CONFLICT BETWEEN CIUDAD AND CAMPO IN THE FICTION OF BENITO LYNCH

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CHAPTER I

BENITO LYNCH

Benito Lynch was born on July 25, 1885, in Buenos Aires. His father was Irish, and his mother was a Uruguayan of French descent. When Benito was two years old, his parents left the city for the estancia "El Deseado" in the La Plata region. There he came to identify closely with the area which later was to provide the setting for his rural novels. At the age of ten, Benito moved to La Plata, where his father became a legislator and community leader. In the city young Lynch experienced difficulty in accepting the disciplines of study.¹ Lynch has explained:

Cuando chico viví mucho tiempo en la estancia de mi padre. Pero mi padre no quería hacer de mí un gaúcho, sino un hombre instruido, un hombre de ciudad, y yo tuve que confortarme con estudiar, encerrado en mi cuarto, en vez de dedicarme a enlazar potros o a marcar reses en la estupenda gloria de aquellas mañanas camperas. Pero cuando volví a la estancia, después de mis estudios en el Colegio Nacional, entonces me desquité ...²

At the Colegio Nacional, he was introduced to sports, and at

¹Carmelo M. Bonet, "La novela," Historia de la literatura argentina, edited by Rafael Alberto Arrieta (Buenos Aires, 1959), IV, 144.

times he would become so engrossed in boxing that he would forget to attend classes. He never lost contact with rural life, often making lengthy visits to the estancia of his relatives.3

Lynch’s literary interests first became evident when, as a seven year old boy, he published a handwritten newspaper for the estancia. At an early age he began to read French novelists, his favorites being Daudet and Zola.4 When his father died in 1902, Lynch left his secondary school studies to become a newspaperman. He first was employed by the paper El Día.5 In 1909 he published his first novel, Plata dorada, but he did not achieve fame as a writer until the publication of Los caranchos de la Florida in 1916. His other novels were Raquela (1918), Las mal calladas (1923), El inglés de los güesos (1924), and El romance de un gaucho (1933). In addition to these works, Lynch published two novelettes, Palo verde y El antojo de la patrona (1925), and two collections of short stores, La evasión (1922) and De los campos porteños (1931). Although Lynch chose to ignore the many other cuentos which he had written for periodicals, some of these were printed after his death on December 23, 1951, in the book Cuentos camperos (1964). His only non-

3 Arturo Torres-Rioseco, Grandes novelistas de la America hispana (Berkley, 1941), p. 113.
4 Ibid.
5 Bonet, p. 144.
narrative work is *El estanciero*, published in 1933. Lynch always wrote slowly and carefully—"con la seguridad del hombre que expresa su verdad sin apremio, porque no necesita de su pluma para vivir porque económicamente independiente, puede meditar con tiempo la forma de sus libros." As Gálvez has commented, "trabaja poco, pero todo lo que hace es meditado."

Lynch wrote principally about the life of the campo, which he knew at first hand; his attempt at a novel of the city was unsuccessful. *Las mal calladas*, which Torres-Ríoseco calls "un paréntesis en su labor de tendencia rural," is based on the idea that men and women have different moral values. A man will risk death to avenge his honor; a woman, her own conscience being clear, feels that it is foolish to endanger the life of a husband or brother by asking him to fight a duel in defense of her honor. The characters of this novel are rather poorly drawn—"más imaginados que vistos." Concerning Lynch's city characters, one critic explains, "Siempre sus personajes respiran, mas no a pleno pulmón." In *Las mal calladas* and the short stories set in

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6Torres-Ríoseco, *Grandes novelistas*, p. 111.


8Torres-Ríoseco, *Grandes novelistas*, p. 133.

9Bonet, p. 151.

10Salama, p. 109.
Buenos Aires, the author does not attempt to reflect the total atmosphere of the city. He concerns himself with only the upper classes who go to their clubs to gossip and pass away the time.  

Torres-Ríoseco comments that although Benito Lynch may have felt in his youth the restless, violent impulses described in *Plata dorada* and *Los caranchos*, by the time he was fifty, he was "un perfecto tipo anglo-sajón":  

He seems far more Anglo-Saxon than Argentinian: a tall, rugged man, with a large, bony face and bushy eyebrows, and a slow meditative manner of speaking. By preference, Lynch leads a quiet bachelor's existence, entirely apart from the littératuer of Argentina, in the peaceful university city of La Plata.  

As an adult, Lynch lived with his mother and sisters, occasionally leaving La Plata to go to Buenos Aires. According to one writer, the city signified for Lynch "a club where one takes it easy among frivolous friends, not a Bohemian café where writers gather, much less an academy of scholars."  

Few writers in the capital knew him. He has been described as "lo menos literato que se puede suponer." Although he took little interest in the literary affairs of Argentina, Lynch was one of the few popular Argentine novelists of his

14Torres-Ríoseco, *Grandes novelistas*, p. 112.
day. The National University of La Plata granted him the title doctor honoris causa.\textsuperscript{15}

Lynch was so shy and withdrawn that he was often accused of being ill-tempered. Even among his intimate friends in the Jockey Club, he avoided all argument or debate. If his opinion was directly solicited in a controversial matter, he would pretend an urgent engagement and leave immediately.\textsuperscript{16}

Nason believes that Lynch's fundamental position in regard to his artistic and personal life is to be found in "La cola del zorro,"\textsuperscript{17} a story in which the words sociedad and enemigo are equated.\textsuperscript{18} According to this tale, society attacks everybody, for it is unwilling to admit that a person may be sound and worthy in all respects. The main character, to keep society from destroying his integrity and soul, pretends to have been insane. Society then has something to ridicule, but something which is of little importance to him. In this action the character is imitating the sample of the fox. When trapped by dogs, the fox will try to satisfy them by offering them his tail, the most dispensable part of his body.


\textsuperscript{17}\textit{La evasión} (Barcelona, 1922), pp. 83-94.

\textsuperscript{18}Nason, p. 69.
As a writer, Lynch is frequently compared with William Henry Hudson, author of *Green Mansions* and *The Purple Land*. Bonet has said, "Era el Hudson de nuestros días, mas un Hudson que escribió en el idioma de su país."¹⁹ Luis Alberto Sánchez considers Lynch to be as much a son of Hudson as he was a son of the *pampa*.²⁰ There are, however, important differences between the two men. Hudson interprets a historical and social time entirely different from that about which Lynch writes. And unlike Hudson, Lynch was not an escapist writer; he had no interest in the exotic, nor did he describe the country and atmosphere in the great detail of the English author.²¹ Another critic comments, "Hudson saw the Englishmen from his English home. Lynch, on the contrary, looked at them with Argentine eyes. Lynch is closer to Hernández than to Hudson."²² This comparison is also questionable. *Martín Fierro*, in which Hernández protests against the torment and persecution of the gaucho, gave rise to a whole body of literature which idealized the Argentine plainsmen. Benito Lynch was not a romantic, and in his objectivity and his simple, natural portrayal of the criollo, he brought "a new refreshing note to gaucho

¹⁹Bonet, p. 144.


²¹Nason, pp. 79-81.

Williams Alzaga explains, "Lynch rompió los moldes de la pampa tradicional--de la pampa de Ascasubi y de Hernández--. Dejó de lado las pulperías, los bailes, las payadas, las faenas pastoriles con resonancias épicas." Lynch helped to form a literature which turned away from the extinct heroic gaucho, and which focused attention upon the transformation of the descendants of the old plainsman into farmers and day-laborers tamed by the fenced-in field.

Juan B. González mentions one limitation of Lynch: "Hay en él una gran simpatía por el gaucho, pero no verdadera compenetración de alma. Por eso lo mira vivir en vez de ... sentirlo vivir, 'sacramente,' en su propia intimidad profunda." In contrast to this opinion, most critics believe that Lynch's outstanding trait is his ability to create living characters--the ability "para introducirse en el alma de sus personajes."

Lynch is chiefly interested in the psychology of his characters. His skill in this area is such that all action in his books seems to be the logical, inevitable doing of

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23 Torres-Ríoseco, The Epic of Latin American Literature, p. 161.


26 Juan B. González, En torno al estilo (Buenos Aires, 1931), pp. 176-77.

27 Bonet, p. 145.
the characters themselves. He frequently examines the psychology of uncomplicated persons at everyday activities. This has been called the basis of Lynch's modernity—the fact that he finds poetry in ordinary circumstances.

Lynch's interest in psychology is particularly evident in his short stories—"Buen número de sus relatos breves puede encuadrarse en esta definición: dado un 'caso,' o un suceso, hasta una reflexión o sentencia, reconstruirlo psicológicamente."

In Lynch's work, the psychological elements strongly outweigh the passages of costumbrismo; nevertheless, Lynch has been called the foremost costumbrista of Argentina. Although bits of local color fill his writing, they never detract from the story. Lynch attempts to make landscape, situation, and characters form a unit. Description of setting appears only when it contributes to the story. According to Williams Alzaga, Lynch stops to describe setting "cuando adquiere visos de protagonista el paisaje, cuando

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28 Ibid., p. 163.


30 González, p. 189.

31 Torres-Ríoseco, The Epic of Latin American Literature, p. 162.

llega éste a formar parte inseparable de la acción misma."

Brevity is usually characteristic of Lynch. In rapid lines he manages to capture the essence of an atmosphere, a scene, or a landscape. The following lines from Raquela demonstrate this ability and also indicate why Lynch has been called the most significant exponent of the Río Plata novela naturalista. In these lines the narrator describes a group of horses trapped by a range fire:

Roces siniestros del pajonal removido, sordos bataneos de patas, toses ahogadas, relinches agudos como alaridos, intensas vibraciones de los alambres empujados por los reculones violentos de las ancas, y, por último, ese acre olor característico de la cerda quemada, esparciéndose en el viento ...

Lynch makes much use of dialogue; many of his short stories are written in play form. He prefers brutal effects which speed up the action and leave the reader in suspense.

Lynch writes in the dialect of the Río Plata region. His European characters speak their own jargon. However, his use of English is frequently incorrect, and his imitation of the Englishman's attempts at Spanish is poor. Fernando Alegria

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33 Williams Alzaga, p. 216.
34 Ibid., p. 373.
35 Valbuena Briones, p. 317.
has said that Mr. James in El inglés de los güesos speaks in "un lenguaje extravagante que no corresponde a ningún idioma conocido."38

Lynch writes with no social objectives, trying merely to picture realistically life on the estancias. Caillet-Bois warns that Lynch's writing should not be considered a disinterested exercise of literary composition: "Era un cuadro donde entraban recuerdos suyos que se habían transformado en valores éticos en su vida de hombre maduro."39 Lynch disliked the social and political changes taking place about him. In his writings he could stop time, cast out all evidence of change, and bring back what was forever lost to the real world.40

Perhaps one accurate summation of Lynch's position in the literary field is the following:

Si sus preocupaciones estéticas no se hallan siempre en primer plano, el conjunto de su producción, de fuerte inspiración vernácula, ofrece un aporte de consideración a la literatura argentina e hispanoamericana.41

He is generally considered the most authentic interpreter of the campos porteños.

