difference between urban and rural life: in the country there is room for spontaneity, room for nature to play a part in people's lives. In the *pueblo*, while nature still affects characters, they tend to plan their lives without forethought as to how the natural world will play a part in the events of their day.

Additionally, nature is not as centrally present for inhabitants of the *pueblo*. Solari highlights this difference when he states the following: “En cambio el habitante urbano vive rodeado de un ambiente artificial, conoce la Naturaleza—en la mayoría de sus aspectos—a través del cine, de los libros, o en accidentales salidas al campo, lo cual crea—como se verá oportunamente—grandes diferencias psicológicas” (17). The artificiality of the *pueblo*, then, comes to shape the psychology of its inhabitants. The difference between the real natural world and the virtual one that is created through

movies and books creates a difference in psychology that results in different thought and behavior. One of the key differences between these two forms of nature is that the former is experienced with all five senses, while the latter has a more limited effect upon the spectator. The result of all of this is that characters who transplant themselves from the country to the city have a different interpretation of how the natural world functions. But, particular to La raza de Caín, characters who move from country to city are not normal citizens of the country—they possess a perversity that differentiates them from the normal country inhabitant.

But there is more to the formation of different psychologies in the city and country. Because of the infiltration of the city upon the countryside, people of the countryside have begun to be exploited by urban patterns of business. Therefore, characters who transplant themselves from country to city are looking to join the effort that is dominating and exploiting workers of the countryside. Furthermore, they don't have the same political and business formation as people from the city, so their appear naïve. For the person from the country: "...no hay legislación, ni horarios, ni seguros, ni jubilaciones. De él no se han acordado...ni Dios ni el diablo" (Morosoli 25). In this same spirit, although the implied author portrays don Pedro as logical, kind, and philanthropic, it is clear that he must also be influential in the maintenance of the difficult situation and difficult relations with the countryside, whose crops and animals are necessary for the sustenance of the city. In this sense a situation arises much like that described by Eduardo Galeano in Las venas abiertas de América Latina (1971). Galeano describes how Latin America's natural resources (gold, silver, sugar, coffee, cotton, bananas, and many more)

are controlled in large part by corporations from North America and Europe. The domination of the city over the country resembles this paradigm because of the exploitation that Morosoli describes as taking place at the expense of country people. Morosoli expands upon the subject of exploitation when he describes what happens to country people when they come to the city without a philanthropic donor like don Pedro: they live in "...los pueblos llamados de ratas, verdadera lepra de la tierra, gusanera humana donde viven desgraciadas mujeres, rodeadas de chicos llenos de costrones, semidesnudos, muriéndose de diarreas, como corderos con lombrices" (32). The slums created by immigrants looking for a better life in the city are a testament to the inequality between city and country, and this is another factor that affects the different psychologies that develop among inhabitants of the country and of the city.

This situation is emphasized by Morosoli in the following:

Pero ahora el hombre del campo nuestro, el proletario rural, el peón, el monteador, el siete oficios, el carbonero, está de a pie, sin fraternidad, sin tierra para trabajar, sin guitarra y sin ilusiones. Ahora que él come guiso de porotos y el patrón carne asada, ahora que el patrón lee el diario y él no sabe leer, ahora que el honor de uno y otro es diferente, ahora que le falta todo, ni siquiera tiene idea de lo que le falta. (18)

The many different names of the rural worker are a testament to the different trades he or she must learn to survive in the countryside. The statement that the rural worker does not even have a guitar to play reveals further the misery upon which Morosoli elaborates.

This, together with the difference in education of the boss and the worker, creates a psychological situation in which the rural worker knows no other way of life. While don Pedro contributes to further this state of affairs, it must be kept in mind that he supports those who he can through philanthropy.

Despite his good intentions, however, he cannot change the effect that this rift in social class produces in the psychologies of those involved. “El fatalismo es aquí una consecuencia del mapa económico, de la pobreza de la tierra que sólo sustenta aquellas especies de animales y vegetales tan estoicas como el hombre” (Morosoli 45). The fatalism that evolves through this relation between disparate classes is a key characteristic of this psychological makeup. In fact, the fatalism that these class relations breed is one motivating force behind Cacio’s murder of Laura. The murder is not motivated by jealousy and selfishness, but Cacio’s fatalism, developed through his position of dependence upon don Pedro, displaces his conscience and makes the deed psychologically possible to commit.

As McDowell affirms, ecology is “the science of relationships” (372). However, the situation of class disparity between city and country does not permit such relationships to flourish. Instead of a multiplicity of voices contributing democratically to the definition of society, a few voices stand out above the rest and control its course. Thus, the dialectic of city versus country results in a situation that runs against the grain of McDowell’s definition of ecology. A parallel situation, as described by Galeano, exists between Latin America and Europe. Verdesio refers to this situation when he states: “todavía América Latina (en general, y el Río de la Plata en particular) se sigue representando, no sólo desde Europa sino también desde América, a partir de una narrativa creada por la episteme europea” (63-64). Verdesio’s statement refers, in terms of the novel, to the Crookers, who appropriate European techniques, but make them American.<sup>81</sup> “European techniques” denotes the techniques used to proliferate the

Industrial Revolution taking place at this time (more advanced in Western Europe than in Latin America). But the actual land that is being modified by said revolution is what makes the practice American and is what Verdesio refers to when he observes that the European “narrative” is converted into an American practice. Morosoli highlights the results of this conversion of European technique into American practice when he affirms: “Porque la ciudad está en su más honda y humana trascendencia, allá donde los frigoríficos ensucian el cielo” (13). The image of the *frigorífico* that Morosoli chooses to represent the city is diametrically opposed to the proliferation of the natural world. It is an image of how the natural world is being possessed by the interests of humans in an urban environment, which, in itself, is a manifestation of technological domination of the natural world. The psychological implications of this reality are, according to Morosoli and the novel, a naïve desire to exist in the city and thereby gain possession of part of the power that urban life exerts over the rural.

Morosoli then describes one of the ways in which urban society exerts domination over the rural. His exposition of the differences between urban and rural women workers illuminates the differences between the two worlds: “Se dice peón o peona y se excluye todo oficio determinado, pero por rara paradoja, se entiende que en el trabajo del peón están contenidas todas las posibilidades. La peona es la síntesis de todas las labores que una mujer puede desempeñar. Es del campo. Nada más del campo. En la ciudad hay fabriqueras, empleadas de éste o de aquello” (14). The peasant has much less choice available to him or her when compared to the urban laborer. While urban labor is often specialized, workers from the country must learn an entire set, or multiple sets, of skills

in order to perform required tasks. Indeed, the term *siete oficios* reflects well the requirement of the rural laborer to be flexible and to possess multiple sets of skills. About the *siete oficios*, Morosoli comments that it is a “nombre que se da en el campo, y aún en el pueblo del interior, al hombre de brega que a fuerza de tener muchos oficios no tiene ninguno” (25). Morosoli mentions the “pueblo del interior,” which corresponds with the setting of the novel in question. Don Pedro’s philanthropic efforts save several characters from becoming useless in the sense of the *siete oficios* described above. However, this philanthropy does not prevent the characters in question from falling into moral decadence.

Overall, however, the novel is a study of various psychologies and their relationship to the natural world. Slovic concludes that “[n]ature writing is a ‘literature of hope’ in its assumption that the elevation of consciousness may lead to wholesome political change, but this literature is also concerned, and perhaps primarily so, with interior landscapes, with the mind itself” (368). Slovic refers to “nature writing” as a tool for “political change.” In general he is referring to the way that texts about the natural world project a desire to be conscious of the fragility of such environments and to conserve what exists for the benefit of future generations. The “political change” that La raza de Caín projects is an ideology that, because of its placement in the continuum of the history of environmental writing, is less conscious of the need to preserve and conserve the natural world. The novel’s message is that working for the good of others, as don Pedro does, brings the best success to a person. But it cannot be denied that don Pedro is tacitly in favor of class disparities between *pueblo* and countryside. Despite his



philanthropic quest to benefit individuals from the country, he preserves gaps in class equality by working harder than others. However, he is clearly the implied author's model not only for how people should live, but also for how the Uruguayan economy should function.

La raza de Caín expresses a decadentism that can be related to the decadentism of the French symbolists. Much of the critical attention paid to this novel deals with the characters of Cacio and Guzmán. In this vein Menafrá proposes that one characteristic of La raza de Caín is "la inquietud metafísica, la angustia de vivir" (119). These two psychological manifestations are representations of the artistic decadence that Reyles probably observed taking place in France. It is probably not coincidental that at the beginning of the novel Cacio returns from a trip to Paris. Speaking about Cacio and Guzmán, Menafrá relates that "[e]l novelista los presenta como víctimas de un odio provocado por ellos" (122). A vicious cycle, then, of self-hatred becomes one of the key characteristics of the novel and directs the plot as it evolves from chapter to chapter.

The psychological depth of the novel, as has been mentioned, can be seen at its greatest expression in the characters who hail from the countryside. About Cacio, Menafrá claims that "[e]l autor lo estudia con delectación de psicólogo complaciéndose en hacerle profundas incisiones, para que supuren sus humores innobles" (123). In this sense, La raza de Caín can be considered a novel in the Naturalist tradition, and evident especially in the work of Javier de Viana. Menafrá claims that the implied author's close psychological study has the ultimate purpose of warning against developing a psychology like Cacio's. However, Bobadilla writes against the idea that Cacio's decadent

psychology emerged from his childhood and from habits of thought and behavior developed in adolescence. Criticizing the idea of Ferré, Bobadilla states: “El crimen de Cacio no es, como él afirma, producto de ‘sus tempranos desencantos, de su egoísmo robustecido por sabias lecturas y sus creencias escépticas.’ Es la resultancia de su temperamento psico-fisiológico en relación con el medio, y no hay que darle vueltas” (290). Bobadilla’s conclusion is that Cacio’s psychology is a result of both his unique nature and the “medio” in which he grew up, which means that the rural environment had an effect on his psychological development, as well. Bobadilla’s idea that Cacio’s psychological affectation results from the interaction of his innate nature and the unquiet spirit of the countryside at that time rings true when compared with the implied author’s intention to show how relations between *pueblo* and countryside were difficult at this moment in history. Crispo Acosta affirms that “Guzmán es sin duda un débil, un impotente, un enfermo; pero si en parte depende esta condición, de su cultura malsana, es esta cultura lo que la superioridad del protagonista sobre cuantos lo rodean, y no se da contra ella cosa que valga” (70). Crispo Acosta establishes a similar psychological pattern between Jacinto B. Cacio and his compatriot Julio Guzmán. Crispo Acosta attributes Guzmán’s weakness to the culture of the countryside and enforces his weakness by comparing him to don Pedro, who is represented as the strong, resilient character of the novel around which everything revolves. The implied author’s message that characters from the countryside are innately weak propagates the message that the urban world should continue dominating the rural and that the harm that is visited upon the natural world as a result of this policy is necessary for the continuation of the human

race, a proposition that is being questioned more and more as we witness the effects of environmental degradation upon the planet.

Crispo Acosta's criticism of people from the country who move to the city is dire. "Guzmán y Cacio pertenecen a lo que Reyles llama la raza de Caín, su rasgo característico es la perversión, la falta de salud moral. Ambos son terriblemente egoístas, pero no es el egoísmo lo que en ellos se condena, sino la incapacidad viciosa de acción y de contento que proviene de una falsa posición en la vida" (79). The novel takes on Biblical proportions with this declaration. Crispo Acosta seems to reverse the idea presented in *El terruño* that city dwellers are useless, lost in thought, and incapable of acting upon their desires. Here, it is the characters from the country who assume this negative attribute. However, the element that these two works share is that the main character, the character who is presented as the hero and model of how Uruguayan society should function, is a landowner who concerns him- or herself the well-being of others and does what he or she can to benefit them, even if his or her activism does not reach the level of overturning the system of class exploitation in place.

The categorization of Cacio and Guzmán as members of the *raza de Caín* is indicative of their psychologies. Crispo Acosta explains that "[u]na cosa hay común a los dos: la oposición a lo normal, el quebrantamiento a las fatalidades ordinarias" (80). These two characters' resistance to modes of ordinary life is related to their desires to leave their existence in the country and immigrate to the *pueblo*. The novel is not only a study of environmental psychology, but also the expression of an archetypal model that has existed since the beginning of Biblical time. Those who are part of Reyles' *raza de Caín*

can be seen, in the same sense that Cacio and Guzmán are seen, as perverted and as enemies of normality. Although Cacio commits the murder of Laura, the two conspired regarding her death. Bobadilla recognizes the criminality of both characters when he writes: “Me inclino a creer que ha querido estudiar dos casos patológicos: Cacio y Guzmán, criminal nato el primero y criminal loco el segundo” (286). The pathology of these two characters is revealed through the course of the novel. Cacio is the “born” criminal because his passive personality leads him to be dominated by his eventual victim, Laura. His passiveness manifests itself as passively aggressive especially in his use of poison as a weapon, a method that requires no physical violence (read: aggressiveness) on his part. Guzmán is the “crazy” criminal in that his relationship with his wife, Amelia, is a failure, which leads him to attempt a double-suicide with his lover, Sara, la *Taciturna*. The attempt, however, results in failure, as he is passively unable to take his own life after Sara takes hers.

Crispo Acosta claims that the novel is profoundly psychological although it lacks formal unity (83). The novel treats all of the main characters with an aplomb for psychological detail, but the different story lines that exist are not always unified. Llambías de Azevedo’s proposition that the novel is “algo más imaginativa que sus otras novelas” lends the critic the idea that perhaps the implied author sacrifices formal continuity to achieve the very imaginative character portrayals present in the novel (42). Llambías de Azevedo might also be referring to the fact that the characters in La raza de Caín are less archetypal than in other Reyles novels, like El terruño.

Menafra's comment that "[e]s indudable que La raza de Caín posee un intenso sentido modernista, aunque en el fondo constituye una reacción contra ese movimiento espiritual" refers to the novel's decadent characters, but also to its Naturalistic approach (119). The element of *modernismo* in the novel comes from the moral decadence of Cacio and Guzmán. The novel follows the tradition of the French decadent poets of the time, and Cacio and Guzmán are representatives of this decadence (Bollo). Menafra's statement that the novel is also a statement against modernism reveals that the centrality of don Pedro to the novel because don Pedro is not a decadent character. He is, instead, a representative of the implied author himself, both in the way that he enjoys psychological observation and analysis and in the way that he is the center of novelistic activity. His proclivity for psychological observation further leads the novel astray from its modernistic bent in that this psychological observation is a Naturalistic approach, opposed to more decadent forms of art like that of the French symbolists of the time.

