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*The Gaucho in the Works of Eduardo
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OF
EDUARDO ACEVEDO DÍAZ AND JAVIER DE VIANA

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THE GAUCHO IN THE WORKS OF
EDUARDO ACEVEDO DÍAZ AND JAVIER DE VIANA

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FOREWORD

The gaucho from the Rio de la Plata region has been the subject of many works by South American authors, especially in Argentina and Uruguay. I have selected the works of two Uruguayan authors for this study, not because Argentine gaucho literature is less important, but rather because the Uruguayan gaucho made a greater contribution over a longer period of time, to the development of his native country, than did his Argentine counterpart. The works of both authors, generally speaking, treat of the same topic and are of national significance in picturing the gaucho type. The methods of treatment varied considerably, which was a still more important reason for the choice of these particular gaucho authors.

Eduardo Acevedo Díaz is generally called a romanticist by most critics, while Javier de Viana is always classified as a realist, or even a naturalist. Yet there are elements of both romanticism and realism in the works of each. Passages from their works have been chosen not only to show them in their respective traditional classifications, but also to reveal their differences and similarities. More important, however, is the fact that the authors make use of the same type of protagonist, the gaucho from a romantic point of view on the one hand, and from a realistic approach on the other. It will be the purpose of this study, then, to attempt to bring out those distinctly different treatments and to find the reasons for that difference.

Perhaps a clearer picture could be shown of how the subject

is handled by discussing the romantic elements found in the works of each and then progressing in the same manner to the realistic elements. Unfortunately such a method would tend to destroy the continuity of the individual author's development during his period of creative writing. For this reason I have considered each author separately. Attention has been paid to the chronologic order of publication of the works of both authors, in so far as that is possible.

A brief glimpse at the history of Uruguay and a glance at the historical role played by the gaucho will help clarify his as a representative of a national type in the country's development.

Chapter I - HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The hectic struggle for Uruguayan independence left a profound effect on the people themselves and, as might be expected, deeply influenced writers who drew upon national history as a source for their literary works. That influence has not ceased; it is reflected in literature of both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by three authors who give us a composite picture of the country and its inhabitants. In the revolutionary movements which often swept over the nation, many of the participants were of the rural, or gaucho class, and it is from this class that authors frequently drew their characters, giving rise to what is commonly called gaucho literature.

Eduardo Acevedo Díaz, one of the authors whose works are considered in this study, achieved recognition in literature primarily as an historian. His works lean heavily on the gaucho type to carry the thread of action through the era which he depicted. The typical gaucho of his historic novels also appears in some of his purely fictional publications, but in either case, his protagonist is limited in conception to a definite era in time.

The second Uruguayan author here considered, Javier de Viana, wrote chiefly of the gaucho of a later period. With the progress of the country, the gaucho's role was changed to some

extent, and part of Viana's works gives us a picture of the gaucho class as he saw it during the first quarter of this century. A few of Viana's gauchos, for example, discuss national political situations in lieu of taking an active part in civil wars, for revolutions had ceased entirely in Uruguay during most of the author's productive years. .

It is of utmost importance then, to look at the historical and political difficulties which Uruguay has faced, from the beginning of her history down through the era of Batlle y Ordóñez, (or through the first quarter of this century). If some of the explanations and accounts seem to have no direct relation to gaucho themes, it will be understood that they are included merely for a greater appreciation of the backgrounds in the literary works listed in this study.

Smallest of the republics on the South American continent, Uruguay today enjoys a relatively prominent position in the American nations. In fact, Uruguay is called a "bright light" in the Western hemisphere.¹

That Uruguay has arrived at economic peace and prosperity, free from violent political revolutions, is alone a remarkable achievement in the light of her history. But to have attained a marked degree of democratic political freedom and at the same time to have created extensive social legislation for the welfare

1- Caldwell, Mary, The Pan-American, Vol. X, No. 10, March 1950. p. 42.

of her people, makes Uruguay unique among nations. Against staggering odds, she has emerged from disheartening internal chaos that would have discouraged a less determined people.

Perhaps the Uruguayans are approaching the Spanish characteristic of idealism in politics which Cecil Jane defined as an attempt to reach "the ideals of efficiency and liberty" in government.² He traces this characteristic to the ancient Castilian products of intense localism and a "desire that government should also be ideal,"³ which results in "a perpetual tendency to alternate between a degree of liberty which amounts almost to a negation of all government and a degree of government which amounts almost to a negation of all liberty."⁴ The chaotic and anarchical manner of governments in Spanish America are the result of an attempt "to apply to the central government the principles and machinery of Spanish local government...;" thus, the South American idea of representative government is rather derived from the Spanish than the Anglo-Saxon.⁵ Mr. Jane concludes however, that "the race will continue to seek a solution of its political problems, but it will be sought less tempestuously, although not less

2- Jane, Cecil, Liberty and Despotism in Spanish America, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1929, p. 166.

3- Ibid., p. 26.

4- Ibid., p. 26.

5- Ibid., (see especially pp. 26, 129, 170) (This "local government" refers to the cabildos abiertos which antedated the New England town meetings, but were similar to them).

sincerely."⁶ It is this last expression that the Uruguayans seem to have embodied thus far in the twentieth century, arriving at a degree of constitutional, democratic government in the face of almost insurmountable odds.

During the colonial period several early attempts were made to settle dwellers on the lands east of the Uruguay River--La Banda Oriental del Uruguay. Four settlements were founded by the Spanish in 1527, 1552, and in the decade following 1570--all of which had to be abandoned because of the vicious attacks of the ^{Charrúa} Carrúa Indians.⁷ It remained for the Franciscan missionaries to establish the first permanent settlements, or missions, in Uruguay, in 1618.⁸ The more active Jesuits arrived in 1624, however and did much of the groundwork of settling the area. Of the 37 such missions in what was once the Banda Oriental territory, 30 of their sites are in present day Brazil.⁹

Noting that the territory was apparently unsuitable for immediate settlement, the governor of the La Plata area devised a scheme of occupation that was later to draw overwhelmingly large numbers of Europeans to the Banda Oriental. In 1603, he imported large herds of horses and cattle into the area, to multiply on the rolling grasslands. The wisdom and foresight of Hernandarias--or Hernando Arias de Saaavedra--formed the basis

6- Ibid., p. 175.

7- Koebel, W. H., Uruguay, T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd., London, 1919 p. 389.

8- Ibid., p. 40.

9- Ibid., p. 40

For the territory's wealth and prosperity later.¹⁰ When the transplanted stock had multiplied sufficiently, the ease of obtaining hides for trade purposes--illegal as it generally was in view of the strict Spanish commercial regulations--attracted many comers. Among them were Portuguese, Dutch, and English smugglers and privateers. The Carrúan Indians also took advantage of the easy livelihood provided,¹¹ as did the citizens of Buenos Aires. There was a great deal of competition, however, from the lawless hunters of hides. The acceptable procedure was to obtain a hide-hunting license from the Buenos Aires authorities, enabling the hunter to slaughter legally the numberless herds.¹² Those who did not secure such a license were called changedores. When the Crown tried to suppress them, they fled to Brazil, growing in numbers until they could offer resistance to the Spaniards. Partly to control those lawless men, but also to constitute a military and police force against Indian uprisings and smuggling in general, a corps of lancers, Blandengues, was formed in 1797; its picked ranks included a man destined to become the country's national hero, José Gervasio Artigas.¹³

Up to the eve of the wars for independence, the Spaniards

10- Sherbinin, Betty de, The River Plate Republics, Coward-McCann, Inc., New York, 1947, p. 232.

11- Koebel, op. cit., p. 42.

12- Sherbinin, Betty de, op. cit., p. 41.

13- Sherbinin, Betty de, op. cit., p. 54.

fought to drive the Portuguese from La Banda Oriental. Under Rondeau in 1801 the Blandengues troops succeeded in expelling the Portuguese.¹⁴

During the British invasion of La Plata in 1806-7, Montevideo, Maldonado, and Colonia were the points of occupation in Uruguay. After the British withdrawal in 1807, "not only had the provinces learned their own power, but--more especially in the case of Montevideo--the seeds of commercial liberty had been sown amongst the local merchants and traders by the English men of business who had descended upon the place beneath the protection of the Army."¹⁵ The Banda Oriental province had discovered its potentialities, and was thus prepared to launch its struggle against political dominance--a struggle destined to last for twenty years, as against similar periods of ten years for most of the other South American republics.

The Junta of Buenos Aires was set up in 1810 to declare itself free from Spain, and also for the purpose of uniting all the provinces of the former viceroyalty under one government, the United Provinces of La Plata. La Banda Oriental did not join the movement for independence at first, and Montevideo consequently found itself the seat of the viceroyalty early in 1811. Montevideo was "held for the king" until 1814.¹⁶

14- Ibid., pp. 54-5.

15- Ibid., pp. 54

16- Kirkpatrick, F. A., Latin America, MacMillan Co., New York 1939, p. 151.

José Gervasio Artigas appeared on the scene in 1810, to become the "George Washington of his land."¹⁷ This leader of the Banda Oriental peoples was born in Montevideo, 1764, of one of the leading families. He joined the Blandengues in 1797 and became head of the organization in 1802.¹⁸ He served with the corps in 1807 against the British.

At the time of Viceroy Elío's declaration of war against Buenos Aires in 1811, Artigas was stationed at Colonia with the Blandengues troops. He fled to Buenos Aires and offered his services to the Buenos Aires junta, which commissioned him as Commander of Militia.¹⁹ He gathered an army and the move for independence swept rapidly over the country. But Elío had requested the Portuguese to come to the aid of the house of Bourbon, to save La Banda Oriental province from Argentina and hold it for Ferdinand VII. After Portuguese troops swarmed across the border, Buenos Aires, at this point involved in a war against Bolivia, or Upper Peru, made an armistice with the viceroy at Montevideo. This was known as the "October Treaty,"²⁰ and left La Banda Oriental to Elío. Artigas withdrew, not only with his troops, but with their families and even the inhabitants of the Uruguay River, into Entre Ríos province. Soon after, the armistice with Elío was broken and the patriots again started a

17- Gunther, John, Inside Latin America, Harper & Bros., New York and London, 1941, p. 335.

18- Lansing, Marion, Liberators and Heroes of South America, L. C. Page and Co., Boston, 1940, p. 124.

19- Kirkpatrick, F. A., op. cit., p. 152.

20- Wilgus, op. cit., p. 40.

siege of Montevideo, (the first one was interrupted by the October Treaty), under Artigas and an Argentine force. A general constituent assembly for the United Provinces had been called at Buenos Aires. The Artigas delegates however did not succeed in securing a loose federation of the provinces as per his instructions,²¹ and were banned from the assembly.²² Indignant, Artigas again withdrew from the siege early in 1814; then for a time, the Orientales, Portuguese, and Buenos Aires were fighting one another.²³ The Royalists were driven from Montevideo by the soldiers from Buenos Aires who in turn occupied the city. Artigas now made war on the Porteños, as the Buenos Aires people were called, with the aid of another famous leader, Rivera; Oriental troops finally moved into Montevideo in February, 1815.²⁴

The Portuguese overran La Banda Oriental in 1816, and forced Artigas to leave Montevideo to them early in 1817. At this date, the Portuguese, and later the Brazilians claimed the Banda Oriental as their territory for the next twelve years. But Artigas did not give up with the Portuguese arrival at Montevideo. For three years he fought both the Buenos Aires troops and the Portuguese. He twice invaded Brazil, but was badly outnumbered, and again crossed the Uruguay River into

21- Lansing, M., op. cit., p. 126.

22- Wilgus, op. cit., p. 43.

23- Ibid., p. 44.

24- Kirkpatrick, F. A., op. cit., p. 153.

Entre Ríos, in January, 1820, leaving Rivera as the only active leader of Oriental troops to fight the Portuguese. Rivera was obliged to yield and took service with the conquerors.²⁵ Artigas, the "Protector of the free peoples," eventually fled to Paraguay,²⁶ thus ending the activities of a gaucho chief so endowed with personalismo that at least one foreign land, the United States, had recognized him as head of the La Plata provinces rather than giving recognition to the Argentine government.²⁷

Beginning in 1820, the Banda Oriental was known as the Cisplatine province of the Portuguese empire. It passed from Portuguese domination to Brazilian, with the advent of the Brazilian Empire as a free nation. But it was not to remain for long under imperial control.

A group of Oriental (Cisplatine) exiles in Buenos Aires were dissatisfied under Brazilian domination. They determined to try to throw off that dominance for even incorporation with the United Provinces was preferable to foreign control. Known as the "Immortal Thirty-Three," they crossed the Uruguay River by night in April, 1825, with Lavalleja as their leader. Rivera, in charge of rural districts for the empire, threw in his lot with them. They held an Oriental congress at Florida, and de-

25- Ibid., p. 154.

26- Ibid., p. 155.

27- Gunther, John, op. cit., p. 336.

cided to join the United Provinces.²⁸ The Buenos Aires congress voted to give aid to the Orientales, which caused Brazil to declare war on Argentina.

After three years of war, a peace conference was held at Buenos Aires. The British, as mediators, wanted to see a buffer state set up between the two countries, and insisted that the Oriental land be made an independent republic, overriding Argentine protests.²⁹ A provisional government was set up, and a centralist constitution drawn up which was approved by both Brazil and Argentina. The Uruguayan authorities adopted the constitution in 1830. At long last, independence of the Oriental people was born. The name of the new country was La República Oriental del Uruguay.

Miss Williams states that the new republic did not get off to a smooth start, however, due to the military psychology which had developed in the previous twenty years of fighting.³⁰

Rivera and Lavalleja were the candidates for the presidency in the first election under the new constitution. Rivera won the election but the disgruntled Lavalleja revolted, and much of the first four-year term was spent in fighting. Manuel Oribe was the choice agreed upon by both factions in 1835. He had been one of the "Thirty-Three." Promptly he alienated

28- Kirkpatrick, F. A., op. cit., p. 155.

29- Williams, Mary W., The People and Politics of Latin America, Ginn & Co., New York, 1945, p. 688.

30- Ibid., p. 690.

Rivera by granting amnesty to the Lavallejistas. Rivera launched a revolt against Oribe, and this action started the bitter political struggle which has lasted until the present, as far as party affiliations are concerned.³¹ Kirkpatrick describes the parties as follows:

...the Blancos, (Whites), Oribe's men, allied with Urquiza,...an Argentine caudillo...who were supposed to stand for order and tradition; and the Colorados (Reds), Rivera's followers, favoured by Mitre...of Argentina...opposed to Urquiza...and by the Porteños and claiming to represent Liberalism and progress. But in fact, principles distinguishing them are hard to find...³²

The Argentine dictator Rosas, in power at Buenos Aires from 1832 to 1852 also meddled. He supported Oribe and the Blancos. The disturbances which followed also involved the Brazilian empire, for that country supported Rivera and the Colorados. Rosas' forces were decisively driven out of Uruguay early in 1852, and his Argentine regime ended at that time. Brazil grabbed a sizeable portion of northern Uruguayan territory in return for participation in the war against Rosas.³³

From 1853 to 1863 the Blancos were usually in power, but there was a great deal of political turmoil. In 1861 a gaucho

31- Ibid., p. 690.