38Fernando Alegría, Breve historia de la novela hispanoamericana (Mexico, 1959), p. 193.

39Julio Caillet-Bois, La novela rural de Benito Lynch (La Plata, 1960), p. 43.

40Ibid., p. 70.

41"Benito Lynch," Enciclopedia Barsa, Vol. X.
CHAPTER II
THE WORLD OF LYNCH'S NOVELS AND STORIES

In choosing a setting for his works, Benito Lynch usually confines himself to a rather well-defined area around Buenos Aires, bounded by the provinces of Dolores, Cañuelas, Monte y Lobos, Saladillo, and Bolívar. However, in "La evasión" he moves down to Patagonia, and in "El casao casa quiere" he writes of the mountain region of Tandil and Balcarce.¹

Although absolute time limits cannot be fixed, the action in Lynch's stories generally takes place between the years 1890 and 1915, the end of a period of profound change in Argentina.² During the last half of the nineteenth century, the Indian wars were brought to a close, stimulating further settlement of the pampas. The country made rapid progress in the building of railroads and in the introduction of alfalfa, barbed wire, improved breeds of cattle and sheep, and the refrigeration of meat.³

¹Caillet-Bois, p. 11.
²Salama, p. 83.
All of these innovations affected deeply the lives of the gauchos. Free, wild men who considered demeaning all work not done on horseback, the gauchos could at first move west to escape the new way of life developing on the campo. Then came the period in which the gauchos could find no more unfenced territory in which to live. They could try only to resist as best they could the changes taking place about them.

The problems caused by the confrontation of the urban and rural cultures had been considered by Sarmiento, some years before Lynch. In *Facundo*, Sarmiento described the vast differences separating these two ways of life:

El hombre de la ciudad viste el traje europeo, vive de la vida civilizada tal como la conocemos en todas partes; allí están las leyes, las ideas de progreso, los medios de instrucción, alguna organización municipal, el gobierno regular, etc. Saliendo del recinto de la ciudad, todo cambia de aspecto; el hombre de campo lleva otro traje que llamaré americano, por ser común a todos los pueblos; sus hábitos de vida son diversos, sus necesidades, peculiares y limitadas: parecen dos sociedades distintas, dos pueblos extraños uno de otro. Aun hay más; el hombre de la campaña, lejos de aspirar a asemejarse al de la ciudad, rechaza con desdén su lujo. ... Todo lo que hay de civilizado en la ciudad está bloqueado allí, proscrito afuera; y él que osara mostrarse con levita por ejemplo, y montado en silla inglesa atraería sobre sí las burlas y las agresiones brutales de los campesinos.  

In "El bagual" Lynch points up this same attitude on the part of the campesino.  

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5 Gálvez, pp. 163-175.
the friendship of the gauchos because of his many admirable characteristics, particularly his bravery, horsemanship, and friendliness. After a time, he and the *gaucha* Manuelita fall in love. But he and the *campesinos* never entirely get accustomed to each other. For example, the city man beats a drunken gaucho for cutting off a dog's tail as a joke. And when the men wish to drive "La Garita" off the *estancia*, he forces them to give her lodging, saying that no civilized man can refuse a woman shelter on a rainy night, however vile she may be. Because of his behavior, the gauchos decide that he is slightly *lunático* and *neurasténico*. His disillusionment with life on the *pampa* is climaxed when Manuelita publicly says of him, "¡qué bagual!" He leaves politely and returns to Buenos Aires before she can find him to apologize. His reaction to her intended jest bewilders Manuelita. Her mother, however, believes that the man's motives are obvious:

Decía que lo que hay es que ése, como todos a los que vienen de adentro y se llaman A o B, está lleno de orgullo y ha querido hacernos una afrenta demostrándonos en lo poco que nos tiene. Para esa gente, mi pobre hijita, nosotros siempre seremos gauchos, siempre seremos chusma inorante y no han de perder la ocasión de echarnos en cara nuestros defectos. 

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Carmelo M. Bonet has compared Lynch and Sarmiento, saying that the estancia of Lynch's novels is the theater of a sarmentesque battle between civilization (the city) and barbarism (the countryside).\textsuperscript{8} Sarmiento had observed the political struggle between the federalistas of the pampa, who wanted Argentina united under a federal system, and the unitarios, who wanted Buenos Aires to retain its "special hegemony" over the nation. He lived through the bloody rule of the federalista dictator Juan Manuel de Rosas; therefore, it is not surprising that he considered the conflict between ciudad and campo to be a struggle between civilization and barbarism and that he despised the gauchos.\textsuperscript{9} Lynch does show the campo to have what Sarmiento called "el predominio de la fuerza brutal, la preponderancia del más fuerte, la autoridad sin límites y sin responsabilidad de los que mandan, la justicia administrada sin formas y sin debate."\textsuperscript{10} To some extent Lynch's first novels describe a war between civilization and barbarism. However, Lynch did not welcome without misgivings the "civilizing" influences of the city, which Sarmiento desired so earnestly. Lynch was saddened by the disappearance of the gaucho, and in writing about the Río Plata area, he scorned the agriculture of the region.

\textsuperscript{8}Bonet, p. 146.
\textsuperscript{10}Sarmiento, p. 33.
by completely ignoring it. On the whole, Lynch was of the school in Río Plata letters in which the regional came to signify the true and authentic. This feeling was based on the fact that the cities were imitators of European thought and habits; whereas the more isolated campo had developed a unique culture. Lynch describes his feelings about the changes which had already come to the campo:

Denigrar al progreso por amor a la tradicional y noble sencillez de las viejas costumbres criollas es casi un delito de lesa cultura y de lesa patria; pero bien se puede--al advertir como se van para siempre, con toda la poesía de los antiguos campos--dedicarles la misma mirada melancólica con que contemplamos, tendido en el suelo, al árbol añoso que nos vio nacer, pero cuyo sitio hace falta para construir un garage.

Nicolás Cócaro has noted that the theme of ciudad and campo as revived by such authors as Lynch during the years from 1910 to 1930 differs from its treatment by earlier novelists. Among the original elements added by Lynch is that those who contend with the criollos are usually English. In addition, "uno de los aciertos más originales de Lynch consiste en presentarse como el novelista de los aspectos de la estancia, en lo que esos aspectos reflejan lo sedentario y lo más estable de la vida campeña: el galpón de los peones, la cocina y el puesto."
Valbuena Briones notes another aspect of Lynch's treatment of this theme:

Cabe suponer una tesis doctrinaria en las novelas de Lynch. Civilización y barbarie oponen sus armas personificadas en las figuras de sus narraciones, pero aquí la última consecuencia es la poetización del agro y la manifestación de su hermosura. Es el viejo tema de la ciudad y el campo. El autor pinta la tragedia de la pampa. Lo natural ha de ser cambiado por el infortunio de una visión más económica calculada y exigente. Elogio y admiración de la vida rústica. El gaúcho en su humildad, es un héroe primitivo, pero novelesco. Lo regional es el escenario apropiado para el artista, que puede describirnos la pasión humana y la inclinación vigorosa. En la defensa del paisano, Lynch es un seguidor del santanderino José María Pereda.15

At the top of the society which Lynch re-creates in his writings is the patrón. This figure is no longer the estanciero whom Lynch describes as "dueño, administrador, y habitante de su estancia."16 More often, he is a city man or a foreigner—doctor, lawyer, military official, or businessman—who owns land but rarely visits it, leaving it in the hands of an assistant or capataz. Lynch refuses these men the title estanciero, calling them simply dueños de estancia. In this category is the patrón of Palo verde, who goes to the city for several months and instructs young Sergio to manage the estate for him. He considers the estancia to be merely a business enterprise. To make the most profit, he has abandoned the traditional campo principle of hospitality, embodied in the saying, "En mi estancia no se

15 Valbuena Briones, p. 324.

16 El estanciero, p. 8.
Sergio is forbidden to give travelers overnight lodging or to allow strangers to take shortcuts across the property.

Typical of the classic estanciero is the patrón of the story "Un patrón endeveras." This type, which Lynch calls the "estanciero señor," in contrast to the "estanciero gaacho," feels that the gauchos are his inferiors; in dealing with them, he adopts a policy of noblesse oblige. In "Un patrón endeveras," a gaucho imprisoned for murder is visited by his patrón, who promises to help him. After the estanciero leaves, the gaucho tearfully refers to him, not as his patrón, but as his padre.

The patrón of La antoja de la patrona is quite different. One critic describes him in this way: "Es también hombre de la ciudad, pero endurecido por la vida del campo. Es injusto, arbitrario, incomprensivo de cólera fácil." He believes that gauchos should be treated like animals and is outraged when the patrona wants to serve them cake to celebrate a national holiday. He has grown so insensitive that he refuses to take time to catch a partridge for his pregnant wife, although for months she has wanted no other kind of meat.

When a partridge is finally captured by a pet dog, the patrón

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19 Bonet, p. 152.
carelessly eats the bird by himself, offering his wife a bit only as an afterthought.

Mayor Grümber in Raquela belongs to this same class. His character is reflected in the sign on his gate: "Cierre la puerta con el alambre, ¡animal!"20 Hated by his peones, he is never without his arreador. One gaucho says of him, "Es el mismo 'diablo adrede.' Los piones no le aguantan quince días. Es bruto en la boca y resabiao a castigar a los hombres ..."21 Nevertheless, the gaucho feels that Grümber's odious personality is at least partly compensated by the fact that Grümber has the best livestock and the first windmill of the area: "Al fin y al cabo no creo que el Mayor sea tan malo como dicen. Tendrá sus cosas quizás, pero es un hombre cuidadoso de sus intereses y que sabe trabajar ..."22

Cócaro had this type in mind when he wrote, "Inconfundibles son los rasgos con que Lynch retrata a sus 'patrones'; en casi todos ellos la actitud urbana busca en el ambiente rural, y en sus personajes elementales, donde ejercer una áspera y a veces injustificada prepotencia."23

Even the kindest patrón was by the very nature of his position an exploiter of the gauchos:

20Raquela, p. 21.
21Ibid., p. 23.
22Ibid., p. 25.
23Cócaro, p. 11.
La posición social del estanciero determina una forma autoritaria, opresiva de actuar, aunque no tenga mala entraña y mantiene en la precariedad a los peones y le permite hacerlos sudar de sol a sol. Lo guía el anhelo de enriquecerse y no el de hacer guadahajas o aspirar a la beatificación. Ciertamente ayuda a poblar tierras desiertas e incultas y contribuye a mejorar el nivel de la producción, a modernizar sus formas, de los peones, que deben conchabarse, pues ha pasado la época en que se carneaba un animal sin dueño. El estanciero era energico, valiente, esforzado, progresista en su trabajo, mas no puede dejar de ser explotador. Y éste es un aspecto primordial que refleja Benito Lynch.