Since, according to Bobadilla: "Carlos Reyles posee un temperamento artístico dúctil y nervioso..." his work is a reflection of this temperament (285). Using this line of thought, one could deduce that this temperament caused Reyles to create a work that resembles the attitude of the French decadent poets (through Cacio and Guzmán). Because of the negative moral positioning of these two characters, it is likely that Reyles was critiquing the French decadent movement as lacking purpose. This corresponds with the idea that La raza de Caín is a picture of how Uruguay of the time requires honest, hard-working, philanthropic people to further national prosperity.

Further criticism from Llambías de Azevedo shows that the novel is “un amplio estudio psicológico con directos raíces en los ensayos de Stendhal y Amiel...” (42). With roots in French and Swiss Naturalist psychology, the work paradoxically opposes *modernismo* even while it embraces it. The implied author’s goal to create Realistic psychological situations is evident in the novel’s design. Reyles’ ductile and nervous personality, as illustrated by Bobadilla, probably helped him not only to penetrate the psychological nuances of his characters, but also to create characters that would represent the decadence of European art at that moment in history. Writing of Reyles’ relationship with European art, Bobadilla expresses: “Aplaudo que los escritores hispanoamericanos se modernicen, tratando de seguir con discreción las huellas de los maestros del arte contemporáneo, sin descuidar la lengua nativa y, sobre todo, sin imitarles servilmente” (281). “Modernizar,” according to Bobadilla, probably means taking up European literary trends, but he is quick to include that it should not be done with obsequious imitation. In this way the Uruguayan landscape and people inspired Reyles to create his art and caused Reyles’ work to take on a particularly American dimension.

Rodó applauds Reyles’ skill in creating characters. He calls upon “el raro don de crear seres imaginarios que vivan y perduren, como si á la realidad de los que engendra la naturaleza unieran la inmarcesible juventud y frescura de los dioses, es concedido sólo a los que pueden levantarse, como pájaros sobre corrales, por encima del vulgo novelador” (Rodó José Enrique Rodó 155). Reyles’ characters are faithful representations of his vision of Uruguay at the time. They endure because of their connection with the land of Uruguay and its importance to the people who inhabit it. Bobadilla opines that “la señora

Pardo [Emilia Pardo Bazán] describe con vigor lo externo; pero no ha creado gente viva” (282). If we are to take Bobadilla’s statement at face value, we can perhaps comment that Reyles’ work differs from that of Pardo Bazán in that he has created “gente viva” (i.e. he has mastered in this novel the art of drawing portraits of the interior, psychological lives of his characters) but has not achieved with equal zeal an elaboration of the external world, the physical landscape that is so important to the lives of these characters.

The implied author’s vision of the Uruguayan countryside deeply affects the novel’s characters; not only Cacio and Guzmán, but also don Pedro, Arturo, Laura, Menchaca, Amelia, and Sara. This vision is also expressed in the way that don Pedro and his son Arturo maintain control over the lands that they own. Differences in economic standing come into play as another indicator of origins (country versus *pueblo*). The *pueblo* in this study is associated with the urban world and contrasts with the rural world from which Cacio and Guzmán come.

The narrator establishes don Pedro as the essential character of the novel by introducing him first. He is described as the “prócer más conspicuo de la villa” (7). This ironic treatment sets the stage for the rest of the novel by revealing his distaste for the social and economic situations of, again, characters from the countryside. Particular instances of this distaste surface in the form of Cacio’s passive pursuit of Laura that ends in murder, Guzmán’s alcoholism and his difficult relations with Amelia, Menchaca’s problems with Ana and with establishing himself as a legitimate businessman. The narrator reveals don Pedro to be a “real” character (not just an idealized example of human behavior):

Arreglóse cuidadosamente los pliegues de su levita gris perla, recién planchada, atusóse los bigotes, que minutos antes habían sufrido la acción de las tenacias y el cosmético, y, paladeando como de costumbre cuando estaba un poco nervioso, entró en el zaguán, irguiéndose á fin de parecer más alto. (7)

Crooker's nervousness reflects his humanity and the desire for the reader to identify with him. But, at the same time that the narrator reveals Crooker's insecurity, he bolsters it by describing him as well-dressed and with a desire to impress his audience. The fixing of his moustache expresses his position in the novel as the organizer and arranger of not only other characters' lives, but also the natural world over which he exerts forces as a landowner.

The novel begins in the summer, and the narrator describes how the Crooker family gathers in the patio during the hot hours of the day to converse and to read (8). Cacio, a newspaper journalist living in the *pueblo* due to the goodwill of don Pedro, has just returned from Paris, a trip funded by don Pedro's philanthropy. Cacio, setting the stage for the gruesome end of the novel, greets Laura first and then everybody else (8). He proclaims: "...tengo fresca en la retina las siluetas delicadas de las parisienses; ¡y bien! sin pizca de exageración, les aseguro que al entrar aquí me he convencido de que en este pueblecito hay quienes, ni en elegancia ni en paquetería, tienen nada que envidiarles..." (9-10). His use of the word "retina" expresses an interest in science and reveals his desire to be accepted as an inhabitant of the *pueblo* to which he has immigrated with Crooker's help.

Cacio begins to characterize himself as a somewhat conceited individual when he talks about his arrival to the pueblo of the Crookers: "...aquí hice yo mi estreno en la escena del mundo, y los primeros pasos son siempre difíciles" (11). His arrogance is



apparent in the fact that he appropriates in grandiose fashion the metaphor of the world's stage. It is understandable that he feel exhilaration at having arrived at a place that may benefit him personally, but his lack of humility begins to reveal his perverse personality. The novel, however, also links this perversity with the practice of novel-writing. The narrator describes Cacio's thought process in the Crooker's patio: "Dió los rodeos de costumbre, mientras su briosa imaginación tejía interminable novela..." (13). That his mind is focused on topics other than the people which he is greeting contributes to his morally decrepit personality. The fact that the novel is "interminable" shows that his goal is not to produce something that will benefit others; his goal, instead, is to exercise his mind as an end in itself. However, the counterbalance to his lack of interest in others is his "briosa imaginación," which plays a crucial role in the formation of his character.

The principal foil for Cacio in the novel is Arturo Crooker, son of don Pedro. The narrator describes him: "Como la mayor parte de los jóvenes ricos, tenía Arturo poca ilustración, pero más ciencia mundana que la generalidad de aquéllos..." (12). These two personality characteristics accompany Arturo throughout the novel and work to determine his actions. Arturo's "poca ilustración" is likely a result of his lack of a need to pay too much attention to his formal education (a subject that the novel does not treat specifically), but his "ciencia mundana" comes from an affinity for his father, who also has common sense, and from a desire to maintain and conserve his family's wealth. While Arturo is described as being rich, the *pueblo* in which he and his family live contrasts starkly: "El pueblo...era como casi todos los de campaña: pobre y triste" (14). This difference illustrates Uruguay's political situation at the time: a few rich landowners

(of which Carlos Reyles was a part) controlled the political and economic situation of the entire rural world.

The narrator describes the rural world over which the Crookers hold power:

Caballos, vacas y cabras pastaban perezosamente en los despoblados; sus colores vivos le prestaban un poco de vida y animación al paisaje, el cual en el verano tornábase más triste; las lluvias llevábanse los pastos secos y aparecía la tierra negruzca; los cardos y las espinas amarilleaban, y el verde puro é intenso que en invierno teñía las praderas, era sustituido por inmensas zonas de tintas pajizas. Sierras agrestes destacándose sobre el horizonte como nubes de tormenta, encuadraban el paisaje, en el cual acentuaba la nota triste el ruinoso molino, que en medio de una llanura se erguía como la encarnación de la muerte, como una parca gigantesca. (15)

The colors of the livestock and the various other colors present in the passage (“tierra negruzca,” “amarilleaban,” “verde,” “tintas pajizas”) act perhaps as a sign of protest against this rule of the few over the many. The various manifestations of color express a sadness that is also evident in the laziness of the livestock, which reveals that the countryside is powerless to change the disparities that the economy of the rural world perpetuates. The figure of the “ruinoso molino” stands out from the rest of the plain and acts as an expression of death against which the aforementioned colors form protest.

Arturo, the inheritor of this economic situation, communicates an air of domination over the countryside. “La mandíbula fuerte, los ojos dominadores y el pliegue desdeñoso de los labios indicaban la aristocracia de la naturaleza y la voluntad imperiosa de los que han nacido para saborear el néctar y la ambrosía del triunfo y la dominación” (16). Arturo’s inheritance of his economic situation is reflected in his physiognomy, even though the characteristics that the narrator describes are not necessarily physical traits (the “mandíbula fuerte,” “ojos dominadores,” and “pliegue desdeñoso” are expressions of

an economically fortunate situation). His economic status is reflected not only in his face, but also in his clothing: “En los zapatos de cuero de Rusia, llenos de agujeritos y respuntes, se detenían absortas las miradas de los humildes colegiales...” (16).

Domination is present in his choice of footwear, which demonstrates that he not only dominates the countryside economically, but also his peers through material goods like shoes.

This feature in Arturo’s personality and financial situation contrasts the dominated (nature) with the dominator (Arturo and his family). Because Arturo belongs to a rich, landowning family, a rivalry develops between him and Cacio. Cacio’s country origins aggravate the rivalry through the impression that Arturo, by dominating the countryside, dominates Cacio. Cacio’s dependence on Arturo’s father’s money further aggravates the relationship. “Cada vez que Arturo iba á la escuela con un traje nuevo—lo cual sucedía con frecuencia—comparó Cacio aquellas ropas de corte elegantísimo con las suyas *hechos en casa*, ordinarias y disgraciosas, y sentía grande humillación y abatimiento” (19). Clothing plays an important role in social status and affects the relationship of the two characters. That Cacio’s clothes are “hechos en casa” links him more with the country because inhabitants of the country would not generally have the financial resources to buy clothing. Through this experience Cacio experiences “el *pavor de descubrir la repulsión de los otros*” (21). Cacio’s relationship of enmity with Arturo becomes a springboard for him to imagine that others are also repulsed by him. The resulting fear becomes a guiding force in his life and leads him to the perversion and timidity that defines him.

In La soledad y la creación literaria, Juan José Morosoli discusses how solitude is necessary in the work of an artist. Because of the importance that Morosoli places on the rural Uruguayan environment, it is easy to place Cacio into the role that Morosoli designs for him: that of an artist seeking solitude. As the narrator elaborates on Cacio: “Andaba siempre solo, no partía peras con nadie, y en las horas de recreación, mientras sus condiscípulos se divertían alegremente, Cacio rumiaba en un sitio apartado su butifarra y su despecho” (21). Solitude and literary creation are two elements of Cacio’s reality in the *pueblo* where he lives. Rather than interact with classmates, he expresses himself through art.

However, Cacio is unable to support himself through art. He has worked in Buenos Aires and Europe as a writer, but, above all, he is a businessman. About the multiplicity of his means of employment, Cacio comments: “Naturalmente...la libertad de acción es lo que más necesita, para orientarse, el hombre que tiene algunas aptitudes” (22). Freedom of action is important to him because he relies on multiple aptitudes to support himself (even though don Pedro’s support is also important to him). What emerges from this dialogue is that Cacio, from the country, becomes, even in the *pueblo*, something like Morosoli’s *siete oficios*, who, by virtue of having too many occupations, does not have even one, a fate that Cacio is unable to evade even in his immigration to the Crookers’ *pueblo*.

Arturo’s facial features reveal aspects of his personality. Similarly, Cacio’s face reflects his mental state: “tenía los ojos entornados, y una sonrisa falsa y un falso gesto desfigurábanle el enrojecido rostro” (26). His “ojos entornados” reflect his introversion

and his “sonrisa falsa” conveys a failed attempt to connect with peers. His embarrassment and fear of others’ opinions and social judgements result in an “enrojecido rostro.” His impression of himself is further degraded by his enemy and rival, Arturo, who accuses him: “Tu imaginación novelesca te hace abultar los sucesos” (29). Arturo’s criticism of Cacio, accurate as it may be, alienates him from any success he might have attained during his stay in the *pueblo* and only serves to perpetuate the domination that Arturo and his family exert over country people like Cacio.

Don Pedro’s clothes, like those of Arturo, make a statement that eventually perpetuates the economic and political situation of the *pueblo* and surrounding countryside. The narrator states: “Vestía lo mismo que en sus establecimientos de campo: americana, pantalón de dril y sombrero de paja echado sobre la oreja izquierda” (29). The constancy of don Pedro’s dressing habits mirrors the constancy of the policies he exerts over the lands he owns as well as the constancy of his work ethic, one of the factors that has brought him such political and economic success.

Throughout the novel, the Crookers’ financial success contrasts Cacio’s destitution. His enmity for himself becomes a means by which his moral constitution is further denigrated. Cacio thinks about Arturo: “Dichoso él. Desde la cuna le ha preparado su padre un camino de rosas, mientras que á mí, el gringo que tuvo la mala ocurrencia de engendrarme...” (34). Cacio recognizes the effect that inheritance has on Arturo’s development. The “camino de rosas” that don Pedro has prepared for Arturo is a result of Cacio’s jealous (and not inaccurate) impression of Arturo. Because of Cacio’s constant comparing of himself with Arturo, he sinks into greater depths of perversion and

unsociability. The narrator defines: “El origen plebeyo de Cacio ofendía su alma ardiente y orgullosa y lo llenaba de odio contra los suyos, a quienes, en ciertos momentos de irritación, hacía responsables de los dolores y humillaciones que lo atormentaban frecuentemente” (34). Cacio’s rural origins are the primary source of this social inadequacy and he brings his distaste for his humble origins with him to the *pueblo*. That he sometimes blames his situation on others reveals an aspect of his psychology: that he is unwilling to take complete responsibility for his being and his actions. The implied author then associates this psychological trait with Cacio’s rural origins.