32- Kirkpatrick, F. A., op. cit., pp. 155-6

33- Williams, Mary W., op. Cit., p. 690-692.

uprising tried to unseat the Blanco president,³⁴ who asked aid of López, the Paraguayan dictator, against Brazil. At that time, Brazil was threatening war with Paraguay over frontier troubles. With Brazil's help, the Colorados gained control of the government by defeating López and the Blancos. Brazil, as was her habit, exerted pressure on the Uruguayan government she had helped in the struggle, and Uruguay was forced to make a third in the Triple Alliance against the Paraguayan dictator until the Paraguayan War ended in 1870--(with López' death). The Colorados have dominated the political scene almost continuously ever since.

Colonel Latorre seized control of the government in 1875 and ruled for six years as a dictator. Although he resigned in 1880 and called the Uruguayan people "ungovernable," his rather despotic rule did impose six years of peace on the restless nation.³⁵ The last decade of the century under two constitutional presidents saw "overborrowing, waste, corruption, shameless personal interest, excessive taxation, and methods hardly less autocratic than those of the military dictators."³⁶ A Blanco uprising under the gaucho Saravia in 1897 served to gain congressional power for the Blancos, and was regarded "not as a partisan rising, but as a popular revolt against scandalous misrule."³⁷

34- Kirkpatrick, F. A., op. cit., pp. 155-6.

35- Ibid., p. 153.

36- Ibid., p. 159.

37- Ibid., p. 159.

It is no wonder then that in writing of the parties, Andrés Lamas summed up the situation as follows:

¿Qué representan esas divisas blancas y esas divisas coloradas?

Representan las desgracias del país, las ruinas que nos cercan, la miseria y el luto de las familias, la vergüenza de haber andado pordioseando en dos hemisferios, la necesidad de las intervenciones extranjeras, el descrédito del país, la bancarrota con todas sus amargas humillaciones, odios, pasiones, miserias personales.³⁸

In the light of Uruguay's chaotic history, how could such a change come about to the effect that there "has been no revolutionary bloodshed in Uruguay since 1904"?³⁹

The reason is largely due to the efforts of one man: José Batlle y Ordóñez. He was a Colorado president from 1903 to 1907, and again from 1911-15 and 1915-19. In fact, he influenced politics in the country through 1929.⁴⁰

His first term was largely taken up with civil war, which saw the end of armed opposition by Saravia, a gaucho leader, and the end of successful revolts by political opposition in Uruguay, to date. The years 1907-11 Batlle y Ordóñez spent in Europe, studying and writing, and "evolving the most comprehensive and radical program for the solution of the problems of a Latin American country which had yet been seen."⁴¹ His reforms were unheard of in South America. "His dominant idea was that fair and free social development would eliminate the

38- Williams, Mary W., op. cit., p. 637.

39- Gunther, John, op. cit., p. 336.

40- Ibid., p. 336.

41- Davis, Harold E., The Pan-American Vol. IX, No. 10, p. 31, (March, 1949).

class struggle and diminish poverty; his life objective was to make a paternalistic state whereby everyone would be employed in his productive years and supported by the state thereafter."⁴²

Although the constitution which he sponsored did not go into effect until 1917, his extensive social legislation had previously given the voting privilege to women and had provided for free compulsory education. The social legislation for the common man which he initiated has since become a habit with the Uruguayans. Today the country "has a form of State socialism unique in the Western Hemisphere."⁴³

Uruguay has progressed a long way from the days of extreme political unrest and turbulence. The change from a revolution-torn, frequently autocratically ruled land to one of progressive, liberal, constitutional democracy, has no parallel in this hemisphere, or scarcely anywhere. After so long a period of misfortunes, it is doubly surprising. The success of this achievement may be due in part to the country's small size. Perhaps a truly nationalistic spirit can be developed more easily in a small country than in a more geographically diversified area. A larger country, possibly could not maintain individual political freedom co-existent with what amounts to state socialism.

42- Gunther, John, op. cit., p. 336.

43- Ibid., p. 337.

Chapter II - THE GAUCHO

The gaucho, as a distinct Uruguayan type, had to undergo a "transformation" from "a most undesirable member of society into a figure of romance and the symbol of nationalism,"¹ which the term stands for today.

The exact origins of the gaucho and the time of his appearance are largely still undetermined. Although Torres-Rioseco speaks of the "change from the Spanish vaquero into the mestizo gaucho."² on the pampas, he refers here to a group, or class, not necessarily lineal descendants of the Spanish cowboy. Under the strict trade regulations of the Spanish, however, the smuggling of cattle hides grew to enormous proportions, and it was this illegal occupation that swelled the number of people on the pampas. The result was a continual mixing of races as the American-born Spaniards, or Creoles, as well as the mestizos, (some combination of European-Indian blood), encountered and intermarried with the plains Indians of the Uruguayan (and Argentine) pampas, in the search for hides. It is generally conceded that the gauchos were mestizos, although Miss Nichols wrote that "any illegal hunter of hides" was a gaucho,³ not necessarily of mixed blood.

1- Nichols, Madeline Wallis, The Gaucho, Durham, N. C., 1945, p. vii.

2- Torres-Rioseco, Arturo, The Epic of Latin American Literature,

3- Nichols, op. cit., p. 4.

During the wars of the nineteenth century, the ever growing gaucho class played an important part. Many of the leaders were themselves gauchos, including José Artigas and Fructuoso Rivera, and gauchos comprised most of the ranks of the Banda Oriental troops. That they were good fighters there is little doubt.

It was not enough for him to possess the special skills which his type of life made necessary. He must weigh them against those of others, with the idea of imposing his superiority and with the hope of maintaining it against all comers. It was this quality which made the gaucho so peculiarly apt in war.....

This longing for superiority which obsessed him led the gaucho into the most unheard of acts of courage....gave him a sense of the ridiculous and hardened him to pain.⁴

.....
The gaucho enjoyed war. To him it was a pleasantly exhilarating experience, one with a promise of booty to be easily won.....Indifferent to death, a fatalist, brave to absurdity, combative,----no career could be better adapted to his nature. In his new social role as a soldier, he eagerly experienced those emotions he loved. He rode, fought, killed, plundered. Moreover, in war he had a cause to invoke as he destroyed. This was especially true in the wars of independence, where the gaucho's enemy was the hated stranger, ever despicable through ignorance of such fine arts as throwing a lasso, of breaking a horse, of throwing a bull, or of skillful knife play."⁵

The nineteenth century wars came in time to save the gaucho from possible oblivion. Free trade with Europe became possible by viceregal decree in 1809.⁶ As a result the demand for the services of the gaucho as a dealer in contraband hides declined.

4- Ibid., p. 16.

5- Ibid., pp. 53-54.

6- Ibid., p. 53.

Any law-abiding citizen could hunt the cattle and do his own trading at the ports. He did not have to hire gauchos to smuggle them out for him. Since there was no need to fear legal authorities, men experienced in living on the pampas were no longer necessary for the raids on the wild herds.

The gaucho however, continued to live on and from the pampas to the fullest degree. The abundance of cows and horses had made this possible. He made his clothes chiefly from hides; shelters, beds, lassos, were made of hides. Torres-Rioseco gives us a good over-all picture of the gaucho's need for hides:

Whenever the gaucho needed 'luxuries,' such as adornments for his horse, perfumes for his girl, or liquor, he obtained them by exchanging rawhides or ostrich feathers with the pulpero, or storekeeper. More than a cattleman, the gaucho was a hunter and horsebreaker in a primitive happy world that did not know property laws, merchants, industry, formal education, or organized religion.⁷

Because of their intimate knowledge of the land, two classifications of gauchos sprang up which were essential to an estanciero's prosperity, and which played an important part in developing Uruguayan national life. The activities of these two types carried over from colonial times well into the existence of the country as an independent unity. Sarmiento classified the groups, considering as the most important, "el rastreador:"

7- Torres-Rioseco, op. cit., p. 137.

...Todos los gauchos del interior son rastreadores. En llanuras tan dilatadas, en donde las sendas y caminos se cruzan en todas direcciones, y los campos en que pacen o transitan las bestias son abiertos, es precisa saber seguir las huellas de un animal, y distinguirlas de entre mil, conocer si va despacio or ligero, suelto o tirado, cargado o de vacío: ésta es una ciencia casera y popular.....⁸

He goes on to describe the gaucho personality of a rastreador, and even his skill in "tracking" outlaws. But if the rastreador was important, how much more so must have been the baqueano, especially his function in time of war.

...El baqueano es un gaucho grave y reservado, que conoce a palmas, veinte mil leguas cuadradas de llanuras, bosques y montañas. Es el topógrafo más completo, es es único mapa que lleva un general para dirigir los movimientos de su campaña; la suerte del ejército, el éxito de una batalla, la conquista de una provincia, todo depende de él.

"El baqueano es casi siempre fiel a su deber; pero no siempre el general tiene él, Sic. plena confianza. Imaginaos la posición de un jefe condenado a llevar un traidor a su lado y a pedirle los conocimientos indispensables para triunfar."⁹

This last paragraph leads us to assume that perchance the general mentioned above had hired a baqueano of uncertain loyalties. Important as the gaucho was in helping to win the wars for independence, in the many civil wars which followed, a leader could probably never be absolutely sure which way the gauchaje sentiment would swing. Many of the gauchos who lived beyond the reach of the law were wanted for crimes worse than cattle stealing. They formed a third class which Sarmiento called el gaucho malo:

8- Sarmiento, Domingo Faustino, Faundo, Buenos Aires, 1940, p. 70

9- Ibid., pp. 74-75

La justicia lo persigue desde muchos años, su nombre ~~estemido~~, pronunciado en voz baja, pero sin odio y casi con respeto.....A veces, se presenta a la puerta de un baile campestre, con una muchacha que ha robado; entra en baile con su pareja, confúndese en las mundanzas del cielito, y desaparece sin que nadie se apercibe de ello. Otra día se presenta en la casa de la familia ofendida, hace desdeñando las maldiciones de los padres que la siguen, se encamina tranquilo a su morada sin límites."¹⁰

The gaucho malo appeared to possess few moral principles --he would kill a cow from an estancia whenever he became hungry for a taste of beef, taking just enough to satisfy his immediate hunger. To rob and steal was a profession for him, a way of life, whether it was horses, beef, or a young girl as the prize. Sometimes this gaucho malo was a matrero, if a desgracia had occurred. That happened when the gaucho, so skillful at 'knife-play', found himself in a duel with a rival gaucho. The object of the skirmish was to "mark" the opponent with his long-bladed knife, the cuchilla, handed down from the Spaniards. One slip of the knife and often the foe was killed; the winner was then said to have had a misfortune, ("tuvo la desgracia de matar"),¹¹ and became a fugitive from justice. In such a case, sympathy was with the desgraciado, who would have to escape punishment, rather than with the deceased! There was usually a swift horse provided if such a misfortune befell an unlucky gaucho, and he headed for the 'limitless dwelling', the pampas, which he knew so well.

10- Ibid., pp. 88-81.

11- Ibid., p. 93.

This admiration for the gaucho, with perhaps a touch of respect stemmed from the universal human characteristic of self-projection; if a person cannot be a hero himself, he tends to search for an ideal of heroism. The resulting devotion to that hero accounts for the aura of admiration surrounding many outstanding figures in the fields of sports, war, or romance. We see this countless literary and folk legends of heroic warriors, lovers, and combatants in the arena.

The outlaw gaucho won his position of respect not entirely because of his rebellion against authority,---although that was a probably contributing factor,---but because of his fearless bravery, his audacity, and his inevitable skill in evading authorities. The cold, casual attitude towards death, whether as punishment for crime or through individual or group combat, and the flaunting of his presence in the face of authorities and then depending on a swift mount to make his escape, elevated him in the eyes of the more settled stay-at-homes, the estancieros and ranch hands. One gathers a general impression from Sarmiento's accounts that the owners of stock looked lightly on an occasional butchered beef, and that the "offended families" of a maid whom a gaucho had seduced, were the only truly outraged, anti-gaucho elements in the interior of the rioplatense area.¹²

This attitude reflects, in part, the changing concept mentioned earlier, from a position of little respect to one of high

12- Sarmiento, Ibid., pp. 70-93.

esteem. By the time the gaucho's career or occupation had ended, as such, an opportunity came for him to display his skill and contribute to the development of national consciousness, throughout the Rio de la Plata region. Gaucho tactics in war differed ostensibly from those of royalist troops. Greatly outnumbered, the gauchos often substituted lightning raids and sniping activities for open fighting whenever that was necessary. At least one fighting unit was officially named Dragones Infernales,¹³ and that name was often applied to other gaucho troops. Crude as they were, gaucho troops had won respect and admiration through their war-time record at the beginning of national independence in both Argentina and Uruguay, and for many years afterwards, in civil wars in the two countries.¹⁴ This was probably more true in Uruguay, where civil war seemed to be the order of the day for a considerable period. With the end of the wars, however, his usefulness having ended also, the gaucho faced extinction; persecuted by the authorities and general unfavorable opinion of urban society, the historic gaucho did vanish, to reappear in literature as the "symbol of the national spirit and of national achievement,"¹⁵ Waldo Frank gives us a rather lofty description of this character of the pampas, with a bit about the transition just referred to:

13- Nichols, op. cit., p. 56.

14- Ibid., p. 57.

15- Ibid., p. 58.

The gaucho became a man in whom the Spanish qualities were redirected. He lived the Indian life with a Castilian conscience, he adopted the primitive morale of the pampa--loyalty, hospitality, courage--with all the ideal fervor of a race that had assumed the burden of Holy Rome.... He is cruel yet tender, he is a man beyond the law, yet a man of law, he is illiterate yet fertile in tradition. And these dichotomies resolve into a fluid, intricate, emotionally concordant person.. He will die for you when he has given his word, but his spirit is fertile in evasions and in ironies. For he is the fluid pampa and the rock of Castile....

The historic gaucho is dead. Men who are called gauchos still corral the steer of the estancias, still drink and quarrel at the pulperias, still tell their ballads at the barbecues. They are ghosts of an age that is gone....Yet the gaucho did not die, until he had been made immortal. Still living, he was ploughed into the lifeloam of his people, to....appear....in spiritual fruitage.¹⁶

This change was initiated through legends and folk tales of the various deeds and abilities of individual gauchos. As the most romantic, or heroic period of the gaucho's deeds drew to a close, these stories grew in number and popularity. Legendary accounts of heroism gradually were supplanting active participation in violent and bloody battles. Authors began to record those legends in some form of literature, keeping the gaucho's primitive and crude qualities but usually picturing him with less barbarity and viciousness. By the time the gaucho theme had reached the proportions of a national literature, some of the realists were showing him to belong to a degenerate lower class of society, but that movement did not destroy the idealized conception which had grown up about him.

