CYCLING THROUGH THE PAMPAS: FICTIONALIZED ACCOUNTS OF JEWISH AGRICULTURAL COLONIZATION IN ARGENTINA AND BRAZIL

A Dissertation

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by

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Abstract

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My comparative study focuses on the negotiation of national, regional, religious, and ethnic identity in the works of four Latin American Jewish authors: Argentines Alberto Gerchunoff and Rebeca Mactas, and Brazilians Frida Alexandr and Adão Voloch. Each author uses collections of independent but interrelated short stories, or short story cycles, to fictionalize his/her experiences as a child growing up in Jewish agricultural colonies in Latin America in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. I reevaluate the literary legacy of Gerchunoff, the father of Jewish Latin American literature, by showing how his canonical Los gauchos judíos (1910; translated as The Jewish Gauchos of the Pampas, 1955) offered a structural and thematic template for works by Mactas, Alexandr, and Voloch.
This work is dedicated to my parents, Kenneth and Carolyn Hussar, who were my first—and best—teachers. It is also dedicated to my wife, Beatriz, and my sons, Gabriel and Camilo, for their love and support.
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INTRODUCTION

Argentine author Jorge Luis Borges (1899-1986) once wrote that countryman and contemporary Alberto Gerchunoff (1884-1950), generally regarded as the father of Jewish Latin American literature, was "uno de los pocos lectores de Cervantes" 'one of Cervantes's few true readers' ("Borges conversa sobre Gerchunoff" 15). In other words, Borges counts Gerchunoff as one of the few readers who fully grasped the significance of Cervantes's work.

One might argue that Gerchunoff, like his literary hero Cervantes, has had few true readers, especially when it comes to his canonical Los gauchos judíos (1910; second edition 1936; translated as The Jewish Gauchos of the Pampas, 1955). On one hand the book, the first to tell the story of Jewish agricultural colonization in the Argentine pampas during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, has been rightly recognized for its role in establishing the Jewish presence in Latin America: in the words of Argentine author Bernardo Verbitsky (1907-1979), Los gauchos judíos earned Argentine Jews their citizenship papers (86). On the other hand, many critics have unfairly characterized Los gauchos judíos as an apology for the official crisol de razas, or "melting pot," ideology of the 1910 Argentine Centennial, the event for which the text was commissioned.

The argument that Los gauchos judíos was a capitulatory work derives in large part from the idealistic manner in which Gerchunoff portrays the immigrant experience.
In the twenty-four semiautobiographical vignettes that comprise the 1910 edition of the text (two stories were added in 1936), Gerchunoff fondly recalls the four years (1891-1895) that he spent as a child in Moisés Ville and Rajil, two farming colonies in the Entre Ríos province of Argentina that were financed by German philanthropist Baron Maurice de Hirsch (1831-1896) through his Jewish Colonization Association (JCA). Founded in 1891, the JCA facilitated the relocation of thousands of Ashkenazi Jews—many of whom, like the Gerchunoffs, were fleeing the pogroms of Czarist Russia—to isolated farming communities in the Latin American pampas. Although most of the immigrants arrived to Argentina with no agricultural training, Los gauchos judíos describes their adjustment not only to farming, but also to a new language and culture, as surprisingly smooth.

While Los gauchos judíos quickly established Gerchunoff as one of the most important Argentine writers of his generation, the author's rhapsodic renderings of life in the agricultural colonies did not go unchallenged by his contemporaries. In a 1910 letter, for example, Argentine author Roberto J. Payró (1867-1928) asks Gerchunoff, "[...] dónde está el descontento de Rajil? ¿Dónde el que se volvió al comercio, hastiado de la tierra fecunda?" 'Where is the discontent in Rajil? What about those who, sick and tired of the fertile fields, went back to commerce?' (241-42). Despite his criticism of Los gauchos judíos' rosiness, however, Payró lavishes Gerchunoff with praise, using such superlatives as "hermoso" 'beautiful' and "nobilísimo" 'very noble' to describe his friend's book.

Later critics were not so kind. In the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, a generation of Jewish intellectuals, dubbed "parricides" by critic Edna Aizenberg, accused Gerchunoff
of sugarcoating the immigrant experience and promoting melting-potism in order to secure his position among the Argentine elite. For example, David Viñas writes, "[...] para sobrevivir en La Nación y para ser tolerado [Gerchunoff] exalta 'el crisol de razas' de la oligarquía en el mismo momento en que las bandas blancas balearon judíos y obreros en Plaza Lavalle" [...] in order to survive at La Nación [the Buenos Aires newspaper where Gerchunoff worked] and to be tolerated, [Gerchunoff] praised the oligarchy's crisol de razas ideology at a time when Jews and workers were being shot in the Plaza Lavalle' (44). Here Viñas attacks Gerchunoff's character by claiming that the latter not only supported melting-potism, but also turned a blind eye to abuses against fellow Jews, strictly out of concern for his status. Although less caustic than Viñas, Saúl Sosnowski also questions Gerchunoff's motives, suggesting that the author's desire to scale the social ladder clouded his judgment: "[Gerchunoff's] apparent longing to join that [the Argentine ruling] class, a misdirected sense of gratitude and loyalty to his adopted country, prevented him from an accurate reading of the country's ills and from a rational defense that would support any contention that Argentina in fact was the 'promised land'" ("Contemporary Jewish-Argentine Writers" 3). The negative image of Gerchunoff as a self-interested and/or delusional propagandist, evident in the passages cited above, also emerges in the works of other so-called parricides including Leonardo Senkman (La identidad judía en la literatura argentina 34) and Gladys Onega (210-11).

While it's true that, as Viñas, Sosnowski, Senkman, Onega, and Naomi Lindstrom ("Los gauchos judíos " 231) argue, Los gauchos judíos is excessively paeanistic, the book doesn't bear out the claims that Gerchunoff compromised his beliefs for personal gain and advocated assimilation at the expense of Jewish identity. In fact Los gauchos judíos
contains quite a bit of what the aforementioned Aizenberg calls "quarrelsomeness and questioning" when it comes to melting-potism (*Parricide* 29). For a supposedly accommodationist work, Aizenberg observes, *Los gauchos judíos* conveys considerable apprehension about "blending in": Gerchunoff's orthodox colonists, for example, denounce the young Jewish girls who consort with local, non-Jewish boys; they also worry that anti-Semitism has followed them from Russia to Argentina (*Parricide* 28). Even at the linguistic level, Aizenberg remarks, *Los gauchos judíos* resists melting-potism through its frequent use of Hebrew and Yiddish terms (*Parricide* 25).

In sum, Aizenberg's work reclaimed Gerchunoff from the parricides by effectively arguing that *Los gauchos judíos* is a highly dialogic and often ambivalent text. To that end, Gerchunoff could hardly have chosen a more suitable genre with which to work than the short story cycle. Described by James Nagel as an ideal vehicle for "the exploration and depiction of the complex interactions of gender, ethnicity, and individual identity" (10), the cycle consists of stories that, while capable of standing alone, complement and complete one another. The independent but interrelated stories, often linked by a common setting, similar structures, and recurring characters, symbols, images, and themes, may offer different perspectives on a particular person, issue, or event while retaining the overall unity of a novel. Other common features of short story cycles include the use of collective protagonists—either a "group that functions as a central character" or an "implied central character who functions as a metaphor" for a group (Maggie Dunn and Ann Morris 59)—and thematic, rather than chronological, ordering of stories.
Although no other critic to date has identified *Los gauchos judíos* as a short story cycle, the book qualifies on all of the above counts. As the title suggests, Gerchunoff uses a collective protagonist: the Jewish gauchos who farmed the Argentine colonies of Moisés Ville and Rajil, Entre Ríos, around the turn of the twentieth century. Recurring characters include Jacobo and Rabí Abraham, the literary alter egos of a young Gerchunoff and his father, respectively; the author also makes frequent use of archetypes to divide the community into representative groups, such as virtuous Jewish maidens, assimilated Jewish boys, orthodox elder colonists, and irascible gaucho neighbors. The stories, all but one of which take place in the Argentine colonies, feature recurring themes including freedom, intermarriage, the intergenerational gap, acculturation, and religious identity, and their order suggests Gerchunoff’s intention to juxtapose contrasting perspectives on these topics.

*Los gauchos judíos* locates Gerchunoff within an international, although then-unnamed, literary tradition. The proliferation of short story cycles in the United States, South America, and Europe coincided with the growing popularity of literary magazines that published serials in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and in fact three of the most well-known story cycles appeared in the same decade as Gerchunoff’s text: James Joyce's *Dubliners* (1914), Ernest Hemingway's *In Our Time* (1919), and Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919). While other short story cycles, including Argentine author Leopoldo Lugones's *La guerra gaucha* (1905; The Gaucho War), preceded *Los gauchos judíos* in Latin America, Gerchunoff was the first to use the cycle to represent the perspectives of Jewish immigrants living in Argentine agricultural colonies.
He was not, however, the last. Argentine author Rebeca Mactas (1910-1997), for example, fictionalizes her experiences as a child growing up in the JCA farming community of Carlos Casares in her short story cycle Los judíos de Las Acacias (1936; The Jews of Las Acacias). Published in the same year as the second edition of Los gauchos judíos, Los judíos de Las Acacias contains seven stories set during the decline of the agricultural colonies; accordingly, Mactas offers a bleaker view of farm life than does Gerchunoff, who treats an earlier "honeymoon period." These differences notwithstanding, Mactas likely used Los gauchos judíos, a book that she knew well, as a model for her own cycle. As the title suggests, Mactas follows Gerchunoff's lead with regard to her use of a collective protagonist and one predominant setting. Like Gerchunoff, she also focuses on the rift between the colony's orthodox farmers and their assimilation-minded coreligionists. In Los judíos de Las Acacias as in Los gauchos judíos, leaving the farm represents a break with Judaism; consequently Mactas's seven stories, each of which pits the capital (Buenos Aires) against the colony (Las Acacias), wrestle with national, religious, and ethnic identity.

While the structural and thematic similarities between Los gauchos judíos and Los judíos de Las Acacias speak to Gerchunoff's literary legacy in Argentina, Aizenberg posits a greater sphere of influence when she claims, "In one way or another every piece of Argentine-Jewish, if not Latin American-Jewish, literature has had to dialogue with Alberto Gerchunoff [...] and his story collection Los gauchos judíos" (Books and Bombs 17). Consistent with Aizenberg's statement, short story cycles set in Rio Grande do Sul, 

\[1\] In the course of my e-mail correspondence with Mactas's son, Federico Gabriel Polak, in August 2007, I asked about Mactas's familiarity with Los gauchos judíos. Polak responded, "Sí, conocía el texto. Lo conocía bien" 'Yes, she was familiar with the text. She knew it well.'
Brazil, where the JCA expanded its operations during the first decade of the twentieth century, suggest that Gerchunoff's reach extended beyond both national and linguistic boundaries in Latin America.

Language probably would not have prevented Gerchunoff's fame from spreading in the Jewish communities of southern Brazil; on the contrary, many of the farmers in Rio Grande do Sul's two Jewish agricultural colonies, Filipson and Quatro Irmãos, had themselves relocated from Argentina.\(^2\) Furthermore the geographical and cultural proximity of Rio Grande do Sul and the Argentine pampas, most notably the cult of the gaucho, add to the likelihood that Los gauchos judíos reached at the very least a Jewish audience in Brazil.

Brazilian author Frida Alexandr (1906-1972) appears not only to have read Gerchunoff but, like Mactas, to have used Los gauchos judíos as a model for her own short story cycle, Filipson (1967). Alexandr's only published work, Filipson contains fifty-six stories that treat young Frida's experiences over nearly two decades in the titular JCA colony. Although critic Regina Igel claims that Alexandr's text emerged from "um vácuo de protótipos literários" 'a void of literary prototypes' (Imigrantes 38), Filipson borrows from the Bildungsroman tradition; furthermore, portions of Alexandr's cycle, especially the description of a locust attack in the story "Gafanhotos" (Locust), read like palimpsests of Los gauchos judíos. Igel, however, does correctly credit Alexandr as "the first woman to publish about life in the Brazilian fields for the Jewish immigrants and their descendants" ("Brazilian Jewish Women Writers" 69); Filipson, which offers

\(^2\) According to historian Jeff Lesser, Argentine Jews had relocated to Filipson within a decade of its founding in 1903 (Jewish Colonization 43); the same source states that Quatro Irmãos's original settlers included fourteen families and nineteen single men from Argentina's Mauricio colony (51).
insights into the lives of women in the farming communities, tells a side of the story that Gerchunoff, for the most part, ignores.

Adão Voloch (1914-1991), another Jewish Brazilian author who describes life in the JCA farming communities, closely resembles Gerchunoff in his appropriation of the gaucho archetype, which in his works is synonymous with Brazilianness. Voloch was born in Filipson and lived there at the same time as Alexandr; at the age of ten, he moved with his family to the Quatro Irmãos colony before migrating to the city of Porto Alegre in 1934. His short story cycle O Colono Judeu-Açu (1984; The Great Jewish Colonist), the first installment of a semiautobiographical trilogy that includes Um Gaúcho a Pé (1987; A Gaucho on Foot), and Os Horizontes do Sol (1987; The Horizons of the Sun), fictionalizes the experiences of the author's family in Quatro Irmãos. The title refers to Natálio Litvinoff, a quixotic character based on Voloch's father, Nathan. In search of a way of life consistent with his Communist principles, Natálio wanders from Argentina's Basalvilbaso colony to Filipson and, finally, Quatro Irmãos. The cycle's eighteen stories document not only Natálio's failure as a farmer, but also the struggle of Jewish immigrants who attempt to negotiate religious, ethnic, and national identity.

Mactas, Alexandr, and Voloch appear to have emulated Gerchunoff not only by creating short story cycles to recount their childhood experiences in the JCA colonies, but also by adopting his ambivalent posture toward assimilation. On one hand, the authors' stark descriptions of life in the isolated and somewhat exclusive farming communities suggest that the Jewish colonists stood to benefit from more contact with dominant national culture. On the other hand, many of the characters in their cycles fear that acculturation occurs at the expense of Jewish identity; consequently rifts develop
between orthodox and liberal members of the farming communities. Typically the divide occurs along generational lines; in Filipson, for example, the local pharmacist harshly criticizes young Frida for dancing with a gaucho boy at her sister's wedding (145-46). In O Colono Judeu-Açu, recent arrivals to Quatro Irmãos worry that their children will become goyyim, or non-Jews (49); old farmers in Los judíos de Las Acacias, meanwhile, regret having sent their children to study in the capital, where the latter strayed from Jewish precepts (90).

As the above examples illustrate, assimilation represents a painful process in Mactas's, Alexandr's, and Voloch's cycles. It's also a potentially futile one: in Los judíos de Las Acacias, for example, colonists who set out for Buenos Aires return to the country financially and/or spiritually bankrupt. Furthermore, in Filipson as well as in each installment of Voloch's trilogy, anti-Semitic attitudes and threats create a hostile environment, raising questions about whether or not the assimilation of Jewish immigrants to Brazil is even possible.

Story cycles by Mactas, Alexandr, and Voloch pick up where Los gauchos judíos leaves off, documenting the ongoing struggle of JCA colonists to adapt to life in Latin America. Unlike the parricides, whose reductive readings of Los gauchos judíos ignore the text's dialogism, the three authors above echo Gerchunoff's apprehensions about religious, ethnic, and national identity. This study, a reevaluation of Gerchunoff's literary legacy, nominates Mactas, Alexandr, and Voloch as "good readers" of Gerchunoff by building a case for intertextuality between their respective cycles and Los gauchos judíos.

I divide the study into five thematic chapters. In Chapter 1, "Los gauchos judíos: A Model Short Story Cycle," I identify Los gauchos judíos as a short story cycle,
showing how Gerchunoff uses many of the main features of the genre, most notably collective protagonists and recurring characters and themes, to question Argentine melting-potism. In Chapter 2, "Before and Beyond Los gauchos judíos: Gerchunoff's Antecedents and Heirs," I locate Gerchunoff within the short story cycle tradition by considering precedents to Los gauchos judíos, including Argentine Leopoldo Lugones's La guerra gaucha and Russian Sholem Aleichem's Tevye the Dairyman (1911; the volume's stories were published individually over a twenty-two year period, beginning in 1894). In the second part of the chapter, I study Mactas's Los judíos de Las Acacias, Alexandr's Filipson, and Voloch's O Colono Judeu-Açu as story cycles, showing how the three authors work within the genre to continue and expand the saga of the Jewish gaucho begun by Gerchunoff.

Chapter 3, "Which Comes First: the Gaucho or the Judío?" treats the negotiation of religious, ethnic, regional, and national identity in cycles by Gerchunoff, Mactas, Alexandr, and Voloch. I challenge the portrayal of Gerchunoff as an apologist for the Argentine elite by demonstrating how his references to the gaucho archetype, evocation of the freedoms guaranteed by the 1853 Argentine Constitution, use of heteroglossia, and description of Judaism as a "pre-Christian Christianity" in Los gauchos judíos make a case for cultural pluralism rather than melting-potism.

Like Gerchunoff, Voloch appeals to regional gaucho identity and Constitutional guarantees to affirm the Brazilianness of his Jewish colonists; his trilogy documents the struggle to reconcile Jewishness—which Voloch alternately defines as an indicator of religion, ethnicity, and culture—and national identity. Voloch criticizes what he terms
the "shtetl mentality"\(^3\) of the Jewish farmers, emphasizing that they, like all other Brazilians, have civic obligations; at the same time, he defends the immigrants' right to live according to their beliefs, arguing that national identity transcends religious and cultural differences. This argument, mouthed most often by father-and-son protagonists Natálio and Arturo Litvinoff, typically falls on the deaf ears of Brazilian non-Jews, painting a bleak picture of the future of Jews in the country.

While national identity and assimilation figure less prominently in *Filipson* and *Los judíos de Las Acacias* than in Gerchunoff's and Voloch's cycles, Mactas and Alexandr broach these themes through their use of, and references to, language. Although Mactas was the granddaughter of Marcos Alpersohn (1860-1947), regarded as the dean of Yiddish literature in Argentina, she dedicated much of her literary career to the translation of Yiddish and Hebrew works into Spanish. Her minimal use of heteroglossia in *Los judíos de Las Acacias*, which makes the cycle accessible to a Spanish-speaking audience, also reflects a generational process of acculturation. Yet Mactas's stories consistently privilege traditional Jewish farmers over their urbanized counterparts, suggesting the value of preserving Jewish identity within Argentine society.

In *Filipson*, Alexandr establishes a direct correlation between Portuguese proficiency and Brazilianness; consequently the author, by demonstrating her mastery of the language throughout the text, affirms her own national identity. Of the four authors in this study, she most vehemently decries the isolation of the colonies; her scathing critique of country life, however, should not be confused with an urge to assimilate at the

\(^3\) The term *shtetl* refers to Jewish villages found throughout Central and Eastern Europe in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Many JCA colonists were uprooted from *shtetls* in the Pale of Settlement, a western border region of Imperial Russia. Voloch correlates the European *shtetls* and the isolated Jewish farming communities in Brazil, emphasizing the need for Jewish immigrants to interact with dominant national culture.
expense of Jewish identity. On the contrary Alexandr, like Gerchunoff, raises the spectre of anti-Semitism and shows her colonists engaging Brazilian culture from the safe distance of the colony, most notably in the story "Professor Budin." In doing so, she justifies the Jewish immigrants' right to negotiate Brazilianness on their own terms.

Chapter 4, "You Can Take the Jewish Colonist Out of the Country…," addresses the authors' handling of the city/country dichotomy and related binaries including civilization/barbarism, assimilation/segregation, and capitalism/socialism. In their cycles, Gerchunoff, Mactas, Alexandr, and Voloch, each of whom spent his/her entire adult life in the city, make a literary pilgrimage back to the colonies of their youth. References to the city are conspicuously absent in Los gauchos judíos; the author's portrayal of country life, however, is overwhelmingly positive. According to the parricides, Gerchunoff's loving descriptions of the Argentine pampas evince his unconditional support of official crisol de razas ideology; I show, however, that bucolicism in Los gauchos judíos promotes cultural pluralism by affirming Jewish identity. For example, pastoral passages in Gerchunoff's stories reflect the influence of the Haskalah, or Jewish Enlightenment, a movement that spread in Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Some maskilim (followers of the Haskalah), including JCA founder Baron Hirsch, believed that a return to farming would lead to the spiritual regeneration of the Jewish people; Gerchunoff's Jewish gauchos, whom the author likens to the biblical Hebrews, experience just such a revival. Furthermore, the colonies represent autonomous Jewish spaces whose traditional laws far surpass their Argentine counterparts in terms of breadth, depth, and impartiality. While it's true, as the parricides claim, that Gerchunoff's description of Entre Ríos glosses over many of the
difficulties that Jewish immigrants to Argentina faced, it's also important to note that *Los gauchos judíos* is less an historical account than the author's vision of Argentina as a tolerant, multicultural society.

For Mactas, the colony also represents a locus of Jewishness; her description of country life, however, is less idealistic than that of Gerchunoff. *Los judíos de Las Acacias* contains some idylls reminiscent of *Los gauchos judíos*, yet Mactas also portrays Las Acacias as a desolate refuge for the dead and dying. She describes how the colonists, having invested years of painstaking work in conquering the land, still faced potentially disastrous threats including heat waves, droughts, and illness. The insecurity of country life notwithstanding, ex-colonists fare even worse in the capital: "Fuego" (Fire) and "La vuelta del hijo" (The Son's Return), for example, feature characters who return from Buenos Aires broken men; others land in jail (Benjamín in "Un hombre de campo" [A Country Man]) or fail to find work (Juan in "Primaveras" [Spring]). Furthermore, Mactas characterizes ex-colonists (Abraham in "La casa" [The House], David in "Corazón sencillo" [A Simple Heart], Simón in "Fuego") as selfish and inconsiderate; by way of contrast, the old farmers (Jaim in "La casa," Marcos in "Corazón sencillo" and "Fuego") are principled and selfless. Mactas's repeated juxtaposition of these two character types, which highlights the corruptive influence of the city, suggests that the immigrants were better off in (Jewish) Las Acacias than (pagan) Buenos Aires.

Of the four authors in this study, Alexandr offers the most critical view of the Jewish farming communities. She denounces the JCA's administration of Filipson and details the brutal conditions endured by the colonists, who struggle to survive against deadly diseases, murderous gauchos, punishing storms, and plagues of locust. For young
Frida, who longs to escape to the city, life in Filipson is suffocating, lonely, dangerous, and sometimes terrifying. Alexandr's autobiographical stories, however, also reflect the perspective of "old Frida"—a mature, disillusioned woman who has spent most of her adult life in São Paulo. The two vantage points reveal that the author, while resentful of Filipson, also regrets having left. In other words, the dialogue between young and old Frida results in an ambivalent presentation of the city/country dichotomy.

Similarly, Voloch's trilogy renders no clear verdict on which of rural and urban life is preferable. In O Colono Judeu- Açú and Os Horizontes do Sol, Nátalio sees farming as a means to live according to his Communist principles; his failures in Basalvilbaso, Filipson, and Quatro Irmãos, however, suggest fundamental flaws in the JCA's design. Natálio's son, Arturo, who inherits both his father's Marxist ideology and lousy luck, learns that life outside the colony is no less harrowing: in Um Gaúcho a Pé, he sets out to establish his Brazilianness, only to meet anti-Semitic discrimination and political persecution at every turn.

Chapter 5, "Las Gauchas Judías: Gender, Perspective, and Position in Fictionalized Accounts of Jewish Agricultural Colonization," considers the role that gender plays in the type of cycle that each of the four authors in the study produces. With the notable exception of "La triste del lugar" (The Sad Woman of the Colony), Gerchunoff's stories tend to ignore the female perspective on life in Entre Ríos. His "gauchitas judías" all fit the same mold: they are wholesome, fit, and attractive farmhands who recall the shepherdesses of the Hebrew Bible—that is, until they begin to consort with local gaucho boys, prompting the Jewish community to question their honor.

Although Argentine author Martiniano Leguizamón (1858-1935), in his prologue to the
1910 edition of *Los gauchos judíos*, celebrates the defiant daughters by calling them "el crisol de amor" 'the melting pot of love' (xi), I show how the girls' fall from grace reflects apprehensions about miscegenation. At the same time, Gerchunoff's implicit criticism of the Jewish practice of arranged marriage in stories such as "El episodio de Miryam" (Miryam's Story), "Las bodas de Camacho" (Camacho's Wedding), and "Divorcio" (Divorce) suggests that both women and men deserve to partake of the blessed Argentine freedom that his text repeatedly evokes.

Like Gerchunoff, Mactas uses female archetypes: her mother-and-daughter colonists, for example, are all submissive, selfless, and hard-working. In *Los judíos de Las Acacias*, however, the author delves into the thoughts and emotions of her female characters through frequent passages featuring free indirect speech, a technique that "maintains the third-person reference and the tense of narration, but [...] reproduces verbatim the character's own mental language" (Dorrit Cohn 13-14). Such passages, which give Mactas's heroines a psychological dimension uncommon in their Gerchunoffian counterparts, reveal the extent to which women suffered in the Jewish farming communities.

*Filipson*, most of which is narrated in the first person by a young girl desperate to leave the colony, shows that life for Jewish women in the country could be downright excruciating. As Igel notes, JCA sons were free to set off for the city on their own; their sisters, however, required a male escort (*"Brazilian Jewish Women Writers"* 73). This double-standards figures prominently in Alexandr's stories: Frida, having seen her brothers abandon the farm one by one, often complains that she feels helpless and alone. By casting young Frida as a collective protagonist representative of Filipson's young women,
Alexandr implies that her sentiments and experiences were common among girls in the colony.

Voloch, like Gerchunoff, tends to develop his male characters more so than his female characters; nevertheless Alexandr's description of the lives of women in the country resonates in his trilogy. In fact Voloch's characterization of Arturo's sister, Flora, in *O Colono Judeu-Açu* and *Um Gaúcho a Pé* appears to crib from Alexandr's *Filipson*: both Frida and Flora, for example, daydream about migrating to the city, pinning their hopes on the return of their brothers. They also express feelings of inadequacy stemming from the lack of regular instruction and social interaction in the colony. Because Voloch focuses most of his attention on Natálio and Arturo, however, characters like Flora play only minor roles in his texts.

The following chapters show that *Los gauchos judíos* provided Mactas, Alexandr, and Voloch with a blueprint not only for fictionalizing their childhoods in the JCA colonies, but also for handling complex themes such as national identity, Jewishness, and the city/country dichotomy. This is not to say that *Los judíos de Las Acacias*, *Filipson*, and *O Colono Judeu-Açu* represent facsimiles of Gerchunoff’s text; as I have established in this introduction, Mactas, Alexandr, and Voloch each make original contributions to the saga of the Jewish gaucho. Furthermore, while they wrestle with many of the same questions raised in *Los gauchos judíos*, Mactas, Alexandr, and Voloch attempt to supply their own answers. In doing so, they prove to be worthy successors to Gerchunoff, as well as some of his best readers.
CHAPTER 1:

LOS GAUCHOS JUDÍOS: A MODEL SHORT STORY CYCLE

Scholarship to date avoids locating Alberto Gerchunoff’s *Los gauchos judíos* within a particular genre. Ilan Stavans describes the text as "a book-long narrative interconnected by its theme and the occasional reappearance of a small set of idiosyncratic characters" ("Foreword" xix), and Edna Aizenberg calls it both a "chronicle of the Jewish settlement on the plains" (*Books and Bombs* 18) and "a collection of twenty-three stories about turn-of-the-century Jewish immigrants to the Argentine pampa" (*Parricide* 11). According to Darrell B. Lockhart, *Los gauchos judíos* "can be read either as a novel or as a collection of interrelated short stories" ("Introduction" xx). In this chapter, I demonstrate that Gerchunoff’s masterpiece represents a short story cycle, a type of middle ground between the short story collection and the novel, by identifying the principal features of the genre and studying their function in *Los gauchos judíos*. I show how Gerchunoff juxtaposes stories to present contrary perspectives on characters and themes; I also challenge traditional readings of his text by arguing that the cycle does not endorse "melting pot" assimilation, but rather affirms Jewish identity.

1.1 What is a Short Story Cycle?

The identification and study of the short story cycle as a distinct genre began in 1971, with Forrest L. Ingram's *Representative Short Story Cycles of the Twentieth*
Century: Studies in a Literary Genre. Ingram defines the short story cycle as "a book of short stories so linked to each other by their author that the reader's successive experience on various levels of the pattern of the whole significantly modifies his experience of each of its component parts" (author's italics, 19). He proposes that a cycle's stories, while capable of standing alone, complement and complete one another, and that the cumulative effect of the entire cycle alters the reader's understanding of the individual stories.

Ingram refers to static patterns in the text, such as the author's use of numbers or titles to indicate divisions, as the short story cycle's "external structure" (20). Cycles also evidence an "internal structure" created by the recurrence and development of symbols, characters, and themes throughout the stories (20-21). These elements may determine the order in which the stories appear in a cycle: according to Ingram, the authors of cycles "are more interested in the rhythmic pattern of the telling than in the chronological consistency of the events themselves" (23); consequently, leaps forwards and backwards in time are typical of the genre.

Subsequent works by critics including Dunn, Morris, Nagel, J. Gerald Kennedy, Robert M. Luscher, and Susan Mann corroborate the basic points of Ingram's study: all describe the short story cycle as a single volume of independent but interrelated stories tied together by recurring themes, characters, plots, and symbols. They identify such works as Homer's Odyssey, Ovid's Metamorphoses, Boccaccio's Decameron, and Chaucer's The Canterbury Tales as forerunners of the short story cycle, but date the genre to the nineteenth century, linking its development to the rise of literary magazines that popularized the publication of serials.
Building on Ingram's study, Dunn and Morris developed a typology that identifies five primary ways in which stories are interconnected: through unity of setting, a single protagonist, a collective protagonist (either a community or special interest group that functions as a whole, or a central character representative of a group), a patterned format for each story, and an emphasis on the act of storytelling (14-16). Authors of cycles use interconnective elements to craft texts that accommodate "apparently contradictory themes or philosophies" (Mann 12), representing different perspectives through a chorus of voices. According to Nagel, "there is a good deal of narrative modulation in cycles, presenting a series of first-person narrators or a third-person narrator deriving information and impressions from a changing series of central characters in each episode" (17). Often the line between first- and third-person narration blurs: for instance, some short story cycles feature unifying voices that periodically interrupt third-person narratives by interjecting first-person commentary. Others make liberal use of free indirect speech, a technique that "maintains the third-person reference and the tense of narration, but [...] reproduces verbatim the character's own mental language" (Cohn 13-14). In other words, free indirect speech allows the narrator to assume a character's perspective and express the latter's thoughts and emotions without altering the flow of the narrative.

Short story cycles often feature voices from the margins: in his study of the multi-ethnic use of the short story cycle, Nagel characterizes the cycle as a vehicle for "the exploration and depiction of the complex interactions of gender, ethnicity, and individual identity" (10). The genre reflects the tensions associated with culture clash and often treats assimilation, language acquisition, and discrimination from a subaltern perspective.
The production of short story cycles by women and representatives of ethnic and religious minorities suggests a particularly democratic genre in which the margins merit equal representation and differences are aired rather than absorbed.

1.2 Los gauchos judíos as a Short Story Cycle

Gerchunoff's Los gauchos judíos qualifies as a short story cycle on all of the counts listed above. Each of the stories begins with a short, descriptive title and is capable of standing alone: beginning in 1908, several were published individually in the Buenos Aires newspaper La Nación. Gerchunoff represents the perspective of Jewish immigrants attempting to adjust to a new language and lifestyle in an occasionally hostile environment; he also uses interconnective elements including unity of setting, narrative voice, collective protagonists, and recurring themes to link the stories in his work. The following sections demonstrate how these elements contribute to Gerchunoff's affirmation of Jewish identity, which the author presents as compatible with Argentine culture.

1.2.1 Unity of Setting and Narrative Voice

With the exception of the text's first story, "Génesis" (Genesis), which takes place in Russia, Los gauchos judíos depicts the provinces of Santa Fe and Entre Ríos, Argentina, during the early days of Jewish agricultural colonization. Gerchunoff describes the colonies as Jewish spaces that operate autonomously: the farmers elect their own leaders and resolve conflicts according to Jewish, rather than Argentine, law. The stories reflect Gerchunoff's experiences growing up in two colonies, Moisés Ville and
Rajil, in the last decade of the nineteenth century, and the author's repeated use of the first person links the vignettes while lending the text an autobiographical quality.

In their analysis of Leslie Marmon Silko's short story cycle *Storyteller* (1981), Dunn and Morris describe a unifying voice that "runs throughout the book, interrupting here, remembering there, commenting briefly somewhere else" (89). *Storyteller* resembles *Los gauchos judíos* in this regard: a recurring first-person narrator figures prominently in many of Gerchunoff's stories, often interrupting third-person narration. The author opens his text with an invocation: speaking directly to fellow Argentine Jews, he compares the Argentine Centennial to a great Passover celebration. In the first story, "Génesis," the author's first-person narrator asserts his presence by repeating the phrase "Bien recuerdo" 'I remember well' (4);¹ in the second story, "El surco" (The Furrow), the first-person narrator uses the present tense to describe how he and his brother plow the first furrow in a new tract of land.

After the invocation and the first two stories, Gerchunoff's first-person narrator appears intermittently throughout *Los gauchos judíos*, on occasion reminding the reader of his presence through his use of apostrophe. In "Leche fresca" (Fresh Milk) and "Las lamentaciones" (Lamentations) for example, the narrator directly addresses the stories' respective central characters, Raquel and Moisés, as "tú" 'you.' In "Las bodas de Camacho" and "Historia de un caballo robado" (The Story of a Stolen Horse), Gerchunoff's first-person narrator interjects commentary in the stories' conclusions.

In addition to featuring shifts between first- and third-person narration, *Los gauchos judíos* represents the voices and perspectives of characters through quoted

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¹ Citations maintain the spelling and punctuation of the 1910 edition of *Los gauchos judíos*. All English translations are my own.
dialogue and free indirect speech. Three consecutive stories, "El surco," "Leche fresca," and "La lluvia" (The Rain) include short passages of dialogue that interrupt the narrative; others, such as "Las brujas" (Witches) and "Divorcio," open with dialogue and consist mainly of conversations between the colonists. In "El episodio de Miryam" and "Las bodas de Camacho," two stories that treat romances between Jewish girls and criollo boys, Gerchunoff uses free indirect speech to convey the reactions of colonists to the events. In the first story, he assumes the colonists' perspective to describe Miryam's dramatic escape with her boyfriend, Rogelio, as "algo horrible" 'something horrible' (52); in the second, he expresses the opinion of Rabí Abraham, the shochet or ritual slaughterer, that the relationship between Raquel, a young Jewish girl, and Gabriel, a criollo, represents "una desgracia, un castigo de Dios" 'a disgrace, a punishment from God' (90). In these examples, Gerchunoff reproduces the characters' mental language—"algo horrible," "una desgracia," "un castigo de Dios"—while maintaining the third-person narration.

The narrative modulation in Los gauchos judíos allows Gerchunoff to juxtapose contrary perspectives on assimilation: some colonists offer favorable impressions of criollos and their customs, whereas others express apprehension about losing their religious identity. The general disapproval of Miryam's and Raquel's relationships with non-Jews, for example, reflects the Jewish immigrants' fears of miscegenation and

2 Gerchunoff uses the term "criollo" as a synonym of "gaucho" to refer to "native" Argentines, as opposed to European immigrants. He does not elaborate on the gaucho's ethnicity; the region's horsemen, however, were typically of mixed Spanish, Indian, and African descent.

3 Shochets played an important role in the JCA farming communities. In addition to preparing meats according to the rules of shekhitah or ritual slaughtering, the shochets often were religious authorities in the colonies, particularly in the absence of a rabbi.
contradicts the traditional reading of *Los gauchos judíos* as an endorsement of the "melting pot" ideology of the 1910 Argentine Centennial.

1.2.2 The Collective Protagonist

Both types of collective protagonists described by Dunn and Morris appear in *Los gauchos judíos*. On one hand, Gerchunoff often portrays his titular Jewish gauchos working, thinking, and worshipping in unison; furthermore, he emphasizes collectivity by comparing the community as a whole to biblical Hebrews, medieval Sephardic Jews, and gauchos. On the other hand, he uses archetypal figures to represent factions within the community; his characterizations divide the colonists into oppositional categories such as "old" and "young," and "orthodox" and "assimilated."

In his 1914 autobiography, Gerchunoff describes *Los gauchos judíos* as "un libro en el cual trato de pintar las costumbres de los agricultores judíos" 'a book in which I try to depict the customs of the Jewish farmers' (*Entre Ríos* 34). The text represents colonists engaged in identical routines; "Leche fresca," for example, describes the clockwork manner in which the workday begins: "Abrianse los corrales, y los viejos de grandes barbas, aparecian en las puertas de los ranchos, mascando la oracion de la mañana" 'The corrals opened, and the old men with long beards appeared in the doors of the ranch houses, mumbling the morning prayer' (12). Gerchunoff refers to the collective activities of "the colony" — "La colonia se recoge en el descanso" 'The colony retires to rest' (16), "La colonia duerme en una tibia modorra" 'The colony sleeps in warm drowsiness' (18)—and attributes thoughts and emotions to the entire group. In "Llegada de inmigrantes" (*The Immigrants' Arrival*), for example, some 200 families gather at the train station to meet new arrivals to the colony; as they wait, each person remembers his
own migration from Russia to Argentina: "La espera de aquella multitud evocaba en cada uno recuerdos lejanos. Cada uno veía la mañana en que abandonó el fosco imperio del zar y veía la llegada á la tierra prometida, á la Jerusalém anunciada en las prédicas de la sinagoga y en las hojas sueltas [...]" 'The wait of that multitude evoked in each one distant memories. Each one saw the morning in which he abandoned the Czar's cruel empire and remembered the arrival to the promised land, to the Jerusalem announced in sermons in the synagogue and in leaflets [...]’ (26). Gerchunoff's repetition of "cada uno" 'each one' emphasizes the collective experience: all of the colonists, united by their common past, share a nascent love for their new home.