The narrator also comments on the psychologies of other characters from the rural world, like Menchaca: “Menchaca quiso seguirle los pasos, y como no tenía suficiente dinero para tirarlo por la ventana con manos tan pródigas como las de aquél, torturó el magín, hasta que un buen día ocurriósele que, por otros medios, podía hacerse tan útil y...espectable [sic] como el acaudalado estanciero” (41). While Cacio turns inwardly as a result of his shame from being from the country, Menchaca dedicates himself (somewhat unsuccessfully) to the close imitation of don Pedro’s business models. The above passage highlights a great difference between those from the country and those from the *pueblo*: the latter have power and the former are dependent on that power. Menchaca, although he attempts to become wealthy as well, remains dependent on don Pedro. “Menchaca, producto legítimo de la civilización inferior y grosera de los pueblos de campo, participaba de todos los prejuicios, comulgaba con todos los lugares comunes y no acertaba á salir jamás de los limitados horizontes en que lo aprisionaban las nieblas espesas de lo trillado y vulgar” (44). As the narrator states, Menchaca is part of a

“civilización inferior.” The implied author seems to intend that, because of this inferiority, Menchaca, try as he might, can never achieve the same level of economic success as his mentor don Pedro.

About his relationship with Menchaca, don Pedro attests: “Menchaca es una de las principales curiosidades de mi *museo psíquico*. No me canso de admirarlo, y créeme que es cosa digna de estudio el origen y desenvolvimiento de su bondad, de su humanitarismo y de la fe en la vida que lo hace ir adelante como un iluminado” (48). Don Pedro’s “museo psíquico” reveals a motive beyond pure philanthropy for don Pedro’s adoption of less fortunate individuals. He tinkers, much in the tradition of Naturalism, with his dependents’ psychologies. Crooker, like the implied author, observes scientifically his subjects’ psychologies and in a sense revels in their inferiority to him. Julio Guzmán, however, also participates in this psychological tinkering in his conversations with Menchaca: “Escuchando Guzmán al comerciante, hacía curiosos experimentos: con embozadas reticencias é insinuaciones, arrancábale determinadas juicios, lo obligaba á que descubriese la razón oculta de sus pensamientos, ó lo inducía á afirmar lo que había negado” (48-49). Guzmán’s interest in the psychology of Menchaca mirrors don Pedro’s interest in that it is exercised on subjects who are considered to be inferior.

The narrator mentions that Cacio and Guzmán are “en el fondo, individuos de la misma patria espiritual” (47). From this affirmation develops the notion they share between them that they are both descendants of the “raza de Caín,” a perverted, unsociable race of people who serve only to destroy that which society builds for the

good of others. It could well be the implied author's objective to show that people of the "raza de Caín" come from rural society. The starkest contrast to rural society, of course, is the city. In the novel, the ultimate representation of the city is the European city, or more specifically, Paris. The novel infers that each of don Pedro's three dependents have traveled to Paris at least once, and Arturo plans to take a trip to Great Britain with Laura to buy high quality livestock to breed. The centrality of Paris to the lives of the inhabitants of this Uruguayan *pueblo* reveals a psychology that places the rural world at the service of the urban.

The characters from the country in this novel tend to do a lot of thinking and pondering. Guzmán's own thought processes are complex in the way that he "thinks" about "not thinking": "La debilidad de los idealistas me inspira el asco, la invencible repugnancia de la acción: sea; [sic] ¿pero el agitarse vanamente, el ir y venir sin saber por qué ni para qué, es acaso más saludable?" (60). Guzmán's concern with "idealistas" hints that he may also himself be one. The disgust, then, that idealists instigate in him is also a disgust for himself. But he is honest with himself and realizes that neither direct action nor philosophical contemplation are answers in and of themselves. As the narrator relates: "A pesar de todos sus defectos y asperezas de carácter, era Julio una naturaleza expansiva, que, por no encontrar eco en los corazones extraños, seguía los movimientos y escuchaba los latidos del propio corazón" (61). Guzmán's embrace of himself and his own desires shows that characters from the countryside are not stock characters, but, rather, complex and realistic. The implied author's message, however, remains the same, that rural characters are inferior to urban ones.



Cacio, from the beginning of the novel, is in love with Laura. The natural world, at the point in the novel when a relationship between Laura and Cacio seems possible, takes on characteristics of joy and exhilaration for Cacio: “¡Espléndida tarde! La brisa del salado mar le dilatava el pecho, el cielo le parecía más azul, más luminosa la gloria del sol y las cosas todas más amigas y buenas” (70). When Cacio is in love, nature seems to be in harmony with him, as in more completely Romantic novels, like Jorge Isaacs’ María (1867). Cacio’s relationship with Laura brings out his desire to be dominated. He proclaims: “Me gustaría amar á una reina, á un imposible, entregarle mi vida toda, obedecerle ciegamente, besar la tierra que pisara y sonriendo morir de los desdenes con que me pagase tanto amor” (77-78). Cacio’s desire to love a queen demonstrates that he desires to be dominated in the same way that the urban world dominates the rural. In the same way that Laura dominates Cacio, the urban world holds sway over the rural.

Cacio, as a pilgrim from the rural world to the urban, leaves behind the reality of his life in the country in order to embrace urban customs. He states: “Mi educación me hizo un extraño entre los miembros de ella [su familia]; no nos entendíamos nunca sobre ningún punto, y las continuas rozaduras con que sin querer se irritaban y se herían nuestras almas antagónicas, concluyeron por divorciarnos completa y definitivamente” (81). Cacio’s education is another factor that separates him from his family and brings him to the *pueblo*. His education continues in the *pueblo* with the support of don Pedro, but does not bring positive experiences. As Cacio relates: “Del colegio no guardo recuerdos agradables, lejos de eso: Arturo me dejó el alma llena de heridas que no se han cerrado aún; en la universidad no tuve compañeros, ni en el mundo amistades...ni

amores, y sin embargo yo no hubiese sido incapaz de las afecciones tiernas y delicadas” (85). Cacio blames Arturo for holding him back and laments that he did not find relationships that would assimilate him into urban culture. Cacio’s years in school in the *pueblo* can be considered a state of transition, one that ends in failure because of the crime he commits against Laura. At the end of the novel, having committed the crime, he is separated not only from his family in the country, but also from the network of associates he had established in the *pueblo*.

Despite the education that he completes in the *pueblo*, Cacio cannot evade his rural roots. The narrator observes: “El sol se hundía en el mar, enrojeciendo trágicamente las movibles aguas. Las superficies arenosas de los médanos resplandecían como si estuviesen cuajadas de diminutos brillantes, y en los campos agonizaba la luz, comunicándoles á los objetos la melancólica belleza que espiritualiza el rostro de los moribundos” (88). Cacio is able to observe in great detail and perception the setting of the sun. His rural origins boost his affinity for the natural world and cause him to reflect: “Yo tengo el alma como ese paisaje” (88). This reflection mirrors a similar reflection observed previously, an instance in which Cacio feels that the natural world is mimicking his feelings of love for Laura, but here the emotion is more somber and shows that Cacio’s relationship with the natural world is profound and complex.

Although Cacio, because of his rural upbringing, harbors this expansive relationship with the natural world, this does not mean that he always cooperates with other characters from the country. About Menchaca he thinks: “su buena fortuna irritábalo secretamente, pero sobre todo lo que más insufrible se lo hacía, era la ingenua

confianza y la fe ciega de aquél en los hombres y en la existencia” (92). Because of this distaste for another character from the country, the implied author is able to reveal that, although his general message is that people from the country are inferior and bound to fail, they do not share the same characteristics. Each of the three main characters from the countryside manifests different psychological attributes. For this reason don Pedro considers each one part of his *museo psíquico*.

The narrator even suggests that these characters from the country can aspire to be successful. The following illustrates Menchaca’s case:

[o]cupábase en dirigir á los departamentos unos á modo de cuestionarios sobre asuntos de agricultura y ganadería, los que contestados por personas competentes, ponían á la vista del curioso el movimiento comercial de la campaña, la abundancia de las cosechas, el estado de los animales y otros datos no menos interesantes y útiles, que Menchaca hacía publicar en los periódicos de más circulación, con la sana idea de que todo el mundo pudiera sacar algún producto de su trabajo. (94)

Although Menchaca’s efforts are well-intentioned, the narrator’s choice of language reveals an irony that Menchaca, despite his intentions to succeed in agricultural business, does not have the proper state of mind to succeed. The narrator’s tone throughout the passage indicates that, while Menchaca has good intentions, he does not have the business sense required to manage such an enterprise.

Cacio’s enterprise, in general, is more related to having Romantic relationships than to succeeding in business. While Guzmán and Menchaca have spouses, Cacio is younger and single. The narrator reveals his thought process concerning Laura: “<<He ahí la mujer soñada>> me dije al verla, y experimenté una emoción dulcísima, una especie de grato mareo... Hoy me ha sonreído y me ha coqueteado un poco... ¿Me hará

caso? ¡Será posible que yo, el hijo de...!>>, y mudando de pensamientos, ennegrecióle el humor el análisis despiadado que hacía siempre de sus padres y hermanas” (99). Cacio’s conflicted emotions arise from the state of transition he is in between rural and urban worlds. While he is able to feel pleasure at the prospect of a relationship with Laura, his ties to his rustic family cause him to lose faith in himself. He adds, however, that “Si yo lograra obtener el cariño de Laura, si yo lograra unir mi destino humilde á su destino brillante...si de un golpe satisficiera las necesidades de mi espíritu y de mi corazón...! ¿Y por qué no? me insinuaré poco a poco, adivinaré sus gustos y la haré mía convirtiéndome en su esclavo...” (106). The difference between Cacio’s “destino humilde” and Laura’s “destino brillante” reveals again Cacio’s inward struggle to accept himself as a valid contender for Laura’s love. His difficult relationship with Arturo (another of Laura’s suitors) is perhaps double-edged: he fears defeat at the hands of Arturo, but he aspires to earn Laura’s love for the very reason that Arturo is also interested in her. Cacio is attracted to Laura because Arturo is also attracted to her. Above all, however, Cacio wants to win Laura’s affection because she has shown interest in him.

One of the key aspects of Guzmán is that he and his wife, Amelia, fight. The emotions that emerge during their arguments are another tool that the narrator uses to demonstrate the differences between country and city. Guzmán, leaving the house at the end of an argument, exclaims: “<<He estado á punto de asesinarla; el hombre puede llegar á todos los extremos. ¡Qué asco...!>>” (137). Not only does this quotation show that the emotions of those from the country are more intense and detrimental, but it also

foreshadows the desperation that Guzmán will experience at the end of the novel when he and his lover Sara decide to commit double-suicide. Guzmán's relationship with Sara reveals a further truth about urban-rural relations in the novel. The narrator describes: "Llamábase Sara Primo de Casares, hacía un mes escaso que había llegado de París, y todo en ella dilatava el sabor y refinamiento de la moderna Babilonia" (140). That Sara proceeds from the center of modern civilization indicates one of Guzmán's possible reasons for courting her. While Guzmán's life with Amelia is full of competition and struggle, he finds calm in his relationship with Sara. Her refinement is a quality that Guzmán values and associates with the urban world into which each of the three main rural characters aspires to fit.

However, more than simply being another representative of the urban world, Sara represents peace and refuge for Guzmán, a source of calm to which he can withdraw when his struggles to be successful in the *pueblo* combined with his arguments with Amelia become taxing. The narrator expresses about Guzmán and Sara: "Habíanse criado juntos: él era enfermo, ella lo cuidaba con el cariño solícito que suelen tenerles las niñas a sus hermanos menores" (144). Their positive familiar relationship results later in a romantic relationship that is beneficial for both of them. Their bond is so great that the narrator explains, through Guzmán's thoughts: "Por mí dió su mano á un hombre á quien no quería; por mí faltó luego á la fe jurada al esposo, y por mí estuvo á punto de cometer una innoble acción, que seguramente la hubiera atormentado toda la vida" (146). Guzmán and Sara's relationship, together with don Pedro's calm and assured personality, are the two refuges from strife in the novel. Don Pedro loves his work and Guzmán and Sara

love each other. This novel suggests, then, that love provides a haven from the struggles and conflicts of life. Guzmán explains to Sara: “Mi organismo funcionaba mal sin tus caricias; yo no tenía voluntad de vivir suficiente para oponer á la avalancha de tu recuerdo; hasta mis huesos clamaban por ti...” (152). The explanation serves to clarify the role of love in the novel: it redeems and it requires those who are caught up in it to return to each other like Guzmán and Sara. In terms of the spiritual brothers Cacio and Guzmán, love plays a role in that they both desire romantic relationships that will save them from daily difficulties.

Guzmán, as evidenced in his marriage to Amelia, is not always successful in love. The narrator explains that “Guzmán, aunque no lo sospechase, se había casado no sólo para satisfacer un capricho amoroso, sino por desesperación y para resolver el arduo problema de la existencia” (153). Guzmán marries Amelia to satisfy “el arduo problema de la existencia.” His idea is that marriage will convert his life into an easy game, and his desperation made the choice to marry seemingly easier. While Guzmán’s relationship with Sara is true, it is not always easy. The narrator describes how Guzmán cries in the presence of Sara: “[l]loraba al igual de los niños que no se pueden valer contra los males que los rodean. Y arrastrado por la racha de ardiente sentimentalismo que lo llevaba hasta olvidarse de su dignidad de hombre y verter lágrimas como una débil mujerzuela, comprendió con angustia indecible que su daño no tenía remedio...” (158). The lack of a remedy for Guzmán’s anguish reveals how very hard life is, even with Sara at his side. While his struggles seem to have no remedy, his relationship with Sara maintains him in the sense that it is not a source of any of his problems: his problems come from the

urban-rural conflict that manifests itself in the psychology of the majority of the characters.

The role that the natural world plays in Guzmán and Sara's love is evident in the passage where the narrator conveys: "Un fúlgido rayo de sol caía sobre la antigua amante de Guzmán y rodeaba su cabeza de virgen de Botticelli como de un nimbo de gloria" (165). The pastoral imagery produced in this quotation tells the history of the couple's relationship. Sara's similarity to Botticelli's virgin (possibly his "Birth of Venus") echoes Javier de Viana's likening of Juana to a Botticelli in *Gaucha* (1899). The narrator's vision of Sara parallels that of both Guzmán and the reader, who want the relationship between the two to thrive. One of the elements that indicates such thriving is the natural world. Guzmán remembers: "Cuando estábamos juntos, las cosas tenían para nosotros un significado nuevo, un encanto misterioso: el cielo nos parecía más azul, el verde de los campos más intenso, el aire más sutil" (167). The couple's love brightens their reality, including their perceptions of the natural world. The fact that Guzmán uses the natural world to demonstrate how the couple felt when they were together shows that, more than the more industrialized, artificial urban world, the natural world reflects the couple's commitment to each other. It emphasizes the organicity and naturalness of their love. In this way, the "encanto misterioso" of the couple's love reveals itself through the natural world.

