

ENRIQUE AMORIM

THE MAN AND HIS WORKS

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ENRIQUE AMORIM  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
CHAPTER	
I. ENRIQUE AMORIM--THE MAN . . . . .	4
II. REALISTIC NOVELS OF THE GAUCHO AND PAMPA LIFE-- THE KEY TO FAME AND SUCCESS . . . . .	19
Tangarupá	El caballo y su sombra
La carreta	La luna se hizo con agua
El paisano Aguilar	La desembocadura
III. THE NOVELS WITH POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS . . . . .	56
Nueve lunas sobre Neuquén	
La victoria no viene sola	
IV. NOVELS OF SOCIAL INJUSTICES . . . . .	61
Corral abierto	
Los montaraces	
V. MYSTERY NOVELS . . . . .	68
El asesino desvelado	
Feria de farsantes	
VI. URBAN NOVELS . . . . .	73
La edad desapareja	
Todo puede suceder	
Eva Burgos	
VII. SHORT STORIES . . . . .	81
CONCLUSION . . . . .	91
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	95
APPENDIX . . . . .	105

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## INTRODUCTION

In Mexico, Central and South America there are numerous writers who are distinguished and prominent men in their respective fields of scholarly endeavor, but primarily only in the Spanish-speaking areas of the world. Many have not received their due recognition in other countries or received it only after they were no longer able to appreciate it. It would seem that there are four primary factors involved here: 1) Only a small minority of the inhabitants of non-Spanish-speaking countries are able to read, speak or understand Spanish; 2) There is only a limited number of the works printed; 3) Spanish-English translations are limited; and 4) The translations do not always do justice to the author's original work.

The purpose of this thesis was to gather and make known more information about the life and works of one of these outstanding writers of Latin America who has been somewhat overlooked in the United States up to the present.

Enrique Amorim (1900-1960), a native of Uruguay and a writer well known in Latin America, spent two thirds of his sixty years producing literary works which have won him awards, been translated into ten other languages, been plagiarized, and now remain to preserve for him fame and recognition.

Beginning at the age of twenty with a book of verse entitled Veinte Años, he has produced a continued and varied assortment of literary materials ranging all the way from novels, short stories,

poetry and plays to essays and hundreds of newspaper and magazine articles written on diverse subjects.

Enrique Amorim's stories of the country people confronted with the realities of life and nature have been his most popular and appealing works. The source of inspiration for most of these realistic stories was drawn from his experiences as a child on a ranch in Northern Uruguay. The key to his fame and success undoubtedly lies in the novels of the gaucho and life on the pampas. These novels include La carreta, El paisano Aguilar, El caballo y su sombra, Tangarupá, La luna se hizo con agua, La desembocadura and Los montaraces. The first three in particular are likely to endure after his other works have been forgotten, although the last two novels mentioned above, among his latest works, may well become as popular as their predecessors. He has also written some highly-regarded short stories, the general themes of which are much the same as those found in his novels.

In the United States very little has been written about him. There has been a limited number of critical reviews in major newspapers written about his novels. Richard O'Connell and James Graham Luján translated El caballo y su sombra (The Horse and His Shadow), Scribner & Sons, New York, 1943, and presented a short biography. In 1952 J. C. Herman and Agnes M. Brady presented an adaptation of El asesino desvelado for classroom use. This also contained a brief biography. In Books Abroad, published by the University of Oklahoma, Vol. 34, 1960, Harley D. Oberhelman presented an article entitled "Enrique Amorim as an Interpreter of Rural Uruguay". To the best of my knowledge this exhausts the list of materials written in the United States about Enrique Amorim other than that found in anthologies and histories of literature.

Since there is no complete edition of this author and materials are widely scattered, the purpose of this thesis is to assemble as much information as possible about Enrique Amorim as a man and writer. I shall attempt to evaluate his major works and bring together the numerous, sometimes little-known, materials in such a form as to give a total overall picture of the man, the influences which affected his literary output, and the purposes of his works which were: first, to depict in a realistic manner the country people and life of rural Uruguay; second, to protest against the inequalities suffered by the lower classes, the workers; and third, to point out the need for social reforms. Lastly, I shall try to present as complete a bibliography as possible, including all of Enrique Amorim's works, criticisms and evaluations of his publications, and miscellaneous materials which give a picture of the man and his talents.

## CHAPTER I

### ENRIQUE AMORIM--THE MAN

Enrique Manuel Amorim was born July 25, 1900, in Salto, Uruguay, the son of Enrique Amorim and Candalaria Areta Torres. During his formative years he lived on the ranch of his Portuguese forebears in Northern Uruguay near the Brazilian border. There, at his father's side, he developed an interest in the work and future of the frugal, indifferent and melancholy people who served on the ranch. It is these people and events in their lives which Enrique Amorim has drawn upon as the source of inspiration for his now famous novels of the gaucho and the Uruguayan countryside: Tangarupá, La carreta, El paisano Aguilar, El caballo y su sombra, La luna se hizo con agua, La desembocadura and Los montaraces.

He began his schooling at the Osimani and Llerena Polytechnical Institute in Salto. In a personal interview with Marcha, Amorim was asked if there was something in his life which had had a deep influence upon his intellectual creativeness and he answered:

A los quince años tuve un maestro (Don Pedro Thévenet), que nos exigía diariamente una copia de cualquier texto--diario, revista, libro. Yo empecé a escribir las diez líneas exigidas sacándolas de mi caletre. Eso me hizo escritor. El maestro calibraba el gusto del alumno, leía en su caligrafía, escudriñaba en las diez líneas. Al fin del año supe que yo tenía capacidad de inventiva. Ya es algo en países sin imaginación. Aquí se copia y poco se inventa, casi nada.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Marcha, Montevideo, April 8, 1960.

In 1917, at the age of sixteen, he was sent to the Colegio Internacional de Olivos in Buenos Aires where his literary talents were further developed. In a letter to Angel Flores he tells of his experiences there:

Me hice bachiller. Allí empecé a escribir una revista que hacíamos los estudiantes. No salieron muchos escritores de aquella colmena. El colegio tenía una tradición humanista porque lo había fundado un italiano de gran cultura y lo dirigía en mis tiempos, un gran maestro, Francisco Chelía. A su alrededor circulaban artistas, hombres de letra, científicos y pedagogos. Frecuentaba la casa José Ingenieros que, en cada visita, dejaba un revulsivo en el ambiente. Aparecieron personajes de toda índole. Ejemplares raros de aquella época. Desde Bagaría a Benaventi, desde el escultor que fracasó o el pintor hasta el celebrado actor. Caían bien en aquella casa las domingos. Teníamos un lunes lleno de resonancias y falta de disciplina en el estudio. Y en ese Colegio fué profesor de literatura cuando la madurez empezó a golpearme las carnes. Al mismo tiempo, era secretario de una oficina de Impuestos, en la Provincia de Buenos Aires. Estas funciones, la una y la otra, y la aparición de mi primer libro me enfrentó a un país que amo tanto como mi patria.<sup>2</sup>

In Buenos Aires in 1920, while in his twentieth year, he published his first work, a book of verse entitled Veinte años, which contained a prologue by Julio Noé and a few prophetic words by Baldomero Fernández Moreno.<sup>3</sup> These poems are almost adolescent in nature and tend to be nostalgic and sentimental, but the volume is full of "frescura y de gracia."<sup>4</sup> The intense young poet revealed his highly artistic temperment

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<sup>2</sup> Angel Flores, Historia y antología del cuento y la novela en hispanoamericana (New York, 1959), p. 578.

The literary magazine was Páginas which Amorim edited in conjunction with his friends Alfredo O'Connell and Felix Callo.

A personal letter from Mrs. Amorim, April 26, 1962, states that Francisco Chelía was the person who directed Amorim's first steps in the field of literature.

<sup>3</sup> I am including in this chapter brief criticisms and resumes of Mr. Amorim's other volumes of poetry, plays and miscellaneous materials in order not to exclude them entirely. The novels and short stories are dealt with in later chapters.

<sup>4</sup> Juan Carlos Welker, "La obra literaria de Enrique Amorim," appearing in Amorim's La carreta, 1st and 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Claridad, 1932), p. 153.



which was to be more fully exposed in his forceful and poetic prose of later years.

Another volume of poetry, Un sobre con versos, was probably published sometime between 1920 and 1923 or 1924 according to Mrs. Amorim.<sup>5</sup> It was a very limited edition, and there is no other information available regarding this work.<sup>6</sup>

A third volume of poetry, Visitas al cielo, appeared in 1929. The title page was done by Alejandro Sirio, a friend of the author, and Amorim's wife, Esther Haedo, did the drawings. The first part contains a miscellaneous collection, while the second part describes various European sights and cities. The title is significant when we read Amorim's comment on the title page, "Y, que nos sirve la poesía, para escapar de este mundo y visitar el cielo."<sup>7</sup> In this handful of poems of neo-romantic inspiration the author reveals a refined and polished approach to writing in which his poetry becomes the condensed outlet for his spiritual as well as physical speculations.<sup>8</sup> M. López Palmero cites the influences of the first symbolists Verlaine and Rodenbach, the influence of Juan Ramón Jiménez, the humorous and rhetoric exoticism which

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<sup>5</sup> A personal letter to the writer, April 26, 1962.

<sup>6</sup> Some of Enrique Amorim's earliest works are out of print and therefore are not available so it was necessary to rely on the limited criticisms of others. However, since there has been so little published about Amorim, I have included these volumes to give as complete an outline of his works as possible even though they were unavailable for consultation for this thesis.

<sup>7</sup> Visitas al cielo (Buenos Aires: Gleizer Editor, 1929), title page.

<sup>8</sup> Juan Carlos Welker, "La obra literaria de Enrique Amorim," La carreta, 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Claridad, 1932), p. 158.

now is a decadent form, and other examples to show a lack of organization and the absence of an "estética bien delimitada" in this volume of poetry by Amorim.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless there are a half dozen poems, among which are "Estancias en el crepúsculo", "Romance desde los techos", the romance which begins "Una noria de pájaros", "Toledo", "Paris" and "Mujer de Castilla", which have been admired by critics.

Cinco poemas uruguayos, a book of poetry inspired by his native country, was published in Salto in 1935 in a limited edition. Dos poemas, 1940, was also published in Amorim's hometown of Salto. Cuaderno Salteño, 1942, contains poetry written by him, but without his signature. His wife did the illustrations, also without signature. The year 1949 saw the appearance of another volume of poetry, Primero de mayo, which contains a variety of poetry written from the years 1942 to 1949. Quiero, 1954, contains many of his poems--almost all of a political or social nature--which had been previously printed in newspapers or magazines. Sonetos del amor en octubre, 1954, contains love sonnets as the title suggests; a second edition of this volume was published in 1957. The year of Amorim's death, 1960, saw the publication of a number of works, but the only poetry in this year was a volume entitled Mi patria, which according to the editor,

. . . representa la vena lírica que se deja entrever en La carreta, en El caballo y su sombra, Corral abierto, y La desembocadura, sus más reputadas novelas de los últimos años.<sup>10</sup>

His poetry contains variety in meter and theme. The subjects

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<sup>9</sup>M. López Palmero, "Sobre Visitas al Cielo," Nosotros, Vol. 66 (Buenos Aires, 1929), p. 410-412.

<sup>10</sup>Mi patria (Montevideo: Ediciones Papel de Poesía, Impresora Uruguaya, 1960), cover of paper jacket.

range from love, political and social problems, scenes of country life, and of his travels and acquaintances, to miscellaneous thoughts of his inner spirit and personal observations. His love sonnets and some of the poems dealing with life and scenes of the countryside, such as "Estancias en el crepúsculo", "El mate", "El ombú" and others, have been cited as outstanding.

Amorim wrote regularly for Argentine newspapers and magazines: La Prensa, Crítica, Caras y Caretas, Plus Ultra, La Nación, Mundo Argentino, etc. Articles relating to the theatre and current events appeared in the magazine El Hogar. In Uruguay he contributed to El Nacional, El País, El Popular, Justicia, Mundo Uruguayo, and La Mañana. In his native Salto, he submitted materials to La Nota, La Tarde, Tribuna Salteña and El Pueblo. He also contributed short stories, poetry, essays and miscellaneous other articles to various other newspapers and magazines such as Sur, Nosotros, Ficción, Atenea and others. His wife writes in a personal letter to the writer,

Se puede decir que no hubo revista o diario editado en ambas márgenes del Plata que no contó con sus colaboraciones.<sup>11</sup>

The theatre recognized him as a dramatist, and he wrote frequently for the Argentine movie companies from 1938 to 1944. Nosotros, Vol. 14, 1941, reviews a film, Yo quiero morir contigo, which Enrique Amorim wrote in collaboration with Román Gómez Masía. He also collaborated with Sixto Pondal Ríos and Carlos Olivari.<sup>12</sup> The year 1950

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<sup>11</sup> April 26, 1962.

<sup>12</sup> These men are all prominent Argentine playwrights. Carlos Olivari and Sixto Pondal Ríos collaborated in Viejo verde and others. Román Gómez Masía (1903-1944) has numerous plays to his credit such as El señor Dios no está en casa, La mujer que ellos sueñan, Ausencia, Temístocles en Salamina, Yo me llamo Juan García and Islas Orcadas.

brought forth a flurry of activity in the theatre. Amorim wrote and directed three plays, La segunda sangre, Pausa en la selva, and Yo voy más lejos. La segunda sangre, first shown in Buenos Aires March 16, 1950, is dedicated to

. . . mis amigos de Francia, camaradas de la resistencia, como contribución al esclarecimiento del gran destino que guardan todos los pueblos del universo en la cruenta lucha por la libertad.<sup>13</sup>

The scene is France during the German occupation. The protagonist is Teresa, a village girl who is the personal maid of Dede Lefevre. She worships her mistress because she is beautiful and of noble birth. Dede's husband, Gaston, is fighting with the French Underground. During his absences his wife entertains the German officers at their chateau. When Gaston returns he is captured by the Germans. He is to be shot, but the Germans first want some valuable information from him. When he refuses to talk, the Germans send Dede to see him. She tells him they have agreed to pretend to shoot him, and in the morgue his body is to be exchanged for another so he can escape. He is unable to make her understand the Germans are lying to her. She is still patiently waiting for Gaston's homecoming when Teresa returns to the chateau which she left the day of Gaston's supposed execution. Teresa joined the French Underground where she was accepted as an individual rather than a servant. A German officer comes to see Dede and in an ensuing argument Dede learns that they have killed Gaston. Teresa kills the officer and Dede and then returns to the resistance fighters.

Amorim's works deal primarily with the downtrodden, the poor, the

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<sup>13</sup>La segunda sangre (Buenos Aires: Editorial Conducta, Colección Maese Pedro, 1950), p. 7.

lower classes and their spiritual and physical battle with the strong and powerful in their society; this play is no exception. Amorim's heartfelt sympathies lie with the French people, but this play is concerned with more than the Frenchmen's battle with the German conquerors. Amorim portrays an individual's fight for bodily and spiritual independence and recognition of one's own true worth. Teresa, the village girl, is attracted to her rich, beautiful and immoral mistress as light attracts the moth. Gaston's death puts out the light for Teresa, and she is able to escape the attraction. She finds herself among her own kind with the resistance fighters; there she is accepted and treated like another human being. She discovers for the first time that she is attractive to men of both noble and common birth. Most important of all is that she finds she can be useful to her village, her country and her fellowmen, and life very suddenly becomes rich and full of meaning for her. In the united effort to free France from Germany's strangle hold, she emerges as one of the brave, patriotic and independent young people fighting for their liberty, which now has more meaning for them.

Pausa en la selva, dedicated to Dr. Jean Dalsace in Paris, is set in a tropical area of America where the Germans have set up a station to experiment with artificial insemination. The main characters are the Professor, his young co-worker Frank, and Sara the nurse. Hitler wants lots of strong young men for his armies so these three people are brought together to experiment on the Indians of the area to determine how this can best be done. Some of the women have died from the experiments. Frank is the only one who has been able to gain the children's confidence. He learns that the Indian chief's daughter,

Isabel, is considered almost holy because she has received instruction from a priest and therefore is seldom seen. The rainy season descends upon the area. The Indians fear it because they die with the plague. Isabel comes to Frank hoping he can save her from this illness, and they become lovers. The next truck bringing new supplies has seeds and plants on it which Frank hopes will better the diet, health and economy of the Indians. The Indians plan to attack the station because the chief has learned that Isabel is pregnant. Everyone leaves the station except the Professor and Frank. After a tense night filled with fear and the beating of drums, the dawn arrives and with it comes Isabel; Frank is no longer afraid of anything.