16- Frank, Waldo, America Hispana, (New York, 1931), pp. 96-98, 162.

For proof of the gaucho's rebirth through folk tales and legends as the first medium in point of time, we need only refer to Sarmiento's fourth classification, El Cantor, which he places as early as 1840.¹⁷ Comparing "el trovador" with the bard of the Middle Ages, he gives us a description of this earliest gaucho songster, here quoted in part:

El cantor no tiene residencia fija: su morada está donde la noche lo sorprende; su fortuna, en sus versos y sus voz. Dondequiera que el cielito enreda sus parejas sin tasa, dondequiera que se apura una copa de vino, el cantor tiene su lugar preferente, su parte escogida en el festin.....

El cantor mezcla entre sus cantos heroicas, la relación de sus propias hazañas.¹⁸

Here we notice the movement to romanticize the gaucho in folklore ballads was initiated by himself--a shrewd method of perpetuating individual glory, which developed into a perpetuation of gaucho activities as a group, or class. The deeds of which the gaucho-troubador sang frequently involved a love affair, and perhaps even a desgracia, forcing him into the gaucho malo class, with the resulting continual flight from justice. His skill in guitar-playing and composing narrative songs always found an audience. As an entertainer in the numerous pulperías, or stores, or taverns, or wherever he might find a handful of people to listen to his tales, he obtained shelter and food readily enough.

17- Sarmiento, op. cit., p. 85.

18- Ibid., pp. 84-85.

A concise portrayal of literature furthering the gaucho's spiritual existence is brought out by Miss Nichols in describing him as the "ideal of romance."¹⁹ She cites the chief gaucho writers, as well as some lesser ones, as responsible for substituting an idealized gaucho for the actual, historical type. This literature, which frequently pictured the protagonist with a vibrant stirring quality of persecuted heroism rather than with the crude violence and simplicity with which the realists credited the gaucho, played an influential part on the fancy of the populace during the early twentieth century.²⁰ Numerous clubs sprang up to continue the gaucho tradition--a revised and improved version of that tradition--similar to fan clubs in this country which support a popular living actor, actress, or personality that catches the public eye. These imitators of the now highly respected gaucho "played the guitar, sang gaucho songs, read gaucho stories, wrote gaucho newspapers, acted in gaucho ways.....they went on picnics, built bonfires, roasted steaks, drank mate."²¹

It appears then, that the real gaucho, who was instrumental in developing the interiors of Argentina and Uruguay and in achieving national independence, actually found a new place in men's minds. As a symbol of national glory, he commands a patriotic place in the Uruguayan's conception of him; his semi-barbaric cruelty and outlawry almost forgotten and certainly forgiven,

19- Nichols, op. cit., p. 58.

20- Ibid., p. 61.

21- Ibid., p. 62.

he still lives, generally romanticized, in an imaginary perfection of his character and personality, far above and beyond the reality of his crude beginning.

Chapter III - THE LIFE AND WORKS OF EDUARDO ACEVEDO DÍAZ,
(1851-1924), "Romanticist".

Eduardo Acevedo Díaz was born at Villa de la Unión in April, 1851. He studied at the University of Montevideo and had started studying law, when he joined the revolutionary army in 1870, of Timoteo Aparicio. His lengthy career as a journalist, novelist, historian, and politician was as exciting as it was varied, filled with periods of exile as well as popularity. At the end of the war he founded "La República," a publication directed primarily against the government; in 1873 he was an editor of "La Democracia", and helped to establish "La Revista Uruguaya" in 1875--the latter two publications also violently anti-government. After another short period of active duty in an uprising against the government, he spent some time in Argentina, as an exile and editor of "La Constitución." Once more in Uruguay, he published orations against the dictator Laterre, and was banned to exile a second time for his activities. In 1895, however, he was active in Uruguayan journalism, this time establishing "El Nacional" as a medium to voice his anti-governmental attack, which culminated in the revolution of 1897. He was a Senator in the government of the republic from 1898 until 1903.¹

1- Eduardo Acevedo Díaz, Lanza y sable, from Ficha Biográfica, Montevideo, 1943, p. 9-10.

With the election of Batlle y Ordóñez in 1903, Eduardo Acevedo Díaz began a diplomatic career as Uruguayan Minister Plenipotentiary in the United States, Mexico and Cuba, Argentina, Paraguay, Italy, Switzerland, Brazil, and Austria-Hungary. His career as a representative of his country abroad ended in 1914. He died in 1924, in Buenos Aires.

By most critics Eduardo Acevedo Díaz is called a romanticist, yet there are many episodes in his novels which are just as strikingly realistic as those considered to be characteristic of the realist gaucho authors. His first novel, Brenda appeared in 1884, and although it is the one which initiated his fame as a romanticist author, it is not considered primarily a novel of the gauchesque genre. With Ismael, (1888), however, Nativa, (1890), and Grito de Gloria, which appeared soon after Nativa, Acevedo Díaz hit his stride as a gaucho author. Here are the beginnings of the gaucho's idealized existence through the medium of literature, as noted in the previous chapter. These three novels comprise a trilogy, depicting respectively revolutionary action under Artigas, the uprising against Brazilian domination--(initiated by the famous "Treinta y Tres")--or the Cisplatine era, and the final battles of gaucho versus Brazilian troops which resulted in the lifting of foreign domination. Although various descriptions of battles and gaucho--living between battle campaigns are sometimes morbidly realistic, the over-all conception of the gaucho in the trilogy is romantic.

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It is romantic in the sense that a willingness of his characters to sacrifice their lives for patriotism and their loyalty to an ideal,--independence,--plus the aura of respect and admiration surrounding the gaucho troubador, or gaucho of romance, as well as a few tender courtship scenes, combine to make the complete picture of the gaucho something loftier than may usually be encountered in strict realism. The epitome of this description is reached in Soledad, Acevedo Díaz' last novel. Lanza y Sable, published considerably later than Grito de Gloria, although not a part of the trilogy, is a historical representation of one of Rivera's campaigns against the Oribe government; and Rivera first appears in Grito de Gloria, (as do Oribe and Lavalleja). Lanza y Sable is also a fictional account of some of the people close to Rivera.

Eduardo Acevedo Díaz,--except perhaps for his brief periods of active revolutionary activity,--never lived close to the gaucho or his manner of living. Historically, he was far enough removed from the gaucho who fought in the wars of independence to write of that gaucho in a romantic vein, emphasizing his historic role. He was not closely enough associated with the gaucho of his own era to allow the degeneration of the class to influence his writing, as was the case of some of the more realistic gaucho authors, notably Javier de Viana. Also, due in part to his role in contemporary literature the gaucho's popularity experienced a tremendous upsurge in the early part of the twentieth century, during which time Acevedo Díaz was not active in the

literary field. His career was then of a political nature as a representative of Uruguay in foreign lands, and he did not produce literary work throughout that time. His influence had been superseded by another literary movement. A summary of his political and cultural influence--and its termination--can be seen in Alberto Zum Felde's work:

"Eduardo Acevedo Díaz puede ser considerado como el iniciador de la novela nacional; no porque haya sido el primero en cultivar el género, sino el primero en lograr obra de cierta categoría. Sus novelas históricas representan, en efecto, la primera realización seria y durable del género narrativo en el Uruguay.Con Acevedo Díaz nace la novela de rango suficientemente, en otro de virtudes literarias, en su doble aspecto humano y estético, como sustancia y como forma. También Acevedo Díaz es, en el fondo, un romántico; pero su romanticismo, equilibrado por sus certeras dotes de observador de la realidad y por su seguro conocimiento histórico, está asimismo robustecido por un temperamento de recio vigor plástico, resolviéndose en el siglo de idealismo heroico que mueve y envuelve sus figuras y sus escenas, dándole a la obra contornos de epopeya.

.....Como todos los hombres de letras de su generación, Acevedo Díaz pagó su tributo de ciudadano a luchas políticas de su tiempo, llegando a ser, en ese campo, una de las figuras más prominentes, y en cierta hora, de más decisivo influjo en los acontecimientos. Fue uno de los más formidables polemistas y tribunos políticos de su época; y su vasto prestigio popular hizo de él, durante varios años,--del 1895 al 1903--el caudillo civil del partido Nacionalista;²....

.....
...La aparición de las obras de Acevedo Díaz--hacia el 90--marcan la postrer llamarada y el ocaso definitivo de la época romántica en nuestras letras; y en nuestra cultura. Tras él, las corrientes positivistas y realistas cobran preponderante influjo. Comienza en la evolución intelectual del Uruguay un nuevo período."³

2- Zum Felde, Alberto, Proceso Intelectual del Uruguay, Montevideo, 1941, pp. 169-170, 172.

3- Ibid., pp. 181.

Chapter IV - THE LIFE AND WORKS OF JAVIER DE VIANA, (1868-1920),

"Realist" and Narrator of Folk Tales.

We have seen that the historical gaucho's activities and the glory surrounding him were recorded in literature. Through idealization of his past performances he was elevated above and beyond his actual role even to the extent of becoming a symbol of national unity and of nationality. Eduardo Acevedo Díaz in his works gave a noble and romantic character to his protagonist, the gaucho of Uruguay's early historical era. Twentieth century gaucho admirers copied that type of romanticized hero through the activities of their many fan clubs; they imitated the kind of gaucho that had caught their fancies in reading.

But while the gaucho tradition was kept alive through romantic literature, what had happened to his real-life counterpart? Was he able to retain the noble characteristics which his predecessors had had and which were applied to that fictional prototype? Unfortunately, he was not capable of keeping them. In the works of Javier de Viana we have, for the most part, a study of those later generation gauchos called criollos. He presents us a well-drawn but vulgar, repulsive view of the degenerated rural dweller. Alberto Zum Felde has described very well the type of gaucho which Viana wrote about:

¿Cabe, entre nosotros, y a propósito de la obra de Viana, parecida protesta? Desgraciadamente, esa obra expresa una dolorosa realidad. Hay, sí, en nuestros campos, muchos hombres laboriosos, de hábitos

sobrios, propicios a la instrucción y al mejoramiento. Pero innegable es para todo aquel que conozca un poco el interior del país, que una gran parte de nuestra población rural criolla vive en completo abandono material y moral. La ociosidad, el alcoholismo, el compadraje, el juego, la prostitución, la mendicidad, todos los males que aparecen, pintados al desnudo, en la obra de Viana, hacen estragos en los rancharíos y en los pueblos. El paisanaje es abúlico y vicioso en su mayoría. Las mujeres son haraganas, livianas, sucias y chismosas. La miseria y la inmundicia señorean por doquier. [Sic] En general, Viana no ha calumniado a nuestro paisano. La triste verdad es esa. La leyenda de la Arcebia cimarrona se ha disipado. Hace largos años que el rudo gaucha primitivo y la patriarcal virtud, son raros en nuestros campos. Después de un breve ciclo heroico, la raza gaucha entró en un período de decadencia, que se prolonga hasta nuestros días. Viana ha visto al nuestro paisano en esta etapa decadente de su involución. Y así lo ha pintado.¹

A brief biographical sketch may help explain how Viana could write so feelingly, (and accurately, most critics agree), of a type so far removed from his own social class.

Javier de Viana was born in Canelones, 1868, of a politically distinguished family. Until he was eleven years old, he was reared on an estancia, and has said of himself that he could ride almost as soon as he could walk.² His early associations were almost exclusively with rural people, peons, or gauchos, about whom he later wrote so many accounts. His vivid descriptions of nature or the people living close to nature were thus drawn from his early experiences, those received at such an impressionable age. Contacts with people outside his traditional social class were resumed, however, for he tells us:

1- Zum Felde, Alberto, El Proceso Intelectual del Uruguay, Montevideo, 1941, pp. 306-7.

2- Javier de Viana, Abrejon (Auto-Biografía), Montevideo, 1936, p. 13.

"He sido hacendado, criador de vacas y de ovejas, trovero y hasta contrabandista; revolucionario, muchas veces; candidato a diputado al congreso en varias ocasiones,....."3

It is obvious from the above quotations that Viana engaged in various activities. Having received a degree from the University of Montevideo in 1884, he started studying medicine, but left it to join a popular revolution in the ranks of the "Partido Nacionalista," the political party of which Eduardo Acevedo Díaz was a leader.⁴ More important, however, were his journalistic activities. At different times he worked as an editor of several important publications, and was frequently a contributor.

As a gaucho author, his first work was a book of short stories, Campo, published in 1896. Two novels followed, Gaucho, (1899), and Gurí, (1901). Subsequent short stories were collected and published in the following order: Macachines, Muros, Leña seca (1903 and 1909), Abrojos (1913), Sobre el recado (1913), Cardos (1919), Laisanas (1920), Del campo y de la ciudad (1921), Tardes del fogón (1925), Biblia gaucha, Con divisa blanca (1905), De la misma lonja (1916), Richitos de luz (1913), Potros, toros, y aperiaches (1922), Pago de deuda y Campo Amarillo (1934).⁵

Javier de Viana died in 1926.

3- Ibid., p. 14.

4- Zum Felde, Alberto, Proceso Intelectual del Uruguay, Montevideo, 1941, p. 191.

5- Viana, Javier de, op. cit., (Ficha Biográfica), p. 11

Here we have an author who belongs to two separate periods. The first three works mentioned are considered his best, and for the most part belong to the realist school and to his first period. His realism is a vivid and ugly characterization of the gaucho as a product of social-economic conditions, powerless to raise himself above a cruel, crude, and brutal existence. Viana doesn't deal only with mere unpleasantness or true-to-life vicissitudes characteristic of realism; he often plunges into naturalism with scenes of violence and the barbaric activities of his crude gaucho class. His female characters have been classified "vile creatures" and his gauchos "degenerate sons."⁶ Although that doesn't always hold true, many such examples are found. On occasion, he seems to delight in describing scenes of lawlessness, vice, and blood-shed. His gaucho is quite different from that of Eduardo Acevedo Díaz, as Zum Felde noted:

...La vida de nuestra campaña que nos presenta en sus narraciones, es de una barbarie desolante. Brutalidad y miseria llenan sus páginas. No es la barbarie primitiva, sana, pujante y heroica, que aparece en "Ismael"; es una barbarie triste y corrupta, de degeneración.

El paisano de las narraciones de Viana es un ser abúlico y apático, que nada cree, nada piensa, nada sabe, nada quiere, nada espera. Un fatalismo pasivo, un tácito servilismo pudren a la raza criolla. La miseria, la prostitución, el alcohol, el juego, la tuberculosis, hacen presa de sus sóvidos rancheríos.⁷

Alberto Zum Felde believes that the persecution of the gaucho and the generally unfavorable economic situation facing him were

6- Coester, Alfred, Literary History of Spanish America, N. Y., 1936, p. 190.

7- Zum Felde, Alberto, op. cit., p. 304.

causes for his degeneration. He also cites Viana's literary merits in depicting what he saw:

El dictador Latorre había prometido limpiar la campaña de matreros, suprimir de raíz el abigeato. Y lo cumplió de modo brutal, matando cientos de gauchos y trayendo otros cientos a los cuarteles para convertirlos en milicos. Bajo su régimen de terror, por robar una oveja se pagaba cuatro tiros a un hombre.....