Guzmán recognizes the power of his love for Sara and calls on her to enter into love with him again: "¡Ah, Sara! Dime que quieres castigarme, pero no me digas que tu cariño ha muerto para siempre... tan sólo tú tienes en la mano el poder de devolverme la

voluntad de vivir; el resto del mundo no me dice nada, como si no existiera...” (169). The crux of his argument is that Sara, just like the natural world, has power over life and death. This sets up a paradigm in which, for Guzmán, Sara is all-powerful. While the majority of the novel deals with a conflict between urban and rural psychologies in which there are no absolute values, Sara becomes the absolute value for Guzmán. Sara achieves for Guzmán the status of deity in part because of Guzmán’s relationship with the natural world in that his rural origins create for him a longing for maternal nature that Sara is able to satisfy.

When in company other than that of Sara, Guzmán struggles to identify. At a tertulia in the Crookers’ home, he observes to himself: “¡Cuánta niña insignificante, y cuánto ganso entre los caballeros! ¡Ah! está visto, *esos señores no tiene nada que decirme*. Comen, digieren...¿pero eso es la vida?” (175). Guzmán’s internal existential conflict alienates him from his fellow participants in the tertulia and highlights his desire to transcend the everyday and the mundane. In terms of the novel, this desire corresponds with the psychology of the country and it is shared by Guzmán’s spiritual compatriot, Cacio. However, this noble desire to surpass the normal comes, in the cosmovision of the novel, with a selfishness and a lack of preoccupation for others. In contrast, don Pedro embraces the mundane and, at the same time, interests himself almost entirely in the good of others. Guzmán ponders about don Pedro: “el varón sencillo, fuerte y bueno que se pega los botones para no molestar á las criadas, el hombre generoso que sólo goza con la dicha de los demás” (177). Although characters like Guzmán are charged with the noble



task of transcending the mundane, the implied author's hero of the novel is, without a doubt, don Pedro.

The narrator continues to contrast Guzmán and don Pedro. The narrator describes how the two men embrace: "...cuando D. Pedro lo abrazó, sintióse Julio tan conmovido que tuvo que hacer grandes esfuerzos para no dejar traslucir la emoción que lo embargaba" (177). Guzmán's emotionality conforms with the implied author's impression of his psychological constitution. Guzmán's desire to hide his emotion reveals the inferiority he feels in the presence of don Pedro. Don Pedro, in contrast, effuses peace and affability: "su mirada tranquila y profunda, pero sonriendo siempre, lo cual le quitaba á sus frases toda severidad" (178). Perhaps, additionally, it is don Pedro's very peace and friendliness that affects Guzmán's emotions. Don Pedro's desire to provide for others extends even to his gaze. He makes his life philosophy clear to those around him: "La vida no es una diversión. Todos padecemos; no creas que alguien escape á esa ley. Sí, cada uno lleva á costas su cruz, y á mi entender, es mejor el que con más ánimo la lleve. ¡Phss...! las lágrimas y los desmayos ¿para qué sirven? ¡Bah! eso es bueno para las damiselas" (178). Don Pedro's pragmatic and unsentimental view of life has served him well, and he appears to want to share his discovery for the benefit of others. Contrasting with Guzmán again, don Pedro leaves expressions of emotion to the female sex.

Guzmán's psychological makeup does not completely instigate failure. Rather, he takes a more detached, more introspective approach to life. He thinks: "...sólo somos libres en el reino de los sueños" (181). While this idea contrasts strongly the worldview of don Pedro, it has its benefits for Guzmán. It is possible that the implied author is

proposing the idea that while worldviews like that of don Pedro are necessary for the propagation of the national economy, society also needs dreamers like Guzmán to invent the stories that promote a worldview like don Pedro's. But Guzmán's introversion is, for the most part, self-serving. "El alma de Guzmán parecía escaparse en tales casos del cuerpo que la aprisionaba, y esta ausencia producíale á la larga ansias gratísimas, inquietudes extraterrenas y estados de verdadero misticismo, dentro de los cuales sus visiones tenían un carácter más artificial que milagroso" (182). The importance of "alma" in Guzmán's psychological makeup is greater than in don Pedro. Don Pedro's soul is tied to earthly matters and manifested solely in his actions and the benefits that he provides to others. Guzmán's conception of soul is more mystical. Don Pedro would frown upon Guzmán's practice of separating body from soul.

Guzmán's impressions of the two women in his life further reveal aspects of his worldview. He exclaims to himself: "<<¡Qué diferencia entre una y la *otra*! Sara es la belleza, el amor, la libertad; Amelia la esclavitud, la prosa de la vida" (182). Guzmán's mystical desire for complete freedom is represented in Sara. She represents for him not only the desired freedom of the soul from the body, but also the freedom of the natural world without urban (or rural) restraints. Amelia becomes for Guzmán the opposite of freedom. She represents for him the idea that urban domination will eventually withdraw all freedom from the natural world and discard the natural world like the waste that said urban domination generates.

The eventual result of urban domination and the character of don Pedro, however, generate a contradiction. While don Pedro is hard-working and interested in benefitting

others, the consequence of the industrial proliferation that he supports is a loss of habitat for many living beings and a decrease in quality of life for his descendants. However, Crooker's ignorance of the coming environmental crisis is not transgressed on purpose. As Guzmán idealistically observes: "En Crooker no existe nada contradictorio, ninguna causa de desequilibrio, ningún motivo de conflicto entre la cabeza y el corazón; debe, pues, sentir goces simples y puros que yo no puedo ni sospechar siquiera..." (188). The implied author portrays Crooker as a type of synthesis between Cacio (who has a vivid imagination) and Guzmán (who has a formidable heart). This idealistic projection, however, simplifies the relationship between the three men, even if it facilitates an understanding of their principal strengths and weaknesses. Although don Pedro does not appear to have any weaknesses of character, the fact that his business practices contribute to the future environmental crisis reveals a weakness.

The narrator chooses to focus more on the weaknesses of Cacio and Guzmán. The narrator exposes: "Á Cacio, aun admirándolo, lo ofendía la aristocracia intelectual de Julio, y á éste le repugnaban las aspiraciones vulgares y el materialismo grosero de Cacio" (189). Their mutual offense indicates a dissatisfaction with themselves. Cacio, the more intellectual one, is offended by Guzmán's "aristocracia intelectual" and Guzmán, the more emotional one, is offended by Cacio's "aspiraciones vulgares." Their mutual offense reveals that each struggles to transition from country life to life in the *pueblo*. Both use don Pedro as their mentor and guide, and both disparage each other as part of the adjustment process. "No obstante, como en lo esencial estaban acordes, confiábanse en ciertos asuntos delicados sus más íntimos pensamientos, sin ese temor de no encontrar

eco simpático que abortar hace tantas confesiones; y en realidad se buscaban para consolarse ó...irritarse, porque en esto solían encontrar también singularísima satisfacción” (189-90). The intimate level on which Cacio and Guzmán relate and associate with each other reveals not only their mutual need for one another, but also their desperation to succeed in the world of business, the world of the *pueblo*. This mutual relationship between the two exposes the implied author’s intention to illustrate that Cacio and Guzmán are part of the “raza de Caín,” a group of people who pervert social values and think and act only for themselves. The sad end of the novel is an image of the consequences of such thought and behavior. The destructiveness of Cacio and Guzmán’s actions reveals the implied author’s plan to illustrate that immigrants from the country to the city are inferior to city people and are desperate to establish themselves in the city, even if they have no real skills to contribute to the market.

Guzmán himself expresses his and Cacio’s inferiority to don Pedro: “Es un hombre *diferente* de nosotros y mejor que nosotros. Acepta la ley de la vida, mientras que usted y yo la rechazamos por egoísmo y por flaqueza” (193). The two men, conscious of their failure to achieve don Pedro’s standards, wallow in selfishness and laziness. One of the key reasons they fall into these vices is that they don’t live their lives for the benefit of others. Their lives become fragmented and useless, to the point where Cacio states: “La felicidad de los otros me irrita, me subleva como una gran injusticia. ¡Ah! la raza de Set...! [sic] No sufren, no padecen, no luchan y se muestran orgullosos de su bondad, de su estúpida bondad...” (200). Cacio’s perversion of the social value of supporting others leads to misery for him. He complains that he was born into the wrong family. And while

one of the implied author's goals is to portray how it really does matter into what family one is born, Cacio demonstrates the manner in which one remains in the situation into which he or she is born. It does seem to be the implied author's goal to illustrate that there are two categories of people, those of the *raza de Caín* and those of the *raza de Set*. However, the narrator does not make any mention of the impossibility to transcend these categories. But Cacio flounders in decrepitude: "Los *ratés*, los que lo anhelan todo sin conseguir nada, los que sientan el roedor despecho de los caídos y la rabia de los hijos de Caín, son mis hermanos..." (202). Cacio cuts ties with his family in the rural world and unites himself with the *raza de Caín*, a group of people who have grand aspirations, but who don't achieve their goals. The fact that Cacio claims these people as family shows that he, too, dreams without achieving.

Guzmán presents the issue in terms of the human heart: "Delante de la humana criatura el corazón enfermo no experimenta ninguna santa alegría, ningún sentimiento expansivo que refresque y consuele" (203). Those of the *raza de Caín*, then, have sick hearts, hearts that are callous to the beauty of the human race and of life in general, something that a character like don Pedro would entirely appreciate. However, the discussion that Cacio and Guzmán have about their spiritual compatriotism evokes a reaction from Cacio: "Una emoción profunda le dilató el pecho, y de sus ojos brotaron dos lágrimas, dos perlas incandescentes que fueron á apagarse en el salobre mar" (204). This emotional manifestation from Cacio shows that he cares about improving himself, but it does not inspire him to the point that he takes positive action. It does provide an interesting dynamic in the discussion of whether or not Cacio is a criminal. Guzmán

states, a few pages earlier, that “Para mí los únicos criminales son los *indiferentes*” (202). Cacio demonstrates with this emotional reaction that he is not indifferent to his fate. Thus, in Guzmán’s perverted and idealistic terms, Cacio is not wrong for murdering Laura. Perhaps for this reason the novel does not describe the trial or imprisonment of Cacio; it leaves his legal fate open to the interpretation of the reader. While it’s clear that he will be punished, the implied author never actually documents the process of justice that will be enacted upon Cacio.

Guzmán recognizes, however, a contradiction in society’s values. He perceives that “[p]ara la vida activa conviene ser un poco idiota; conviene no pensar, no dudar, y por añadidura encontrarse bien entre los hombres...yo gano si me meto en mí y pierdo si vivo para los otros” (219). He classifies as “idiota” the average businessman of the *pueblo*. He implies that to survive in the business world one must sacrifice his independent way of thinking, something that a person of the *raza de Caín* would find difficult. He adds, however, that one must also be selfish in order to succeed at business, contradicting what the narrator has stated about don Pedro and his philanthropy. It’s possible, in exchange, that Guzmán sees don Pedro’s philanthropy as a selfish action, one that will benefit him in the world of commerce.

Guzmán searches for purpose in life. He explains to Cacio that doubt about the purpose of life goes back to the beginning of humanity. He purports: “Ésta fué acaso la fruta del árbol del saber que el Todopoderoso prohibió á Adán y Eva” (219-20). Guzmán’s speculation about the meaning of life shows that this sort of discussion concerns him. Although Guzmán’s cause ends in failure at the end of the novel, this

preoccupation for life's meaning shows a genuine interest in humanity. While don Pedro is busy working, Guzmán speculates about important questions that have engaged people for ages. The mention of the garden of Eden draws us once more to the question of the different families that proceeded from that mythical place. Guzmán, with his claim about the apple being the meaning of life, shows that all of humanity is united in finding meaning in life. Through the illustration of the Garden of Eden, the narrator shows how, despite differences in psychology, everyone is united in the search for meaning. This, however, does not suggest that every character is equally engaged in such questions. It seems that the *raza de Caín* is more interested in such questions than the *raza de Set*.

Cacio searches for meaning through his attempted romantic relationship with Laura. He writes her an anonymous letter that she later discovers and to which she responds favorably (241). The reader, however, knows that her sentiments also lie with her cousin Arturo. About her love for Cacio she tells her cousin María Carolina: “me dirán que es pobre, que no es un hombre distinguido; bueno, tanto mejor... No es tan *chic*, ni tan elegante, ni tan buen mozo como tu hermano, pero tiene más talento, y como me adora, me hará feliz” (245). Laura's own indecision perpetuates Cacio's interest in her, even if he is, at first glance, poorly-matched with Arturo. However, even Arturo and his family are part of a hierarchy that is greater than any one of them could be on his or her own. Arturo expresses: “Los importadores de animales de raza nos explotan que es un gusto, y á veces nos venden lo que no sirve y en Europa nadie quiere. Pronto empiezan las ventas en Inglaterra y me propongo asistir á ellas para comprar en buenas condiciones” (247-48). Europe's dominance of Latin American resources and economic

markets is evident in this passage, and Arturo shows awareness of his own inferiority in comparison with the great livestock markets of Europe.

However, in his own *pueblo*, Arturo, like his father, is at the top of the hierarchy. Crooker is the center of the *pueblo*. Everyone depends on him for sustenance and livelihood. Crooker, together with Mamagela from El terruño and don Zoilo from Gaucha, are similar in that each one acts as a center of his or her novelistic universe. Other members of the *pueblo* in La raza de Caín are conscious of the hierarchical order of importance that exists among the characters. Menchaca, aware of his inferiority to don Pedro, reacts curiously: “Menchaca solía oír los sanos consejos de su padrino con una sonrisa desdeñosa de hombre superior” (253). Menchaca’s psychology, developed in the country, is such that he cannot stand to be inferior to another, even while at the same time he knows that he is.