Amorim depicts three people with a ruthless, utilitarian purpose in mind: to use the Indians any way they can to conduct merciless experiments in artificial insemination since for them the Indian is expendable. Again we see the theme of exploitation of the helpless in Amorim's work. Contrasted with this is Frank's humanitarian impulse to help the Indians improve their health, diet and economical status; his love for Isabel has changed him. The play is credible and realistic. Its criticism of those who exploit the helpless is apparent.

Yo voy más lejos, with a French version by Jean Camp entitled Au bout du monde, takes place on a ranch, "El Palenque", in a subtropical region in the summer of 1919. Julio has come from the city to visit his brother, Teodoro Azara, whose wife has supposedly just given birth to a son and heir. He chuckles about what the doctor's reaction will be when he learns that Silvia has had a boy after the doctor said she could never have children. Silvia only knows that she was unconscious a long time and awoke to find the boy in her arms. One evening Rosaura comes

and demands that Teodoro return her son to her, or she will tell his wife and the police. She willingly gave up her son to avoid her father's wrath, but now she wants him back. Teodoro threatens her, and she is almost out of her mind when the old peon leads her away. When the boy Teo was nine, Teodoro died and his widow, Silvia, married Eduardo. They have a daughter, Elena, who becomes a medical student. Teo manages the ranch and falls in love with Elena when she comes to the ranch for a vacation. The old peon dies and leaves a packet of letters for Teo, but he burns them without reading them; then Silvia tells him she is not his mother and therefore he can marry Elena, thus fulfilling his father's wish that her blood and his be united.

This play illustrates Amorim's sensitive ability to depict the psychology of the rural people. He portrays the power of the feudalistic rancher over his people whereby he is able to alter and change laws and customs to suit his purposes. There is the ever-present desire to have an heir at any cost. He aptly reveals Silvia as a woman who unselfishly raises, protects and loves the boy, Teo, knowing that he is not of her flesh, but that he deserves her care in order to follow in his father's footsteps.

The year 1958 saw the introduction of another play, Don Juan 38. The scene for this is a feudal estancia where horses are raised. An old woman relates facts between the scenes about the characters and events. Gabriella, a widow, is in love with Don Juan, her deceased husband's best friend. She thinks her three children are unaware of her affair. Don Juan, apparently has never married, and always has excuses when marriage is mentioned. Don Juan takes an interest in Gabriella's daughter, Elvira. Years later he is attracted by Elvira's



daughter, Ada. He declares he will learn her weaknesses when he is unsuccessful in exciting her passions, but she tells him that he will never know the truth. The old woman gives him a drink, and he falls dead.

Don Juan is the proverbial lover. He loves each female member of the family until he has conquered them both physically and spiritually, and then he leaves them for a new love which in each case is a daughter of his previous conquest. His downfall comes when he attempts to conquer the third generation and fails pitifully. Fantasy and reality are mixed in this play, and many superstitions of the country people are related in the dialogue. For me this was the most interesting part of the play.

I consider La segunda sangre and Yo voy más lejos to be among his better productions for their vivid portrayal of times, people and emotions. His dramatic writing is limited, and comparison is difficult; but, as in the case of his poetry, some of the material is superior to the rest, although neither his poetry nor his plays seem to me to equal the quality of his novels.

Juan C. Castagnino, written in 1945, is the sole monograph among his literary works. He also wrote an essay entitled El último niño bien which was published in 1960.

In an interview with Marcha, April 8, 1960, Amorim was asked to relate what works and authors most influenced his intellectual formation, and he replied,

La formación intelectual no está supeditada a una obra ni a ciertos autores, sino, más bien, a los ambientes en que se desarrolló esa formación. Para mí fueron piedras de toque--pedernales diríamos--Iván Bunin, Maupassant, Chejov. Sin La maison Télrier (Maupassant) yo no me habría atrevido a 'inventar'

La carreta. En la época en que el escritor resuelve continuar escribiendo recurre a los maestros luego de haber frecuentado, sin pensarlo, a los clásicos. Leí a Sherwood Anderson para penetrarlo. Estoy inscripto en la tradición nacional, y los movimientos estéticos extranjeros no son más que eso--'movimientos'; cambios, modas, paparrucha al fin.<sup>14</sup>

From these men Amorim absorbed the art of the Realist and that of the Naturalist. All of his characters have an air of realness in an appropriate environment. Even the highly original but fictitious quitanderas appear to be a part of history, although there is nothing to support this claim but Amorim's lifelike descriptions of them. Amorim delves deeply into the psychology of some of his characters and presents their prime concerns in life. Thus in El caballo y su sombra we see Nico Azara's desire to maintain the status quo, the feudal estancia, and his brother's desire to improve his country. In La luna se hizo con agua we see Silvia's belated but sincere interest in the welfare of the workers on the ranch and Goyo Lanza's same interest seen from the worker's point of view. The descriptions of customs and superstitions help to support the scene and aid in the development of the plot.

Amorim's earliest works may have been influenced by Horacio Quiroga.<sup>15</sup> It is natural that Amorim as a son of Salto might attempt to follow in the steps of the older man whom he admired and who had lived and breathed the same atmosphere as he. His realistic portrayal of the rural scenes in Tangarupá (1925) suggest Quiroga's technique,

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<sup>14</sup> Marcha, Montevideo, April 8, 1960. Nosotros, Vol. 58 (Buenos Aires, 1927), p. 79-80, contains a poem by Amorim entitled "Tarde con Maupassant".

<sup>15</sup> Nosotros, Vol. 3 (Buenos Aires, 1937), p. 319-321, contains an article written by Amorim in which he paid homage to Horacio Quiroga at his death.

but Amorim's novels and short stories developed in a different direction later.<sup>16</sup> Although Enrique Amorim may have been influenced by others at times, he always maintained his own style, his own individuality.

Amorim wrote under a number of pseudonyms. Dr. Harley Oberhelman of Texas Technological College has kindly lent me the following list of pseudonyms and the year in which Amorim used them: 1929-D.P.; 1930-T. and Dr. Ignotus; 1932-Don Perogrullo and Federico Paz; 1933-Joaquín de Salto; 1937-Arapey, Juan de Dios, Agapito, Juan Mínimo and Primer Comisario; 1939-Diógenes; 1947-Lázaro Riet; 1950-Campesino, Francisco Aguilar and Globe Trotter; 1951-El Abate Julio, Observadora and Teatralero; 1952-Fray Gerundio; 1953-A.B.C. and Linuco Pereira; 1955-Ub Artiguense Indignado and Celedonio; 1957-Froilón, Lansquenete and Diplomático I; 1958-El Asecino (sic) Inglés, Diplomático XXIII, Margarita Moncloa and Juan Barcos; 1959-Veter I Nario and Manuel Goncalvez.<sup>17</sup> As can be seen the list is extensive, and a good deal of research would be necessary to locate all the materials written under these various names and initials.

Enrique Amorim was an enthusiastic photographer and made a number of sixteen-millimeter films which won him awards in competitions sponsored by the Cine Club of Uruguay and the Cine Universitario of Uruguay. He was also an excellent still photographer as his numerous photographs and pictures will testify.

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<sup>16</sup> Quiroga, a native of Salto, Uruguay, wrote short stories of the South American tropical scene and fantasy which are well known; he is considered to be the first outstanding short story writer in contemporary Spanish American letters.

<sup>17</sup> Personal research of Mr. Harley Oberhelman contained in a personal letter to the writer dated March 3, 1962.

Amorim spent many of his years in Argentina and was well known and liked in that country as well as in his own. During Perón's regime, Amorim, who had been actively participating in anti-Perón activities, was detained as he got off a plane. He returned to his home, "Las Nubes" in Salto, Uruguay, in 1950 and remained there until the dictatorship in Argentina was overthrown. He traveled extensively through Europe, the United States and various Latin American republics. In the forward to The Horse And His Shadow (1943) he wrote:

I have traveled much. Not long ago when I crossed North America from New York to Los Angeles I realized that this earth's most prodigious accomplishment lies in the formation of the United States. I believe that if I were faced with the problem of describing earthly life to an inhabitant of Mars, Moon or Saturn, I'd be content to try to tell him about the United States.<sup>18</sup>

He held offices in several organizations and took an active part in literary affairs. Mrs. Amorim writes:

Formó parte de varias Comisiones Directivas de la Sociedad Argentina de Escritores y fué su Vice Presidente en el año 1936, en que se realizó el primer Congreso Gremial de Escritores en la Argentina. Fué fervoroso luchador por los derechos de la propiedad intelectual y principal promotor para que la SADE adquiriera su sede propia. Una bella y antigua casona de la calle Méjico en la ciudad de Buenos Aires. Suya fué la idea de que la SADE instituyera el Premio de la Medalla de Oro cuyo primer poseedor fué Jorge Luis Borges. También bajo su iniciativa se creó El Día Del Escritor y la Faja de Honor que la SADE otorga al mejor libro del año.<sup>19</sup>

He represented Argentina in June, 1931, at the 9th Congress of the P.E.N. Club at the Hague. In 1939 he traveled to New York where he represented Uruguay at the International Congress of the P.E.N. Club. He had a special invitation to attend the 18th Congress of this same club in

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<sup>18</sup> The Horse and His Shadow (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943), p. x.

<sup>19</sup> Personal letter to the writer, April 26, 1962.

Stockholm, Sweden, in 1946 but was unable to attend. His wife gives us a further list of his activities. In August of 1948 he took part in the First World Congress of Intellectuals for Peace which took place in Wroclaw, Poland. In the following years he traveled to Europe frequently and in some years made as many as two annual trips. In December of 1952 he was Uruguay's delegate to the Congress for Peace in Vienna. There he became ill and went to Paris where he spent a month before returning to Montevideo. He entered a hospital where his illness was diagnosed as endocarditis. This later developed into pancarditis. From this time on his health was very delicate. In 1954 he decided to return to France and obtained a tourist's visa for three months. About midway through his stay he was arrested by agents of the Sureté Nationale, questioned, and then ordered to leave the country. As a result the intellectuals of Paris mobilized, and Robert Mitterand, brother of the Minister of the Interior at that time, intervened and succeeded in having the interdict lifted and the arrest annulled. Near the end of 1954 Amorim represented Uruguay at the Second Congress of Soviet Writers in Moscow. In 1958 his native city of Salto rendered homage to him with activities which lasted a full week. In 1959 he received an invitation to travel to China, but his precarious health forced him to refuse the invitation.<sup>20</sup>

Amorim joined the Communist Party in 1943. Nueve lunas sobre Neuquén and La victoria no viene sola, a famous statement by Stalin, both reflect this influence. Adolfo Silva Delgado, editor of El Pueblo, Salto's liberal Catholic newspaper, wrote in one of his issues,

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

Y Amorim con ellos se adelanta y da un paso decisivo, afiliándose al Partido Comunista. No es un obrero; es un burgués; no espera de la revolución social bienes para sí, porque tiene una sólida posición económica, no busca posiciones políticas, porque su partido no las tiene, no busca la tranquilidad personal, porque sabe que encontrará hostilidad y, quizás, persecución; no busca popularidad benevolente, porque sabe que la inmensa mayoría lo condenará. Amorim da el gran paso, venciendo su posición social y económica, venciendo su tradición familiar, venciendo su origen y su educación, con la humildad que otorga solamente una firmísima convicción. Un hombre que se atreve a tanto es, sin duda, todo un hombre.<sup>21</sup>

A poem entitled "Palabras a José Stalin" appears in Primero de mayo.

He made his home at "Las Nubes" in Salto with his daughter, Liliana, and his wife, the former Esther de Haedo Young, whom he married in 1928. It was here that he died of a heart attack on July 28, 1960, just three days after his 60th birthday. His wife writes,

En los últimos diez años de su vida fué un trabajador infatigable. Escribió en ese lapso de tiempo once libros, dos de los cuales salieron después de su fallecimiento. Innumerables cuentos, artículos, poemas, ensayos lo atestiguan. Aparecerá en un futuro cercano un volumen de memorias.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>El Pueblo, Salto, July 29, 1960.

<sup>22</sup>Personal letter to the writer, April 26, 1962.

## CHAPTER II

### REALISTIC NOVELS OF THE GAUCHO AND PAMPA LIFE--

#### THE KEY TO FAME AND SUCCESS

The works most likely to endure and keep Enrique Amorim's name high on the list of Argentine and Uruguayan writers are those novels written for the most part early in his career--novels about the gaucho and the country people of Northern Uruguay.

The gaucho in literary tradition was a romantic fellow who lived a wild, exciting life riding his horse over the pampas, getting into knife duels, playing his guitar, dancing the pericón and perhaps running off with some enchanting young lady to live happily ever after. Amorim destroyed this concept with his realistic novels and short stories of pampa life. He himself has made clear his concept of the gaucho. Referring to it in his novels Tangarupá, La carreta and El paisano Aguilar, he says:

The gauchos I wrote about . . . do not resemble the familiar, romantic figures that appear in our literature. They are men of the plains, working men, unable most of the time to cope with the responsibility of a harsh and fierce land.<sup>1</sup>

In these novels we also see a lonely, desolate pampa which can be both beautiful and deadly, where the poor live in misery and toil, and the rich hold a feudalistic hand over the rights and thoughts of those

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<sup>1</sup>The Horse and His Shadow (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943), p. ix.



less fortunate.

TANGARUPÁ--THE INTRODUCTION OF AMORIM'S GAUCHO NOVELS:

Tangarupá, which Roberto J. Payró describes as a dangerous river crossing the Salto countryside near Palomas, was used as the title of this book, and was the first of the gaucho novels by Amorim. It was published in two editions (1925) and contained material for twelve loosely-joined chapters and three short stories entitled: El pájaro negro, Los explotadores de pantanos, and Las quitanderas. Juan Carlos Welker feels that Los explotadores de pantanos is strong, admirable, one of the best.<sup>2</sup> Las quitanderas first appeared in 1923 in Amorim, a volume of short stories, and was then published separately in 1924. This title was plagiarized by a Frenchman, Adolfo de Falgairolle. In the third edition of Tangarupá (1929), the three stories were omitted and the twelve chapters were loosely woven together to form a novel.

It is interesting to note the strong similarities between this novel by Amorim and one written later by Benito Lynch, El romance de un gaucho (1930). The young gauchos of both stories are named Pantaleón. They fall in love with the young wives of nearby ranchers. They leave their homes since they are unable to marry the young ladies. In returning to their loved ones they both meet solitary deaths. In both novels use is made of gaucho language but there the resemblance ends.

The theme of Amorim's novel is based upon a desire for an heir. Nicolás Acunha, educated for city life, became the sole heir of the family ranch, "El Fondo", when his father was killed in battle. He

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<sup>2</sup> Juan Carlos Welker, "La obra literaria de Enrique Amorim," La Carreta, 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Claridad, 1932), p. 154.

lived there alone for several years and then at the age of thirty-eight married María, a poorly educated young girl. As he grew older his supreme desire was to have a son, an heir.

The ants were eating all the green plants and it became almost his obsession to kill them. When Nicolás spread poison and had the Brazilian, Pereira, bring him some cannibal ants from Brazil, his workers told him that God was punishing him by giving him no heir because he killed the ants so relentlessly.

María went to see Felipa who was known to cure childlessness and almost anything else. Felipa was raising three illegitimate children whose parents had abandoned them. One of these children was Panta (Pantaleón Molinas), the whistling gaucho. He and María were strangely attracted to one another from the very beginning. Felipa took advantage of their attraction and on one of María's visits sent the two young people to the house for a potion. There they suddenly found themselves in each other arms. When Felipa arrived they had both gone.

María became pregnant and Panta fled to Brazil where he worked with some smugglers. After they had successfully carried contraband tobacco across the Brazilian border into Uruguay in a coffin that supposedly held the remains of their dead father, the smugglers allowed Panta to go home. He planned to carry María away. Stopping at the Tangarupá river, in sight of "El Fondo", to go swimming, he discovered a big fish caught on a line. When he tried to pull it in, the fish gave a strong jerk, and the line whipped through his hands and around his body opening up a mortal wound. The neighbors found Panta's body the next morning. María gave birth to a son, and Nicolás had his long

sought heir.

María, a country girl, is poorly educated and superstitious. She is

. . . rubia, menuda, delgaducha. Tenía su voz la inflexión de los temperamentos flojos o apáticos. De una inocencia rayana en la bobería, todo lo preguntaba: y averiguaba los por qué y los cómo con curiosidad inocente y desmedida. Apenas sabía leer, y escribir era para ella el mayor sacrificio. Tanto pudor guardaba por su garabateada letra, como por dejar al descubierto alguna parte de su cuerpo menudo.<sup>3</sup>

She has married a man twice her age, and, while life treats her well, age is taking its toll of her husband.

Vida como la suya, le sirvió para conservarse joven y fresca, al lado de su marido, el cual día a día tenía más arrugas en la cara, más cabellos blancos y menos disposición para el trabajo.<sup>4</sup>

Early in their married life Nicolás decided that they would not have children. Then as he grew older it became his supreme desire.