"El himno" (The Anthem) also reflects the collective optimism of the Jewish farmers during the early days of colonization: "Un amor idílico rebosaba en todas las almas y los ojos eran cisternas de ensueño. Por los alrededores de Rajil, los arados abrían gloriamente la tierra y la esperanza unánime estallaba en canciones" 'An idyllic love overflowed in all of their souls and their eyes welled with dreams. Around Rajil, the plows opened the earth gloriously and songs expressing unanimous hope broke out' (171). The adjectives "todas" 'all' and "unánime" 'unanimous' punctuate the group dynamic, and the references to "almas" 'souls' and "ojos" 'eyes' suggest that the farmers share the same spirit and perspective.

The story describes the colonists' preparations for May 25, the day commemorating Argentine Independence, and Gerchunoff generalizes that the colonists know little about Argentina: "Los judíos de Entre Ríos conocían poco el lugar y sus ideas sobre las costumbres del país eran en extremo confusas" 'The Jews of Entre Ríos knew little about the place and their ideas about the country's customs were very muddled'
"No sabían los colonos una palabra de español" 'The colonists didn't know a word of Spanish' (172). In these examples, Gerchunoff uses the collective nouns "judíos" and "colonos" to refer to the entire group; on other occasions, he conveys "they" with the passive voice: "Se ignoraba el color de la bandera argentina" 'They didn't know the color of the Argentine flag' (174); "No se sabía quién [sic] era presidente" 'They didn't know who the president was' (176). At the end of the story, the colonists experience a collective epiphany as they listen to a recitation of the Argentine national anthem:

No lo comprendían [sic] los israelitas; pero al llegar á la palabra libertad, el recuerdo de su antigua esclavitud, de la amargura y las persecuciones seculares sufridas por la raza, revolvió sus corazones y con el corazón y con la boca, todos exclamaron, como en la Sinagoga:

"¡Amén!" (177)

The Israelites didn't understand it; upon hearing the word "freedom," however, the memory of their past slavery, of the bitter persecutions suffered by their race, stirred their hearts, and just as they did in the Synagogue, everyone exclaimed with their hearts and mouths:

"Amen!"

This passage, which features singular nouns—"el recuerdo" 'the memory,' "el corazón" 'the heart,' and "la boca" 'the mouth'—to show the colonists thinking and acting in unison, also culminates in the farmers' collective response to the word "freedom."

In the above example, Gerchunoff refers to the Jewish colonists as "Israelites."

This characterization, which appears throughout Los gauchos judíos, reflects the influence of the Haskalah. Some maskilim saw farming, the traditional profession of the biblical Hebrews, as a path to moral regeneration (Azriel Shochat 438-39). Accordingly, the Dayan Jehuda Anakroi, a religious authority in "Génesis," describes agricultural colonization as an opportunity to recover the Jewish past: "Si volvemos á esa vida
retornaremos á nuestra existencia anterior y ojalá pueda en mi vejez besar esa tierra y bendecir bajo su cielo á mis hijos" "If we return to that life we will return to our prior existence, and would that I in my old age be able to kiss that land and bless my children under its sky' (7).

Gerchunoff uses stock descriptions to reinforce his comparison of the colonists to biblical Hebrews: the old farmers, with their flowing white beards and long, knotty fingers, resemble the Jewish patriarchs, and their young daughters, whom the author extols for their beauty and virtue, evoke the shepherdesses of the Hebrew Bible. The repetition of physical features, personality traits, and even names reflects Gerchunoff’s use of the collective protagonist: the colonists, whose shared qualities make them indistinguishable from one another, represent types rather than individuals, and all qualify as ancient Hebrews.

As heirs to the misfortunes of medieval Spanish Jewry, the Jewish colonists also represent neo-Sephardim. In "Génesis," the Dayan traces the Jews' plight back to the Middle Ages, when they abandoned agriculture: "'Fue en España donde los judíos dejaron de cultivar la tierra y cuidar sus ganados'" "It was in Spain that the Jews stopped working the land and shepherding their flocks' (7). The suffering of the Diaspora links Gerchunoff’s colonists to the Sephardim and the biblical Hebrews; when young Perla recites a Spanish lyric in "La lechuza," for example, she maps a trajectory from Jerusalem to Entre Ríos, Argentina, that passes through medieval Spain: "'Hemos perdido á Sión / Hemos perdido á Toledo / No queda consolación'" 'We have lost Zion / We have lost Toledo / No consolation remains' (71).
The Jewish farmers also inherit Sephardic traditions and wisdom. In "Divorcio," don Moisés Urquijo de Abinoim, a Moroccan Jew, represents a living link to medieval Spain and ancient Jerusalem: "Pomposo y sutil, [don Moisés] renovaba, entre las paredes de la casucha de barro, las disquisiciones medievales de Toledo y de Córdoba, conduciendo al auditorio el pensamiento florido y profundo de los judíos que continuaron bajo los reyes de Castilla, la tradición de los doctores de Jerusalém" 'Stately and subtle, [don Mosisés] revived, within the small clay hut, the medieval disquisitions of Toledo and Cordoba, conveying to his listeners the florid and profound thought of the Jews who, living under the kings of Castile, continued the tradition of the great sages of Jerusalem' (118). The colonists' deference to don Moisés during the colony's first divorce proceedings reflects their reverence for Sephardic tradition, which they relate to their lives on Argentine soil. By casting the colonists as neo-Sephardim who both empathize with the suffering of the medieval Spanish Jews and value their teachings, Gerchunoff presents immigration to Argentina as an opportunity to redress the wrongs of the period of convivencia, when Christians, Jews, and Muslims shared medieval Spain.4

In order to compare the Jewish farmers to biblical Hebrews and medieval Sephardic Jews, Gerchunoff overlooks the immigrants' Ashkenazi descent as well as the centuries that separate the three groups. His pairing of "Jews" and "gauchos" proves equally problematic: for one, the colonists worked as chacareros, or small-scale farmers,

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4 Gerchunoff's vision of an Argentine convivencia, however, excludes Muslims. In his 1944 essay "El problema judío" (The Jewish Problem), Gerchunoff clearly expresses his disdain for Arabic culture: "Y podemos decir que esa eclosión arábiga fué un accidente hispánico y un accidente hispano-judío, que jamás se habría producido, como efectivamente no se produjo, en el ambiente terráneamente doméstico del arabismo y del islamismo" 'And we can say that the rise of Arabic culture was an Hispanic accident and a Judeo-Hispanic accident that would have never occurred, and in fact never occurred, anywhere else in the primitive domestic realm of the Arabic and Islamic world' (157). Here Gerchunoff approximates Catholic and Jewish culture by aligning both against an "inferior other": Islam.
and not as horsemen like the gauchos. Furthermore, by the time the Jewish colonists arrived to Argentina, the gaucho was a dying breed, eradicated by a nationwide impulse toward modernization: as Stavans notes, "the gaucho ceased to exist as an identifiable social type during the last third of the nineteenth century" ("Foreword" xvi).

Undeterred by the above discrepancies, Gerchunoff emphasizes similarities between the Jewish farmers and the gauchos. For example, he likens both groups to the ancient Israelites. The unlikely comparison of Argentine gauchos and biblical Hebrews appears in "El poeta" (The Poet): the story's protagonist, Favel Duglach, says that the gauchos, like the ancient Hebrews, "son patriarcales y nobles. Viven vida sencilla y dulce, entre su hogar y su ganado" 'are patriarchal and noble. They live a simple, sweet life with their families and livestock' (133). Portrayed as peaceful folk who live in direct contact with nature, the gauchos represent an appropriate model for the Jewish farmers, who seek redemption by returning to the soil.

Gerchunoff suggests that his colonists' love of the land qualifies them as honorary gauchos. In "La visita" (The Visit), for example, Rabí Abraham extols the Entre Ríos sky, calling it unique, soft, and sheltering; his comments resonate with don Estanislao Benitez [sic], an old gaucho who understands little else that his Jewish guest says (99-100). Gerchunoff offers a similar description of Entre Ríos in his autobiography: "En aquella naturaleza incomparable, bajo aquel cielo único, en el vasto sosiego de la campiña surcada de ríos, mi existencia se ungió de fervor, que borró mis orígenes y me hizo argentino" 'In the midst of that incomparable natural world, beneath that singular sky, in the vast calm of the fields crossed by rivers, I was overcome by a fervor that erased my origins and made me Argentine' (Entre Ríos 26). In this passage, the author
associates love for Entre Ríos with national identity. According to the same criterion, Rabí Abraham and the other Jewish farmers of Los gauchos judíos represent true Argentines.

By casting the entire community of colonists as gauchos, Gerchunoff appeals to an archetypal figure celebrated both for his authentic Argentineness and his independent spirit: the gaucho offers the author a model for the Jewish immigrant who maintains his otherness—in this case, his religious identity—while assimilating to national culture. Although Leguizamón, Gerchunoff's prologuist, reads Los gauchos judíos as an endorsement of the official "melting pot" ideology of the 1910 Argentine Centennial, Gerchunoff's portrayal of the JCA farmers as biblical Hebrews and neo-Sephardim affirms the colonists' Jewishness while suggesting the compatibility of Jewish and Argentine Catholic cultures.

The comparison of the colonists to biblical Hebrews approximates Jewish immigrants and Argentine Catholics by emphasizing the shared history of their respective faith traditions. Gerchunoff's references to ancient Jerusalem evoke a period prior to the definitive break between Judaism and Christianity; by noting the farmers' resemblance to principal figures of Christianity, including Jesus, Mary, and the Apostles, Gerchunoff points out that Christianity had its matrix in Judaism, and that the individuals venerated as the first Christians would have considered themselves Jews.

As neo-Sephardim, the colonists are capable of living as Jews in a predominantly Catholic, Spanish-speaking country; consequently, Gerchunoff implies, the period of convivencia in medieval Spain had established a precedent for nineteenth- and twentieth-century Argentina. This characterization, like the others, illustrates Gerchunoff's use of
history to legitimize the presence of Jewish immigrants on Argentine soil: the author proposes that the colonists and *criollos* who share common ground also share a common past.

The characterizations described above suggest that the JCA farmers, as a collective protagonist, exhibit shared qualities and common values. Despite their similarities, however, the colonists do not represent a homogenous group. Gerchunoff uses the second type of collective protagonist described by Dunn and Morris, the archetypal central character, in order to reflect difference in the community: for example, recurring characters Rabí Abraham and Jacobo personify opposite positions on the issue of assimilation.

In "La trilla" (The Threshing), Rabí Abraham expresses the orthodox colonists' view that acculturation occurs at the expense of Jewish identity: "En Rusia [...] se vive mal, pero se teme á Dios y se vive de acuerdo con su ley. Aquí los jóvenes se vuelven unos gauchos" 'In Russia [...] one lives badly, but fears God and lives according to his law. Here our young become gauchos' (29). Jacobo symbolizes the attraction of the younger generation to local culture, and his negligence of Jewish precepts puts him at odds with the elder colonists. In "La siesta," for example, doña Raquel, Abraham's mother, criticizes Jacobo's defiant attitude and ignorance: "Déjelo á ese gaucho; no sabe más que contestar. ¡No ve, todo un gaucho! Bombachas, cinturón, cuchillo y hasta esas cositas de plomo para matar perdices; en cambio, en la sinagoga, permanece mudo y no sabe rezar" 'Don't pay any attention to that gaucho; he only knows how to talk back. Look at him, a gaucho through and through! Trousers, belt, knife, and even those little lead things to kill partridges; but in the synagogue, he keeps his mouth shut and doesn't
know how to pray' (22). Israel Kelner echoes doña Raquel's sentiments in "La revolución" (The Revolution) when he tells Jacobo, "'Eres siempre el mismo muchacho; nadie respetas' 'You're the same boy as always; you don't respect anyone' (139).

As a collective protagonist, Jacobo represents an unsuccessful model for assimilation: the boy's extreme approximation to gaucho culture estranges him from the Jewish community but does not earn him the acceptance of native Argentines. In "Historia de un caballo robado," for example, don Brígido Cruz, a criollo neighbor, emphasizes Jacobo's otherness by calling him a "gringuito" (123), an epithet for "Russian Jew" in the context of Gerchunoff's story. Unlike Jacobo, two other characters, Favel Duglach of "El poeta" and Nahum Yarcho of "El médico milagroso" (The Miraculous Doctor) effectively negotiate their national and religious identities, earning the admiration of their Jewish and non-Jewish neighbors; consequently, they represent prototypes for successful assimilation.

In "El poeta," Duglach identifies himself as a "gaucho judío" (130). He moderates his passions for Jewish scripture and criollo customs and legends, embodying the best of both traditions: the story's narrator remarks, "En su espíritu se habían fundido las bellezas de las tradiciones hebreas y gauchas" 'In his spirit the beauty of the Hebrew and gaucho traditions had fused' (129). As a result of his expert negotiation of the two cultures, Duglach enjoys "unánime estima" 'unanimous esteem' (129): both Rabí Abraham and the herdsman don Remigio Calamaco, prominent figures in their respective communities, admire him and appreciate his talent as a storyteller.

5 The term "gringo" was also used in a more general sense in the River Plate region to refer to a foreigner of European descent.

6 "El médico milagroso" is one of two stories that was added to the 1936 edition of Los gauchos judíos; the other is "El candelabro de plata" (The Silver Candelabra).
"El médico milagroso" describes Yarcho, a character who in many ways represents Duglach's double. The doctor demonstrates flexibility with regard to Jewish precepts: according to the narrator, Yarcho "era efectivamente algo epicúreo e infringía las reglas con sonriente distracción" 'was, in effect, somewhat of an epicure and broke the law with a smiling nonchalance' (175). His pragmatic attitude, medical expertise, and selfless service earn him the admiration of colonists and criollos alike: the rabbi of the colony declares, "'Era un santo. Nunca vi un judío más hondamente judío'" 'He was a saint. I never met a more profoundly Jewish Jew' (188). The local sheriff adds, "'Era un gran gaucho'" 'He was a great gaucho' (188). Like Duglach, Yarcho offers an alternative to the extreme positions represented by Rabí Abraham and Jacobo. He also serves as a successful model for limited assimilation.

1.2.3 Development of Recurring Characters and Themes

Although recurring characters function as collective protagonists in Los gauchos judíos, the story cycle format allows Gerchunoff to create characterizations of some individuality and depth. By presenting recurring characters in a variety of situations, the author reveals different aspects of their personalities. A series of three consecutive stories, for example, features Rabí Abraham. He makes his first appearance in "La siesta" (The Siesta); the brief description of his tallit, or prayer shawl, reflects his orthodoxy (23). The subsequent story, "Llegada de inmigrantes," presents Abraham as vain, detailing his attempt to embarrass another shochet in public: "El matarife de nuestra colonia discutía con el de Rosch Pina, á quien deseaba confundir en presencia de tantas personas con su inagotable sabiduría" 'Our colony's slaughterer was arguing with his counterpart from Rosch Pina, whom he hoped to confuse in front of so many people with
his infinite wisdom' (25). A third story, "La trilla," portrays Abraham's extreme religiosity: he privileges Czarist Russia over Argentina and criticizes the young colonists' approximation to gaucho culture (29).

Later stories, however, show Rabí Abraham to be a round, dynamic character. In "La visita," for example, Abraham's resemblance to a gaucho contrasts his earlier intractability: "Gaucha parecía también la silueta del judío de grandes barbas, extensa melena, nariz gibosa y alta frente, vestido de bombachas como los nativos del suelo y como ellos, con ancho tirador en la cintura" 'The Jewish man's silhouette, complete with long beard and hair, hooked nose, and high forehead, looked like that of a gaucho; like the natives, he was dressed in gaucho trousers and wore a wide belt around his waist' (97). During the visit, Abraham reverses his position from "La trilla," extolling the incomparable Entre Ríos sky as "'protector y suave' 'sheltering and soft' (99).

Abraham's enthusiasm wavers, however, when he is falsely accused of stealing a horse in "Historia de un caballo robado." The shochet speculates that anti-Semitism has followed the Jewish immigrants from Russia to Argentina (125). This and a second incident, Abraham's death at the hands of a criollo peon in "La muerte de Rabí Abraham" (The Death of Rabí Abraham), cast a pall over Gerchunoff's otherwise optimistic text, prompting the reader to reconsider the reasons behind Abraham's initial hard-line stance against assimilation.

As the above examples illustrate, some criollos in Los gauchos judíos appear as perpetrators of crimes against the colonists. Gerchunoff, however, juxtaposes stories to portray the gaucho's good and bad qualities. "El boyero" (The Herdsman) and "La visita," for example, feature nearly identical criollo characters: don Remigio Calamaco
and don Estanislao Benitez, respectively. The author emphasizes their function as archetypes: he describes Calamaco as "uno de los tipos más característicos de la colonia" 'one of the most characteristic types in the colony' (54), and Benitez as "una de las figuras más típicas de la colonia" 'one of most typical figures in the colony' (92). In "La visita," Gerchunoff compares the two directly: "Como don Remigio Calamaco, el boyero ilustre de Rajil, don Estanislao era noble, valiente y analfabeto" 'Like don Remigio Calamaco, the illustrious herdsman of Rajil, don Estanislao was noble, brave, and illiterate' (93).

The characterizations of Benitez and Calamaco show two sides of a single coin. Benitez illustrates the gauchos' potential to be good neighbors: he invites Abraham's family to his home in "La visita," and vouches for the honesty of the Jewish colonists in "Historia de un caballo robado" (124-25). Calamaco, on the other hand, represents Benitez's dopplegänger: by killing his own son for retreating during a knife fight, Calamaco serves as a reminder of the gauchos' impulsively violent nature.

Gerchunoff's account of the filicide is characteristically ambivalent. Some witnesses justify the murder as a condemnation of cowardice, expressing their approval "con murmullos de admiración por el anciano criollo" 'with murmurs of admiration for the old criollo' (61); the narrator, meanwhile, describes the episode as a worthy end to Calamaco's life as a warrior (58). Nevertheless, the story concludes with the pathetic image of Calamaco rotting away in a jail cell (62).

Gerchunoff's stories present contrary facets of themes as well as characters, and the order in which the stories appear calls into question the traditional reading of Los gauchos judíos as an assimilationist text. A series of seven consecutive stories, for example, illustrates how Gerchunoff develops the theme of miscegenation in the text.
The first three feature relationships between *criollos*—or creolized Jewish boys—and Jewish maidens. "El cantar de los cantares" (The Song of Songs) treats the budding romance between Esther and Jaime; the story does not specify whether Jaime is an assimilated Jew or a *criollo*, but the Hebrew origin of his name suggests the former. Fittingly, his name means "supplanter" or "substitute": by proposing to Esther, Jaime disrupts plans for a profitable arranged marriage between Esther and another Jewish boy in neighboring San Miguel. The narrator appears to favor Jaime by contrasting the physical stature of the two prospective grooms: he describes Jaime as "robusto como un roble y agil como una ardilla" 'strong as an oak and agile as a squirrel' (38); his rival, on the other hand, is a "manco" 'cripple' (39).

In "Las lamentaciones," Jacobo courts Raquel as elder colonists observe Tisha B'Av, the commemoration of the loss of Jerusalem. Although the story, like "El cantar de los cantares," pairs two Jews, Jacobo's indiscriminate appropriation of *criollo* customs makes him a troublesome match for Raquel. The elders' cries continue throughout the romantic interlude, and Jacobo's disregard for the solemnity of the occasion suggests negligence with regard to his religious obligations.

The next story, "El episodio de Miryam," treats the relationship between the titular character, described as a dignified Jewish girl (52), and Rogelio Miguez, a *criollo* peon with don Juan-like credentials: according to the narrator, "ninguno podía ostentar en su biografía tantas aventuras de amor" 'no one else could boast of so many romantic conquests' (48). Although the Jewish colonists admire Rogelio's honesty and hard work, they disapprove of his romance with Miryam and criticize the girl for her liberal conduct
(51). The couple stages a dramatic escape on horseback during the Passover celebration; their timing emphasizes Miryam's break with Jewish precepts.7

Gerchunoff follows the three stories featuring problematic romances with a second set of three stories, each of which describes the Jewish immigrants' criollo neighbors as murderous. In "El boyero," don Remigio Calamaco kills his son, and don Goyo, a peon, murders the shochet in cold blood in "La muerte de Rabí Abraham." The next story, "La lechuza" (The Owl), describes a mother's concern as she waits for her son, Moisés, to return home. Her fear that Moisés has fallen victim to roaming criollo bandits proves prescient when, at story's end, his riderless white horse appears with a bloody saddle (75).

A seventh story, "Las bodas de Camacho," returns to the theme of criollo/Jewish relationships. Young Jewish maiden Raquel flees with Gabriel, her dashing gaucho boyfriend, on the night of her arranged marriage to Pascual Liske, a wealthy Jewish boy. Her decision can be read as liberation from a loveless marriage: Raquel clearly prefers Gabriel to the awkward and dim-witted Liske, but marries the latter out of obligation (78). The three preceding stories, however, represent the escalating threat of gaucho violence within and around the Jewish colony, implicating the brash young criollos who literally whisk Jewish maidens off their feet. By sandwiching these stories between "El episodio de Miryam" and "Las bodas de Camacho," Gerchunoff calls into question the safety of relationships between Jews and non-Jews; consequently, the sequence reads as a warning, rather than as an endorsement, of miscegenation.

7 In this sense, "El episodio de Miryam" inverts the story of the biblical Exodus, which was precipitated by the events commemorated during Passover.
A later story, "La triste del lugar," reflects on the discussion of criollo/Jewish relationships. The protagonist, Jeved, exhibits all of the qualities of Gerchunoff's archetypal Jewish maiden: she is strong, honest, beautiful, and industrious. She surpasses her peers, however, as a paradigm of moral and spiritual perfection: the narrator compares her to a priestess and a mystic, and remarks that her words have a prayer-like quality (148-49). Although many suitors compete for her affections, Jeved finds happiness with Lázaro, a crippled Jewish youth whose physical defect recalls Esther's fiancé in "El cantar de los cantares." Jeved's choice represents an alternate ending to the earlier stories: having weighed the potentially disastrous consequences of mixed relationships, Gerchunoff offers an example of a blissful Jewish couple.

1.3 Conclusion

Los gauchos judíos represents a model short story cycle. Each of the text's stories, while capable of standing alone, contributes to a larger narrative. Interconnective elements including unity of setting, sporadic first-person narration, collective protagonists, recurring characters, and motifs link the cycle's stories, which Gerchunoff sequences thematically rather than chronologically.

Although many critics read Los gauchos judíos as an endorsement of the official "melting pot" ideology of the 1910 Argentine Centennial, Gerchunoff's cycle consistently affirms Jewish identity. The author celebrates the freedom of the early days of Jewish agricultural colonization by describing the colonies as autonomous spaces where communities observe Jewish laws and traditions; he also uses collective protagonists to illustrate the compatibility of Jewishness and Argentineness. Gerchunoff appeals to the
shared history of colonists and criollos by casting the Jewish farmers as biblical Hebrews, neo-Sephardim, and gauchos, and offers two characters, Favel Duglach and Nahum Yarcho, as prototypes for limited assimilation. Gerchunoff's vision of a new period of *convivencia*, however, succumbs to nagging doubts about the colonists' non-Jewish neighbors: the image of the impulsively violent gaucho resonates in stories featuring romances between criollos and colonists, and accounts of anti-Semitism raise questions about the safety of interacting with non-Jews. The threat to the colonists escalates as the stories unfold, and the text as a whole reflects Gerchunoff's growing apprehensions with respect to the future of Jews in Latin America.

As the first author to represent the Jewish immigrant's perspective on agricultural colonization in Latin America, Gerchunoff established a precedent for later authors who wrote on the same subject. Rebeca Mactas, Frida Alexandr, and Adão Voloch also created cycles to fictionalize their experiences as children growing up in Jewish farming communities; like Gerchunoff, they portray assimilation as a painful and potentially futile process. In the next chapter, I demonstrate how *Los gauchos judíos* functions as a "model cycle" for Mactas, Alexandr, and Voloch, three authors who likely used Gerchunoff's masterpiece as a structural, stylistic, and thematic template.
Los gauchos judíos, hailed as "the founding work of Jewish Latin American writing" (Florinda Goldberg 506), represents one of the earliest attempts to narrate the experience of Jewish immigrants to Latin America. While his text is innovative in the above respects, Gerchunoff's use of the short story cycle reflects the times during which the author wrote: by 1910, the story cycle was a well-established and widely cultivated, if yet unnamed, international tradition.

2.1 Russian Influences: Sholem Aleichem

In Gerchunoff's native Russia, several short story cycles had already been published by the mid-nineteenth century, including Alexander Pushkin's The Tales of Belkin (1831), Nikolai Gogol's Evenings on a Farm near Dikanka (1831), Mikhail Lermontov's A Hero of Our Time (1840), and Ivan Turgenev's A Sportsman's Sketches (1855). A few decades later Russian Yiddish writer Sholem Aleichem's Menakhem-Mendl and Tevye the Dairyman series, published in installments between 1892-1913 and 1894-1916, respectively, likely furnished Gerchunoff with models for his masterpiece. Maggi Salgado Gordon, who elaborates the Aleichem-Gerchunoff connection, bases her comparison of Tevye the Dairyman and Los gauchos judíos on the authors'
representations of Jewish communities destined to disappear: Aleichem describes life in the Eastern European Jewish shtetl of Kasrilevke, a fictional town based on Voronka, Ukraine, while Gerchunoff portrays the Jewish agricultural colonies of the Argentine pampas ("Gerchunoff, Alberto" 189). Both texts, while capturing a foregone era for subsequent generations of readers, also resemble one another structurally, as illustrated by separate critical studies of Aleichem's and Gerchunoff's works.

As with Los gauchos judíos, some scholars hesitate to categorize Tevye the Dairyman within a specific genre. Hugh Denman identifies the work as a cycle (385); others mention features that suggest a cycle without explicitly using the term. Stavans, observing the similarities between Gerchunoff's and Aleichem's texts, acknowledges that the individual stories of each author, when combined in a single volume, produce a gestalt: "Both books are mere successions of disjointed episodes but achieve the stature of epics in scope and ambition, a quality Gerchunoff dreamed of achieving as he imagined the multilayered dimensions of the colonies in Entre Ríos" ("Foreword" xxii).

While Stavans describes Los gauchos judíos and Tevye the Dairyman as collections of vignettes with a limited degree of cohesiveness, Hillel Halkin contends that Tevye, by virtue of the relationship between the stories, qualifies as a great Jewish novel (x). In order to defend his argument, Halkin must first address Tevye's publication history, which is typical of many short story cycles but atypical for a novel. The text's eight stories appeared separately over a twenty-two year period, beginning with "Tevye Strikes it Rich" (1894; revised 1897) and ending with "Lekh-Lekho" (1914; revised version published posthumously in 1916); Aleichem authorized the printing of the first
six episodes in a single volume titled *Tevye the Dairyman* in 1911, and later editions included the two additional episodes.

Although Halkin identifies *Tevye the Dairyman* as a novel, the text's publication history suggests a completed cycle—the type of cycle in which the author writes the first installments prior to conceiving the series (Ingram 18). Furthermore, *Tevye* evidences the characteristic features of the short story cycle. Halkin himself recognizes the repeated pattern of rise, fall, and recovery in each episode, and notes that the independent stories, when grouped together, complement and complete one another: "But though it certainly is true that each episode of *Tevye* can be read as a story in itself (which is undoubtedly how some of its original readers, not all of whom were familiar with what came before, did read it), and true too that each shares basic patterns with the others, it is equally clear that each builds on the previous installments and that there is a definite development from one chapter to the next" (xx).

Halkin's assessment echoes that of Gerchunoff, who in his 1934 essay "Semblanza de Schalom Aleijem" (Biographical Sketch of Sholem Aleichem) characterizes *Tevye* as an unorthodox novel for its lack of a central plot: "Su obra es una novela cómica y poética, sin trabazón de asunto central, en que el protagonista se subdivide en la multiplicidad de figuras que, a fuerza de ser prolijamente reales, acaban por adquirir la fijeza de un símbolo" 'His work is a comic and poetic novel, without a unifying central plot, in which the protagonist is subdivided in a series of realistically and meticulously crafted figures who consistently achieve symbolic status' (*El pino y la palmera* 48). Gerchunoff's reading points out features consistent with the short story cycle: by describing *Tevye* as a novel without an arc, for example, he alludes to the
interconnectedness of the stories while recognizing their ability to stand alone as individual pieces. Gerchunoff also notes Tevye's role as a collective protagonist who both represents the shtetl community and embodies Jewish suffering (49). Similarly, the author of Los gauchos judíos groups episodic vignettes and makes frequent use of archetypal characters; like Aleichem, he also added two stories to a second edition of his work.

Although the 1911 edition of Tevye the Dairyman appeared one year after the initial publication of Los gauchos judíos, seven of the eight stories in the Tevye series had been published and widely circulated by 1909; therefore their influence on Gerchunoff's masterpiece is plausible. Gerchunoff's reverence for Aleichem, whom he compares to his beloved Cervantes—as well as to Gogol, Charles Dickens, and Mark Twain—in the above-mentioned "Semblanza de Schalom Aleijem" (50), increases the likelihood that the author of Los gauchos judíos sought to emulate Aleichem in his own work. Furthermore, Gerchunoff's specific reference to Tevye's structure in the same essay, which indicates his awareness of the stories' cohesiveness, reveals a potential source of inspiration for the composition and arrangement of Los gauchos judíos. As if to confirm this influence, Gerchunoff concludes his essay with a reference to Aleichem's epitaph: "Aquí yace Schalom Aleijem!...Sí: aquí yace, en efecto; yace en cada uno de nosotros" "Here lies Sholem Aleichem"...Yes, here he lies, in effect; he lies in each one of us' (52).

2.2 Spanish American Influences: Horacio Quiroga and Leopoldo Lugones

While Gerchunoff's use of the short story cycle places him within an established Russian literary tradition, the author of Los gauchos judíos also numbers among the
earliest practitioners of the genre in Spanish America, where the short story traditionally has enjoyed a prestige approaching that of the novel. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw active production of Spanish American short story collections (Miguel Gomes 575), some composed by close friends of Gerchunoff, including Uruguayan Horacio Quiroga and Argentine Leopoldo Lugones.

Gerchunoff's essays eulogizing these two authors suggest Quiroga's and Lugones's influence on the writing of Los gauchos judíos. For example, Gerchunoff recognizes man's struggle versus nature as the common theme linking Quiroga's tropical stories ("Horacio Quiroga," Figuras de nuestro tiempo 195), some of which were published in the volume Los perseguidos (1905; The Persecuted). Although Gerchunoff tends toward idyllic descriptions of farm life, he also recounts the colonists' battles with swarms of locust and sudden downpours. Furthermore he, like Quiroga, uses recurring themes to create continuity in his cycle.

The title of Lugones's La guerra gaucha hints at its likely influence on Gerchunoff, 1 who in a 1938 essay acknowledges his debt to the Argentine writer and statesman: "No se perfiló desde el comienzo del siglo [veinte] un hombre de letras que no debiera algo a Lugones. Bajo su signo dominante se caldeó una etapa de nuestra cultura literaria" 'Since the beginning of the [20th] century, there has not been a single man of letters unindebted to Lugones. Beneath his dominant sign an era of our literary culture came to life' ("Leopoldo Lugones," Figuras de nuestro tiempo 75). In "Dos palabras" (A Few Words), Lugones's prologue to La guerra gaucha, the author's description of his

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1 Viñas and Aizenberg consider La guerra gaucha a predecessor to Los gauchos judíos, but for reasons different from those that I describe here. Viñas notes similarities in Lugones's and Gerchunoff's use of antiquated Spanish and says that both texts share an "orientación nacional" 'national orientation' (78-79). Aizenberg points to Lugones's glorification of the gaucho archetype as a model for Gerchunoff (Parricide 18).
work matches that of a short story cycle; for example, he makes reference to the unity of
time, place, and theme that connects the stories: "Los episodios que la forman, intentan
dar una idea, lo más clara posible, de la lucha sostenida por montoneras y republiquetas
contra los ejércitos españoles que operaron en el Alto Perú y en Salta desde 1814 a 1818"
The episodes that comprise it [La guerra gaucha] attempt to offer, as clearly as possible,
an idea of the fight sustained by the insurgents and small republics against the Spanish
armies operating in Alto Peru and Salta between 1814 and 1818' (5). Lugones explains
that he initially intended to write a novel, but abandoned that idea upon realizing that the
project would have required multiple volumes, given the quantity of material and number
of characters; rather, he decided to compose a series of stories featuring unnamed gaucho
protagonists, whose qualities he synthesizes in the final story, in the figure of General
Martín Miguel de Güemes (1785-1821) (5).

Lugones's characterization of the gaucho illustrates his use of the two types of
collective protagonist. On one hand, his individual insurgents, cast in the same mould,
function as a single central character; on the other hand, Güemes, by embodying their
traits, represents the entire group. As I explained in Chapter 1, Gerchunoff also makes
use of both types of collective protagonist; furthermore he, like Lugones, presents the
duality of the gaucho figure, juxtaposing descriptions of their binge drinking and
impulsive violence with tales of their courage, nobility, and gift for storytelling.

Aleichem, Quiroga, and Lugones, contemporaries for whom Gerchunoff
expresses profound admiration, provided the author of Los gauchos judíos with ready
models for his own short story cycle; each uses setting, recurring themes, and collective
protagonists to create connections between the stories in his respective work. Given
these important precedents and the popularization of the short story cycle during the late
nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, *Los gauchos judíos* reflects the times in which
Gerchunoff lived and wrote; nevertheless his masterpiece, one of the earliest attempts to
narrate the Jewish perspective on immigration to Latin America, takes the genre in a new
direction. *Los gauchos judíos*'s innovative quality earned it canonical status and a
formidable literary legacy; as Aizenberg writes, "In one way or another every piece of
Argentine-Jewish, if not Latin American-Jewish, literature has had to dialogue with
Alberto Gerchunoff [...] and his story collection *Los gauchos judíos*" (*Books and Bombs*
17). As I discussed in the Introduction, Aizenberg focuses her study of Gerchunoff's
legacy on "parricides"—Jewish authors of fiction and non-fiction including Viñas,
Sosnowski, Senkman, Mario Szichman, and Gerardo Mario Goloboff—who accuse
Gerchunoff of idealizing the immigrant experience and advocating the total assimilation
of Jews to dominant culture (*Books and Bombs* 23-39; *Parricide* 20-21). For reasons that
I explained in Chapter 1, however, such responses to Gerchunoff reflect a reductive
reading of his text; far from an apology for the Argentine establishment's melting pot
philosophy, *Los gauchos judíos* calls into question the possibility of negotiating national,
religious, and ethnic identity.

Aizenberg's argument that both the 1910 and 1936 editions of *Los gauchos judíos*
express Gerchunoff's apprehensions, rather than unflagging optimism, regarding the
future of Jews in Argentina contradicts her earlier views and opens a new line of
discourse in Gerchunoff studies (*Books and Bombs* 68-74). If the parricides base their
criticism of *Los gauchos judíos* on misperceptions and oversimplifications, as she
suggests, then Gerchunoff's literary patrimony merits reevaluation. Are there Jewish
writers who treat the same period of Jewish immigration to Latin America and, unlike the parricides, echo Gerchunoff’s gnawing doubts in their own works? The following sections compare *Los gauchos judíos* to texts written by Argentine Rebeca Mactas and Brazilians Frida Alexandr and Adão Voloch, authors who fictionalize their experiences as children in the Jewish agricultural colonies. In order to show how Mactas's *Los judíos de Las Acacias*, Alexandr's *Filipson*, and Voloch's *O Colono Judeu-Açu* function as short story cycles, I identify the authors' use of interconnective elements, including unity of setting, collective protagonists, and recurring themes, characters, and patterns.

The points of comparison between the respective works of Gerchunoff, Mactas, Alexandr, and Voloch extend beyond the authors' choice of setting and their blending of autobiography and fiction in series of linked vignettes. Each portrays assimilation as a painful and potentially futile process that divides communities and families along generational lines, pitting defiant young colonists against their orthodox parents; their texts express doubts about the possibility of maintaining Jewish identity in predominantly Catholic Argentina and Brazil, where the colonists face threats of anti-Semitic violence and constant pressure to conform to dominant national culture. Unlike the parricides, Mactas, Alexandr, and Voloch emulate Gerchunoff by debating the value and the possibility of cultural immersion, which in their texts typically occurs at the expense of Jewishness. In some ways, the authors pick up where *Los gauchos judíos* leaves off; for example, Mactas, Alexandr, and, to a lesser extent, Voloch represent the thoughts of their female characters, whereas this perspective is virtually absent in Gerchunoff. The three authors, who like Gerchunoff describe the early days of agricultural colonization, also portray the subsequent decline and abandonment of the colonies, a period that neither the
1910 nor the 1936 edition of *Los gauchos judíos* treats. By continuing and expanding the sagas of the Jewish gaucho and gaucha, Mactas, Alexandr, and Voloch craft texts that read like sequels to Gerchunoff's landmark work. Consequently, they establish themselves as Gerchunoff's legitimate literary heirs.