This exploitation led to what Zum Felde describes as "una lucha sorda de clases entre los prepotentes hacendados y el proletariado rural." The gauchos endured the treatment of such patrones as Grümben until they could find a way to take vengeance, as when a mulatto who has been beaten by Mayor Grümben sets fire to the range of the patrón.

One type of exploitation is described in the story "El Nene." Nine year old Santina has for two months worked as a servant in the house of the patrón, caring for the new baby of the patrona. Often she wishes the baby were dead so that she might return to play with her friends. The story describes the anguish she suffers when she accidentally drops the baby and mistakenly believes that she has killed him.

24 Salama, p. 55.

25 Alberto Zum Felde, Indice crítico de la literatura hispanoamericana: la narrativa, II (Mexico, 1959), 192.

26 Benito Lynch, Palo verde y el antojo de la patrona (Santiago de Chile, 19--?), pp. 139-48.
A less obvious kind of exploitation is presented in "Pedro Amoy y su perro." Pedro, a simple, loyal gacho, is devoted to a city doctor for having helped him obtain a higher position on the estancia. Through the following animal analogy, Lynch explains that the man from the city had actually acted in his own behalf, with little concern for Pedro. Pedro's dog is attacked by other dogs and tries to hide near a horse. The pursuing dogs accidentally nip the horse's leg, and the horse kicks at them, driving them away. Pedro's simple dog believes that the horse has acted solely to befriend him.

Like Pedro Amoy, the majority of Lynch's gauchos are loyal, honest, hard-working, generous, and capable. Another example of this type is Silverio Mulchen, the faithful capataz of "La evasión." When escaped prisoners carry off young Mabel Dougal, Jaime Frasser dashes out alone to rescue her. Silverio follows and overtakes him only when Jaime's exhausted horse is unable to travel farther. Silverio refuses to lend Jaime his horse, not wanting his patrón to risk the danger of facing the escaped killers alone. Jaime then shoots his capataz and takes the animal by force. Jaime finds Mabel dying, abandoned by the prisoners. Just as the grief-stricken Jaime is about to shoot himself, Silverio arrives to prevent the suicide, for he realizes that his patrón, who normally

27 Lynch, Cuentos camperos, pp. 17-22.
would injure neither gaucho nor horse, is half-insane because of his love for Mabel. Then Jaime rides off toward the sound of the prisoners' shots in a neighboring estate, and Silverio follows him devotedly.

In contrast to the gauchos such as Silverio are the "peones aprovechados, vagos, haranganes, taimados, asesinos,"26 One critic believes that Lynch endows all his countrymen with certain negative characteristics. The gaucho is slow-witted, slow of speech, sly, vindictive, indolent—an easy tool of the more industrious gringo. This critic adds that Lynch frequently seems to use the word gaucho in a pejorative sense, since it is almost always accompanied by a degrading qualifying word—"gaucho trompeta, o animal, o roñoso, o guarango, o cornudo ..."29 This type of gaucho is presented in the story "El Talerazo."30 A man goes to appraise an estate and is almost killed by his gaucho guide, who desires nothing more than the city man's clothes and tie pin.

Santos Telmo in El inglés de los güesos is a second example of the "paisano taimado."31 Continually ignored by La Negra, Santos Telmo finds that he can win her approval by playing tricks on the Englishman. Later, when he suspects

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26Salama, p. 55.
29Bonet, p. 145.
30Lynch, Cuentos camperos, pp. 119-125.
31Bonet, p. 149.
that La Negra is in love with the stranger, he has even stronger motives for tormenting the man. He attempts to destroy Mr. James' archeological discoveries; then he stabs the Englishman.

Torres-Ríoseco has made the following generalization concerning Lynch's gauchos:

Los gauchos de Lynch están como prestigiados de pequeñez y de humildad. No tienen esa aristocracia rural de Don Segundo Sombra ni la exuberancia lírica de Martín Fierro. Pobres de ideas y de palabras, tres o cuatro principios guían sus vidas y con media docena de frases expresan su manera de ser. Cuando se les pregunta algo que no entienden o que no quieren entender contestan con otra pregunta hecha con la última palabra de la frase anterior. Para dar señales de aprobación dirán: "ta güeno" o simplemente "ah, ah." Su criterio simplista de la vida les hace obedecer ciegamente al patrón, sufrir sus injusticias, sus insultos y sus golpes, hasta el día en que, colmada ya la jarra, puedan darle una puñalada a traición. 

Traditionally the gauchos had been a nomadic people. Horses and cattle were plentiful, and about the only effort required to maintain an estancia was the taking of hides of animals that died. The gaucho drifted about from estancia to estancia. As estates became subdivided, owners needed fewer gauchos to operate them. As fences were built and trees and crops were planted, the true gaucho moved farther away. Lynch explains that the gauchos disappeared from the land when fences were built and crops were planted "porque eran simplemente hombres chúcaryos irreductibles a la

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32 Torres-Ríoseco, Grandes novelistas, p. 123.
civilización y por lo tanto destinados a ceder al campo y a desaparecer poco a poco." Those gauchos who remained had to become accustomed to working on foot. Salama quotes the critic David Viñas as saying that the main body of Lynch's work deals with what he calls the "adecuabilidad del gaucho y de la pampa ante lo social," a problem which had to be faced once all the land became occupied.

Confronted with new ideas being brought from the city, the gaucho chose to oppose rather than adopt this new way of life. A gaucho—even an estanciero gaucho—might have explained to him the advantages of certain changes, but he would never see his error. Rather, he would joke at the foolish new ways of the gringos, and his reply would be, "Será muy gueno, pero aquí siempre se ha hecho así, a lo menos." In his desire to improve the campo, the city man was in continual opposition to the gaucho. Lynch writes that the too-insistent progresista was sometimes murdered by his peones.

Los caranchos de la Florida contains some good examples of the gaucho's resistance to change. Panchito returns from abroad with numerous ideas for improving the estancia. He plans to sow alfalfa, rye grass, and mixed grazing grasses.

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34 Salama, p. 291.
35 Lynch, El estanciero, pp. 10-11.
Also, he intends to put up a mill, to construct a system of canalization and drainage, and to build a dairy. The gaucho's reception of these plans is described:

Nadie dice una palabra. Las ideas de reforma del amo nunca producen entusiasmo entre los sometidos. Miran esos proyectos como una amenaza, como algo que puede venir a perjudicarles y a destruir sus costumbres y su tranquilidad.37

Old Sandalio informs Panchito that the drainage canals projected by the government are inventions designed chiefly to take money from the region.

Unfortunately, projects for improving the campo were not all that the city man brought with him. "El hombre formado en la ciudad lleva al campo un hálito de ciudad: conocimientos librescos, herramientas, técnicas, cultura. Y también poltronería, refinamientos y vicios."38 Lynch describes many of the weak city figures who appeared on the campo. One example is Mayor Grüm ben's nephew in Raquela. He is rude and self-centered. The violence of the campo makes him nervous. Inclined toward alcoholism, he beings drinking to calm his fears of the range fire, for in his inexperience with rural life, he does not realize that he is in no danger. Finally his cousin Raquela has to hide his liquor bottle.

37 Benito Lynch, Los caranchos de la Florida (Buenos Aires, 1938), p. 64.
38 Bonet, p. 146.
"Debilitas" criticizes the city man's addiction to tobacco. Two visitors from Buenos Aires are stranded on an estancia because of flooding rains. When they run out of tobacco, they become frantic in their efforts to obtain more. In contrast, the gauchos smoke when tobacco is available but are able to live without it for months with no discomfort. The patrón, formerly from the city, has overcome his dependence upon smoking and is like the gauchos. In desperation, one of the visitors slips away to try to ride to the nearest store. When the city man's horse returns later, the patrón, already exhausted from rescuing some sheep from the flood waters, is forced to ride out into the rain in search of his missing guest.

According to Lynch, neither campo nor ciudad provided an ideal environment. The first offered a violent and brutal way of life; the second exposed man to all the vices and demands of civilized society. The solution to the question of whether to live in the savage country or the demoralizing city seemed to be the following;

Huir de la ciudad hipócrita y encerrarse en la fortaleza de la estancia, pero defendiéndose del asedio del campo que envuelve y envilece: ésa es la fórmula que no remedia pero que permitirá sobrevivir y salvar jirones de la individualidad que se juzga superior; aunque no señale un camino esperanzado, parece el único digno.40

40 Caillet-Bois, p. 27.
One character who adopts this solution is James Frasser of "La evasión." At the age of twenty-five, he comes to the Argentine desert, but not for the usual reasons of money, science, or tourism: "Personifica al hombre civilizado que huye de los centros de civilización para no perder contacto con el riesgo de la existencia elemental y demás incentivos de la vida."\(^\text{41}\) He keeps his past a mystery, and he lives more simply than the other estancieros, without electricity or running water. After two years on the pampa, he is as competent in raising livestock as the oldest gaucho.

Although the city-born patrón might develop a love for the campo, rarely did he want his sons to be influenced by the gaucho traditions. He kept his children out of the kitchens of the peones. Panchito, in Los caranchos, had always resented one embarrassing occasion in which his father had snatched him out of the gaucho kitchen, where he was forbidden "para no aprendiese pillerías."\(^\text{42}\) Why did the patrón fear the influence of the campo? "Porque el campo, el enemigo, aprovechará las flaquezas del hombre de ciudad, y se vengará de su dominio, asimilándolo y haciéndole olvidar su condición."\(^\text{43}\)

\(^{41}\) Luis Emilio Soto, "El cuento," Historia de la literatura argentina, edited by Rafael Alberto Arrieta (Buenos Aires, 1959), IV, 352.

\(^{42}\) Lynch, Los caranchos, p. 124.

\(^{43}\) Caillet-Bois, p. 27.
The sons of the estancieros were greatly affected by the conflict between city and country. Their natural inclinations toward the campo were continually frustrated by their fathers. One such son was Mario, who at times seems to be Lynch himself. Of the many Mario stories, some of the best are collected in De los campos porteños. The first story of the book occurs when Mario is a baby; the last pictures him as a sophisticated city man. While a child, Mario feels the need to imitate the gauchos and to prove that he is as capable as any of them. He displays the typical gaucho affection for animals, as presented in "El potrillo roano." Mario's father firmly opposes his gaucho tendencies with the following result:

En adelante [Mario] será hombre de ciudad. Estudiará. Añorará la pampa. Y llevará como cimiento de su experiencia la frustración del hombre, comprobándola con los años a cada paso, a partir de su genuina vocación trizada.

La experiencia gaucha que posee es parte intransferible de su ser y asoma siempre, de un modo u otro, en su actualidad de hombre culto y de buena sociedad, cortés, amable, galante, excéptico sin amargura, comprensivo, ligeramente irónico, firme en el timón de su conducto privada o, si se prefiere de su corazón. Esta experiencia le da un sello personalísimo de firmeza y seguridad, de conocimiento vital, de maestría en un oficio. Pero también del campo ha extraído su concepto sobre el mundo y la vida: eterna frustración y desengaño; imposibilidad de realizarse en forma plena.