Cuando triunfó la buena época, y las haciendas llegaron a un precio enloquecedor, Nicolás "hizo la América" con su invernada. A raíz de aquellos felices acontecimientos, y presintiendo una fría vejez, comenzó a insinuarse de continuo:

---Es inútil María, los gurises alegran una casa, es inútil . . . .<sup>5</sup>

María's faith in Felipa is like that of a simple child. It may be that she fears her. The old woman's description is not unlike that of a witch:

Toda ella era un espectáculo de miedo. Sus rotas ropas negras; sus ojillos grises y vivaces; la desdentada boca, sumida y seca; sus uñas largas; sus brazos esqueléticos y el pecho hundido, como si tuviese el corazón escondido en una cueva . . . .<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Tangarupá, 3rd ed. (Paris: Le Livre Libre, 1929), p. 16.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 17.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 17.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 30.

The country people have boundless faith in the curative powers and sayings of the old woman. One of the workers tells don Nicolás:

. . . Vea, patrón, yo que usted hacía ver a la patrona María, con la médica. ¡Casos ansina la Felipa tiene curaus muchos. Tanto lidiar con gente arrevesada! . . .  
 . . . Las machorras por ojeo se curan, patrón. . .  
 ¡Quién sabe no li han codiciau la patrona. . . .  
 O la mujer aquella, que vivió con usted, no la ha dañau a la patrona, con sus ojos dobles. . . .<sup>7</sup>

In the baptism that takes place the frightened babies cry, but this is considered a good omen.

Hubo mucho llanto de niño asustado, pero aquello, en lugar de preocupar, agradaba. Según la Felipa, si lloraban tanto en el cristianamiento, era señal de que iban a vivir muchos años.<sup>8</sup>

The plot is loosely drawn together, but the author depicts well the prime concerns of the country people and the undercurrents of their lives. The main concern is Nicolás' desire for a son:

Cuando llegó la noche, ya en el lecho, Nicolás sintió más intensamente la frialdad de su casa. La idea fija de que no podía alcanzar la dicha de tener un heredero se incrustó en su cerebro, como la cifra de una deuda impagable.<sup>9</sup>

Era tal el deseo de tener un heredero, que ya no podía callarlo, y menos aún sabía disimular. Comentaba, lo que era para él la peor desgracia, con todos sus amigos y conocidos . . . En la estación, con la familia del jefe; con su peón casero, viendo correr por el campo a alguno de los hijos de éste . . .<sup>10</sup>

So great became his desire that he was willing to do or try almost anything:

Había oído que la médica en casos ansina, de embrujamiento, aconseja que se auguen las mugres en agua limpia; que hay que echar

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 24.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 111.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 43.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 23.

al río las enmundicias; que viviendo cerca el arroyo poco a poco la correntada se yeva la mugre del embrujo . . . en fin, mil consideraciones que era bueno de tener en cuenta. Y, convencido o no marchó al río con los aparejos.<sup>11</sup>

Finally we sense his great emotion when he returns one night, looks at his wife and realizes that she is going to bear him a child:

. . . al regresar a la estancia, encontró a su mujer dormida, . . . Encendió un candil. La miró un buen rato con lágrimas en los ojos. . . . Hasta que uno de los lagrimones rodó por sus mejillas, cayendo sobre el lienzo que cubría el abultado vientre de la mujer. Suspirando, lloriqueando como un niño, con pena y alegría a un mismo tiempo, Nicolás salió tambaleando de su pieza . . .<sup>12</sup>

The animals and plants are the basis for the existence of humans in this area. If the ants eat all the living plants, the animals will die, and the people will be in dire straits for they depend on the animals for their very life and livelihood. Thus it is natural that this problem should be one of their prime concerns. We encounter this conflict between husband and wife. Nicolás is spreading the poisonous powder on the ground and his wife says:

. . . /Mirá, canejo, no te pongás en babia . . . mirá! A Nicolás comenzaba ya a molestarle, la no participación de su mujer en aquella lucha contra las hormigas. El consideraba aquello como un signo de civilización y de progreso en la estancia. . . . Igo yo, ¿y no hará mal perseguir a esos pobres animalitos? . . . /Pobres animalitos! . . . y en una noche te dejan pelau una hilera de árboles--y sigue sacudiendo el tarrito, rodeando el tronco, de un naranjo con el polvo venenoso. . . . /Lástima que va a yover! . . . /Pero eyas yevan el veneno en las patas . . . y en la cueva será la cosa! . . .<sup>13</sup>

Amorim gives us a description of the poverty and misery that exists in the village. Father Cipriano has come for the baptism of the infants, walking down the single street to bless the dwellings

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 96.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 111.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 56-57.

as he passes by.

De cada puerta salía una cara, o dos o tres, sucias, curiosas, que aguardaban el paso del padre Cipriano. Las guarecidas en los ranchos eran aquellas que, por su indumentaria miserable, no podían concurrir al acto. Mujeres en camisa, rapazuelos desnudos y viejos cubiertos apenas con una camiseta agujereada, en calzoncillos de colores vivos. . . .<sup>14</sup>

The author describes the manner in which the workers are paid in this area--not unlike situations that have occurred in our own country.

Como era domingo y día de pago, los peones de "El Fondo" y "El Rincón" concurrían alegres a lo de don Ramón a cobrar sus jornales. El pulpero, la semana anterior, había bajado al pueblo en busca de dinero. Algunos estancieros depositaban en la pulpería las sumas correspondientes a los jornales, para favorecer a don Ramón. . . En esa forma, los primeros gastos se efectuaban en su casa pudiendo asimismo cobrar los adelantos y fíaus. . . .<sup>15</sup>

There is superfluous material such as the chapter dealing with don Pedrito and his two brothers who live on the estancia, "El Rincón". They are not necessary to the plot, although the dominance of the elder brother over the actions of the two younger ones is interesting. Amorim gives us an insight into the lives and very hopes and desires of these people. He demonstrates their poverty, their misery, their superstitions, and thus gives us a realistic picture of rural life.

El campo en esta obra de Amorim se muestra tal cual es en la realidad; pobre, áspero, inmenso en su dolor, árido y seco. En este campo de Amorim es el verdadero, el rudo, sensual, supersticioso campo nuestro; sin nada que lo eleve, ni amor, ni religión, ni afán de progreso o de ideal. Amorim ha sabido trazar en esta novela cuadros en un realismo brutal sin que nunca pierda calidad la elegancia de su estilo. Hay momentos en que las frases candentes de sus descripciones parecen haber sido trazadas por un Zola o un

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 107.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 65.

Barbusse.<sup>16</sup>

La quitandera, which first appeared in Tangarupá as a short story and then was enlarged to form the novel La carreta, brought about a case of evident plagiarism. Adolfo de Falgairolle, a French writer who had translated many Spanish works, was loaned a copy of Tangarupá by Pedro Fígari, an artist who had painted and exhibited in Paris a series of pictures entitled quitanderas as he conceived them to exist after having himself read the book. In February 1929 Falgairolle published and registered the title of a book, volume 56 of "L'Oeuvre Libre", entitled La quitandera. A verbal battle in newspapers ensued. Amorim accused Falgairolle of plagiarism in L'Intransigeant, Comedia, Les nouvelles Littéraires and Candide, and the accused replied in the Chicago Daily Tribune and the New York Herald, but he had fallen into a trap. The meaning that Amorim had given to the word quitandera was taken over unchanged; it signified traveling prostitutes. D. Martiniano Leguizamón and other folklore specialists investigated the background of the word and denied that such people existed. Furthermore they could find no evidence of the word in the Spanish language nor the several aborigine languages--Guarani, Quechúa and Araucano--which have numerous words that have been incorporated into the common language of the Río del Plata region. They did locate the word quitanda in a dictionary of the Portuguese language by Beaurepaire-Rohan entitled Diccionario des vocábulos brasileiros. This word refers to a vender of fruits, vegetables, poultry, fish and other similar products: the individual who

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<sup>16</sup> Juan Carlos Welker, "La obra literaria de Enrique Amorim," La carreta (Buenos Aires: Editorial Claridad, 1932), p. 157-58.



buys and sells produce. Thus this word would seem to indicate a humble, honest working woman, while Amorim's interpretation suggests vagabond lovers. The word is used near the Brazilian border in Northern Uruguay to indicate a vender of "goodies"--fruit, tarts, cookies, etc. at the fairs and fiestas. This was the original occupation of the quitanderas until their other trade became more profitable. Falgairolle apparently read the story and then saw Fígari's exhibition which dealt exclusively with quitanderas inspired by Amorim's narrative. Perhaps he thought they were a national institution like the gauchos. He certainly did no research on the matter. In any case the publicity was indeed profitable in that he sold many copies of his book. It was finally concluded that quitandera, in the sense in which Enrique Amorim used it, was an original word from the fertile mind of this writer.

#### LA CARRETA--AN ORIGINAL NOVEL:

The carreta is a long, narrow cart rambling about the rural Uruguayan countryside. It is the vehicle by which the author presents and describes a lonely, forlorn area where there is only one woman for every five men. It also produces an excellent opportunity to introduce a whole series of new episodes, people and scenery to the reader.

La carreta no es una novela, porque no tiene un conflicto individual o colectivo como tema central desarrollado. Pero nada obliga a encasillarla con un rótulo en los límites precisos de una preceptiva. Basta con que haya cumplido su propósito de belleza y con que se la distinga por el tono personal de su originalidad en el plano de una realización de jerarquía.<sup>17</sup>

There is no real plot. La carreta is a series of short stories held

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<sup>17</sup> Alicia Ortiz, Las novelas de Enrique Amorim (Buenos Aires: Compañía Editora y Distribuidora del Plata, 1949), p. unknown.

together by the travels of the cart. It is in this manner that we travel with the quitanderas from their inauspicious beginning to their sad ending.

The quitanderas began their career with the circus where they sold fruits, goods, tobacco and miscellaneous items. It was there they discovered a more profitable business, selling their favors. When the circus was asked to leave because of their activities, Don Pedro, the owner, planned revenge. The lights were turned off the last night, and the men were given worthless bills to pay the women, who, needless to say, had a very busy night. In the morning they discovered the trick; a cart containing the quitanderas left the circus and began its lonely journey through the predominantly masculine countryside.

The protagonist of the book is the carreta itself, but there are a number of important characters such as Matabayabo, the gaucho, who in his younger days was heralded for his feats of strength and his prowess in breaking horses. Now after an illness, with his strength gone and feeling useless, he leaves his wife and children and follows the quitanderas. Later he is killed by a revolutionary's bullet. There is Marcelino Chaves, a mysterious tropero, a widower with scars on his face, who helps and often defends the women. This honorable gentleman appears here and there throughout the book. We sympathize with Correntino who has never known a woman intimately and is the butt of many jokes. The marica (Correntino) is taken to the quitanderas' camp where he loses all his inhibitions, but when the girl refuses to marry him he begins to cry and loses his manly virility. Some strangers who tired of his crying beat him so badly that he died. Another character is Don Caseros who has paid well to take the

virginity of thirteen year old Florita. He is kind, gentle and unsure of himself under the circumstances. Florita, who has slept little for worrying about the encounter, falls asleep under his caresses. Perplexed, he lacks the heart to disturb her and leaves her as pure as when he met her.

The women who live in the cart lead a miserable existence, but they are intensely loyal to one another. Examples of this occur when Petronila refuses to marry Correntino and when the Turk has to kill old Rita because he knows Brandina will never leave the old woman as long as she lives.

Amorim depicts cruelty in the scene where Paujuán, seeking attention, initiates a cat race for interest and excitement.

Levantó la bolsa en alto, en ademán de dar la orden de partida, y, lanzando un ronco ¡Aura!, bajó el brazo, sacudiendo en el suelo el saco de arpillera. Y la pareja de gatos rompió, asustada, en feroz carrera, ante la amenaza de un castigo. Huyeron bajo la tendida cuerda sin apartarse de ella, hasta dar con sus cuerpos en la otra estaca. Chocaron en el extremo de la cuerda y se tumbaron, previo vuelco por el aire. El rabón llegó primero e inmediatamente revoleó por el aire la cola el otro animal. Como dos briosos caballos, luego de haber corrido, los gatos daban saltos, atados a la cuerda, amarrados a las estacas.<sup>18</sup>

Horror appears when the old Indian, Ita, profanes his dead woman's body. The spectators, who have seen death and perhaps have themselves killed, are horrified when they unexpectedly witness this morbid scene in which Ita bids his wife goodbye.

Y, como presas de pavor, los dos hombres, el alto de negro, Chaves, y el muchachón recién lanzado a los caminos y las pampas, ambos pudieron ver la escena pavorosa que dentro del rancho acababa de descubrir el hombre de los cabellos largos. Ita, el indio milagrero, desnudo, y desnudo el cuerpo de la finada,

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<sup>18</sup>La carreta, 5th ed. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Claridad, 1942), p. 79.

desnudo el cadáver de la Pancha, estaban amándose. Bárbaramente unidos, frenético el indio desde la vida, y yacente y fría la mujer. Los brazos de la hembra pendían de la cama, mientras iba la cabeza del indio de un lado o otro del rostro pálido, besándola, en aquellas apresuradas últimas nupcias, a la luz de un candil parpadeante y amarillo.<sup>19</sup>

This exceeds the brutality which even they could accept and went beyond the moral limits which placed few restrictions on their activities.

Another scene of violence portrays an example of gaucho vengeance. Chiquiño discovers that his wife, Leopoldina, a former quitandera, likes their neighbor, Pedro Alfaro. He starves his prized pigs for three weeks and then one night he kills Alfaro and throws his body into the pigpen.

Volcó el cadáver en el chiquero. El cuerpo, al caer, hizo un ruido como de pellejo a medio llenar. Se abalanzaron las bestias sobre los despojos de Alfaro. Gruñían, rezongaban, se peleaban a dentelladas, para ver quién daba el mejor golpe de colmillo. En un segundo, andaban las piernas de Pedro Alfaro por un lado, los brazos por otro. . . . ¡Aprendé, miserable!<sup>20</sup>

Superstition does not play a strong part in this book as it did in Tangarupá, which abounds with it, but there is one brief scene when Chiquiño, returned from jail, learns his wife was buried with Alfaro's knife.

Pensaba que, si durante su encarcelamiento la Leopoldina había muerto y sido enterrada con el puñal de su enemigo mortal, era porque el diablo andaría metido en el asunto. ¡Y él debía arrancar a su china de las uñas del diablo!<sup>21</sup>

This leads us to a fantasy scene where Chiquiño, dealt a traitorous mortal blow, believes he has opened his wife's coffin, removed his

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 94.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 138.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 177.

rival's knife, taken out the bones and washed them, but somehow they slip from his hands and disappear in the river.

Pudo soñar, antes de morir, en el rescate de los huesos de Leopoldina, salvados de las uñas del diablo.<sup>22</sup>

Death is a common event in the lives of these people. Old Rita was poisoned, Correntino was beaten to death, Matacabayo was killed by a stray bullet and his son, Chiquiño, was murdered. The last two died alone on the pampa with this epitaph, "Barro y flores de espinillo para los dos pobres canallas."<sup>23</sup>

Thus we meet a series of people and scenes which have no real-life counterpart in history, but take on life and seem real enough to appear not only possible but probable.

Superstition, misery, brutality, violence and a preoccupation with sex occur often in this novel. Amorim has presented the picturesque and spiritual affinity of these lonely people of the plains, along with their sensuality, crudeness and brutality. The author himself writes:

Today, correcting a new edition of La carreta, I realize that in this story of women wandering in an ox cart over the plains with their alarming miseries, I had my strongest theme.<sup>24</sup>

The characters are realistically human but not always well drawn. Some of them are heard of only once, and others like Chaves, Chiquiño and Matacabayo appear here and there throughout the book.

Amorim loves his plains as we see in this paragraph which

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 184.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 184.

<sup>24</sup>The Horse and His Shadow (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943), p. ix.

describes not only the beauty and loneliness of it, but the hope that lies there for the future.

A uno y otro lado del camino, las tierras laboradas ofrecían un armonioso paisaje. Hondonadas y cuestras, abierta en surcos la tierra negra, infundían en el ánimo un estado noble de amor al trabajo. La entraña partida por el arado exhalaba un olor penetrante. Paralelos los surcos, determinaban un orden perfecto en las ideas de los que los contemplaban. A lo lejos, un rancho daba la sensación de la propiedad, lo que llaman el progreso lento y seguro. Un labriego, de pie en el medio de la tierra arada, aparecía como surgiendo del surco. Alta y fornida estaca de carne y hueso, que traía a la mente una idea sana y alentadora. Imágenes de salud y de vida surgían al contemplar la labor realizada tal vez por aquel ejemplar humano, de pie sobre la tierra. Aquel hombre era un poco árbol y otro poco bestia de labranza. Era una presencia sugerente.<sup>25</sup>

Some critics have remarked on the book's realistic aspects and its originality: "un libro crudo, amargo, pero original y de recia contextura."<sup>26</sup> The carreta provided the means by which to present new scenes and characters--a method which is common today on our television screens. Amorim did not capitalize on it as writers do today since he did not use similar vehicles in later works.