Menchaca hides his failures and weaknesses from himself. As the narrator relates: “En el más secreto escondrijo de su corazón de marido débil y amante, abrigaba la sospecha, ó mejor aún, la amarga certitud de que alguien le robaba el cariño de su esposa, pero no podía rebelarse, porque veía con lucidez abrumadora que cualquiera desgracia, la más grande, la más vergonzosa, era preferible para él á la desgracia de perderla” (254). His preoccupation of his wife’s unfaithfulness results from his hiding of difficult subjects from himself. His cowardliness in marital relations is also a manifestation of his particular psychology in that he feels that if he takes action he will be revealed as weak in relation to his associates and will lose favor with those with whom he does business. His facetious imitation of don Pedro reveals further his desperate desire to fit into the social



fabric of the *pueblo* to which he has immigrated. The narrator explains that Menchaca “[t]enía dos coches... porque Crooker tenía dos; el escaparate de su tienda era el más lujoso, y Ana la señora que mejor se vestía y empingorotaba, hasta el punto de imponer la moda y hacer célebres sus capotas y tocados *venidos de la ciudad*” (254). Menchaca’s specific psychology, then, is one of fear—fear that he will be discovered as an immigrant, an imposter, and a servile member of society. He closely imitates Arturo as well: “...adoptando con frecuencia las posturas, ademanes y expresiones típicas de Arturo. Su ridícula imitación llegó hasta el extremo de vestir iguales prendas que éste vestía y fumar los mismos cigarrillos que Arturo fumaba” (256). Menchaca, like Cacio, cuts ties with the rural world from which he comes. As a result, he arrives in the *pueblo* without an identity. In order to forge a new identity, he relies on imitating those whom he recognizes as the most authentic representations of *pueblo* life. His obsequious replication of Arturo’s habits and customs succeeds in bothering Arturo, who accosts Menchaca: “Hable claramente: no me gustan las situaciones ambiguas” (258). Arturo’s statement not only reveals his displeasure for Menchaca’s imitation, it also suggests what we have discussed that Menchaca’s actual identity in the *pueblo* is ambiguous. The innate psychology of characters from *pueblo* and country works to create a hierarchy that is both social and economic, as well as self-perpetuating.

This system is self-perpetuating in that business and familial relations are consolidated. Arturo’s relationship with Laura effectively keeps the wealth within the family. Arturo consoles Laura and furthers their romantic relationship:

No llores más, yo también te quiero con todo el alma, vidita, sólo que quería ver hasta dónde llegaba tu soberbia...—y estrechándola contra su robusto pecho, se

afanó en consolarla, prodigándole con sincera ternura toda clase de caricias y mimos. Mientras la acariciaba, embriagábala el dulce y á la par penoso placer de verla toda agitada y convulsa por la pasión amorosa que él había sabido inspirarle. (261-62)

Arturo's cunning words reassure Laura and permit him the liberty of caressing his cousin's body. The narrator's indication that Arturo knows how to incite passion in a female shows one more way in which he is capable of getting what he wants from others, a capability that causes others, especially those from the country, to admire him.

Guzmán's admiration of Arturo goes so far as to include philosophical inspiration. The narrator describes that Guzmán is "...movido secretamente por una idea obscura, se dijo, sin que él mismo supiera por qué parodiaba y repetía la frase de Stendhal: <<Es feliz...y lo sería en cualquier parte, porque él, sí, él *es capaz de ir á recoger la misteriosa flor del amor al borde de un precipicio*>>" (263). Arturo's power to "recoger la misteriosa flor del amor" could be described as one of the single most important elements in distinguishing between urban and rural psychologies as presented by the narrator. Arturo is able to get what he wants out of life while characters from the country have trouble both identifying what they want and obtaining it.

Laura, however, acts as a mediator between opposing parties. She thinks about Cacio: "¡Si yo pudiera consolarlo!" (266). Laura, object of affection and desire for both Cacio and Arturo, functions as a mediator between the two. She sees the positive and negative traits in each suitor and thus provides an element of dispute to the narrator's general observations that people from the country are inferior to people from the *pueblo*. However, the narrator is quick to effect a rebuttal, through circumstantial evidence, to Laura's positive valuation of Cacio. He describes how Cacio leaves the tertulia in

shame: "...con voz insegura, y saludando á las demás personas con una inclinación de cabeza, se retiró" (266). Cacio's "voz insegura" shows that he feels unequal in the company of the tertulia. That he salutes everyone only with a nod of the head furthers this situational dynamic. What is more, instead of going home, he wanders the streets, in search of meaning: "Con la cabeza caída sobre el pecho, avanzó Cacio por las solitarias calles. Los rayos oblicuos del sol difundían sobre los objetos una luz agonizante, una luz de candil, pobre y macilenta" (268). Indeed, his aforementioned psychology brings him loneliness, but it is a loneliness that he chooses voluntarily, inspired by emotions of insecurity. Similar to when the natural world mimicked his feelings of love for Laura, his immediate environment amplifies his feelings of loneliness and loss.

The result of these sentiments is that Cacio's soul, while it feels loneliness, is also hardened to the sensibility of others. The narrator describes: "Cacio la miraba fijamente; cuando Ana le preguntó si tenía algo, respondióle sin pestañear y con el perverso placer que debe de sentir el asesino al hundir la fina hoja de un *stiletto* en la carne blanda" (270). Likening Cacio to a murderer, the narrator furthers his intentions to expose Cacio as a criminal—intentions that succeed by the end of the novel, though Cacio's weapon of choice is not a blade, but the more passive option of poison. Further along in his conversation with his sister Ana, he recognizes his position in Arturo's scheme. He states: "Nosotros somos para ese hombre utensilios que, después de usados, arroja á la basura" (272). Arturo, unlike Cacio, is socially adept, but he also harbors a callous, uncaring side in which he has no qualms to discard people when he is done using them.

Rather than discard, Menchaca is interested, valiantly, in reconquering his wife, Ana. As the narrator relates: “El comerciante, fatigado de cálculos y números, y deseando echar un palique con su mujercita, cerró el librote de caja, lavóse las manos y abandonó el espacioso almacén, contento como un colegial escapado del aula” (277). While the narrator emphasizes Menchaca’s work ethic and his desire to have a good relationship with his spouse, he also describes him as “un colegial,” which draws attention to his immaturity as a businessman. Nonetheless, the narrator describes him as a philanthropist: “Los ojos grandes, dulces y saltones del filántropo se fijaron en el líquido humeante, mientras su pensamiento corría, corría tras de Ana” (278). Menchaca’s goals, then, are to compete as a valid, and even formidable, member of urban society. For this reason he and Ana decided to move to Montevideo. While the other two characters from the country, Cacio and Guzmán, have trouble motivating themselves to achieve their goals, Menchaca is merely unable to maintain himself without moral support from figures like don Pedro.

One difference between these two business moguls (one more aspiring and the other more established) is that the narrator makes no mention of don Pedro’s marital status nor his history. Menchaca, however, has a wife with whom, despite her antagonism toward him, he is determined to love and support. “...Menchaca, el marido enamorado, que lo dejaba todo para correr la singularísima aventura de reconquistar el corazón de la esposa ingrata, suspiró por centésima vez, sin poder apartar los ojos de los sitios que le eran tan familiares y gratos, y que un recóndito presentimiento le aseguraba que no tornaría a ver...” (290). Menchaca’s dedication to his wife, even if it is combined with his general ineptitude, is a task that he handles on his own, with less imitation than in

business matters. Menchaca's entire drive to succeed at business could be attributed to his love for Ana. All of the bumbling that he commits as a budding businessman can be attributed to his desire to please Ana. Menchaca's love for Ana, then, is a positive element of his desire to transform himself from a man of rural psychology to one of urban mental organization.

Cacio's efforts to adjust to urban life, however, are filled with increase and decrease in emotional state. Cacio's dejection continues as he realizes that Arturo and Laura are growing closer as a couple. He observes them from a distance and the narrator affirms: "No lo veían palidecer, no veían el sudor frío que a veces le perlaba la nudosa frente, ni los destellos lúgubres de sus ojos, ojos pequeños y de brillo metálico, escondidos en las órbitas como dos piedras de alquimia, turbadoras, brillantes y raras, en el fondo de un matraz ennegrecido" (292). The bodily manifestations that take place as Cacio deals with his emotions reflect his relationship with the natural world. Such bodily functions reaffirm his existence as a natural being who depends on the natural environment for sustenance. His eyes, especially, convey his relationship to the two content lovers: now that Laura's affections have been won by Arturo, she becomes a proponent of his urban way of life. Cacio's eyes, like "dos piedras de alquimia" reflect the differences between Arturo and himself. Arturo, interested in practical matters, would not occupy his time with the fanciful world of alchemy, while Cacio, with his dreamy rural nature, would embrace the practice.

Cacio's purported interest in alchemy, however, is not enough to keep him from falling into depression from his failure to engage with Laura. His inability to act in a

practical manner deepens, as the narrator conveys: “Enflaquecía, empezaba á digerir mal y habíase vuelto extremadamente díscolo, irritable y raro. Con frecuencia engolfábase en larguísimos monólogos, á la menor causa ó rozadura se le iba la lengua, y por las noches saltaba á menudo del lecho, para huir de las imágenes de los novios, que soñando veía juntos y en posturas obscenas...” (295). Cacio’s lack of attention to his physical needs balloons while his need to interact with others decreases. He expresses himself only to himself, perhaps because he feels he is the only person who will understand. His loss in terms of winning Laura’s heart leads him to dejection, even though he was never favored to be her groom. His dreams of Arturo’s and her sexual relations emphasize the gloomy world into which he has plunged. Cacio repeats this phrase to his sister: “—Te usará, y luego al canasto” (305). Cacio’s observation of Arturo allows him to prophesy about Arturo’s actions. In fact, Arturo will use Ana just like the city uses the country—sucking nutrients and then disposing of the shell.

The narrator is quick to portray Guzmán’s psychological makeup. Guzmán, being older than Cacio, is more aware of his weaknesses and his inability to succeed in business. As the narrator emphasizes, Guzmán “...refugiábase en el taller, sentábase en la mecedora, cogía una pipa, y siguiendo las espirales ascendentes del humo, como arrastrado por la onda marina sobre la cubierta de un buque hacia países lejanos y maravillosos, perdía la noción de la realidad y gozaba el delicioso mareo de la vida interior” (313-14). His enjoyment of his own interior life mirrors the dejected introversion that Cacio displays when confronted with Arturo’s success in courting Laura. The phrase: “perdía la noción de la realidad,” emphasizes the distance with which

Guzmán regards the real world. His absorption into spiritual matters makes him a character rich in life, but the narrator's biased attitude reveals Guzmán's idyllic thinking to be a flaw rather than an enhancement of his character.

Guzmán observes about this fact that: "Para saltar por encima de las convenciones humanas, se necesita tener, no inteligencia, sino jarretes de león... No creo en el monstruoso edificio de la ley humana, no creo en ella, ni en lo demás..." (317). Guzmán leaves the goal of gaining control of the world of human invention to those with more desire to compete than he has. Competition in business, closely related to market capitalism, is a characteristic more developed in individuals from urban environments than in those from the rural world. Guzmán confirms: "No lo olvide: bajo mi capa de escepticismo y perversidad, sólo soy un lírico, un idealista y un romántico" (320-21). None of the characteristics listed above will help Guzmán succeed in business (except, perhaps, for perversion, since Arturo has been shown to be perverse at select moments in the novel). Guzmán's propensity for art, idealism, and Romantic whims weeds him out of the competition, a competition in which Menchaca, for example, is trying to succeed. Cacio shares the following statement with Guzmán: "La desconfianza, el miedo de los otros y la duda de mí mismo, de que él me llenó el corazón, ha continuado atormentándome siempre, y es la causa principal de mis caídas y de mi carácter débil y arisco" (325). Cacio and Guzmán's inadaptability to urban standards of living leaves them poor, with little hope of succeeding in that world. Lack of confidence, fear of others, and self-doubt are factors that Cacio realizes have prevented him from

succeeding, but he blames the responsibility for these traits on Arturo, committing himself to a vicious cycle of failure.

Don Pedro, on the other hand, never stops to wallow in such negative sentiments. The narrator comments: “Contaba sesenta y cinco años y nunca se le había pasado por la imaginación la idea de la muerte” (330). The narrator’s choice of the word “imaginación” reveals the type of imagination that don Pedro possesses: a practical one that does not waste time thinking about unprofitable ideas like death. Because of this revelation, one could place don Pedro under the category of people previously mentioned by Guzmán who perform everyday actions without knowing the meaning. However, don Pedro does have a reason for his actions: everything he does is for the benefit of others. Perhaps for this reason don Pedro feels peace with himself and does not think about death. Due to don Pedro’s sense of peace, a mismatch of confidence and purpose can be observed between the latter and his pupil Menchaca. Don Pedro advises Menchaca: “Menchaca cayó en una especie de repentino embrutecimiento. El rostro dejó de expresar el dolor, las lágrimas cesaron de correr, su mirada tornóse incierta é indiferente como la de los idiotas, y una sonrisa estúpida le entreabrió los labios” (348). Don Pedro’s ability to charm Menchaca lies not only in don Pedro’s urban psychological makeup and attitude, but also in Menchaca’s rural psychology and servile attitude. The disappearance of characteristics of sadness in Menchaca’s face is accompanied by a lack of initiative and want.

These differences between Menchaca and his mentor affect and reveal Menchaca’s rural personality, causing him to reflect: “Á él lo miraba y le sonreía en el pueblo, de un modo característico, como demandándole gracia... Á mí jamás me ha



mirado de esa manera...” (354). Menchaca is conscious of his own faults and of don Pedro’s superiority. He defines himself according to that difference, in a way that never allows him to escape from the detriments that his rural origins cause in his way of thinking. His determination to change, as directed by don Pedro, is stymied in addition by Ana. He has been drinking when Ana says to him: “Sí, tú, y por eso estás tan...doctor. Apuesto á que has ido á confesarte con Crooker y á ponerme en ridículo. Sí, seguramente es eso lo que ha pasado. Le habrás referido alguna historia lacrimosa, que es tu especialidad, y él entonces se habrá dado el tono de aconsejarte como á una criatura...” (361). Ana realizes Menchaca’s weakness as a businessman at the same time that she ignores his earnest desire to succeed. Her beratement of her husband and his association with don Pedro only serves to deteriorate the situation. Although she understands Menchaca’s situation very well, her attitude and tone of voice reveal that she has no desire to help him succeed.

Indeed, her attentions are elsewhere: she has already given up on Menchaca. The confrontation between the two ends in the following supplication:

...y abrazándose loco de dolor á las piernas de su esposa, le besó los pies, sollozando y gimiendo como un esclavo suplicante, mientras que ella, erguida, rígida, con la victoriosa cabeza echada insolentemente hacia atrás y los nervios tendidos por una emoción suprema, ebria, borracha de su extraña poder y poseída por el demonio de la perversidad, besaba la carta desdeñosa de su amante sonriendo triunfalmente. (367)

The relationship between Menchaca and Ana at this moment is similar to Menchaca’s relationship with don Pedro, except that Ana belittles Menchaca while don Pedro encourages him to develop and mature. The difference between rural and urban psychologies can be observed clearly here in that Ana, Cacio’s sister, is from the country

and possesses similar psychological characteristics to her brother. In the above quotation, the narrator reveals that Ana, too, manifests the perversity that we have come to identify so closely with Cacio. Ana's desire to serve herself places her in the *raza de Caín* as well and condemns her to a life of unhappiness.