44 Benito Lynch, De los campos porteños (Buenos Aires, 1938), pp. 45-57.
45 Salama, p. 142. 46 Ibid., pp. 143-44.
The stories in *De los campos porteños* are tales of disillusionment and of the special harshness of nature to be found on the *pampa*. In "Un negocio de pieles" Mario encourages his dogs to kill a mountain lion and is led by his father to believe that the hide has been sold and shipped to Spain. The child's pride is wounded months later when he finds stuffed in a corner of a shed the worthless hide—"la cruel evidencia de su primer desengaño."47 In "Travesiando" Mario faces the loss of his gauchito playmate, who is killed in a fall from his horse.48 "Limay" describes Mario's sorrow at the death of his favorite dog, due to the heat and dryness of the *pampa*.49 Similar disillusionment with life in *el campo* occurs in "Los corderos de 'la Fanita.'"50 Young Juanita cannot accept the fact that certain young lambs must be left to die because of the lack of water. Only when she tries to feed them does she realize the impossibility of such a task, and she understands for the first time the cruelty of nature.

In "La Esquiladora" Mario is stunned by the discovery that the lovely young shearer whose hand he bandages and who reminds him of a Greek statue is married to the old man he

47Lynch, *De los campos porteños*, p. 90.
48Ibid., pp. 119-26.
49Ibid., pp. 127-52.
has thought to be her father. 51 "La Chuña" describes a day of particular disappointment and grief for Mario. 52 His proposal of marriage is rejected on the grounds that he is too young, and his potrillo roano is gored to death by a bull. Weeping over his first disillusionment of love and the loss of his first horse, Mario says good-bye forever to his childhood.

Lynch not only reveals the harshness of the pampa region, but he often displays a cynicism about life in general. "Crudelitas" explores the thesis that all men are cruel. 53 "Corajudo el Alférez" questions the motives of leaders who urge sacrifice on the part of others. 54 "Hombres y teros" expresses the belief that animals are kinder than men. 55 "Aquel hijo" is based on the theme that it is not just the hardships of the campo but the very nature of life which makes complete happiness impossible. 56 The main character of the story has come to the campo with his family, penniless but optimistic. Although he now has material

52 Ibid., pp. 189-207.
53 Cuentos camperos, pp. 129-72.
54 Ibid., pp. 25-29.
security and a loving family, he is not happy:

El no está contento, siente como una amargura, como un despecho, como un tremendo torcedor rencoroso, contra su suerte, un rencor que revive y se exacerba precisamente en las circunstancias en que, como ésta, debería estar más contento: Leo, aquel hijo; el mejor de todos, sin duda.57

The grief over the death of his favorite son, at the age of twelve, is so intense that years afterward, just before he is to leave for the wedding of his youngest daughter, he cannot forget his sorrow, and he cries, "Aquel hijo!: ... Aquel hijo!"58

Salama describes Lynch's conception of life as one of human frustration, ruled arbitrarily but permitting a little happiness to lessen the general effect.59 Caillet-Bois also considers Lynch a pessimist, adding that although God is absent from Lynch's world, he still punishes.60 This pessimistic view of life is expressed by one of the figures in Los caranchos de la Florida: "Lo que hay es que para divertirme y estar contento en esta vida es necesario ser o un superficial o un bruto; y como yo nunca seré ni una ni otra cosa, estoy de antemano condenado a una existencia triste y aburrida ..."61

57 Ibid., p. 312.
58 Ibid., p. 320.
59 Salama, pp. 91-92.
60 Caillet-Bois, p. 64.
61 Lynch, Los caranchos, p. 23.
The theme of campo and ciudad has already been discussed in relation to the short stories of Lynch. The remaining chapters will treat this theme as it is found in the five campo novels of the author.
Plata dorada, Lynch's first novel, is generally considered an inferior book and is not widely read today. One friendly critic explains that the defects of Plata dorada can be attributed not to inexperience but to the fact that "Lynch had the touch of a rural novelist." He adds that Lynch's characters came alive when the scene changed from urban to rural, showing Lynch to be better adapted to writing about the country than about the city. Despite this opinion, the first half of Plata dorada, with its description of young Williams' adjustment to city life, contains the only passages of merit in the novel. Generally the book is melodramatic, with too many lengthy preachments. Much of the novel is autobiographical.

The story begins when ten year old Williams Fernández moves from an estancia to Buenos Aires. His father, admiring the British and wishing to "Anglicize" his son, enrolls the

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2 Ibid.
3 Torres-Rioseco, Grandes novelistas, p. 117.
boy in a school in which English is the language of instruction. Williams makes friends and masters English. When he manages to fight the boy who beat him up on his first day of school, Williams begins to feel at home in the city. Later, he learns to box at the home of Edwards Gardener, his first English friend. Meanwhile, Williams' father, trying to make some English-style business transactions, loses most of his money and must sell the family's estancia.

The revolution of July, 1874, occurs, but Williams is too young to understand it. Afterwards, his father returns and settles the problem of Williams' sister La Negra, who wishes to marry John Gardener, brother of Edwards. The father decides that at fourteen La Negra is too young to marry; consequently, he loses forever the opportunity to realize one of his dreams—the marriage of his daughter to an Englishman.

The second part of the novel begins when Williams, now eighteen years old, goes to work as a clerk for an English company. He hates the work and continually argues with his father, who wishes him to adopt the English ways.

At a picnic Williams meets Manuela Sánchez. She has become the ward of an Englishman and has adopted so many English habits that she is said even to laugh in English. To please her, Williams becomes a model English gentleman, imitating English dress and smoking habits and dedicating himself to English sports—especially boxing. He so impresses
Manuela's benefactor Mr. Linck that the Englishman gives him a job. During this time, Williams' father dies of a heart attack.

Williams loses a large sum of money in a card game and also gets into a fight with one of the players, Pancho Somoza, over remarks made about Williams and Manuela. A boxing match is arranged to settle the matter. When Williams wins, Pancho draws a gun. Edwards Gardener defends his friend with the result that Pancho is shot and Williams and Edwards must leave the city. When Williams goes to work on Mr. Linck's country estate, his sister, to escape becoming an old maid, marries Manuela's brother, whom she has always ridiculed.

Manuela loves Williams, but her English training causes her to dislike his demonstrations of affection. She is angry when he kisses her good-bye before leaving for the country, and she writes him that such a thing must never happen again. After a time Manuela, Mr. Linck, and some friends vacation on the estancia. One day Manuela decides to swim down the river to an island. Williams accompanies her. A storm comes up on the island, and the two take shelter in a cabin despite Manuela's protests that she does not want to be alone with Williams out of the sight of the others. In the cabin Manuela's emotions temporarily overcome her English moral standards. When Mr. Linck finally reaches the cabin, Manuela, in embarrassment and horror, dashes outside and
into the river where she is cut to pieces by the propeller of a boat. According to the boatman, she purposely swam into his path. Hours later Williams is further saddened by the news that his mother has died.

The theme of *Plata dorada* is the attempt to blend the best of the British and Latin cultures. The chief proponent of this idea is Williams' father, who so admires the British capacity for accomplishment that he requires Williams to imitate the Englishmen about him. Emulating various British investors, the elder Fernández speculates in real estate and loses both his *estancia* and his savings. He believes that education alone will be the salvation of Argentina, for education can spread the English influence over the country in a single generation. Upset at Williams' obstinate refusal to become an "English" businessman, Fernández, already middle-aged, becomes an insurance agent and attempts to learn English himself. He feels that his lack of success in business is caused not by any personal inadequacy, but by the fact that he is *español*.

Despite his admiration for the British character, Fernández is repelled by certain British traits. During a walk in the park, he and Williams meet Edwards Gardener and his father. Fernández is annoyed that his friendly greeting and attempts at conversation receive only a formal "good-bye" from Mr. Gardener as he leaves. Fernández cannot refrain
from criticizing the English personality. Lynch himself felt this same ambivalence toward the British.  

Williams criticizes his father's dream of fusing the British and Latin cultures:

El pobre ignoraba el poder de la sangre, la imposibilidad de esa transformación que no podrán operar nunca ni el ambiente ni la educación, ni las costumbres impuestas ni aun esa buena voluntad de nuestra raza latina hacia las grandes modificaciones, hacia los grandes progresos y sobre todo hacia aquello que nos viene de afuera y que es exótico.

Williams believes that a man may consider himself "Anglicized" but that in a moment of crisis when the practical English spirit is necessary, his theories will fail him and the characteristics of his own race will manifest themselves.

Williams also thinks that his father has been mistaken in trying to foster the English spirit in his son by allowing him unusual freedoms:

El temperamento de nuestra raza tan entusiasta, tan cálida, y tan opuesta al de los sajones, no podría someterse nunca a la rigidez de un estrecho molde, y si los niños ingleses saben sacar provecho de las libertades que las conceden las costumbres de su tierra, los nuestros, por el contrario, en uso de tan precioso don, sólo sabrían utilizarlo para perderse y aumentar así la triste y larga caravana de la viciosidad precoz.

Of course, Fernández, in his slavish imitation of the foreign, is a caricature; but the British figures are even

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4Nason, p. 43.


6Ibid., p. 121.
more exaggerated. Williams' best friend Edwards is the typical well-organized Englishman. Edwards arrives at work punctually. He plays football, boxes, swims, spends evenings in the casino, and still has time for such projects as canoe building. Miss Bell and her fiancé Mr. Thady, whom Williams meets on Mr. Linck's estancia, are stock figures representing the English coldness or evenness of temperament. Williams is puzzled by the apparent lack of passion between the two. He describes Miss Bell as "uno de esos seres sin sangre, una de esas chicas cloróticas como hierbas que nacen debajo de las piedras."7 Manuela practices this same adherence to propriety in her relationship with Williams, committing suicide in remorse after she has finally been overcome by passion.

Throughout this novel, the campo, in contrast to the city, is shown to have a certain regenerative power. This power is first seen to affect Williams' friend Julio Madero. A lazy rascal in the city, Julio makes a good name for himself when he moves to the campo, and his letters praising country life capture Williams' interest. When Williams goes to Mr. Linck's estancia, he, too, finds relief from the world of commerce.

According to Lynch, neither the British nor the Latin race is ideal. He admires the British self-discipline which results in business success, but he deplores this same

7Ibid., p. 335.
restraint when it is applied to personal relationships. And he praises the warm, emotional nature of the Latins, except when it leads to a lack of discipline in business affairs. Lynch concludes that the best characteristics of each race can never be combined to form the *plata dorada* of the title. Passion will always dominate intellect, and inheritance will overpower education. Manuela and Williams indicate that a Latin can never really adopt the ways of a Saxon. Torres-Ríoseco points out the flaws of Lynch's conclusion:

No se funden la plata y el oro, la plata dorada, pero no nos demuestra el autor sinceramente el problema, sino que procede ciegamente violentando la verdad, para terminar con la muerte de la heroína, muerte absurda, abultado melodrama, y con un crimen inútil del héroe, crimen sin grandeza, arrebato de locura que en todo caso habría sido necesario explicar artísticamente.8

*Plata dorada* is melodramatic and filled with oversimplified problems and solutions. It is in his second novel that Lynch succeeds in giving a realistic picture of the problems caused by the confrontation of rural and city life. This second work, *Los caranchos de la Florida*, brought Lynch a reputation as a writer, and today many still consider it to be his second best novel.