This book is naturalistic in tone; it may be, however, that one's sense of morals will protest against some of its aspects.

Con la intervención de esta clase de gente y de la de algunos paisanos de los suburbios pueblerinos, Amorim tejó una trama, y de ella salió La carreta, novela bien escrita, de valores estimables, por momentos interesante, pero concluye por hastiarnos con tantos tipos y acciones repulsivos y acanallados.<sup>27</sup>

There is the breath of reality in the human emotions and actions, but

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<sup>25</sup> La Carreta, 5th ed. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Claridad, 1942), p. 67.

<sup>26</sup> Alberto Zum Felde, Proceso intelectual del Uruguay y crítica de su literatura (Montevideo, 1941), p. 613-614.

<sup>27</sup> Domingo A. Caillava, Historia de la literatura gauchesca en el Uruguay (Montevideo, 1945), p. 142-143.

the poverty, misery and degradation of these wandering people in their hopeless situation eventually cause boredom.

La carreta, first published in 1932 and now in its seventh Spanish edition, has sold more copies than any of Amorim's other works. It has been translated into German by V. Rodewald Grebin, into French by Francis de Miomandre, and into Italian.

EL PAISANO AGUILAR--RURAL LIFE SUBDUES CIVILIZATION:

Another novel of the gaucho, El paisano Aguilar, first appeared in 1934. It is in its fifth Spanish edition, the last printing of which was in 1958. In 1959 it was translated into Portuguese. It relates nature's conquest of a young man who has spent many years in an urban setting and then is forced to return to the country. In this book Amorim combines his own experiences as a young estanciero and as a city dweller to depict Pancho Aguilar, the protagonist, who has been educated by his parents for city life and then as the only surviving heir has to assume charge of the family ranch, "El Palenque", near the Brazilian border. Here he finds himself in conflict with the values of two different environments and the two contrary halves of his own nature. The ranch is a very lonely place with only the servants and a radio for company. His cook, Juliana, becomes ill; before she dies she begs Pancho to look after her daughter, Malvina, who works for Don Cayetano. Don Cayetano, Malvina's father, refuses to recognize her as his daughter and lusts for her virginity. When Juliana dies, Malvina stays on as Pancho's cook and eventually bears him sons. He makes occasional trips to town but soon becomes bored and homesick for the ranch. He ignores his old girl friend, Sofia, who lives in the city. Then tragedy strikes:

his young son dies and drought kills his animals. He is about to go into bankruptcy when he meets some smugglers on his property. They persuade him to take his cattle to virgin land in the North. The herd is caught in a flash flood and his faithful retainer, Don Farías, loses his life trying to save the animals. Pancho is greatly upset by the loss but Malvina consoles him. As the story ends we find him in town for Christmas, but he becomes lonesome and returns to the ranch to be with the mother of his sons for New Years.

Pancho Aguilar's proud spirit is buffeted about by nature and people. He makes the same mistakes and falls into the same vices as did his forbears despite his education. Thus he loses all the benefits of his education and eventually comes to vegetate like a true gaucho; city civilization is conquered by the solitude of the campo in Pancho's soul.<sup>28</sup>

Pancho has the psychology and characteristics of a true gaucho and the heritage of the gauchos in his blood. His parents expected him to become a city dweller, but the city bored him and he yearned for the country to the extent that his friends teased him and called him the country boy, "El paisano". When he was forced to manage "El Palenque" himself, he found he was unable to handle the task. He was dissatisfied with his existence there for he disliked the solitude, the monotony and sameness of life. After he had talked with the smugglers he got the urge to roam, free as a gypsy, in the North where there would be excitement, adventure, less social order and

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<sup>28</sup> Domingo A. Caillava, Historia de la literatura gauchesca en el Uruguay (Montevideo, 1945), p. 148.



freedom from his responsibilities. The gaucho lacked adaptability, initiative and perseverance for work. Pancho was irritated when a cattle seller refused to take his check and requested cash, but the longer he remained on the ranch, the more he recalled from his childhood, and these ways came to please him. "El paisano" could not adapt himself to the city nor to life on the plains. He lacked initiative to try new methods on his ranch and the perseverance to continue trying when things went wrong. His first thoughts seem to be "escape". He didn't love his sweetheart nor his mistress, but merely accepted them in his time of physical need and used them for companionship. It is here that Amorim begins the thread of annihilation of the gaucho which continues on into his other gaucho works. The gaucho paisano who could not adapt himself to the new ways of life brought by the European immigrant was going to be exterminated by European progress and industry much as José Hernández described it years earlier in Martín Fierro.<sup>29</sup> Germán García too, expresses the idea of the criollo who disliked the city and new methods which were brought into his life by immigrants from far away lands.<sup>30</sup> These new people were slowly going to displace those who could not and would not adapt themselves to their changing environment. The whole structure of society seemed to be suppressing the gaucho and his natural instincts.

This novel contains more plot than did La carreta, but the architecture is still not strong. Notable in this novel as in

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<sup>29</sup> Juan B. González, "Letras argentinas--Una novela gauchesca", Nosotros, No. 4 (Buenos Aires, 1936), p. 446-448.

<sup>30</sup> Germán García, La novela argentina (Buenos Aires, 1952), p. 155-156.

La carreta are the sharp, penetrating observations of the people and countryside.

Muchas de estas observaciones se formulan en metáforas que pertenecen a la familia de la literatura "de vanguardia". Sólo que en Amorim estas nuevas metáforas, aun las audazmente expresionistas, entran en el relato con naturalidad, sin cambiar la voz, sin atropellarse.<sup>31</sup>

There is little optimism and joy in this book which reflects conditions on the Uruguayan pampa during the depression years. The whole story is permeated with the desolation and loneliness of the pampas and the struggle to break away from the isolation as well as the responsibilities of a father and rancher. Aguilar is constantly changing his plans, for he cannot seem to find his own little niche in life. He proved to his workers that he could be a just and astute master when he decided the case of the stolen hens successfully. He could be obstinate like his neighbor, Don Cayetano, the brutal, feudal master whose word was law on his ranch, but he lacked strength of character.

Amorim gives us his view of the old criollo politics in the words of Dr. Coppa, whereby the rich supported the officials, who in turn aided the feudalistic ranchers.

The women in the story are typical of that period--submissive, hard working and quietly suffering individuals who knew little joy and happiness in their hard lives. Juliana has cooked over the hearths of numerous ranches. Her experiences with men have made her impassive and indifferent to their actions as in this dialogue: "/Luego, señor,

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<sup>31</sup> Enrique Anderson-Imbert, Historia de la literatura hispano-americana, Vol. II (Mexico, 1961), p. 197-198.

luego! ¡Que se me quema el asau! ¡Déjeme ahora!"<sup>32</sup> Malvina, is timid and insecure until she becomes mistress of "El Palenque" and then she begins to assert herself and lose her feeling of inferiority. She probably hopes that Pancho will marry her and recognize their children as his heirs. Pancho Aguilar seems to have one redeeming feature: he loves his children, because he cuts short his trip in the city to return to them. The wise old man, Don Farías, is the confident of everybody. He helps people by listening to their problems and allowing each one to solve his own affairs in his own way.

El paisano Aguilar has been compared to Don Segundo Sombra for its importance, depth and beauty. Some even consider its plot to be justly comparable.

El paisano Aguilar crea un tipo al que Amorim debió y pudo destacar con los netos, perfiles de otros de la novela americana. Su feliz interpretación, su animado estilo, así lo hacen pensar. Con todo, la visión de la naturaleza en Amorim se esfuma ante su concepción de la conducta de las protagonistas.<sup>33</sup>

It is praise enough for a novel to be compared with one as outstanding as Don Segundo Sombra.

Amorim wanted to portray country life as it actually existed without the duels, fiestas and other activities which made it seem romantic. He succeeded in the scenes of every day happenings and customs on the ranch and the surrounding countryside. The descriptions of the loneliness, the scenery and buildings are exceptionally impressive.

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<sup>32</sup> El paisano Aguilar, 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Claridad, 1937), p. 68.

<sup>33</sup> Luis Alberto Sánchez, Proceso y contenido de la novela Hispano-americana (Madrid, 1953), p. 281, 339.

Thus the cycle of the legendary gaucho, which began with José Hernández's Martín Fierro and appeared to end with Don Segundo Sombra, seems to continue with Amorim's interpretation of the gaucho in El paisano Aguilar.

No ha abatido Amorim a nuestro gaucho; lo ha renovado solamente. Le ha hecho adoptar para su comodidad cosas estandarizadas de hoy día como la radio y el automóvil, sin que tales y otros artefactos del progreso, y el estudio, sobre todo--lo que por cierto es sorprendente--modificaran en un ápice su idiosincrasia de paisano. La inconformidad gauchesca, la cobardía frente a los obstáculos diarios, la carencia de espíritu de empresa, el natural fatalista y haragán del criollo se salvan intactos en Aguilar.<sup>34</sup>

EL CABALLO Y SU SOMBRA--THE SEEDS OF PROGRESS TAKE HOLD:

Amorim wrote El caballo y su sombra, considered by most critics to be his best novel, in 1941. It unites all the themes of his earlier works to depict a contemporary picture of the pampa.

El caballo y su sombra gathers all these themes (Tangarupá, La carreta and El paisano Aguilar) and resolves them in the light of today's life. The horse Don Juan represents the traditions that made life on the plains beautiful. Bica, the inarticulate peasant girl, holds in her provident hands a sane and hopeful solution to all the struggles I have reflected.<sup>35</sup>

For the first time men drop their passive role and take an active part in shaping their destiny. Amorim presents the decay and downfall of the feudalistic ranches with their gaucho elements, and pictures the growth of new towns, new ideas and new blood brought by the immigrants. Amorim believes that the future progress and well-being of Uruguay is closely tied to these European immigrants.

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<sup>34</sup> Juan B. González, "Letras argentinas--Una novela gauchesca", Nosotros, No. 4 (Buenos Aires, 1936), p. 445.

<sup>35</sup> The Horse and His Shadow (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943), p. ix, x.

The concluding sentence of El paisano Aguilar--"aun no ha comenzado el diálogo entre el hombre y la llanura",<sup>36</sup> is used as the epigraph of El caballo y su sombra and serves to unite the two novels.

The plot involves two brothers. Marcelo Azara was educated in the city and belongs to a political party which is trying to improve the country by bringing in European immigrants. Marcelo is progressive. His brother, Nico, lives on the estancia "El Palenque" which is the ancient estate of the Aguilar family--his wife, Adelita, being the last surviving heir. Nico symbolizes rural feudalism. A typical gaucho, he lives in the past and resents the parceling of land and the intrusion of foreigners with new ideas and customs who have come to till the land. He is a rancher and not a farmer. His resentment and antagonism is not unlike that between the ranchers, the farmers and sheepmen of our own West. He plows furrows across his land to isolate the ranch and prevent the foreigners from Colonia using his land as a public highway. An Italian immigrant, Toribio Rossi, deformed by the First World War, gets stuck in the muddy furrows while taking his small son to the doctor and the child dies. The Italian challenges Nico and they kill one another. Marcelo returns to Montevideo after an affair with Bica, the servant girl.<sup>37</sup> Bica bears Marcelo's son and Adelita gives her a parcel of their father's land along the river.

The first half of the book concerns the life of the people who live on "El Palenque" estancia and the stallion, "Don Juan", whose

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<sup>36</sup>El paisano Aguilar, 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Claridad, 1937), p. 200.

<sup>37</sup>Bica is the daughter of Pancho Aguilar and Malvina. Adelita, then, is her half sister although Bica is unaware of this relationship.

arrival brings new blood to the horses on the ranch.

The gaucho and the feudalistic master are symbolized in the character of Nico Azara.

Demostraba idéntico dominio sobre lo grande y lo pequeño, sobre el corazón y las manos de Adelita, sobre las cerraduras de la despensa, sobre el destino de las majadas.<sup>38</sup>

He obstinately and steadfastly refuses to accept progress. He is the true gaucho to his very death when he refuses to let his workers interfere and save him from Rossi's knife. The criollo code of honor must be upheld.

. . . Cuando se pelea en su ley--se oyó decir a uno de los tres paisanos, es de criollo respetar al que gana . . . y al que pierde!

Era una voz criolla, eran palabras de hombre, tendidas al sol de la mañana. Las había pronunciado uno de ellos, pero el pensamiento sonaba parejo en las tres cabezas gauchas. . . . ¡No le hagan nada! ¡No le hagan nada! . . . pudo decir Nicolás Azara. La sangre que brotaba de su boca le impedía hablar. Pero sus peones, los paisanos de "El Palenque", conocen muy bien las leyes del campo abierto, las del bajo . . . Y las saben cumplir.<sup>39</sup>

Marcelo represents the city way of life and thinking. He is a part of the progressive movement and sees the need for improvements on the ranch as this passage indicates:

La estancia entera estaría alerta para recibir al padrillo, porque en "El Palenque" los acontecimientos sacuden por igual a los patrones y al paisanaje. Y--pensaba Marcelo--nada menos que un caballo de carrera con su "pedigree" como un título nobiliario. Era un paso adelante en el refinamiento caballar, aparejado a la modernización de la estancia. No podría ser de otra manera. Primero, toros; luego, carneros; ahora se trataba de un padrillo importado de Buenos Aires, un verdadero lujo para "El Palenque". La sangre de los reproductores de "El

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<sup>38</sup>El caballo y su sombra, 1st ed. (Buenos Aires: Club del Libro A.L.A., 1941), p. 38.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 215.

Palenque" no mereció mucho celo en otros tiempos y se comentaba la deficiencia de sus planteles.<sup>40</sup>

Amorim has portrayed the three feminine characters of this book well. Adelita seems out of place on the estancia; she is kind, understanding and intelligent--a delicate flower among thorns. She can see the advantages and progress that the immigrants have brought. She tells Marcelo how mail used to come once a week, and now it comes "día por medio". There is "tierra labrada y los sembrados". There are new and different agricultural methods. The rusos even work their tractors at night. The colony wants a port so it can ship grain down the river, and one of the immigrants is working on a machine to press oil from the sunflower seeds more easily. She can see how the immigrants have improved the area.

Bica, Adelita's half sister, is a simple gaucha respected by the men for her horse-breaking prowess. Adelita describes Bica to Marcelo:

/Belarmina! . . . La llamábamos Bica.--Siempre se rebeló a toda educación, pero fué de tiernos sentimientos. . . . Por su manía de cultivar plantas olorosas, se distinguió entre todas las chinitas de por aquí.<sup>41</sup>

Bica has remained a virgin until Marcelo uses her as a toy. He discovers that though she is a gaucha she lacks some of the usual attributes. "Las características de sumisión campesina, de humildad, no predominaban en su aspecto."<sup>42</sup>

Doña Micaela, the Azara brothers' mother, is described as

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 34.

avaricious and miserly. Because she wears rubber heels to sneak up on conversations, the servants call her "la rata". She worries about expenses and carefully hoards the rations and provisions.

The second part of the book is concerned primarily with life in Colonia which is populated with Jews, Russians, Poles, Lithuanians and Germans contemptuously and collectively called rusos by the paisanos. They are not accepted by the natives for they are hard workers and use modern agricultural methods. They fight the ranchers in their own small way by using their animals for food and by cutting fences which were deliberately placed to force them to go miles out of their way to attend school or go to town. They want a port on the river, but have to cross Azara property first.

The story is full of symbolism. Amorim seems to indicate that there must be a blending of the old and the new if Uruguay is to progress. The principle of mixing the blood lines of animals to improve the stock, as in the surreptitious mating of "Don Juan", the pedigreed stallion, with the mare of common stock, parallels that of the humans--in this case the son of Bica and Marcelo who combines peasant stock with the landed aristocracy. It is hoped the child will contain the most desirable qualities of the two classes. It is this new, strengthened strain which will be best able to meet the problems of the future. This same theme is repeated in La desembocadura (1958).

Don Nico's death represents a crumbling of the foundations of the old feudalism which kept the land in the hands of a favored few. As the new immigrants settle the land, the big estates will gradually shrink, and the land will lose its desolation and loneliness. Adelita gives Bica a parcel of land from the main ranch, "El Palenque". This



is only the beginning of the division of the big estates which Harley Oberhelman describes as essential, in Amorim's view, if Uruguay's agricultural problems are to be solved.<sup>43</sup> Mechanization is forcing the horse to become a sombra. Machinery is rapidly replacing the horse in an economy which is also changing from animals and their products to grains and like crops. Thus a new type of individual is needed to meet the demands of this new and ever changing economy and way of life. Enrique Amorim believes this is the key to Uruguay's future.