2.3 Rebeca Mactas's *Los judíos de Las Acacias* as a Short Story Cycle

*Los judíos de Las Acacias*, published in the same year (1936) as the second edition of *Los gauchos judíos*, includes seven stories set on Jewish homesteads in the Mauricio colony (Senkman, *La identidad judía* 65). Mactas was born in Carlos Casares, a Jewish farming community in Mauricio, in 1910, just before what historian Theodore Norman calls the 1911-1912 "zenith" of Jewish agricultural colonization in Argentina (83); her stories reflect the years of stagnation that followed. The number of Jews in the Argentine colonies remained static throughout most of the 1920s, as new arrivals compensated for those who left; a steady decline in the Jewish population in the farming communities, however, began in the first half of the 1930s (Norman 124; 130), setting the stage for Mactas's text.

Aizenberg's contention that every Jewish Latin American author dialogs in some way with *Los gauchos judíos* resonates with respect to *Los judíos de Las Acacias*, in which Mactas engages Gerchunoff on several different levels. Like Gerchunoff, Mactas blends autobiography and fiction to describe the lives of Jewish farmers in the pampas. Her cycle treats a later, and less idealistic, stage of Jewish agricultural colonization than does *Los gauchos judíos*; consequently, the tone of her text is notably darker than that of
Gerchunoff’s stories. These differences notwithstanding, there is considerable continuity between *Los gauchos judíos* and *Los judíos de Las Acacias*.

Mactas’s text shows her borrowing Gerchunoff’s literal and figurative language; for example, her references to her older male characters as "rabí" hint at Gerchunoff’s influence. According to Aizenberg, Gerchunoff’s original use of the title "rabí" as a substitute for the Yiddish "reb," or "mister," represented an appropriation and new contextualization of the medieval Spanish term for "rabbi" (*Parricide* 26); it also reflects Gerchunoff’s comparison of Jewish colonists to medieval Spanish Sephardic Jews throughout *Los gauchos judíos*. In *Los judíos de Las Acacias*, Mactas follows suit by replacing "reb" with "rabí," most prominently in the titular story featuring Rabí Fatel, Rabí Mosché, and Rabí Menasché. If Aizenberg’s etymology is accurate, then Mactas’s use of "rabí" subtly suggests a connection between Gerchunoff’s text and her own.

Again in the titular story, Mactas’s description of Rabí Fatel’s weathered face echoes a metaphor that recurs in *Los gauchos judíos*; like Gerchunoff, she compares the old man’s wrinkles to plow lines: "El rostro de Rabí Fatel se surca de mil arrugas de satisfacción" 'Rabí Fatel’s face is furrowed by a thousand wrinkles of satisfaction' (82). Rabí Fatel recalls Moisés in Gerchunoff’s "La trilla": on the occasion of his first harvest, Moisés cries tears of joy that run down his "mejillas aradas por una larga miseria" ’cheeks furrowed by his long misery’ (31). Gerchunoff consistently uses this metaphor both to evoke the Jews’ millennia of suffering in the diaspora and to underscore the colonists’ ties to the land; in "Las lamentaciones," for example, the narrator’s direct address to Moisés, who may or may not be the same character from "La trilla," begins with a description of "tu cara pálida, arada por el dolor como la tierra de tus hijos por el arado" ’your pale face,
furrowed by pain like the land of your sons is furrowed by the plow' (43). Mactas's use of similar figurative language in her own stories underscores the resilience of Las Acacias's aged colonists, who cling to their farms through good times and bad.

While the above examples show Mactas ringing Gerchunoffian bells on a semantic level, the similarities between Los gauchos judíos and Los judíos de Las Acacias run deeper. Gerchunoff's text probably provided Mactas with a ready model of how to portray the Jewish colonists' experiences through a series of interrelated stories. Her own short story cycle uses many of the same narrative strategies employed by Gerchunoff: like Los gauchos judíos, Los judíos de Las Acacias features unity of setting, shifts in narrative voice and perspective, recurring themes and patterns, and both types of collective protagonist. The repetition of these components throughout her text links the individual stories, placing them in dialogue with one another and lending the volume its cohesiveness.

Like many short story cycles, Los judíos de Las Acacias includes stories that had been published independently prior to appearing in a volume: "Fuego" and "La vuelta del hijo" were originally printed in the newspaper Judaica in 1935 and 1936, respectively (Ana E. Weinstein and Miryam E. Gover de Nasatsky 6). While capable of standing alone, the seven stories with short, descriptive titles show the author working over many of the same ideas and character types. As the title of her book suggests, Mactas focuses on a particular community and geographical space; with the exception of one flashback episode set in the city in "La vuelta del hijo" (104-108), the stories take place exclusively in Las Acacias, maintaining an outward gaze toward Russia and Buenos Aires. Los judíos de Las Acacias's subtitle, cuentos de la vida campesina (Stories of Farm Life),
indicates a common subject for each of the stories; it also recalls Gerchunoff's stated goal of depicting the customs of the Jewish farmers in *Los gauchos judíos* ("Autobiografía," *Entre Ríos* 34).

Mactas, like Gerchunoff, uses a variety of narrative voices in order to tell the stories of the Jewish farmers. Each of the stories in *Los judíos de Las Acacias* is preceded by a poem that functions as an epigraph; some reflect the voices of the stories' protagonists, and others, the voice of an unidentified poet. For example, the poem that introduces the first story, "La casa," features three different voices, beginning with a first-person narrator who announces, "He aquí la voz de Jaim, campesino judío / de corazón afable, sereno, honrado y pío" 'Listen to the voice of Jaim, a Jewish farmer / whose gentle heart is serene, honorable, and pious' (5). Mactas's opening reproduces the invocatory quality of *Los gauchos judíos*’s first sentence, which reads: "He ahí, hermanos de las colonias y de las ciudades, que la república celebra sus grandes fiestas, las fiestas pascuales de su liberación" 'Behold my brothers of the colonies and the cities: the Republic is celebrating its great festival, the paschal feast of its independence' (1). The synonymous expressions "he aquí" and "he ahí" with which Mactas and Gerchunoff, respectively, begin their texts address the reader and direct his attention. In Mactas's case, the epigraph's first line also offers an immediate indication of the narrative shifts that characterize her text: the first-person narrator quotes Jaim Kahn, the story's protagonist, whose verses in turn quote Psalms 6:6, attributed to David.

The phrase "he aquí" recurs in Mactas's stories, interrupting the flow of third-person narration with occasional reminders of the presence of a first-person narrator; these interjections give the accounts a testimonial quality, as if to confirm their accuracy.
In *Los gauchos judíos*, the first-person narrator who concludes "Las bodas de Camacho" plays a similar role, although Gerchunoff uses first-person narrators more frequently, and in different ways, than does Mactas. Some of Gerchunoff's first-person narrators, for example, offer substantial commentary on a story's events, as in "Historia de un caballo robado"; others tell entire stories, as in "El surco." Both Gerchunoff and Mactas, however, intersperse first-person apostrophe throughout predominantly third-person narratives; the two also use a variety of techniques to represent the perspectives of their characters.

Like Gerchunoff, Mactas reproduces the speech of her Jewish farmers through dialogue. On occasion, she uses interior monologue; that is, she directly quotes her characters' thoughts, as in the following passage from "Primaveras": "Solo [sic] en la soledad y en medio de la Naturaleza me siento bien' pensó Miriam mientras se encaminanba a su casa por la carretera bañada por los últimos rayos solares" "I only feel good when I'm alone and surrounded by Nature," thought Miriam as she walked home along the road bathed by the day's last rays of sun' (142).^2^ More often, however, Mactas uses free indirect speech to grant the reader temporary access to her characters' minds. Mactas's narrator sometimes assumes the perspectives of several different characters within the same story, as the following excerpts from "Los judíos de 'Las Acacias'" illustrate. Neighbors lament the lack of a suitor for Clara, the town's only marriageable Jewish girl: "Pero, ¿de dónde, ay, sacarle el premio?" 'Ay, but where to find her prize [a young Jewish husband]?' (86); Rabí Mosché resents the loss of his farm: "¡Tanta cosa viva, material, surgió de ella [la tierra] con

^2^ I retain the original punctuation of Mactas's texts in all citations.
ayuda de sus manos! ¡Y otros la poseen ahora! ¡Otros dicen a boca llena: es mía; sólo mía! ¡Ay, cuánta injusticia!" "So many living things had sprouted there [in the land] with the help of his hands! And others owned it now! Others proclaim: it's mine, all mine! Ay, what injustice!' (91); and Rabí Menashé feverishly reacts to his apocalyptic dream: "¡Sí! ¡Que se hundieran todos! ¡Que sufrieran y murieran como su primera mujer, sus hijos, su nieto, agotándose en un calabozo!" 'Yes! May they all sink! May they all suffer and die like his first wife, his children, his grandson, wasting away in a jail cell' (95).

Similarly, Mactas's narrator inhabits several members of an ostracized family in "Primaveras," introducing the reader to the colonists' cruelty through the eyes of mother Fanny (125), revealing the extent of her son José's suffering for the sake of his sister, Miriam (134), and capturing Miriam's panic when she fears that she has lost her only chance at happiness (150-51).

In Los judíos de Las Acacias, the combination of free indirect speech and present-tense narration, which lends a sense of immediacy to the stories, creates the illusion that reader and character are experiencing thoughts and emotions simultaneously. Mactas uses this technique in the two stories cited immediately above, as well as in "Corazón sencillo" and "Un hombre de campo." Free indirect speech reveals the thoughts of several characters in "Corazón sencillo" including Eva (42), David (43), Mauricio (35), and don Marcos (45); long passages in which they wrangle with difficult decisions are narrated in the present tense (38-47; 48-51), allowing the reader to follow the characters' thoughts in "real time." Mactas achieves the same effect in "Un hombre de campo," as the unnamed protagonist faces the dilemma of mortgaging his farm in order to bail his son, a communist sympathizer, out of jail.
While Mactas uses the present tense to rachet up the emotional charge of her narrative, Gerchunoff's present-tense narration has the opposite effect. The second through fifth stories of *Los gauchos judíos*, for example, open with idyllic descriptions of the landscape, all narrated in the third person, present tense. The passages, which portray the harmonious interaction of the colonists with nature, convey peace and calm.

With regard to her characterizations, however, Mactas often follows Gerchunoff's lead. Many of the Jewish colonists of Las Acacias, like those of Entre Ríos, have strong ties to the land, and some even have a heightened perception of nature. Jaim Kahn, for example, feels the pulse of the earth in "La casa" (26). In "Corazón sencillo," protagonist Eva "hears" the countryside's mute language (47; 50); similarly Natán, the titular son in "La vuelta del hijo," hears a mysterious voice that welcomes him back to the farm (114).

Similarities in traits, values, and thoughts among characters such as Jaim, Eva, and Natán reflect Mactas's use of collective protagonists. The author develops three principal types of characters, each of which represents a group within Las Acacias. These include the original settlers who continue to farm into their old age; their sons or siblings, who have migrated to the city but return to visit; and their daughters, who, whether bound by a sense of duty or lacking an opportunity to leave, stay on in the colony.

Unlike Gerchunoff, whose text features Rabí Abraham, Jacobo, and others in multiple stories, Mactas seldom uses recurring characters; she does, however, repeat the above types throughout *Los judíos de Las Acacias*. The repetition creates continuity in

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3 Marcos of "Corazón sencillo" and his namesake in "Fuego" probably represent the same character at different stages of his life: as "Fuego" confirms, both have nephews named David (61). If indeed the two Marcos are one, he is the cycle's only recurring character.
the text: most of the stories pit an old farmer against a brother, son, or nephew who lives in the city. The diametrically-opposed pairs include Jaim and his son, Abraham, in "La casa"; Marcos and his nephew, David, in "Corazón sencillo"; Marcos and his brother, Simón, in "Fuego"; several sets of parents and children in "Los judíos de 'Las Acacias'"; and an unnamed father and his son, Benjamín, in "Un hombre de campo." Two stories, "La vuelta del hijo" and "Primaveras," present idealistic youth who, having left Las Acacias for the city, later return disillusioned to the colony. The patterned appearance of archetypes that embody established sets of ideals links the stories thematically: all seven stories, for example, place country and city in conflict with one another (Lockhart, "Mactas, Rebeca" 359).

While men in Los judíos de Las Acacias typically represent opposite positions on the city/country dichotomy, the young female characters, including Eva in "Corazón sencillo," Clara in "Los judíos de 'Las Acacias,'" and Miriam in "Primaveras," occupy the space in between: their destinies are tied to suitors and fathers on both sides. Reminiscent of Gerchunoff’s "biblical heroines," Mactas's female characters share similar qualities, roles, and limitations. Because they are honorable daughters, their movement is restricted to the colony until or unless the family moves, or marriage to a Jewish man relocates them to the city. Although Gerchunoff’s Jewish maidens rebel against patriarchal Jewish orthodoxy by fleeing with gaucho boyfriends, the female characters in Los judíos de Las Acacias resign themselves to life on the farm and, in the case of Eva, even embrace sacrifice and service.

Mactas's three character types represent factions within the colony: the author distinguishes between several groups by describing differences related to gender,
religiosity, and preference for the country or the city. As is the case with Los gauchos judíos, however, the title of Los judíos de Las Acacias refers to the entire community as a collective protagonist, and Mactas attributes particular thoughts, attitudes, and behavior to the group as a whole. For example, the story "Los judíos de 'Las Acacias,'" which condenses the text's gallery of characters (Senkman, La identidad judía 67), shows the neighbors thinking, speaking, and acting collectively: they smile and sigh in response to the phonograph music that drifts through the still town each late afternoon, and turn their eyes toward the cemetery as one (79). The neighbors share both a bleak view of death, which they associate with nothingness, and a diasporic consciousness evidenced by their identification with a Jewish liturgical chant (80). "Primaveras" dates the farmers' collective qualities to the early days of colonization; in passages reminiscent of Gerchunoff's "Llegada de inmigrantes" and "El himno, " Mactas's narrator describes the pioneers' camaraderie and initial optimism: "Entonces aún se hallaba bien trabado el nudo de la Colonia. Sosteníanla la esperanza latente en cada campesino por una propiedad no lejana" 'Back then the ties between the colonists were still tight. It [the colony] was sustained by each farmer's latent hope for a nearby property' (124).

Although the above passage suggests later dissension among the colonists, "Primaveras" illustrates how the farmers continue to present a united front, albeit in a negative sense, by ostracizing a family. The community disowns Fanny for an undisclosed error in her youth (125) and shuns Fanny's husband Moisés, daughter Miriam, and son José. When a young man, Juan, returns to Las Acacias in search of work, his relationship with Miriam places him at odds with the colonists; they refuse to
hire him for even the most menial jobs and label him as a communist (153-54), in effect exiling him back to the city.

Like Gerchunoff, Mactas uses two types of collective protagonists to underscore her characters' fundamental similarities and differences. A common bond that connects the colonists to Las Acacias and to one another prompts collective thought and behavior, while their division into three basic types results in predictable interaction and inevitable conflict. The dynamic between the characters plays out in the text's recurring plotlines and themes; movement in and out of Las Acacias, for example, figures prominently in each story and often precipitates the action. Complications ensue when ex-colonists return to Las Acacias from the city in "La casa," "Corazón sencillo," "Fuego," "La vuelta del hijo," and "Primaveras"; in "Los judíos de 'Las Acacias'" and "Un hombre de campo," Jewish farmers second-guess their decisions to send their children to the city to study. Brothers, sons, and nephews leave in search of business and educational opportunities, and some come back seeking financial assistance or spiritual regeneration; their arrivals disrupt the peaceful monotony of Las Acacias, where old colonists cling to their land and their way of life. The colonists' daughters, including Eva in "Corazón sencillo," Clara in "Los judíos de 'Las Acacias'" and Miriam in "Primaveras," experience a state of paralysis; male characters revolve around the young women, whose movement is restricted by standards and expectations within the Jewish community.

The contrast between movement and rootedness in each story introduces themes related to the city/country dichotomy. Mactas's characterizations of Abraham in "La casa," David in "Corazón sencillo," and Simón in "Fuego," for example, suggest that migration to the city estranges ex-colonists from traditional Jewish values. On the other
hand, old farmers including Jaim Kahn in "La casa," Marcos in "Fuego," and the entire cast of neighbors in "Los judíos de 'Las Acacias'" share a commitment both to the county and to Jewish tradition. Consequently land ownership, which represents prosperity, financial security, and status within the colony, also ensures the continuity of Jewish religious practice in the Argentine pampas.

2.4 Frida Alexandr's Filipson as a Short Story Cycle

Frida Alexandr's Filipson describes life in the first Jewish agricultural colony in Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. Founded in 1904, the colony was named for Franz Philippson, then-JCA vice-president. Although she was born two years later, Alexandr documents the pioneers' migration and settlement in her account, which covers nearly two decades in the colony. Her text had a long period of incubation, beginning with the bedtime stories that Alexandr used to tell her three children (Igel, "Brazilian Jewish Women Writers" 69). At their urging she began to write down her memories; the process, which took twenty years to complete, culminated in the publication of Filipson in 1967, some forty years after the author had left the colony. On the text's flaps, Samuel Szwarg attributes the delay to Alexandr's concern that the events and people in her stories be represented fairly and accurately; the author corroborates Szwarg's point in the story "Jankel 'Chinder'" (Jankel the Swindler) by stating her goal of objectivity with regard to her characterizations: "Minha intenção é a de analisá-los com imparcialidade, separando as impressões por vezes injustas que a mente da criança ou do adolescente é suscetível de gravar" 'My intention is to analyze them impartially, removing the occasionally unfair impressions that the mind of a child or adolescent may record' (166).
In the same story, Alexandr alludes to the autobiographical nature of her work by describing the slow process of reconstructing events and characterizations from fragments of memories (167-68). *Filipson* consists principally of first-hand accounts from the author's childhood and adolescence in the colony; Alexandr acknowledges, however, the limits of her memory, which raise questions about the reliability of her text. In "Os Nicelovich ou o Furto do Anel" (The Nicelovichs or the Theft of the Ring), for example, Alexandr struggles to recall details about the Nicelovich family; she admits to forgetting the name of one of the sons and introduces the possibility that she has erred while listing the children (84). When she mentions "Old Man Moritz" in the same story, Alexandr adds parenthetically, "Para mim todo chefe de família era velho" 'For me every head of a household was old' (86). These and other passages register the challenges of narrating the past: in *Filipson*, Alexandr must reconcile her perspectives as a young girl and mature woman while working through forgetfulness, time, and distance.

With the exception of four stories—"Viagem a Uruguaiana" (Trip to Uruguaiana), "D. Corina" (Ms. Corina), "Regresso a Filipson" (Return to Filipson), and "Santa Maria" (the name of a nearby town)—Alexandr's first-hand accounts are set in Filipson. Some date from her earliest childhood memories: in "Encontro Com a Vida" (Life's Encounters), for example, Alexandr recreates her perspective as a young girl as she describes events related to the death of an infant sibling (46); in the next story, "Ciganos" (Gypsies), she claims to recall an incident from her childhood "como se o estivesse vivendo agora" 'as if I were living it right now' (52). The author also portrays events that she could not have witnessed, either because they occurred outside the colony or
happened too early for her to remember. In these cases, Alexandr relies on second-hand accounts that she assimilates into a master narrative.

Her task becomes more challenging when family and neighbors suppress information considered inappropriate for the young girl's ears. In "Pecy, a Nora" (Pecy the Daughter-in-Law), for example, Frida tries in vain to eavesdrop as her sister Adélia and a friend discuss matters related to marriage (56); in "O 'Rebale'' (The Hebrew Instructor), Alexandr pieces together "alusões veladas, palavras apanhadas no ar e perguntas que apenas recebiam meias respostas" 'veiled allusions, words plucked from the air, and questions that were answered only halfway' (102) in an effort to explain the death of a local Hebrew teacher. The author comments later in the same passage that she has used her imagination to fill in gaps in the story (102); she makes a similar remark in the first paragraph of "Jankel 'Chinder,'" when her memory fails her: "Barba, não me recordo se [Chinder] a tinha. E, se a tivesse, deveria ser loura e rala. É assim que a imagino" 'I don't remember if he [Chinder] had a beard. And if he did, it was probably blond and thin. That's how I imagine it' (167). Such examples point to the intersection of autobiography and fiction in Alexandr's work; as a result of this hybridism, Filipson resists easy classification within a single genre.

Although Filipson's subtitle, Memórias da primeira colônia judaica no Rio Grande do Sul (Memoir of the First Jewish Colony in Rio Grande do Sul), identifies the work as a memoir, critical readings reflect the challenge of categorizing Alexandr's text. Carlos Rizzini, the author of Filipson's preface, casts Alexandr as both a novelist and an historian; he explains that her autobiographical text, which faithfully captures a particular historical moment, reads like a novel composed by a gifted storyteller (11-12). Igel refers
to Filipson by alternating terms that suggest the text's fictive and historical qualities; in Imigrantes Judeus/Escritores Brasileiros (Jewish Immigrants/Brazilian Writers), for example, she identifies Filipson as a "crônica" 'chronicle' (41), but calls Alexandr's work a "novel" in a subsequent study ("Brazilian Jewish Women Writers" 69). The latter study also describes Filipson's content as fifty-six "short chapters," "stories," and "chronicles" (70).

Rizzini's and Igel's hesitance to pin down Filipson stems in part from their admiration of Alexandr's skills as a writer. They suggest that, while Filipson qualifies as a memoir and a chronicle, Alexandr's style compares more readily to that of a good novelist; Igel in particular offers a detailed discussion of Alexandr's use of different narrative techniques and perspectives ("Brazilian Jewish Women Writers" 70-72; Imigrantes 41-43). The waffling over Filipson's genre recalls descriptions of Gerchunoff's Los gauchos judíos, another text that blends autobiography and fiction. Igel's interchangeable references to Filipson's "chapters" and "stories" also raise a question familiar to Gerchunoff's critics: where does Filipson fit as a work of fiction? "Chapters" suggests the unity of a novel; "stories," a collection of individual pieces whose cohesiveness may vary. Igel's indecision probably results from her recognition that Filipson's fifty-six "chapters," while capable of standing alone as stories, also complement and complete one another. In other words, Alexandr's work is a prototypical short story cycle.

Like many cycles, Filipson features linked vignettes with short, descriptive titles. Furthermore, Alexandr strings her stories together with interconnective elements including unity of setting and recurring characters, archetypes, themes, and symbols.
Although the text follows a generally chronological progression, *Filipson* also accommodates frequent leaps back and forth in time, which is another common feature in story cycles.

Most of the stories track Frida's life from birth to womanhood. In "O Espêlho" (The Mirror), Alexandr imagines herself as the heroine of a novel (209); the passage reflects her double role as author and protagonist of *Filipson*. Gerchunoff and Mactas also use literary alter egos—Jacobo and Miriam, respectively—but do not cast themselves as central characters of their accounts. In *Filipson*, however, the author's coming-of-age represents the text's main narrative thread; this feature prompts Igel to describe the work as a "mini-bildungsroman" ("Brazilian Jewish Women Writers" 72; *Imigrantes Judeus* 41).

As the title suggests, *Filipson* also tells the story of a farming community. Alexandr, like Gerchunoff, set out to create a record of the pioneers' lives in the colony; she identifies the colonists' descendants as the target audience for her work: "Ressuscitou-os [os colonos], pois, em toda a simplicidade e rudeza de seus carácteres de pioneiros para conhecimento das novas gerações, mais cultas, mais prósperas, mais felizes, dêles separadas apenas por algumas décadas, devendo-lhes, contudo, o progresso alcançado e as possibilidades que ora usufruem." I revive them [the colonists], then, as simple and rough pioneers for the sake of their descendants, who are more refined, more prosperous, and happier. Separated from their ancestors by only a few decades, the younger generation owes to them the progress they have made and the opportunities they now

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4 In response to my question about Mactas's female characters, the author's son, Federico Gabriel Polak, noted some similarities between his mother and the character of Miriam—namely, their natural intelligence and inclination toward writing. Polak also pointed out, however, that the characterization was not entirely autobiographical.
enjoy' (168). Paying homage to the colonists with whom she interacted in her youth, Alexandr weaves their stories into her autobiographical account. On occasion the colonists' stories overlap with her own and with each other, resulting in the juxtaposition of Alexandr's collective protagonists.

Frida, as an archetypal character, is one such collective protagonist. She alternately represents two groups: Filipson's children and young women. Reflecting on her childhood, Alexandr compares herself and her peers to "bichos selvagens aclimatados ao ambiente" 'wild animals acclimated to the environment' (108); she remarks on more than one occasion that she and other children in the colony, unaware of the potential danger that their surroundings posed, were oblivious to fear (105; 107-108). In the stories "Filipson" and "Sal e Biologia" (Salt and Biology), for example, the author describes her exploration of the wilderness that bordered the colony and recalls how she and her dogs, with no regard for their personal safety, battled alligators, cobras, and bulls.

Alexandr's coming-of-age coincides with a more acute awareness of herself and her surroundings; for example, she begins to perceive a wide range of threats in and around Filipson. Neighbors warn Frida's parents that, by wandering the countryside on her own, she is exposing herself to a multitude of dangers (227); Frida's subsequent encounter with a wildcat finally puts an end to her solo expeditions (234). She shares the adult colonists' fear of João Ortiz, a ruthless bandit who terrorizes the region, and becomes aware of anti-Semitic violence when two drunken mestizos hurl epithets in her direction (138-39).

The adolescent Frida embodies the typical anxieties and aspirations of the colony's young women. They long to leave the suffocating confines of Filipson;
consequently, short visits to nearby towns and cities are cause for celebration. When she receives an invitation to her cousin's home in Uruguaiana, for example, an elated Frida rushes to tell her classmates; they, like Frida, can hardly believe her good fortune (114-15). The girls look forward to marriage as their one opportunity to escape the monotony of colonial life for good; as Igel notes, "the women could leave the farm only on the arms of their husbands (or with this prospect in mind)" ("Brazilian Jewish Women Writers" 73). In "Filipson," Alexandr describes the girls' shared dream of falling in love with a dashing suitor, marrying, and moving to the city: "Essas cabecinhas cheias de sonhos românticos, que se ataviavam com as melhores roupas para assistir à passagem do trem, sonhavam com os heróicos personagens dos romances lidos até altas horas da noite. Parecia-lhes possível que êles pudessem apresentar-se na figura de alguns dêsses viajantes para, num momento qualquer, levá-las para longe daquela solidão insípida" 'Their young minds full of romantic dreams, they dressed up in their best clothes to meet the train and fantasized about the protagonists of the novels that they read late into the night. It seemed possible to them that the heroic characters could appear in the figures of some of those travelers and, at any given moment, take them far from that insipid solitude' (106). By switching from first- to third-person narration, Alexandr erases the distinction between herself and the colony's other young women: they think and act as a group, hoping for a fairytale escape from Filipson.

Alexandr associates a wide range of emotions with marriage. When her sister Adélia becomes engaged, for example, Frida experiences the couple's joy vicariously: "Meu coração não cabia em si de contentamento. Alegrava-me com a felicidade que o futuro reservava à minha irmã" 'My heart nearly burst with happiness. I became joyful
over the happiness that the future held for my sister' (113). She expresses a less gracious attitude in "Casamento de Zelde" (Zelde's Wedding): "Quanto a mim, invejei-lhes a felicidade que os envolvia e desejei de todo o coração, crescer depressa para também me casar" ' As for me, I envied the happiness that surrounded them [the newlyweds] and wished with all my heart to grow up fast so that I too could marry' (96). Frida's jealousy shows that she, like every other girl in the colony, anxiously anticipates her own wedding day.

Much of Filipson focuses on Frida and, by extension, on the types of colonists with whom she most closely identifies: the Brazilian-born children of Filipson's pioneers and the young women who stay behind as their brothers depart for nearby cities. The author, however, also dedicates many stories to colonists who belong to other cliques within the farming community. She describes the diversity of the settlers, noting that they came from the "mais diversas camadas sociais e dos mais variados misteres" 'widest range of social classes and professions' (16). Despite their differences, however, the colonists play the role of collective protagonist throughout Filipson. Their religiosity provides the basis of a tight-knit community; Alexandr generalizes that "os judeus emigrados eram, na sua totalidade, profundamente ortodoxos; seguiam, portanto, à risca os costumes religiosos" 'the Jewish émigrés were, in their entirety, deeply orthodox; therefore, they followed religious customs to the letter' (167). The coreligionists' solidarity, the product of their shared core beliefs, has both positive and negative consequences. When Frida's mother Eva suffers a stroke, for example, neighbors pray for her recovery and help with chores, cooking, and childcare (75). In "Ratzel Amonis" (the name of the story's protagonist), however, the entire community unfairly ostracizes a
young mother; furthermore, adult colonists condone the malicious stories that their children spread about her (150).

Alexandr's portrayal of Filipson's colonists as a collective protagonist recalls passages in Gerchunoff's *Los gauchos judíos* and Mactas's *Los judíos de Las Acacias*. Ratzel Amonis's situation, for example, mirrors that of Fanny in Mactas's "Primaveras"; Alexandr and Mactas, who empathize with the outcast women, use the stories to illustrate the colonists' potential for cruelty. Like Gerchunoff and Mactas, Alexandr also attributes thoughts and speech to the entire community; in the following example from "Passeio à Estação e Novidades" (Visit to the Station and News), for example, the colonists interpret a blood-red sunset as an apocalyptic sign:

Os judeus contemplavam-no estáticos. Longos suspiros fugiam de seus peitos. Gemiam, lametavam-se:

"Mau presságio! Mau presságio! O mundo está à beira de uma guerra! Êsse pôr-do-sol é um aviso, é o sinal. A Terra se cobrirá de sangue e de cadáveres!"

The Jews, unmoving, contemplated it. Long sighs escaped their breasts. They moaned and lamented:

"Bad omen! Bad omen! The world is on the brink of war! This sunset is a warning, a sign. The Earth will be covered in blood and dead bodies!" (73)

Filipson's colonists also act collectively. In "O Templo" (The Temple), Alexandr describes their uniform response to the arrival of Torah scrolls: "Dançaram com a Tora, como o fizera Moisés no deserto, ao descer do Monte Sinai, para entregar aos israelitas as lápides sagradas onde Deus inscrevera a fogo as leis pelas quais os homens deviam reger-se" "They danced with the Torah, as Moses had done in the desert; upon descending from Mount Sinai, he revealed to the Israelites the sacred tablets on which God had used fire to inscribe the laws by which men should conduct themselves' (22). In this passage
Alexandr's evocation of the Israelites, like Gerchunoff's comparison of Jewish farmers to biblical Hebrews, contributes to her portrayal of the group's solidarity.

Alexandr uses the pronoun "todos" 'all' or 'everyone' to emphasize the colonists' role as collective protagonist. When the Torah scrolls mysteriously disappear in "O Templo," for example, everyone suspects the same person: "Todos os olhares convergiam sobre Burd e seus familiares que, indiferentes, continuavam a rezar, como se nada tivesse acontecido. Na opinião de todos, sómente êle poderia ter subtraído a Tora' 'All eyes converged on Burd and his family, who, indifferent, continued to pray, as if nothing had happened. In everyone's opinion, only he could have stolen the Torah' (24). Alexandr uses the same technique in the first paragraphs of "Capelish Macher" (The Hatter), the story of a young woman who dies in labor: "Todos os olhares dirigiam-se para a estrada à espera de alguém que surgisse com a boa nova" 'All eyes looked to the street in anticipation of someone bringing good news'; "Todos esperavam um milagre" 'Everyone hoped for a miracle'; "Em todos os lares, àquela tarde, orava-se a Deus pela nora do fabricante de bonés ('Capelish macher') que sofria as atrozes dores do parto" 'That afternoon, in every home, prayers were lifted to God for the hatter's daughter-in-law, who was suffering awful labor pains'; "De todos os lados surgiam sugestões" 'Suggestions came from everywhere' (97).

Alexandr's portrayal of herself as a girl and young woman, and of the colonists as a unified community, shows two types of collective protagonists at work in her text. Alexandr draws on a wealth of vivid memories to tell her own story; the stories of the colonists, however, present greater challenges. They often extend beyond the space and time that the author inhabited; consequently, she lacks first-hand knowledge of some
events and people that she describes. Alexandr compares her difficult task to resurrecting the dead: "Sacrilegamente, procuro arrancar as criaturas de suas tumbas, fazê-las reviver com todos os seus sofrimentos" 'Sacrilegiously, I try to pull them from their graves, bring them back to life, hardships and all' (167). She performs her miracle by piecing together and paraphrasing accounts of other colonists, which she assimilates into her predominantly autobiographical text.

As a result of its collage-like composition, Filipson, like many short story cycles, features a good deal of narrative modulation. Alexandr presents a variety of perspectives; when relaying second-hand information, she credits her sources with introductory phrases that emphasize the verbs "contar" and "relatar" 'to tell' (Igel, "Brazilian Jewish Women Writers" 70), as in the following examples: "Golde, a filha mais velha dos Averbach, contou-me que, ao chegarem a Filipson, foram hospedados por meus pais" 'Golde, the Averbachs' oldest daughter, told me that, when she and her family arrived to Filipson, they were guests of my parents' (22); "Sturdse, atualmente octogenário, mas em plena lucidez de espírito, foi quem me relatou o que se segue" 'Sturdse, now in his eighties but in total command of his faculties, told me the following' (23).

On occasion Alexandr relinquishes control of the narrative. In "O Templo," for example, an abrupt shift from third person, singular to first person, plural indicates that the author's paraphrase has given way to Sturdse's own voice: "Na sequência dessas colônias continua Sturdse contando, moravam uns parentes de Burd. Quando chegamos ali, noite avançada, uma luz fraca que alumiava uma das janelas, apagou-se. Batemos à porta, mas ninguém respondia" 'Among those homesteads, Sturdse continued, lived some of Burd's relatives. When we arrived there, late at night, a dim light in one of the
windows went out. We knocked on the door but no one answered' (25). Alexandr also uses free indirect speech to convey her characters' thoughts without changing the narrative tense and third-person reference; in "Casamento de Zelde," for example, the author assumes the perspective of the story's titular character, who reacts angrily to a Jewish wedding tradition: "Tem os olhos inchados, o nariz vermelho e a bôca contorcida num rictus de ódio. Tanto tiempo perdido em frente ao espêlho na arrumação do cabelo para essas velhas ignorantes a enfeitarem dêsse jeito!' 'Her eyes are swollen, her nose is red, and her mouth is twisted in a rictus of hate. So much time wasted in front of the mirror just so those ignorant old woman could style her hair that way!' (95).

Even the first-person, autobiographical portions of Filipson offer multiple points of view: Alexandr reproduces her perspectives as a child, teen, and mature woman, alternating between the three from story to story. In "Encontro com a Vida" and "Casamento de Zelde," for example, the author describes events through the eyes of young Frida. She recreates the "nebulosidade dos [seus] primeiros anos de existência" 'the cloudiness of [her] first years of life' (46) in "Encontro." The story's opening paragraphs, which treat the death of an infant sibling, capture Frida's hazy early memories of the event: "Os dias prosseguem envoltos em tristeza. Sinto que algo falta em casa, algo assim como um brinquedo que agitava os bracinhos, ensaiava balbucios, que muito me divertia, mas no qual me era vedado tocar" 'The days continue shrouded in sadness. I sense that something is missing at home, something like a toy that moved its tiny arms, that babbled, that entertained me a lot even though I wasn't allowed to touch it' (46). In the introduction to "Casamento de Zelde," young Frida expresses her excitement as she prepares to attend her first wedding: "Hoje casa a Zelde. Iremos todos ao
Today Zelde is getting married. We're all going to the wedding. At last I'm attending a wedding. I'll eat strudel and honey cake and see a real bride and groom (94). Although the above examples refer to events from the author's early childhood, Alexandr recovers their immediacy and emotional charge by narrating in the present tense. Her choppy sentences suggest a child's speech; the precise use of adult vocabulary such as "envoltos" 'shrouded' and "vedado" 'prohibited,' however, reveals the hand of a mature author.

Other autobiographical stories find Alexandr narrating from different stages of her life. In "O Espelho," the titular mirror links the author's past and present. The story begins with a rare glimpse into the author's later years; she sees herself as "frustrada" 'frustrated,' "fracassada" 'a failure,' and "uma velha" 'an old lady' (208). As she gazes into the mirror, however, her reflection soon changes to that of an adolescent Frida: "Revejo-me, então, muitos, muitos anos atrás" 'I see myself, now, many, many years ago' (208). Alexandr briefly straddles the two points of view; although the younger Frida assumes control of the narrative, the first-person present tense continues for the remainder of the paragraph (208-209) before reverting to the past tense. The story comes full circle in its final lines, which return to the "old" Frida's disappointing present (212).