.....El régimen ganadero primitivo, daba holgado abasto a la población: una estancia tenía cuantos peones acudían a ella, y fuera de la estancia no era difícil la vida. Al valorizarse los ganados, desaparecer la hacienda cerril, importarse animales finos y cuidarse más los rodeos, la carne ya no abunda, ni el animal se desperdicia. El abigeato--antes cosa venial--es ahora delito castigado severamente. Los estancieros no conservan durante todo el año sino los peones necesarios para el cuidado de las haciendas: pocos hombres bastan para atender estancias de leguas; sólo en la época de la esquila y la yerra se toman peonadas necesariamente a la miseria gran parte de la población rural

.....La poca demanda de brazos con respecto a la población hábil para el trabajo, determina sueldos mínimos, apenas lo suficiente para vegetar. El peón de las estancias, está casi solamente por la casa y la comida, más unos reales para pilchas, taba y pulpería; gran parte, se pasa el año de tapera en galpón, esperando la época de la zafra. Eliminada toda competencia, no hay posibilidad de prosperar, ni de salir nunca de peón. Y éstos son los que están mejor. Gran parte no tiene ni aún esto, pues no hay trabajo para todos en las estancias; viven del merodeo, del pichuleo, de la servidumbre, de las changuitas, de los parajeros, de las limosnas, de la raza, porque produce la debilidad, la suciedad, la inmoralidad, la ignorancia, la delincuencia.

..... Por la veracidad objetiva de su observación, y por el vigor realista con que traza sus cuadros---ambientes, escenas, figuras--ha de considerarse Javier de Viana como el pintor excelencia de nuestra vida criolla; así como, por su procedimiento analítico y la crudeza moral de su pintura, ha de tenérselo como el primer representante del naturalismo zoliano en el Uruguay. Sus cuentos son los únicos ejemplares de positiva valía, de esa modalidad y ese género, existentes en nuestra literatura.⁸

Viana, then, observed the gaucho in a much different manner from that of Eduardo Acevedo Díaz. He abandons the realistic approach somewhat in Gaucha, but not entirely even here. Once he had written his "best" realist stories, however, a small but perceptible change in attitude towards the gaucho can be noticed. The movement to revive gaucho tradition grew up during his active writing period, and he turned to it as a means of support. His contributions to weekly publications were very popular, and perhaps the demand for his stories drew too heavily on his capacity. Alberto Zum Felde believes he lost his powers of creating work comparable to his first three books, because of this constant search for material from the same theme plus his own degeneration, or alcoholism, which may have deadened his inspiration.⁹ Certainly his stories are somewhat repetitious, being reworkings of the same general theme. Nevertheless, although he is generally a realist, there is some romanticism in his work. In this later period he achieved distinction as an unequalled story teller. Although the chronological order of his stories was not adhered to when published in book form, the gaucho of his second period generally is cast in a more sympathetic, less brutal role. This is probably due to the fact that his writing technique was deliberately slanted to a given market, where a thoroughly revolting gaucho story would not find popularity. In addition, his natural fondness for the criollo life

9- Ibid., p. 302.

and the wide acquaintance he had made from that classification probably were instrumental factors in causing him to write of the gaucho in a more mild, sympathetic vein, in his later period.

Chapter V - ROMANTIC AND REALISTIC ELEMENTS IN THE WORKS
OF THESE AUTHORS.

A- Eduardo Acevedo Díaz

The first fictional work of Eduardo Acevedo Díaz, Brenda, appeared in 1884. Although it placed him in the ranks of the romanticists, it is not included in this study since it belongs outside the range of gaucho literature.

With Ismael which was published in 1888, he began an historical trilogy, swinging from strictly historical matters in one chapter to the actions and sentiments of his gaucho characters in another. A rather lofty description is given of Artigas, the caudillo who embodied many gaucho characteristics:

Representaba cuarenta años. De estatura regular y complexión fuerte, nada existía en su persona que llamase a primera vista el interés de un observador, Era un hombre de un físico agradable, blanca epidermis-- aunque algo razada por el sol y el viento de los campos--cuello recto sobre un tronco firme, cabellera de ondas recogida en trenza de un color casi rubio, y miembros robustos conformados a su pecho saliente, y al dorso fornido.....Permanecía sereno e impassible, si bien escuchando con atención marcada lo que se decía, y concediendo una que otro ligera sonrisa al comentario de los hechos. De maneras sencillas, sus gestos, movimientos y ademanes mesurados se avenían con aquella tranquilidad glacial de un espíritu. Era parco en el hablar.....

Tales condiciones de carácter le hacían aparecer tolerante y modesto, para los que no le conocían de cerca; para aquellos con quienes hablaba, era simplemente un hombre llamado a vida de orden y sosiego, después de algunos años borrascos; servicial, enérgico y valiente, capaz de cumplir con su deber y de conducir sus empresas al último grado de la audacia y del arrojo.¹

1- Eduardo Acevedo Díaz, Ismael, Montevideo, 1930, pp. 19, 20, 21.

Acevedo Díaz did not follow Artigas' steps in developing this historical work; the country's foremost gaucho takes a secondary place in the thread of the story. Such a method allowed the author to use a fictional character, Ismael Velarde, as the protagonist, giving him all the noble attributes which characterized the typical gaucho. Although Acevedo Díaz himself realized that this type of gaucho no longer existed at the time he wrote of him, in the descriptive passage which follows we gain an impression of the high esteem surrounding the baqueano class; a type which never knew the comforts of a permanent home, living close to nature and having the animals of the forests for its closest companions; a class which lived beyond the law, persecuted by the authorities for its way of life, and which cast its shadow over the plains, uplands, and forests; a symbolical shadow of an ever-growing national consciousness against colonial authority:

Era este jinete, un gaucho joven. Representaba apenas veinte y dos años, y solo un bozo ligero sombreaba su labio grueso y encendido. El caballo castaño y ensortijado, caíale sobre los hombros en forma de melena. Sus facciones testadas por el sol y el viento de los campos, ofrecían sin embargo, esa gracia y viril hermosura que acentuaba más la vida azarosa y errante, transmitiendo a sus rasgos prominentes como una expresión perenne de las melancolías y tristezas del desierto. En los ojos pardos de mirar firme y sereno, parecía despedir de vez en cuando sus destellos el sentimiento enérgico de la independencia individual.....--Llevaba en su persona los signos inequívocos de una sociabilidad embrionaria, de una raza que vive adherida a la costumbre, baja la regla estrecha del hábito, aun cuando por entonces las aspiraciones al cambio---empezaban a macer con desarrollo lento,.....Severa imagen de la época, vástago fiero de la familia hispano-colonial, arquetipo sencillez y agreste de la primera generación, aquel

mozo, huraño, arisco, altivo en un alzáñ poderoso, con su ropaje primitivo y su flotante melena, simbolizaba bien el espíritu rebelde al principio de autoridad, y la fuerza de los instintos ocultos, que en una hora histórica, como un exceso potente de energía, rompen con toda obediencia y hacen irrupción, en la medida misma en que han sido comprimidos y sofocados por la tiranía del hábito.

.....
.....Rara vez que la planta humana hollaba aquellos sitios, verdaderos asilos ignorados del gaucho errante; y diríase ante su salvaje pompa y virgen soledad, la smarrita via, en la selva oscura del poeta...²

The quotation above realistically describes something of the persecution which followed the matrero, yet doesn't detract from the elements which symbolized the revolutionary spirit of an awakening race. Ismael Velarde, the baqueano of the passage, has all the self-assurance, energy, wisdom, and firmness of character which Acevedo Díaz ascribed to the class.

In another description of his protagonist, the author reaches the heights of the genre of romantic gaucho literature. It is apparent that the background and environment helped to form the person, but here Acevedo Díaz was delineating more than a person; he was showing the development of the strong man, the gaucho, as the symbol of a nationality, typifying the Uruguayan people.

Ismael Velarde era un gauchito sin hogar.

La existencia azarosa, en medio de cuyos conflictos lo presentamos, no fué sin embargo la de sus primeros años de juventud. Aunque errante e indolente, por inclinación y por hábito, cumpliéndose en él y en casi todos los de su época de una manera fatal la ley de la herencia,--tenía cierto cariño al trabajo rudo que pone a prueba el músculo y nutre al organismo con jugo salvaje. Sentía pasión por la vida libre, indisciplinada,

2- Ibid., pp. 55-8, 60.

licenciosa; pero le era también agradable por orgullo de raza que se fiasen de él, cuando hacia la promesa de sudor en la labor honesta. Esta conciencia de su responsabilidad moral, impresa en su semblante, abría sin sospechas depresivas el camino del trabajo. Los que lo oían, creían desde el principio de buena fe, que él sería capaz de cumplir con su deber. Pobre, solo, inculto, desamparado, realizábase en el joven gaucho el proverbio oriental: el hombre fuerte y el agua que corre, labran su propio sendero.³

Ismael falls in love with a typical criolla girl, Felisa, whose virtues are on a par with his own. For the most part, she was typical of the colonial women of the times. She meets the requirements of romantic literature in being sufficiently virtuous to be loved by the hero of the story, as the following quotation indicates:

.....ese ejemplo de fidelidad a la monarquía
.....por parte de uno de sus abuelos, no privaba a Felisa de seguir sus impulsos de criolla y de ser ella misma,.....un producto indígena o engendro del clima. También estaba en el rango de los tupamaros.

Tenía un genio un poco bullicioso, con sus barruntos de insubordinada y de altanera. Se había hecho mujer en el campo, y no conocía otra sociedad que la de los ganaderos y gente cerril.

Verdadera fruta del país, era un tipo correcto de la criolla en los tiempos del gusto colonial.Sus propensiones agrestes la hacían feliz. A los callejuelas estrechas y lodosas del recinto dentro del cual había macido y pasado sus primeros años, prefería las asperezas naturales de la campaña; montar a caballo para andarse a media rienda, chapucear en el río y las lagunas, bailar cielitos y oír las cántigas de los ganchos al son de la guitarra.

Todo esto era native, y se encuadraba en su natural-eza.

No había experimentado por lo demás, todavía, otro género de sensualismos. Contentábase con aquellos gustos

3- Ibid., pp. 69.

vulgares sin abatecer otros mejores, pues que su criterio, muy semejante al de la mayoría de las mujeres sin espíritu, no iba más allá del círculo de sus afecciones.⁴

For a contrast of types of female characters, Acevedo Díaz describes certain other women of the country. They are suited to the needs of the gaucho malo, and hardly compare with Felisa. The author was certainly aware of the gaucho malo class, and pictures him, as well as his feminine companion, in the following realistic passage:

Impuesto de todo por el pulpero,.....si el riesgo había desaparecido determinábase entonces a dar un golpe hasta el rancho del "china", [Sic] y aún a robar a ésta se era su consentida, para lo que no era preciso cencia sino juerza en los puños y resolvenica, según la lógica del matrero.

Y entraba a robarla.--Bien montado, se acercaba de noche al rancho, apeábase a poca distancia asegurando el "pingo" en el balenque o al pie de un "ombú"; ladino y sagaz aguardaba que la muchacha se entrase a la cocina, y después arremetía allí haciendo sonar las espuelas, la mano en el mango del facón y el gesto iracundo.

Las campesinas viejas se quedaban acurrucadas entre las guascas y cueros peludos, atónitas ante el gaucho malo y por miedo a una tunda a rebenque; pero la "china", como era frecuente en estos casos, no hacía mucha resistencia y se dejaba levantar del suelo, con chancletas o sin ellas, al aire las piernas percudidas, las greñas sueltas sin desmayos ni cosas semejantes; y él la conducía hasta su caballo, la enancaba bien, si es que por la premura a veces no la hacía montara "lo hombre", y partía a la carrera muy contento con su presa.⁵

Occasionally, Acevedo Díaz abandoned the strictly romantic touch which is evident in the quotation above. Ugly naturalism rarely encountered in his writings, but the realistic scenes

4- Ibid., pp. 75-6

of a duel described below end with a tone that borders on naturalism. The duel itself, the participants, and the sentiments of the observers are similar to the impressions of which Sarmiento had written:⁶

El grupo ya muy numeroso y compacto, se aremolinó con el rumor de la marea. Todas las bocas respiraron ruidosamente. El vencedor al arrancarse la daga de la herida y al arrojarla lejos, enrojecida con su sangre, dijo con su acento fiero:---Vean se está buen muerto!

Los jinetes en tumulto, aproximarse más al cuerpo del vencido que yacía de costado entre un gran charco sangriento, y se quedaron mirándole en silencio.---Difícil hubiese sido reconocer en aquellos rostros si el sentimiento que en ese instante predominaba, era el del interés que inspira la desgracia del guapo, o el de la compasión que despierta la muerte de un hombre. El hecho era que, a la voz de Fernando, todos se habían movido como por un resorte.----El gaucho bravo tenía en los ojos una fuerza avasalladora; ninguno se acordaba en aquel momento de la justicia del rey.....

La escena....había removido las pasiones del grupo por un momento.----Después había sobrevenido algo como una calma indiferente. Uno de los campeones estaba en el suelo, extinta para siempre su fiereza!..

Tres de los grandes mastines, echados junto al cuerpo inmóvil, alargaban sus hocicos oliendo la sangre que empapaba las hierbas.

Ismael had a rival for the love of Felisa, and thought he had killed the other suitor after a duel similar to the one described above. He fled, as a matrero, but Acevedo Díaz, unwilling to allow an ignoble impression of his hero to be retained by the reader, explains as follows:

Explicase así que un gran número de matreros perteneciesen a la clase honesta y laboriosa, a la espera en los bosques del grito de libertad....

6- Sarmiento, Domingo Faustino, op. cit., p. 93.

7- Eduardo Acevedo Díaz, op. cit., pp. 105, 107-8.

Cuando no había probabilidad alguna de ataque o sorpresa en campo raso, los matreros pasaban largas horas en los ranchos, en bailes o velorios de "angelitos" reposando en la lealtad de los vecindarios, que les advertían la hora conveniente del replique, así que vislumbraban algo de sospechoso en el horizonte.

Si llegaban a ser sorprendidos hacían causa común, y se batían con bravura, en la firme convicción de un fin desastroso, en caso de caer prisioneros...

A un instinto poderoso de existencia libre, se unía en ellos un coraje incómito. Verdaderos hijos del clima, como Artigas, poseían la tendencia irreductible hacia las pasiones primitivas, y la crudeza del vigor local. Peleaban sin contar el número, y caían con resignación heroica.