The scenes of pampa life and customs are drawn with the care of an artist. Amorim puts a great deal of color and emotion into common, every day events and scenes such as this description of twilight on the estancia.

Caía la tarde. El crepúsculo embellecía la estancia. Apretados y negros nubarrones hacia el norte y el sur. Por una abertura entre los densos cirros del poniente, se colaba el sol. Un lampo dorado abarcaba la arboleda, encendiendo el verde que contrastaba con las espesas nubes de los restantes puntos cardinales. El sol, resplandeciente en la brecha, como en una ventana. Las vacas miraban hacia el poniente, en extraño éxtasis, con los cuernos erguidos, para que la luz se los dorase. Los pájaros--el misto, la tijereta nerviosa, el vivo benteveo--se dejaban bañar por aquella claridad prodigiosa. Colocados estratégicamente en las ramas más altas, inmovilizados por la luz. Los añosos árboles, graves, solemnes, despedían el día campesino con esos adioses lentos que manda la brisa vespertina. Los troncos lucían sus heridas y las arrugas de los años. Una pareja de horneros alardeaba saludable alegría, en el pretil de la casa. El primer fogón alzaba un humo ceniciento, en columna impecable hasta más arriba de las ruedas del molino. El Ángelus reducía a todos a un silencio religioso. Si un ternero mugía en el encierro, su lamento se estiraba como un minucioso tiento de lonja.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Harley D. Oberhelman, "Enrique Amorim as an Interpreter of Rural Uruguay", Books Abroad, Vol. 34 (1960), p. 117.

<sup>44</sup>El caballo y su sombra, 1st ed. (Buenos Aires: Club del Libro, A.L.A., 1941), p. 44, 45.

Amorim has also given us descriptions of the mating process of the horses and the flood where Don Ramiro was trapped in a tree with a deadly assortment of animals, insects and reptiles. It was here that he was bitten by a snake which caused his blindness.

Amorim's character descriptions have become stronger. Some of the characters of El paisano Aguilar seem to return in this novel. Bica, the daughter of Pancho Aguilar and Malvina, parallels the life of her mother and her grandmother. Wise old Don Farías reappears in the form of Don Ramiro, the blind old gaucho who in his dark world is full of wisdom, advice and knowledge of his surroundings, and is the confidant of the fatherless Bica. Don Cayetano Trinidad appears in the character of Don Saturnino Chana, the feudal rancher who lives near the Azaras. It is the opposing and complementing characters of this book which give the story color and life.

This novel is a "bella e inolvidable fusión de la naturaleza, el animal y el hombre."<sup>45</sup> Amorim has painted a rural scene with intensity and realism. He has drawn together elements in the rural setting which need improvement and has given possible solutions. Thus he hopes Uruguay's social, economic and cultural problems and programs will be improved. The continuity has greatly improved over his previous novels. The language of the paisano adds authenticity to the story. This novel, which climaxes the first series of four gaucho novels and is probably Amorim's best work in this area, in a sense, continues the historical progress of rural Uruguay.

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<sup>45</sup> Enrique Mallea Abarca, "Sobre El caballo y su sombra", Nosotros, XV, No. 67 (Buenos Aires, 1941), p. 96-100.

In a letter to the writer, Amorim's wife gives us these background statements:

No lo afirmo categóricamente, pero creo que mi marido estaba satisfecho con su novela, El caballo y su sombra. Según la gran mayoría de los críticos la juzgan como teniendo la mayor continuidad. Era sin embargo un escritor insatisfecho y muy rara vez estaba totalmente contento con lo que hacia. Creo que sus críticos están de acuerdo en pensar que de sus novelas de la primera época, La carreta, El paisano Aguilar y El caballo y su sombra son las que más gustan.<sup>46</sup>

Another critic has given this review in reference to El paisano Aguilar and El caballo y su sombra.

. . . novelas de estancias que desembocan en parcelas para chacareros. Se presentan en ambas personajes de robusta constitución y son totalmente logradas una y otra, de buena arquitectura. Estudios de tipos y pintura de ambientes, se enfoca sobre todo la psicología de los habitantes de nuestro campo rioplatense, tan similar en ambas márgenes: los que viven en el pasado ya lejano, los que despiden el presente y los que harán el futuro; el viejo criollo, el paisano en el que luchan como pareja fuerza la ciudad y la estancia, y el nuevo poblador de la campiña, llegado de tierras lejanas. Incorporando éste, Amorim nos coloca más cerca de la realidad del campo de ahora. No poniendolo en sus libros, los novelistas gauchescos, incluso Lynch, han sido parciales porque mostraron sólo una faz o un aspecto de nuestro ruralismo.<sup>47</sup>

It is for these reasons that the books have been so popular, because the author has given us historical fiction from the viewpoint of a sociologist and a man who loves his country. El caballo y su sombra is the first of Amorim's works to end on an optimistic note, "La tierra se levanta con el sol. Está amaneciendo."<sup>48</sup> This demonstrates his faith in the future.

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<sup>46</sup>Personal letter to writer, April 26, 1962.

<sup>47</sup>Germán García, La novela Argentina (Buenos Aires, 1952), p. 155-156.

<sup>48</sup>El caballo y su sombra, 1st ed. (Buenos Aires: Club del Libro, A.L.A., 1941), p. 221.

The book has two Spanish editions. Silveira Peiroto translated it into Portuguese in 1943. There was an English translation, also in 1943, by Lt. Richard O'Connell and James Graham Luján. It was translated into the Czech language in 1950. The latest edition is a 1962 printing done in Peking, China.

LA LUNA SE HIZO CON AGUA--THE CONTINUED BREAKDOWN OF TRADITION:

La luna se hizo con agua (1944) pictures a further breakdown of feudal customs and gaucho life. The younger generation is beginning to see the misery and oppression around them and wants to do something about it. The fermenting gaucho revolution never quite gets started because reforms appear in the new era and the gaucho, of course, is always outnumbered. The scene is presented from a contemporary urban perspective by the protagonist, Silvia Guerrero de Riverós, who was born in Paris but brought up in the provincial city of Tacuaras, Uruguay.

Silvia, an only child, is spoiled, used to having her own way and being independent. She grew up with one interest and love--music, and hated the ranch, "Los Pingos", where so much violence and brutality had occurred in the past and where such misery still existed.

She has numerous suitors but is interested in Leonardo Corti, a writer who sympathizes with the peones. It is probably this person who first opens her eyes to the social and physical problems and injustices on the ranches and causes her to feel compassion for the victims, but Leonardo is murdered and she is left disorientated and alone. Giving in to her father's plea for an heir to the ranch, she marries Don Raúl Riverós.

She returns to the ranch after her father's death. Goyo Lanza,

who had left the ranch after her father's funeral, also returns, and the two young people find themselves strangely attracted to one another. Goyo had found a pot of gold which was mentioned in Don Jerónimo's will. Raúl is interested in obtaining this additional wealth immediately.

Silvia and Goyo go looking for the gold, but decide to leave it where it is. The rains fall, for the moon is made of water. The river floods and isolates the ranch leaving the two young people in solitude, for Raúl has left the ranch never to return.

Again Amorim has brought to life the brutality and cruelty of the ranchers as witnessed in one of the scenes. Gregorio Lanza, Goyo's father, was a horsebreaker. He so angered Don Jerónimo's father that the latter caused Gregorio to be trampled and killed by a herd of wild horses. Don Jerónimo spent most of his life trying to make up for the boy's loss. The people lived in squalid ranchos with little food and clothing and no money for medical services. It was Silvia who became aware of these oppressive conditions when her father wouldn't get down from his horse to see the alarming misery of his workers.

The foundations of feudal customs continue to disintegrate in this novel. In his will Don Jerónimo leaves Goyo Lanza some property. Thus the breakdown of the large holdings expressed by Amorim in El caballo y su sombra is continued in this book. Thanks to his daughter's pleading, the old man has also left grants of money to build a school and a hospital on the estancia for his workers. This is the first time the aristocracy has considered the needs of their workers beyond shelter and food.

There is also a suggestion that Silvia and Goyo find themselves compatible, perhaps in love, and with the departure of Raúl Riverós, the scene is left open for a breakdown of social barriers. Since these two people do not belong to the same social class, it is a big step toward individual equality without regard to financial status and physical heritage.

Up to this point the women in Amorim's novels have been quiet, submissive, and long-suffering individuals with no personal freedom. In comparison with the gentle Adelita of El caballo y su sombra, Silvia is domineering and authoritative. This could be the result of having been an only child or of having been her father's child. She is unsure of herself, wanting to make decisions, and yet not sure enough of herself to make them. Only as the story nears its end does she make decisions with wisdom, leaving the headstrong, obstinate characteristics behind her.

The superstitions of the country people are beautifully woven into this novel. We find May Vieja is the wise old lady whom the paisanos depend upon to answer their questions and solve their problems. It is she who tells Goyo where to find the crock of gold and reveals that his life is intertwined with that of Silvia. There is a sense of the supernatural in the scene at the river where Goyo witnesses a nude woman on an inaccessible rock. There is the feeling that legend, history, fantasy and superstition have been blended to form a reality.

An interesting scene portrayed by Amorim is that in which the locusts descend in swarms on the ranch. Goyo brings some peones to the ranch to help save the garden. Silvia thankfully gives them cigarettes and food and treats them so kindly that they don't know how to react

because they have never before been treated with consideration and thoughtfulness by their employers.

Graphic descriptions of the countryside, the people and customs make this book interesting. Social injustice is slowly beginning to dissipate due to the proddings of the younger generation. Amorim's attacks on social inequalities and injustices will continue in his other works where they become the major theme in most cases. It is interesting that Enrique Amorim, one of the favored class, should feel these injustices so intensely and put them into written form so accurately, when he viewed them from the "other side of the fence." Harley Oberhelman suggests that the book belongs to "la literatura de vanguardia" because it acts as a transitional step to later works of Amorim which deal for the most part with urban settings and leftist political tendencies.<sup>49</sup>

This book does fill the gap between the gaucho life as such and the gradual change beginning to take place in the rural scene, but it lacks the dramatic intensity of the former novels of country life.

#### LA DESEMBOCADURA--HISTORY UNFOLDS:

The year 1958 saw the introduction of La desembocadura, in which a dead man relates the activities of his family, half of which is illegitimate. The author tells of the growth and civilizing process which takes place as people move in and populate the area, and of how the two branches of the family react to the conflict between material progress, wealth, freedom, and other values which are rooted in the

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<sup>49</sup> Harley D. Oberhelman, "Enrique Amorim as an Interpreter of Rural Uruguay", Books Abroad, Vol. 34 (1960), p. 118.

worth and dignity of man.

When the tractors began to plow the fields around Salto, they brought to light some human bones. These bones were the remains of the founder of the Montes dynasty and it is this man, Manuel Montes, who tells the reader how the country developed with the first white settlers and the part that he and his heirs played in its development. His Spanish wife loved her animals more than her husband and children. One of his worker's daughters bore him a blue-eyed son, and thus begins the two branches of the family, the Montes and the Lope. He and his eldest son were killed in battle, but he has followed the progress of his offspring. His wife brought her relatives from Spain. The ranch degenerated under their management and she returned to Spain. The riffraff were dispersed, but they built a small village near the ranch and called it Corral Abierto. The Montes family went into politics; the Lope family went into the professions, medicine and teaching. The fortified houses on the frontier became ranches. They began to brand animals and build fences. Windmills pumped water and mechanized machinery became commonplace. New settlers came and developed ranches. Manuel Montes' great-grandson writes poetry, and Manuel Montes muses that he will get nowhere as a poet, but perhaps poetry from the Lopes is better than the quarrels and political insincerity of the Montes family. One of the Montes opened a machinery agency and spoke as though machinery alone would save the workers. The men who came with the tractors to plow the land expected to find a pot of gold and not human bones. Amorim concludes that time has buried those first conquests of the land and now museums hold the tools of progress. "De ese museo salió la misión que terminaría con un estudio adecuado a la



cultura de la época."<sup>50</sup>

This novel spans a period of time beginning with the first settlers in Northern Uruguay and follows the two branches of a family through their ups and downs and those of Uruguay until the period after the Second World War when mechanization brought a change into the lives of all the people. Although the first Manuel Montes is proud of his heirs and the way they have grown along with their country, he seems most proud of the great-grandson who writes poetry and, because he is the product of a Lope and a commoner mother, is all the stronger for it.

Amorim's book is a "curious mixture of naturalistic detail and attempts at lyricism" in which the author is suggesting that Uruguay's poets and idealists may be the country's salvation in the years to come.<sup>51</sup>

There is no one outstanding, strong character in this novel, but there is a theme previously expressed in El caballo y su sombra which appears again. This is the precept that, in order to progress, the old families need new blood so that the best qualities of the two individuals may be vested in the offspring. This will then forge the makings of a new, more superior individual who may well be the leader of tomorrow. Hope for the future lies in the youth of a nation.

The story is related in a manner such as one would use in telling of happenings in one's own life. It expresses the poignant aspects of

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<sup>50</sup> La desembocadura (Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada, 1958), p. 105. (English translation by writer.)

<sup>51</sup> Dorothy McMahon, "La desembocadura by Enrique Amorim", Books Abroad (1960), p. 164.

the rather vague characters--their hopes, their disappointments, their joys and their accomplishments through the years. In a few pages the whole history of an area unfolds before the reader's eyes in a vivid panorama of progress. It also summarizes all the aspects of the previous gaucho novels and unites them with the present under the author's hand. This book, which combines rural and urban aspects, is probably one of Amorim's best works in the last decade.

Amorim's gaucho novels depict rural Uruguay from the turn of the century to the present. Tangarupá provides the setting--the pampa. La carreta and El paisano Aguilar etch the theme of physical and spiritual solitude which held the pampas in its grasp. El caballo y su sombra presents a breakdown of feudal customs and displays the first hint of optimism which provides solutions for man's problems. La luna se hizo con agua depicts a further breakdown of the gaucho heritage as seen from an urban perspective, and finally La desembocadura summarizes the other four novels in terms of progress and knits them to the present.

Enrique Amorim's contribution to gaucho literature is that he was able to lay aside the romantic stereotype of the gaucho and present him as a ordinary human being with normal faults and attributes. He pictures the gaucho as he lived during the early part of the twentieth century--not as a romantic, heroic individual, but one who had serious problems and was often unable to meet their challenge--a gaucho or paisano who had difficulty settling down to one job, accepting responsibility and adapting to the changes which progress brought. Amorim's gaucho novels have filled the links in the chain between Don Segundo Sombra and the present.

The clear-cut characterizations, the objective, realistic and colorful descriptions of the Uruguayan countryside, the people, customs and life there leave a lasting impression on the mind of the reader. Much of his written material, we know from his life, is autobiographical. His animal portraits are particularly charming for their color and the obvious love with which he drew them. This is evident in his descriptions of the stallion, "Don Juan" and the mare, "La Marinera". He has developed "una concepción lawrenciana del hombre en sus relaciones con la naturaleza"<sup>52</sup> as seen in the pages of La carreta, Tangarupá and El paisano Aguilar.

Amorim has shown a deep understanding and knowledge of the rural scene where man is closely bound to nature and the land and dependent upon them for his very existence. He has portrayed the influences of feudal servitude in all its human degradation and misery. Amorim, at heart a literary social worker, could see the unfavorable conditions under which so many of the workers lives--a feudalistic master who held their very life in his powerful hands, the poor pay, the long, hard working days, the miserable shelters, and the lack of schools, medical and cultural facilities--all were depicted in the lives of his people. He painted the paisanos' superstitions and beliefs which bound and hampered their lives, and the spiritual and physical battle between the old and new customs and methods which progress brought, particularly in agriculture, with the advent of the European immigrants.

Enrique Amorim learned the art of the true story teller when as

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<sup>52</sup>Fernando Alegría, Breve historia de la novela hispanoamericana (Mexico, 1959), p. 234.

a child he sat around the campfires with the gauchos absorbing their stories and developing a sensitive interest in their heritage. Thus he has unfolded some astute characters, rich and poor, lovable and despicable, domineering and subservient, male and female, with all the human foibles of their time and culture. One will remember the wise, old, blind gaucho, Don Ramiro; stubborn Nicolás Azara; gentle Adelita and unfortunate Bica from El caballo y su sombra, or Don Cayetano Trinidad, the feudal rancher, and Pancho Aguilar in El paisano Aguilar or willful Silvia of La luna se hizo con agua. His deep psychological penetrations have shown the inner conflicts and aspirations of some of his characters.

A love for his country and its future caused him to point out the need for better breeding animals, more diversified agriculture, modern methods of farming and ranching, and the parceling of the big estates. Amorim has suggested in a subtle way that social injustice has and continues to hamper Uruguay's progress as a nation. New blood in family and animal lines will do much to improve the offspring of the two. The breaking up of the large estancias and land holdings will help to develop a middle class and do away with the wealth that belongs to a few while the majority are very poor and dependent on the rich, sometimes for their very existence. It will also assure better use of the land.