Her unhappiness, however, is easily matched by that of her brother. "Los insomnios, los malos sueños y las obsesiones fijas y violentas, minaban su salud y desataban sus nervios, hasta el punto de convertirlo en una especie de fiera humana atacada del extraño mal de los elefantes solitarios" (369). That the narrator uses foreign imagery ("elefantes solitarios") to describe Cacio's unhappiness shows that Cacio is a stranger in the *pueblo*. The acuteness of Cacio's discontent is evidenced in the fact that elephants are even more foreign than rural Uruguay is to a Uruguayan *pueblo* like the one in which this novel takes place. The narrator pairs the adjective "humana" with the noun "fiera," demonstrating the damage that is enacted upon Cacio's health and his nerves when he learns that Arturo and Laura are going to get married:

Pocas veces se aventuraba por los *barrios bajos*. Los portones de hierro de los lupanares, los rostros cínicos y cubiertos de polvos, que no ocultan, á pesar de su blancura cadavérica, las rosas de la tisis ni las violetas de la libidine, los descotes desvergonzados, los senos desnudos, ofrecido al vicioso del goce carnal como una canasta de frutas maduras; la beodez de los hombres y las músicas libertinas, lo llenaban de horror y le revolvían el estómago. (371)

Cacio has another experience with a foreign influence, an experience that marks him as being from somewhere foreign in the first place (rural Uruguay). The strangeness of the *barrios bajos* that he visits highlights the general strangeness that he feels as a rural immigrant. The allure and lechery of the *barrios bajos* offends his sensibilities because of its strangeness and exoticism. The "rosas" and "violetas" in the above passage represent

this exoticism and display yet another foreign world in which Cacio does not feel welcome. That all of this foreign influence unsettles Cacio's stomach is a further indication of his general discontent.

Cacio, acting on the same perverse impulses that have governed his behavior for the entire novel, enters Laura's bedroom on the night before the wedding and poisons the glass of milk that she is to drink before going to bed. He is trapped in her closet for ten pages as she prepares to sleep. She takes the poison and goes to bed, and Cacio escapes from the room. Cacio's crime is discovered, but instead of focusing on Cacio, the narrator jumps to Guzmán, who reflects: "Mi descreimiento, mi irritación y las abstrusas doctrinas del egoísmo, que viviendo en esta época de aridez intelectual no podía menos de beber en las aulas, en los libros y en la práctica de la vida, me arrastraron á pensar en... ¡Ah, es horrible!" (390). He continues his self-conscious social commentary and blames himself for planting the idea in Cacio's head to murder Laura (395).

The narrator describes the sadness of the *pueblo* but, perversely, does not focus on the suffering of any one individual. The narrator, rather than highlight how Laura's death affects those who loved her, focuses on the main proponents of the *raza de Caín* in the novel. In particular, he displays Guzmán's self-guilt and Cacio's lack of self-guilt. One of the few manifestations of the sadness of the *pueblo* is the following: "El luto, la semi-obscuridad de las habitaciones, los rostros, aflijidos, todo predisponía á la tristeza. En medio del silencio de la casa, los pasos y los golpes de tos resonaban lúgubrementemente" (392). The use of the word "predisponía" reveals a lack of true sentiment on the part of the *pueblo*. It suggests that each member is in mourning only because of social custom.

The coughs of the mourners, although they are quite natural, lend an air of insincerity to the gathering.

The death of Laura, and the manner in which it is committed, seems to affect Guzmán even more than it affects Cacio. He thinks: “Aquí, como en mi patria, como en todas partes, soy un extranjero” (392). His realization of his status as a stranger not only in the *pueblo*, but also in the world-at-large is an effect of his belonging to the *raza de Caín*. His being part of this family makes him a stranger even in his homeland. He continues to be self-critical when he expresses to himself: “Si he pecado ha sido por exceso de idealismo” (393). That Guzmán associates idealism with sin shows revolutionary thought. His rural psychological upbringing, however, causes him to be passive and lazy. He continues to reflect: “Después de vivir en ciertas alturas ideales, es imposible aceptar la grosería de la existencia y desempeñar seriamente un *rol* en el cual no se cree... No, yo no puedo vivir: no tengo la dosis de vulgaridad y de bellaquería que son indispensables para eso” (393-94). His self-criticism and self-guilt keep him from progressing. He reflects upon a personal history of idealism as immorality and, now that his idealism has led him to place in Cacio’s mind the idea of the crime, he suffers because of his involvement in the heinous deed. His thought that he will never be able to return to a life of baseness and normality is further evidence of the attitude with which the implied author characterizes him as being from the country.

The narrator does eventually enter deeply into Cacio’s post-murder psychology in the form of a letter that Cacio writes to Guzmán. The fact that Cacio chooses to communicate to Guzmán in the form of a letter further reveals Cacio’s detachment

concerning his deed. He writes: “Escúcheme, no tenga repugnancia en departir con un asesino, con un hombre que, como las águilas humanas, tuvo el valor de libertarse de las infinitas tiranías de la ley para apoderarse de lo que creía suyo” (404). From the beginning of the letter, the reader realizes that Cacio has completely succumbed to his perverse nature. He no longer sees himself as a contributing member of society—instead, he has achieved his heinously selfish goal of appropriating and possessing Laura for all eternity. He clarifies to Guzmán: “Asesiné á Laura, no por venganza ni por celos, sino porque sólo muerta podía ser mía” (405). Cacio’s crime, dastardly as it would still be if committed for revenge or jealousy, would at least continue to include him as a member of society who acted rashly. Because of his immense selfishness, however, he excludes himself from society and alienates himself from any form of support that anyone may have felt obliged to offer. The narrator doesn’t even describe the type of punishment that Cacio receives for his crime, revealing a strange perversion on the part of the narrator as well.

This perversion suggests a state of mind in which the narrator feels no need to elaborate the punishment that Cacio receives. The narrator wants to transmit to the audience as well the morally decrepit state of Cacio’s soul. Without the explicit punishment of Cacio, the verdict about his crime remains in limbo and the reader is left without closure, a state in which it is easier to consider in depth the horror of Cacio’s crime. However, if we consider the crime in terms of urban and rural psychology, we see that Cacio is a prisoner of his own psychological state. The novel presents the idea that

everyone who transplants him- or herself from a rural environment to an urban one meets with failure.

Cacio's letter, as he himself acknowledges, is meant to explain the current situation to Guzmán and, by extension, to the reader. Cacio recognizes: "Desearía, ya que le escribo, explicarle el caso tan claramente que su curiosidad de psicólogo quedase satisfecha por entero" (405). The issue receives an explanatory treatment, but only from Cacio's limited perspective. Cacio recognizes that Guzmán's interest in the case extends beyond just their friendship; Guzmán expresses an interest in the case from a psychological perspective. Beyond this, the reader, too, feels further drawn in to the psychological drama by means of Cacio's letter.

One of the key components of Cacio's state of mind is that he blames his failures on Arturo. This tactic is not absent from the letter. He writes: "Y de casi todos mis sufrimientos tenía la culpa Arturo. Yo le he contado á usted la funesta influencia de ese hombre sobre mi destino, ya le he contado que de pequeño fuí su víctima, el *plastrón* donde ejercitaba, sin pizca de piedad, sus puños de atleta" (407). Cacio goes so far as to blame his very fate on his rival. He victimizes himself and makes himself out to be weaker than Arturo both physically and mentally. He then returns to writing about himself and recognizes that his strengths are in doubt and destruction: "...los hombres como usted y como yo, hemos nacido sólo para *destruir* la sociedad, porque llevamos en el alma los gérmenes de la duda y de la negación y debemos cumplir un *alto, aunque odioso destino*, que nadie comprende" (413). He claims that he and Guzmán have been destroyers of society since birth. That urban and rural differences in psychology are

innate infiltrates Cacio's letter. It is a vicious way of thinking because it allows for no form of escape. The affirmation that nobody understands them is simply further evidence that they want to make no effort to assimilate into the society to which they have immigrated.

Cacio's letter concludes with an acknowledgement that the natural world is linked with the type of psychology apparent in characters like himself and Guzmán. He writes:

Somos, y no lo digo sin el orgullo del más hermoso de los ángeles, los que se rebelan contra la ley, los descendientes de Caín, sobre quienes pesan las terribles palabras del Señor: *vagabundo y fugitivo vivirás sobre la tierra*. Para nosotros no son las dulzuras de la civilización, ni las delicias del hogar: para nosotros la espesura agreste del monte, ¡pobres y flacas panteras!; mientras los mansos cerdos arrastran el voluminoso vientre, bostecemos de hambre y de fastidio, enseñando como una protesta la riqueza de la garra. (413-14)

Not only is the natural world central in forming the psychologies of these characters, but it engenders in them a celestial pride in being the way that they are. In this passage, Cacio elevates the playing field for these different psychologies from terrenal to celestial. By invoking celestial beings, he affirms once more that it is his destiny to be destructive and antisocial, and that, because of this destiny, he feels no repugnance for having murdered Laura. The celestial and Biblical connotations that Cacio applies to his particular case do, however, come with negative consequences. While he may not believe that he could have avoided committing his crime, he clearly acknowledges that punishment from heaven has been and will be his burden for all of his life. The end of the passage casts characters like Cacio and Guzmán out into the wilderness. Consequently, we can observe an inversion of cause and effect in that innate perversion casts them into the wilderness and not the other way around. Their rural origins in this case would not have anything to do with their

psychologies. Although the implied author argues that their origins do affect their psychologies, this passage sheds light on a possible alternative.

With the matter of Cacio more or less resolved by his letter, the final chapter of the novel is dedicated to Guzmán and Sara, la *Taciturna*, and the double-suicide that together they attempt. The narrator concludes that they would be acting on the same impulse that caused Cacio to murder Laura:

Á entrambos los desasosegaba, en ciertos momentos de laxitud y de *morbidezza* en que los hundían las caricias apasionadas y los goces incompletos de la carne, la sed obscura de idealidad, la atracción misteriosa de un destino trágico, vagamente presentido, y el ansia ignota y suprema de fundirse en el todo, de dispersarse en la nada, para darle á su amor, efimero como todo afecto terreno, un elemento de eternidad y de belleza que lo elevase sobre la fugacidad miserable de la vida. (426-27)

The narrator expresses that the distaste for idealism that Guzmán has expressed for the entire novel leads Sara and him to consider mutual suicide so that they can possess each other for eternity. The “atracción misteriosa de un destino trágico,” a Romantic notion arising from the idea that a single moment is equivalent to infinity, leads them to believe that they need nothing more from life than to be together dead. Guzmán feels the “fugacidad miserable de la vida” because of his relationship with his wife, Amelia. Sara, deeply devoted to Guzmán, will follow him even into death.

Cacio invokes the natural world to describe his moral degradation. Similarly, the narrator invokes a whirlpool to depict the reckless abandon with which Guzmán and Sara now view their lives: “Y libres de toda incertidumbre, seguros de que las miserias de la existencia no los afligirían más, y de que nada, nada podría separarlos, olvidáronse de todo y se entregaron á su locura, á las embriagueces de su pasión, impetuosa y



arrastradora como un vórtice del mar” (430). The desperate certitude that they possess leads them to attempt to commit these crimes against themselves.

But the idealism that Guzmán enjoyed in which he believed that he would live forever with Sara in the moment of their deaths receives a brutal shock when the materiality of Sara’s deed reaches him: “Oyóse un disparo, y la sangre caliente de Sara salpicó el rostro y las manos de Guzmán y lo hizo estremecer de horror, del horror invencible de la muerte” (437). Guzmán had not calculated the element of horror into his idealistic vision of suicide. The shock is so great that he becomes unable to complete the double-suicide: “Haciendo un esfuerzo supremo, quiso apoyar el revólver humeante aún en su sien, pero el brazo permaneció inerte, como si fuese de plomo, y Guzmán comprendió aterrado, con indecible pena, que le era imposible, que no *podía* matarse” (439). At this moment Guzmán reveals once more the psychological weakness that keeps him from joining his lover, the most important person in his life. He gathers all of the forces that he can to finish off himself, but they are not enough. The narrator describes how his arm becomes like lead. The natural metaphor furthers the argument that elements of the natural world are associated with inaction and passivity.

Indeed, the two men, condemned to prison (we know no more than that), are both accused of more or less passive crimes. Cacio passively placed poison in the glass of Laura and Guzmán observed the suicide of Sara, an occurrence that may result in a murder conviction if he, again, passively, does not defend himself. “Como Cacio, Guzmán no quiso defenderse, y por una coincidencia peregrina, lo alojaron en una celda próxima á la de su único amigo, á la de aquel hombre de destino tan semejante á suyo y

que como él tenía el corazón extraño a los hombres” (440). These two members of the *raza de Caín* grow up in the countryside and come to the *pueblo* thanks to don Pedro’s favor. Their selfishness and perversity accompany them throughout the events of the novel, which is a portrait of the difference between urban and rural psychologies. Cacio, the intellectual one, and Guzmán, the idealistic one, share this brotherhood that ends in death, even if it is a death committed passively. Menchaca also propounds a psychology that, in the cosmivision of the novel, is profoundly rural. His obsequiousness toward and imitation of don Pedro reveal that he relies on others for inspiration.

A trend in the literature of Carlos Reyles is to belittle those who do not own land, those who are subordinate to landowners, even to the point of giving to landowners positive psychological characteristics and to those who live below the landowners negative ones. In this sense, Reyles emphasizes and perpetuates patterns of economic development that keep the upper class prosperous and the working class destitute. His portrayal of country people as being selfish and perverted reflects his vision of a countryside in which people like him (he was a large landowner) rule over those with inferior psychological development. The figure of don Pedro is perhaps admirable at least for his keen attention to the wellbeing of others, but the idea that this type of psychology can only be realized in an owner of land clearly denigrates the people of the country.