8 Torres-Ríoseco, *Grandes novelistas*, p. 118.
CHAPTER IV

LOS CARANCHOS DE LA FLORIDA

The city man used his knowledge to change the campo. However, the campo did not passively accept the work of the new settler; often it took possession of him, molding and finally conquering him—"lo apaisana, lo agaucha."¹ One writer explains:

El contacto con formas del asentamiento campesino debilita a los hombres que no tienen la virilidad esforzada que requiere tal vida; de ahí las insistentes referencias al agauchamiento y a la ruina de antiguos patronos, tragados por los morbos latentes en el ámbito rudo del campo.²

At times a man might become so much a part of the campo that he would forget his sweetheart or wife and begin living with the simple daughter of some puestero. Bonet has observed that the attraction of these "flores de campo" over men living alone and isolated from their people is so powerful that Lynch has used it to present terrible conflicts of passion, notably in Los caranchos de la Florida, which provides several examples of agauchamiento.³

¹Bonet, p. 145.
²Juan Carlos Ghiano, Testimonio de la novela argentina (Buenos Aires, 1956), p. 121.
³Bonet, p. 146.
Los caranchos, Lynch's first successful novel, has been described as an intense, unadorned, tragic work.4 The caranchos of the title are Don Francisco Suárez Oroño, patrón of "La Florida," and his son Panchito.5 Don Francisco had left the city, obtained land from an old gaucho, and spent thirty years developing an estate. His wife, an Englishwoman, had died, leaving him a son to rear. The novel begins with the return of Panchito after six years of study in Germany. The action takes place in about eight days.

Leaving the estancia on business, Panchito loses his way in a thunderstorm and comes upon the puesto "Los Toros." His father has forbidden him to set foot on the place, supposedly as a punishment for the puestero Sandalio. Nevertheless, Panchito enters the gaucho home long enough to dry his clothes and to meet Sandalio's lovely daughter Marcelina.

Finally Don Francisco sends Cosme to look for Panchito. This gaucho is devoted to his patrón for having him released from jail where he was imprisoned for murder. When Cosme finds Panchito riding aimlessly across the fields, the young man refuses to admit that he is lost, and he begins to hate the sly gaucho.

Don Francisco attempts to hide from Panchito his own interest in Marcelina, and he tries to prevent Marcelina

5Carancho, a word of obscure origin but certainly indigenous to South America, means vulture. Davis, p. 333.
from seeing his son by telling her that Panchito is a man of very bad character. Despite Don Francisco's secrecy, Panchito, while visiting his cousin Eduardito, hears the gossip that his father is living with Sandalio's daughter.

Marcelina and Panchito meet by chance outside the estancia and declare their love for each other. They are seen by Cosme, and Panchito begins to fear that the gaucho may be sent not only to spy upon him but to kill him as well.

Later, Panchito goes to the country school, hoping to see Marcelina. There he learns from the teacher that the gossip about his father and the girl is untrue—although Don Francisco would wish it otherwise.

Panchito and Cosme clash over the gaucho's cruelty to a colt. Only the intervention of Don Francisco prevents a knife fight.

Panchito meets Marcelina on her way to school. She explains that her parents have forbidden her to talk to him, in obedience to their patrón. They have also ridiculed her, saying that Panchito does not love her. Panchito convinces Marcelina of his love for her, but she still fears the anger of the patrón and insists that Panchito wait a while before seeing her again. When Marcelina returns home, her mother suspects that she has seen Panchito and beats her.

Now that they are acknowledged rivals for Marcelina, Panchito and his father refuse to speak to each other. While
working in the corral, the two men quarrel. Don Francisco attempts to punish his son by beating him before the onlooking gauchos, but Panchito draws his revolver. Then, confused, he flees to Eduardito's estate. To keep his son from seeing Marcelina, Don Francisco orders the girl and her mother to move to "La Florida." Before leaving, Marcelina entrusts the idiot Mosca with a letter for Panchito. Don Francisco remains on the puesto after his cart takes Marcelina away. Panchito, drunk, stumbles in and kills his father with a llave inglesa. Cosme then arrives and stabs Panchito. Finally Mosca discovers "los caranchos de la Florida" and lays Marcelina's note on Panchito's body.

In contrast to Plata dorada, Los caranchos is characterized by realism, although it, too, contains elements of melodrama. Torres-Rioseco comments that Lynch in his speedy unraveling of events seems to have falsified the character of Panchito. The brutality which is understandable in the father seems almost unjustified in the son:

Porque, de este muchacho que llega lleno de buenos proyectos, que comprende el espíritu malo e injusto de su padre, que detesta la crueldad, que se enamora como un colegial, uno no esperaría ver salir en unos días al asesino de su propio progenitor.\(^6\)

Yet, this critic concludes that the novel is a clear example of "realismo integral; el sacrificio de la verdad artística

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\(^6\) Torres-Rioseco, Grandes novelistas, p. 123.
As another writer explains, "por la otra verdad." 

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Es en la noche oscura, un final de sangre y de tragedia, pero ni una palabra, ni un procedimiento del novelista hacen desviar al autor hacia el melodrama. Los sucesos y, más que ellas, la naturaleza de los personajes, habían de llevar el argumento a tal desembocadura.
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The Oroño family evidences the influence which the campo could exert on the man reared in the city. After thirty years' absence from Buenos Aires, Don Francisco has been completely conquered by the campo. He is violent, almost a misanthrope, and widely hated. His own son both resents and admires him. Panchito's mixed feelings are summed up in his musing, "Y no puedo olvidar las injusticias ... pero es mi padre ..." When Panchito was a child, his father had gone to great lengths to prevent the boy's learning the earthy gaucho language. Yet, whenever Don Francisco became angry, he provided his son with more examples of vile language than the boy might ever have learned from the gauchos. Once Don Francisco had punished Panchito for saying a word which he himself had inadvertently taught the boy just hours earlier.

Don Francisco shows kindness only to Marcelina. The peones, whom he treats like animals, conceal their real

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7Ibid., p. 125.


9Bonet, p. 146.

feelings toward him because they fear his power. Remembering the beating that one peón received for speaking disrespectfully of Marcelina, young Bibiano is terrified when he accidentally tells Panchito that Marcelina is haughty. Not even Panchito's promise not to mention the matter to the patrón can keep Bibiano from weeping.

It seemed that the city man who adopted the ways of the campo often became worse than the native gaucho. Speaking of the sons of a neighboring patrón—men who had received five years of education in England—a resero says, "Ellos andan pior que piones; andan de alpargatas y con el chiripá roñoso, metiéndose en todas las pulperías y en todos los ranchos." He later comments to another gaucho that poor children go to the city, enter a profession and earn a good reputation; however, the children of the patrones remain in the campo and degenerate. This degeneration can be seen in Don Francisco's son and in his nephew Eduardito.

Panchito's studies in Europe do not refine him. He remains dominated by the education which he received in the kitchen of the estancia, without a mother to soften his heart. He has a passion for guns and speaks of his revolver as the fiel amigo which will never betray him. Like

11 Ibid., p. 127.
12 Ibid., p. 129.
13 Bonet, p. 148.
his father, he is governed by violence and hatred. This temperament causes him to kill his father and results in his own death. Although education cannot free Panchito from the violence of the campo, it does inbue him with the city man's desire for progress. The conflict between Panchito and his father may be considered a part of the larger struggle between the traditional ways of the campo—"el espíritu rutinario" represented by Don Francisco—and the liberalism of the city—the "afán renovador" symbolized by Panchito.14

In Eduardito it is not violence but "la prodigalidad desenfrenada, el vicio, y la holganza" which are displeasing.15 Eduardito has completely adopted the gaucho life, for which action his uncle has forbidden him to set foot on "La Florida." Eduardito's behavior is not unique. Bonet stresses the fact that more than one estanciero gloried in dressing like the paisanos, and in imitating their speech: "Toma 'verdes' y churrasquea como el mejor criollo. Se le contagia el amor al caballo y adquiere destreza en las faenas camperas."16

Like Panchito, Eduardito has been only slightly influenced by his education:

La vida del colegio lo había civilizado algo, pero pocos meses de ambiente campero bastaron para

14Torres-Ríoseco, Grandes novelistas, p. 121.
16Bonet, p. 146.
He has married a gaucho and has become a typical estanciero gaucho. Strangers idle about his home. From these parasites he does not even demand respect, for his motto is "En 'El Cardón' no se mezquina la carne a nadie; no es estancia de gringos." His estate is underdeveloped, revealing the gaucho's resistance to change:

Es una población que se derrumba bajo al peso del abandono y de los años. Hay verdín en los muros blancos, agrietados por la humedad y por los soles, y la maleza brava llega hasta el pie mismo de los grandes árboles del patio. ... Un molino, sin rueda, se hunde, allá bajo, entre la alta maciega, y así, decapitada y escueta, parece su torre el recuerdo melancólico de una civilización que se ha ido.

Don Francisco, Panchito, and Eduardito are three men who were unsuccessful in spreading the city influence over the campo. The country changed them more than they were able to change it. The first two adopted its violence. The third became entirely agauchado, losing all interest in progress. Although it was inevitable that the city would succeed in its struggle to modernize the campo, Los caranchos de la Florida shows that the city's victory did not come without setbacks.

17 Lynch, Los caranchos, p. 11.
16 Ibid., p. 97.
19 Ibid., p. 94.
CHAPTER V

RAQUELA

Class prejudice--between rich and poor, city man and gaucho--is a theme often found in Lynch's writings. The maestra in Los caranchos de la Florida expresses the widespread belief that the city is superior to the campo, which is a place for peasants and those who can do no better: "El campo es bueno, le diré, para los paisanos o para los que, siendo pobres como yo, no tienen más remedio que aguantarse, y van adonde los mandan ... pero para ustedes ... los mozos de ciudad. ..."¹ She is shocked that Panchito retains such campo habits as drinking mate instead of tea. And she feels pessimistic about the "civilization" of the campo, for she considers teaching the gaucho children an almost impossible task. She cannot even hope for regular attendance by her pupils; they must frequently be absent to work on the estancias.

Lynch has used this prejudice on the part of the city man as the theme of his novel Raquela. The narrator of the tale, the successful dramatist Marcelo de Montenegro, leaves

¹Ibid., p. 147.
Buenos Aires to visit in the campo. Curious by nature, he tries to experience every aspect of country life. He even dresses as a gaucho. Only his uña esmaltada indicates his real status.