As the above examples illustrate, Filipson accommodates multiple perspectives and tenses. Despite frequent shifts, however, the entire narrative features an emphasis on the act of storytelling. According to Dunn and Morris, many short story cycles focus on "the transactional process involved in getting the story told" through narrators who contemplate the difficulties and joys of their task (16). In Filipson, Alexandr explains her
reasons for writing and alludes to the challenges she faced. Her text has a conversational tone; Alexandr credits an array of storytellers and addresses the reader directly, creating a "floating atmosphere of oral communication" (Igel, "Brazilian Jewish Women Writers" 70). A dialogue between author and reader begins in the book's first line, when Alexandr poses a rhetorical question: "Já ouviram falar de Filipson?" "Have you ever heard of Filipson?" (15). Her style recalls that of Gerchunoff, whose writing often resembles speech; as Borges observes, Gerchunoff "manejó con igual felicidad el lenguaje oral y el escrito y en sus libros hay la fluidez del buen conversador y en su conversación (me parece oírlo) hubo una generosa e infalible precisión literaria" 'took the same pleasure in handling oral or written language, and his books display the fluidity of a good conversationalist just as his conversation (I can almost hear it) had a generous and infallible literary precision' (Prólogos 66). As I mentioned above, Gerchunoff's Los gauchos judíos opens with apostrophe and includes several passages in which a first-person narrator directly engages the reader; in the final paragraph of "Las bodas de Camacho," for example, a self-conscious narrator tries to persuade the reader that his story is accurate (91).

The oral storytelling tradition appears not only in Filipson's content but also in its arrangement. Like other works based in oral tradition, Filipson has a paratactic structure; in other words, it is characterized by "fairly short, self-contained narrative units [that] are not obviously integrated into a larger conceptual whole but follow each other in a sequence of discrete segments, like beads on a string" (Carolyn Dewald xix). Consecutive stories in Filipson find Alexandr elaborating on details as if prompted by questions from an interlocutor. In "Jacob na Estrada de Ferro" (Jacob on the Railway),
for example, the author makes passing reference to the colonists' first attempts to grow wheat (37); the next story, "O Romance do Administrador" (The Administrator's Romance), explains how Baruch Wolff, a knowledgeable farmer, initiated the experiment by convincing the JCA administration to distribute wheat seed to his neighbors (44). Similarly, "João Ortiz" offers a biographical sketch of the bandit mentioned in the previous story, "Professor Frankenthal."

The examples above illustrate Alexandr's tendency to provide background information later rather than sooner. On one hand, the author organizes her text chronologically around two main storylines: Frida's coming-of-age and the decline of the colony. On the other hand, she often moves back and forth in time to fill in details. In this regard Filpison resembles other story cycles, including Los gauchos judíos and Los judíos de Las Acacias: as Ingram notes, the authors of cycles typically prioritize "the rhythmic pattern of the telling" over chronological consistency when ordering their stories (23).

Rather than adhere to a strict timeline, Alexandr uses recurring characters, themes, and symbols to create continuity between her stories. In addition to Frida and her immediate family, prominent figures in the community appear at different points in the text. They include Abraão Schteinbruch, the shochet; Israel Becker, an instructor of Hebrew and Yiddish; and Boris Wladimersky, a felcher or pharmacist who provides emergency medical care. Alexandr develops her characterizations over the course of several stories; for example, she portrays Wladimersky as a sympathetic and heroic figure early in Filpison, but emphasizes his negative qualities in later stories including "O Namôro de Adélia" (Adélia's Courtship), "Casamento de Adélia" (Adélia's Wedding),
"Ratzel Amonis," and "Vida Difícil" (A Difficult Life). The two sides of Wladimsky's personality ultimately prompt Alexandr to ask, "Como podia êsse homem, valoroso nos momentos graves de vida, tornar-se tão irascível e intolerante como naquela ocasião?"

'How could this man, so strong in life's gravest moments, become so irascible and intolerant as he had on that occasion?' (226).

Filipson finds Alexandr, like Gerchunoff and Mactas, wrestling with dichotomies including country/city, exclusion/assimilation, and old/young. In Filipson these recurring themes often emerge in passages in which an introspective Frida expresses loneliness and guilt. The migration of many farm families to urban centers, for example, leaves Frida feeling friendless and abandoned. In "Os Nicelovich ou o Furto do Anel," "Impacto" (Impact), "Ratzel Amonis," and "Chico Lencino" (the name of a gaucho neighbor), Frida laments that she has no one her age in whom to confide; consequently she longs to join the exodus to neighboring towns and cities:

"Até quando correria estradas e campos sempre só? Quando regressaria Jacques ou Luís para me libertar daquele inferno? Eu ansiava por abandonar Filipson, agora que os manos haviam acenado com aquela possibilidade" 'How much longer would I run along those streets and fields, always alone? When would Jacques or Luís return to free me from that hell? I couldn't wait to abandon Filipson, now that my brothers had presented that possibility'} (221).

As Frida is pulled toward the city and assimilation, the colony's orthodox authority figures pull back. When Frida dances with a non-Jew at her sister's wedding, for example, she enfuriates both her mother, Eva, and the felcher, Boris Wladimersky (145). Their harsh comments cause Frida to feel ashamed and angry at herself: "E odeie-me a mim mesma por ter criado aquêle caso, sem poder supor que estivesse fazendo algo
errado" 'And I hated myself for having created that mess, and for not being able to realize that I was doing something wrong' (146). Frida's mea culpa, one of several in Filipson, illustrates the emotional toll that the competing pressures of exclusion and assimilation exact on the colonists' daughters.

The themes of Alexandr's longer, confessional pieces are reinforced through the repetition of symbols and images in Filipson. For example, the increasing frequency with which Alexandr refers to empty and dilapidated homes indicates the exodus of colonists to neighboring cities and towns. The image first appears in "O Namoro de Adélia," in which Alexandr describes the occupation of the old Zeiligman home by outsiders (110). The passage foreshadows the arrival of transients and squatters whose presence transforms what had been an exclusively Jewish space. The stories "Viandantes" (Vagrants) and "Tibúrcio" (the name of a neighbor boy) show how the colony's changing demographics distress the remaining Jewish farmers: fearful and wary, they hesitate to interact with the newcomers.

Alexandr uses the recurring image of the fence to convey the tension between Jews and non-Jews in Filipson. Initially the colonists erect fences to demarcate their plots and to prevent their livestock from straying to outlying areas. As non-Jews begin to settle in and around Filipson, however, fences provide an important means of protection. In "Professor Frankenthal," for example, barbed wire fences separate the colonists' homes from roads overrun by banditry (137-38); another fence separates Frida and her family.

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5 Frida is burdened by a guilty conscience from childhood. In "Encontro Com a Vida," she remembers a kitten that she had accidentally smothered in a blanket and a chick that had fallen from her hands and broken its leg (47). When her mother falls from a wagon at the end of the story, Frida blames herself: "Eu, encolhida num canto, tomada de um tremendo sentimento de culpa, seguiu muito triste, convicta de que era a responsável por tudo quanto havia acontecido a ela [Eval]" 'Huddled in a corner, overwhelmed by a tremendous sense of guilt, I continued to feel very sad, convinced that I had been responsible for everything that had happened to her [Eva]' (51).
from the drunken mestizos who hurl anti-Semitic epithets in the direction of their home (139). In these passages fences become a metaphor for the boundary markers between Jewish and non-Jewish cultures.

2.5 Adão Voloch's *O Colono Judeu-Açu* as a Short Story Cycle

Voloch's *O Colono Judeu-Açu*, the first installment of a trilogy that includes *Um Gaúcho a Pé* and *Os Horizontes do Sol*, takes place in the Quatro Irmãos colony in Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil from the mid-1920s to the early 1930s. The work draws on the author's experiences growing up in the colony during the same period: at the age of ten he moved with his family from Filipson to Quatro Irmãos, where he lived until 1934. The title *O Colono Judeu-Açu*, which combines "Jew" and the Tupi word "açu" or "great" (Igel, *Imigrantes Judeus* 71), refers to Natálio Litvinoff, a character based on the author's father, Natan Voloch. The text's subtitle, *Romance da Colônia Quatro Irmãos* (A Novel Set in the Quatro Irmãos Colony), identifies the work as a novel, although some passages suggest other genres, including personal memoir, political manifesto, and farmers' almanac. With regard to its subject matter, organization, and multiple narrative voices, however, *O Colono Judeu-Açu* resembles story cycles by Gerchunoff, Mactas, and Alexandr.

Like those authors, Voloch focuses on several dichotomies such as city/country, assimilation/isolation, young/old, and national/religious identity. He also juxtaposes Communism and capitalism, which Mactas treats in a limited manner. Each of these recurring themes relates to Voloch's main goal as a writer: by his own account, he wanted to "contribuir para o esclarecimento da questão judia no sentido comum, cotidiano"
'contribute to the clarification of the Jewish Question in the common, everyday sense' (Um Gaúcho a Pé 14; author's boldface). As a means to broach this expansive topic in O Colono Judeu-Açu, Voloch portrays the experiences of the Quatro Irmãos farmers as typical or representative of all Jews: the colonists, who struggle to establish themselves as Brazilians, face many of the same challenges as their coreligionists in other parts of the world. Some express apprehensions about assimilation, which they associate with the loss of their religious and cultural traditions. Others embrace their national identity, but fail to gain the acceptance of their non-Jewish neighbors.

As outsiders in a predominantly Catholic society, the Jewish farmers of Quatro Irmãos represent a collective protagonist in O Colono Judeu-Açu. They are, however, a diverse group: opposing factions within the community include Ashkenazim/Sephardim and young/old. Voloch describes language barriers and different religious practices among colonists of Ashkenazi and Sephardic descent (69-70); he also distinguishes between the behavior and attitudes of old and young colonists: "As pessoas idosas, nos seus chales e vestimentas de pobres aldeões eslavos ou balcânicos, têm fisionomias amarguradas e temem a vastidão e estranheza deste país. Os jovens estão eufóricos, libertos de discriminações, pobreza, ameaças" 'The older people in their rustic homes, wearing the clothes of poor Slavic or Balkan villagers, have embittered expressions and fear the vastness and strangeness of this country. The young are euphoric, free from discrimination, poverty, threats' (30). The old colonists hold fast to orthodoxy (43) and see themselves as outsiders in Brazilian society (59); the assimilation-minded members of the younger generation, on the other hand, tend to neglect the Jewish precepts and believe that their children will be full-fledged Brazilians (42-43).
As a collective protagonist, the colonists figure prominently in *O Colono Judeu-Açu*; they take a secondary role, however, to Natálio. Like Alexandr, Voloch follows a central character from his arrival in the colony to his imminent departure. The author's focus on Natálio's frustrated efforts to succeed as a farmer lends some continuity to a disjointed text that, like other cycles, features leaps in time and narrative modulation.

Although the stories have numbers in addition to their long, descriptive titles, they do not always appear in chronological order. Rather, Voloch arranges some stories thematically; the eighth, ninth, and tenth stories, for example, portray Natálio's positive relationships with his non-Jewish neighbors. The author's abrupt shifts between the present and past tense, the first and third person, and different narrative perspectives also contribute to the complexity of the text. Most of *O Colono Judeu-Açu* features a third-person, omniscient narrator, and Voloch typically uses quoted dialogue or free indirect speech to express his characters' thoughts and opinions. In one passage, for example, he assumes Natálio's perspective to convey the father's surprise over his children's growth: "O pai serve e depois as crianças. Puxa: já cresceram, se vê pelas mangas e meia canela das calças" 'The father serves himself and then the children follow suit. Gosh, they're all grown up; their sleeves and pant legs are too short' (27). By way of contrast, the story "Um pouco de história da aldeia guarani e seus descendentes" (A Glimpse into the History of the Guaranis and Their Descendants) opens with unquoted, first-person narration later attributed to Afonso, Natálio's Guarani neighbor (81-82). In another passage, Voloch interrupts the third-person narration with the isolated statement in the first person, plural: "Estamos em 1925" 'We are in the year 1925' (21).
Voloch also disrupts the flow of the narrative with parenthetical comments and rhetorical questions. On two occasions the author breaks in on quoted dialogue to clarify that Gumercindo Fagundes da Silva, Natálio's gaucho neighbor, rents rather than owns his land (17; 74). In other stories he poses questions directly to the reader, for example: "É sábado, não é? Não importa" 'It's Saturday, isn't it? It doesn't matter' (27); "Serão eles [os filhos de Natálio] também judeus? O quê é um judeu?" 'Are they [Natálio's children] also Jews? What is a Jew?' (31).

The author's use of first-person parenthetical comments and rhetorical questions, both of which give *O Colono Judeu-Açu* an oral quality, probably reflects the way in which he composed the text. Failing eyesight forced Voloch to dictate his works to secretaries who copied down his words (Igel, *Imigrantes Judeus* 69); consequently *O Colono Judeu-Açu*, like Voloch's other five books, is a written transcript of his speech. Detailed passages in which the author describes aspects of life in the colony also suggest oral communication: Voloch offers present-tense, step-by-step explanations of how farmers cleared and plowed their land (11), built their homes (25-26), and ground manioc into flour (51-53) as if he were giving instructions.

The passages mentioned above, while rich in local color, relegate the fiction to the background: in such passages, Voloch places the story on pause in favor of a more historical style. Likewise, the political nature of *O Colono Judeu-Açu* disrupts the narrative's flow. Dialogue between characters features heavy doses of Communist ideology, criticism of JCA policies, and commentaries on Brazilian and Jewish relations. Long-winded speeches and frequent soapboxing make some portions of the text resemble political tracts (Igel, *Imigrantes Judeus* 69).
As historian Jaime Pinsky explains in his prologue to *O Colono Judeu-Açu*, Voloch expresses his political and economic theories through Natálio (10); in a conversation with new arrivals to Quatro Irmãos, for example, Natálio elaborates on the initial failure of the colony, the merits of agriculture, Zionism, and assimilation (44-50). Voloch reiterates his ideas on farming through George, a suitor to Natálio's daughter Flora. Like Natálio, George recognizes that life in the colonies falls short of the Jewish immigrants' "American dreams" (48; 129). The former blames the JCA's refusal to develop farming cooperatives (168); the latter faults the practice of monoculture and the lack of modern equipment (135).

The almost verbatim repetition of dialogue in *O Colono Judeu-Açu* reinforces Voloch's message. For example, two stories include variants of the same conversation, voiced by different pairs of characters. In the first story, "'Vida-Apertada' e um acontecimento que terá conseqüências" ("Hard-Knock Life" and an Event of Some Consequence), a Brazilian official talks with Pereira, a prominent member of the Jewish community:

"O senhor também é judeu, Seu Pereira?"
"Sim, senhor Delegado. Sou judeu brasileiro. O senhor é cristão ou muçulmano brasileiro?" retrucou o esperto oriental.
"Bem, a minha religião é assunto pessoal".
"A minha também, Seu Delegado. Mas nós viemos aqui para saber da intimação do coitado do zelador da Sinagoga." (152-53; author's boldface)

"Are you also a Jew, Mr. Pereira?"
"Yes sir, I am. I'm a Brazilian Jew. Are you a Brazilian Christian or a Brazilian Muslim?" replied the quick-witted Sephardi.
"My religion is a personal matter."
"So is mine, sir. But we're here to talk about the summons of the Synagogue's poor caretaker."
A similar exchange takes place in the story "'Seu' Natálio esqueceu que o sonho só pode viver se aglutinado com outros sonhos, de muita gente unida" (Natálion Forgot that a Dream Can Only Survive Together with Those of Many Other People). When a traveling salesman, on his first visit to Quatro Irmãos, asks Natálion if everyone in the colony is Jewish, the following conversation ensues:

"E o senhor o que é, em religião?"
"Eu sou espírita, mas católico. Graças a Deus".
"Infelizmente para o senhor aqui não tem igreja. Somos todos brasileiros". (164)

"And what religion are you?"
"I'm a spiritualist, but a Catholic. Praise God."
"Unfortunately there is no church for you here. We are all Brazilians."

In both conversations a Jewish colonist outwits a non-Jew: Pereira and Natálion thwart their counterparts' attempts to define them based on their religion and/or origin. Their responses also convey Voloch's message that Brazilian citizenship represents a common denominator among people of different faith traditions and, as such, transcends religious identity.

2.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I show that Los gauchos judíos owes its literary firstness to Gerchunoff's innovative use of a then-relatively new but well-cultivated genre, the short story cycle. Prominent authors in Gerchunoff's native Russia and adopted home of Argentina, including Sholem Aleichem and Leopoldo Lugones, respectively, offered likely structural models for Gerchunoff's cycle; in 1910, however, Los gauchos judíos
became the first work of its kind to treat immigration to Latin America from a Jewish perspective.

Following Gerchunoff's example, Mactas, Alexandr, and Voloch composed their own cycles, each of which portrays a particular phase of Jewish colonization in South America. Together their accounts offer a picture of JCA activity in the region, from the settlement of colonies in Argentina and Brazil in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to subsequent periods of decline and out-migration. The authors borrow from the oral storytelling tradition by using first-person, present-tense narration and by arranging their stories thematically rather than chronologically; their works, however, accommodate a variety of narrative perspectives, tenses, and techniques such as quoted dialogue, interior monologue, and free indirect speech.

Interconnective elements including unity of setting, collective protagonists, and recurring characters, themes, and symbols hold the disjointed texts together. With few exceptions, the stories take place within the Jewish colonies and feature farmers as their protagonists. Passages in each cycle show the colonists thinking and acting as a group, although the authors also narrow their focus to individuals. Gerchunoff and Mactas sketch characters who represent types of colonists within Argentine farming communities; Alexandr and Voloch also use archetypes, but focus on central characters Frida and Natália, respectively. The four works represent conflict in the colonies through a series of dichotomies: national/religious identity, city/country, assimilation/isolation, and young/old. These dichotomies recur throughout the texts and relate to particular symbols such as abandoned homes and fences.
In the next chapter I explore how each author addresses the theme of national and religious identity. As the Jewish farmers enter into more frequent contact with dominant culture, they begin to question their place as minorities within Argentine and/or Brazilian society. They try to reconcile the rights and responsibilities of citizenship with their Jewish precepts, with mixed results. By portraying assimilation as a difficult and potentially futile process, Gerchunoff, Mactas, Alexandr, and Voloch convey apprehension about the future of both observant and non-observant Jews in South America.
CHAPTER 3:

WHICH COMES FIRST: THE GAUCHO OR THE JUDÍO?

In Gerchunoff's story "La siesta," an older colonist, doña Raquel, criticizes the adolescent Jacobo: "Déjelo á ese gaucho; no sabe más que contestar. ¡No ve, todo un gaucho! Bombachas, cinturón, cuchillo y hasta esas cositas de plomo para matar perdices; en cambio, en la sinagoga, permanece mudo y no sabe rezar" 'Don't pay any attention to that gaucho; he only knows how to talk back! Just look at him—he's a gaucho through and through! The pants, the belt, the knife, and even those little lead things to kill partridges; but when he's in the synagogue, he doesn't open his mouth because he doesn't know how to pray' (22). Doña Raquel argues that Jacobo, in his zeal to assimilate, has neglected his obligations as a Jew.

As I have discussed in previous chapters, some prominent critics, whom Aizenberg calls "parricides," accuse Gerchunoff of similar behavior; Salgado Gordon says that their works implicate Gerchunoff of "consorting with the enemy by selling his (Jewish) birthright for a mess of (Argentine) porridge, and maintaining a deliberate policy of myopia toward Argentine anti-Semitism to protect his special status as the accepted or token Jewish writer of the elite national literary circle" ("Gerchunoff, Alberto" 195). This cynical view, which casts Gerchunoff as an apologist for the Argentine establishment, relates to the faulty premise that Gerchunoff advocated
integration at all costs, including the renunciation of Jewishness as a religious, cultural and/or ethnic identity.

Leguizamón propagated the inaccuracy in his prologue to the 1910 edition of *Los gauchos judíos*. He interprets references to relationships between local *criollo* boys and Jewish girls in Gerchunoff’s text as an unconditional endorsement of the predominant *crisol de razas* or "melting pot" ideology of the Argentine Centennial; in the prologue, he anticipates a process of miscegenation through which a new generation of assimilated children would replace their orthodox grandparents:

La obra será lenta, sin duda, pero concluirá al fin su evolución inevitable cuando los ancianos judíos desaparezcan y sobre el solar poblado de bíblicas añoranzas, los hijos de sus hijos, argentinos por la fusión de la sangre, encariñados á la tierra que les entrega sus riquezas ubérrimas, libres de preocupaciones y de recelos, con la alegría y la paz del hogar risueño que les colma de dicha el corazón, entonen en las fiestas de la nueva centuria el cántico glorioso de la libertad argentina. (xii-xiii)

The process will be slow, to be sure, but its inevitable evolution will come to an end when the old Jews disappear and, on the ground that once inspired their Biblical nostalgia, the children of their children, made Argentine through the fusion of blood, endeared to the fertile land that gives them its riches, free of worry and fear, with the happiness and peace of pleasant homes that fill their hearts with joy, sing the glorious song of Argentine freedom in the celebration of the Centennial.

Leguizamón's blueprint for assimilation, which he ascribes to Gerchunoff, has racial, cultural, and religious components. The approximation to, and appropriation of, local *criollo* culture, typified in *Los gauchos judíos* by Jacobo and a series of defiant, young Jewish girls, coincides with the abandonment of Jewish precepts and traditions, such as the prohibition against intermarriage (xi-xii). According to Leguizamón, the offspring of mixed Jewish and non-Jewish couples qualify as Argentines by virtue of miscegenation,
"la fusión de la sangre" 'the fusion of blood.' These children, "libres de preocupaciones y de recelos" 'free of worries and fears,' would no longer identify with their orthodox grandparents, who represent a dying breed.

Leguizamón's prologue suggests that, for Gerchunoff, assimilation turned on the planned obsolescence of Jewishness in the religious, ethnic, and/or cultural sense: according to the former, the "melting pot" and the lure of dominant local and national customs would combine to produce a homogeneous society; the elimination of difference would bring with it the elimination of persecution, allowing the descendants of the Jewish pioneers to partake in Argentine freedom.

Leguizamón portrays the developments that lead to this freedom as positive, as evidenced by his use of the term "evolución" 'evolution' and his celebratory tone. Some Jewish-Argentine critics, meanwhile, decry the process and take Gerchunoff to task for his purported willingness to compromise his Jewish identity for the sake of "fitting in."

While their reactions differ, Leguizamón and the so-called "parricides" base their judgments on the same flawed reading of Gerchunoff's text.

It's true that Gerchunoff's essays, which treat many of the same themes as Los gauchos judíos, offer his critics some ammunition. In "Los judíos" (1906; The Jewish People), for example, Gerchunoff discusses miscegenation as a means to assimilate Jewish immigrants to Argentina: "El arado y el martillo acompasan, en la inevitable fusión de razas y esfuerzos, la mezcla del torturado rostro de Jacob con el robusto nativo, el fino perfil de la hebrea con el varón cosmopolita, todo ello ley fatal" 'The plow and the hammer mark time, in the inevitable fusion of races and efforts, as the tortured face of Jacob combines with that of the robust native, as the delicate profile of the Hebrew girl
combines with that of the cosmopolitan male, everything a foregone conclusion' (El pino y la palmera 14). In "Entre Ríos, mi país" (1950; Entre Ríos, My Country), published posthumously, the author associates miscegenation with progress; he anticipates the benefits that the racial mix of Italians, Spaniards, Germans, Slavs, and Jews in the region will bring: "Las corrientes de sangre operan en el fundente étnico la amalgama esperada, que producirá, tiempo andado, en la Argentina total, una entidad humana rica en diversidad psicológica y fecunda en su aptitud por la coherencia íntima" 'The flow of bloodlines creates the desired ethnic mix that will produce, over time, in all of Argentina, a human being rich in psychological diversity and well-equipped for intimate cohesion' (Entre Ríos 41).

While the above passages portray the official crisol de razas ideology in a positive light, Gerchunoff never identifies miscegenation as a mandatory prerequisite for assimilation, nor does he trade in his Jewish birthright for security and status, as some of his critics suggest. In fact much of his writing not only affirms the compatibility of Jewishness and Argentineness, but also privileges Jewish tradition over its Argentine counterpart.

In Chapter 1, I discussed how specific characterizations and passages in Los gauchos judíos challenge the notion that Gerchunoff advocated assimilation at all costs. For example, Jacobo, who becomes "el más criollo de la colonia" 'the most creolized of the colonists' (85) at the expense of his Jewishness, fails to win the acceptance of the locals; on the other hand, Favel Duglach and Dr. Nahum Yarcho, who expertly negotiate their Argentine and Jewish identities, are revered by Jews and non-Jews alike.
Furthermore, Gerchunoff tends to treat miscegenation more guardedly in *Los gauchos judíos* than he does in the essays cited above. As Aizenberg observes, he consistently registers the negative reactions of colonists to mixed couples (*Parricide* 28; *Books and Bombs* 74): some adult colonists consider it to be "una vergüenza" 'a shame' (22) and "algo horrible" 'something horrible' (52) when young Jewish girls run off with their *criollo* boyfriends. This perspective contradicts Leguizamón's praise of the maidens as a "melting pot of love." By the same token, Leguizamón's derogatory portrayal of elder orthodox Jews as a frustrated and dying breed conflicts with Gerchunoff's loving descriptions of the Dayan Jehuda Anakroi in the conclusion to "Génesis," and of his boyhood teacher, Rabí Guedalí, in "El viejo colono" (The Old Colonist).

The first part of the present chapter considers what Aizenberg calls the "quarrelsome and questioning" (*Parricide* 29) surrounding Gerchunoff's negotiation of Argentineness and Jewishness in both the 1910 and 1936 editions of *Los gauchos judíos*. Far from cowtowing to the Argentine establishment, Gerchunoff evokes both the fiercely independent figure of the gaucho and the freedoms guaranteed by the 1853 Argentine Constitution to build a compelling case for diversity. The text celebrates the past and potential contributions of the Jewish tradition: the colonists, for example, practice a faith that Gerchunoff portrays as a "pre-Christian Christianity" and live according to a set of laws superior to those of Argentina in terms of fairness, completeness, and efficacy. Even Gerchunoff's masterful use of Cervantine Spanish, which recalls the great Jewish authors of medieval Spain, represents a kind of linguistic one-upmanship; the Hebrew and Yiddish expressions sprinkled liberally throughout the text, meanwhile, serve as constant reminders of the colonists', and the author's,
Jewishness. By strategically aligning himself with particular Argentine values and myths, emphasizing the continuity between Judaism and Christianity, and crafting a heteroglossic text, Gerchunoff appeals to the nation's tolerance of difference. Argentina represents, for him, both the potential site of a new and improved *convivencia* and an alternate Zion—a place where Jews can practice their faith freely, with the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of all citizens.

In the second part of this chapter, I show how the fictionalized accounts of Rebeca Mactas, Frida Alexandr, and Adão Voloch respond to Gerchunoff's nimble negotiation of national and Jewish identity. Each author follows Gerchunoff's example by writing in his/her country's official national language—Mactas in Spanish, and Alexandr and Voloch in Portuguese—with occasional use of Hebrew, Yiddish, and/or Russian. In their texts, the Jewish farming communities also operate outside the jurisdiction of regional and national governments. While Mactas and Alexandr typically represent the physical isolation and relative autonomy of the colonies as obstacles to assimilation, however, Gerchunoff and Voloch embrace local *criollo* culture and conceptualize their national identities as an extension of their regional identities. Like Gerchunoff, Voloch perceives Jewishness as, alternately, an indicator of race, cultural heritage, and religion, and posits that national identity transcends ethnic and religious differences. Ultimately, however, all four authors express apprehensions about the possibility of successfully negotiating Jewishness and Argentineness/Brazilianness.
3.1 Gerchunoff, Jewishness, and Argentineness

In his 1914 autobiography, Gerchunoff recounts a personal epiphany that, in terms of dramatic effect, rivals Saul's conversion in Acts 9: "En aquella naturaleza incomparable, bajo aquel cielo único, en el vasto sosiego de la campiña surcada de ríos, mi existencia se ungió de fervor, que borró mis orígenes y me hizo argentino" 'In the midst of that incomparable natural world, beneath that singular sky, in the vast calm of fields crossed by rivers, I was overcome by a fervor that erased my origins and made me Argentine' (Entre Ríos 26). The passage suggests an exchange: twenty-year-old Gerchunoff, overwhelmed by the powerful beauty of his surroundings, becomes Argentine at the expense of his origins, whether Jewish, Eastern European, or both. He concludes the autobiography, however, by reclaiming his Jewishness, albeit in a subordinate role to his Argentineness: "Yo no aspiro a cantar únicamente la vida judía: soy ante todo argentino y mi carácter de tal orienta mi existencia de hombre de letras" 'I do not aspire to sing only of Jewish life: I am above all Argentine, and my character as such orients my existence as a man of letters' (36). By asserting the primacy of his national identity, is Gerchunoff advocating integration at all costs?

Not really. As I showed above with regard to Gerchunoff's portrayal of miscegenation, the author's work retains an ambivalent posture toward assimilation and, for that reason, demands to be read holistically. Gerchunoff's autobiography, which revisits many of the ideas introduced in Los gauchos judíos, turns on two ideals: freedom and equality. He mentions the "beneficio supremo de la libertad" 'supreme benefit of freedom' twice in the essay-length text (14; 34) and praises Argentina as a welcoming
and maternal country whose tolerance of religious difference serves as a model for other nations (35). Jewishness, according to Gerchunoff, neither precludes nor interferes with Argentineness; the author cites examples of prominent Jews who hold positions as government officials and university administrators in Argentine society, remarking, "Son ciudadanos argentinos y a nadie interesa saber en que [sic] templo rezan, si son o no católicos" 'They are Argentine citizens and no one cares in which temple they pray, or whether or not they are Catholic' (35). In other words, Gerchunoff argues, Jews need not convert to Catholicism to become full-fledged citizens of "free" Argentina because religious preference has no bearing on assimilation.

The passage quoted immediately above illustrates Gerchunoff's ready association of citizenship with equality, an idea that he introduces in an anecdote about how he became a documented Argentine. He recalls, "Mi pena era no ser igual a los demás, es decir, no ser argentino" 'My shame was not being the same as everyone else, that is, not being Argentine' ("Autobiografía," Entre Ríos 31). Although Gerchunoff's experiences growing up in Entre Ríos had already made him an Argentine in spirit, legal status conferred on him the same rights, responsibilities, and privileges that "native" Argentines had. The example shows how national identity "erases origins" in the sense that it places all citizens on equal footing; at the same time, Gerchunoff suggests, Argentineness transcends, rather than obliterates, religious and ethnic difference.

When Gerchunoff evokes freedom, equality, and citizenship, he echoes the guarantees of the 1853 Argentine Constitution; Articles 14, 16, and 20, for example, address rights including freedom of religion and naturalization. Such ideals play a prominent role in Gerchunoff's early work because he was writing in response to growing
anti-foreigner sentiment in Argentina at the turn of the twentieth century. By that time, the tolerance associated with Positivism\(^1\) had begun to give way to a romantic, and xenophobic, brand of Nationalism (Haim Avni 204); some "native" Argentines, resentful of the influx of immigrants who preserved their language and traditions and resisted assimilating to dominant national culture, looked back nostalgically to the period prior to the immigration boom. They defended Argentina's Catholic roots with renewed vigor; furthermore, they rehabilitated the images of the pampas and the gaucho, once symbols of barbarism that would come to represent uncorrupted, authentic Argentineness.

Anti-Semitic stereotypes made Jews an easy target for xenophobic "nativists." Accused of deicide, political radicalism, and predatory capitalism, Jewish immigrants were often portrayed as undesirable, inassimilable, and even dangerous.\(^2\) Faced with groundswells hostile toward immigration in general, and Jewish immigration in particular, Gerchunoff defended the rights of Argentine Jewry by appealing to the nation's founding principles; by constantly evoking freedom and equality, he holds Argentina accountable for providing the basic liberties that the Constitution guarantees.

In other words, Gerchunoff became the voice of Argentina's moral conscience. Far from capitulating to the establishment, he uses idealistic language provocatively to remind Argentine policymakers of their Constitutional obligation to immigrants. True, his sugarcoating of Jewish agricultural colonization sometimes borders on the ridiculous; in his autobiography, for example, Gerchunoff compares the rustic canvas tents in which

\(^1\) Developed by French thinker Aguste Comte (1798-1857), Positivism held that the scientific method was the only means to arrive at authentic knowledge. The philosophy gained currency in Europe and Latin America in the second half of the nineteenth century.

\(^2\) In his La Restauración Nacionalista (1909; The Nationalist Restoration), for example, influential nationalist ideologue Ricardo Rojas (1882-1957) juxtaposes "judío" and "argentino" as mutually-exclusive identities and casts Jews as a threat to Argentine society.
the first arrivals lived to palaces (Entre Ríos 16). Likewise, Los gauchos judíos rarely registers the difficulties that the pioneers faced: while Gerchunoff fictionalizes the plagues of locust and torrential downpours of 1895-1897 in his stories "La huerta perdida" (The Destroyed Orchard) and "La lluvia," respectively, he is more inclined to describe teeming fields and pastoral peace. Even "La muerte de Rabí Abraham," which recreates the murder of Gerchunoff's father at the hands of a murderous gaucho, ends with the victim's beatific imitatio Crísti. Gerchunoff's tendency to downplay discord, however, does not necessarily represent an attempt to curry favor with the Argentine elite.

In fact accounts of the early period of Jewish agricultural colonization generally say little about anti-Semitism in Argentina; some say even less than Los gauchos judíos, which explicitly addresses the theme in "Historia de un caballo robado." Because of the isolation and relative autonomy of the colonies as well as the JCA's role as go-between, the farmers initially had limited contact with non-Jewish Argentines; consequently, anti-Semitism was not their most pressing issue. Ironically, the principal villain in many of the negative accounts isn't anti-Semitic Argentina, but the JCA itself. For example, Mactas's grandfather, Marcos Alpersohn, whose account of Jewish agricultural colonization Colonia Mauricio: memorias de un colono judío (Colony Mauricio: Memories of a Jewish Colonist; first published in Yiddish in 1921) earned him the title of the "anti-Gerchunoff," levies most of his criticism against corrupt, disingenuous, and negligent JCA administrators.\(^3\) The fact is that, when compared with texts that treat the

\(^3\) Alexandr's brother, Jacques Schweidson, also takes aim at the JCA in his memoir Judeus de Bombachas e Chimarrão (1985; Jews with Bombachas [gaucho trousers] and Chimarrão [maté tea]). While he claims that he never heard an injurious racial or religious remark in Filipson (26), Schweidson repeatedly criticizes "as tremendas falhas da YCA" 'the JCA's tremendous faults' (147).
same or subsequent periods of Jewish agricultural colonization, *Los gauchos judíos* just
doesn't stray far from the norm with respect to Gerchunoff's portrayal of anti-Semitism.
For this reason, the sell-out label that parricides such as Viñas and Sosnowski apply to
Gerchunoff misrepresents the author's life and work.

More recent Gerchunoff criticism reveals that calmer heads have prevailed,
however, with some contemporary scholars challenging the notion that Gerchunoff's
early writings, including *Los gauchos judíos* and the 1914 autobiography, capitulate to
the Argentine establishment. On the contrary, says the author's son-in-law, Manuel
Kántor, Gerchunoff ardently defended Jewish causes throughout his entire career: "Hizo
desde 1906 a 1950 la apología y la defensa de su pueblo, la divulgación de su historia, el
esclarecimiento de sus problemas" 'From 1906 to 1950 he explained and defended his
people, made their history known, and clarified their problems' (5). In Kántor's opinion,
Gerchunoff always maintained "[s]u fidelidad a sus dos ricas facetas de judío y de
argentino" 'his faithfulness to both his Jewishness and Argentineness' (9), refusing to
compromise either aspect of his identity. Gerchunoff biographer and critic Beatriz
Marquis Stambler corroborates Kántor's view, although she qualifies it a bit by arguing
that the young Gerchunoff's zeal for acceptance as an Argentine may have temporarily
overshadowed his identification with Jewishness: "No obstante, debe aclararse que
Gerchunoff nunca, bajo ninguna circunstancia, renegó de lo judío, pero en esta época de
su vida eso quedó arrinconado, con un tanto de aire exótico, que agregaba una nota más a
su pintoresca figura" 'Nevertheless, it's clear that Gerchunoff never, under any
circumstance, rebelled against Jewishness; during that period of his life it remained in the
background, with a certain exotic air that contributed even more to his pintoresque figure'
Kántor's and Stambler's studies reflect a shift in Gerchunoff criticism; they propose what Aizenberg calls a "complex Gerchunoff" (Parricide 22-29) whose works merit a more nuanced reading than that provided by earlier scholars.