## Chapter VI: Conclusion

We have seen that the natural world is represented in Uruguayan fiction of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries in a number of different ways. It functions in Chapter Two as a site upon which the European pastoral imagination asserts itself. The promise of bounty, richness and youth drew Europeans to the New World. Eduardo Galeano's Las venas abiertas de América Latina (1971) explains the development of this imaginary (but also sometimes accurate) impression of the newly-discovered lands of the Americas. A conflict over the ownership of the natural resources evolved, as represented in Ismael (1888), between Spain and Uruguay. The result of the battles between these two forces is that the natural environment comes to be under the governance of the victorious Uruguayans. The object of pastoral desire, the land of Uruguay, falls into the hands of the *criollo* immigrants who have lived there for several generations.

The natural world is represented in El terruño (1916; Chapter Three) as forming part of the urban-rural dichotomy. The novel emphasizes the importance of rural landowners and portrays them as the protagonists of both El terruño and La raza de Caín (1900). Land-owning characters realize that the urban world depends upon the rural world for sustenance. Reyles' heroes carry with them a mixture of good-heartedness and good work-ethic, which helps them succeed not only for themselves, but also for the characters who depend upon them. The battle that evolves between *blancos* and *colorados* creates further schisms between rural and urban realities, schisms that result in kidnapping and loss of life. As an indication of the urban-rural crisis, Primitivo becomes mad and burns down his house on the new piece of land he had just purchased. Looking

back, it is possible to discern that Primitivo's actions could also be seen as indications of the coming environmental crisis.

The natural world functions in Gaucha (1899) as a setting that is more than a setting. The countryside of Gutiérrez, in the department of Minas, affects characters profoundly. It shapes their personalities, which come under the direct scrutiny of the Naturalistic implied author. The natural world makes don Zoilo become reclusive and anti-social. For Juana and Lucio, it is a setting that participates in their romantic encounters by challenging them and hiding them at various moments. What is more, Juana's mysterious melancholic ailment seems, according to the narrator, to emerge from the natural world. El rubio Lorenzo's relationship with the natural world is characterized by the impulse to dominate it and the people who inhabit it. For this reason he and his gang of bandits raid don Zoilo's abode, set it on fire, and kill Zoilo, Lucio, and Juana. Even though he is a bandit who lives off the land and takes no part in technological proliferation that is beginning to shape Uruguayan society at the time of this novel, Lorenzo can be seen as a proponent of the future environmental crisis, especially in his attitudes of deprecation of said natural world and inhabitants.

Psychology and nature figure prominently in La raza de Caín, the featured novel of Chapter Five. In this novel, like in El terruño, Reyles toys with urban-rural relations, and comes to conclusions both similar and different from those of the other novel. Actual descriptions of nature are fewer in this novel when compared to any of the other three analyzed in this dissertation. The "natural world" that is most important to La raza de Caín is the inner landscape of the mind. The implied author suggests that one's

environmental origins determine in part the character of that person. The notion that the rural world provides for the urban is inverted in this novel in the way that don Pedro, from the *pueblo*, provides financial support for three of the novel's characters. Don Pedro, however, is a landowner, much like El terruño's Mamagela. His generosity toward others is similar to Mamagela's own desire to provide for others. The novel suggests that those from the country are inferior to those from the *pueblo* because of the way that the natural world affects their psyches. Those from the *pueblo* are able to embrace technological change and innovation that, as has been observed, leads to our environmental crisis. As urban and rural come into conflict (in the form of modernization and industrialization), they tend to cause movement and change, but don't ever completely displace one in favor of the other. There is a gradient that continues to exist between the two, even after they have attempted to convert one to the other and vice versa.

Change and innovation that landowners like Mamagela and don Pedro would embrace is evident in an article by Carlos A. Russi, where he writes of the dangers of revolutionary movements in agriculture during the last fifty years: "alto rendimiento, monocultivos, mecanización de tareas agrícolas y elevada utilización de agroquímicos" (Russi 24). This revolution, while enormously effective in the short-term, can be damaging to our environment. An example of how the natural environment can be damaged is found in Galeano, where he writes of the quetzal, Guatemala's national bird:

El quetzal siempre fue la alegría del aire en Guatemala. La más resplandeciente de las aves sigue sirviendo de símbolo a este país, aunque ya se lo ve poco o nada en las altas selvas donde antes abundaba. El quetzal se está extinguiendo y mientras tanto, se multiplica el zopilote. El zopilote, que tiene buena nariz para oler la

muerte de lejos, completa la tarea del ejército: persigue a los verdugos de aldea en aldea, volando en círculos ansiosos. (Memoria 3: 165-66)

The disappearance of the *quetzal* is not just a national concern; it is a reflection of the disappearance of many forms of life across the planet. Galeano's message of the disappearance of the *quetzal* and its replacement with the *zopilote* is that a beautiful, symbolic bird is being replaced by one that lives off the death of others. His contention that the bird completes the task of an army reveals its close association with death, lending it a less majestic reputation than that of the *quetzal*.

Another way in which the death of the natural environment is further perpetrated is through the use of toxic chemicals upon plants for the purpose of warfare. Chemical products, like defoliants, are sprayed on plants in order to remove leaves in warfare. Galeano explains: "Completan la faena los desfoliantes de la Dow Chemical, que arrasaron los bosques de Vietnam y ahora arrasan los del Brasil. Las tortugas, ciegas, deambulan por donde hubo árboles" (Memoria 3: 270). Galeano's image of blind turtles wandering through a habitat that has become foreign to them is a testament to the power of companies like Dow Chemical to drastically and violently alter the natural environment. That we must preserve what remains of our faltering natural environment is clear. Galeano emphasizes that the Amazon is "el río padre de mil ríos, el río más caudaloso del mundo, y la selva brotada de su aliento es el último pulmón del planeta" (Memoria 3: 269). His expression of the importance of this river and the forest through which it runs should be a model for all discourses about the preciousness of the natural environment and its resources. If we establish a sense of belonging to a certain space or place, it will be easier to enact ideas about natural conservation. If a people feels that it

belongs to a certain place, it will take greater care of that place than if it were a foreign place.

Wendell Berry warns about the importance of “place” in the fight to care for and maintain an environmentally healthy planet: “Without a complex knowledge of one’s place, and without the faithfulness to one’s place on which such knowledge depends...it is inevitable that the place will be used carelessly, and eventually destroyed” (qtd. in Buell 253). The implications of this statement are that we must remain familiar with the natural world. For that reason, any sort of discourse about the importance of the natural world in humans’ lives, including studies like this one, is useful for the formation of a deeper environmental consciousness. Buell adds:

Apocalypse is the single most powerful master metaphor that the contemporary environmental imagination has at its disposal. Of no other dimension of contemporary environmentalism, furthermore, can it be so unequivocally said that the role of the imagination is central to the project; for the rhetoric of apocalypticism implies that the fate of the world hinges on the arousal of the imagination to a sense of crisis. (285)

Buell calls upon us to use our imaginations and, in effect, imagine the worst. He indicates that we need to experience in our minds the many forms that an environmental disaster can take before we can truly work toward solutions. Environmental apocalypticism, then, according to Buell, begins not with the crisis that is upon us, but by responsibly imagining problems and, in turn, generating solutions. Buell bolsters his argument with a suggestion from Jonathan Schell: “maybe only by descending into this hell in imagination now can we hope to escape descending into it in reality at some later time” (Buell 295). The metaphor of “hell” as a possible future for our planet indeed arouses the imagination to see how terrible the situation could become.

Buell's view is contrasted by that of British scholar Raymond Williams, who speaks of apocalypse in terms of capitalism: "the reflex indeed being fundamentally defensive, with no available confidence in any different way of life, or with such confidence replaced by utopian or apocalyptic visions, none of which can connect with any immediate social practice or movement" (302). Williams takes the more grounded approach and states that we must attend to problems that exist rather than imagining future problems. A wise approach would be to embrace both views so that there are efforts to remedy current problems as well as prevent future ones.

Buell, in fact, refers as well to an historical event and shows that he is thinking not only of the future, but of what has already passed. He expresses: "Nothing is more serious than nuclear holocaust, yet many have found it hard to take seriously, even at the height of the Cold War" (299). The idea that the superpowers of the world were dangerously close to exterminating a portion of the planet's population, and that nuclear arms were already used at the end of World War II, is another indication of the importance of environmental consciousness.

On a scale reduced to the Uruguay of the time period in question, one can associate this environmental apocalypticism with the disappearance of the gaucho. Reyes' El gaucho Florido (1932) is the tale of an old gaucho reflecting on bygone days which have now disappeared. Perhaps we can see a correlation between the disappearance of the gaucho, who lived off the land and whose rate of environmental destruction was minimal, and the rise of industrialism in Uruguay. As agricultural practices became more mechanized and ranches became fenced, there were less



possibilities for the gaucho's survival. He was driven out by civilization just as the Uruguayan natives were previously driven out by the technologically-advanced colonists from Europe. The natural world, as represented in the literature of this time, serves as more than just a backdrop for events because of the way that it integrates itself into the lives of the characters.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Based primarily on newspaper and magazine articles from 1880 to 1920.

<sup>2</sup> Buell, Lawrence. The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 1995. Print.

<sup>3</sup> In Las venas abiertas, Galeano explains that one of the causes of this difference between North and South is the distinct way in which the two continents were colonized. He attributes the colonization of the North to “los granjeros libres” (free farmers) and that of the South to “el latifundio” (the plantation owner). For a more detailed explanation, see “Las trece colonias del norte y la importancia de no nacer importante.”

<sup>4</sup> Naturalism was highly popular as a literary movement in Latin America, as well, and it held influence over much of Javier de Viana’s writing, including Gaucha.

<sup>5</sup> Vara, p. 9-10.

<sup>6</sup> El Grupo de los Cien, co-founded by poet Homero Aridjis, is a collective of one hundred Latin American writers, scientists, environmentalists, and representatives of indigenous groups that, in October of 2010, protested to cancel an international prize funded by a corrupt government of Ecuatorial Guinea (see Aridjis).

<sup>7</sup> Buell’s foundational ecocritical text, The Environmental Imagination (1995), receives ample representation here as a variety of his environmental themes appear throughout the chapters of this dissertation and form the basis for some of the ideas discussed and elaborated.

<sup>8</sup> In the sense of the word that refers to the entire American continent.

<sup>9</sup> Personal interview with Javier Taks. 5 September 2011. Montevideo, Uruguay.

<sup>10</sup> The countryside is popularly referred to by Uruguayans as “suavemente ondulado.” This type of geography is particularly suitable for the grazing of livestock, which has been and continues to be one of Uruguay’s principal industries.

<sup>11</sup> A further example from Hale’s travelogue will suffice to improve our understanding of gaucho life. The *pulpería*, a small rural store and meeting place for country people (including gauchos), serves as an example of how the violent gaucho lifestyle permeated rural society:

As you enter one of them, you see the shop itself is separated from customers by iron bars up to the ceiling, three or four inches apart, which gives the whole thing

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a look of suspicion and dread, as regards customers and the shop master. It shows he considers it necessary to be fortified against violence. Through these bars you see demijohns of wine and spirit, linen-drapery, ponchos, &c., &c., on the shelves round the shop, and what you buy is handed to you through the bars, or through a small door that opens for the occasion. It is possible, however, to get a good bottle of English beer here at a high price, and some bad cheese and bread. (103)

*Pulperías* evolved due to the prevalence of the gaucho culture before the onset of modernization. With certain practices like wire fencing and hybridization of livestock the gaucho disappeared and left less reason for pulperías to exist on the countryside.

<sup>12</sup> Barrán is in agreement when he states the following:

La violencia en sus formas físicas más elementales, el delito de sangre y de cerca entre victimario y víctima; el combate cuerpo a cuerpo en los enfrentamientos de caballerías; el acto de crueldad que, cuchillo en cinto siempre, sigue inmediato a la pasión; el degüello por compasión, el famoso ‘despenar’ de los gauchos a los heridos abandonados y moribundos en campos de batallas protagonizadas por ejércitos sin servicio de enfermería; cierto estoicismo que se practica y se exige a los demás ante el dolor físico; cierta impasibilidad ante las heridas, todo eso sí tal vez se vincule a la matanza a cuchillo diaria e infinita del vacuno. Sólo el primer frigorífico terminará con esta tradición al aplicar desde 1905 a los animales un certero marronazo en la cabeza. (Historia de la sensibilidad 1: 39)

It seems, then, that one of the goals of the “civilizing” contingent would be to eliminate all forms of violence even though, as we have seen, this is impossible to achieve without becoming unprofitable in the meat industry, for example.

<sup>13</sup> Regarding “la exhibición ‘irrespetuosa’ de la muerte,” Barrán recalls the following: “[l]a muerte ‘civilizada’ es también la muerte medicalizada” (Historia de la sensibilidad 2: 216). There is no room in the “civilized” concept of death for humor or group feeling. Death, in fact, grew to be one of the methods that proponents of the “civilized” sensibility used to dominate those who purported other sensibilities. He describes the concept further by stating the following:

La nueva sensibilidad, que es en parte la nuestra, sólo concibió la muerte dentro del mundo de lo serio, lo majestuoso, lo terrible y lo individual. La muerte ganó poder de intimidar, ante lo cual el hombre la negó, la recluyó en los pliegues más profundos de su conciencia como hecha cuya exhibición y recuerdo aterrorizaba. (Historia de la sensibilidad 2: 258)

The way in which a society conceptualizes death reveals its attitudes toward life and, in this case, the treatment of the natural environment and its resources.

<sup>14</sup> Vegetarianism was definitely a key to the “natural” way of life prescribed by Natura. The joining of “natural” and “scientific” was embodied in this eating practice as advertised by Natura: “El vegetarianismo racional es absolutamente científico y dictado

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por el solo deseo de seguir un régimen conforme á las leyes de la naturaleza” (Neuville 42).

<sup>15</sup> The transition from a barbaric to a civilized sensibility, embodied in the process of modernization, causes individuals, according to Williams, to become as “isolated atoms” in a city (296). As modernization took hold, it could be observed that people, desiring to conform with the new civilized sensibility, developed a new strain of individualism which, of course, is well-described by a metaphor from science, that of the atom.

<sup>16</sup> Because it existed from a much earlier point in time, Great Britain had begun to modernize earlier than Uruguay. While Great Britain was pioneering the Industrial Revolution in Europe, Uruguay was struggling to establish nationhood. In such a climate, the incipient nation could not mount a program of sweeping technological changes at the same time that it fought for its independence from Spain. Consequently, Uruguay entered its period of “civilization” later than other countries like Great Britain, as well. In the same way, the disappearance of the peasant was delayed in Uruguay because the farming technology that brought the peasant his demise so early in British history took longer to arrive and be implemented in Uruguay.