No deja de ofrecer también originalidad cierta faz psicológica por decirlo así del matrero, y que lo presenta con un tinte simpático e interesante en medio de los azares y extravíos de su existencia semi-barbara; y es la de muy acentuados sentimientos de gratitud y nobleza en determinadas ocasiones, los que revelaban en sus actos como una prenda segura de lealtad nativa.⁸

In detailed accounts of battles the author could scarcely avoid realism. The throat-slitting scene is equal to the very best of the realists' efforts. True to pattern, however, Acevedo Díaz conveniently avoids vicious brutality on the part of Ismael by having the Indian Cuaró dispose of the royalist prisoner. The scene opens with the prisoner on his knees, begging for his life.

--No me degüye por su madre!.....

Pero el gaucho siempre callado e implacable dió dos o tres brincos forcejeando, lo derribó de espaldas y púsole la bota de botro con su enorme rodaja en el pecho como pudiera sentar la zarpa un animal feroz; y cogiéndole de la barba echóle para atrás la cabeza, introdujole la punta del acero a un lado del pescuezo y se lo cortó de oreja a oreja hasta hacer saltar la tráquea hacia afuera como un resorte elástico.

7- Eduardo Acevedo Díaz, op. cit., pp. 101, 107-8.

8- Ibid., p. 141 and 147.

De la carótida partida saltó un charro de sangre caliente entre ronquidos de fuelle, el cuerpo se sacudió y retorció levantándose sobre los hombros en espantosas convulsiones, al punto de que la cabeza se zangoloteó prendida por solo la nuca al tronco como la espiga que cuelga por una arista en su tallo, empañaronse los ojos enormemente abiertos, torcióse la boca con una última contracción muscular hasta fijar en la comisura una mueca de máscara, encogiéronse en arco los brazos entre teneblosos con los dedos crispados y también las piernas a la altura de las rodillas. En el cuello solo quedó un gran cuajarón de sangre venosa.....

El gaucho limpió el facón en la ropa del muerto; y todos seis quedaron mirándolo en silencio, un breve rato.⁹

Characteristically, the author again paints admirable qualities into the over-all picture of the historical gaucho. This method permits the protagonist to remain in character and leave the reader with a favorable impression. The following quotation reveals the gaucho as Acevedo Díaz apparently wished him to be remembered.

En la edad del gaucho,--tiempos que se ya van alejando de nosotros,--la sencillez ruda, semi-bárbara de la vida se resumía en la danza, en la música--ambos primitivas,--y en la proeza del dúsculo.

La fuerza brutal, desde luego, la destreza, la astucia, la habilidad para tañer, para bailar, cantar, domar, pelear y vencer, eran cualidades y condiciones sobresalientes. Los que las poseían ejercían insensiblemente cierta superioridad avasalladora en sus pagos, influían sobre el número y lo atraían por el ejemplo y la magia de las costumbres varoniles. Como el semental arisco de crines llenas de abrojos repuntaban la grey con alaridos de feroz independencia personal, sin perjuicio de mostrarse siempre sufridos, callados y pacientes, en su existencia original de taimonías y resabios.¹⁰

9- Ibid., p. 184-5.

10- Ibid., p. 188.

The villain of the story is drawn in the role of Jorge Almagro. Almagro is a royalist who kills Ismael's beloved Felisa, because she did not respond to his amorous advances. The tragedy gives Ismael sufficient motive for vengeance, and he hunts down Almagro and kills him. Acevedo Díaz does not dwell on those details, however, and the character of Ismael has been so built up at this point in the narrative that he can safely allow the hero to indulge in meting out gaucho justice without detracting from his heroic qualities.

Ismael rarely appears in the remainder of the trilogy, except for brief sketches.

The second of the series, Nativa, was published in 1890. This is not strictly of the gaucho genre, but does contain certain gauchesque elements. The protagonist is a young man from Montevideo, Luis María Berón, who joins the ranks of the gaucho Olivera, in an unsuccessful uprising against the Brazilians in 1824. Alberto Zum Felde believes the author made a serious error in choosing a topic of so little significance to make up the historical, or semi-historical trilogy.¹¹ Nativa is the least important of the series, historically. The hero mingles with gauchos during the campaign, but is at first unfamiliar with gaucho ways. A triangular love affair completes the thread of the story, although one of the two sisters who are in love with Luis María drowns herself in despair before the end of the tale.

11- Zum Felde, Alberto, Proceso Intelectual del Uruguay, Montevideo, 1941, p. 179.

The dramatic episode of the drowning is romantically and delicately drawn, but it does not especially belong to gaucho literature. In the following quotation, however, the author mingles patriotism with the qualities of the gaucho troubador and the matrero in a manner which necessitates its inclusion in a discussion of the romantic gaucho genre.

A la música ora alegre o melancólica de aquel instrumento hecho nacional, (the guitar), servía de letra en décimas o quintillas la inspiración nativa. El númen poética se excitaba fácilmente ante los cuadros y espectáculos de cada día;Estas estrofas de trovador de pago o de bardo errante, repetidas de monte en monte y de sierra en serrezuela, debían sin embargo dar el tono y el aire original a la poesía patriótica. Cantábase al amor y a la patria por arranque espontáneo, como si esos dos sentimientos elevados se resumiesen en un solo ideal y constituyeran falta de ideas maduras, la base de la iniciativa y la causa ocasional del esfuerzo en todo sacrificio. Verdad era que los hombres de que hablamos vivían de instintos y de pasiones, llevadas casi siempre al fanatismo; pero, en los tiempos de lucha son las pasiones y los instintos generosos los que abren el camino a las ideas. Eran también esas propensiones originarias y esos impulsos irreductibles hacia el cambio, los que debían acentuar la índole y el espíritu de una sociabilidad nueva. Poeta y cantor a su manera, el "matrero" con el oído a todos los sonos dulces de la floresta, atento al ritmo de las ramas y de las aguas, en constante diálogo con la naturaleza que lo rodeaba por doquiera con sus halagos silvestres, al alzar sus cántigas de regocijo o de tristeza levantaba la nota de sus ensueños, ----la expresión de sus anhelos íntimos---en contraste aparente con sus actos de violencia, su vida de aventuras y la crueldad de su valor vencedor en medio de romántico denuestos.¹²

Ismael and Rivera, both introduced in Ismael, remain in the background in Nativa. They, with Oribe and Lavalleja, also play

12- Eduardo Acevedo Díaz, Nativa, Vol. II, Montevideo, 1931, pp. 27-8.

secondary roles in Grito de Gloria, the final unit of the trilogy.

Grito de Gloria followed Nativa in publication and resumes the story almost where it was dropped in the latter. This novel is of extreme importance historically, for it narrates the great Uruguayan campaign which resulted in complete independence for Uruguay.

There seems to be less romanticism and more realism in Grito de Gloria than in the first two gaucho novels of Eduardo Acevedo Díaz. He gives a brief description of the hardships under Portuguese domination and the flight of Artigas, before launching into the struggle against Brazil. The realism of the following quotation attests to the indignities and misfortunes which befell the Uruguayan people.

Entonces los episodios eran terribles.

La soldadesca desborda acometía la caravana, dispersaba sus miembros y se distribuía los despojos; si ya no era que, reunidos los mocetones uno contra diez, cargaban siegos a daga y trabuco rompiendo filas, en tanto dos débiles corrían a ampararse en las malezas.

En estos encuentros ignorados y dramas lúgubres, solía suceder también que en medio del botín y del desorden, "matreros" brovos, en montón, saliendo sigilosos del vecino monte, caían de súbito sobre la tropa dispersa con el estrépito de una manada un días de corrida, y la diezmaban sin verdón, ultimando en el suelo hasta el último vencido.

Más, bien luego aparecían nuevas fuerzas en las próximas "cuchillas" repitiéndose las tétricas escenas en toda la zona hostil; hasta que ya los campos talados no ofrecían alicientes, ni de los bosques taciturnos brotaban voces agresivas.

De este modo, decirse puede que no hubo un pago, un río, un arroyo, una sierra, un llano, una loma donde no corriese sangre.

Los cuerpos sin vida quedaban desnudos al sol y a la lluvia, lejos de ojos piadosos, como los de los

animales montaraces allí donde los sorprendió la muerteesa emigración fué rápida, tumultuosa, con todas las confusas líneas del tropel de la derrota. Se buscaba un sosiego relativo, que en algo devolviese la entereza de ánimo por los que escapaban del círculo de fuego, vencidos por su propia impotencia.

El eco terrible de los gritos de triunfo los aturdí, golpeándoles por detrás como una fusta implacable, y precipitándolos a la otra banda envueltos en el pánico.

¡Era como un estrépito de puertas que se cerraban para siempre!

Algunos devoraban lágrimas en silencio; otros maldecían de sus caudillos, sin excluir a Artigas; los más se alejaban sin protestas ni lamentos, mirando hacia adelante, como si examinasen la naturaleza del nuevo terreno a que se debían.....¡Pesaban demasiado las cadenas, para agotar las últimas fuerzas en estériles clamores!¹³

Once the movement to throw off Brazilian domination had started however, it rapidly spread, and drew people of all classes to the ranks of the small bands of resurgents. Acevedo Díaz gives us a romantic description of fugitives returning from the forests to fight, as well as a view of the hope for independence and its sweep across the land:

Afirmaban algunos que éstos salían de los bosques al rumor de libertad, así como "puntas" de ganado alzado cuando la gramilla escasos en los potriles y el sol reverbera en el "plazo" con un calor que llega a la sangre del "matrero". Un hermoso miraje de nueva vida, sin duda, encantaba los campos.

¡La décima del triunfo en idioma nativo, recorría lomos, ríos y selvas como un grito de gloria!¹⁴

Realizing, however, that battle is not all glory, the author also tried his hand at strikingly vivid realism. His style loses

13- Eduardo Acevedo Díaz, "Grito de Gloria," Montevideo, 1938, pp. 16, 19, 20.

14- Ibid., pp. 27-8.

nothing of its descriptive power in narrating the following scene:

Sonaron dos or tres detonaciones. El hombre de las "ojetas" cayó sobre las crines del cobruño, bamboleóse un instante y en seguida se deslizó a las hierbas con un ruido de mole que rueda en un barranco.

En medio de su pavora, don Anacleto lo vió caer con dos agujeros negros en el rostro a ambos lados del nariz, producidos por la doble descarga de una pistola de los cañones a quema-ropa.

A uno de los soldados, tendido boca arriba, brotábale como un surtidor la sangre del cuello. Aún así seguía retorciéndose. El otro estaba inmóvil, con el vientre desgarrado.¹⁵

Luis María's father and his sweetheart Natalia who is living with the Berón family in Montevideo, watch from a small observation tower the approach of the revolutionaries. Acevedo Díaz' description and Don Carlos Berón's comments on the sight are truly of a romanticist vein:

Un reducido escuadrón tendido en línea sobre la cumbre destacábase correcto, quieto, muy visible en medio de la atmósfera sin celajes.

Aparecían los jinetes de un tamaño diminuto; las lanzas como agujas verticales; la bandera de colores vivos enarbolada en la cinta como un guión de compañía. Tres de estos jinetes recorrían la fila sencilla. En manos de uno brillaba de vez en cuando un objeto herido por el sol, acaso un clarín, cuyos ecos ahogaba la distancia.

En el fondo del diorama luminoso no se veía más que el cortinado azul del cielo, y una que otra nebulilla como cavullo blanco sobre la línea del horizonte. Ni un convoy asomaba en las colinas, ni una pieza de artillería se erguía en sus afustes a modo de luciente escarabajo, ni una carreta forrada de piel de toro subía las cuestas con su pesadez de piedra. ¡Ah! ¡Pero ellos estaba allí!.....(Don Carlos' speech follows:)

15- Ibid., p. 116

--Sí. --dijo como adivinando---sí...Deben estar, hija. Es forzoso que estén...Habrán llegado en el alba de hoy sin duda alguna, porque así les convenía...¿Qué te parece mujer? Dame el antecio. ¡Hem!... Siempre sostuve en que tenían que llegar esos bizarros descendientes de españoles....¡Descendientes en línea recta! Eso de "Tupamaros", no fué más que una pequeñez rencorosa. Sí...En línea recta. La sangre es la misma en los más, bravía, castellana. Si descendemos aquí la semilla, ¿a qué queda reducido el honor de España?...¡Tontería! Estos valientes son dignos del romancero ¡Ya lo creo lo son! Sin lisonja banal de que soy enemigo.

Vamos....Sí! Sobre el airoso montículo observo bien claro el grupo y los movimientos, la bandera, los jefes que andan de uno a otro lado, un clarín que va detrás, banderolas en las lanzas, carabinas al tercio; buenas figurillas de soldados a fe mía! El escuadrón manobra con la dureza de una regla y el aplomo del cuadro veterano.....¹⁶

Perhaps the attributes which Don Carlos applied to the troops in the passage just noted were similar to Acevedo Díaz' own feelings for he himself had taken active part in two revolutionary movements. If the author himself sincerely felt that the noble qualities of the troops were primarily Spanish characteristics, that may be the reason for making the Indian Cuaró and the Negro Esteban the principle actors in the two horrible scenes noted below. By the author's implication, gaucho soldiers of non-Spanish ancestry would thus be capable of more vicious brutality than the others. Whatever he may have meant the descriptions reveal most vividly the ugliness of battle.

Cuaró encajó al suyo las espuelas haciéndole brincar en semicírculo con los remos en el aire, y al sentar el redomón los cascos son un bufido de espanto, su jinete, echado sobre las crines, levantó el fornido brazo trazando

con el sable otra curva y lo descargó en la cabeza del oficial brasileño arracándole con el morrión la mitad del cráneo, que le volcó sobre el rostro como una máscara horrible.

El sablazo lo sacó como en volandas de la silla; rodó su cuerpo por las hierbas, e al agitarse en convulsiones cogiéronsele los cabellos a las matas volviendo el fragmento de cráneo a su lugar y dejando de lado, visible, lívido, salpicado de sesos, un rostro joven que arancó un grito a Luis María.

--¡Pedro de Souza!

--¡Mate! ¡mate!--rugía Cuaró revolviéndose más furibundo con el brazo lleno de sangre y la pupila dilatada.....

.....
....Esteban...tiró un golpe de daga al pescuero de uno de los dragones.

El tajo fué terrible.

La cabeza del herido cayó sobre el hombro a modo de penacho volteado por el viento, brotó un surtidor rojo y bambaleándose un instante, derrumbóse al fin el cuerno inerte. Cogido el pie en el estribo, fué arrastrado el cadáver a lo largo de la colina en vertiginosa carrera, y pudo verse por breves segundos girando como un molinete al cabeza del degollado...¹⁷

The trilogy ends with the death of Luis María, who is buried beside Dora, sister of Natalia, the girl he loved. No mention is made of what finally happens to Ismael.

Lanza y Sable next appeared, as another semi-historical novel. The theme of this novel is based on the activities of the Colorado leader, Rivera, during one of his many campaigns to unseat Oribé's Blanco government. Rivera himself is kept in the background for the most part and the work itself is of minor historical importance. Alberto Zum Felde criticized Acevedo Díaz, a traditional blanco, for shedding unfavorable light on Rivera in Ismael, Nativa, and Grito de Gloria by describing him como un gaucho astuto y tramposo, hábil simulador y sierra

pronto a la deslealtad.¹³ In Lanza y Sable, on the other hand, Rivera is given all the qualities found personified in the gaucho, both good and bad, but always softening the undesirable tone with lyrical, romantic praise for his more noble attributes.