Finally, every individual has a contribution to make to the nation's progress. The politicians may run the country, but the common laborers, the doctors, the teachers, the artists, the poets and all the others are necessary and will influence the development of the country. This idea is well expressed in La desembocadura. The strength

of a nation is invested in all of its people.

Thus one can see why critics acclaim Enrique Amorim's gaucho novels as his outstanding contribution to literature. They have turned out to be his key to fame and financial success.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE NOVELS WITH POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

Social injustice is not a new idea in the works of Enrique Amorim, but never before has it been the main theme of the story, and never before has it been associated with political ideologies. Amorim was interested in people, and he was sensitive to all the meanings implied in the words "freedom", "equality" and "justice". The novels of his last years are filled with the inequalities which society and people impose on one another. These elements are most evident in the works which have been translated for the Communist bloc countries. In all probability these works are read more for the description of a decadent, capitalist world than for their literary content and style, but they express some of the problems which Amorim felt society should be aware of and do something to remedy.

#### NUEVE LUNAS SOBRE NEUQUÉN--AMORIM'S FIRST POLITICAL NOVEL:

Nueve lunas sobre Neuquén (1946) is a political novel which expresses the newly found political ideologies of Amorim. It describes the experiences of the Communists as prisoners under the Perón dictatorship during World War II. It reflects conditions in Buenos Aires at the time and the indignant resentment the Communists felt at being imprisoned when their mortal enemies, the Nazis, were allowed to roam freely about the country.

Dieva Burman, a Jewess, has married José Hernández. They both

belong to the Communist party which hates the Nazis who have a strong foothold in Argentina. Less than a month after their marriage José is taken prisoner along with some other men. They are tortured and then sent to Neuquén, a concentration camp in Southern Argentina.

It is cold in the camp and the food is poor. There is little light and the mail is heavily censored so no information can enter or leave the walls of the prison. Dieva's letter telling of her pregnancy is censored, and the rose petals from the grave of José's mother are removed from a letter. The men in the camp who survive become more firm in their beliefs as time passes. When the war ends they are among those who wait at the dock for the return of the political refugees.

Amorim describes social injustices in an Argentina whose government favored the Nazis and allowed them to develop on Argentine soil. The plot is nearly non-existent. These conditions may have existed in fact, but the material would have been no less dull if the fictional characters had been omitted and the material presented as a documentary account of existing conditions during that period.

This was Enrique Amorim's first work of propaganda, and it suffers because it is just that--propaganda and nothing more. From the moment José cuts a clipping from the papers which announces the Nazi's theme song, "Mueran los judíos", the reader is bombarded with artificial dialogues and propaganda. The fervor is there, but the novel lacks depth, form, content and artistic development. In my opinion, this novel is a poor example of Enrique Amorim's talents as a writer.

In 1950 the book was translated into the Czech and Polish languages.





LA VICTORIA NO VIENE SOLA--

La victoria no viene sola (1952), which also has a Czech version (1953), is the title of Amorim's second political work and also is a phrase made popular by Stalin.<sup>1</sup> It is a psychological study of two young men. One grew up in poverty and has turned to Communism to fight his way upward, and the other, who was born into an old, aristocratic family, sympathizes with the downtrodden and suffers because of it. This novel describes their struggle between what is expected and required of them in their respective classes, and what they themselves wish to do and be.

Carlos Lista grew up on Luis' grandfather's ranch in extreme poverty. He had to work at an early age and became a bricklayer. He is a member of the Communist Party because he sees it as a means to better the lives of other underprivileged people like himself.

Dr. Luis Vera y Amaranto is a lawyer. His family was once wealthy, but now all he has left is the town house. Even as a child he was concerned with the problems of the less privileged and has defended persons unjustly accused.

Luis and Carlos become good friends, and Luis allows Carlos to use his home for a meeting. Afterwards Luis receives notes threatening his life. He becomes so upset that he forces the druggist at gun point to give him some deadly poison because he would rather take poison than be arrested and tortured by the police as a Communist sympathizer.

Luis confesses to his fiancé that he has long sympathized with

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<sup>1</sup> Enrique Anderson-Imbert, Historia de la literatura hispano-americana, Vol. II (Mexico, 1961), p. 198.

the downtrodden, but that doesn't make him a Communist. This sympathy has caused him trouble and heartache and loss of friends because he is determined to stick by his convictions despite the pressures of society.

This book is a political novel with all evident propaganda. It describes the corruption and cruelty of the police force, and corruption in government. There are the professional Communist agitators stirring up trouble in the trades. The plot is abstract and the novel skips around--darting from the present to childhood scenes and then back to the present. Luis' character seems stronger, but more sensitive than that of Carlos. Carlos is more stubborn and unyielding because he has become hardened to social criticism and is better able to withstand it. The characterizations of the two protagonists are distinctive.

The author suggests that social injustice and inequality exist for the upper classes as well as the lower classes if one doesn't agree with his fellowman. Amorim is suggesting that there is more than one way to work out a problem, and sometimes one should be willing to face up to social criticism to uphold his beliefs.

This novel may express some of the problems and criticisms encountered and endured by the author when he became a Party member. He reminds one of his character Luis.

It can be said that Amorim showed a certain amount of personal courage when he wrote these novels related to his political beliefs. It was a step in a new direction as far as his literary career was concerned, and it was an area which hadn't received much attention from fiction writers in Latin America. However, his attempts at fiction and propaganda have encountered the same pitfalls as those of other

political writers. The story loses its objectivity, interest and beauty through artificiality and forced propaganda. The characters often tend to be abstract and the situations static, perhaps because of the political situations and the spiritual disorder and discontent of the times. A newspaperman and a friend writes:

He left himself open to criticism and perhaps a ruined career. He was one of the privileged class. There was no hope for a political office because the Party didn't have one. There would be no financial gain and he had no need of monetary rewards. He wouldn't be popular with the majority for his actions and could expect hostility and persecution. He had nothing to gain and everything to lose for he was prepared to sacrifice and renounce his social and economic position, family traditions, and his education and very origin for a cause he believed to be just.<sup>2</sup>

This takes a high caliber of personal courage and integrity for any individual.

These two novels dealing with the Communist Party are not comparable to his novels of country life, nor do they do justice to his creative genius, but they undoubtedly have their place in Latin American literature, if only as an experiment.

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<sup>2</sup>Adolfo Silva Delgado, "Personalidad de Amorim: Hombre y poeta", El Pueblo, Salto, July 29, 1960. (English Translation by the writer.)

## CHAPTER IV

### NOVELS OF SOCIAL INJUSTICE

#### CORRAL ABIERTO--

In 1956 Corral Abierto, which was translated into Russian in 1958, appeared and described the life of a young man, who was brought up in a slum area where he lived in the depths of misery, poverty, filth, disease and degradation. It was an indictment against a society which allowed such conditions to exist. It continues the theme of inequitable social conditions and society's indifference to them.

Horacio (Costita) Costa, the seventeen year old protagonist of the novel, was the owner of the knife which had killed a factory manager in a big city. Although he was far from the scene of the crime and had witnesses to prove it, he was detained in a juvenile delinquent's home for a period of time and then released with the understanding that he was to be carefully watched.

He got a job and saved his money so he could buy a new blue suit. The first time he wore it he was taken to police headquarters and held overnight with no explanation. His employer gave him good references when the police came, but discharged him because he didn't want anyone who was involved with the police.

He returned to his home, Corral Abierto, and became a carpenter. From then on he was known as "El carpintero". He gained a strong hold on the people because he listened to their troubles and helped them

when he could.

The police were still interested in the factory manager's death and went to Salto to see a former mistress of his, a once beautiful Italian Jewess named Gemma, whom the factory manager had blinded and horribly scarred for life when a gun accidentally went off. In the man's last letter to his former mistress he tells her that he is going to commit suicide, so Horacio is finally cleared, but his life has been visibly scarred with the repeated arrests.

When a smallpox outbreak hit the village, Horacio gathered everybody together--the blind, those dying of syphilis, typhoid, typhus, bubonic plague, cancer, smallpox and all the other pestilences along with hunger, and they marched en masse toward the ranch, "Los Troperos", which had originally created this village of pestilence. In olden days the ranchers kept the people on the ranch to protect them from raids. When they no longer needed them for protection, they sent the helpless ones away. All the flotsam--the cripples, ill, helpless, aged, degraded and jobless--came and built at the edge of the ranch's property and so developed Corral Abierto, a living hell. The people are herded on a train bound for the city and are like little children at the new sights the train offers them for the first time. Horacio plans to burn down the village of rats and pestilence.

Amorim has once more described an urban slum scene in all its crude, but realistic ugliness. Horacio's family helped him to escape to a better life, but there he was persecuted by the police who made life so unbearable for the innocent young man that he developed unhealing wounds which would last him all his life and constantly remind him that there is little consideration for the poor and helpless

regardless of their aspirations or efforts.

The police are depicted as unsympathetic and cruel. They consider Horacio guilty until the letter proves otherwise. They are merciless in their pursuits as in the scene where they browbeat Gemma until she allows them to read the last letter from Paco. This may indicate a need for reforms in the police department.

Horacio's own problems have opened his eyes to the misery and degradation in which his family and friends live. This new awareness coupled with his experiences in society put him in a position to help his people. On his trip home from the city which has rebuffed him, he stops at a house of prostitution and gets drunk. In this state he suddenly realizes his capabilities.

En ese instante de euforia, comprendió que si había vencido las penurias de una infancia con hambre y liendres, si sobrevivió a los reveses de la urbe encanallada, también vencería el oleaje de alcohol y sexo a que estaba expuesto.<sup>1</sup>

He realizes for the first time that he has the strength to overcome any obstacles, and his trip home becomes more direct and filled with purpose.

The old maxim "hope for the future lies in a nation's youth" can very well apply here. Amorim has depicted a strong, bending, but resilient protagonist, a leader, a living Moses who can lead his people out of human bondage and who is the hope for the future. For it is he who must face the problems resulting from older cultures. Only when people begin to see and understand their social problems can they begin to solve them, and people have to learn to help themselves before they

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<sup>1</sup>Corral Abierto (Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada, 1956), p. 119.

can expect help from others.

Amorim has painted a slum area as he has never depicted it before--one where there are no medical facilities and little police protection, no running water, shacks to live in, and disease and corruption of every description. Society, the ranchers in this case, feels no sympathy or compassion for a situation which it has created and does nothing to improve.

This book, which is filled with pages of misery, brings forth a whole portrait gallery of people like Nella, the school teacher who goes out of her mind in the degrading surroundings; Cándido, "el tísico", Horacio's childhood friend, who works a little and spends the rest of his time in a drunken stupor; respected, old Delibrando Andrada who lives in the past with his wisdom; "La Isabel", Horacio's sister who didn't escape in time and like so many of the other young girls has become a prostitute to stay alive; Rezendez, the merciless police detective who has a job to do and does it; and Gemma, the blind Jewess who is called "judía leprosa" because of her terribly scarred face. These are only a few of the many characters in the book who arouse our sympathy and compassion.

Enrique Amorim in his objective style and observant manner has forcefully presented a festering thorn in the side of humanity which needs to be noticed and cared for. The realness portrayed suggests the influence of Zola and others of the Naturalistic school.

#### LOS MONTARACES--

Los montaraces (1957), an outstanding study of a boy's battle with nature and man and the resulting disillusionment which he suffers,

exposes the evils endured by the woodcutters on an island in the river and the growing-up process of the protagonist, Cecilio.

Cecilio lives on the banks of the river and works at a nearby ranch. He has often tested his muscle against the river's current. His dream is to swim to "Isla Mala", an island in the river, from which no one has ever returned alive. He swims through the rapids and whirlpool and reaches the island where he becomes one of the woodcutters. The conditions on the island are bad and, though they are not forcibly held on the island, the workers believe they can't leave because of the pirana in the river and their lack of boats. They make good money, but they spend it so fast at the company store and become so debt-ridden that they can never hope to repay the sum. When the overseer kills one of their friends, Cecilio persuades the group to swim the river. In a later trip a boatload of men is lost in the rapids, and a newspaper investigation results in reforms on the island which had been run for years by the Ulloa family. When Cecilio returns to the island, he is arrested as the instigator of the unrest among the workers. The body of Wanda Ulloa, wife of the owner of the island, lodges on the rocks in the rapids. A strong swimmer is required to retrieve it, and Cecilio is released from jail to perform the task.

This novel is divided into two general parts. The first is an interesting psychological study of Cecilio Morales, who has a desire for adventure like all youth. He has a tremendous curiosity about the things and people who live around him. He wants to discover the world which is limited to grown men, but which to a boy seems limitless and full of wonders. Physical strength needed to swim the treacherous river or break wild horses is a pleasure for him. In the end there is



bitterness and disillusionment, for he learns that man can be cruel and deadly.

Los miré de cerca. Uno por uno. Me di cuenta de que los malos al fin resultaban buenos, y de que los buenos, los que nos parecen buenos, son los peores. Tan ruines, que es poco desearles la muerte.<sup>2</sup>

His innocent youth is gone and his life stained with arrest and jail. He is almost willing to give up his fight to help the exploited men on the island after he has had his first taste of Aminda, but even his disappointment and pleasure can not hold him back from his appointed task. The conclusion seems most fitting: "los calabozos que de alguna manera, siempre son el destino de nuestros gauchos rebeldes, cuando todavía no han aprendido el camino de la rebelión."<sup>3</sup> His small efforts have not been in vain because reforms do appear on the island.

This novel has the strength, objectivity and acute observations found in Amorim's best gaucho novels. Its dynamic presentation of the countryside--horsebreaking on the ranch, the fury of the river, and nature on the island--add bits of beauty to a brutal scene. In subject matter it recalls the work of a fellow Salteño, Horacio Quiroga, who once was one of Amorim's guiding stars.

Superstitions abound in regard to "Isla Mala", the "Rincón Asombrado" where animals go crazy and die, and "La cola del diablo", the rapids and whirlpool in the river. They are caused by the mystery that surrounds them and the lack of knowledge about them.

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<sup>2</sup>Los Montaraces (Buenos Aires: Editorial Goyanarte, 1957), p. 136-137.

<sup>3</sup>E. C., "Los Montaraces por Enrique Amorim", Ficción, Vol. 14 (Buenos Aires, July-August, 1958), p. 155.

There are only three women in Cecilio's life. There is his stepmother Floriana; "La Pelada", who was the only woman on the island until she brought in girls for a house of prostitution; and Aminda, whose caresses and kisses nearly put an end to Cecilio's fight for the rights of men.

The second part of the book gives background material on the Ulloa family and sets the stage for the appearance of Wanda's body in the river. It is a story in itself of a childless woman who learns after years of doctoring and cures that her husband knows he is sterile due to a childhood illness. She falls in love with his brother; when she tells her husband she is leaving him for his brother, he pushes her off the balcony into the river below. It is Cecilio who rescues her body.

Amorim has successfully united man and nature in a brutal scenario to present us with a novel reminiscent of his gaucho works which may be the best example of his creative talents in the last decade.

Enrique Amorim was concerned in his last years with the problems of society. He was disappointed with society's indifference to and disregard of the poor. He used his novels as a medium to awaken people to the need for reforms in working and living conditions. His ever observant eye in harmony with his ever ready pen have given us two classic examples of penetrating writing filled with realism and truth and a moral: we can't expect others to help us if we don't first try to help ourselves. One must have convictions and be willing to make sacrifices for them. Herein lies his faith in mankind.



## CHAPTER V

### MYSTERY NOVELS

Enrique Amorim was always looking for something new to challenge his creative talents. We have seen this in his diversified topics and fields of endeavor in literature. The field of the mystery novel in Latin America had not been thoroughly tried; Amorim's El asesino desvelado (1945) is described as "la primera novela policial escrita en idioma español".<sup>1</sup> Let us see how Amorim met this new challenge and with what results.

El asesino desvelado, the first of Amorim's two detective stories, was published in 1945 and was the lucky number thirteen in a group of mystery stories collected by Jorge Luis Borges and Adolfo Bioy Casares for "El Séptimo Círculo". It is an intriguing story with roots in Europe and Buenos Aires.

The protagonist, Tito Hassan, is an Argentine-born Arab artist who luckily escapes from Paris as Hitler marches in. On the boat trip home he meets and marries mysterious blonde Gloria Líber. Once in Argentina he becomes suspicious of his wife when she receives fono-cartas which indicate there is another man in her life. His only clue is the man's voice and he begins to search for this voice. In a jealous rage he shoots his wife, and then, while trying to establish an alibi in a

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<sup>1</sup>El asesino desvelado (Cambridge, Mass.: Riverside Press, 1952), p. viii.

theatre, he hears the man's voice on the screen. He arranges with a film critic friend to visit Delta Films where he recognizes the man's voice on a set; the police arrest the mysterious gentleman.