Riding with the gaucho Domingo to get some livestock from another estancia, Marcelo persuades his companion not to reveal that he is actually a gentleman from the city. The estanciero, Mayor Grümbein, is not prepared to deliver the animals and tells Domingo to return the next day. Thinking Marcelo to be a gaucho, Grümbein asks Domingo to let his friend remain overnight on the estancia, for Grümbein is short-handed. Marcelo chooses to continue in his role as a simple paisano. At this moment Grümbein's daughter Raquela loses control of her horse in the corral. Marcelo reaches her first and rescues her. He introduces himself as Calistro Güeyo, mensual of "La Blanca," an unhappy orphan, and a former prisoner. Grümbein rewards Marcelo for saving his daughter's life.

Later, in the gaucho kitchen, Marcelo challenges Manuel Tejeira, a vain mulatto who is showing a lack of respect for Raquela. Grümbein appears and prevents a fight. Upon learning the cause of the conflict, the patrón beats the mulatto and orders him to leave the estancia. The next day a range fire is seen, probably started by the vengeful Tejeira. Zum Felde considers the mulatto's action to be another incident in the
war between the gauchos and their city-born masters. After much fruitless work to extinguish the fire, Marcelo is sent to the main house for Grümben's tobacco. There he talks to Raquela, with whom he has now fallen in love.

Raquela also loves Marcelo, but having been reared to believe that a gaucho is inferior to her, she is afraid to admit her feelings. As the two talk, a servant brings in a letter addressed to "Señor Marcelo de Montenegro." Marcelo takes it and leaves hurriedly. He pretends not to notice when Raquela runs after him moments later, for he suspects that the maid has revealed his real identity, and he is not yet ready to face Raquela as an equal.

Later, news comes to the firefighters that Raquela has gone to seek her father and cannot be found. The workers leave the fire to look for her. Marcelo, after searching on several puestos, is thrown from his horse. When he regains consciousness some forty hours later, he is in Grümben's house and his first sight is Raquela, who smiles and says to him, "Cuidado ... Montenegro."³

Raquela shows Lynch's abilities as a humorous writer, but one critic notes that "la angustia de la joven ante la doble personalidad del gaucho es tragicómica."⁴ The chief merit of the book is Lynch's vivid description of the range

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²Zum Felde, p. 192.
³Lynch, Raquela, p. 166.
⁴Torres-Rioseco, Grandes novelistas, p. 127.
fire and the firefighting techniques. Gálvez praises another aspect of the novel: "En Raquela Lynch ha logrado 'hacer arte' con el diálogo del campo, ardua empresa en la que fracasaron casi todos nuestros costumbristas."  

The theme of Raquela is the difficulty of overcoming class barriers. Marcelo has been on Grümbrn's estate only a few hours when his sense of social propriety conflicts with his role as the gaucho Calistro Güeyo. When the mulatto teases the loco about marrying Raquela and about kissing her, Marcelo feels that he should defend her honor. And when the mulatto persists in questioning Marcelo about his rescue of Raquela, the city man forgets that as a gaucho he would not be concerned about the honor of the daughter of a patrón. He refuses to answer the questions, criticizes the mulatto for teasing an idiot, and tries to provoke a fight.

Raquela soon falls in love with Marcelo and frequently forgets that he is a gaucho. However, a slight reminder is enough to make her recover her feelings of prejudice. For example, when Marcelo returns to the house for Grümbrn's tobacco, Raquela, fearful of the fire, seizes his arm. Marcelo easily causes her to shrink from him when, enjoying the deception, he comments in the gaucho dialect that the

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5Gálvez, p. 163.
animals "juyen del juego." Moments later Marcelo thanks Raquela with the words gracias reina. She becomes quite angry and insists that he must never again call her reina. Although she is inwardly in love with him, she cannot permit a gaucho roñoso to pay her compliments. Finally Marcelo tells Raquela not to be ashamed of her feelings, for destiny is at fault: "A veces encierra un alma e pion en un cuerpo e rico y a veces pone una gentilhombre dentro de un molde de pion ..." Raquela is unable to overcome her prejudice. Fortunately she is spared further distress by the discovery that Calistro Güeyo is actually the gentleman Marcelo de Montenegro.

It has been suggested that Raquela contains the key to Lynch's indecisive position between la ciudad and el campo. He points out the faults of both. Marcelo is entangled in his own plot and his hypocrisy is castigated. Raquela, torn between love and prejudice, is provided an easy way out, but her pride is censured. Lynch finds his ideal in a combination of city and country qualities: "La triunfante es la síntesis Marcelo Montenegro-Calistro Güeyo donde entran partes iguales de virtudes urbanas y camperas, sustantivas las primeras y accesorias las otras."

6 Lynch, Raquela, p. 132.
7 Ibid., pp. 146-47.
8 Caillet-Bois, p. 30.
In Raquela Lynch does not fully develop the problems of social class and prejudice. Simply by removing the dilemma, he permits Raquela to escape from her predicament. He treats this problem more realistically in his fourth novel, *El inglés de los güesos*, which explores in detail the great social differences between campo and ciudad.
CHAPTER VI

EL INGLÉS DE LOS GUESOS

Of all Lynch's works, *El inglés de los güesos* contains the sharpest contrasts of *ciudad* and *campo*. This was Lynch's favorite novel and is considered his masterpiece. Bonet calls Balbina the author's best creation and adds the following: "La pintura de la pasión de Balbina hacia el extraño forastero, pasión que empezó como muchas, en la indiferencia y en el odio, constituye uno de los más finos y certeros análisis psicológicos de nuestra novelística."¹

The novel begins with the arrival of the archeologist Mr. James Grey at the *puesto* "La Estaca," where he is to live while making excavations of Indian bones. The *puesteros*, Juan and Casiana, and their young son Bartolo soon grow to like their strange visitor. But their daughter Balbina, nicknamed La Negra, delights in the tricks which Santos Telmo, son of neighboring *puesteros*, plays on the Englishman. Santos Telmo persuades the girl to serve Mr. James a *mate* in which the *bombilla* has been heated. For causing Mr. James a painful burn on his lip, Balbina is severely punished. She begins to

¹Bonet, p. 150.
hate "el inglés" and turns for comfort to Santos Telmo, whom she previously has treated only with contempt.

One day Balbina develops an earache. Being unusually sensitive to pain, she cries and insists that the suffering will kill her. By curing the earache, Mr. James wins her friendship.

Santos Telmo listens to the gossiping puesteros and concludes that Mr. James is in love with La Negra. He harasses the Englishman and finally knifes him in the shoulder. As Mr. James recovers, he actually does fall in love with La Negra. She has insisted on being the only person to care for him, and she now loves him as violently as she had once hated him. She becomes interested in England and even attempts to learn English.

Unexpectedly, Mr. James receives a message ordering him to return to England. La Negra becomes so hysterical at the news that her mother begs Mr. James to calm the girl, at least temporarily, by promising not to leave. Although Mr. James loves La Negra, he cannot give up his studies and discard the plan which he had made for his life years earlier. Neither will he lie to La Negra. Finally the médica is called. She miraculously succeeds in quieting the screaming girl.

Actually, the old woman has told La Negra of a secret charm that will force Mr. James to remain in Argentina. The
girl trusts it so completely that Mr. James is rather disturbed by her sudden lack of concern over his departure. Shortly before he is to leave, La Negra performs the secret ritual, which consists of burying a toad and burning strands of her own and Mr. James' hair. She continues to rely upon the efficacy of the charm until the carriage taking Mr. James to the city is completely out of sight. Then she realizes the truth. After dark she hangs herself with a lazo which the Englishman had braided for her.

Lynch has been quoted as saying that he got the idea for El inglés from reading the accounts of European travelers in America, particularly those of Darwin and Humboldt. Eunice Joiner Gates has made several comparisons between Darwin and Mr. James. "El inglés de los güesos" comes to the campo to search for bones of ancient Indians. The puesteros cannot understand his interest in these things. Darwin's archeological research was generally limited to unearthing bones of prehistoric animals, but he did explore an Indian grave in Patagonia. He noted the curiosity of the natives concerning his work, as well as their interest in his simple scientific instruments. This interest is displayed by La Negra when she secretly examines Mr. James' binoculars and the
other items in his trunk. Darwin attempted all the activities of the gaucho; likewise, Mr. James learns to braid a lazo and expresses an interest in all phases of campo life. The determination of Mr. James to complete his studies, despite his personal inclinations, and his great respect for knowledge find a parallel in this statement which Miss Gates quotes from Darwin's Journal:

And it appears to me, the doing what little one can to increase the general stock of knowledge, is as respectable an object of life, as one can in any likelihood pursue. . . . What fine opportunities for geology and for studying the infinite host of living beings:--is not this a prospect to keep up the most flagging spirit? If I was to throw it away, I don't think I should ever rest quiet in my grave; I certainly should be a ghost & haunt the British Museum.4

Mr. James, the stock English scientist, first appears as a comical stranger to the campo:

Apareció de repente, allá por el bajo de la laguna, jinete en el petiso de los mandados de "La Estancia," más cargado de bártulos que el imperial de una diligencia y desplegando al tope de su alta silueta, nitidamente recortada sobre el fondo gris de la tarde lluviosa, un gran paraguas rojo . . .5

Mr. James displays the reserve and apparent lack of emotion which Lynch attributes to the Englishmen in Plata dorada. For example, in one scene La Negra struggles violently with her parents over her refusal to offer the hated stranger some of the tortas fritas which she has just prepared. After

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5Benito Lynch, El inglés de los güesos (Buenos Aires, 1937), p. 9.
the hysterical girl is forced to leave the room, Mr. James brushes aside the apologies of her parents and calmly helps himself to a couple of tortas fritas. After he falls in love with La Negra, Mr. James does nothing more to express his emotion than kiss her hands. His life is governed chiefly by reason. Dreaming of a professorship at the university, he has decided to lay aside love in favor of his studies until he reaches his fifties, at which time he has planned to marry some respectable woman. All his actions are governed by what Bonet calls an "imperativo kantiano del deber." Lynch describes this motivation in the following passage:

El inglés de los güesos, "hombre de marcha" de la Humanidad, por nacimiento, por educación y por costumbre, tenía como un compromiso moral contraído consigo mismo, y por razón de quién sabe qué arrepentimientos ancestrales de caminar, de caminar siempre, recta y pausada y metódicamente, para cubrir en la vida la mayor distancia que le fuera posible sobre un largo camino de progreso de antemaño elegido y jaloneado por el cálculo ...

Torres-Ríoseco suggests that the caricature of Mr. James is probably intentional. Lynch prefers to make the Englishman the symbol of "una ideología y de un temperamento de raza," even at the expense of his losing force as an individual character.

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6 Bonet, p. 150.
7 El inglés, p. 192.
8 Torres-Ríoseco, Grandes novelistas, p. 140.
Just as Mr. James is a somewhat caricatured Englishman, Balbina is an idealized country girl. She remains wholly uncontaminated by the savagery of her surroundings. Her superstitious belief that the performance of a ritual involving a toad and several strands of hair can prevent the Englishman from leaving contrasts sharply with the scientific reasoning of Mr. James. Mr. James represents the highest in culture and the best in discipline. He achieves his goals through sacrifice, and his reason is always in control of his instincts and passions. In contrast, Balbina thinks that life is entirely for pleasure; she indulges every whim. She finds intolerable the merest suggestion of either physical or spiritual suffering. Torres-Ríoseco calls her "hija de una raza que no calcula ni mide, sino que se da enterá en sus pasiones."