The thread of the story is woven around Paula, one of Rivera's illegitimate children, and her friends. Much of her character is revealed in romantic studies or moods, such as the following:

Ejercían sobre ella cierta influencia, algo como una sugestión irresistible, los cantos de algunos pájaros en las horas calurosas o al caer la tarde. Estos himnos del monte, al ribazo del arroyo, suspendían su ánimo por momentos, a pesar de la costumbre de círclos.

Ya en la pubertad, le parecían distintos a los que había escuchado en la niñez.

Hasta fijaba su atención en las riñas que en el aire solían trabar los pequeños alados, en tanto las hembras huían entre las ramas o se guardaban en sus nidos.

Empezaba a darse cuenta de los odios y de los celos de los habitantes del bosque, así como del motivo de sus cantos, a veces tan dulces y armoniosos..... ..Aunque hurña y arisca, la joven tenía la finura de los sentidos y por estos las noviones elementales del bien y del mal. Las influencias de afuera no habían extinguido en ella, como en otras, la virginidad del alma, tal vez porque existía latente en lo íntimo de su ser algo de superior a lo que la rodeaba, acaso una tendencia a soñadora. Aquella flor moral que en las más de su sexo devoraba el gusano del ejemplo y en ellas no subsistía otro tiempo que el asignado por la misma naturaleza a las que brotan en el valle, se conservaba en Paula, gracias a su propia hurña. Estas dotes en rudimento debían servir en el período de desarrollo a dar resalte a su personalidad, así que el contacto con otra clase de espíritus favoreciera sus luces vivas de inteligencia y acentuase la índole verdadera de su carácter. Por eso no prestaba interés alguno a los

13- Zum Felde, Alberto, op. cit., p. 133.

cuadros animales de cada día, ni su lento avance mental guardaba relación completa con las modalidades del medio. Parecía indiferente a lo grotesco cotidiano. Sólo se estaba a sus gustos y a sus supersticiones aún no extinguidas, que la acompañaban desde la puericia, y de que no quería desprenderse en absoluto por hallar en ellas algún encanto.¹⁹

In a further revelation of Paula's impressions, the author places her close to nature, with even more lyrical settings than those just quoted. The moving description of her enchantment with the beauties and mysteries of the evening ranks Acevedo Díaz as a romantic prose writer of the finest quality:

Al caer la noche, don Braulio la vió sentada bajo los ombúes siempre pensativa. Miraba la línea borrosa del monte, para los demás cosa indiferente, para ella un imán de poderosa influencia. Parecía sentir un goce inefable en estarse largos momentos en esa contemplación.

El monte con sus obscuridades, sus cuitas y ecos plañideros, sus dramas de amor y celos encubiertos por el follaje en la espesura; el monte con sus luces vagas al habla en secreto con la noche cuajada a su vez de remotas lumbres, tibia y silente, solemne como el mutismo del espacio; todo el conjunto de verde, plata, azul y prieto con su macizo arboreo sediento de rocío después del baño de sol, cual si del cielo viniesen todos los ardores y frescuras, los consuelos y esperanzas incognoscibles de las plantas, tanto como la pobre dicha del nido, el cariño entre tremulas de alas, los himnos rumorosos del viento bajo bóvedas espesas; todo eso la suspendió a y embargaba con frecuencia, sin que atinase nunca con el motivo de aquella atracción perenne.

Acaso pensara que, en lo íntimo y recóndito, así era su alma.

Grande como el monte con sus sombras y chispeos, sus aromas salvajes, sus "tristes" de alta noche, sus gritos misteriosos, y sus silbos de ironía.

De su interior casi inexplorado a ciertas horas, parecíanle venir sonos de órgano y de flauta, tríos y coros, semejantes a los que oía en el fondo de su alma absorta, porque en ella había también soledad, ansias

19- Eduardo Acevedo Díaz, Lanza y Sable, Montevideo, 1943, pp. 51, 53-4.

de expansión, corlas de pájaros, celos bravíos--ambiente era mucha pasión y mucha vida--como en el seno de la selva.

Sí, ella era como un estado de la vida del bosque lleno de quejas y alegrías, de asperezas y tinieblas, de fugaces fosforescencias, de plantas fulómanas, de flores lujuriosas. Se sentía zoólatra y selvícola. Nada había hablado todavía a su espíritu un lenguaje mejor, un idioma que fuese música más impresionante y reveladora de emociones desconocidas.²⁰

There are also some very realistic scenes contained in the novel. Such a one is that in which Paula discovers that Rivera is her father as well as the father of her childhood sweetheart. Eventually she confronts Rivera himself, to beg for the release of a blanco prisoner, Abel Montes, whom she loves. Rivera, not knowing she is his daughter, and always on the alert for diversion, listens to her story. His patience is due less to his virtuous qualities than to the scheming in the back of his mind on how to achieve the conquest of such an alluring beauty. Her tale of Abel's activities is filled with atrocities and gaucho revenge:

En una carga cayó prisionero Ubaldo Vera. Se le hizo sacar la divisa colorada para que se respetase su vida. Pero en otro ataque vino envuelto con los blancos y fué matado por sus mismos amigos. Guando acabó la pelea, Gabino Quieroz se sentó sobre el cuerpo de Ubaldo, y se puso a tocar la guitarra, a cantar y a beber aguardiente.

Abel Montes, conocedor de esto, se encontró después con Gabino en el arroyo, como si lo aguaitase; y cuando lo hubo, luego de voltearlo de un mangazo en la morra, le dijo; no es por haberme robado el cariño de una mujer que te voy a matar, porque si ella fúe infiel no es tuya la culpa; te voy a matar por lo que hiciste con Ubaldo, que era tu compañero. Y le dió un tiro en el pecho.²¹

20- Ibid., pp. 70-71.

21- Ibid., pp. 312-13.

Paula later has a chance to inform Rivera of his fatherhood. There is an angry scene, but Acevedo Díaz cannot resist ending it with mention of his hero's past glory:

El caudillo se sacudió, cual si hubiese sentido una opresión moral para él hasta entonces desconocida.

Vió claro. Mejor sería callar.

Acostumbrado a ese género de lances desde temprana juventud, sabía por experiencia que en la venganza y en el amor la mujer de grandes pasiones se hace fiera, y desgarrar sin piedad, aun al mismo que adoró. Sin atreverse a nada, escurrióse como una sombra.

Era aquella toda una historia; una de tantas de sus historias galantes culminadas a veces por dramas dolorosos.²²

In the same manner, the author tells of some very cruel gaucho characteristics, but logically rationalizes their questionable deeds:

Ellos habían aprendido a perfección el "caracheo", el despojo de lo que los caídos llevaban encima y valiese la pena de apoderarse, ni más ni menos que hacen los "caranchos" con los cadáveres frescos.

No conocían otro expoliario que el campo raso, para desnudar a los muertos o ultimar a los heridos; lo mismo que se practicaba con los caballos trucidados en los circos de toros.

Nada de nuevo habíase introducido por la crudeza gaucho, en esas cosas fúnebres. Tan cierto es que hasta en los refinamientos de la crueldad y manifestaciones más variables del odio; hasta en las formas más impulsivas y al parecer flamantes del desagravio, el despojo y el despene de los agonizantes, y aun de los que no lo eran, no habían perdido su salvajez prístina y contaban con innumerables rebisabuelos.

Lo que unos hacían a bayoneta de tres canales, lo ejecutaban otros por el lanceamiento y el degüello, si es que en definitiva, todos no empleaban a capricho los tres medios.

22- Ibid., pp. 314.

¿Cuál de ellos más atroz? Inermes o sanos lo sufrirán.²³

Rivera is pictured as the founder of personalismo, or the strong-man type of leader called caudillo in Uruguay (Many Latin-American governments were successful only under a caudillo's administration). His fluctuating career symbolized the country's struggle, with all its misfortunes. The complete presentation of Rivera's character and leadership shows his defects made into virtues. His influence helped unite the country in the midst of its troubles. The author sums it up this way.

En los grandes despoblados del latifundio, se veía vagar su sombra a toda hora, una sombra gigante de protección, de amparo, cuas bendita.

Si se preguntaba por algún forastero a las paisanas viejas o jóvenes el motivo de tanto afecto, daban como fundamento que era el padrino de todos los hijos.....
---Frutos siempre es el gobierno, aunque haya gobierno.²⁴

The epitome of Eduardo Acevedo Díaz' romantic prose is found in Soledad. It is entirely fiction, an imaginary tale of the pampas. But it is filled with passions, anger, hate, love, and heroism.

Pablo Luna is a "gaucho-trova" who would rather sing and play the guitar than talk. He is in love with Soledad, daughter of an estanciero on the lonely plains. Pablo's character is well drawn in the first of the following quotations, and the love scene of uncontrolled passions embodies all the fervor and zest for living which the primitive gaucho class possessed:

23- Ibid., pp. 361-2.

24- Ibid., pp. 172-3.

Se conocía más a Pablo Luna por su afición a la guitarra que por los hechos ordinarios de la vida de campo. Había empezado él por calarse por el oído a favor de su habilidad para tañer y cantar, antes que por actos de valentía y de fuerza.

No por esto se creía que Luna se prodigaba o hiciese partícipes a los demás de sus gustos y deleites cuasi artísticos; muy al contrario, era tal vez un fiel remedo de ese pájaro cantor de nuestros bosques que alza sus ecos en lo más intrincado, cuando otras aves guardan silencio y no interrumpen aleteos y rumores importunos, el solenne paisaje de las soledades.²⁵

Era una noche de atmósfera serena, tibia, saturada de aromas silvestres, llena de suaves fulgores el espacio y el monte de móviles luces étincelantes sobre las bóvedas frondosas.....

Pablo se excitó más de improviso.

Alargó el brazo, la tomó de un hombro y la arrojó con fuerza de costado sobre los pastos.

Soledad no opuso resistencia, quedándose boca arriba mansa, dócil, insinuante a pesar de aquel manotón grosero.

Una de las trenzas se le había cruzado por el lindo rostro como una banda negra.

Luna la separó de allí con los labios y besó a la joven en la boca cinco y seis veces.

Después la ciñó con sus brazos de la cintura, resollante, la atrajo hacia sí impetuoso y la tuvo estrechada largos momentos hasta hacerla quejarse.

Ella dejó entonces.

Pero como ella no se levantara y le encariñase la barba con la palma de la mano, Pablo volvió a estrecharla con un ahinco extremo oprimiéndole entre los dientes uno de sus hombros carnudos y redondos.

--Me lastimás, bruto--dijo Soledad en voz bajita.

El dejó de morder, rióse como una criatura....²⁶

Soledad's father discovered the lovers, however, and in his fury soundly beat the young gaucho. A revengeful Pablo set fire that night to the fields of Señor Montiel, the hated estanciero.

25- Eduardo Acevedo Díaz, Soledad, Montevideo, 1931, p. 60.

26- Ibid., pp. 118, 122-3.

The blaze became a conflagration and Acevedo Díaz gives us a vivid description of it and the horror it invoked:

Al empuje formidable de la piara despavorida, rodaba estrujado entre las llamas de los flancos el ganado menor que no había atinado a guarecerse con tiempo en los ribazos del arroyo; y al olor de la lana achicharrada se mezclaba el de la cerda y el de cien malezas consumidas por tenaz voracidad, acumulando en la atmósfera gigantescas volutas de humo negro, sembrado de fugaces luminarias.

Las faldas de la sierra, en otras horas sombrías, aparecían en ese momento como vestidas de terciopelo color sangre, a su vez recamado de cenicientos visos que los gases simulaban al flotar en densos nubarrones sobre los abismos y estribaderos. Los peñascos de las bases y de las cumbres, heridos por el vívido reflejo del incendio, resaltaban en la costra como deformes berrugas de un tinte roji-amarillento.....Por doquiera fuego y humo en grado progresivo, ladridos, gritos lejanos, relinchos agudos, fuertes detonaciones cual si en el valle, en las lomas, en las sierras trabaran hombres y bestias un combate a muerte en medio del incendio gigante.²⁷

But the young gaucho can think only of Soledad in the midst of all this damage and destruction, and rides towards her home. He arrives in time to see her surrounded by flames, abandoned by the man whom her father had chosen to be her husband. Pablo disposes of him by tossing him into the flames. He rescues Soledad and rides away with his beloved in his arms. But Pablo is also her father's murderer, as Señor Montiel had been killed in the confusion. Pablo and Soledad, as personifications of the earlier Uruguayans, are thus beset by misery and tragedy.

Although realistic scenes of emotion, death, and destruction fill the pages of Soledad, its style is primarily of a romantic

tone. The simplicity of life on the estancia; the rugged beauty of nature in the vast expanse of sun-drenched sky and wind-swept campo or plain; the primitive crudity of the campo inhabitants, barbarous at times; --all is written in a prose that approaches poetry for its rhythm and beauty. In addition, his graphic portrayal of dramatic scenes proved that Eduardo Acevedo Díaz was a master of prose literature. From a literary point of view his last novel was considered to be his best.

B - Javier de Viana

Viana's first book was Campo, a collection of short stories which appeared in 1896. He wrote of the gaucho class as he saw it, degenerate, existing on a low level, and usually looked down upon by those in other occupations except in times of war or when political support was sought. Such a story is "Ultima campaña", in which a former gaucho colonel, Matos, is prevailed upon to take up arms once more in defense of his ideals. The following passage is of a romantic tone in its backward glance at gaucho heroism, but realistic enough in expressing the excitement of the old gaucho and that of his foreman:

Los dos gauchos sintieron una impresión de frío pasar por el cuerpo. El capataz, trémulo de entusiasmo, queriendo hablar y sintiendo que la voz se le estrangulaba en la garganta, sólo pudo decir, condensando sus pensamientos, esta palabra:

--¡Pucha!....

El caudillo, con los ojos brillantes, llenos de lágrimas, iluminado el semblante varonil por la fiebre del entusiasmo, revolvió con sus gruesos dedos la espesa y enmarañada barba cana. Todo el pasado se agolpó confuso en su cerebro. Vió de nuevo las hordas gauchas, desordenadas y fieras, surgir sobre las cuchillas esgrimiendo chuzas y profiriendo amenazas. Las vió desnudas, fatigadas, hambrientas, descargar sus iracundias sobre el enemigo y vencer al número, a la disciplina, al armamento, a la pericia, con sólo el empuje de su valor y la fiereza de su patriotismo sublime. Salto de la silla, como si le hubieran pasado una corriente eléctrica, apoyó sobre la mesa la ancha mano velluda, y dirigiéndose a su capataz, no ya como patrón, sino con la voz clara e imperiosa del jefe que da una orden.

--¡Capitán Lucas Rodríguez,---dijo,---empiese a adelgazar me picaso, y preparese y avise a los muchachos, porque vamos a dirnos a la ultima patriada!....