<sup>17</sup> Swift 338.

<sup>18</sup> It is for this reason that Barrán and Nahum, in one of the conclusions of their seven-volume study of rural Uruguay, state: “Uruguay, primero como región, la Banda Oriental, y luego como país independiente, creció, cambió o se estancó ‘volcado hacia afuera,’ determinado por las fluctuaciones de la economía mundial regida por las naciones imperiales” (Barrán and Nahum 7: 179). The pressure to modernize came from outside and affected Uruguay economically and socially.

<sup>19</sup> This content included advertisements for all kinds of farm technology (all of which could be found in magazines like La campaña): 3½ horsepower motors, handsaws, rakes, scissors, mills, mincers, alfalfa and corn husks, steel weeders, ploughs, bread mixers, presses, pistols, knives, steel mats, Italian pruning shears, spreaders, cultivators, stalls, rollers, beehives. Products like these made manipulation of the rural environment easier and more effective and contributed to the project of modernization in rural Uruguay as a whole.

<sup>20</sup> Barrán and Nahum 2: 81.

<sup>21</sup> Araújo, Orestes. Tierra uruguaya: Descripción geográfica de la República Oriental del Uruguay. Montevideo: La nación, 1913. Print.

<sup>22</sup> “Los ferrocarriles uruguayos.” El telégrafo [Paysandú] 1 Nov. 1916: 1. Print.

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<sup>23</sup> Misemer observes, using Argentina as an example, on the role of the train as a foreign invention backed by foreign business: "...the train, a British invention, symbolizes modernity for Argentina as the vehicle for populizing and 'civilizing' the land and reaping its bounties..." (Misemer 150). She makes clear that the train was indispensable to the expansion of rural enterprise. Barrán and Nahum, on the other hand, state that the implementation of railroad technology (especially by its British inventors) came with the price of, if not monopoly, then government-backed market dominance: "Mientras Battle y sus jóvenes radicales luchaban contra los monopolios extranjeros, la empresa ferroviaria británica logró un espectacular crecimiento de la red férrea y las ganancias en este período, al amparo de garantías que el mismo gobierno concedió" (Barrán and Nahum 7: 5).

<sup>24</sup> Bouton, Roberto J. La vida rural en el Uruguay. Montevideo: A. Monteverde y Cia, 1961. Print.

<sup>25</sup> "Los residuos de dragado." La nación [Montevideo] 1 Feb. 1903: 1. Microfilm.

<sup>26</sup> An anonymous news article in El día similarly lauds this achievement: "Ya pueden los buques de ultramar llegar hasta los diques de ribera y depositar directamente en tierra sus cargamentos y pueden del mismo modo abrir sus escotillas al borde flamante de los muros de quai, para abarcar los frutos de nuestro suelo fecundo" ("El puerto de Montevideo" 3).

<sup>27</sup> Rodríguez Diez, L. "La raza caballar oriental." El Paysandú 9 June 1891: 1. Print.

<sup>28</sup> Rodillo. "Los alambrados sobre caminos." Asociación Rural del Uruguay 30 Apr. 1883: 241-42. Print.

<sup>29</sup> "Las lombrices en las ovejas." Ecós del progreso [Salto] 2 Oct. 1918: 1+. Print.

<sup>30</sup> "La vacuna polivalente contra la Tristeza." El Paysandú 13 Apr. 1903: 1. Print.

<sup>31</sup> "Exportación de carnes a Inglaterra—Resultados de una investigación profiláctica." El siglo [Montevideo] 9 July 1914: 3. Microfilm.

<sup>32</sup> "Cremas y mantecas—Manipulación de la leche." El siglo [Montevideo] 10 July 1914: 10. Microfilm.

<sup>33</sup> "La viña y el olivo en el Estado Oriental." La nación [Montevideo] 17 July 1880: 1. Microfilm.

<sup>34</sup> "Un gran progreso agrícola." Asociación Rural del Uruguay 15 Feb. 1883: 87-89. Print.

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<sup>35</sup> Katra, William H. "Uruguay." Handbook of Latin American Literature. Comp. David William Foster. New York: Garland, 1987. 529-57. Print.

<sup>36</sup> Franco, Jean. Spanish American Literature Since Independence. London: Ernest Benn, 1973. Print.

<sup>37</sup> Brushwood, John S. The Spanish American Novel: A Twentieth-Century Survey. Austin: U of Texas P, 1975. Print.

<sup>38</sup> Brushwood, John S. Genteel Barbarism. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1981. Print.

<sup>39</sup> Zum Felde, Alberto. Proceso intelectual del Uruguay. Montevideo: Nuevo Mundo, 1987. Print.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Zum Felde, Alberto. La narrativa en Hispanoamérica. Madrid: Aguilar, 1964. Print.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> This quotation appears in footnote 4 on page 30 of Las venas abiertas de América Latina (1971).

<sup>45</sup> Ecological Imperialism (1986).

<sup>46</sup> In his 1931 monograph on Eduardo Acevedo Díaz.

<sup>47</sup> The idea that nature and the representation of nature are distinct realities will be taken up in earnest in Chapter Four.

<sup>48</sup> Rómulo Cosse also refers to the work of Acevedo Díaz as being comparable to the Iliad.

<sup>49</sup> This topic is taken up in full force in Chapter Three concerning Carlos Reyles' El terruño (1916).

<sup>50</sup> Buell's point, however valid, obviously comes from an Anglo-American point of view instead of a Latin American one.

<sup>51</sup> Similar oppositions can be found in El terruño. Tocles is a city-dweller educated by foreign-implemented universities. Primitivo, on the other hand, is an inhabitant of the

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countryside, a gaucho with dreams of owning his own small ranch. Mamagela is also an archetypal character as she represents for Reyles the model of how Uruguayan people should live: working the land and providing for those around them.

<sup>52</sup> An archetypal vision of national formation is also present in El terruño. Mamagela is the archetypal model that, as we have mentioned, Reyles was interested in promoting. It is no coincidence that her daughters (Amabi and Celedonia) are the respective partners of Tocles and Primitivo. The varying national projects that Tocles and Primitivo represent are justified in their relationships with these women, especially if we keep in mind the idea of nation as feminine construct. The two daughters of Mamagela thus represent extensions of Mamagela's own will to define the Uruguayan nation.

The key difference between the two novels is that in El terruño Mamagela is presented as the sole model of how the nation should form itself. The conflict of national ideology is distinct to that of Ismael. The main conflict, in contrast, emerges from Mamagela's disapproval of Tocles as a husband for Amabi. Tocles' melancholic demeanor is a source of dissatisfaction in Mamagela, and this dissatisfaction drives the main conflict of the novel. As the main character, her opinions about Tocles portray Reyles' ideological purpose in writing the novel: Tocles' melancholic aversion to country life is detrimental to the nation as a whole and people like him do not contribute positively to the formation of national character.

<sup>53</sup> In his monograph about colonial Uruguay, La invención del Uruguay: la entrada del territorio y sus habitantes a la cultura occidental.

<sup>54</sup> The narrator calls Elío an "esclavo de la monarquía absoluta" (31).

<sup>55</sup> A further indication of Ismael's organic link with nature comes from the narrator's description of him as a "centauro" (70). This repeated image suggests a bond between Velarde and his horse so intrinsic that the two become metaphorically inseparable.

<sup>56</sup> Felisa, tragically, dies in a horse-riding accident after she has already chosen Ismael as a suitor.

<sup>57</sup> In spite of this reality, Acevedo Díaz's Romantic narrative style allows only for the hero, Ismael, to be victorious. In that light, the reader knows from the beginning, from reading the title of the novel, who will be victorious. Felisa's ambivalence, however, remains true for the characters themselves within the flow of the narrative.

<sup>58</sup> One of the most explicit and detailed indications of the combat to come is taken from later in the novel: "Por esos días, la campaña empezaba a conmoverse. Corrían voces extrañas de sublevación de las milicias; las partidas se cruzaban en todos los rumbos arreando caballos y haciendas vacunas" (256). The idea of the countryside as

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“conmoviéndose” is an indicator of the business the precedes war, a war that will be fought on the same battlefields that are being prepared for it.

<sup>59</sup> Ten pages later, the narrator makes a statement that both shows how the two sides were at war with each other and the reasons for this conflict:

pues que, dividido ya el campo en *uropeos* y *tupamaros*, estos últimos negaban la existencia de todo vínculo social o político con sus antiguos dominadores, considerándose una familia distinta como si dijésemos, una entidad etnológica en pugna con la raza de la vieja colonia, y reclamaban para sí la posesión y tranquilo goce de las soledades en que se habían formado y desenvuelto sus instintos, que en verdad como tales, eran fuerzas más vivas y enérgicas que las ideas y por lo mismo de acción más rápida para demoler hasta en sus cimientos el edificio vetusto, sin dejar piedra sobre piedra. (274)

The *tupamaros*, then, were fighting for instincts they had developed from their relationship with the natural world (“tranquilo goce de las soledades”), instincts that were unrelated to the occupying *uropeos*.

<sup>60</sup> José Gervasio Artigas (1764-1850), leader of the Uruguayan quest for independence.

<sup>61</sup> Another passage that confirms Artigas’ allegiance with the revolutionary effort is the following description of his passionate nature, which he would then channel into support for and leadership of the Uruguayan cause: “el influjo de las pasiones que sirvieron más tarde de nervio de resistencia a la emancipación local” (289).

<sup>62</sup> That the members of the rebel army are more varied and spontaneous is confirmed by the narrator on page 284 when he states:

Este conjunto caprichoso de soldados de uniforme, fusileros con andrajos, casaquillas incoloras, sombreros de altas copas, gorros de cilindro, chiripaes haraposos, enormes espuelas, lanzas de cuchillas y cañoncitos que parecían cerbatanas para soplar bodoques, --pero todo bien organizado y dispuesto— habíase avanzado hasta Canelones en marcha al campo enemigo.

The heterogeneity of the people of the country reveals a spirit of liveliness that the Spanish side lacks.

<sup>63</sup> Las Piedras is now part of the wider metropolitan area of Montevideo, but in the time frame of *Ismael* it would have been on the outskirts of urban civilization, a fitting location for a clash between “civilization” and “barbarity.”

<sup>64</sup> Although the pastoral dream is many times flawed and fleeting, there appears to be, in this case, a significant reality to the pastoral vision, a reality that gets transferred from the Spanish to the Uruguayans at the culmination of the battle.



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<sup>65</sup> As a response to this detrimental attitude, Glen A. Love writes: “The doomsday potentialities are so real and so profoundly important that a ritual chanting of them ought to replace the various nationalistic and spiritual incantations with which we succor ourselves” (226).

<sup>66</sup> Cheryll Glotfelty’s words in the Introduction to her Ecocriticism Reader confirm this assertion: “...we have reached the age of environmental limits, a time when the consequences of human actions are damaging the planet’s basic life support systems” (xx).

<sup>67</sup> Politician and activist, Albert Gore.

<sup>68</sup> Primitivo was one of three Academias that Reyles wrote just before the turn of the twentieth century. The other two texts are El extraño (1897; precursor to La raza de Caín (1900)) and El sueño de Rapiña (1898).

<sup>69</sup> This cry was a conventional battle cry for the revolutionary forces of Aparicio Saravia in the revolutions of 1897 and 1904 (Barrán Historia rural 4: 44).

<sup>70</sup> Aparicio Saravia (1856-1904) was a revolutionary leader among rural communities looking to upend reigning land-owners. He died in a revolution in 1904.

<sup>71</sup> “Langosta” in this case refers not to the oceanic crustacean but to the agricultural pest (locust).

<sup>72</sup> Pantaleón is introduced between pages 73 and 83 of the novel, in Chapter V.

<sup>73</sup> *Matrero* is a term that most easily translates into English as “bandit.” The *matrero* was a relative of the *gaucho* in that both lived in rural areas and obtained their sustenance from the land. Often this implied the killing of livestock belonging to rural landowners. The imposition of wire fencing in Uruguay’s rural areas led to the decline of the *matrero* and the *gaucho*.

<sup>74</sup> The term originates with Clifford Geertz in The Interpretation of Cultures (1973).

<sup>75</sup> Other critics, as we will see, have also denigrated certain aspects of the novel.

<sup>76</sup> The relevant section of Viana’s prologue is as follows: “Bien sé yo que no es un roble mi Gaucha; pero amo considerarla un humilde molle de la sierra, que el extranjero mirará con desdén y que el hijo de mi patria contemplará con algún cariño, un molle de la sierra, que hace muchos años está allí, hundidas las raíces en las grietas de las rocas, desparramada sobre peñascos la oscura y enmarañada cabellera” (Roxlo xvi-xvii).

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<sup>77</sup> Lucio, as a complement to Juana, also manifests psychological illness. As the narrator relates: “Le abruma [a Lucio] la tristeza y el desconsuelo. Es verdad que Lucio, por razones de origen, tiene a la melancolía por compañera. Esta compañera no le deja jamás” (Roxlo xxx). Thus, not only Juana (as some critics have argued), but also the union between Juana and Lucio represents the decadent state of rural Uruguay at this moment in time. Visca adds: “Para Lucio la vida se construye desde las rudas faenas del campo” (49-50). In this sense, Lucio and Juana are both children of the countryside who have, inexplicably, melancholies that rise up from the land.

<sup>78</sup> Pereda Valdés adds: “más que en la descripción de la naturaleza se detiene minuciosamente en estudiar la sicología del hombre del campo” (536).

<sup>79</sup> The feminine refinement in his physiognomy indicates a source of desperation for him because of the desire that it invokes in him to defend himself against accusations of femininity (due to the machistic posturing that governs many of his actions). This desperation would also, in turn, lead to cruelty and violence, as it does in the novel. Lorenzo works to counterbalance his own feminine refinement by physically dominating others. This concept of the relationship between face and personality was the nineteenth-century “science” of phrenology. Practitioners would determine a subject’s personality by analyzing the shape of his or her head, including specific bumps and deformities. See also Mario Vargas Llosa, *La guerra del fin del mundo*, in which a young intellectual is a devotee to phrenology.

<sup>80</sup> See especially David Mazel, “American Literary Environmentalism as Domestic Orientalism” and Scott Slovic, “Nature Writing and Environmental Psychology: The Interiority of Outdoor Experience.”

<sup>81</sup> I use “American” in the broader sense of the word, including all of the North and South American continents, not just the United States.

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