This is an enjoyable and easily read story. The plot deepens and thickens quickly. Tito had been in a bar where three Greek sailors were fighting. He went to his wife's apartment, shot her, and then left his car to be washed while he was at the theatre creating a disturbance to develop his alibi. When he returns to the car he is arrested because a dead sailor with drugs has been found in his car. Tito sees the sailor as a possible alibi and admits hitting him, but another sailor confesses and Tito is freed. He searches the newspaper for news of his wife's murder and learns she is Noemí Farinelli, an Italian spy. Pedro Altávez, a film critic, arranges for him to visit Delta Films. Altávez' secretary, Julia Bayón, has dinner with him but receives a phone call telling her to leave him. Tito recognizes the man's voice; it turns out to be a fake captain who sailed on the ship from Europe. The climax comes when Tito learns his wife had been poisoned by the espionage ring before he shot her. The story ends happily with prospects of money from a book and movie about his harrowing experiences--and a new girl.

Amorim is a master of suspense and intrigue. What could have been a simple, boring story was made interesting with unexpected situations and events like the dead sailor in his car and learning that Tito's wife was a spy.

The character study of Gloria is interesting. There was mystery surrounding her from the very beginning. Despite the fact that her background sounded unlikely, she seemed to be fleeing from the Nazis. Neither Tito nor the reader becomes suspicious when she is willing to

marry after such a brief acquaintance. Though she is seen only through the protagonist's eyes, she is a life-like character.

It is easily understood why there are two Spanish editions of this story. J. C. Herman and Agnes M. Brady adapted it for classroom use in the United States in 1952.

#### FERIA DE FARSANTES--

Amorim attempted his second and last mystery novel in 1952.

Feria de farsantes won the Premio Nacional de Literatura. Amorim traveled a great deal and so it is natural that a novel, like his play La segunda sangre, should have its scene laid in France where he had so many friends.

The scene is a chateau in Normandy and includes the surrounding French countryside and Paris. The Countess de Hendebouville is murdered and her paying guests, all people of the arts, are suspects. Pierre Calín, a jeweler's son and suspected lover of the dead woman, is arrested when his fingerprints are found in the room. The twin sister of the Countess returns from New York and tries to interest the Count in her charms. When this fails, she tells him she has paid for the perfect murder of her sister.

René Garnier, a detective story writer, overhears a strange conversation in an inn and goes to the police who identify the people. Gabriel Dubech, one of the persons at the inn, is arrested later when he sends a disguised policeman to kill a political leader. Dubech, an ex-Nazi, loved the Countess but hated the nobility and all it stood for. He thought she was having an affair with Pierre and killed her for revenge.

This is without doubt Amorim's best mystery novel. He has woven an excellent plot in post-war France. There is absolutely no clue given as to why one should suspect Dubech until near the end when he himself tells why he committed the murder. He does crop up here and there in the story for no apparent reason known to the reader. In the meantime one is led to suspect nearly all the other guests. Among the other characters are Gaby and Pierre who are lovers, but Pierre also has a famous Parisienne model for a mistress; Dino Velardi, an Italian composer; Joaquín Padine, a Spanish artist; Blais Borjac, a poet; Delia Gomez, a sculptress from Argentina; and the clever detective, Casimiro Kassin. The portrait of the Countess' jealous twin sister, Victoria, is a fine one. She not only hated her sister and ordered her death but was also sly enough to tell people she had killed her sister because they wouldn't believe it.

There is also a group of would-be suicides whose motto is "do not die in vain". They are persuaded by Dubech that they can become heroes by killing enemies of the State before they die. There is a chest with money in it which is never explained to anyone, and the Count finally drops the matter. Dubech says it was a Nazi secret how Calin's fingerprints got on the window in the Countess' room.

The novel does end on a happy note. The murderer is apprehended, and the Count has fallen in love with Delia and is going to South America with her.

The whole plot unfolds very concisely and neatly, with just the right amount of suspense and mystery. The unexplained events mentioned above do not mar the plot of this mystery story.

Amorim accepted the challenge of a new genre, wrote the stories,





found they were successful and then went on to new challenges to his writing ability. I don't believe he was trying to prove anything other than his ability to write this type of novel.

## CHAPTER VI

### URBAN NOVELS

#### LA EDAD DESPAREJA--

The urban novels began with La edad despareja (1938). It was the first attempt by the author to describe the solitude of the individual among the masses and to picture the bustle and confusion of the city. The story rambles from Montevideo to Buenos Aires and up the Paraná River. It expresses the disorientation of the writer and the times. It is through the protagonist's eyes that we are able to observe the big city and the people in it.

La edad despareja describes the life and loves of a fatherless city boy named Abelardo Sánchez. His mother, apparently French, will tell him nothing about their background, and thus he is always wondering if this or that man might be his father. As the story unfolds, the author presents an array of completely different female characters who help to teach Abelardo about life. There is beautiful, stupid Lidia; Alicia, a medical student; Dora, a wealthy, dissatisfied young matron; a maid; and María with whom he finally falls in love. While working in a packing plant he is arrested as a suspect in a murder case. In jail Abelardo becomes sympathetic with another accused man and helps him to escape when he himself is released. Fearing arrest, Abelardo seeks refuge in the library and there he meets María. When his mother dies he is given a sealed envelope to deliver to a wealthy rancher. The

two men discover that they have some peculiar habits in common which suggests a relationship, but the old man gives him no satisfaction in the matter. Abelardo settles some virgin land and then learns the ranch has burned. He returns to Buenos Aires to marry Maria and tell her of his inheritance.

In this novel Enrique Amorim has used the city and its life as the background for his plot, whereas previously the campo has been his field. He pictures the city as a multiple personage, turbulent and frustrating when the people become bored with their solitude because they don't know how to communicate with others. Abelardo suffers all the fears and problems of a fatherless, inexperienced city boy growing up during a restless period, slowly learning to adapt himself to his surroundings. Through his person we are able to attend the literary teas at the Dalsace home. We meet his best friend, Raúl Diana, with his vacillating character and revolutionary ideas; the Pocardis, father and son who are so heartily disliked; students at the university; humble servants; the prostitutes by profession; and girls who are trained for nothing more than marriage and a home. Apart from Buenos Aires we visit Montevideo, the beaches in summer, hotels, the packing plant and the estancia.

The women are not always well drawn: María seems vague and nebulous; Alicia, an intelligent medical student, seems more concerned with having a son by Abelardo than marrying him--somewhat out of context with her education and profession and sex. Dora, who is very religious, is willing to kill herself or Abelardo when their affair comes to an end.

The construction of the book is as disorganized as the times.

It skips around from the 1930's to the 1920's, back to the 1930's and the end of the 19th century so that it is difficult to keep the time sequence in order.

It is a novel which expresses the uneasiness and confusion of its period and generation. Its merit lies in the panorama of the city it portrays.

TODO PUEDE SUCEDER--

The author begins by stating that the material for this novel was given him by a stranger on the street in front of a bookstore in Punta del Este. He has never learned the whereabouts of the true author, and it is possible that this is the true story of one, Martín Durand. Todo puede suceder (1955), briefly records the trials of a young Jew in Europe and then relates the events in the young man's life shortly before he has to make a momentous decision.

The protagonist is Martín Durand, a thirty-three year old Jew, who has come from Europe as a displaced person. The ambassador charged him dearly for his visa and new name. For six years he has worked as a night watchman for an architect and enjoys the solitude. His only company is a stray dog he has named Naná from a novel by Zola. Now he has to decide whether to continue this way of life or resume his true identity and position in society. The architect, Miranda, is building a new home for a banker, and Martín is introduced to the banker's wife, Laura Ribans, a beautiful, dissatisfied young woman. Laura is obviously attracted to Martín and tells him that her husband feels more strongly about his money than herself. Laura comes to Martín one night and begs him to help her remove a dead man from her

bed before her husband comes home, but the latter arrives home early. Martín left Punta del Este and read in the papers of the deaths of the architect, Miranda, and a male cousin of Laura's.

The "decisión" to be made seems to be the focal point of the story, but the reader never knows what the decision was--"todo puede suceder". Nor do we know who the dead man was--the architect?, the cousin?, somebody else?

The protagonist, Martín Durand, a solitary individual who likes his pipe and peace, is the impersonal observer of events. Laura Ribans is a rich and unhappy woman who tries to find solace in quiet affairs. She spends the night on the beach with Martín when her husband comes home, and she is unable to remove the dead man's body from her bed. She relates her life with her husband thusly:

---Ahora mi marido despertará---Mi marido ya debe haberse dado vuelta. A veces se levanta y corre el cortinado con suavidad, para no despertarme. Si sus ojos soñolientos no miran hacia el lecho, como tantas veces, seguirá durmiendo hasta las ocho. A las ocho y media dejará el cuarto, otra vez en silencio y en la penumbra, como al acostarse. Irá al de vestir, recogerá la ropa, tomará un baño, se vestirá y habrá pasado la noche entera con el cuerpo del otro, sin darse cuenta . . . Esto es lo cotidiano, es cosa de todos los días. He vivido años como una muerta a su lado, y él no se ha dado cuenta.<sup>1</sup>

Señor Ribans is known to us through the eyes of others only. He is rich and educated and interested in money.

. . . era incapaz de amar con pasión a Laura, pero tenía el placer de respetar los caprichos, las alteraciones de carácter, como si se tratase de méritos excepcionales. Una suma de dinero perdida en pocos minutos tenía para él la misma importancia que para su mujer una cita fracasada. Ribans quizás se deprimiera.

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<sup>1</sup>Todo puede suceder (Montevideo: Editorial Viv, 1955), p. 114-115.

Pero los reveses de fortuna no eran frecuentes.<sup>2</sup>

"He believes himself to be the perfect husband", says his wife.

Considera como algo primordial la esmerada educación. . . . Y yo debo aparecer como mal educada para entretenerlo. Entra en la casa sin hacer el menor ruido. Quería demostrarme que no era capaz de perturbar mi sueño. Y se desvestía a oscuras, en la antecámara, alardeando de ingenio . . . Iba al baño como una sombra. Hasta se frotaba los dientes cerrando la boca. Desde mi cama oía sus movimientos, y no daba señales de vida, para darle el gusto, para complacerlo. Esperaba que se metiese en la cama de al lado y se durmiese antes que yo, feliz de ser un cumplido caballero.<sup>3</sup>

The only other character of importance is young fifteen year old Eva who has heart trouble. She spends a night with Martín, pretending the almost finished house is her family's. Perhaps she realizes she will never have a house of her own because soon after she goes to the hospital on the verge of death.

Amorim's novel in a minor way shows the unkind treatment accorded the Jews, but the merit of the work lies in the fact that it gives us a panoramic view of wealthy Punta del Este and examples of the people living there.

#### EVA BURGOS--

Amorim, one of a group of successful Uruguayan writers such as Acevedo Díaz, Carlos Reyles and Javier de Viana, had just finished this novel when he died in Salto at sixty years of age. This story which he designated as a nivola in the Unamuno manner describes society in Punta del Este and other playgrounds of the wealthy.

Eva Burgos (1960) which was published posthumously, relates the

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 103.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 103.

life of a prostitute in Punta del Este. Carlos Panda first met Eva Burgos when she was eleven and even then was greatly impressed by her beauty and voluptuous figure. He gave her advice and kindness because Eva was one of the many illegitimate children whose mothers came to Punta del Este to have their children and leave them behind. Years later Carlos Panda is killed while crossing the street and Eva, who has just recently returned from Europe as the mistress of a wealthy Spaniard, attends the funeral. Eva sees Panda's secretary, Carlos Ochoa, and in a secluded hotel she tells him about her rise in the world, her life in Europe and her return with Luis Castromagno. Castromagno's wife has come from Spain in a hysterical state. She refuses to divorce him because she wants to inherit his millions. Luis wants Eva to act as his wife's nurse and give her an overdose of sleeping pills. He knows a doctor who will certify her death as a suicide. Eva is afraid. If she kills his wife she will be caught, and if she doesn't she will have to tell the police about his intentions. Either way she is going to lose. Later Eva is found dead surrounded by empty sleeping pill bottles. The news makes headlines. Eva's death ruins Castromagno's commercial opportunities in South America, and women avoid him.

Once more we are left up in the air as in an Alfred Hitchcock thriller or Amorim's Todo puede suceder. The girl is dead but mystery surrounds her death. We will never know for what reason or by who's hand she died. Nor will we know who the stranger was at her funeral.

Amorim delved deeply into the personality of this girl and she evokes our sympathies when she is found dead. Through the pages of this book we have watched Eva grow up. She learned early that she was illegitimate. Wise beyond her years, she knew man intimately at eleven.

The police arrested her hoping to rehabilitate her, but it was already too late. Carlos Panda was the only one who truly befriended her and advised her. He told her to get married. Perhaps if he had married her, things would have been different. A rich woman, Fanny Perlot, read her palm and took her to Paris. There Mr. and Mrs. Perlot fought over who was going to have her. She met Castromagno there, and he gave her his book on the art of making love. Later he bought her from Fanny. She returned to South America, beautiful enough to be a movie star, but not strong enough to take another person's life. At twenty-five she knows all there is to know about life and is found dead in a forested area near the sea. A suicide? Her environment was such that she had no hopes of a normal childhood, much less a normal adult life.

The vividly portrayed men and women in the story are for the most part jaded and live for pleasure only, even in its most degrading forms. The Naturalistic elements and the influence of Zola make this book most realistic. One is reminded of Nacha Regules by Manuel Gálvez who describes prostitution in Buenos Aires, but Eva Burgos is much more degrading, and there is no one to save Eva once Carlos Panda dies.

Está esperando qué hacer ahora que no está guardada por los barrotes de la celda, inventada por una sociedad que defiende su moral, unánimemente de acuerdo en mantener la prostitución legalizada. Eva está a la espera. El azar es para ella, y para otras también, el Dios común. Acaba de entrar en otra cárcel. Y ésta no es menos atroz que la primera.<sup>4</sup>

It is legalized prostitution which makes cases like Eva's possible.

These novels written about urban conditions are difficult to classify. Each is a separate entity in itself and completely different

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<sup>4</sup>Eva Burgos (Montevideo: Ediciones Milla, Editorial Alfa, 1960), p. 92.



from the others. Let it suffice to say that most of Amorim's books of the last decade were fighting some social ill, whether it was prostitution, indifference, or poor working and living conditions. No trained sociologist could have been more aware of society's weaknesses than Amorim.

## CHAPTER VII

### SHORT STORIES

Enrique Amorim's best works are those in the field of the novel where he has proved that he has the narrative ability necessary for the development of this complex literary form, but his story telling ability is also noteworthy in the less complex structure of the short story. Anderson-Imbert and Kiddle write that "Amorim constructs his novels better than he does his short stories and, in the latter, the influence of the novel form is obvious."<sup>1</sup> This statement has exceptions as noted in the case of Amorim's "La doradilla". Since the year 1923, when a series of fifteen short stories were published in a book entitled Amorim, there has been a continual flow of short stories from the pen of Amorim. As in the novels, the themes dealt with the scenes, people, animals and birds of the Uruguayan countryside; scenes of city people and incidents in their lives as well as descriptions of city life itself; humorous anecdotes; psychological studies of people and animals; character studies; love stories; tales of fantasy, legend and superstition; and miscellaneous other incidents and topics. Some of the stories are charming, and all of them portray Amorim's love for life and nature and people.

Amorim (1923), a volume long since out of print and therefore

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<sup>1</sup> Enrique Anderson-Imbert and Lawrence B. Kiddle, Veinte cuentos Hispanoamericanos del siglo XX (New York, 1956), p. 91-97.

almost impossible to obtain, deals primarily with stories of life in the campo. It was here that the theme of the quitanderas first appeared and acknowledged by critics to be the best story in the group. Another fine story is "La criada" which appeared in Nosotros in 1923.<sup>2</sup> It is the story of a servant, Lola, whose face has been badly scarred by small pox. She has no boy friends although everyone thinks so. She loves to watch the elegant ladies and gentlemen who come to the nightclub in their silks and satins and jewels. Her mistress asks that she bring her a shawl, and when Lola gives it to her at the dance she notices that none of the beautiful ladies have smallpox scars. Already ill with fever, she falls down the stairs. Once in her room she kills herself. Her mistress tells the children, "Tenía un novio, es de suponer que estaba embarazada. . . ." Zum Felde severely criticized the volume, using words such as puerile and adolescent, and continued, "Toda la acción es interior. Algo nos hace recordar la primera manera de Horacio Quiroga".<sup>3</sup>

In 1924 the Editorial Latina published a special edition of Amorim's story "Las quitanderas" which appeared later in the first two editions of Tangarupá. Later, of course, it was incorporated to form La carreta. We have already described the obvious plagiarism of this theme by the Frenchman Adolfo de Falgairolle in the second chapter.