One incident which contrasts the two characters involves the letter of Santos Telmo in which he asks La Negra when he can carry her away on his horse. She considers the note to be a great joke, but "el inglés," who has read the letter to her, is shocked. He thinks her reaction quite unladylike and persuades her to tear up the letter because "dice mocho feo, mocho porquerío."

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9 Bonet, p. 146
10 García, p. 147.
11 Torres-Ríoseco, Grandes novelistas, p. 138.
12 Lynch, El inglés, p. 105.
La Negra and Mr. James are unable to solve their problem satisfactorily. In reality, it would be impossible to imagine Mr. James living contentedly on a puesto after having given up his dreams of a chair at Cambridge. Certainly La Negra would be miserable in England. Only an unhappy outcome is possible. La Negra, responding only to love, kills herself when the Englishman leaves. Although Mr. James is not so emotional as La Negra, he is profoundly changed by his experience in Argentina. He can never abandon his goals, but he does undergo a struggle of heart and mind. One afternoon, for example, he sees an insect which has been eaten by ants so that it is only a hollow shell. This he fancies as a symbol of his life without the love of La Negra. Perhaps he will never again be so contented as he was before he came to the puesto. Bonet comments, "Esa vez el sabio no comprendió. Y es que el corazón humano tiene secretos que la ciencia no comprende." Concerning the incident in which La Negra's brother intrudes upon Mr. James, who is packing his trunks for his departure, Torres-Ríoseco explains, "Y cuando Bartolo sorprende al inglés llorando, nos parece asistir al triunfo de la raza emotivo y sentimental sobre la raza calculadora y fría."14

13 Bonet, p. 150.

14 Torres-Ríoseco, Grandes novelistas, p. 143.
Similarly, Caillet-Bois sees the novel as a defense of "la vida del instinto," conquered by social forces which control it and use it as a means to achieve progress. Mr. James is tied to an order of life in which affection or feelings are secondary, and he remains true to this world with no hesitation. Lynch warns that Mr. James will suffer for having disobeyed the mandate of instinct.¹⁵

_El inglés de los güesos_ shows that in the confrontation of _la ciudad_ and _el campo_, the optimistic solutions are not easily achieved, for the attitude of Mr. James, "hombre de Marcha," is "diametralmente opuesta" to that of the _paisano_.¹⁶ Great adjustments are necessary before the two ways of life may be reconciled.

¹⁵Caillet-Bois, p. 40.

¹⁶Ghiano, p. 59.
CHAPTER VII

EL ROMANCE DE UN GAUCHO

In the first part of the nineteenth century, the word gaucho became a title of praise, for the Argentine plainsmen fought bravely in their country's struggle for independence. With the end of the pampa wars and the arrival of railroads and barbed wire fences, the gaucho was forced to earn a living as a cowhand on the estancias. Unemployment drove many of these men to crime and drink. Once more the gaucho became a despised figure.¹

The limitation of the once boundless pampa is seen by David Viñas as a historic moment. As quoted by Salama, he points out that Lynch's work contains clear testimony of the effect of this event on the gaucho:

El límite ha impuesto su poder y sus correlaciones necesarias y naturales; la instalación definitiva de un cuerpo social sedentario, la aparición de las relaciones humanas, la reciprocidad, lo gregario, la responsabilidad del acto, la importancia acordada a la mujer y al prestigio materno, la jerarquía social con sus estamentos y poderes y resenimientos contenidos, la autoridad, el sometimiento, la propiedad y la presencia de la ciudad con sus valores urbanos hasta entonces desconocidos.²

²Salama, p. 293.
Lynch viewed with sadness the disappearance of the traditional gaucho and the emergence of the gaucho sedentario.\(^3\) His last novel, *El romance de un gaucho*, is said to show, more than any other of his writings, the sincerity of his feeling for the old plainsmen.\(^4\) The origin of *El romance* is the novelette *Palo verde*.\(^5\)

In this tale Sergio Aguilera, the hard-working *capataz* of "La Colorada," is left in charge of the *estancia* when his *patrón* returns to the city. Sergio lacks the aggressiveness to carry out the commands of the *patrón*. He is afraid to refuse travelers permission to cross the fences of the estate. He has acquired the nickname "*palo verde*" because "era simplemente que el corazón y los sentidos del hombre no suelen encenderse al calor de las pasiones si no a una edad más avanzada."\(^6\)

One day a woman and a child approach Sergio. The woman, Paula Aristache de Bragao, is fleeing from a man characterized in the narrative as a *mal hombre*. Although his *patrón* has ordered him to refuse lodging to strangers, Sergio gives the two shelter. He begins to feel self-confidence for the first time in his life. When Paula goes to the Orona estate

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\(^3\)Ibid., p. 292.

\(^4\)Torres-Ríoseco, *The Epic of Latin American Literature*, p. 163.

\(^5\)Bonet, p. 154.

\(^6\)Lynch, *Palo verde*, p. 16.
to seek work, Sergio ceases to be the usually efficient capataz in whom the patrón has prided himself; he spends his time daydreaming of Paula.

Some time later, Sergio, working near the Orona estancia, sees Paula and learns that she is planning to leave the estate. She fears a certain man, "Grano malo," who has been annoying her. She asks Sergio for work, knowing that he needs a cook, but he is afraid to hire her without the permission of the patrón. Paula then decides to seek work at "La Pampa."

Sergio learns that "Grano malo" is going to "La Pampa" to look for Paula. When the gaucho tries to pass through "La Colorada," Sergio loses all of his timidity and meets him with a show of fierceness. To avoid trouble, "Grano malo" decides to by-pass the estancia, but before he can leave, Sergio stabs him.

The police soon arrest Sergio. His patrón attempts to help by insisting that "Grano Malo" has been killed in an attempt to trespass on the estate. But Sergio admits that his desire to protect Paula was the sole reason for the murder: "Yo no sé mentir."

Palo verde may be considered an image of the future--of the day when all the smoldering resentment of the oppressed

7 Ibid., p. 83.
peones will burst into flame. This same theme of a meek, obedient gaucho who experiences a complete change of personality because of the influence of a woman appears again in El romance de un gaucho. As in the case of Sergio, Pantaleón Reyes, the main character of El romance, represents more than an individual gaucho: "La novela retrata la transformación del campo argentino y la crisis del gaucho, moralmente incapaz de absorber esa transformación. Pantaleón es un símbolo."

Pantaleón, the young gaucho, falls in love with Doña Julia, who has recently moved to a neighboring estancia. Although she is married, Pantaleón finds nothing wrong in his love for her; he is content merely to help her in any way possible. However, his mother, Doña Cruz, feels otherwise. Having forced Pantaleón to confess that he loves a married woman, she forbids him to visit Julia again. In addition, she begs one of her peones, Ferrayra, to help Pantaleón forget Julia. As a result, Pantaleón begins to drink and to gamble for the first time in his life. In one all-night card game, he loses a large sum of money to Julia’s husband Pedro. Afraid to face his mother, Pantaleón goes to live with Pedro and Julia. As soon as Doña Cruz learns what has happened, she sends a newly-hired gaucho to spy upon Julia and Pantaleón, for she knows that Pedro devotes more time to

Salama, p. 302.
gambling at other estancias than he does to staying with his wife. Pantaleón believes that Julia is attracted to the gaucho, who pretends to be a traveler seeking lodging. In jealousy Pantaleón leaves to pionar at the Rozales estate.

There Pantaleón is persuaded to steal some of his mother's livestock in order to repay his gambling debt to Pedro. But after he has divided the profits with his accomplices, his share is quite small.

Meanwhile Doña Cruz has learned the amount of her son's debt. She asks Pantaleón's godfather Don Pacomio to help her sell some livestock, believing that if she pays the debt to Pedro, her son will return home.

Doña Cruz becomes ill, and Julia is the only person who can be found to care for her. When the older woman recovers and learns the identity of her nurse, she is grateful to Julia. Nevertheless, she is unwilling to renew their friendship; she blames Julia for Pantaleón's behavior.

Life with the Rozales brothers is unpleasant for Pantaleón, and he leaves their estancia. Doña Julia persuades him to return to his mother, but he soon tires of helping Doña Cruz manage the estate. One day, in complete disobedience to his mother, Pantaleón calls on Julia. He returns by way of the pulpería and comes home drunk. Doña Cruz, having sent a gaucho to follow him, ties Pantaleón to his bed after he falls asleep. Then she carries out her threat to beat him for seeing Julia.
The next morning Pantaleón, enraged, is preparing to leave home when he is summoned to the estate of Venero Aguirre. This patrón wishes to help Doña Cruz and has decided to employ Pantaleón in order to make him abandon his reckless way of living. On the Aguirre estate Pantaleón meets a gaucho who is leaving for a distant region and decides to accompany him.

Months later Doña Julia's husband dies of a liver ailment. Doña Cruz pities the girl, and the two are reconciled. Finally they learn of Pantaleón's whereabouts from a traveler. Pantaleón has become known for his excessive drinking, gambling, and fighting. The two women send a peon to fetch him. Hearing that Doña Julia is free to marry him, Pantaleón leaves at once, riding at top speed and refusing to rest until he has reached home. When his horse can go no farther, he stabs it to death in anger and continues his journey on foot. Shortly afterward, he sees what appears to be his horse charging toward him, blood pouring from the dagger wounds in its side. Pantaleón is later found dead on the prairie. Lynch prefers to explain neither the presence of the bloody horse nor the cause of Pantaleón's death.

El romance de un gaucho has been called Lynch's most ambitious novel. Torres-Ríoseco agrees with this opinion: "A pesar de lo popular de ambiente y tipos, el autor ha

10 Anderson Imbert, Spanish-American Literature, p. 312.
logrado darles tal dignidad y lo ha hecho de una manera tal ejemplar que El romance de un gaucho bien pudiera ser considerada como la novela clásica argentina.\(^{11}\)

The language of El romance is unlike that of Lynch's other novels:

The vernacular dialect in which The Romance of a Gaucho is related is somewhat genuine and yet it has esthetic dignity. The author, in a transport of sympathy and imagination, makes himself a gaucho and tells a story in his voice and in his dialect.\(^{12}\)

One critic comments:

Lo audaz del experimento es que el novelista se arriesgó a no ser entendido por sus lectores no argentinos o mejor dicho, por los no versados en achaques gauchescos. Sin embargo, Lynch sacrificó el número de sus lectores por intensificar el realismo de su novela.\(^{13}\)

It is in this novel that Lynch displays the greatest interest in the psychology of his characters. He analyzes the characters of the main figures in extreme detail. In explaining the difference between El romance and Lynch's earlier novels, such as Los caranchos de la Florida, Torres-Ríoseco says, "Se conoce que Lynch ha leído mucha novela proustiana desde entonces porque, guardando lo primitivo de su escenario y de sus hombres, echa mano, al descrebirlos,

\(^{11}\) Torres-Ríoseco, Grandes novelistas, p. 161.