Despite the rallying around a moderate view of Gerchunoff's writings, the notion persists among some critics that Gerchunoff changed his mind regarding assimilation, supporting the *crisol de razas* ideology early in his career and later proposing a different model. According to Senkman, Gerchunoff had abandoned his mythologization of the gaucho in favor of a "crisol cultural," or "cultural melting pot," by 1924 (La identidad judia 209). Salgado Gordon, while in agreement with Senkman regarding the nature of the change, dates Gerchunoff's new emphasis on "multiethnicity or multiculturalism" to the 1940s ("Gerchunoff, Alberto" 191). Gerchunoff's 1944 essay "El problema judío" illustrates Salgado Gordon's point; in one passage, for example, Gerchunoff openly questions melting-potism: "¿es absolutamente, fatalmente imprescindible esa asimilación a fondo para ser buen británico, buen francés, buen yanqui o buen argentino? Asimilarse a fondo significa para el judío su despersonalización religiosa, étnica e histórica" 'is complete assimilation absolutely, inevitably necessary in order to be a good Brit, a good Frenchman, a good Yankee, or a good Argentine? For the Jew, complete assimilation means religious, ethnic, and historical depersonalization' (El pino y la palmera 165). The author proceeds to argue in favor of cultural pluralism, listing Great Britain, Spain, and Italy as nations that had benefited from such a model:

Gran Bretaña es un mosaico de fragmentos nacionales y raciales, con sus trazos fuertemente marcados y hasta antagónicos; España es un semillero de nacionalidades disímiles, con sus luchas seculares; Italia es un repertorio de sangres y de temperamentos de origen diverso. Todas estas cavidades diferenciales enriquecen el espíritu de un pueblo y tipifican la multiplicidad de su genio. (166)
Great Britain is a mosaic of national and racial fragments whose lines are clearly drawn and even antagonistic; Spain is a breeding ground of dissimilar nationalities with centuries-old battles; Italy is a repository of blood and temperaments of diverse origin. All of these differentiating gaps enrich the spirit of a people and typify the multiplicity of their character.

Here Gerchunoff's implication that what's good for Great Britain, Spain, and Italy is good for Argentina supports his argument that Jews ought to be accepted as Argentines without sacrificing their religious and ethnic identity. Diversity, he contends, makes a country strong.

There is something to the perception that Gerchunoff changed his views as he grew older. Events including the 1919 "Semana Trágica," or "Tragic Week," in Buenos Aires, the 1930 military revolution in Argentina, and the atrocities of the Shoah prompted Gerchunoff to speak out more often against Argentine anti-Semitism. He also took up the Zionist cause that he had famously discounted in his 1906 essay "Los judíos": "Los israelitas no necesitan volver a Sión. Lo que urge es proporcionarles un lugar en el universo donde no se les masacre" 'The Israelites don't need to return to Zion. What they need is someplace in the universe where they won't be massacred' (El pino y la palmera 13). Nevertheless the author did not wait until the 1940s, or even the 1920s, to propose a pluralist model for Argentina; it's there, albeit less explicitly, in his earliest writing.

The title of Gerchunoff's masterpiece, which cobbles together two seemingly incompatible terms, suggests as much. Contrary to what Leguizamón says in his prologue (xi), the "gaucho judío" is not necessarily a product of miscegenation. Take, for
example, Favel Duglach, the prototypical Jewish gaucho, or the 1936 edition's Dr. Nahum Yarcho, whom Viñas sees as Gerchunoff's alter ego (76), or the entire community of Russian Jews to whom Gerchunoff applies the term "gauchos judíos": none is the child of a mixed couple. And of course Gerchunoff, desirous of fitting in, would not and does not predicate Argentineness on having at least one non-Jewish parent. Rather, he uses his characters to suggest the possibility of attaining "gaucho" status, while retaining "lo judío" with respect to race, religion, and customs. The question remains, however: how do Gerchunoff's Jewish colonists even qualify as gauchos?

Not at all, if we are to believe Borges, who accurately points out that the JCA immigrants were "chacareros" or small-scale farmers, and not adventurous herdsman who roamed the plains on horseback (Siete conversaciones 36). Furthermore, as Stavans observes, the gaucho had disappeared as an identifiable social type by the time that Gerchunoff arrived in Moisés Ville ("Foreword" xvi), making the author's reference an anachronism. And one might ask why Gerchunoff appropriated the gaucho archetype for his Jewish farmers at all, especially considering that gaucho tradition takes its lumps in the text: "La muerte de Rabí Abraham" and "El boyero," for example, feature irascible and murderous criollos, and "La lechuza" suggests that local bandits are responsible for the death of a young colonist. In other words, these are hardly characters worth emulating.

Gerchunoff, however, recognized the potential payoff of casting his Jewish farmers as gauchos. Even Argentine author and statesman Domingo F. Sarmiento (1811-1888), whose call to civilize the pampas in Facundo (1845) signaled the beginning of the end of the unruly "gaucho malo" or "bad gaucho," saw the gaucho's potential as a
powerful symbol of Argentineness; he writes that "el espíritu de la Pampa está allí en todos los corazones [de los argentinos], pues si levantáis un poco las solapas del frac con que el argentino se disfraza, hallaréis siempre el gaucho más o menos civilizado, pero siempre el gaucho" 'the spirit of the pampas is in the hearts [of all Argentines], for if you lift up the lapels of the Argentine's coat just a bit, you will find the gaucho who, although more or less civilized, is still the gaucho' (Facundo 99). In the decades leading up to the Argentine Centennial, the figure of the gaucho had been gradually reinvented. His make-over, reflected in José Hernández's La vuelta de Martín Fierro (1879; The Return of Martín Fierro), was complete by 1910: thanks in large part to Ricardo Rojas's brand of romantic Nationalism, the gaucho no longer represented a threat, but rather a legacy.

By casting Jewish immigrants as gauchos, Aizenberg says, Gerchunoff "earned them the right to belong" (Parricide 18). So, despite his misgivings about the legendary horseman's violent streak, Gerchunoff dresses up his Jewish farmers in traditional gaucho garb—bombachas (trousers with button cuffs on the legs), boots, and tiradores (wide belts). His colonists share the gaucho's admirable qualities, but none of the bad ones; in "El poeta," for example, the titular character, Favel Duglach, likens gauchos to the ancient Hebrews and, indirectly, to the Jewish chacareros: "Como estos [los hebreos], [los gauchos] son patriarcales y nobles. Viven vida sencilla y dulce, entre su hogar y su ganado" 'Like [the Hebrews], [the gauchos] are patriarchal and noble. They live simple, sweet lives among their families and flocks' (133). By virtue of their approximation to this domesticated gaucho archetype, Gerchunoff’s colonists are legitimate, and innocuous, Argentines.
The author's comparison of the gaucho and the Jewish immigrants, however, goes beyond their clothing and pastoral lifestyle. Gerchunoff realized that the gaucho was just as much a paradox as a paradigm: while he represented authentic Argentineness, the gaucho's independence, rebelliousness, and strong regional loyalties undermined central authority, making him an unlikely mascot for the type of consolidation and consensus that nation-building requires. The gaucho's duality explains the figure's appeal to Gerchunoff, who, in my opinion, proposed cultural pluralism as a viable option to melting-potism all along. By pointing to the example of the gaucho, he shows that Argentina already had a long-standing tradition of accommodating difference—and dissidence. In *Los gauchos judíos*, Gerchunoff parleys the gaucho's insider/outsider status into a defense of Jewish settlers who, while preserving their own religion and traditions, nonetheless qualify as true Argentines.

The likening of Jewish *chacareros* to gauchos undertaken by Gerchunoff hinges on the relationship between nation and region in Argentina. In his essays, Gerchunoff plays up the connection between the gaucho's individuality and his strong ties to Entre Ríos; he also describes the gauchos of the first half of the nineteenth century as forerunners of a distinct social type: "el hombre entrerriano" or "Entre Ríos man." As products of the same environment, the gaucho and the "Entre Ríos man" share some important qualities. For example, they love local culture and take pride in their freedom ("Autobiografía," *Entre Ríos* 26); by nature they are tolerant of religious difference ("Dimensión espiritual de Entre Ríos," *Entre Ríos* 65). Most significantly, the *hombre entrerriano*, like his gaucho predecessor, insists on local autonomy and sees his Argentineness as an extension of his regional identity; Gerchunoff explains, "El de Entre
Ríos es individuo esencialmente sensible al dominio local. Concibe al país a través de la provincia y a ésta a través de la villa menuda o de la ciudad en que la escuela, la sociabilidad, las manifestaciones iniciales de la vida de relación esbozaron su espíritu y lo imantaron con el amor regional" 'The Entre Ríos man is essentially sensitive to local authority. He conceptualizes the country through his province, and his province through the small town or city in which school and early social interactions sketched out his spirit and imbued him with love of the region' ("Entre Ríos, mi país," Entre Ríos 42).

Gerchunoff mentions Jews as one of several immigrant groups carrying on the gaucho tradition as hombres entrerrianos ("Entre Ríos, mi país," Entre Ríos 41), offering himself as a prime example: in his essay "Entre Ríos, mi país," whose title explicitly states Gerchunoff's devotion to his "patria chica" or "little homeland," the author repeats some variation of the sentence "Yo soy de allá, amigos míos" 'I'm from there, my friends' four times in the concluding paragraph (58-59).

Gerchunoff's early writing also finds the author engaging the national through the local. I referred above to Gerchunoff's description of his "conversion" in the 1914 autobiography (26); this passage echoes the conclusion to "Las bodas de Camacho," written four years earlier, in which the author mentions "la colonia judía, donde aprendí á amar el cielo argentino y mi alma se meció en música de la tierra" 'the Jewish colony, where I learned to love the Argentine sky and my soul was immersed in the music of the land' (91). Both examples, which mirror the gaucho's negotiation of national and regional identity, illustrate the possibility of being Argentine from a (safe) distance.

The portrayal of Entre Ríos in Los gauchos judíos and the "Autobiografía" contradicts traditional assumptions about the author's perspective on assimilation.
Senkman and Salgado Gordon argue that Gerchunoff's once-enthusiastic support for the Centennial's *crisol de razas* ideology eroded over time; swelling anti-Semitism in Argentina and elsewhere, they say, changed his views, prompting him to drop melting-potism and, in its place, adopt cultural pluralism. As I explained in Chapter 1, however, Gerchunoff had already expressed serious reservations about miscegenation in several passages in the 1910 edition of *Los gauchos judíos*. Furthermore, he consistently praises Entre Ríos's religious tolerance and independent spirit in his earliest publications, including *Los gauchos judíos*, and portrays his Jewish *chacareros* preserving their traditions and running their colonies with no interference from the Argentine government.

At the same time, Gerchunoff affirms the colonists' patriotism by casting them as heirs to the gaucho ethos and describing their celebration of Argentine Independence, albeit on Jewish terms ("El himno"). In other words, *Los gauchos judíos* reads less like a lockstep endorsement of assimilation than it does an ode to cultural pluralism.

Gerchunoff’s description of life in the colonies reflects JCA founder Baron Maurice de Hirsch's original vision for Jewish farming communities in Argentina. According to Norman, "The Baron's dream and desire had been to establish an independent, self-sufficient, self-supporting and self-governing community of Jewish farmers in Argentina" (73). The philanthropist believed that, by buying large tracts of land and settling as many Jews as possible there, he could guarantee the colonies some degree of autonomy (Norman 20; Avni 107). Hirsch's order to create a Jewish militia in the Mauricio colony (Alpersohn 71) reflects the extent to which he saw the colonies as separate territories.
Los gauchos judíos offers every indication that Gerchunoff saw the colonies the same way. His Jewish gauchos practice their faith openly with no fear of persecution, elect their own officials, and resolve conflicts according to Jewish law. Rationalizing that Zion can be any place "donde reina la alegría y la paz" 'where happiness and peace reign' (7), rather than a specific geographical location, they compare Argentina to the Jewish Promised Land. At the same time, the colonists and their non-Jewish neighbors right the wrongs of the medieval Spanish convivencia, fostering relationships based on mutual respect and tolerance of difference. The harmonization of cultures appears in the characterizations of Favel Duglach and Dr. Yarcho, both of whom are revered by Jews and criollos alike, and in the friendship between Rabí Abraham and his gaucho neighbor, don Estanislao Benitez. Despite their differences, Abraham and Benitez coincide in their profound love for the land (99-100), finding common ground in, well, common ground.

The above examples illustrate that, despite criticism to the contrary, Los gauchos judíos never urges Jewish immigrants to try to "fit in" at the expense of their religious and/or ethnic identity. Rather, Gerchunoff predicates the success of the convivencia, redux, on Argentina's commitment to the ideals of the 1853 Constitution. By having the chacareros repeatedly praise the freedoms afforded them as a minority in a predominantly Catholic country, Gerchunoff appeals to his fellow Argentines' patriotism and magnanimity, and quite successfully at that: at a time of regnant melting-potism, Los gauchos judíos, even with its implicit defense of cultural pluralism, managed to earn a place in the Argentine literary canon.

No small feat, to be sure. Add to it the fact that, throughout Los gauchos judíos, Gerchunoff often privileges Jewish religion and tradition over Argentine Catholic culture,
and the acceptance of the book by the political and intellectual elite of the period seems even more implausible. For example, Gerchunoff's portrayal of Judaism as "el cristianismo precristiano" 'pre-Christian Christianity,' which he elaborates in a 1924 essay of the same name, represents a recurring theme in Los gauchos jüdios. Kántor's assertion that Gerchunoff "no cedia a Cristo a los antijudíos, ni renunciaba a él" 'neither ceded Christ to the Jews' enemies, nor renounced him' (5) is substantiated by Los gauchos jüdios, which is dotted with references to the continuity between Judaism and Christianity. For example, a dying Rabí Abraham resembles "Nuestro Señor Jesucristo, velado por los ancianos y las santas mujeres de Jerusalém..." 'Our Lord Jesus Christ, whom the old men and saintly women of Jerusalem watched over' (67); an old colonist's features "recuerdan á los santos pescadores que acompañaban á Jesús por los arrabales" 'recall the saintly fishermen who accompanied Jesus through the outlying towns' (43).

By returning to a period prior to the definitive break between the two religions, Gerchunoff reminds the reader that Christianity had its matrix in Judaism: he points out, for example, that Jesus was Hillel's⁶ disciple (Los gauchos jüdios 43; El cristianismo precristiano 22) and that the authors of the Gospels themselves were Jews (El cristianismo precristiano 6). These assertions, while emphasizing the compatibility between Judaism and Christianity, also illustrate the former's "firstness."

Although Gerchunoff characterizes Christianity as the universalization of Jewish beliefs (El cristianismo precristiano 5) and calls Catholicism "el judaísmo triunfante" 'Judaism, triumphant' (El cristianismo precristiano 31), the author's life and work hardly

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⁶ Hillel (end of the first century BCE-beginning of the first century CE) was a Jewish sage and scholar whose influential teachings included seven rules for interpreting Torah.
align with supersessionism. On the contrary, Gerchunoff makes a compelling case for the continued merit and relevance of Jewish tradition in *Los gauchos judíos*: his colonists, left to their own devices, live in peace, resolving conflicts according to Jewish law. They rely on the wisdom of their scriptures to settle disputes between feuding neighbors ("La huerta perdida"), to deal with the case of a runaway bride ("Las bodas de Camacho"), and to reach a consensus on a petition for divorce ("Divorcio"). Jewish sacred texts are so comprehensive, in fact, that they even offer commentary on how to handle ghosts ("La lechuza") and witches ("Las brujas").

Furthermore, by sequencing stories like "Divorcio" and "Historia de un caballo robado" next to one another, Gerchunoff contrasts the authoritative and efficient set of Jewish laws with its Argentine counterpart, which allows for the victimization of innocent Jews. Such examples buoy the argument in favor of cultural pluralism by suggesting that the Jewish colony operates according to a legal system superior to that of its non-Jewish neighbors. In other words, the relatively new Argentine code, with its flaws and susceptibility to corruption, cannot compare to the exhaustive and time-tested Jewish tradition.

Based on the treatment of Judaism and Christianity—and Jewish and Argentine law—in *Los gauchos judíos*, one might ask if Gerchunoff advocated the assimilation of Argentines to the culture of Jewish immigrants, rather than the other way around. At the

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7 Mary C. Boys defines supersessionism as "the theological claim that Christians have replaced the Jews as God's people because the Jews rejected Jesus" and identifies the following ideas as central to this theology: 1) the New Testament fulfills the Old Testament, 2) the church replaces the Jews as the new Israel, 3) Christianity has rendered Judaism obsolete, and 4) God has abrogated his covenant with the Jews (10-11).

8 As I mentioned in Chapter 1, Abraham is forced to answer to false allegations in "Historia de un caballo robado." Rather than endure a drawn-out legal process, the *matarife* agrees to pay for a horse that he has not stolen.
very least, he defends multiculturalism by focusing on the past and potential
contributions of the Jewish tradition to Christian society. Even the language and syntax
of *Los gauchos judíos* reflect an affirmation of Jewishness. In a 1918 essay, Gerchunoff
declares, "El idioma es la verdadera nacionalidad. [...] ¿En qué idioma puedo escribir yo
si no es el mío, es decir, el idioma de los argentinos?" 'Language is the true nationality.
[...] In what language should I write if not my own, that is, the language of Argentina?'
(quoted in Ricardo Feierstein, 8). But Gerchunoff never really wrote in the language of
his fellow Argentines, with the possible exception of Leopoldo Lugones: his boundless
vocabulary distinguished him from his compatriots. Borges once said that the author of
*Los gauchos judíos* "casi llegó a escribir con todas las palabras" 'nearly wrote with all the
words' ("Borges conversa sobre Gerchunoff" 13); as Viñas (78) and Senkman (*La
identidad judía* 42-51) point out, Gerchunoff cultivated Cervantine Spanish by frequently
using archaisms in his writing.

*Los gauchos judíos*, imbued with sixteenth-century Castilian words and phrases,
reflects Gerchunoff's lifelong devotion not only to his literary hero, Miguel de Cervantes
Saavedra, but also to Jewish causes. In his 1926 essay "Los judíos en la lengua
castellana" (Jewish Writers in the Spanish Language), Gerchunoff highlights the Jewish
contribution to the Spanish literary tradition by listing prominent medieval authors of
Jewish origin; he also notes that Jews continued to use the Spanish of the Middle Ages
for centuries after the 1492 expulsion (*El pino y la palmera* 31-32). Overlooking the
difference between Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jewry, he says in the same essay that the
Jewish immigrants to Argentina did not need to "adapt to," but rather "recover" the
language that medieval Jews had so readily made their own (32); consequently, they
represented a highly assimilable group. The implication of Gerchunoff's argument, however, is that, if the medieval precedent held true, the newly-arrived Jews would soon best native Argentines in the latter's own language. After all, Gerchunoff himself had done so, as his acceptance by his non-Jewish contemporaries evidenced. By earning a place in the Argentine literary canon with a text whose characters spoke more like Don Quixote than Martín Fierro, Gerchunoff had prevailed in a game of linguistic one-upmanship.

As if that weren't enough, Gerchunoff entered the mainstream without sacrificing *Los gauchos judíos* unusual heteroglossia. As Aizenberg points out, the text features many words in Yiddish and Hebrew, as well as specific references to Jewish religion and culture, at a time when the *crisol de razas* ideology ruled the day (*Parricide* 25). Stavans, commenting on the relationship between *Los gauchos judíos* unique syntax and Gerchunoff's formation in Yiddish, even proposes that the masterpiece may have been "thought out in Yiddish, yet written in Spanish" ("Foreword" xiv). If language is the true nationality, as Gerchunoff wrote fourteen years after the publication of the first edition of *Los gauchos judíos*, then what does his canonical text's mix of Castilian Spanish, Hebrew, and Yiddish say about the author's concept of Argentineness? In my opinion, the polyglotism reflects Gerchunoff's belief that Argentina had the potential to accommodate diversity, just as his text accommodates several different languages. What emerges in the pages of *Los gauchos judíos* is an appeal for tolerance based on the principle that national identity transcends religious and ethnic difference.
3.1.1 Conclusions: Gerchunoff's Jewish Gaucher

At the beginning of this chapter I pose the question, "Which comes first: the gaucho or the judío?" Gerchunoff, who writes in his 1914 autobiography that he is "above all, Argentine" (36), appears to privilege the former. Furthermore, the author's association of miscegenation and progress in his early essays seems to corroborate accusations that he advocated total integration at the expense of Jewishness.

While Gerchunoff praises melting-potism as a boon for Argentina, however, he is more reticent with regard to the potential benefits of the crisol de razas for his Jewish immigrants. In Los gauchos judíos the gaucho, the symbol of authentic Argentineness, is noble and brave, but also violent and uneducated; on the other hand, the colonists represent a millennial culture that places a premium on peace and knowledge. By assimilating, the Jewish immigrants could win acceptance, but stand to lose traditions that precede, perfect, and/or trump their Hispanic counterparts at each turn in the text. Lest we forget, Gerchunoff reminds us repeatedly of Christianity's origins in Judaism and the Sephardim's contributions to medieval Spain; he also shows the Jewish legal system to be superior to that of Argentina. Given Gerchunoff's tendency to privilege Jewishness over Argentinerness in Los gauchos judíos, it follows that the most extreme cases of assimilation register negatively in the text: Jacobo comes across as brash and disrespectful; the runaway brides, disgraceful and tragic.

The examples above contradict the portrayal of Los gauchos judíos as a propaganda piece for the Argentine political and intellectual elite. Hardly a ringing endorsement of melting-potism, the text instead offers something of a blueprint for cultural pluralism. Gerchunoff's case for tolerance of diversity emerges in his positive
portrayal of the autonomous Jewish colony, his characterizations of Favel Dulgach and Dr. Yarcho, and his code-switching between Castilian Spanish, Yiddish, and Hebrew. All of this makes for a text that, in 1910, could have easily been considered subversive by Argentine officials.

So why wasn’t it? For one, Gerchunoff effusively praises Argentina throughout Los gauchos judíos, describing the nation as a twentieth-century Promised Land. Here it is important to note something that Gerchunoff’s detractors overlook: the author presents Argentina not as it really was, but how it should have been as per the vision set forth in the 1853 Constitution. Gerchunoff mounts an effective defense of Jewish rights by wrapping himself in that most Argentine of documents, which guarantees freedom of religion and the equality of all residents. Consequently, to question his argument for cultural pluralism would have been tantamount to questioning the principles on which the nation had been founded.

A slippery slope, to be sure. This is not to say, however, that Gerchunoff appealed to the Argentine Constitution merely for rhetorical advantage. The author’s life and work attest to his belief in, or sincere hope for, the compatibility of Jewish and Argentine identity, a proposition that depended in large part on Argentina’s commitment to its constitutional obligations. In other words, the "gaacho" and the "judío" never represented, for Gerchunoff, an either/or proposition; rather, he argued for both, in equal measure, just as the title of his most famous work suggests. At the same time, Gerchunoff did not ignore the reality of Argentine anti-Semitism that jeopardized his vision; in "Historia de un caballo robado," which appeared in the original 1910 edition of Los gauchos judíos, and "El candelabro de plata," added to the 1936 version, the author
clearly expresses apprehensions about the future of Jews in Argentina. These stories go
to prove that Gerchunoff, while an optimistic skeptic or skeptical optimist, was no
apologist.

Although many of Gerchunoff's harshest critics fail to recognize the author's
evenhandedness, some of his best readers, including Adão Voloch, Rebeca Mactas, and
Frida Alexandr, do. In the sections to follow, I show how Gerchunoff's negotiation of
national identity and Jewishness resonates in their respective story cycles.

3.2 Adão Voloch, Jewishness, and Brazilianness

According to Lockhart, Alberto Gerchunoff engaged in "a life-long program of
identity formation" (Argentine-Jewish Essayists 33). The same can be said of Adão
Voloch, who, in the apologetic "Diálogo com o leitor" (Dialogue with the Reader) that
introduces his second book, Um Gaúcho a Pé, writes, "O objetivo principal de meus
escritos é contribuir para o esclarecimento da questão judia no sentido comum,
cotidiano..." The principal objective of my writing is to contribute to the clarification of
the Jewish Question in its common, everyday sense...'
(author's boldface, 14). Natálvio
and Arturo Litvinoff, the father/son protagonists of Voloch's trilogy, reflect the author's
intentions: they wrestle with national, regional, religious, and ethnic identity throughout
the family saga, swinging like human pendulums between Jewishness and Brazilianness.

Voloch based Natálvio's character on his own father, Nathan, while Arturo
represents the author's literary alter ego. It is abundantly clear in the trilogy, however,
that Natálvio and Arturo are doubles; the latter even goes by "Natalhik'l," the diminutive
form of "Natálvio," in the beginning of Um Gaúcho a Pé. Both are Quixotesque
characters, frustrated idealists dizzied by books: Natálio is "talvez complicado da cabeça de tanta leitura" 'perhaps disturbed from so much reading' (*O Colono* 27); likewise, Arturo is a "campônio que leu demais e viveu de menos" 'country boy who read too much and lived too little' (*Um Gaúcho* 136).

Voloch shows father and son, on separate occasions, struggling with nearly identical scriptural passages: in *Os Horizontes do Sol* a young Natálio, soon after abandoning his rabbinic studies, recalls the commentary, "Serás resgatado do mal que te fizerem mas julgado pelo mal que premeditares" 'You will be delivered from the evil done to you but judged for the evil that you premeditate' (24); *Um Gaúcho a Pé* finds Arturo challenged by an equally difficult text: "Serás perdoado pelos crimes que cometeres; mas terás a condenação eterna por um mau pensamento" 'You will be forgiven for the crimes that you commit, but eternally condemned for an evil thought' (216).

Exasperation and failure cause father and son to identify with the pathetic figure of the "gaucho on foot" (*O Colono* 140; *Um Gaúcho* 82, 184), a point driven home by their analogous deaths: at the end of *O Colono Judeu-Açu*, Natálio meets a gaucho's fate, falling from his horse and impaling himself on his own dagger (168); when Arturo is shot during a prison riot on the final page of *Um Gaúcho a Pé*, he experiences "a sensação de cair de um cavalo a galope" 'the sensation of falling from a galloping horse' (221).

As if the above examples were not enough to establish the connection between father and son, Voloch drives the point home through Dona Tanha, Natálio's common law wife and Arturo's mother. When Arturo is arrested for disseminating Communist literature, Tanha asks herself, "O filho seria diferente do pai?" 'Is the boy any different
from his father?" (Um Gaúcho 91). Given the interchangeability of Voloch's protagonists, the answer to her question is a resounding "no."

With regard to the autobiographical nature of Voloch's fiction, the author places minimal distance between himself and Arturo; Igel, in reference to her 1988 interview of Voloch, writes that the author "[d]eclarou-me com insistência que a descrição da sua vida, como se estende pela trilogia, é quase isenta de interferência ficcional" 'declared to me insistently that the description of his life throughout the trilogy is almost completely free of fictional interference' (Imigrantes Judeus 67). It is likely that Voloch inherited or emulated many of his father's traits, as Igel suggests ("Voloch, Adão" 572), and that the close characterizations of Natálio and Arturo reflect Natan Voloch's influence on his son. Os Horizontes do Sol corroborates this idea: Arturo recognizes that he owes everything he knows to Natálio, and wonders if he has inherited his tendency to ruminate from his father (118).

At the same time, it is possible that Voloch casts certain aspects of the father's character in the son's image or, in other words, that both Natálio and Arturo represent projections of the author. Pinsky, in his prologue to O Colono Judeu-Açu, reads the character of Natálio in this way, describing the latter as a mouthpiece for the younger Voloch's theories on the failure of Jewish agricultural colonization in Brazil (10). Likewise, it's safe to assume that Natálio's rambling discourses on Jewishness and Brazilianness convey the author's own beliefs, particularly because Arturo repeats many of the same ideas in other passages: throughout the trilogy, father and son are wont to offer long and compatible commentaries on assimilation, citizenship, and the religious,
cultural, and ethnic aspects of Jewishness. A chorus of minor characters chimes in, revisiting many of the same ideas and parroting the protagonists'/author's perspective.

As Pinsky notes, Voloch's political soapboxing, thinly disguised as dialogue, often relegates his fiction to a secondary role (10). Natálio's and Arturo's thoughts and speech slip into manifesto mode with regularity; as a result, many passages in the trilogy tend to read like political tracts. Although heavy-handed at times, Voloch's characterizations of father and son offer valuable insights into the author's own theories on Brazilianness and Jewishness. Unlike Gerchunoff, Voloch did not leave behind a body of essays in which he expresses his personal views; his highly-autobiographical trilogy, however, more than compensates in this regard. In the section that follows, I consider how the second and third installments of the trilogy, *Um Gaúcho a Pé* and *Os Horizontes do Sol*, respectively, inform our reading of the negotiation of national identity and Jewishness in *O Colono Judeu-Açu*.

3.2.1 National and Regional Identity in *O Colono Judeu-Açu*

*O Colono Judeu-Açu* finds Voloch making Gerchunoffian moves right from the title, which combines two seemingly disparate terms: the Portuguese "judeu" or "Jewish," and the Tupi "açu," meaning "great" (Igel, "Surcos" 35). The immediate reference to indigenous culture in Rio Grande do Sul is the opening salvo in Voloch's efforts to link Jewish farmers to the region, represented in his texts by the *caboclo* (mestizo) and *gaúcho* (gaucho); the author aligns these figures with his father-and-son protagonists throughout the trilogy. In *O Colono Judeu-Açu*, for example, Natálio dresses in full gaucho garb, farms according to local Guarani tradition, and develops friendships with Gumercindo Fagundes da Silva, a prototypical gaucho, and Afonso, a descendant of
Guaranis. The text's final scene, an account of Natálio's death, underscores his affiliation with both the *gaúcho* and *caboclo* archetypes:

O cavalo lerdo, de rédea solta, de vez em quando trincava uma grama à beira da estrada. *Seu* Natálio, montado, fazia seu cigarro, picando o fumo e pasou-lhe pela cabeça que muitos gaúchos morreram assim: o cavalo se assusta e o homem cai, espetado na própria faca.
Aconteceu.
A cara do colono judeu-açu parecia a de um índio guacho. (168)

From time to time the sluggish horse, its reigns loose, munched on grass along the side of the road. "Seu" Natálio, on horseback, prepared his cigarette, cutting the tobacco, and it occurred to him that many gauchos had died that way: the horse becomes frightened and the rider falls, impaled on his own knife.
That's what happened.
The face of the great Jewish colonist resembled that of a "guacho" Indian.

In *Um Gaúcho a Pé*, references to Arturo emphasize that he, like his father, has strong regional ties: he is the titular "gaucho on foot," as well as a "caipira," "judeo-caboclo," "matuto," "vaqueiro," "campônio," and "camponês judeu" ("hillbilly," "meztizo Jew," "country bumpkin," "cowboy," "country boy," and "Jewish peasant," respectively).

As I discussed earlier in this chapter, Gerchunoff's dubious characterization of Jewish *chacareros* as gauchos appealed to the duality of the gaucho archetype: while national heroes and symbols of authentic Argentineness, the legendary horsemen also embodied the independent spirit of the pampas region. In other words, they were both insiders and outsiders. By casting his colonists as gauchos, Gerchunoff affirmed the former's patriotism while defending their right to live according to Jewish tradition.
Voloch uses a similar strategy when he evokes the *caboclo* and *gaúcho*, both of whom represent Brazil's Rio Grande do Sul; in fact, the region's natives and residents are known as *gaúchos*. There is some overlap between the mestizo and gaucho archetypes;
according to anthropologist Ruben Oliven, "in one of the versions of the Rio Grandian identity, it is considered a source of pride that the Gaúcho has Indian blood. It is common to use the expression 'old Indian,' as a term of endearment, referring to the figure of the Gaúcho" (86).

While synonymous with Rio Grande do Sul, the autochthonous caboclo and gaúcho also symbolize authentic Brazilianness. Their rehabilitation in the second half of the nineteenth century, reflected in Brazilian author José de Alencar's novels O Guarani (1857; The Guarani) and O Gaúcho (1870; The Gaucho), coincided with the similar transformation of the Argentine gaucho. By the early 1900s, when Jewish agricultural colonization began in Brazil, the hybridized gaúcho represented a model for immigrants arriving to Rio Grande do Sul; as Oliven notes, "The identification of the colono with the Gaúcho meant [...] a symbolic form of upward social mobility" (66), principally because of the latter's status as a national hero. Voloch's characterizations of Natário and Arturo as gauchos recall the attraction of the archetype at the beginning of the twentieth century; they also respond to the revival of "Gauchism" during the 1980s (Oliven xiii), the decade in which the author wrote and published his trilogy.

Like Gerchunoff, Voloch aligns his protagonists with local culture in order to establish their national identity. In O Colono Judeu-Açu, for example, the older Litvinoff sees Brazilianness as an extension of his ties to Quatro Irmãos: "O colono judeu gosta de pensar sobre a história desta província, pois ele já leu alguns livros a respeito e, cada vez mais, se sente brasileiro" 'The Jewish colonist likes to think about the history of the province; in fact he's already read some books on the topic, and has begun to feel more and more Brazilian' (20). Similarly, Arturo taps into the gaúcho and caboclo mystique in
declaring his own Brazilianness: "meus verdadeiros patrícios são os brasileiros, os caboclos, os gaúchos, os camponeses" 'my true compatriots are Brazilians, meztizos, gauchos, country folk' (Um Gaúcho 47). Even after he becomes a documented Brazilian citizen as a result of his military service, Arturo insists on his regional identity: "Eu sou um caboclo, esta terra é minha e dela faço parte sem que me possam excluir. Não procuro outra pátria' I'm a meztizo, this is my land and I can't be excluded from it. I'm not looking for another homeland' (Um Gaúcho 144). While both Natálío and Arturo consider regional identity to be part and parcel of their Brazilianness, the protagonists tend to privilege the former by assuming the guise of gaúchos and caboclos. Their frequent appeals to the autochthonous figures suggest apprehensions about their acceptance as Brazilian citizens.

Earlier in the chapter, I discussed how anti-Semitic accusations propagated by xenophobic "native" Argentines played a role in Gerchunoff's decision to cast Jewish immigrants as gauchos. If Voloch, like Gerchunoff, meant to defend Jewish tradition while reaffirming the patriotism of Jewish Brazilians, then it made perfect sense to portray Natálío and Arturo as gaúchos and caboclos. Both archetypes represented quintessential insiders/outsiders: despite their inherent difference, they were accepted by the mainstream as symbols of authentic Brazilianness. Furthermore, they were emblematic of Rio Grande do Sul, a region that, while loyal to Brazil, has a long tradition of resisting central authority, dating back to the Farroupilha Revolution of 1835-1845. 9

In other words, diversity and dissidence were tolerated and even celebrated in Brazil

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9 This civil war pitted farapos, republican liberals fighting for local rights, against caramurus, conservative supporters of Brazil's imperial government. Following a series of crushing defeats at the hands of the imperialists, the farapos agreed to peace terms that included broad amnesty for the rebels.
decades before Jewish agricultural colonization began in the country; in 1891, the Rio Grande do Sul State Constitution and Brazil's first Republican Constitution, both inspired by Positivist ideology, made tolerance the law of the land by institutionalizing freedom of religion (Boris Fausto 142; Lesser, *Jewish Colonization* 11). Based on these precedents, Voloch could have parlayed his portrayal of Natálio and Arturo as Rio Granadians into a compelling case for Jewish rights in Brazil, à la Gerchunoff in Argentina.

Some passages in the trilogy find Voloch doing just that. In *O Colono Judeu-Açu*, for example, Voloch offers a romanticized description of Quatro Irmãos that recalls Gerchunoff's Entre Ríos dreamscapes: "Os visitantes de mais longe cincharam os arreios dos cavalos, atrelaram os bois às carroças e partiram cantando e conversando alto, naquela linda madrugada sulina, onde não havia pogroms nem insultos raciais" 'The visitors from farther away cinched up their horses' reigns, hooked up their oxen to their carriages, and set off singing and talking loudly, in the beautiful dawn of Rio Grande do Sul, where there were neither pogroms nor racial insults' (author's boldface, 32). The author's vision of a multicultural region free of religious and racial prejudice reappears two stories later, when Natálio attempts to reassure a group of newly-arrived Jewish colonists: "O Brasil dará a todo o imigrante, após cinco anos de vida no território nacional, a carteira de cidadania e a vida de liberdades democráticas que lhe permitirá ir e vir, negociar, trabalhar, estudar e rezar pelo credo que entender" 'Brazil will give every immigrant who lives in the nation for five years citizenship papers and democratic freedoms that will allow him to come and go, trade, work, study, and pray as he sees fit' (*O Colono* 48). In this passage, Natálio rattles off a list of Constitutional guarantees, an
indication that Voloch, like Gerchunoff, constructed his idyllic image of colonial life with unrealized Constitutional promises in mind.

Writing retrospectively, Voloch uses Natálio and other characters as gadflies to remind his contemporary Brazilian readers of their Constitutional obligations toward minority groups. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, *O Colono Judeu-Açu* features two nearly identical conversations about the separation of Church and State; the first takes places between a Brazilian lieutenant and Mr. Pereira, a successful businessman and prominent member of the Jewish community in Quatro Irmãos:

"O senhor também é judeu, Seu Pereira?"
"Sim, senhor Delegado. Sou judeu brasileiro. O senhor é cristão ou muçulmano brasileiro?" retrucou o esperto oriental.
"Bem, a minha religião é assunto pessoal."
"A minha também, Seu Delegado. Mas nós viemos aqui para saber da intimação do coitado do zelador da Sinagoga." (152-53)

"Are you also a Jew, Mr. Pereira?"
"Yes sir. I'm a Brazilian Jew. Are you a Christian or Muslim Brazilian, sir?" retorted the quick-witted Sephardi.
"Well, my religion is a personal matter."
"So it mine, sir. But we came here to learn about the summons of the poor caretaker of the Synagogue."