La trampa del pajonal (1928) is another volume of six short stories based on both country and city life. In "Relato para 1999"

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<sup>2</sup> Enrique Amorim, "La criada", Nosotros, Vol. 44 (Buenos Aires, 1923), p. 480-483.

<sup>3</sup> Alberto Zum Felde, "'Amorim' por Amorim", El Día, October 23, 1929.

Amorim presents his own brand of fantasy and science fiction. The story which gave the volume its title has appeared in an anthology of short stories compiled by Serafín J. García,<sup>4</sup> and in brief is this: A young boy spends the night with some woodcutters on the mountain to prove his bravery. He awakens late in the morning and walks in the direction from which he can hear the axes chopping, but he becomes hopelessly lost in the pajonel and cannot find his way out. "La perforadora" and "Farías y Miranda, avestrueros" are also worthy reading material, the latter being the better of the two.

La plaza de las carretas (1937), is divided into four parts: "De tiro largo", "Dos tipos" with an enchanting story of an old gentleman, "Un payador" and "El retobado", five stories of birds' relationships with people in "Historias con pájaros" and "La plaza de las carretas". The five bird stories have been revised and reprinted in Los pájaros y los hombres (1960), which will be mentioned later. The stories all describe country life and are distinguished by the movements of the characters in their settings.

Los pájaros y los hombres (1960) brings back ten short stories which appeared in earlier publications. The book deals with interesting studies and characteristics of birds as they relate themselves to humans. In "Los Horneros" Pedro Lima leaves the hospital and hurries to keep a wedding date, but the girl doesn't know what he is talking about. They had originally found the wounded Pedro from the chatter of the horneros; in his delirium these things became real for him. The

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<sup>4</sup>Serafín J. García, Panorama del cuento nativista del Uruguay, (Montevideo, 1943), p. 191-202.

most tender and sad tale is the one found in "Las palomas". Inocencia, an old maid, lives alone. In her garden there is a dove cote; as the years pass she is the only one keeping doves because the other women fear they will remain single if they have one. The doves are gradually all killed until there is only one male left. Inocencia put a mirror on her bedroom window ledge and watched the male make love and flirt with his reflection in the mirror. That night Inocencia died after watching the unrequited love of the dove. In "Los carpinteros" a little boy wants to see the babies and nest of the woodpeckers. A friend finds one in a tree and the little boy rides up to it and puts his hand in the hole. The birds fly away, and the horse moves away leaving the little boy with his arm caught in the hole. He hangs there until his friend appears and helps him down without any comments--like a true friend. There are other enchanting stories such as "Las calandrias" and "Los mixtos". All give the author an opportunity to philosophize and paint charming scenes of nature which he obviously loved. Two rural stories, "El mayoral" and "Vaqueros de la cordillera", appear at the end of the book.

Horizontes y bocacalles is a book of short stories published in Buenos Aires in 1926. It is divided into two parts. Horizontes deals with the country and Bocacalles describes city life. The short stories "Quemacampos" and "Un peón" were both later incorporated into El paisano Aguilar. The first story, "Saucedo", gives a tragic view of campo life. A poor, dusty, sleepy little village, Saucedo, is suddenly aswarm with locusts who drop like clouds from the darkened heavens and quickly strip every living plant despite the flames and flapping arms of the poor people who lose their crops to the voracious insects.

There are six stories of the campesinos. "Florentino" sees a three legged colt but doesn't tell anyone because he knows the patrón will kill it. The colt is found and brought to the ranch. Later it is sent with some mares who are going to be sold in town. The patrón tells his son that they are going to find a leg for the colt. The stories in this first part are all tragic and portray the misery and suffering found in the country. The stories in Bocacalles are satirical as we see in "Mal humor y heroísmo" where a young man gets his name in the paper for returning a purse found in his taxi. He loses his life in a fire trying to save people who weren't there and becomes a hero. The stories of country life in this volume are superior to those of the city. The characters are vague as are the themes; therefore the latter stories lack interest.

In 1927 Tráfico appeared. It is a book of short stories describing city life and scenes. There are descriptive scenes of store windows, the theatres, autos, street corners and trains. Fantasy is woven into several of the stories. The section labeled "Tranvías Imposibles" is a whimsical account of how trains could be used to make people happy and life more enjoyable. These are a series of personal impressions, primarily about Buenos Aires, which picture the hustle and bustle of a big, cosmopolitan city.

Temas de amor (1960) consists of ten touching love stories. They are short but poignant glimpses into the lives of both men and women and the outcome of their search for love, companionship, security and dignity. There is the "Doble vida" of María who is single and beautiful. Neighbors used to suspect her trips to Buenos Aires, but at thirty their interest began to flag and now at forty they don't

care though they wonder why she has never married. "Humo" describes a prostitute of Paris, Mayenne. A Latin American tells her to stop smoking. He tells her about a hotel room lined with mirrors which recalls to her mind scenes of "a day when Paul held her in his arms, while the Germans strafed the roads, and told her of a hotel room in Paris where the walls were lined with mirrors. "La madre polaca" tells the touching story of two widows who raise the son of one of them and records their pleasure when he passes his exams and becomes a doctor. There is sadness and disappointment and disillusionment and sex in these stories. There is very little love in these narratives which is beautiful and pure, except perhaps in "La madre polaca". Though the word "love" suggests romance, there certainly is none in these short accounts of happenings in people's lives.

Editorial Ercilla of Santiago de Chile printed the book Historias de amor in 1938 containing five short stories about women and their loves. "Miss Violet March" describes love on a ranch. "Donde se habla de Gluvia" recalls the fate of a bar girl whose brothers and father went to sea. "Flora y Clara María" are the two loves of a young writer. He meets them years later and is surprised at the way in which they have changed. In "Eugenia" a young man tells of a tragic affair his sister had, not realizing that the author he is speaking to was the cause of it all. The best story is "Quién es María Damia?" which first appeared in Presentación de Buenos Aires (1936). It relates an evening in the life of a young man about to commit suicide. He meets María Damia who persuades him to wait until morning. The next morning he is glad to be alive, but he can find no trace of the girl who saved his life. Amorim displays his narrative skill in these tales

and develops a certain amount of suspense in each one which makes for interesting reading.

Presentación de Buenos Aires appeared in 1936. It contains two stories of miscellaneous nature. A series of short impressions make up the first one. A young writer receives a cable from a wealthy Dutch girl saying she is coming to see the beautiful Buenos Aires he described to her when he was in her home. Only a letter comes to him on the boat. It tells of a loss of fortune, father and beauty and her subsequent stop in Río. He believes that someday she will come to drink in the beauties of Buenos Aires. The second section entitled "María Damia" has already been discussed and relates the story of a "dream" woman of that name who saves a would-be suicide. Humor, satire and fantasy are all blended with reality in these two stories to indicate the author's lyrical qualities. He has also presented scenes of Buenos Aires and the Río del Plata region. Francis de Miomandre translated the book into French in 1937.

In 1932, Enrique Amorim published a series of six short stories entitled Del 1 al 6. These stories are depressing bits of life and fantasy and are not among Amorim's better short stories. There is satire and discontent which were typical of the second and third decades of this century, and they are portrayed most realistically in these tales.

Después del temporal (1953) is Amorim's best collection of short stories with a varied assortment of themes. In them he pictures intricate psychological processes, paints scenery, dissects personalities, draws clear men, women and children types, and depicts the realities of life with sympathy and compassion. In "Después del temporal" Ben



Finney, wealthy and fifty years old, married Cora in hopes of having children. There were no children and she was having an affair with Alex, a penniless young man. Ben asks her if Alex is in love with her. She tells him that because of Alex she has been happy and able to endure living with him the past four years. When she turns to see his reaction, he is gone and she finds him asleep in his room. Did he hear her answer? In "Una palabra de más" Bodutchá wants a child. She chooses a sailor who is strong as a tree to plant the seed. He sails away and finds her gone when he returns. He longs for her and hopes she will return one day. We find a bit of legend in "Las ñapangas". Lus and Flora are ñapangas who live in the valley and are said to be descendants of women the conquistadores left behind. They are enemies of the Indians who live in the hills, but the Indians come to the valley to make love with them. A stranger comes one day and Flora begs him to give her a child, but the Indian refuses because the ñapangas must not be allowed to reproduce themselves. "La doradilla", which first appeared in Sur,<sup>5</sup> and was included in Anderson-Imbert and Kiddle's anthology,<sup>6</sup> is one of Amorim's finest animal stories. It is told by a boy who loves his beautiful mare who has been barren. One day he sees a colt with her and proudly tells his father, but his father tells him that the colt belongs to another mare. When next he sees the mare he discovers that she has fought the colt's mother and kept her away from her offspring. The colt is dying for lack of food and the mare, who has all the

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<sup>5</sup> Enrique Amorim, "La Doradilla", Sur, 15 [i.e. 16] (139): May 1946, p. 54-60.

<sup>6</sup> Enrique Anderson-Imbert and Lawrence B. Kiddle, Veinte cuentos Hispanoamericanos del siglo XX (New York, 1956), p. 91-97.

instincts of maternity, has bloody teats from trying to feed the colt she has tried to adopt.

There is the interesting fable that "Los gorriones" like peace and order. When Luis tries to cross the patio late one night to get to Lucila's room, the birds flew about and screeched so that everyone was awakened. Luis notes that the birds are the best guards of the honor of a home and are dangerous to one who wants to lead the life of a Don Juan. "La fotografía", which Amorim claimed to be his favorite short story in the collection, relates the loneliness of a French prostitute in a small Uruguayan town. She wants to send a picture to her mother assuring her of her well-being. She finally finds courage to ask the school teacher to be in the picture, but the school teacher doesn't appear at the photographer's at the appointed time. On the way home she sees the teacher standing on the balcony, but the latter slams the door and goes inside when she sees the French woman. Anderson Imbert and Eugenio Florit included this story in their book.<sup>7</sup> There are twenty-six stories collected in this book, and each is an example of Amorim's love for animals and mankind in tales filled with love, whimsy, humor and sorrow; they are undoubtedly his best efforts in the field of the short story.

Enrique Amorim has earned well-deserved compliments for his penetrating and modernistic handling of his literary ventures in this area. Although a good many short stories were published, either individually or bound together in volumes, they do not as a whole attain the same high caliber as his novels, particularly those of the campo.

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<sup>7</sup> Enrique Anderson-Imbert and Eugenio Florit, Literatura Hispanoamericana (New York, 1960), p. 719-722.

Again, it is the short stories of the campo which seem to present his strongest and most positive themes, although there are exceptions to the rule as in "La fotografía". There are primarily three main subjects: country life, urban life and love. Into these three main themes he has woven satire, pessimism, character studies, fantasy and disillusionment. There is only an occasional story with hope and a ray of sunshine. The rest abound with sorrow, hardship and the unhappy, seamier side of life. Amorim knows how to "desentrañar las más sutiles reacciones psíquicas o físicas"<sup>8</sup> of his many characters in order to make them appear more realistic. As in his novels the influence of the Naturalists is apparent. They will probably never reach the heights of popularity that some of his novels have. Después del temporal is, in my opinion, the best volume in Amorim's short story collection.

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<sup>8</sup>Serafín J. García, Panorama del cuento nativista del Uruguay (Montevideo, 1943), p. 202.

## CONCLUSION

Enrique Amorim's literary output involves some thirty volumes and includes novels, poetry, plays and collections of short stories. His numerous short stories, articles about the theatre and other topics have appeared in such magazines and newspapers as Mundo Uruguayo, Ficción, Nosotros, El Popular, La Nación, Marcha, El País, El Hogar and Mundo Argentino, to just mention a few. There has been a variety of themes beginning with the rural scene with charming studies of the people, birds and animals therein, and continuing to the city and people and scenes there. There is also love, political and social problems, fantasy, mystery, legend, and everyday occurrences woven into his literary tapestry.

Amorim has proven himself to be an astute and intelligent observer of life around him. He was best able to depict his childhood environment, but his many years of city residence are also well represented. Sometimes the political and social situations, and spiritual disorder and discontent of his times caused him to produce static situations and abstract characters as in his few political novels, but in general, his attachment to reality is firm.

Religion never plays a part in his work, nor do extreme cruelty and brutality except that which is nature's own. Romance isn't considered a necessary element in his writings. Sometimes elements of Zola are evident in the poverty, degradation and promiscuity that he pictures because Amorim uses the Naturalist's and Realist's art to its

fullest. Amorim has fully developed "una concepción lawrenciana del hombre en sus relaciones con la naturaleza."<sup>1</sup> His rural scenes are certainly realistic and provide poignant bits of human drama.

His technique is modern and his style has strengthened with the passage of time and experience. His characters have become more intense and realistic in their exterior forms, although he has avoided, for the most part, analysis of the interior problems of his characters. He has experimented and incorporated new themes, styles, ideas and genres into his literary output. The lyrical quality of his works sometimes gives one the feeling that the soul of a poet lurks just around the corner, but then one is suddenly brought back to actuality by the intense realism of the situation and characters with a style which is sometimes more journalistic than poetic.

It is Amorim's originality which sets him apart from other writers. His devotion to the Latin American scene and the people who live and work there has superseded his cosmopolitanism. His characters, both male and female, represent such nationalities as Germans, French, Polish, Russians, Austrians, Spaniards, Italians, Turks, Arabs, Englishmen, Lithuanians and Jews.

Those novels which are most outstanding and will keep his name prominent in literary history are those which Amorim skillfully and conscientiously tooled and etched to depict rural Uruguay--his novels of the gaucho and the campo.

El libro más vendido es La carreta. Siete ediciones en castellano y varias traducciones. Creo que sus críticos están de acuerdo en

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<sup>1</sup>Fernando Alegría, Breve historia de la novela Hispanoamericana (Mexico, 1959), p. 234.

pensar que de sus novelas de la primera época La carreta, El paisano Aguilar y El caballo y su sombra son las que más gustan y de la segunda época diremos Los montaraces y La desembocadura, ésta, al decir de Emir Rodríguez Monegal, un reconocido crítico uruguayo, es una novela que irá ganando laureles con el correr del tiempo. Como Ud. habrá visto, pinta el crecimiento de una región, como se fueron civilizando tierra y gentes casi salvajes y como fue avanzando el crecimiento de las familias a medida que esas tierras desiertas se iban poblando.<sup>2</sup>

In these novels Enrique Amorim presents a different, a personal, view of the gaucho and breaks away from the somewhat stereotyped version of the gaucho which in many instances painted him as a romantic, devil-may-care Don Juan, running off with some other man's china, or playing his guitar, singing, dancing and telling stories all night, and finally ending in a knife duel. Amorim depicts the gaucho as a man, like all men, facing problems incurred by their physical and social environment, resisting changes because it destroys their independence, security and entire way of life. There is nothing romantic about this type of gaucho. You may even feel pity for him because of his inability to adapt to a changing world in which he had no real place. Roberto J. Payró shows why Amorim's rural novels have met with such success.

Con osadía, pero sin tropezar, Amorim nos ha llevado a ver al hombre, gosero, rústico, en quien no se ha encendido todavía la lucecilla del idealismo sentimental, pero en quien arde naturalmente el fuego de los sentidos frente al inefable misterio del amor, son páginas rudas, sin adorno, sin rubores, pero también sin viciosa complacencia.<sup>3</sup>

Enrique Amorim at this time is the last Uruguayan to have

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<sup>2</sup>Personal letter from Mrs. Amorim to the writer, April 26, 1962.

<sup>3</sup>Roberto J. Payró, "El azar de las lecturas, por Magister Prunum", La Nación (Buenos Aires, no date).

produced nativista novels of note.<sup>4</sup> It is precisely these rural novels which are his outstanding contribution to Latin American literature and assure that his name will be included as one of a long series of writers who have depicted rural life, among whom are such illustrious names as Eduardo Gutiérrez, Eduardo Acevedo Díaz, Roberto J. Payró, Benito Lynch and Ricardo Güiraldes.

Although Amorim's novels of the gaucho and rural life are his finest contributions to literature, one shouldn't overlook the plays, poetry, short stories and other novels which demonstrate Enrique Amorim's skillful creative powers with outstanding selections in each of these genres. This author has not only produced quality but quantity. Thus we are able to repeat his biographer's statement that Enrique Amorim has been able to do what few novelists and short story writers are able to do and that is, "escribir mucho y muy bien"<sup>5</sup>--one of the highest compliments we can pay this fine writer.

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<sup>4</sup> Arturo Torres-Ríoseco, Historia de la gran literatura Ibero-americana, 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires, 1951), p. 315.

<sup>5</sup> Juan Carlos Welker, "La obra literaria de Enrique Amorim", La carreta, 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Claridad, 1932), p. 153.

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## APPENDIX

### WORKS OF ENRIQUE AMORIM

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