El capitán lucas, tembloroso, radiante, salió precipitadamente agitando el sombrero en la diestra, y antes de llegar a la cocina, no pudiendo contenerse, gritó con toda la fuerza de sus pulmones:

--¡Muchachos!....¡hay revolución!.....¡Viva la
revolución!....²⁸

In "El ceibal" Viana tells of a young gaucho who is in love, but is so far removed from the bold and daring gaucho of earlier times that he cannot hold his lady's love. When he surprises her in an act of infidelity with his friend Luciano, he is furious only at the girl and disposes of her in a most horrible manner:

Luciano retrocedió atónito y Clota intentó levantarse; pero él de un zarpazo feroz la cogió de la revuelta cabellera y respondió con una mirada de rencor infinito y de desprecio sin límites a la mirada angustiosa que ella le dirigió implorando misericordia; y dando un rugido sordo, que tenía más de bestial que de humano, hundió repetidas veces la daga en el pecho y en el vientre de la joven.

La infeliz cayó bañada en sangre y estuvo un corto rato agitándose en terribles convulsiones.²⁹

Something of gaucho character is seen however, when he explains to Luciano that he is not angry with him, and in his apparent calmness:

Y luego, mientras su rival quedaba como petrificado junto a un ceibo, él arrojó la daga, dió media vuelta, y se alejó lentamente, tranquilamente, soberbio, altivo, doblando las ramas con su pecho robusto.³⁰

"La vencedura" tells of the task of rebuilding a ruined ranch after a prolonged absence in one of the civil wars. The estanciero's son becomes sick and is on the verge of death, when an old practitioner of quackery and herb remedies cures him. In effecting the cure, some superstitions of the campo are revealed,

28- Javier de Viana, Campo, Montevideo, 1945, pp. 19-20.

29- Ibid., pp. 41-2.

30- Ibid., p. 43.

which Viana probably meant to be recognized as psychological factors.

A young gaucho's heroism in a fight with a number of official lancers forms the story of "La trenza". The scene of his death falls short of what is expected after a detailed account of his escape, but his determination to live, which reveals a gaucho characteristic, is well drawn:

El indio indomable, el heredero del charrúa, cuya sangre llevaba mezclada con la del tupamaro de fresco renombre, huía ahora, huía sin descanso. Agotadas las fuerzas, sintióse perdido y pidió a su moro un último servicio para escapar al cuchillo que deshonra. ¿Ser degollado él?.....¡La puta que los parió!31

"En familia" is a sordid story of misery, drunkenness, laziness, and unfaithfulness. The topic comes nearer being naturalism than realism in depicting the ugliest sort of living, as in the following examples:

Sólo en una afición concordaman: en la de beber caña. Pero, bebida ésta, la desemejanza tornaba a mostrarse en los efectos que en sus respectivos organismos producía el alcohol: diferencia fisiológica, diferencia psíquica. En Casiano el licor obraba como anestésico para sus órganos, como analgésico para sus dolores; y en Asunción, por el contrario, excitaba el desordenado galope de las pasiones y exacerbaba las contrariedades o sufrimientos.....Y más de una vez, al regresar el amo, encontró a la esposa y a la suegra borrachas como cubas, ostentando en el rostro con frecuencia la señal de las uñas de la reciente gresca.

Por ese entonces dió en visitar la casa un tal Salustiano Sandes, un indio puestero del inglés don Jaime Smith en Vera. Casiano lo miraba con malos ojos,

pero no dijo nada. Sin embargo, cuando nació Cleta, una criaturita flaca y raquítica, se le puso que la tal se asemejaba al indio Salustiano; y aunque guardó silencio, ostentó al visitante y echó del rancho a la vieja, que se fué al pueblo, de "piona", a estar a su dicho; y en oficio más lucrativo, aunque menos digno, a creer las voces que corrían y lo que Casiano opinaba.

La casa quedó peor,--porque Asunción era el prototipo de la haraganería,.....³²

Such vividly realistic portrayals of the people Viana had observed in his native land establishe him as a realist author of Uruguayan country life. He had found his particular mode of expression and rigidly adhered to it except in a few instances, for the remainder of his productive literary period. Although in later years he softened the tone of his realism in his short stories, they continued to be essentially realistic.

With the publication of Gaucha in 1899, however, Viana briefly left the practice of revealing the gaucho class as a degenerate, uncultured, reprehensible type which he knew so well and which was the theme of nearly all his other works. This novel was also intended to represent a psychological study of his protagonist, Juana, in her reactions to the society of the times and to the circumstances which controlled her life. Alberto Zum Felde states that he was unsuccessful in presenting a good psychological problem as well as in creating a convincing character about which to build it.³³ Certainly Juana, with her unmolested virginity and her intention of maintaining

32- Ibid., pp. 99-100, 101.

33- Zum Felde, Alberto, op. cit., p. 312.

that status, is far different from most of Viana's female characters!

The story opens at the time of Rosas' rise to power in Argentina, merely as a convenient starting point to trace Juana's ancestry, and that of Lucio Díaz, her timid gaucho lover. At that point in the story Acevedo Díaz' influence is noticeable, for there is a definite reference to those female soldiers who fought beside the men and who abundaban en aquella tierra de los Ismaeles y Cuarós.³⁴

After she is orphaned, Juana goes to live with her uncle, don Zoilo, at his ranch, which is three days' travel from Lucio's. He comes to see her and there is a beginning of a passionate love scene, but then the author veers away from his usual pattern and the lovers control their passions. Lucio promises to return in a few months, but knows he won't, for he thinks:

No, decididamente, no; él no era semejante a los demás hombres, y Juana no era igual a las otras mujeres. Un lazo misterioso los unía a los dos; una mano providencial había vaciado sus almas en un mismo molde, y había roto el molde después.³⁵

In time Juana also comes to believe this, for from her nearly hysterical pining for him, she finally concludes:

.....que Lucio seguía adorándola, y, por su parte, ella no había dejado de quererle; pero ¡qué ridícula unión la de ellos! Uno, puro cuerpo, sensato, equilibrado, razonable, y la otra, puro espíritu, sin noción de lo real, sin equilibrio, sin colocación posible en el medio donde actuaba!.....¡qué ridícula unión!.....³⁶

34- Viana, Javier de, Gaucha, Montevideo, 1947, p. 44.

35- Ibid., p. 55.

36- Ibid., p. 211.

The author pictures the brutality of the local police officers and their iron-like rule over the people, in their vigorous hunting down of matreros. The sentiments of the people are against the officers, for they believe the matreros do not rob and kill for the sake of robbing and killing, but become criminals merely in self-defense. Although Juana continually tortures her mind over her lost Lucio, she eventually becomes accustomed to the ways of the campo, and understands the attitude which prevails there of protecting matreros from the authorities. When that attitude is made sufficiently clear for the reader, the author introduces the outlaw, Lorenzo Almado. Viana ends his romance with the following realistic scene: (realistic in spite of Juana's apparent disinterest and incapability of emotion--qualities which Zum Felde thought contributed to the failure of Gaucha as a literary work).

.....Su boca purísima, que revelaba la virginidad y la inocencia, parecía no sentir el calor y el contacto de aquellos labios groseros y lascivos; y su cuerpo, de exquisita sensibilidad, permanecía insensible a la presión de aquel otro cuerpo abrasado por la lujura.

Lorenzo separó el rostro y observó. Su respiración era violenta y penosa; sus labios temblaban;.....los dientes, castañetando, trozaron el tronco del clavel rojo que cayó al suelo como una virgen decapitada.....cada uno de aquellos contactos, el bandido se estremecía, sacudido, cargado, como una botella de Leyden al máximo de la tensión nerviosa. De pronto, aquella mano llegó al blanco cuello de la víctima, se contrajo como una gara, dió un tirón brusco, rasgó la tela, y los senos, blancos, pulidos, adorables de virginidad y de pureza, quedaron al descubierto...Con una voz que era un rugido espantoso:

--¡Mi china!.....--gritó.

Y al mismo tiempo, cogiéndol brutalmente entre los brazos, la arrojó sobre el catre, sobre las revueltas ropas que durante la noche habían abrigado al trenzador

Arreglándose los pliegues del chiripá, sonriendo con la risa cínica y satisfecha que le era peculiar:

--¡Jiede a chibo!.....--dijo el matrero señalando el catre.

Juana permanecía tendida boca arriba, el vestido en desorden, los senos al aire, la revuelta cabellera rubia esparcida sobre la almohada, y los ojos, de pupila azul pálida como flor de camalote, abiertos e inmóviles, cúa si miraran al infinito!...³⁷

When Gurí appeared in 1901, however, Viana goes back to his realistic treatment of the gaucho. Gurí was a gaucho with Charrúan Indian blood, who had a prostitute for a sweetheart. After a time he lost interest in her, but was tortured with the superstitious belief that she had cast a spell over him, depriving him of his virility. After convincing himself that he was indeed under such a spell, he rode out one night during a heavy rainfall, in a complete mental fog and became soaked and thoroughly chilled. The next morning he was found very nearly dead at the spot where he fallen from his horse. His friends tried to save his life, but he had no will to live. The victim of superstitions, his tortured mind and the pneumonia which he had contracted hastened his death.

The squalid pictures of the prostitute Clara and her miserable hovel are done in the best of Viana's naturalistic efforts. The despicable character of her mother is drawn in the same tone, as the following quotation indicates:

...Encorvado el cuerpo flaco, sin seno, sin vientre: caídos los largos brazos terminados por una manazas negras, con gruesos dedos deformados, permanecía allí, callada y sumisa, como un perro en

espera de la carniza. Había tenido cinco hijas, de las cuales la cuatro primeras habían ido entrando sucesivamente--educada por ella, prostituídas por ella y vendidas por ella--en la carreras del vicio. La quinta, Paula--aquella chicuela que la acompañaba--, esperaba su turno, moralmente corrompida ya, iniciada ya en ciertas prácticas del oficio y sin que sus diez años ignoraran, en la teoría, ningún secreto del infame destino que la aguardaba. Afeada, envejecida, consumida la vieja miserable vivía implorando la caridad de sus hijas, que no siempre mostraban sensibles a sus ruegos, y que cuando en alguna ocasión le daban un trozo de carne, unos trapos viejos o un par de reales, lo hacían de mala gana y acompañados de insultos.....³⁸

Some short stories were included in Gurí; "En las cuchillas" is the tale of a blanco patriot, who is wounded by his pursuers and killed by his friends. The latter disliked to see him suffer, so one of them, desenvainando un cuchillo lo degolló de oreja a oreja, con un movimiento rápido. Viana carries this scene to its bloody and logical conclusion:

....Cuando regresaron, dos días después, se detuvieron ante el cadáver, que, desnudo e hinchado, estaba tendido en el camino. En el cuello, la espantosa degollación había abierto una boca negra, sombría, repugnante, retraídos los dos labios gruesos y cárdenos. Las moscas y los jejenes formaban enjambre sobre la llaga y sobre las entrañas que habían salido de las brechas abiertas en el tronco por los lanzazos, y que los caranchos y los chimangos habían arrancado y arrastrado a fuerza de pico y garra.³⁹

"Las madres" is a pathetic portrayal of the mothers of gauchos who had been killed in battle. Viana wished here to picture the social responsibility which the country owed to those bereaved mothers and their heroic dead.

38- Viana, Javier de, Gurí, y otras novelas, Montevideo, 1920, p. 22.

39- Ibid., pp. 123-4.

The author's next collection of stories to appear was la biblia gaucha, published in 1905. In "Vida" he gives the gaucho a romantic treatment, as follows:

...Es la obligada cooperación del individuo en el dolor común, que todos debemos pagar a la humanidad para tener el derecho a vivir.

Ese concepto tan amplio, tan digno, tan noble, y, sobre todo, tan lógico que de la vida y sus obligaciones tiene el casual gaucho, explican en mucho la nobleza y la heroicidad de su progenie.⁴⁰

"Sobre el recado" is a brief but detailed listing of a typical gaucho's equipment, and emphasizes the gaucho's contribution to civilization. In a similar manner, the author wrote about the role of "Los bueyes" in the simple country life. He personifies them by giving them the following qualities:

Tienen conciencia de su deber y lo cumple.

El espíritu del gaucho les ha impuesto la necesidad de resistencia, sobriedad, abnegación y sacrificio.⁴¹

"La agonía del ombú" is a lament for the seemingly useless tree of the pampas, and again the author makes a comparison with the gaucho:

...Y así, como desconocen la soberbia belleza del árbol gaucho, ignoran también sus virtudes medicinales y su posible aprovechamiento industrial.....

Sucumbe, pues, gran árbol gaucho; y, como el gaucho, soporta resignado en tu agonía, el frío de la ingratitud y el sarcasmo de la ignorancia!.....⁴²

From the three quotations it appears that Viana felt the gaucho should be remembered for his better qualities, and wrote

40- Viana, Javier de, La biblia gaucha, Montevideo, 1905, p. 8.

41- Ibid., p. 54.

42- Ibid., p. 65.

of such common topics in a manner designed to inspire respect for the gaucho type. Such descriptions are merely occasional, however, and in Macachines, published in 1908, he is again writing of moral degradation.

In "Of cuando ella dijo", a girl accuses her gaucho lover of being 'maula' and in allowing a certain Morales to insult her. The following dialogue could hardly be more expressive of fickleness and the extremely low moral principles of the gaucho type:

--Guenas tardes, Jacinta.
--Guenas tardes, Lucindo. ¿Qué traís en el poncho?
--Un regalo pa vos.
--¡Siempre llegás tarde!...El pardo Juan me trajo ayer una docena.
--¡Quién sabe si son como est!
--¿Es de ñandú macho?
--Si. Mirá.
--¡Ay!....¡Ay!....¡Ay!....la cabeza de Morales!....Del Morales que yo quería...del guano....del tigre...
--Sí, lo pelié, lo maté, lo desgollé, le corté la cabaza.....
--¡Vos, Lucindo!
--Yo, si, yo mesmo, pa probarte que no soy maula.
--¡Oh, Lucindo, mi Lucindo, como te quiero me Lucindo!⁴³

Realistic descriptions of daily events, such as the estancia girls being robbed of their honor, usually de buena gana, and the flocking of countless bandits to Uruguay after hearing that the country was in the midst of another civil war, crowd the rest of the pages of Macachines. With stories of this kind Viana supported himself by contributing publications throughout the Rio de la Plata area. Gaucho stories were then experiencing a

43- Viana, Javier, de, Macachines, Montevideo, 1913, p. 26.

new period of popularity as previously noted, and the author wrote his stories for that particular reading public. Only occasionally thereafter were there such brutal depictions of immorality as he had recorded earlier. His gauchos continued to be realistic in being simple, degenerate sons of the race, but there is frequently an obvious attempt to gain sympathy for the type. His pages are filled with misery of a people trampled by warring bands of colorados and blancos, in Yuyos, for example, which was published in 1909. Such a story was "Ultima tropa" which shows for the ranch of Don Pantaleón ransacked by the two political factions:

..Y vino la guerra civil. Los colorados, que lo suponían blanco, le carnearon la mitad de la hacienda; los blancos, como contribución partidaria, le carnearon la otra mitad, y en un combate cercano de las casas, sus dos hijos llevados á la fuerza al teatro de la lucha, dejaron la osamenta en una loma, agujereados á balazos.⁴⁴

Leña seca was published in 1909 shortly after Yuyos. The first story "La tapera del cuervo" is concerned with the Negro Matuco, and the girl he cared for and reared. The circumstances surrounding her birth are particularly characteristic of Viana's descriptions of the havoc and ruin wrought by the gaucho malo class, as noted below:

¡Animal curioso, el hombre!....Las gentes que habían asesinado y robado, el Matuco, en compañía de Escobar... y su cuadrilla! Una vez en la Abra Honda, cayó entre los muertos una mujer en cinta; Lanzaseca le abrió el vientre y sacó vivo el vacaray y se le tiró a Matuco, diciendo:

44- Viana, Javier de, Yuyos, Montevideo, 1912, p. 157.