The second exchange, between Natálio and a traveling salesman, follows a similar course:

"Aqui todos são judeus? Desculpe a pergunta. Sou viajante de casa de ferragens. É a primeira vez que aqui venho."
"E o senhor o que é, em religião?"
"Eu sou espirita, mas católico. Graças a Deus."
"Infelizmente para o senhor aqui não tem igreja. Somos todos brasileiros." (164)

"Is everyone here a Jew? Pardon the question. I'm a travelling salesman with the ironworks. It's my first time here."
"And you, sir, what religion are you?"
"I'm a spiritualist, but Catholic. Thank God."
"Unfortunately we don't have a church for you here. We're all Brazilians."

Both Mr. Pereira and Natálio, taking issue with questions about their religious preference, quickly turn the table on their interlocutors. They make a point of emphasizing their Brazilianness, arguing that national identity transcends religious difference. In Um Gaúcho a Pé, Arturo expands the argument by addressing ethnicity as well as religion:

"Somos italianos, sírio-libaneses, portugueses, africanos, espanhóis, japoneses...Eu sou mais um judeu...Porém, tudo isso reflete as nossas origens. O que há, de fato, é um ponto comum: cidadãos de uma nação, numa cidade, num meio de trabalho e atividades centrífugas e na produtividade necessária e complementar da comunidade. Portanto, somos homens dentro de uma sociedade e não judeus ou católicos ou islamitas." (202)

"We are Italians, Syrians, Lebanese, Portuguese, Africans, Spanish, Japanese...I'm one more Jew...This, however, reflects our origins. But we all have something in common: we are citizens of a nation, in the city and the workplace, involved in centrifugal activities and productivization that are vital to the community. Therefore, we are men within a society and not Jews or Catholics or Muslims."

Like the two dialogues cited above, this passage affirms the right to religious freedom of all Brazilian citizens. In each case, however, a Jewish character, and not a Christian or Muslim, assumes a defensive posture, evoking Constitutional ideals to challenge discriminatory attitudes. By repeating the same ideas through Mr. Pereira, Natálio, and Arturo, Voloch focuses his lobby on the rights of Jewish Brazilians.

At the same time, however, Voloch points out that citizenship comes with certain obligations. He uses Natálio and Arturo Litvinoff to both criticize the colonists' "auto-guetismo," or tendency to form exclusive groups (Um Gaúcho 215), and to emphasize the Jewish immigrants' civic duties. In Os Horizontes do Sol, which follows Natálio from
Russia to London, Argentina, Chile, and Brazil, Voloch's restless protagonist expresses clear ideas about what it means to be Argentine and Brazilian. Upon his arrival in Buenos Aires, for example, Natálio advocates "a adaptação à nova pátria sem pretensões a privilégios e distinções, mas naturalizados com direitos e deveres" 'adaptation to the new homeland without pretensions of privileges or distinctions, but rather naturalization with rights and responsibilities' (28). Later, as an instructor in Basalvilbaso, a Jewish agricultural colony in Gerchunoff's old stomping grounds of Entre Ríos, Natálio insists on teaching the Spanish language and Argentine history and geography because his students, he says, will be "'cidadãos desta nação e devem instruir-se no curriculum moderno'" 'citizens of this nation and they should be instructed in the modern curriculum' (author's italics, 48). As I discussed earlier in this chapter, Natálio embraces Brazilianness with the same zeal: in addition to developing close friendships with Filipson's and Quatro Irmãos's locals and copying the gaucho style of dress, he becomes a naturalized citizen, learns Portuguese, and studies the history of Brazil and Rio Grande do Sul. In other words, he makes an effort to meet the expectations associated with citizenship. The same can be said of Arturo, whose trajectory from soldier to documented Brazilian to political activist reflects his guiding sense of civic duty.

With respect to the rights and responsibilities that accompany Brazilianness, other minor characters in the trilogy rather conspicuously echo Voloch's protagonists. Os Horizontes do Sol, for example, introduces Maúricio, a character who has a lot in common with Arturo, including his age, Jewish background, political orientation, and strong ties to Rio Grande do Sul. During his single cameo appearance in the text, Maúricio declares "'que nós, israelitas devemos todos estar naturalizados e tirar nosso
Título de Eleitor. Nós não podemos ficar de fora da política nacional'' 'that we, the
Israelites, ought to all be naturalized and cast off our title of the Chosen. We can no
longer stay out of national politics' (93). A fabricated conversation in *O Colono Judeu-
Açu* finds Voloch planting similar sentiments in the mouths of six unnamed characters; a
cross section of the Quatro Irmãos community, they are identified only as the *shochet*, a
businessman, a farmer, a JCA administrator, a pharmacist, and an artisan. The author
presents their exchange as a cacophony of voices, neglecting to attribute speech to
specific characters; their rhetoric, however, has a familiar ring. One comments,
"'Vivemos numa República Democrática e não há discriminações para o cumprimento do
dever'' 'We live in a Democratic republic and there is no discrimination with respect to
the fulfillment of our responsibilities' (154); another argues, "'Mas nós temos que pensar
como brasileiros. Acabou a discriminação. Acabou-se o gueto e a perseguição. É assim
que devemos compreender a nova situação e ensinar nossos filhos a serem brasileiros de
religião judaica, os que quiserem professá-la...'' 'But we have to think like Brazilians.
There's no more discrimination. There's no more *shtetl*, no more persecution. That's the
way that we should understand our new situation, and we should teach our children to be
Brazilians who happen to profess Judaism, if they so choose...' (155). In these passages,
fiction clearly takes a backseat to Voloch's preoccupation with communicating his ideas
on Brazilianness. The characters stick to Voloch's talking points: the benefits and
obligations of citizenship, the eradication of the *shtetl* mentality, and the civic education
of Jewish children. Their conversation, complete with stock phrases direct from the
Voloch catalogue, offers more examples of the author's tendency to write dialogue with
the express purpose of advancing his agenda.
While the author clearly outlines what it means to be Brazilian, his position on Jewishness takes some unusual twists and turns. He sets out to address Jewishness in the same matter-of-fact way that he tackles Brazilianness; Voloch's narrator, and one of his secondary characters, even pose the question, "What is a Jew?" (O Colono 31; Os Horizontes 126). This pump-priming allows the author to elaborate his theories on Jewish identity, which, he suggests throughout the trilogy, has religious, ethnic, and cultural components.

Arturo says as much in Os Horizontes do Sol: "'No sentido geral, judeu é membro de uma etnia, que conseguiu ficar unida em torno de sua religião e cultura. Apesar de várias migrações. É uma das etnias mais desenvolvidas e prolongadas de nossa civilização' 'Generally speaking, a Jew is a member of an ethnic group that managed to remain united around their religion and culture, in spite of several migrations. They are one of our civilization's most developed and enduring ethnicities' (126). In O Colono Judeu-Açu, Voloch makes the same point, albeit more subtly, through his characterization of Natálio. Although he calls himself a Jew, Natálio neither believes in God nor observes Jewish precepts: he ignores the Sabbath, eats pork, and steers clear of the synagogue. Despite his aversion to Judaism, however, Natálio still identifies with Jewishness as it relates to ethnicity and culture; when other colonists call him an assimilationist, for example, Natálio responds, "'Nossos filhos falam e escrevem em ídiche, são circuncizados...Entrem, vejam nossa biblioteca, tem literatura ídiche, européia, também russa, francesa, inglesa...Podem encontrar uma bíblia, mas não há zidur nem mezuzá nas portas'" 'Our children speak and write in Yiddish, they are circumcised...Come in, take a look at our library, we have Yiddish and European literature, as well as Russian, French,
English...You'll find a Bible, but there's no **siddur** or **mezuzah** in the doorway' (author's boldface, 50). In answering his neighbors' accusations, Natálio distinguishes between observant or "religious" Jews, and "cultural" Jews whose relationship with Jewish practice is much more arbitrary.

Arturo's and Natálio's pat answers on Jewishness reflect Voloch's stated objective of "contributing to the clarification of the Jewish Question in the common, everyday sense." His texts, however, send plenty of mixed signals about the Litvinoffs' à la carte Jewishness, ultimately raising more questions than they resolve. Both father and son fail when it comes to putting their theories on Jewish identity into practice; in Natálio's case, for example, the attempt to divorce the religious, ethnic, and cultural aspects of Jewishness sways no one. The Jewish community rejects the Litvinoffs, calling them "heretics" (*O Colono* 27) and "Reds" (*O Colono* 42); meanwhile, anti-Semitic attitudes among non-Jewish Brazilians prove to be as pervasive as ever: even loyal *gaúcho* friend Gumercindo Fagundes da Silva suspects that Natálio's disinterest in money is backhanded "picardia semita" 'Semitic trickery' (*O Colono* 75). Perhaps the least convinced is Natálio himself: although he leaves the yeshiva and disavows Judaism, the apostasy never really takes. Rather, Natálio's vacillation between atheism and mysticism continues throughout his life and remains unresolved following his deaths.

I refer to "deaths," plural, because Voloch offers two different accounts of Natálio's demise. As I discussed above, *O Colono Judeu-Açu* ends with Natálio's fall from a horse; in *Os Horizontes do Sol*, however, the protagonist dies of natural causes while sitting on the doorstep of his home. The second version describes a delirious Natálio's final thoughts; with his dying breath, he quotes Job 6:26: "'Acaso pensais em
reprovar as minhas palavras ditas por um desesperado ao vento"?" (117) "Do you devise words of reproof, / But count a hopeless man's words as wind?" (The Jewish Study Bible 1513). While the conclusion to O Colono Judeu-Açu affirms Natálio's Brazilianness by emphasizing his resemblance to both the gaúcho and the guacho, Os Horizontes do Sol has Natálio die as a Jew: Arturo interprets his father's last words as the latter's return to his mystic origins, and Flora, Arturo's sister, has Natálio buried according to Jewish ritual (117-18). Fittingly, the alternate ending finds Natálio second-guessing his estrangement from Judaism in death, just as he had throughout his life.

Natálio's efforts to come to terms with his Jewishness, fraught as they are, pale in comparison to those of Arturo. Initially, Arturo disqualifies himself as a Jew because he does not profess Judaism; in Um Gaúcho a Pé, for example, he comments, "Não posso me definir como judeu ou israelita. Não sou da religião, nem os meus o são" 'I can't define myself as a Jew or an Israelite. I'm not religious, and neither is my family' (56). In Os Horizontes do Sol, however, an older Arturo ups the ante by renouncing Jewishness in both the cultural and religious sense: "Minha cultura é o materialismo histórico e o marxismo. Não tenho religião, por isso não sou judeu"' 'My culture is Historical Materialism and Marxism. I have no religion, therefore I am not Jewish' (126). Nevertheless he wavers in his convictions, as his declaration before a group of fellow Communists illustrates: "Eu quero gritar aqui: sou judeu, sou filho de raça judia e sou comunista, para extirpar o fascismo e o imperialismo da face da Terra"' 'I want to shout out here: I am a Jew, I am a son of the Jewish race and I am a Communist, here to wipe fascism and imperialism off the face of the Earth' (Os Horizontes 131-32). Voloch suggests at each turn that Arturo shares his father's dubiousness; in one passage, for
example, the narrator of *Os Horizontes do Sol* asks, "Será que também, através do sangue herdado, era influenciado por meditações religiosas, metafísicas?" 'Could it be that, through the blood he had inherited, he was also influenced by religious and metaphysical meditations?' (118). *Um Gaúcho a Pé* answers the question affirmatively: reeling from an argument with his wife Helenice, Arturo remarks, "'Estou pensando igual a um talmudista'" 'I'm thinking just like a Talmudist' (215).

The final pages of *Um Gaúcho a Pé* indicate that, even had Arturo effectively distanced himself from his Jewish identity, it would have been imposed on him by non-Jewish Brazilians. He says as much, complaining, "'Sou acusado de ser judeu, sendo brasileiro. Sempre foi assim. Os judeus me discriminavam e os brasilerios também'" 'I am accused of being a Jew, while I am Brazilian. It's always been that way. Jews discriminate against me and so do Brazilians' (214). Although he does not fit the anti-Semitic profile applied to Jewish immigrants of the period, Arturo is nonetheless rejected by non-Jewish Brazilians; he remarks, "'Cultivei a terra e não fui comerciante. Servi ao Exército, escolhi ser um cidadão participante e não fui aceito. Desejei as liberdades e me via preso'" 'I worked the land and wasn't a businessman. I served in the Army, I chose to be an engaged citizen, and I wasn't accepted. I wanted freedom but I was imprisioned' (216). Ultimately, Arturo's dreams of assimilation amount to nothing more than self-delusion, prompting him to wonder if he should have embraced his Jewishness from the start (216).

So which comes first for Voloch: the Jew or the gaúcho? Were all Brazilians to respect the provisions of their Constitution, he implies, the question would be irrelevant. By evoking the separation of Church and State and the rights and responsibilities of
citizenship, the author argues that national identity, as per the law of the land, transcends religious and ethnic difference. Voloch's vision of a multicultural and tolerant society, readily apparent in his utopian description of Quatro Irmãos, pre-1930 (O Colono 30-32), also emerges at the linguistic level through his ample use of heteroglossia; the author emulates, and perhaps surpasses, Gerchunoff in this respect by sprinkling his Portuguese texts with words and phrases in Spanish, Hebrew, Yiddish, Ukrainian, German, French, and Polish. 10

At the same time, Voloch recognizes the disparity between lofty Constitutional ideals and the reality on the ground, and his doubts about the compatibility of Jewishness and Brazilianness drive the trilogy. The author looks at Brazil's Jewish Problem from different angles, but most often through the eyes of his literary alter ego, Arturo. Free indirect speech reveals Arturo's thoughts on the assimilability of Jews; he believes, for example, that the Jew "não se adapta ao meio, ao contrário, o meio é que se ajusta a ele, pois é, antes de tudo, um criador" 'doesn't adapt to his surroundings; on the contrary, the surroundings adapt to him, because he is, after all, a creator' (Um Gaúcho 98). He attributes the Jews' outsider status, in part, to the nature of Judaism, which he considers a "monopolistic" and "unabsorbable" religion; by way of contrast, he theorizes that Christianity accelerated the naturalization of Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese immigrants to Brazil (Um Gaúcho 78). In other words, Arturo sees Jewishness as an obstacle to that which he most desires: Brazilianness.

10 The narrator of O Colono Judeu-Áçu, for example, compares Quatro Irmãos to Babel, citing different greetings overhead in the colony: "Shalom Aleichem, Buenas tardes, Guth Tag, Dobri, Bon soir" (author's boldface, 30).
By making Arturo's mind an open book, as it were, Voloch offers insights into the character's motives for renouncing his Jewish identity; by the same token, we see the extent of Arturo's frustration when his attempts to integrate fail. He realizes that assimilation is a two-way street that depends as much on his actions and attitudes as it does on those of non-Jewish Brazilians. Ultimately the persistence of anti-Semitism in Brazil renders all of Arturo's efforts futile; as a result, his story reads like a cautionary tale through which Voloch paints a bleak picture of the future of Jews in Brazil.

Meanwhile, Voloch's unflattering portrayal of non-Jewish Brazilians as generally small-minded and intolerant raises the question: why bother trying to assimilate in the first place? Gaúcho identity, to which many immigrants to Brazil aspired, takes some particularly hard hits in the trilogy. On one hand, Voloch's Jewish colonists pay the gaucho lip service: in *O Colono Judeu-Açu*, for example, Natálio's sons, and potential son-in-law, George, vouch for their gaucho neighbors, whose unsavory reputation as drunkards and murderers precedes them (67; 129). On the other hand, the trilogy registers several examples of gaúcho aggression: a small gang tries to ambush George and Flora after a dance (*O Colono* 63); a farmhand instigates a fight with George at a wedding (*O Colono* 135-36); Gregório Boscoli kidnaps a local Jewish girl (*O Colono* 117); and Francisco Dornelles Castilhos intimidates a Jewish girl into marriage (*Os Horizontes* 76). With the exception of level-headed Gumercindo Fagundes da Silva, who himself turns out to be a descendant of crypto-Jews (*O Colono* 77), Voloch's gaúcho characters reinforce the negative stereotype of the irascible and violent gaucho: they represent a threat to the Jewish farming communities, rather than a model worthy of emulation. By exposing, and emphasizing, the gaucho's dark side, Voloch not only
undermines a powerful national myth, but also suggests that Jewish immigrants to Brazil stand to lose more than they gain through assimilation.

As I discussed above, Gerchunoff uses the same strategy to address assimilation in Argentina. What passes for ambivalence in Los gauchos judíos, however, gives way to healthy doses of skepticism in Voloch's trilogy. There are no Brazilian correlates to Favel Duglach or Dr. Nahum Yarcho in Voloch's books; Natálio probably comes the closest, although he is roundly rejected as a heretic by his Jewish neighbors and considered a recluse by many of his non-Jewish acquaintances. Cognizant of his father's failure to negotiate Jewishness and Brazilianness, Arturo renounces his Jewish identity altogether; even so, anti-Semitic Brazilians continue to discriminate against him, frustrating his efforts to assimilate. Add to the equation that the retrograde gaúcho represents the model of Brazilian authenticity and virtue, and assimilation in Voloch's trilogy appears not only futile, but also wholly undesirable.

While Gerchunoff holds out hope that, by the second Argentine Centennial, the Jewish Question in Latin America will have been resolved, Voloch shows that little had changed in the seven decades following the publication of Los gauchos judíos. If the Brazilian author saw a viable means to reconcile Jewishness and Brazilianness, he never reveals it; consequently, the trilogy offers an overridingly pessimistic outlook toward the future of Jews in Brazil.

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11 In "Historia de un caballo robado," Gerchunoff's narrator acknowledges anti-Semitism in Argentina, adding, "Yo quiero creer, sin embargo, que no siempre ha de ser así y los hijos de mis hijos podrán oír en el segundo centenario de la república, el elogio de próceres hebreos, hecho después del católico Te Deum, bajo las bóvedas santas de la catedral..." 'I want to believe, however, that things will change and that, by the Republic's Bicentennial, my children's children will hear praises sung to illustrious Hebrews under the cathedral's sacred arches, after the Catholic Te Deum...' (127).
3.3 National Identity and Jewishness in Rebeca Mactas's *Los judíos de Las Acacias* and Frida Alexandr's *Filipson*

National identity and assimilation figure less prominently in Mactas's *Los judíos de Las Acacias* and Alexandr's *Filipson* than they do in Gerchunoff's and Voloch's texts: the two women authors hardly mention gaucho ethos and culture, focusing more on their female characters' longing to escape the suffocating solitude of country life than the dangling carrot of citizenship. This is not to say, however, that Mactas and Alexandr overlook Argentineness and Brazilianness, respectively, but rather that they address the negotiation of national and religious identity less frequently, and more subtly, than do their male counterparts. In particular, the women authors' use of, and references to, language reveal their self-consciousness about "fitting in." Because Alexandr associates Portuguese proficiency with Brazilianness in *Filipson*, for example, her text, written in Portuguese, represents an affirmation of her national identity. Mactas's deliberate avoidance of heteroglossia in *Los judíos de Las Acacias*, as well as her work as a translator of Hebrew and Yiddish texts into Spanish, make a similar statement.

It's fair to say that Mactas's and Alexandr's accounts reflect, in letter and spirit, Gerchunoff's dictum that language is the true nationality. As I discussed earlier in this chapter, Gerchunoff bolstered his case for cultural pluralism by proposing language as the unifying factor in a diverse society. Judging from their descriptions of life in the colonies, Mactas and Alexandr shared Gerchunoff's vision. It's true that many of Mactas's and Alexandr's female characters, who feel trapped and alone in the insulated farming communities, dream of moving to the city, and that this impulse can be skewed as an endorsement of integration; on the other hand, the authors recognize that isolation
offers important benefits, including freedom and safety. Las Acacias and Filipson are loci of Jewish orthodoxy where residents live, work, and worship in peace; the colonists there suffer neither anti-Semitic persecution, outside pressures to assimilate to dominant national culture, nor interference from federal and municipal governments. Left to their own devices, the colonists determine the extent to which they interact with their non-Jewish neighbors, some of whom are unscrupulous or dangerous; for example, two of Mactas's stories, "Fuego" and "Un hombre de campo," convey distrust of Argentina's legal system, and Filipson registers several run-ins between Jewish families and unsavory locals. For these reasons, the texts suggest, autonomy matters.

In the following sections, I will show how passages in Los judíos de Las Acacias and Filipson illustrate the relationship between language and national identity. I will also discuss how both this relationship and the authors' portrayal of life in the colonies support the idea of cultural pluralism.

3.3.1 Language, Assimilation, and Exclusion in Mactas's and Alexandr's Story Cycles

In Los judíos de Las Acacias, Mactas refers to language to distinguish between two types of characters. The Jews living in Las Acacias, who maintain their distance from national affairs, tend to use languages other than Spanish: a family converses in Yiddish (15); a colonist recites a Hebrew prayer to support his argument (36); children study Hebrew, with no mention of Spanish instruction (137-39). By way of contrast, many of the settlers' sons and daughters, who move to neighboring cities in search of educational and economic opportunities, hone their Spanish skills and begin to assimilate to dominant national culture. Mactas shows how this process divides orthodox colonists from their urbanized siblings and children. "La casa," for example, describes a battle of
wills between an old farmer and his eldest son, a successful businessman and prominent public figure in the city; similarly, "Fuego" pits a colonist against his brother, a tycoon. Such conflicts develop in each of the seven stories in Mactas's cycle, often taking center stage.

Filipson also juxtaposes two groups: the older, orthodox Jewish colonists and their more liberal children. While the former struggle to learn Portuguese, the latter pick up the language with relative ease, often serving as translators for their parents; the author recalls that she and her brother, Jacques, assisted their father in this capacity (68; 160). Some of the young colonists consider overcoming the language barrier a key to "getting ahead." Case in point: "Jacob na Estrada de Ferro," a story in which Frida's brother, Jacob, and a group of friends leave Filipson in search of work. Hired on to lay railroad ties, the boys dedicate their off-hours to the study of Portuguese; their co-workers, on the other hand, squander their time and money on fights, booze, and women (41).

For Alexandr, however, learning the language is about more than upward mobility. In several passages, the author intimates a correlation between Portuguese proficiency and Brazilianness; for example, she describes her sister's suitor, Jacob, in the following fashion: "Falava de São Paulo, onde estivera durante os dois últimos anos, que havia feito o serviço militar, pois se naturalizara brasileiro. Seu português era fluente, sem aquêle sotaque característico que acompanhava a vida inteira o imigrante judeu" 'He talked about São Paulo, where he had spent the last two years, during which he had served in the military, as he had become a Brazilian citizen. His Portuguese was fluent, without the characteristic accent that typically accompanied the Jewish immigrant
throughout his entire life' (111). Here Frida associates Jacob's military service with his legal status; in her eyes, however, it is Jacob's command of Portuguese that authenticates his Brazilianness. In other words, by losing his accent, Jacob also drops the "immigrant" label. Frida applies the same criteria to herself; regarding her extended visit to the nearby town of Uruguaiana, she comments, "Meu português ia melhorando naquele ambiente onde as crianças, na sua maioria, eram brasileiras" 'My Portuguese was improving in that environment, in which most of the children were Brazilian' (122). In this passage, Frida identifies "Brazilian children" by their ability to speak fluent Portuguese; by this standard, she and most of Filipson's colonists fall short of true Brazilianness.

At the same time, however, Alexandr expresses her eagerness to improve, and Filipson testifies to her eventual mastery of the language. Taking into account the author's association of language and national identity, it's possible to interpret her decision to write and publish in Portuguese as an affirmation of her Brazilianness.

Mactas's writing suggests a similar impulse. As Lockhart points out, the author "was actively engaged in bringing Yiddish and Hebrew literature to a Spanish speaking [sic] public through translation" ("Mactas, Rebeca" 359); she seems to have had the same audience in mind for Los judíos de Las Acacias.

In her story cycle, Mactas uses a minimum of heteroglossia; rare examples include the Russian terms "muchik" 'peasant' and "verstas," a unit of measurement (10), and the Hebrew terms Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement; 19) and "Midrash Koelet," a commentary on Ecclesiastes (140). Otherwise, the author avoids words and phrases that Spanish-speaking readers of the period may not have recognized. She also translates her characters' conversations in Hebrew and Yiddish entirely into Spanish, designating the
original language with explanatory phrases such as "expresándose en hebreo" 'expressing himself in Hebrew' (9) and "Hablaban en idisch" 'They conversed in Yiddish' (15).

Mactas's language choices are particularly noteworthy in light of her pedigree: as I mentioned in the Introduction, she was the granddaughter of Marcos Alpersohn, regarded as the dean of Yiddish literature in Argentina. By catering to a Spanish-speaking audience, she not only bucks family tradition, but also makes a statement about her Argentineness.

It's tempting to construe Mactas's and Alexandr's enthusiasm for Spanish/Portuguese as evidence that they advocated assimilation. Passages portraying the colonies in a negative light, which abound in Los judíos de Las Acacias and Filipson, only add fuel to that fire. In both texts, the most damning indictments come from forlorn female characters. Filipson, for example, conveys Frida's mounting frustration and loneliness:

Chorei meus verdes anos perdidos nessas estradas lamacentas. Cada vez mais acerbamente, fazia-se sentir a revolta contra aquêle meu destino. Até quando correria estradas e campos sempre só? Quando regressaria Jacques ou Luís para me libertar daquele inferno? Eu ansiava por abandonar Filipson, agora que os manos haviam acenado com aquela possibilidade. Enquanto continuássemos na colônia, eu não mudaria de vida. (221)

I cried over my green years lost on those muddy roads. I felt more and more disgusted and bitter about my fate. How much longer would I run along those streets and fields, always alone? When would Jacques or Luís return to free me from that hell? I longed to abandon Filipson, now that my brothers had presented that possibility. As long as we continued in the colony, my life wouldn't change.

Likewise, Los judíos de Las Acacias features a series of female characters trapped in the colony, including Eva in "Corazón sencillo," Clara in "Los judíos de 'Las Acacias,'" and Miriam in "Primaveras." They often feel alone, helpless, and numb to their passing
youth; meanwhile, they are prone to breakdowns similar to that of Frida. Take, for example, the following description of Clara:

Empero, a veces, en mitad de algún trabajo, se detiene de súbito, pálida, temblorosa, frías las manos, pues siente en lo más hondo que por más que se afana, no hace nada; entonces, abandonando su ocupación, corre a su cuarto y arrojándose sobre el lecho llora amargamente, llora con abundantes lágrimas que amustian la impecable tiesura de las fundas almidonadas. (86-87)

But sometimes, in the middle of a chore, she stops suddenly, pale, trembling, her hands cold, because she feels deep inside that, no matter how hard she works, she will not accomplish anything; then, leaving her task, she runs to her room and, throwing herself on the bed, cries bitter tears that wither the impeccably starched pillowcases.

Characters like Clara and Frida, who are drawn from the authors' experiences in the country, show the extent to which young women suffered the solitude of colonial life. Their stories emphasize the drawbacks of the colonies' physical and cultural isolation; consequently, they make a compelling case for assimilation.

Mactas and Alexandr, however, really don't belabor the topic of assimilation in the way that Gerchunoff and Voloch do. I discussed above how self-referential appeals to the gaucho archetype recur throughout the texts of the two male authors; I also described how the gaucho, as a symbol of both regional and national identity, is a lynchpin in Gerchunoff's and Voloch's cases for cultural pluralism. By contrast, the legendary horseman is conspicuously absent from Mactas's and Alexandr's story cycles. In fact, the word "gaucho" doesn't even appear in *Los judíos de Las Acacias*, nor do the Jewish farmers in the book interact with any non-Jewish neighbors. The only reference that Mactas makes to local Argentine culture comes in "Primaveras," when she dresses a Jewish boy in *bombachas* and *alpargatas*, or gaucho trousers and sandals (143).
In *Filipson*, Alexandr makes a single mention of the word "gaúcho" (160) and describes only two "natives" who fit the gaucho profile. The first, a young man dressed in shiny boots and *bombachas*, invites Frida to dance at her sister's wedding. The second, Chico Lencino, wears traditional gaucho clothes, sings gaucho songs, and seems to live on horseback (160-61). Frida's contact with both of these characters brings negative consequences. By dancing with the gaucho boy, for example, she incurs the wrath of local busybody Boris Wladimersky, who in turn eggs on Frida's furious mother (145-46). Later in the text, Lencino touches the adolescent Frida inappropriately as he lowers her from a horse, pressing the length of her body against his (162). Although it's easy to distinguish the gaucho youth's flirtation from Lencino's perverse behavior, both incidents suggest that interacting with the non-Jewish locals only stirs up trouble.

Furthermore, it can be downright dangerous. It's true that Alexandr offers some examples of friendly non-Jews in and around Filipson, including Otacílio, "o nosso querido chefe da estação" 'the beloved boss of the train station' (195), and Frederico Bastos, "a autoridade local e grande amigo dos pacatos colonos" 'the local sheriff and a great friend to the quiet colonists' (71). On the other hand, she devotes entire stories to unsavory characters such as the aforementioned Lencino; Serafim, a neighbor who reneges on a business deal with Frida's father, then tries to kill him; and João Ortiz, an outlaw who terrorizes the colony. There's also Bonifácio, a former slave whom the colonists suspect in the murder of a Hebrew instructor (103), and a pair of drunken *caboclos* who hurl anti-Semitic epithets at Frida and her family (138-39).

Aside from these threatening figures, the only other non-Jewish neighbors with whom Frida has contact are the vagrants who occupy the abandoned homes once owned
by Jewish colonists. The squalor in which they live shocks Frida, who comments, "Não podia compreender como aquela gente tinha pela vida tal indiferença. Debaixo da pele gretada pelo vento e queimada pelo Sol não pulsaria um coração humano?" 'I couldn't understand how those people could be so indifferent about life. Didn't they have human hearts beating below their weathered, sunburnt skin?' (166). Mactas describes a similar experience in "Primaveras," a story in which Miriam wanders to "el otro lado del pueblo, lugar al cual pocas veces había visto" 'the other side of town, a place that she had seen only a few times' (161). Her unfamiliarity with the area suggests the periphery of Las Acacias, where non-Jews were likely to take up residence; there, she observes the occupants of a run-down ranch house: "Niños semidesnudos se revolcaban junto con los perros en las puertas de las viviendas. Los hombres tomaban mate con una expresión de tristeza y mansedumbre. Las madres solteras, a las que ella conocía de vista, hacían los trabajos más rudos de la casa" 'Half-naked children rolled around with dogs in the doors of the homes. Men drank mate, their faces sad and broken. The single mothers, whom she recognized, took care of the toughest household chores' (161). The passage most likely refers to the squatters who moved in as Jewish farmers began to leave the colonies in droves; if so, Mactas's only mention of her non-Jewish neighbors, which comes at the very end of the book, paints a pathetic picture of their standard of living.

As the above examples illustrate, neither Mactas nor Alexandr romanticizes regional culture. Unlike Gerchunoff and Voloch, who celebrate the gaucho myth, the two women authors find no models worthy of emulation among the "natives." In this sense, Los judíos de Las Acacias and Filipson corroborate Judith Laikin Elkin's assessment that "the colonists found the process [of acculturation] exquisitely painful in the vacuum of
the pampas, where they saw nothing of value to acculturate to" (*The Jews of Latin America* 120). By contrast, the city captures the imagination of Mactas's and Alexandr's female characters: lured by the trappings of an urban lifestyle, they long to join the steady stream of out-migration from the colonies. This impulse, however, does not necessarily indicate a desire to assimilate; rather, it reflects the untenableness of Jewish agricultural colonization.

In other words, Mactas and Alexandr relate the exodus from the colonies to the danger of the surroundings, the lack of educational and economic opportunities in the country, and the difficulty of farming; the urge to "fit in," however, doesn't really factor in the move. On the contrary, both authors express reservations about assimilation through their characters. Mactas's "Fuego" and "Un hombre de campo," for example, feature old Jewish farmers who recoil in fear when faced with the prospect of negotiating the Argentine legal system, and "Los judíos de 'Las Acacias'" describes a community of Jews who choose to live out their last days blissfully unaware of national affairs. Likewise, Frida learns to appreciate Filipson's backwardness: she prefers the poverty of colonial life to more progressive Uruguaiana (125) and recalls her reticence as she and her family prepared to move to Porto Alegre: "De minha parte, eu me sentia tentada a ficar em Filipson e a continuar a ser o que era, semi-selvagem" 'As for me, I felt tempted to remain in Filipson and to continue to be what I was: a semi-barbarian' (237). These passages show how colonial life, while lonely and monotonous, is also reassuring in its predictability; meanwhile, approximation to dominant national culture is uncertain and intimidating.
How to interpret the mixed signals in Mactas's and Alexandr's story cycles? On one hand, the authors' linguistic choices and female characters suggest an impulse to assimilate. On the other hand, neither *Los judíos de Las Acacias* nor *Filipson* places a premium on citizenship nor criticizes characters who are content to limit their contact with the outside world to a minimum. Rather, Mactas and Alexandr show that the colonies' isolation offers some benefits; for example, the Jewish immigrants live according to their beliefs, with little concern for anti-Semitism or interference from the government. In other words, *Las Acacias* and *Filipson*, like Gerchunoff's *Entre Ríos* and Voloch's *Quatro Irmãos*, afford the colonists considerable freedom. Herein lies one way to reconcile the apparent contradictions in Mactas's and Alexandr's texts.

As I discussed above, Gerchunoff and Voloch build their cases for cultural pluralism by appealing not only to the gaucho archetype, but also to the freedoms guaranteed by their countries' constitutions. Although Mactas and Alexandr make fewer references to constitutional ideals than do their male counterparts, several passages find them evoking the immigrants' hopes for Argentina and Brazil in the same way. Mactas's "La casa," for example, describes the protagonist's excitement as he prepares to emigrate: "En una nación donde reinaba la libertad, los judíos podrían tener tierras y tierras propias. Jaim Kahn tembló de alegría. Tendría campos; campos suyos. ¡Una propiedad! ¡Hacer de ella lo que se quiere!" 'In a nation where freedom reigned, Jews could own land. Jaim Kahn shook with happiness. He would have his own fields. His own property! To do with it whatever he wished!' (10). Similarly, *Filipson's* Boris Wladimersky sees the colony as the place "onde encontrara a liberdade num país livre de ódios raciais e pudera montar seu lar e, nêle, um sumário laboratório para o exercício de sua profissão" 'where
he had found freedom in a country without racial hatred and where he could establish his home and a modest laboratory to practice his profession' (29). In the examples above, Argentina and Brazil provide Jewish refugees freedom from persecution, as well as the freedom to pursue the livelihoods of their choice.

Such constitutional rights come with few strings attached in Los judíos de Las Acacias and Filipson. I have already shown how both texts convey the importance of learning the national language; beyond promoting proficiency in Spanish or Portuguese, however, Mactas and Alexandr don't touch upon the responsibilities associated with citizenship. Mactas never mentions Argentineness, nor do her characters pursue naturalization. Alexandr's colonists, meanwhile, negotiate Brazilianness from a distance. In the story "Professor Budin," for example, the author recalls learning of Brazil's decision to enter World War I from her teacher, Abraham Budin; accompanied by Budin on violin, she and her classmates sing the country's national anthem (128-29). This rare display of patriotism, like the celebration of Argentine independence in Gerchunoff's "El himno," implies neither a long-term commitment nor a deep-rooted connection to the country; aside from this momentous occasion, the colony remains detached from national affairs.

So which comes first for Mactas and Alexandr: the gaucho or the judío? It's a tricky question because, unlike Gerchunoff and Voloch, the authors make few asides related to Brazilianness, Jewishness, and assimilation. Furthermore, their characters recognize both the potential dangers of acculturation and the drawbacks of isolation. By illustrating the inviability of either extreme, however, Mactas and Alexandr appeal to a middle ground consistent with cultural pluralism. In other words, they appreciate the
colonists' right to live according to Jewish law; at the same time, their texts reflect the importance of communicating and identifying with the rest of the nation.

In *Los judíos de Las Acacias* and *Filipson*, language, and little else, emerges as the common denominator capable of connecting Jews and non-Jews in Argentina and Brazil. Mactas's and Alexandr's linguistic choices not only cater to a Spanish- or Portuguese-speaking public, but also affirm the authors' national identity. In this regard, the two women authors take a page from Gerchunoff's book; they differ, however, from Voloch, in that neither addresses any civic responsibilities beyond language proficiency.

As I discussed above, Gerchunoff's *Los gauchos judíos* tends to privilege Jewish tradition, whereas Voloch's trilogy emphasizes Brazilianness. It's difficult to make such generalizations about Mactas and Alexandr without first studying their treatment of the city and the country, which represent "national" and "Jewish" spaces, respectively, in *Los judíos de Las Acacias* and *Filipson*. In Chapter 4, I will consider the relevance of the city/country dichotomy in each of Gerchunoff's, Voloch's, Mactas's, and Alexandr's story cycles.
CHAPTER 4:

YOU CAN TAKE THE JEWISH COLONIST OUT OF THE COUNTRY...

When Gerchunoff, Mactas, Alexandr, and Voloch wrote their short story cycles set in the Jewish agricultural colonies, both time and space separated them from their lives in the country. All had long since relocated to the city—Gerchunoff and Mactas in Buenos Aires, Alexandr in São Paulo, and Voloch in Rio de Janeiro. Over a decade passed before the two Argentine authors "returned," through writing, to their childhood stomping grounds. Their Brazilian counterparts waited even longer: Alexandr departed from Filipson some forty years before the publication of her book, and Voloch, who left the farm in 1934, published O Colono Judeu-Açu fifty years later.