\(^{12}\) Anderson Imbert, Spanish-American Literature, p. 312.

\(^{13}\) Angel Flores, editor, Historia y antología del cuento y la novela en Hispanoamérica (New York, 1959), pp. 374-75.
del método detallista psicológico."\textsuperscript{14} As a result, \textit{El romance} contains "una atmósfera de estatismo, quietud y deliberada tardanza que no atrae la colaboración viva y entusiasta del lector."\textsuperscript{15} This slowness in the novel has been defended as being born of the nature of the people and their lives.\textsuperscript{16}

One critic observes that Lynch, in \textit{El romance}, looks back into the past and tries to re-create the gauchos that he knew as a child.\textsuperscript{17} But even in the scene captured by Lynch, changes were occurring that would eventually destroy the gaucho. Pantaleón is quite unlike the traditional gaucho. On his estancia he spends as much time at trabajos tamberos as he does at los de campo: "Se arregló el corral de las ovejas, que estaba hecho una ruina, estiró toditos los alambres del potrero e la alfalfa, levantó y acomodó la tranquera ... y hasta arregló aquella chapa e cinc del techo el galpón."\textsuperscript{18} Doña Cruz notices the difference between her son and the gauchos of past generations. When Pantaleón hesitates to go after some lost sheep because he thinks that the weather is too cold, his mother exclaims:

\textsuperscript{14}Torres-Ríoseco, \textit{Grandes novelistas}, p. 162.
\textsuperscript{15}González, p. 185.
\textsuperscript{16}García, p. 151.
\textsuperscript{17}Torres-Ríoseco, \textit{The Epic of Latin American Literature}, p. 161.
\textsuperscript{18}\textit{El romance de un gaucho} (Buenos Aires, 1933), p. 356.
¡Con el hombre gaucho, con los gauchos de ahura! ... ¡Ah, ah! ... Sabía contar to agüelo--el padre e mi padre--que en sus mocedades, los hombres salían al campo a la recogida, tiempo invierno, sin poncho y el canzoncillo arremangao hasta la rodilla ... 19

The gauchos were dissatisfied with the fenced-in estancias and tended to roam about continually in search of a better life. One such restless gaucho is Ferrayra, peon callado y serio, whom Doña Cruz asks to divert Pantaleón's attention from Julia. During Pantaleón's disastrous card session with Julia's husband, Ferrayra manages to win a rather large sum of money, and he refuses to lend any of it to his companion. When morning arrives, Ferrayra, who has worked for Doña Cruz for two years, deserts Pantaleón and rides off to his own region. Pantaleón, too, exhibits this restlessness--working for the Rozales, returning to his home, then wandering away to an estate in Bolívar. Likewise, Sergio in Palo verde tires of his job as capataz of "La Colorada" and upsets his patron by asking to leave.

At the time in which El romance is set, the influence of the city is already widespread, although the gauchos still look upon all innovations with suspicion. Doña Julia and her husband are distrusted by their neighbors simply because they come from the city. Viñas, as quoted by Salama, considers the relationship between Pantaleón and Julia to be another example of the gaucho's inability to

19 Ibid., p. 415.
deal with the problems of the community: "el interés psicológico está significado por el fracaso, el fracaso amoroso del habitante del campo ante el recién llegado de la ciudad, marcando la adecuabilidad, pero también la adecuabilidad frustrada." Pantaleón's experience with formal education is another instance of his failure to adjust to the changes being brought from the city. He will not attend school because he thinks the maestro is a gringo fiero. It is obvious that the campesinos are not ready to accept such agents of society as the police. On one occasion Pantaleón refuses to lend money to the gaucho "el Toruno." The two fight, and when Pantaleón weakens, one of the Rozales brothers helps him. Although "el Toruno" is rather severely wounded, he and the Rozales brothers quickly forget their animosity in their common goal of keeping all news of the incident from the police. Doña Cruz also shows her distrust of the police when Don Veniro suggests that she ask them to find her missing son.

In contrast to most of the gauchos, Don Veniro Aguirre is one paisano who has eagerly accepted the ideas from the city. His estate "El Mirador" is the most beautiful one in the area. Pantaleón is amazed by its white buildings and colorful roofs, by the trees and gardens, and most of all, by the windmill. Don Veniro has one serious fault:

Salama, p. 293.
Parece que el hombre, aunque medio juerte a genio era güeño con los piones y que el defecto más principal que todos le hallaban, era aquel desajerar contino que tenía pa el paisano, pa la gente criolla; como si él mismo no lo hubiera sido, como su habla y su apelativo lo estaban cantando clarito, dende media legua ...  

Don Veniro openly shows his contempt for the unprogressive paisano: "¿De ande se les va a ocurrir poner molinos, ni cavar misisurjentes, a esta punta de animales? ... ¡Han de morirse tirando agua con manga e cuero, como los padres y los agüelos! ..."  

Because of this attitude, Don Veniro has hired only two or three criollos; for his workers, he prefers el gringo, el vasco, and el gallego. One of these criollos is the capataz. This man distrusts the foreign workers with their strange customs and languages. The capataz explains to Pantaleón that the foreigners may be satisfactory for "trabajo a pie," but for working "en un corral u rodeo delante e gente de ajuera," the native criollo is best.  

El romance describes many kinds of gauchos. Pantaleón first appears as a timid youth whose only fault, according to his mother, is that he spends too much time at home. By the end of the book, he has so changed that he can be described as "violento, cruel, arbitrario, degenerado ya."  

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21 Lynch, El romance, p. 384.  
22 Ibid., p. 458.  
23 Ibid., p. 452.  
24 Torres-Ríojaseco, Grandes novelistas, p. 162.
The gauchito taimado of the novel is Pantaleón's padrino, Don Pacomio. Caillet-Bois observes that the chief fault of this old man is not misería, but ruindad and avaricia. Don Pacomio frequently criticizes Doña Cruz for spoiling her son, reminding her of his many requests to have Pantaleón live with him in order that the boy might grow up under a man's influence. It is obvious that the old man has little concern for Pantaleón; he merely resents the loss of a free worker. Don Pacomio is so greedy that he even cheats Doña Cruz when she begs him to sell her sheep and pay Pantaleón's gambling debt. No one is really sad when Don Pacomio is found alone in his cabin—dead.

The Rozales brothers, like Eduardito in *Los caranchos de la Florida*, belong to the class of agauchados. They are known for squandering on cards, drink, and women the inheritance left them by their father. The only vice of which a Rozales can not be accused is miserliness. Their behavior disturbs even Pantaleón. When one of the Rozales brothers begins to jest in his drunken state with one of his Negro peones, Pantaleón thinks to himself that although it is good not to be proud and haughty with the poor, "tampoco está bien que los patrones den tanto lazo, si quieren que los respeten los que han de servirlos en el trabajo."  

El *El romance de un gaucho* is a fitting culmination for Lynch's career. Not only does he display fully in this novel his psychological insights, but he also reveals the outcome of the struggle between *campo* and *ciudad*, if as Magis suggests, Pantaleón's fate is intended to symbolize that of the whole gaucho class. For like Pantaleón the gauchos were to degenerate and finally disappear from the *pampa*, leaving the countryside to the *progresistas* from the city and to the *paisanos* who could convert to the ways of a technological age.
CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

In exploring the theme of ciudad and campo, Lynch sometimes pictures the two ways of life as being the life of reason and the life of instinct. In Plata dorada the life of reason is represented by the Englishmen such as Edwards Gardener and Mr. Linck. The criollos Williams and Manuela are governed by instinct or emotion. In El inglés de los gúesos Mr. James is the embodiment of reason; the opposite way of life is represented by La Negra. A similar contrast occurs in "El bagual" between the city man and the gaucho. The visitor from the city cannot understand the campo way of life in which there appears to be no restraints of any kind.

Lynch views the meeting of these two opposites with pessimism. He seems to believe that reason and understanding are too easily overcome by violence. Manuela in Plata dorada tries to put all emotion out of her life, but her efforts are unsuccessful and she finally commits suicide. Panchito in Los caranchos de la Florida returns from five years of study in Germany with the intention of spreading "civilization" over the campo. Within a few days he has been overcome
by hatred and violence to the extent that he tries to engage
the gaucho Cosme in a knife fight. By the end of a week he
has even killed his own father. *Palo verde* and *El romance
de un gaucho* are tales of boys whose entrance into adulthood
is marked by violence. Sergio's first independent act is
the murder of "Grano malo." When Pantaleón finally leaves
his mother's home, he devotes himself to a life of drinking,
gambling, and fighting. *Raquela* in Lynch's only novel in
which *ciudad* and *campo* meet without tragedy. And in this
book the happy ending is possible only because of a con-
trivance of plot by which the gaucho actually happens to be
a rich author from Buenos Aires.

Lynch's ambivalence in writing of the encounter of
*ciudad* and *campo* have been noted briefly. He admires cer-
tain results of a life guided by reason. He praises Edwards
Gardener in *Plata dorada* for his ability to succeed in
business. He shows admiration for the projects of Panchito
to improve "La Florida." Certainly Mr. James commands
respect for his dedication to increasing the world's store
of knowledge. Lynch displays sympathy for the city man in
"El bagual" who is repulsed by the apparent cruelty and
insensitivity of the gauchos. Nevertheless, at times Lynch
finds the traits of the city characters unbearable. The
deceit of Marcelo de Montenegro is to be criticized. Lynch
also condemns the apparent lack of emotion in the Englishmen
in \textit{Plata dorada} and in Mr. James. The archeologist's decision to return to England, although inevitable, is a wholly unsatisfactory one both for himself and for La Negra. In stories such as "Debilitas" Lynch points out weaknesses in the characters of men reared in the city.

Likewise, Lynch displays conflicting views concerning the gaucho. Men such as Cosme in \textit{Los caranchos}, the mulatto in \textit{Raquela} and the Rozales brothers in \textit{El romance} contribute to the view that the gaucho is a barbarian. Pantaleón, Sergio, and Santos Telmo of \textit{El inglés} are others who are guided by violence. However, Lynch usually treats the gauchos and criollos with understanding. Despite his failures, Williams Fernández demands more sympathy from the reader than do the successful English businessmen of the novel. Both Mr. James and La Negra suffer in \textit{El inglés}, but Lynch seems to have more pity for the gaucha than for the scholar. Although Pantaleón and Panchito exhibit all the violence of a \textit{gaucho taimado y asesino}, Lynch does not entirely condemn them. Rather, he seems to blame the conditions which are responsible for their behavior. Lynch realizes that schools, a system of laws, and better techniques of agriculture are of benefit to the campo. Nevertheless, he regrets the changes that such progress entails—changes which must result in the disappearance of the gaucho and of campo life as he had known it. The civilization of the campo, according to Lynch is inevitable and necessary but none the less cruel.
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