--Tomá una achura, retinto.⁴⁵

The story of "Facundo Imperial" is the tale of a gaucho who is rich and respected on the campo during the time of persecutions of the gaucho class. He is arrested on trumped up charges and jailed while his rival, a local police officer, wins the affections of the young man's wife. Eventually such persecution breaks him, physically and mentally. His wife's infidelity didn't help matters. Viana is trying to arouse sympathy for the people whom the caudillo leaders were bent on "exterminating". The story also reveals Viana's apparent bitterness towards women in general.

In "Entre púrpuras" a horrible scene of the bandit gaucho's deeds is described. Although Viana had apparently started writing for a limited market at that time, he was not yet completely avoiding the ugly atrocities of the gaucho malo class, as shown in the repulsive passages which follow:

Al principio no vieron a nadie; pero luego, costeando los muros, Policarpo contempló un espectáculo horroroso. En el suelo, desnudo, tendido largo a largo, estaba un hombre ya anciano, cuyo cuerpo, rojo en sangre, presentaba innuberrables heridas de daga; a su lado, igualmente desnuda, rígida, el cabello en desorden y la garganta partida de un tajo feroz, había una joven, una niña casi; una de esas vírgines criollas, de formas perfectas, de piel suave, tersa y colorida como una terracota;Policarpo volvió a contemplar los cadáveres; los miembros flacos, velludos, con nudos tendones, del viejo puestero, y los miembros gráciles, torneados, de la niña, cuyo rostro expresaba los tormentos de una muerte horrible. Sobre la frente pálida caían los bucles de un cabello negró, rizado y lustroso; la pequeña nariz contraída en un espasmo supremo, mostraba

las ventanillas cubiertas de espuma sanguinolenta; la boca, grande y de gruesos labios, dejaba ver los dientes menudos y blancos; entre los senos, redondos y firmes, había un gran coágulo de la sangre brotada de la herida del cuello, cuyos bordes cárdenos se habían contraído hacia arriba y hacia abajo....⁴⁶

In "Marca sola" and "Cosas que pasan", the author deals with the infidelity of campo women, or gauchas. Sympathy for the gaucho who is deserted by his mate, and the resulting philosophy which leads to a broad-minded understanding and forgiving in one case, are the themes of these two stories.

Abrojos appeared in 1913 with its usually mild stories in defense of the persecuted gaucho. "Crímenes gauchos" for example, relates a crime perpetrated by a man from the city, yet the press demanded justice, or vengeance, for the gaucho on whom the deed was blamed. Sometimes Viana exploited the mental slowness of the degenerate gauchos in a manner which revealed the author's humor. Such a story is "La inocencia de Candelario", wherein the simple gaucho is accused of an atrocious murder. But Candelario tries to defend himself, denying that he is guilty:

--¡Le juro, don juez, que lo 'e las puñaladas en pura mentira, un falso que me han levantao pa emararme más entrocavía!...¡Yo l'unico qu' hice jué degollarlo!
Y se volvió a sentar tranquillo, serenado, convencido de su inocencia.⁴⁷

Sobre el racado was the next collection of short stories to appear. "El Puerto de Añang" proves Viana an excellent narrator of folk tales. He turns the legend into calculated realism,

46- Ibid., pp. 103, 111.

47- Viana, Javier de, Abrojos, Montevideo, 1936, p. 154.

with an odd angle for a climax--the unexpected ending--which is so necessary in short story writing and is therefore, commonly found in Viana's works. Part of the Indian legend about the tort of the Devil follows:

....Cuenta la tradición que quien quiera llegue hasta la boca del puerto, volverá fatalment a él, a media noche, y allí, seducido por encantadoras mujeres, --que no son otra cosa que hijas de Añang, --es elevado en una barca roja y florida hacia los angosturas donde los mandingas de avariciencia abórca cumplen su siniestra misión.

Para salvar de tal suerte aciaga, no había otro remedio que recurrir al conjunto de los rosarios y padrenuestros de que me hablaba el guía...Y marcharse de inmediato de la comarca.

Yo sonreí al escuchar el relato. **No recé rosarios ni padrenuestros**, y me apresuré a emprender la marcha antes de la salida del sol.

Conozco muchas leyendas semejantes y sé que allá en aquellas tierras de contrabando, Añang se encarna en diversas formas y ¡guay de quien, incrédulo, persiste en descubrir sus secretos!⁴⁸

"¡Dame tiempo, hermano!" is the tale of two gaucho lads who had grown up together and were like brothers. One of them seduced the sister of the other, but did not follow through with a marriage as he was expected to do. In spite of their fondness for each other, the brother of the dishonored girl was forced to kill his friend. The realism of the scene emphasizes a code of ethics which Viana's gaucho adhered to when it struck their fancies to do so.

Del campo y de la ciudad appeared in book form in 1921. The author drew a scene from one of the civil wars, as realistic as any of his earlier attempts, to describe gaucho justice.

48- Viana, Javier de, Sobre el rogado, 1913, p. 32.

It is not in keeping with the general tone of the stories in his later period, but the action takes place in 1870, and is fully as bloody as any of the crimes Viana wrote about:

...El gaucho estuvo en el suelo antes que su caballo, y vió rodar con las boleadoras enroscadas en las patas, al zaino de Farías, dejando a éste debajo. Entonces corrió con el facón en la mano dando vrinco de felino y profiriendo amenazas. Cuando, al rato, el capitán llegó hasta allí, pudo ver a la víctima degollada "de oreja a oreja", revolcándose en convulsiones espantosas en medio de un charco de sangre.

La venganza estaba consumada.⁴⁹

"Teru-tero" is an ugly picture of the results of drunkenness and immorality on the part of the gaucho. A physically and mentally deficient child, conceived in debauchery, is born on his father's ranch. With this repulsive narrative, Viana evidently wished to illustrate the degeneration of the race and to point out its consequences.

Potros, toros, y aperiajes was published in 1912. One of its stories, "Pájaro-bobo" concerns a gaucho, Carranza, who appears in a certain town and becomes quite a respected figure before showing his true colors of moral depravity. In the following scene the author demonstrated that his capabilities as a realist had not suffered:

Pájaro-bobo la soltó un momento y fué hasta la puerta. Estaba oscureciendo y no veía alma viviente por las inmediaciones: era uno de esos crepusculos tristes de los suburbios de aldea, sin luces y sin rumores. Carranza, veloz como un felino, se abalanzó sobre la

49- Viana, Javier de, Del Campo y de la ciudad, Montevideo, 1911, p. 16.

mulata y le asestó un golpe de blancha con su facón, en medio de la frente. La mujer lanzó un grito, un grito horrible, más de rabia que de dolor y retrocedió apretando su tesoro contra el pecho, con ansia convulsiva; y mientras su tesoro contra el pecho, con ansia convulsiva; y mientras el bandido le descargaba golpe sobre golpe, ella vociferaba iracunda, vomitando palabras horribles, insultos sangrientos. Al fin Pájaro-bebo, cansado de sostener tan larga lucha, la asió de la trenza, dió un tirón seco y la arrojó al suelo. Le puso en pie en la garganta, otro en el vientre e iba a robarla miserablemente, cuando tres hombres, sable en mano, entraron de súbito en la covacha.....Lo condujeron a la cárcel,.....⁵⁰

Tardes del fogón is the final work of Viana's included in this study. Here is evident his later period of softening the brutality of the gaucho, although not particularly his crudity. Although the entire work is made up of short stories, the same characters are found in each separate story. The author depicts their daily life on a ranch, but most of the stories consist of political or philosophical discussions. One of them in particular, "Apunte pa otro lao" deserves mention. The biblical tale of the flood is told in the gauchos' dialectical speech. A comparison is drawn between God's decision concerning the flood on the one hand, and the regime of president Batlle y Ordóñez on the other. The president speaks:

...Confieso me equivocación, mi obra resultó mala, completamente mala y es necesario destruirla conjuntamente con aquellos malhadados Apuntes, cuya consecuencia dué que ahora no me cuieran llevar el apunte. ¡Destruyamos todo para edificar de nuevo!... ¡Ahoguemos a los rebeldes en una inundación de gatos! ...Dejénme a mí, que soy baquiano, abrir las. Por más duras que estén, con un poco de aceite de influencia moral, funcionarán lo mismo que antes!.....⁵¹

50-Viana, Javier de, Potros, toros, y aperiares, Montevideo, 1922, p. 81.

51- Viana, Javier de, Tardes del fogón, Montevideo, 1925, p. 136.

Not only did Viana use his gaucho protagonists to praise the activities of Batlle y Ordóñez, he revealed gaucho provincialism in attributing some of their qualities to God--a natural thing for a simple folk to do.

Although Viana produced more literary works than are considered here, I have chosen what I believe best represents his style and approach to the subject matter.

In comparing and contrasting the two authors, it is evident that there are many similarities to be found in their works. The most obvious is, of course, that they each use the gaucho as a protagonist. A few of Viana's stories mention the historical gaucho--and he is capable of treating him just as romantically as did Acevedo Díaz--but most of his gauchos were of a much later period than those of Acevedo Díaz. Their descriptive scenes are equally as stirring to the imagination, and character drawing, for the most part, is done well by both authors. At that point, however, the similarities cease.

Differences are found in their styles of writing. Acevedo Díaz, always a journalist and frequently an historian, swung from straight fact reporting to the fictional approach in his works with the exception of Seleaad which ^{is} entirely fiction and not semi-historical as the others. His style is quite formal and usually devoid of colloquialisms and dialectical speech. Realism for Viana meant a phonetic spelling of speech sounds, and his was a less formal and not at all documentary style. Viana casually mentions historical dates and events, but for the most

part writes of the results or consequences which those events had on the populace. Concern over the psychological well-being of his characters is apparent in Viana's works, and he is preoccupied with the misery, debauchery, brutality, immorality, crudeness and general degeneration of the people about whom he wrote. Realism and naturalism dominate his pages whereas they occupy little space in Acevedo Díaz' novels. Elements of romanticism, on the other hand, are abundantly found in Acevedo Díaz' works, while Viana rarely sees anything attractive enough in his observations to record in a romantic writing; his topics are every day, common-place materials which must usually be personified to give them any kind of meaning. Gaucha was of course, the one exception in Viana's works, but even then he failed at producing a poetic prose of the romantic genre and his reversion to realism at the climax of the novel indicates his inability to produce a lengthy work of art outside of his proper field of realism. He was at his best when relating a legendary tale of the campo, or in building a climax to a short story.

The field chosen for the expression of their talents was a very real cause of their difference in the treatment of the gaucho. Viana was skilled handling the brief, concise framework of the short story, on the other hand, Acevedo Díaz preferred the novel, where he had sufficient space and time to work out every possible angle which would be derived from a theme. In addition, Acevedo Díaz had not had the contact with the country people, the gaucho

class, which Viana had experienced in his early youth, and later, presumably, as a contrabandista and hacendado. Both of the authors had seen sufficient action with revolutionary troops to allow them to write realistically of such topics.

Eduardo Acevedo Díaz was practically exiled from his country for many years after the rise of Batlle y Ordóñez to the Uruguayan presidency. His political function thus took him away from the land at the time the conception of the gaucho was undergoing a considerable change. It is significant that he did not produce any literary works during that time. Javier de Viana, however, continued to record his observations during the same period, and depended on the stories he produced for a livelihood during much of that time.

The most important difference was one of objectives. Viana was content to picture the gaucho as he had evolved, while Acevedo Díaz wished to record the country's history, by the way of a nostalgic backward glance at the gaucho's period of greatness. The opposite treatment of their protagonists is not to be wondered at then, when the authors' varied backgrounds, experiences, and objectives are considered.

Chapter VI - CONCLUSION

The lives of the two authors considered here coincided to such an extent that they can be classified in the same time period. Eduardo Acevedo Díaz' literary productivity ceased almost entirely during the twentieth century, however, while Javier de Viana continued writing until his death in 1926. The authors belonged to similar social classes, yet, for the most part, led quite different lives. From Viana's boyhood experiences on an estancia and from his adult career as an hacendado, he was later to draw many episodes in his literary accounts, which were based on his contact with the gaucho class and were enhanced by his keen powers of observation. Although each author had taken part in certain gaucho uprisings against the government, Acevedo Díaz' contact with the gaucho proto-type of his day was more limited than was Viana's. For many years, Acevedo Díaz' adult career took him away from Uruguay, either as a political exile or in a diplomatic capacity.

The authors really belonged to separate schools of literary thought, as can be seen from the romantic and realistic passages listed and discussed in this study. It is apparent then, that in spite of using the same type of protagonist, the objectives at which the authors aimed were widely separated. Such different aims were due in part to their individual experiences and personal contact, but probably to a greater degree, they

were the results of the changing concept of the gaucho. Undoubtedly Acevedo Díaz was aware of the degenerate gaucho type and perhaps he wished to exalt the historical gaucho's role in order to off-set the miserable condition surrounding the descendants of that earlier type. Certainly he was successful in portraying his protagonist in a romantic vein.

It remained for the realists to picture the miserable and degenerate qualities of their contemporary gaucho class, as did Javier de Viana. Not content with being a realist, Viana also tried his hand at romantic depictions of the gaucho, but apparently discovering his talents to be at their best in realistic--and occasionally in repulsive naturalistic descriptions,--for the most part he steered clear of loftier examples of gaucho heroism of a former day. The barbarity, primitive nature, and cruelty of the gaucho that Viana pictured represented the low status to which the type had arrived. Viana's alert observation had noted the changing conception of the gaucho in the minds of the people. Near the close of his literary career the gaucho was again upheld in a more favorable light, and the author changed his style and tone sufficiently to remain a popular narrator of gaucho stories.

The difference in the authors' views of the gaucho, then, was obviously due to Eduardo Acevedo Díaz' romantic, backward glance at the heroic period of his protagonist, while Viana pictured the modern gaucho, deprived of the inspiration and circumstances which had spurred his ancestral prototype to national greatness.

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