Why did the four city dwellers follow memory lane back to the country? Let's review some of the reasons that they, themselves, offer. In his autobiography, Gerchunoff states that he undertook Los gauchos judíos in order to study Jewish life in a free environment and to portray the Jewish farmers' customs (Entre Ríos 34). Alexandr wrote Filipson in order to document the way that the colonists lived: she wanted younger, more comfortable generations to realize how the pioneers had struggled and sacrificed (168). Voloch's stated purpose for writing is to tackle the Jewish Question (Um Gaúcho 14); at the same time, it's also clear that he set out to record details about life in the colonies. Long passages in which Voloch describes how farmers cleared and plowed their land (O Colono 11), built their homes (O Colono 25-26), and ground manioc into
flour (*O Colono* 51-53), for example, reflect the author's concern for preserving accurate information about the Jewish settlements. Mactas doesn't speak to her authorial intent in any publication; it's likely, however, that she also saw her cycle, *Los judíos de Las Acacias*, as an anecdotal history. In her stories, she makes less use of local color than do Gerchunoff, Alexandr, and Voloch; nevertheless, Mactas's text, like those of her counterparts, offers profiles of characteristic types within a particular Jewish community.

These accounts are more than just clinical case studies. When the four authors wrote about the colonies, they were also telling their own stories and, in effect, recovering pieces of their youth. The high personal stakes led to some passionate writing about the country: the authors, while often ambivalent, are never neutral on the subject. They express a gamut of emotions, from joy to hate to fear. In this chapter, I will sort through the sometimes contradictory descriptions of country life in works by Gerchunoff, Mactas, Alexandr, and Voloch, focusing on the city/country dichotomy and a few of its correlates, namely civilization/barbarism, estrangement from Judaism/orthodoxy, and capitalism/cooperativism.

4.1 Gerchunoff's Sentimental Journey Home

Of the four main authors in this study, Gerchunoff spent the least time in the country. He and his family emigrated from Russia to Argentina in 1890, arriving in Moisés Ville, Province of Santa Fe, in 1891. Following the murder of his father in that same year, Gerchunoff moved with his family to Rajil, a colony in the province of Entre
Ríos, in 1892; after a few years of unsuccessful farming there, the Gerchunoffs relocated to Buenos Aires in 1895.

Although he was born in Russia and lived in Buenos Aires for most of his life, Gerchunoff considered himself an Entre Ríos man. He claims the province as his "patria chica" in the essay "Entre Ríos, mi país," declaring, "Yo soy de allá, amigos míos" 'I'm from there, my friends' (Entre Ríos 58). His love of the land is evident throughout Los gauchos judíos, a book filled with idyllic descriptions of the countryside. Viñas compares the setting of the text to a temple, noting how everything in Gerchunoff's natural world contributes to a beatific peace. There, the critic says, each move is deliberate and orchestrated (73-76): the cattle's lowing, the earth's scent, the brook's gurgle, and the lapwing's song all commingle in the gentle breeze.

Viñas's comments allude to the perfect balance achieved by elements of nature in Gerchunoff's story cycle. The introduction to "La siesta" illustrates this harmonization: a solemn peace, which descends upon the colony at dawn, is met in midair by sounds rising from the waking earth (18). The trope reappears in "El Cantar de los Cantares": a soft light illuminates the sunflowers as a moist scent rises from the soil (37). Such reverie, characteristic of Gerchunoff's text, is interrupted only on rare occasions, including the sudden downpour in "La lluvia" and the locust attack in "La huerta perdida." These isolated events, however, have no long-term consequences: order is quickly restored, allowing the colonists to resume their regular activities.

With regard to the structure of Los gauchos judíos, Gerchunoff's telluric descriptions create balance in the narrative itself. Leguizamón writes that one motif, the

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1 Gerchunoff mentions in his autobiography that plagues of locust destroyed their crops three years in a row (Entre Ríos 26).
love of the land, links all of the cycle's stories. As I discussed in Chapter 1, the
descriptions of nature also establish unity of setting: with the exception of "Génesis,"
which is set in Russia, all of the stories take place in the Argentine countryside.
Furthermore, they tend to take place outdoors. The text evinces a claustrophobic quality:
even when the action moves indoors, the colonists are in contact with nature. In "Las
lamentaciones," for example, moonlight bathes the faces of the elder colonists gathered
for prayer in the home of don Moisés (42); their cries of anguish, meanwhile, reverberate
in the countryside, combining with "el ritmo de las vidalitas, los suspiros de amor, los
jadeos del ganado" 'the rhythm of the vidalitas, the sighs of love, the labored breathing of
the livestock' (44).

A sequence of four consecutive stories, "El surco," "Lecha fresca," "La lluvia,"
and "La siesta," illustrates how Gerchunoff uses telluric descriptions to establish
structural continuity in his cycle. Each story opens with the literary equivalent of a
cinematic pan of the colony, taking in the rolling landscape. There is a temporal logic to
the order of the stories: "El surco" and "Lecha fresca" depict the colony at the beginning
of the workday, "Leche fresca" shows the colony at day's end, and "La siesta" takes place
on the Sabbath, following a week of farming.

Gerchunoff also consistently uses descriptions of nature to transition between
scenes within his stories. In "La muerte de Rabi Abraham," for example, references to
the countryside fill in lapses in dialogue and action as well as mark the passage of time.
Two such passages show the natural world gradually coming alive in response to the
sunrise: between the banter of busy farmers readying for work, mares whinny, birds sing,
frogs croak, and plants sway in a gentle breeze (64-65). The same technique appears in
"La lechuza," a story dominated by a dialogue between Eva Reiner and her daughter, Perla. In the passage that follows, the narrator describes a break in their conversation:

"Un largo silencio siguió á la conversación. Grillos y ranas perturbaban con su chirriar la quietud augusta del crepúsculo. En los charcos los teros elevaban su grito y de la selva próxima se oían ruidos confusos" 'A long silence followed the conversation. The sounds of crickets and frogs disturbed the majestic calm of twilight. In the puddles, lapwings raised their already shouting voices, and from the nearby woods came confusing noises' (70). Obviously, the "long silence" is anything but: crickets, frogs, and lapwings compensate for the lack of human speech.

"La visita" features another such long "silence." As Rabí Abraham and his family slowly trek toward the ranch of don Estanislao Benitez, their gaucho neighbor, they hardly exchange a word. The night, however, is full of sounds: the countryside seems to breathe, the brook gurgles musically, goats bleat, dogs wail, and a bell tolls in a distant chapel (94-95). These noises accompany the matarife and his family on their trip; once they arrive, however, the narrative turns to their conversations with their gaucho hosts.

It is evident in "La visita" that, while the descriptions of nature hide the seams in Gerchunoff's stories, they also serve a much greater purpose. Scenes showing Jewish farmers integrated into the environment respond to the earlier calls of Argentine statesmen Sarmiento and Juan Bautista Alberdi (1810-1884) to populate and civilize the pampas,² justifying the immigrants' presence in Argentina. Gerchunoff's colonists contribute to the nation by introducing agriculture, tradition, and laws to a previously

² In Chapter XXXI of his Bases y puntos de partida para la organización política de la República Argentina (1852; Bases and Points of Departure for the Political Organization of the Argentine Republic), Alberdi famously declares that "en América gobernar es poblar" 'in America, to govern is to populate' (127). Seven years earlier, Sarmiento's call to civilize the pampas in Facundo had emphasized the need to populate the region and educate its inhabitants.
untamed land. Furthermore, they exert a positive influence on the unruly "natives": as Lindstrom points out, reformed gauchos such as don Estanislao Benitez renounce the nomadic life and take up farming ("Los gauchos judíos" 233).

The change doesn't come without a sense of loss. Take, for example, "El boyero," in which the titular herdsman, don Remigio Calamaco, is a defeated, domesticated gaucho who waxes nostalgic about days gone by:

Paladin de huestes bravías, concluía su existencia repleta de hechos gloriosos, en las monótonas tareas de la colonia. Ni siquiera rodeos ni yerras. Dividido en predios las enormes extensiones de tierra, alambrados por todas partes, su espíritu acostumbrado al comunismo de antes, se sentía oprimido en el nuevo régimen. Disperso el criollaje, muertos los camaradas de los días heroicos [sic], miraba con oculta tristeza á los extranjeros, que araban el campo y llevaban la cuenta de los terneros y de las gallinas. (57)

Once the paladin of brave hosts, [Calamaco] was living out a life full of glorious deeds doing monotonous chores in the colony. There were not even rodeos or cattle drives anymore. The enormous expanses of land were now divided into lots and fenced in all around; accustomed to the collective spirit of the past, he felt oppressed by the new order. His fellow gauchos dispersed, his comrades of the heroic past dead, he contemplated the foreigners—who worked the land and kept tabs on their calves and hens—with a hidden sadness.

Although don Remigio romanticizes the past and laments his present, the conclusion of "El boyero" makes it clear that the gaucho's wild ways are no longer acceptable in a progressive society: after brutally murdering his son over a question of honor, the herdsman spends the rest of his life isolated in a jail cell.

Even as Gerchunoff's Jewish colonists bring sweeping changes to the Argentine countryside, they, too, undergo a transformation. Many of the farmers, including the orthodox Rabí Abraham, take on the aspect of gauchos, adopting the latter's characteristic dress. The colonists' appearance, however, is but the outward manifestation of their
spiritual naturalization. "La visita," for example, describes the collective epiphany of Rabí Abraham and his family as they head to Benitez's ranch: "Una emoción secreta dominaba sus espíritus. ¿Era la noche suave, el cielo azul, la alegría de vivir en plena naturaleza, abierto el corazón, como una puerta, á la sencillez?" 'A secret emotion took control of their spirits. Was it the calm night, the blue sky, the joy of living in the midst of nature, with their hearts open like doors to simplicity?' (95). Later in the story, Abraham, like Gerchunoff, praises the soft, sheltering Entre Ríos sky (99). In "Las lamentaciones," Jacobo, who represents a young Gerchunoff in the cycle, has a similar experience: he is "hinoptizado por la dulzura del cielo—el cielo único de Entre Ríos" 'hypnotized by the sweetness of the sky—the singular sky of Entre Ríos' (46). Such references are significant because, as I discussed in the previous chapter, Gerchunoff's autobiography describes how the incomparable Entre Ríos sky erased the author's origins and made him Argentine (Entre Ríos 26). In other words, Gerchunoff uses the descriptions of nature in Los gauchos judíos to affirm the Argentineness of his Jewish immigrants.

By all indications, he was successful. Several authors and critics point out the instrumental role that Los gauchos judíos played in establishing Argentina's Jewish population: Luis Emilio Soto, for example, calls the book the "acta de fundación de un pueblo" 'founding act of a people' (121); likewise, Senkman characterizes Los gauchos judíos as a "bautismo nacional" 'national baptism' (La identidad judía 22).

The descriptions of nature in Los gauchos judíos also helped to establish Gerchunoff as an Argentine author. Senkman locates him within an Argentine telluric tradition that includes authors Arturo Capdevila, Joaquín González, and Juan Carlos
Dávalos (*La identidad judía* 19-20), and Leguizamón salutes him as a model for other native writers sidetracked by their imitation of foreign texts (XIII). Leguizamón's endorsement of Gerchunoff on these grounds is ironic, considering that the latter's treatment of the Argentine countryside reflects the influence of two eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European, not Argentine, movements: Romanticism and the Haskalah, or Jewish Enlightenment.  

While the first gave Gerchunoff a language with which to portray the Argentine pampas, the second allowed him to marry the nation's interests with those of the Jewish immigrants. During the 1880s, when the Jewish Colonization Association began operations, the Argentine government was actively recruiting Europeans to populate and farm its empty expanses of land. At the same time, many followers of the Haskalah associated agriculture with the spiritual regeneration of the Jewish people. Gerchunoff's characters make this correlation: in "Génesis," for example, the Dayan Jehuda Anakroi remarks, "'Si volvemos á esa vida [agrícola] retornaremos á nuestra existencia anterior y ojalá pueda en mi vejez besar esa tierra [argentina] y bendecir bajo su cielo á mis hijos'" 'If we go back to that life [agriculture] we will return to our original ways; may I, in my old age, kiss that [Argentina's] land and bless my children beneath its sky' (7). Similarly Guedalí, a Hebrew teacher and the titular character of "El viejo colono," sees farming as a noble and redemptive profession: he exclaims, "'Ojalá no hubieran tocado mis manos, sino el misal y el arado y sería yo destinado á velar por vosotros en el Paraíso!'" 'If only

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3 Lindstrom ("Los gauchos judíos" 231) and Lockhart (*Argentine-Jewish Essayists* 55) both point out the influence of these movements on Gerchunoff.

4 During the presidency of Miguel Juárez Celman (1896-1890), for example, the Argentine legislature approved the formation of agencies to promote immigration to the country and to finance the fares of potential immigrants and their families (Avni 86-87).
my hands had never touched anything but the prayer book and the plow, I would be destined to watch over you in Paradise!' (167). By casting his colonists as idealistic farmers, Gerchunoff asserts that they were both desirable immigrants and good Jews: their spiritual naturalization beneath the sheltering Entre Ríos sky coincides with their moral edification.

Gerchunoff's descriptions of farm work reinforce the ideology of the Haskalah by attributing theological significance to each task. Plowing a new tract of land, for example, represents a sacred act in "El surco" (10) and "El viejo colono" (166). In "La trilla," the narrator compares grains of wheat spilling from a thresher to a biblical blessing from above (31). The farmers' animals, whom Gerchunoff endows with human intelligence, also approach their work solemnly: the pair of oxen who pull the plow in "El surco," for example, "comprenden su misión importante y caminan con paso digno y menudo" 'understand their important mission and walk with small, dignified steps' (10); Bárbos, the narrator's dog, "percibe con facilidad las proporciones trascendentales del acto" 'easily grasps the transcendental nature of the act' (11). Even the plow wheel sings the psalm of planting season (11). Consistent with the ideals of the Haskalah, the animate and inanimate actors mentioned above lend an air of religious ceremony to the simplest of farm tasks, in effect asserting the sanctity of agriculture.

Much of Los gauchos judíos corroborates the Dayan's statement that country life is "la única saludable y digna de la gracia de Dios" 'the only [life] that is wholesome and worthy of God's grace' (7). Gerchunoff is effusive in his praise of the pampas; by way of contrast, he makes few direct comments about the city, even though he resided in Buenos Aires for over fifty years. Nevertheless the city/country dichotomy emerges in the cycle,
particularly in passages that reflect the influence of the Haskalah. In each case,
Gerchunoff clearly privileges the country over the city. In "La trilla," for example, the
colony's mayor asks Moisés Hintler, a colonist, "¿Tenías también parvas en Vilna? Allí
trabajabas de joyero y componías [sic] relojes, ganando un par de rublos al mes. ¡Aquí,
Moisés, tienes campo, trigo y ganado!" 'Did you have such piles of grain in Vilna?
There you worked as a jeweler, repairing watches for a couple of rubles per month. Here,
you have land, wheat, and livestock!' (30). In this passage, the mayor reminds Hintler of
his former life in a Russian town, arguing that he is much better off as a farmer in
Argentina. An analogous comparison appears in "El médico milagroso," one of two
stories added to the 1936 edition of Los gauchos judíos, when the titular Dr. Yarcho asks
a patient, "¿Ha visto alguna vez nubes como éstas en su podrido pueblecito de Rusia?"
'Did you ever see clouds like these in your rotten little Russian village?' (178). Later in
the story, Yarcho responds to a colleague's suggestion that he move his practice to
Buenos Aires, where he can become rich and famous; the former replies that he already
feels rich and famous in Rajil, and that the demands of his schedule in the capital would
not allow him to spend idle hours in his garden, as he does in the colony (184). The
passage, which offers the only direct comparison of Buenos Aires and the Argentine
colonies in either edition of Los gauchos judíos, illustrates the consistency of
Gerchunoff's treatment of the city/country dichotomy.

What do the descriptions of country and city life in Los gauchos judíos tell us
about Gerchunoff's authorial intentions? For one, it's apparent that he never set out to
portray the JCA colonies with what I'll call "historical accuracy"—that is to say, a
reasonable representation of known facts. Although much of Gerchunoff's story cycle is
autobiographical, his idyllic renderings of fertile fields and bountiful harvests belie his own experiences on the farm. Furthermore, the early years of Jewish agricultural colonization in Argentina were hardly the "honeymoon period" that Gerchunoff paints in his book. Entire crops were lost to drought, floods, and plagues of locust (Norman 35), prompting out-migration from the farming communities shortly after their settlement.  

As I discussed in the introduction, critics including Sosnowski ("Contemporary Jewish-Argentine Writers" 3), Viñas (44, 84) and Senkman (La identidad judía 34) link Gerchunoff's idealized descriptions of Argentina to his desire to maintain his status among the nation's intellectual elite: rather than stir up trouble and risk his privileged position, they claim, Gerchunoff chose to ignore serious problems in Argentine society.

The historical shortcomings of Los gauchos judíos notwithstanding, Gerchunoff's panegyric to the pampas can, and should, also be read as a sincere expression of the author's love for the nation that offered refuge to him and his family. That's how Borges read it: he writes of Gerchunoff's masterpiece, "Creo que ese libro es menos un testimonio histórico que un testimonio de la nostalgia, un testimonio del amor que él sintió por Entre Ríos" 'I believe that the book is less an historical account than a nostalgic one: an account of the love that he [Gerchunoff] felt for Entre Ríos' ("Borges conversa sobre Gerchunoff" 14). Of the four main authors in this study, only Gerchunoff experienced the conditions that led thousands of Jews to flee Russia; in light of this context, it's entirely reasonable to interpret Gerchunoff's descriptions of the Argentine countryside as a reflection of his gratitude, rather than self-interest.

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5 As Avni notes, more than half of the colonies' families left between 1891-1896 (footnote, 113).
It's worth noting that Gerchunoff's praise for the Argentine pampas does not extend to the city where he spent most of his life. In *Los gauchos judíos*, as well as in his autobiography and essay "Entre Ríos, mi país," Gerchunoff embraces his regional identity, which functions as a metonym for Argentineness. At the same time, the colonies represent Jewish spaces where residents practice their faith without fear of persecution. The same cannot be said of Buenos Aires where, ten days prior to the 1910 celebration of the Centennial, an attempted pogrom took place (Avni 212).

In the 1934 essay "Semblanza de Schalom Aleijem," Gerchunoff writes that he still often felt out of place in Buenos Aires, despite having lived there for thirty-nine years:

A menudo, en la madrugada, después de un día de identificación honda con la universal vida cristiana de la metrópoli y del país, siento una morbosa necesidad de ghetto. Es cuando me sumerjo en el café de Corrientes, donde, entre el disturbio de los vasos de té y los pleitos del barrio, contemplo la traslación aluvional de ese mundo fabuloso y extraño. La misteriosa atracción de la judeidad se satisface en mí como si regresara de un viaje a Varsovia, a Bucarest, a Odessa. (*El pino y la palmera* 51-52)

Often, in the early morning, after a long day immersed in the Christian life of the capital and the country, I feel a morbid need for the ghetto. That when I go into the café on Corrientes Avenue, where, amid the clatter of the tea cups and the quarreling customers, I contemplate the migration of that strange, fabulous world from across the sea. My mysterious attraction to Jewishness is satisfied as if I had just returned from a trip to Warsaw, Bucharest, or Odessa.

Here Gerchunoff describes how he "escaped" Christian Buenos Aires by ducking into a local café. Similarly, the act of writing *Los gauchos judíos* allowed Gerchunoff to take a trip—a sentimental journey back to the Jewish colonies of his youth. If, as Borges suggests, *Los gauchos judíos* is a nostalgic account, what is it that Gerchunoff attempts to
recover in the pages of his stories? As the cycle's title suggests, it's the place and time in which he can be, at once, Argentine and Jewish.

4.2 I Left My Heart (and Soul) in Carlos Casares: Mactas and the City/Country Dichotomy

Rebeca Mactas was born in 1910 in the farming community of Carlos Casares, just beyond the limits of the Mauricio Colony, one of the earliest JCA settlements. After completing her primary education, she moved with her family to Buenos Aires, where she resided for over seventy years. Like Gerchunoff, Mactas published her story cycle, Los judíos de Las Acacias, at the age of twenty-six, in the same year (1936) that the second edition of Los gauchos judíos appeared.

With the exception of "La vuelta del hijo," which features several scenes set in Buenos Aires, each of the stories in Mactas's cycle takes place in the country. Only a few hundred kilometers separate Carlos Casares, the inspiration for the fictive Las Acacias, from Gerchunoff's old stomping grounds of Moisés Ville and Rajil; in certain passages, however, it seems like the authors are describing different worlds. As Senkman and Aizenberg have noted, Mactas offers a somber, often pessimistic look at life in the colonies: her characters must deal with failed crops, mounting debt, and mortgaged farms. In "Fuego," for example, the story's protagonist, Marcos, has a string of particularly bad luck: "Como una negra maldición le perseguía la desgracia en los últimos tiempos. Primero le robaron el arado; luego vino esa sequía desvastadora y a la postre se

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6 Senkman refers to the "irremisible fatalidad telúrica" 'unforgiving telluric fatalism' of Mactas's stories (La identidad judía 66); Aizenberg calls Los judíos de Las Acacias a "devastating portrait of life in the agricultural colonies" (Books and Bombs 72).
le moría una vaca de la estirpe de la 'Chilena'. ¡Cómo para prosperar con tanta malaventura!" 'Misfortune had dogged him like a black cloud lately. First his plow was stolen; then came the devastating drought and, to top it off, a cow of Chilena's caliber was dying on him. How could anyone prosper with so much adversity?' (57). We learn that, in addition to these difficulties, Marcos had nearly lost everything he owned following a year of poor grain sales (64); as if all this weren't enough, his wheat crop burns to the ground at the end of the story.

Although Marcos's situation is exceptionally bleak, the other farmers in Las Acacias face a similar struggle to survive. "La casa," for example, describes how the protagonist, Jaim, had managed to conquer the land "palmo a palmo" 'inch by inch' (11); in "Un hombre de campo," a two-month drought threatens the crop of the unnamed titular character. "Los judíos de 'Las Acacias," meanwhile, tells the stories of several old, ex-colonists whose properties have been foreclosed and auctioned off. Through these examples, Mactas emphasizes that the colonists faced potential financial ruin at every turn: their years of painstaking work could have been wiped out precipitously by any number of natural causes, including heat waves, droughts, and illness.

That is not to say that Mactas presents nature as a purely malevolent force. On the contrary, many of her descriptions of the land's bounty recall Gerchunoff. In Los judíos de Las Acacias, life perpetually springs from the land: for example, the narrator of "La casa," assuming Jaim's perspective, characterizes the earth as an eternally fecund source of creation (8; 11); the story's old farmer is particularly prosperous, his hard work rewarded with teeming fields (17). Likewise Eva, the protagonist of "Corazón sencillo," acknowledges the earth's gifts; she thinks to herself: "He aquí la tierra otorgando y
otorgando su fruto. He aquí las vacas perennemente grávidas" 'I have here the land giving and giving its fruit. I have here the cows who are perennially pregnant' (49). Even the story "Los judíos de 'Las Acacias,'" which compares the desolate titular town to an old, blind hen (74) and a cemetery (76), features a telluric passage reminiscent of Los gauchos judíos: "Los campos primaverales, a la espera de la cosecha, permanecían dormidos en sus frutos, acunados dulcemente por el buen sol de todos los días. La tierra yacía boca arriba, hinchada de vida" 'The Spring fields, awaiting the harvest, remained asleep, their fruits cradled sweetly each day by the sun's good rays. The earth lay face up, swelling with life' (95). As I discussed above, Gerchunoff opens several of his stories, including "El surco," "Leche fresca," and "Llegada de inmigrantes," with similar images of the fertile fields at daybreak.

Essentially, the difference between Mactas's and Gerchunoff's descriptions of country life boils down to the apportionment of the rhapsodic and the tragic in their texts. In Los judíos de Las Acacias, Mactas strikes an even balance between georgic idealism and brooding pessimism: nature giveth, and nature taketh away. By way of contrast, Los gauchos judíos is overwhelmingly paeanistic; disasters, such as the locust attack in "La huerta perdida," are rare and quickly overcome.

To some extent, this difference can be attributed to the fact that each author portrays a distinct stage in the colonization process. While Los gauchos judíos covers the settlement and early years of the Entre Ríos colonies, Los judíos de Las Acacias treats a subsequent period that coincides with the decline and abandonment of the farming communities. Each of Mactas's stories addresses, to varying degrees, the migration of colonists from Las Acacias to Buenos Aires. In most cases, a young man has set off for
the city in search of educational or economic opportunities. As a result of this pattern, Las Acacias becomes a town populated by old couples and a few younger, unmarried women.

The out-migration, and subsequent return visits, of ex-colonists drive Mactas's cycle, creating a constant juxtaposition of the city and country. As I discussed in Chapter 2, *Los judíos de Las Acacias* features a series of diametrically-opposed pairs of characters, one of whom represents the colony and the other, the capital. Mactas privileges the Jews of Las Acacias over their city-dwelling relatives, depicting the first group as selfless and the second as selfish. "La casa," for example, pits Jaim against his son, Abraham, a successful businessman in Buenos Aires. The titular house refers to an urban-style chalet that Abraham has built for his parents. Abraham's seeming act of generosity in fact disregards his father's will: Jaim insists that he is happy in his earthen bungalow. Nevertheless Abraham goes ahead with his plan out of concern for his own reputation: he comments, "[...] dentro de la posición que ocupo actualmente, no queda bien que mis padres habiten esta tapera"' '[...] considering my current position, it doesn't look good for my parents to live in this hovel' (18). Rather than leave the old home to the poor as his mother requests, the heartless Abraham has it destroyed. Ultimately, his selfish actions have fatal consequences: the mausolean chalet hastens Jaim's death.

We see the selfless/selfish dichotomy at work again in "Corazón sencillo." Marcos, an archetypal old farmer, mortgages everything he owns in order to finance his nephew David's studies in the city. Aware that the cost of his education will likely bankrupt his uncle, David instead worries much more about himself; he tells his cousin Eva, '"¡Pero sí me estoy esclavizando en una deuda de gratitud! ¡Estoy comprometiendo
mi porvenir! En adelante no pensare más que en pagarle en cualquier forma lo que le debo. ¡Me estoy atando a tu padre!" 'But I'm indenturing myself in a debt of gratitude! I'm compromising my future! From now on I won't be able to think of anything other than how to pay him what I owe him. I'm tying myself to your father!' (43). Even David's offer to marry Eva is tinged with selfishness: the latter concludes that her cousin has proposed to her only because he "quiere quedar en paz con su conciencia" 'wants to be at peace with his conscience' (50). Through the above examples, Mactas gives the impression that, were it not for his financial dependence on Marcos, David would have severed his ties with his uncle and cousin long before.

Like father, like son: as the cycle's next story, "Fuego," shows, David's father Simón only bothers with Marcos when money is involved.⁷ A big shot in Buenos Aires, Simón returns to the colony after a ten-year absence. He had last visited Marcos following their father's death, with the express purpose of claiming his part of the inheritance (59); having since lost his money in bad business deals, a desperate Simón reappears to ask his brother for a loan. As if the situation weren't audacious enough, Simón requests a sum that Marcos could only raise by mortgaging his farm, thus risking the welfare of the latter's entire family (63-64). Overwhelmed by such a prospect, Marcos initially turns his brother down; shortly after Simón leaves, however, Marcos decides that he will indeed risk everything to help his brother. That same evening, however, the spiteful Simón burns Marcos's fields to the ground.

In Los judíos de Las Acacias, the selflessness of the old colonists reflects their traditional Jewish values. Direct contact with the land fuels their faith: in "Fuego," for

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⁷ Here I am assuming, with probable cause, that the Marcos of "Corazón sencillo" and his namesake in "Fuego" are the same character, at different stages of his life (see footnote, page 53).
example, Marcos prays "con la fe vibrante de un viejo judío" 'with the vibrant faith of an old Jew' (69). Similarly, "La casa" features the devout Jaim, who, in the poem that introduces the story, declares, "Mi espíritu la clara visión de Dios encierra / cuando siente el gozoso palpitar de la tierra" 'My spirit the clear vision of God enfold / when I feel the earth's joyful pulse' (5). Consistent with Mactas's portrayal of Las Acacias as "un medio judío" 'a Jewish environment' (76), Marcos, Jaim, and others in the cycle establish a connection between orthodoxy and country life.

The ex-colonists who relocate to the capital, meanwhile, stray from Jewish precepts. Mactas drives this point home when, having already introduced a series of selfish city-dwellers in the cycle's first three stories, she describes the dilemma of Sara and Moisés Rabinoy in "Los judíos de 'Las Acacias.'" The elderly couple agonizes over the decision to send their children to the city to study: "Más tarde, aunque con un dolor intenso, [Sara] hizo que los muchachos abandonaran el hogar para estudiar en las grandes ciudades, pese a que sabía y Moisés no dejaba de repetírselo, que olvidarian las fórmulas de su judaísmo, en un medio pagano" 'Later, although it pained her greatly, Sara sent her children away to study in the big city, even though she knew, and Moisés never ceased to remind her, that they would forget their Jewish ways in a pagan environment' (90). Here Sara and Moisés weigh the value of their children's education, which Elkin calls a "cultural imperative" for the Jewish immigrants (The Jews of Latin America 117), against their children's likely estrangement from Judaism in the city. Their situation is representative of the other Jews of Las Acacias: eventually all must choose between hanging on in the moribund colony and heading to the city in search of educational and/or business opportunities. At stake: nothing less than their Jewish identity.
Although many of Mactas's stories, most notably "Los judíos de 'Las Acacias" and "Primaveras," offer a gloomy picture of country life, the author clearly and consistently favors the country over the city. She questions the ambitions that spurred out-migration from the agricultural colonies not only by portraying the city-dwellers as selfish, but also by detailing their financial straits. It's true that some, like Abraham in "La casa," make good in Buenos Aires and even support their parents: for example, several of Mactas's elderly couples, the Rabinoy included, subsist on the money that their children send from the city (76; 89). As Simón's case in "Fuego" illustrates, however, success in the city can be fleeting: he, like David in "Corazón sencillo" and Juan in "Primaveras," returns from the capital impoverished. Those on the farm, who are subject to the vagaries of the weather and the volatility of crop prices, also face the constant threat of financial ruin; compared to their counterparts in the capital, however, they enjoy a relatively stable position. For example, they have the wherewithal to subsidize their children's studies ("Corazón sencillo," "Los judíos de 'Las Acacias," "La vuelta del hijo," "Un hombre de campo"), loan money to their siblings ("Fuego"), and bail out wayward sons ("Un hombre de campo").

Through these examples, Mactas implies that the Jewish immigrants and their children are better off spiritually, and in some cases economically, in the colony than in the capital. The city, she suggests, exacts a terrible toll on its residents, as we see in "La vuelta del hijo." The story follows Natán, the titular prodigal son who, after twenty years in Buenos Aires, decides to return to the family farm. The passage below, in which the narrator uses free indirect speech to assume Natán's perspective, explains his surprising move:
Ah, in the city the human soul expands out of use. Man's most terrible recesses are illuminated; the caves of all of his desires are discovered. He loves, he hates, he sacrifices himself, all to calm his internal fire. Man made cities. Man is their king and master. But he must sustain them, and his strength is in his soul. At last he becomes tremendously tired, no longer able to give support but rather in need of support himself. He longs for the tender weakness of childhood; he needs something good and strong, like the bosom of the earth. He wants to sleep without dreaming.

Here Mactas characterizes the city as both the product and the purveyor of man's desires; the insatiability of those desires, however, ultimately drives man to exhaustion. Such is the case with Natán, who sees his return to the country as a salvation and a liberation from the demands of city life (109).

"La vuelta del hijo" is one of several stories in *Los judíos de Las Acacias* that features the return of a defeated ex-colonist to the country. The nature of Natán's defeat, however, differs from that of, say, Simón in "Fuego" and Juan in "Primaveras." Financial considerations do not force Natán's hand: he is economically solvent if not moderately successful, with an Engineering degree (100) and some well-received publications (105) to his credit. Rather, he heads home spiritual fatigued and unsure of his identity, telling his friends, "Hay momentos en que me parece que no soy yo mismo quien alienta en mi cuerpo. Tal vez, cambiando radicalmente de vida, vuelva a encontrarme" 'There are times when I feel like I'm not the one living in my own body. Maybe if I drastically change my life, I'll find myself again' (105). The theme of the search for self reappears.
when Natán, gazing into a mirror during the train ride back, asks his reflection, "¿Quién eres? ¿Quién eres? ¿Quién eres?" 'Who are you? Who are you? Who are you?' (111). His hope is that, by resuming the farm life that he left at age fifteen, he will recover the identity that he lost in the city.

We've seen similar ideas in *Los gauchos judíos*: Gerchunoff's idealistic colonists, inspired by the Haskalah, also see farming as a means of spiritual regeneration and reconciliation with their past. Here, though, an earlier point bears repeating: Gerchunoff tends to romanticize the immigrant experience, glossing over the hardships to which the first settlers were subjected. Mactas, however, pulls no punches when it comes to the harsh realities of country life. Even in "La vuelta del hijo," she checks Natán's newfound enthusiasm for farming with his brother's pessimistic commentary: "¡Somos tantas bocas para tan poca tierra! Las cosas van cada vez peor. ¡Y yo que tenía esperanzas de que mi chico mayor estudiara! ¿Pero de dónde sacar dinero para enviarlo a la ciudad?" 'So many mouths to feed, and so little land! Things keep getting worse and worse. And I had hoped that my oldest boy would be able to study! But where will I get the money to send him to the city?' (112). This passage lists the principal reasons that many colonists, including Natán, left for Buenos Aires: the unprofitability of small-scale farming, the gradual decline of living conditions in the agricultural colonies, and the lack of educational opportunities in the country all contributed to out-migration. Rather than hide these circumstances, however, Mactas places them against the backdrop of Natán's journey. By focusing on a character who, although successful in the capital, returns demoralized to the country, the author suggests that the move to the city is folly.
It's curious that Mactas, like Gerchunoff, consistently privileges the country over the city, yet spent her entire adult life in Buenos Aires. Even more curious, perhaps, is her affirmation of traditional Jewish values through characters such as Jaim and Marcos. According to her son, Federico Gabriel Polak, Mactas did not have a religious life: her husband, Carlos Polak, was an atheist, and their family neither attended synagogue nor observed the major Jewish holy days such as Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement), Rosh Hashanah (New Year), and Pesakh (Passover). All but one of Mactas's literary works, however, have Jewish themes\(^8\): in addition to *Los judíos de Las Acacias*, she translated into Spanish works by Yiddish authors Sholem Asch and José Rabinovich and Hebrew poets Haim Nahman Bialik and Yehuda Halevi. She also retells Jewish legends and parables in her *Leyendas y parábolas judías según la Agadá* (1950; Jewish Legends and Parables from the Aggadah). At the time of her death, Mactas was writing a book titled *El huerto* (The Garden), a reference to the Mount of Olives; in this work, says Polak, his mother "con seguridad indagaba sobre el judaísmo de Jesús y sus discípulos" 'was no doubt studying the Jewishness of Jesus and his disciples.'

As her literary career illustrates, Mactas felt an enduring connection to Judaism that was not evident in her everyday life. In *Los judíos de Las Acacias*, she associates Jewish values with the country, portraying those who farm the land as upright and selfless. What can we glean from the cycle's seven stories about Mactas's authorial motives? It appears that she, like Gerchunoff, wrote to recover a past to which she still felt strongly connected: each of her stories returns to the Jewish environment in which she spent her childhood. Given the prevalence of the city/country dichotomy in her work,

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\(^8\) The lone exception is *Primera juventud* (1930; First Childhood), a collection of aphorisms.
we might also interpret *Los judíos de Las Acacias* as Mactas's attempt to reconcile two different components of her identity. In "La vuelta del hijo," Natán heads back to the farm in search of himself; perhaps Mactas, through her writing, was embarking on a similar journey.

4.3 Be It Every So Humble, There's No Place Like *Filipson*

If, as I've argued, Mactas tempers Gerchunoff's treatment of country life, Alexandr turns Gerchunoff on his head. Born in 1906 in Filipson, Alexandr portrays the colony where she spent her childhood as suffocating, lonely, wild, and dangerous. In her stories, she details the brutal conditions endured by Filipson's settlers and denounces the JCA's administration of the colony. Her characters face a host of threats including deadly diseases, murderous gauchos, punishing storms, and plagues of locust; in their downtime, they eke out a meager and unbearably monotonous existence as farmers. Young Frida, the author's principal literary persona, often expresses her contempt for country life, bitterly complaining that she feels trapped and abandoned in Filipson. Like many of her generation, she looks longingly to the city, with which she associates fine clothes and high culture.

Although young, restless Frida is responsible for much of the narrative, the stories also reflect the perspective of "old Frida"—a mature, disillusioned woman who has spent most of her adult life in São Paulo. This double gaze reveals that the author, while resentful of Filipson, also regrets having left. The two vantage points are crystal clear in "O Espêlho," in which Alexandr offers a glimpse of her narrative present. The story opens with an elderly Alexandr contemplating her reflection in the titular mirror; as if
transported through the looking glass, she suddenly sees herself as a young woman. Both Fridas are consumed by melancholy: the first, who describes herself as "uma velha" 'an old woman,' comments, "[...] me sinto frustrada, fracassada" 'I feel frustrated, like a failure' (208); the second, meanwhile, laments, "Sinto-me só, desprotegida" 'I feel alone and vulnerable' (208). This equal-opportunity complaining notwithstanding, the story's conclusion appears to privilege the author's country past over her urban present: discussing her childhood nickname of "Alegria" ("Happiness"), Alexandr writes,

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\text{Tão logo mudamos para Pôrto Alegre, deixei-o [o apelido] definitivamente, como a tôdas as outras recordações que me prendiam à minha existência de menina campionesa. Hoje, arrependo-me bastante. Se o tivesse mantido, é possível que a minha vida houvesse decorrido em maior harmonia com o seu significado. (212)}
\]

Right after we moved to Porto Alegre, I gave it [the nickname] up for good, just like I gave up every other reminder of my life as a country girl. Today, I deeply regret having done so. If I had kept it, maybe my life would have been happier.

Here Alexandr establishes the connection between her nickname "Alegria" and her identity as a farm girl. Looking back on her life, the unhappy author concludes that giving up that name, and by extension that identity, was a mistake.

\[E \text{ unus, pluribum: as the above passages illustrate, Alexandr's first-person narrator communicates the author's thoughts and speech at different stages of her life. Naturally, Frida's views change as she ages; therefore the stories, while connected by a single narrative voice, accommodate several contradictory perspectives. With regard to Frida's perceptions of the city and the country, her trip to the neighboring town of Uruguaiana is a watershed. Fascinated by the dramatic makeover that her sister Adélia had undergone in the city (63), Frida anxiously awaits her own opportunity. When her time finally comes, she too undergoes a transformation, but not the type that she had anticipated.}\]
Frida's attitude toward Filipson begins to change soon after her Uruguaiana-bound train leaves the station. For the first time, she sees her home through the eyes of an outsider, asking, "Será que os desconhecidos companheiros de viagem têm da minha modesta casinha a mesma agradável impressão que eu tenho, ao vê-la no centro daquele promontório, meio envolta pelas sombras do entardecer, enquanto a casa dos Druch, no alto do morro, ainda aparece beijada pelos últimos raios do Sol?" 'Could it be that the strangers riding along with me have the same pleasant impression of my modest house as I do upon seeing it in the center of that promontory, half-hidden by the afternoon shadows, while the Druch house, high on the hill, is sun-kissed by the day's last rays of light?' (116). As this passage indicates, distance affords Frida a new perspective: in fact, she comments that her visit to Uruguaiana seems to have removed a blindfold from in front of her eyes (137). Before so eager to leave Filipson, she looks forward to her return, waxing nostalgic about her home, the rolling countryside, and even the relative poverty in which her family lived (124-25).

Alexandr conveys the significance of her visit to Uruguaiana when, addressing her readers directly, she writes that "os acontecimentos, para mim, só giram en torno do antes...e do depois da minha viagem a Uruguaiana" 'events, for me, are all classified according to whether they took place before or after my trip to Uruguaiana' (127). Fittingly, the three stories that the author dedicates to the turning point of her youth, "Viagem a Uruguaiana," "D. Corina," and "Regresso a Filipson," appear smack-dab in the middle of her cycle. Because Frida's taste of urban life alters her views on the city and the country, one might expect that the account of her trip to Uruguaiana divides the book into two halves, one pro-city and the other pro-country. This, however, is not the case,
for a couple of reasons. For one, Alexandr's tendency to leap back and forth in time within and between stories jumbles her pre- and post-Urugaiana perspectives. Furthermore, the text's different narrative perspectives are intertwined: young Frida's thoughts and feelings originate in the memory and imagination of her older, more objective alter ego. As a result of the constant shuttling between the multiple Fridas, Filipson is ambivalent, and dialogic, from start to finish.

Still, it seems that the cons of country life far outnumber the pros in Filipson. In this respect, Alexandr's account inverts Los gauchos judíos, which makes scant mention of trouble in its colonial paradise. The two story cycles diverge, in part, because Alexandr, like Mactas, dedicates most of her text to a later, less optimistic period of colonization than that portrayed by Gerchunoff. Yet even passages in which Alexandr describes Filipson's early years shatter Gerchunoff's rosy picture of the farming communities.

Like Gerchunoff's Jewish gauchos, Alexandr's immigrants arrive to the colony imbued with the spirit of the Haskalah. The forty-five pioneer families, rescued from the Russian pogroms, see Brazil as "um mundo de liberdade, puro de sentimentos e instigações racistas sanguinárias, onde recomeçariam a vida como lavradores" 'a free world without racial hatred and bloody attacks, where they would start over as farmers' (15). Enthused by JCA promises of fertile lands, comfortable homes, and schools for their children (15), the immigrants are in for a rude welcome: upon their arrival to Brazil, they find their homes unfinished; consequently, they are forced to live together in a makeshift, disease-ridden shed. Furthermore, farming Filipson's virgin, sterile lands turns out to be a brutal, and dangerous, struggle for survival: Alexandr writes, "Lutava-se
contra uma natureza selvagem talvez nunca antes pisada por pés humanos, ganhando o terreno palmo a palmo a uma natureza bravia, aos lagartos esquivos, às onças ferozes"

'They fought in the wild, perhaps the first to step foot there, gaining ground inch by inch despite nature's wrath, elusive lizards, and ferocious jaguars' (18). Unlike Gerchunoff, who sings of teeming fields and sheltering skies, Alexandr emphasizes the colonists' abjectness, describing their sweat, tears, calloused hands, and broken spirits (18). More often than not, their hard work is rewarded with natural disasters, failed crops, and mounting debt, all of which drive the would-be farmers away in droves.

Alexandr pins much of the blame for the colonists' troubles on incompetent and negligent JCA administrators. She points out, for example, that the Association had purchased land later deemed unsuitable for farming, essentially putting the immigrants behind the eight ball right from the beginning (31). To compound the problem, the local JCA representative is detached and unresponsive to the immigrants' needs: while the new arrivals live like refugees in the onerous shed, the administrator and his family occupy a large, luxurious home kept off-limits by a barbed wire fence, two ferocious dogs, and a couple of armed locals (16). Even when the JCA tries to do right by the colonists, their efforts fall short: they recruit a pharmacist/doctor, for example, but fail to furnish him with necessary medicines and instruments (38). By leveling serious charges against the JCA administration, Alexandr contradicts Gerchunoff, whose few references to the philanthropic organization in *Los gauchos judíos* are all positive.9

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9 Gerchunoff dedicates *Los gauchos judíos* to JCA founder Baron Hirsch and refers to the participation of JCA representatives in the colony's celebrations in "Las bodas de Camacho" (85), "La revolución" (The Revolution, 137), and "El himno" (174).
Although highly critical of life in the colony, Filipson finds Alexandr making some Gerchunoffian moves. The second of two stories titled "Filipson," for example, offers a bucolic scene reminiscent of Los gauchos judíos: "As árvores frondosas entrelaçavam as frondes acima do açude e através delas filtravam-se os raios do Sol pintalgando águas, pedras e vegetação de confetes côr de ouro. E à noite, quando havia luar, todo o recinto enchia-se de magia" 'Sunlight filtered through the interwoven leaves above the dam, dotting the water, stones, and plants like gold-colored confetti. And at night, when the moon was out, the entire clearing was filled with magic' (105).

Alexandr's Edenic description of the place where she and other girls played and bathed isn't the only happy gathering in Filipson: like Gerchunoff’s "La trilla," "Professor Frankenthal" shows the entire colony, young and old, celebrating as a thresher spews golden kernels of corn (137).

It bears repeating, however, that the pastoral passages characteristic of Los gauchos judíos are few and far between in Filipson. Furthermore, Alexandr's rare bucolic reverie is short-lived. She tends to revert quickly to a pessimistic point of view; for example, "Filipson" shifts abruptly from the happy interlude at the dam to a somber scene at the train station, where Frida and her friends dream of escaping the colony's "solidão insípida" 'insipid solitude' (106). Similarly, Alexandr wastes no time in juxtaposing the festive atmosphere around the thresher with images of empty streets and abandoned farm homes in "Professor Frankenthal" (137).

It seems like sadness and danger are always lurking around the next corner in Filipson. In "Depois" (Afterwards), Alexandr's narrator hardly mentions the pleasant smell rising from the soft earth before turning her attention to sudden downpours, wild
animals, departed neighbors, and tragic deaths (147-48). As is the pattern in Alexandr's stories, disaster strikes just when things are looking up; take, for example, "A Rosada" (the title refers to the family's mare), in which Alexandr describes the calm after a strong storm:

Mas as chuvas cessaram. O Sol, a custo, conseguiu romper a grossa camada de nuvens e um ventinho aliado soprou varrendo o firmamento que nunca nos tinha parecido tão azul. Os campos começavam a vestir-se de verde e a enfeitar-se de florzinhas azuis que cerravam timidamente suas corolas quando os raios do Sol se apresentavam mais ardentes. Pairava no ar uma promessa de dias melhores e a terra renovada de seiva sorria para todos, exalando um cheiro bom e fecundo, à espera da semente. (197)

But the rain stopped. The sun, struggling, managed to break through the thick layer of clouds; a light breeze cleared the sky, which looked bluer to us than it ever had before. The fields began to dress up in green and adorn themselves with tiny blue flowers that timidly closed their corollas when the rays of the sun became stronger. The promise of better days was in the air, and the rejuvenated land smiled at everyone, giving off a pleasant and fecund scent as it awaited planting.

Adding to the euphoria, Rosada appears with a new colt. Suddenly and inexplicably, however, the family's otherwise obedient dogs attack the foal; helpless and fearful that their own dogs will turn against them, Frida and her parents must leave the foal for dead (198).

Unlike Gerchunoff's Jewish gauchos, Alexandr's hard-luck colonists just can't seem to catch a break; their stories of tragedy from triumph typify Filipson's inversion of Los gauchos judíos. And while there's no absolute proof that Alexandr set out to "flip" Gerchunoff, the story "Gafanhotos" makes a particularly compelling case. In her account of a devastating locust attack, Alexandr appears to be rewriting Gerchunoff's "La huerta perdida."
Both Gerchunoff and Alexandr open their stories with panoramic descriptions of their respective colonies on an ordinary day. They lace their introductory paragraphs with references to color and climate, albeit to much different ends. "La huerta perdida" begins: "Era un día caluroso y límpido. A los dos lados de la colonia, los sembrados verdeaban en las eras inmensas, onduladas levemente por un viento suave" 'It was a warm, clear day. To either side of the colony, the crops shone green in the immense fields, swayed by a light breeze' (32). Here Gerchunoff's references to the clear sky, light breeze, and green fields suggest peace and prosperity in the farming community. In contrast, "Gafanhotos" begins with a bleak picture of country life: "Foi um amanhecer igual a muitos outros, com um Sol enorme dourando tudo. O calor, com o passar das horas, tornou-se sufocante. Não soprava nem a mais leve brisa. O dia escoava-se sem novidades. Todos se queixavam da sèca prolongada e de quanto isso prejudicava as lavouras" 'It was a day like many others, with an enormous sun turning everything golden brown. After a few hours the heat became suffocating. There was not even a hint of a breeze. The day dragged on uneventfully. Everyone complained about the prolonged drought and how much it jeopardized the crops (175). As if responding to Gerchunoff, Alexandr points out that, in Filipson, there's no breeze to alleviate the stifling heat. Furthermore, the arid, sun-baked soil takes on a golden, rather than green, hue, and the farmers are restless and disgruntled.

As the stories unfold, intertextuality seems even more likely. There are some striking similarities between Gerchunoff's and Alexandr's descriptions of the locust attacks, including repetition of the same language. In "La huerta perdida," the narrator and his family spot an ominous cloud on the horizon: "[...] advertimos, lejos, muy lejos,
en el horizonte todo encendido, una nube vaga" 'we noticed, far, far off against the bright horizon, that a cloud was taking shape' (33). As the cloud approaches, it expands and descends, blotting out the sun (34-35); soon swarms of locust cover the orchard like "manchas obscuras" 'dark stains' (35). In "Gafanhotos," Frida's father is scanning the horizon when he sees, "longe, bem longe, num ponto onde o céu parecia tocar a terra, uma mancha escura que se ia avolumando rapidamente" 'far, far off, at a point where the sky seemed to touch the earth, a dark stain that was growing rapidly' (175). The stain, which resembles "uma nuvem compacta" 'a compact cloud' (175), comes in fast and low; as in "La huerta perdida," the locust blot out the sun and cover everything in sight (175-76).

Gerchunoff's and Alexandr's colonists, clanging empty tin cans together to scare off the locust, take to the fields in a futile attempt to protect their crops. Gerchunoff's account of the struggle, which focuses on young Raquel's symbolic effort to save her prized rose mallow (35), is cursory: the farmers wage a pitched battle for a few hours, at which point the locust move on from the orchard to neighboring wheat fields (36). Alexandr, on the other hand, offers graphic details: she describes an apocalyptic scene complete with raging fire, acrid smoke, and wave after wave of locust colliding with the desperate farmers' eyes, mouths, and hair (176). The plague finally moves on, leaving destroyed fields in its wake; even greater devastation awaits, however, when eggs deposited by the locust begin to hatch a few days later. A second life-or-death struggle ensues, and Frida's family manages to isolate a small portion of their cornfield; later, however, they lose many of their animals to sicknesses caused by the infestation (178-80).
"Gafanhotos" illustrates not only Alexandr's flair for the dramatic, but also her tendency to dwell on the negative. When it comes to her unforgiving portrayal of country life, Alexandr is much closer to Sarmiento than Gerchunoff: she describes Filipson as a barbaric backwoods overrun by dangerous wild animals (jaguars, alligators) and deadly gauchos (Serafim, João Ortiz). Young Frida identifies with her surroundings, twice referring to herself as "semi-selvagem" 'part savage' (120; 237); of the colony's children, she writes, "Éramos também uma espécie de bichos selvagens aclimatados ao ambiente' 'We were also a type of wild animal acclimated to the environment' (108). Contributing to Frida's inferiority complex, the girl's mother, Eva, chastises her for having the "ousadia de desejar coisas fora do alcance de uma filha de colonos" 'audacity to desire things beyond the means of a daughter of colonists' (48). Eva's brand of negative reinforcement discourages Frida, who begins to perceive a social ladder in which she and her neighbors in Filipson occupy the lowest rung.

For Frida, it's the city folk who lead privileged, fairytale lives. Consistent with Sarmiento's dichotomy, she associates the city with civilization, often fawning over the ex-colonists who return transformed into urban sophisticates. I mentioned above how Frida marvels at the dramatic changes that her sister, Adélia, undergoes during the latter's stay in Bagé (63); similarly, she gushes over her brother Jacob's fine clothing, soft, scented hands, and slick hairstyle when he returns from Uruguaiana (78).

Life in the city, however, isn't all peaches and cream. In fact the financial straits in which Jacob finds himself prompt his visit to Filipson: he asks his father to sell his oxen and loan him the proceeds (80). It's a storyline that we've seen in Mactas's Los judíos de Las Acacias: the ex-colonist returns from the city, penniless and looking for a
bailout. In Mactas's cycle, these stories are cautionary tales that, like the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15: 11-32), warn against the corruptive ways of the world. Does Alexandr's account of Jacob's troubles serve the same purpose?

If Alexandr's description of Filipson as a locus of Jewish orthodoxy is any indication, then the answer is a resounding "maybe." As Alexandr notes in "Jankel 'Chinder,'" Filipson's farmers were "profundamente ortodoxos" 'profoundly orthodox' and "seguiam, portanto, à risca os costumes religiosos" 'therefore followed religious customs to the letter' (167). Several stories show observant Brazilian Jews migrating to Filipson: the Nicelovich family, for example, leaves a prosperous German colony to live among their coreligionists (83); Moritz, the Brazilian-born son of German Jews, arrives seeking to be circumcised (28); and Leão, Frida's brother-in-law, carries the body of his infant son back to Filipson to ensure his proper Jewish burial (62).

Just as Alexandr indicates that the move toward the colony coincides with religious propriety, she suggests that the move away leads to laxness and indiscretion. In light of the Haskalic association of farming and moral regeneration, it's worth noting that many of the ex-colonists, having abandoned agriculture, take up a comparatively "degenerative" profession—peddling—in neighboring towns and cities; some, like Mordechai Burd (26) and Frida's brother, Luís (84), even deal in pictures of Catholic saints. Others adopt questionable attitudes and behavior, as is the case with Chaike, the daughter-in-law of Filipson's shochet. When Frida, after traveling to Santa Maria to have a tooth extracted, shows up on Chaike's doorstep, Chaike treats her with indifference bordering on disdain (214-15); in doing so, she disobeys "o mandamento judaico, que manda amar e ajudar seu próximo, cedendo ao hóspede o lugar de honra em sua mesa"
'the Jewish commandment to love and help one's neighbor by offering guests the place of honor at one's table' (30). Frida herself appears to have picked up some bad habits in Uruguaiana: upon her return to the colony, one of her role models, Abraão, cuts her to the quick, scolding, "Foi isso que ela aprendeu na cidade" 'So that's what she learned in the city' (135).

The above examples notwithstanding, not everyone who leaves Filipson heads down the road to perdition: after Chaike turns Frida away, for instance, another family of ex-colonists welcomes her with open arms (215). And even were an estrangement from Jewish orthodoxy the inevitable result of a move to the city, Alexandr wouldn't necessarily object: in fact, she suggests that Filipson's strict moral code could stand for a little loosening. She offers Boris Wladimersky as a case study of orthodoxy gone awry: the felcher, whom Frida calls "irascível e intolerante" 'irascible and intolerant' (226), emerges as her harshest critic, unfairly accusing her of wanton behavior on two occasions (146; 226). The felcher's meddlesome habit of instigating Frida's mother, Eva, against her daughter makes life in Filipson even more oppressive and unbearable for the young protagonist.

Wladimersky's cruelty, JCA ineptitude, and the colony's isolation and backwardness all contribute to Frida's misery. For all her complaints, however, Alexandr later regrets having forsaken all things Filipson, and hints that her move to the city never brought her happiness (212). In the text's last paragraph, the author looks back wistfully on her last day in the colony: "Ao sairmos de casa, encostamos uma pedra na porta, por fora, como habitualmente fazíamos quando a nossa demora não seria longa" 'Upon leaving home, we rested a stone against the front door, as we often did when we didn't
expect to be gone long’ (237). Through her writing, an older, wiser Frida makes her return to Filipson; ironically, her cathartic, often bitter stories also represent her attempt to recover and preserve memories of a "better time."

4.4 Voloch and the Dream Deferred

Born in Filipson in 1914, Adão Voloch joins Frida Alexandr and her brother, Jacques Schweidson, as authors to have published on their experiences in the colony. His description of life in Filipson, however, occupies a mere four chapters (10-13) of Os Horizontes do Sol, the third installment of a trilogy in which Voloch tells his family history. The first installment, O Colono Judeu-Açu, offers a more sustained look at Jewish agricultural colonization: each of the stories in the cycle takes place in the Quatro Irmãos colony in Rio Grande do Sul, where Voloch lived from 1924-1934. Having spent most of his adult life in Rio de Janeiro, the author published O Colono in 1984, fifty years after leaving the farm.

With O Colono, Voloch begins in medias res. The sequel, Um Gaúcho a Pé, follows Voloch's literary alter ego, Arturo, around 1930s-1940s Brazil; Os Horizontes do Sol, a "prequel," leaps back to the turn of the century, tracking Arturo's father, Natálvio, from then-Russian Bessarabia to England, Argentina, and Brazil. The dizzying trilogy shows Natálvio, Arturo, and others adjusting to life in big cities (London, Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro) as well as isolated colonies (Basavilbaso in Entre Ríos, Argentina; Filipson and Quatro Irmãos in Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil). Because Voloch's characters routinely disagree, the trilogy renders no clear verdict on which of rural or urban life is preferable.
Some perspectives, however, are privileged. Natálio and Arturo are the trilogy's most important, and redundant, characters: as I discussed in the previous chapter, father and son reflect the author's own views. Consequently Natálio's and Arturo's positions on the city/country dichotomy indicate what Voloch would have his readers believe—and it just so happens that both favor the country.

When Natálio, bucking trends as per his custom, decides to move from Buenos Aires to Filipson, his rationale recalls Gerchunoff:

Sua vida no emprego, em casa, a mulher, os filhos, os parentes e amigos ficavam de fora do seu íntimo. Buscava a solidão. Poderia, como os antigos Levitas, ter os seus livros, os seus pensamentos, e o trabalho da terra, lhe abastecendo as necessidades.
Somente se dedicando à agricultura, poderia ficar livre e a salvo das contradições que o rodeavam na vida citadina. Era a fuga. (author's italics, 64)

His life at work and at home and his relationships with his wife, children, relatives, and friends were not intimate concerns. He sought solitude. Like the ancient Levites, he would have his books, his thoughts, and his farming to satisfy his basic needs.
Only by dedicating himself to agriculture could he free himself of the contradictions that surrounded him in everyday life. It was an escape.

Like Gerchunoff's Jewish gauchos, Natálio sees farming as a liberating experience. He also associates agriculture with his Jewish ancestors, fancying himself an heir to Levitical tradition.

As a novice farmer in Filipson, Natálio is content to practice the primitive type of agriculture endorsed by the JCA, reasoning, "[...] não ambiciono coisas de luxo e conforto, aqui sou feliz" '[...] I'm not interested in luxuries and comforts, I'm happy here' (Os Horizontes 68). By the time Natálio moves to Quatro Irmãos, however, he no longer holds the same views: he openly criticizes the JCA administration's negligence and poor
planning (*O Colono* 49) and advocates a more modern, cooperative approach to farming (*O Colono* 166).

Despite his belief that JCA policies are misguided, Natálio never wavers in his dedication to agriculture. Like the *maskilim*, he romanticizes farming, although he does not share their interest in the spiritual regeneration of the Jewish people. Rather, Natálio is a far-leftist who understands the city/country dichotomy in terms of capitalism and socialism, respectively. For him, farming represents release from an exploitative bourgeois system (*Os Horizontes* 60); consequently, he tries to dissuade new immigrants to Quatro Irmãos from migrating to the city, to no avail (*O Colono* 49-50).

As it turns out, Natálio can't even convince his own son to stay: Arturo, who sees no future in family farming (*Um Gaúcho* 24), abandons the colony at age 17.10 Although he leaves for the city, Arturo shares his father's affinity for Rio Grandian culture, commenting, "[...] meus verdadeiros patrícios são os brasileiros, os caboclos, os gaúchos, os camponeses"' '[...] my true compatriots are Brazilians, mestizos, gauchos, country folk' (*Um Gaúcho* 47). As I discussed in Chapter 3, Arturo's identification with the above "natives" not only reaffirms his rural roots, but also establishes his Brazilianness-by-association.

Aside from Natálio and Arturo, few of Voloch's characters express enthusiasm about country life. In fact Tanha, Natálio's wife and Arturo's mother, is the perfect foil for her husband's/son's brand of idealism. Like many of her fellow Jewish immigrants, she considers the colonies uncivilized and inhospitable: upon moving to Quatro Irmãos,

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10 This is one instance in which Arturo's story diverges from Voloch's own biography: the author left Quatro Irmãos at age 20. A much more significant divergence is Arturo's death in a prison riot in 1947 in the final chapter of *Um Gaúcho a Pé*, Voloch died 44 years later, in Rio de Janeiro.
for example, the troubled mother worries that her children will be alone, uneducated, and unsafe there (*O Colono* 15). Taking a page from *Facundo*, Tanha sees her sons slipping into barbarism when they propose eating a slain wood-rail for lunch: she protests, "'Somos, por acaso, agora, caçadores primitivos e depredadores? Viveremos da caça e da pesca?" 'Have we become primitive, plundering hunters? Are we to survive by hunting and fishing?' (*O Colono* 16). Also consistent with Sarmiento's dichotomy, Tanha associates city life with scholarly and leisurely pastimes including public lectures, conferences, and theater performances (*Um Gaúcho* 24).

Resigned to remaining with her husband, however, Tanha stays on in Quatro Irmãos as others leave in droves. For Voloch, the mass exodus has a simple explanation: the immigrants, desirous of the "American dream," find farming unfulfilling. Shocked by the colony's primitiveness, they look to the city for business and social opportunities unavailable in the country (*O Colono* 47; 129).

Eventually even the stalwart Natálio, deep in debt and out of options, must join the out-migration. He remains convinced of Quatro Irmão's potential, but realizes that his vision of a farming cooperative cannot succeed without the support of the JCA and his fellow colonists (*O Colono* 140). In the last lines of *O Colono Judeu-Açu*, Natálio dies along with his dream (168); as *Um Gaúcho a Pé* and *Os Horizontes do Sul* illustrate, however, the father's failures become his son's crusade. By his own account, Voloch wrote *Um Gaúcho* to show that "o gueto pode ser diluído na paz e na extinção da exploração do homem pelo homem" 'the end of the shtetl can come about through peace and the elimination of exploitation' (*Um Gaúcho* 14); his rousing concluding statement,
"E assim será!" 'And that's how it will be!' (14), suggests that, for the author, the dream never died—to borrow from Langston Hughes, it was just deferred.

4.5 Conclusion

When it comes to the city/country dichotomy in Gerchunoff, Mactas, Alexandr, and Voloch, it's not a question of whether the authors privilege the country over the city, but rather how, how much, and why. Gerchunoff clearly offers the most enthusiastic, and least realistic, account of JCA colonization: Los gauchos judíos is so overwhelmingly positive, in fact, that many scholars overlook or discount the few but serious apprehensions that Gerchunoff expresses in his cycle. It's probably true that, to some extent, Gerchunoff aimed to please Argentina's power elite with his lilting, telluric prose; as I have shown, however, the author's descriptions of nature are more about affirming Jewishness than currying favor and securing his position.

Los judíos de Las Acacias avoids glamorizing farm life, balancing Gerchunoffian bucolicism with bitter doses of reality. Mactas's often fatalistic stories pit colonists against drought, fire, debt, and crushing loneliness; nevertheless the farmers cling stubbornly to the land, sustained by their faith and sporadic good fortune. Their counterparts in the city, estranged from traditional Jewish values, generally fare worse, returning to Las Acacias penniless, desperate, and/or demoralized. Herself a nonreligious ex-colonist, Mactas appears to have sought personal redemption through her writing, dedicating all but one of her works to Jewish themes. If so, Los judíos de Las Acacias, Mactas's melancholy look back at her childhood in Carlos Casares, represents a literary pilgrimage.
Of the four authors, Alexandr is the most critical of country life, portraying Jewish agricultural colonization as ill-conceived and dangerous. While young Frida longs to leave for the city, however, her older, disenchanted double, having spent most of her adulthood in São Paulo, wonders if she wouldn't have been better off staying in Filipson. Like Mactas, she seems to have decided that, in retrospect, the grass really was greener in the colony.

Voloch's descriptions of three colonies—Basavilbaso, Filipson, and Quatro Irmãos—combine Gerchunoff's idealism, Mactas's stark realism, and Alexandr's finger-pointing. Likely taking his lead from Los gauchos judíos, Voloch characterizes Rio Grande do Sul's gauchos, caboclos, and Guaranis as authentic Brazilians in order to make a case for his own national identity. He presents the farming communities as potentially successful cooperatives derailed by JCA mismanagement, blaming the colonists' struggles on shortsighted and inflexible administrators. Whereas Gerchunoff, Mactas, and, to a lesser extent, Alexandr privilege the colonies as Jewish environments, Voloch spins the city/country dichotomy in another direction, favoring farming as the livelihood most compatible with his socialist principles.

In sum, Gerchunoff, Mactas, Alexandr, and Voloch attempt to recover their rural pasts and reconcile them with their urban presents; their motives, however, differ, as does the extent to which each privileges the country over the city. In describing farm life, the idealistic Gerchunoff and Voloch set their sights on larger political goals (the naturalization of Jews in Argentina and the dissemination of Communist principles, respectively). In contrast, the more realistic Mactas and Alexandr turn their gazes
inward, focusing on how individual colonists, especially wives and daughters, interact with their environment.

The above pairings—Gerchunoff/Voloch, Mactas/Alexandr—prompt the question: how does gender influence the type of narrative that each author produces? I explore this question in the next chapter, paying particular attention to the characterization of women in the story cycles.
CHAPTER 5:

LAS GAUCHAS JUDÍAS: GENDER, PERSPECTIVE, AND POSITION IN FICTIONALIZED ACCOUNTS OF JEWISH AGRICULTURAL COLONIZATION

In the Introduction, I mentioned a 1910 letter that Argentine author Roberto J. Payró wrote to his friend, Alberto Gerchunoff, regarding Los gauchos judíos. While generous with praise, Payró concludes that "en la parte íntima, en el 'alma' del libro falta algo" 'in the intimate part, in the 'soul' of the book, something is missing' (241). Specifically, he criticizes the flatness of Gerchunoff's characters, remarking, "Me hubiera gustado ver el interior de sus gauchitas-judías, así como les he visto el tostado y admirable seno, así como me gustaría ver el alma de espada fina y sutil que envainan los enjutos cuerpos de algún gaucho judío como Favel Duglach y otros" 'I would have liked to see inside your Jewish gauchitas, just as I have seen their tawny, admirable breasts; I would also like to see the souls that, like fine and subtle swords, are sheathed in the lean bodies of Favel Duglach and the other Jewish gauchos' (241).

Payró's comments respond to Gerchunoff's frequent use of archetypal characters, which I addressed in Chapter 1. The young women of Los gauchos judíos, for example, are cast in the same mould: they are beautiful and industrious farm workers who relate intimately with nature. As Payró correctly notes, Gerchunoff's stock descriptions tend to focus on his female characters' physical attributes; he rarely delves into their thoughts and
emotions. The girls' actions, however, reveal a rebellious streak: several flee the colony with their criollo boyfriends.

In his prologue to the first edition of *Los gauchos judíos*, Leguizamón calls the defiant daughters "el crisol de amor" 'the melting pot of love' (xi); according to his interpretation of the text, they had initiated a process of miscegenation that, within a few generations, would wipe out all traces of the orthodox elder colonists. It's true that Gerchunoff emphasizes the reproductive potential of young female protagonists: several passages find the author pausing to contemplate their breasts and hips. It's also true that Gerchunoff portrays miscegenation positively in the essays "Los judíos" and "Entre Ríos, mi país." On the other hand, I discussed in Chapter 1 how *Los gauchos judíos* raises troubling questions about mixed Jewish-criollo couples. For example, Gerchunoff's stories register the negative reactions of the community toward the girls' behavior (Aizenberg, *Parricide* 28): the dramatic escapes on horseback represent "una desgracia, un castigo de Dios," 'a disgrace, a punishment from God' (90), and "algo horrible" 'something horrible' (52). Furthermore, Gerchunoff orders his stories to suggest the danger of mixed relationships: "El episodio de Miryam" and "Las bodas de Camacho," both of which describe such romances, bookend three consecutive stories featuring murderous gauchos.

In other words, Leguizamón's interpretation of *Los gauchos judíos* does not accurately represent Gerchunoff's positions on miscegenation and assimilation. Gerchunoff never advocates "blending in" at the expense of Jewish identity; on the contrary, his characterizations of the young female colonists celebrate their Jewishness. We have seen how Gerchunoff's idyllic descriptions of Entre Ríos reflect the influence of
the Haskalah, in particular the idea that farming edifies the Jewish colonists. The "gauchitas judías" reinforce this idea. Gerchunoff emphasizes the girls' connection to the land by comparing them to elements of nature: for example, Esther's pupils are "negras como tierra arada después de la lluvia" 'black like the plowed soil after it rains' (38), and Miryam is "rubia como la tarde y los trigales" 'blond like the afternoon and the wheat fields' (50). They are hard-working farmhands: we see Raquel milking cows at dawn in "Leche fresca" (12) and Esther picking watermelons in "El cantar de los cantares" (37); likewise, Rebeca is "fortalecida en el trabajo, triunfante como una diosa rústica" 'strengthened by her work, triumphant like a rustic goddess' in "La lluvia" (17).

These descriptions play into Gerchunoff's comparison of the young female colonists to the heroines of the Hebrew Bible. The trope first appears in "Leche fresca"; the narrator, speaking directly to the story's protagonist, says,

Raquel, tú eres Esther, Rebeca, Dvorah ó Judith. Repites sus tareas bajo el cielo benévolo y tus manos atan las rubias gavillas cuando el sol incendia en llamas de oro ondulante, las olas de trigo, sembrado por tus hermanos y bendecido por el ademán patriarcal de tu padre, que ya no es, ni prestamista ni mártir, como en la provincia de Besarabia. (14)

Raquel, you are Esther, Rebeca, Deborah, or Judith. You repeat their tasks below a benevolent sky; your hands bind blond sheaves while the sun's golden flames toast the wavvy wheat fields sown by your brothers and blessed by the patriarchal gesture of your father, who is no longer a money lender or a martyr, as he was in Bessarabia.

Similarly, Jeved in "La triste del lugar" evokes "las hembras gloriosas de la Biblia" 'the glorious women of the Bible' (147), and the Entre Ríos landscape in "La lechuza" recalls "los poemas hebráicos en que las pastoras retornan con el rebaño sonámbulo bajo el firmamento de Canaan" 'Hebrew poems in which shepherdesses return with their sleepy
flocks under Canaan's sky' (69). Such passages contradict Leguizamón's argument: Gerchunoff's female protagonists don't spell the end of Jewish identity; on the contrary, the author of Los gauchos judíos privileges the girls who most resemble their biblical ancestors.

Those who flee from their Jewish heritage, on the other hand, fall from the pedestal. A neighbor calls Rudmann's daughter "una perdida" 'a lost soul' after she leaves with her criollo boyfriend (23), and Old Man Liske, a wealthy colonist, exclaims that Raquel is "una adúltera infame" 'an infamous adulteress' when he discovers that his prospective daughter-in-law has done the same (90). Of course these reactions correspond to Gerchunoff's fictitious colonists and not to the author himself; nevertheless, Gerchunoff introduces the derogatory comments to change the tone of the narrative. Initially, all of the young women enjoy a spotless reputation within the Jewish community; accordingly, the author showers them with compliments. Effusive praise gives way to harsh criticism, however, when Jewish maidens begin to consort with criollo peons.

It is true that Jacobo, himself a dubious character, defends Rudmann's daughter after she bolts with her gaucho boyfriend, Remigio (23); Jacobo and his friend, Rebeca, also aid and abet runaway bride Raquel in "Las bodas de Camacho." Otherwise, the Jewish community roundly condemns the girls' actions and the stories take a decidedly negative turn. Gerchunoff never follows up with the mixed couples, but it's unlikely that he shared Leguizamón's vision of assimilation. On the contrary, the author's portrayal of the gaucho's dark side in "El boyero," "La muerte de Rabí Abraham," and "La lechuza" conveys apprehensions about the girls' safety.
By way of contrast, we have the uplifting story of Jeved, the protagonist of "La triste del lugar." As the paragon of feminine virtue, she embodies the admirable qualities of Gerchunoff's typical heroine: she is beautiful, hard-working, and humble, and recalls the shepherdesses of the Hebrew Bible. At the same time, she stands out from her peers; according to the narrator, "No era posible confundirla con las muchachas de la colonia" 'It was impossible to confuse her with the other girls in the colony' (147). Gerchunoff endows Jeved with traits that distinguish her from the other Jewish maidens; for example, she has the spirit of a mystic (148), and her mere presence allows neighbors to experience "la emoción de la naturaleza" 'the emotion of nature' (149).

Jeved is also a round character compared to the other young women: Gerchunoff provides the standard physical description of Jeved's lean body and firm breasts, but also explores her thoughts and emotions in detail. The author offers Jeved's perspective on the city/country dichotomy: she waxes nostalgically about her childhood in Europe and imagines herself surrounded by urban comforts (154). Jeved's daydreams about her first sweetheart appear through free indirect speech: "La muchacha continuaba pensando. ¿Qué haría ahora el novio? É imagináballo hermoso y triunfante, buscado por las mujeres más bellas de la ciudad" 'The girl continued thinking. What would her boyfriend be doing now? She imagined him handsome and triumphant, sought out by the most beautiful girls in the city' (155-56). Initially, the uncouth men of Rajil pale in comparison to the gallant young man in Jeved's imagination (155). Her opinion changes, however, when she falls in love with Lázaro, a lame musician.

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1 As Payró notes in his letter, such glimpses of the girls' "souls" are rare in Los gauchos judíos. We find another example in "Las bodas de Camacho" when the narrator uses free indirect speech to reveal Raquel's interest in a criollo boy: "En cambio, era muy distinto aquel muchacho de San Gregorio, que solía visitarla y bailaba tan bien" 'In contrast, that boy from San Gregorio, the one who visited her and danced so well, was much different' (78).
Despite the Christian connotation of his name, Lázaro appears to be a Jew: the narrator mentions that he is a colonist, and that his repertoire includes Russian and Jewish songs (157). Lázaro also shares Jeved's connection to the land: he plays a clay flute, and his silhouette appears "en el cielo azul, en los arbustos próximos, en la tierra negra de surcos que limitaba la distancia" 'in the blue sky, in the nearby bushes, in the black soil with furrows that stretched into the distance' (159). It's important to note that Jeved's choices affirm her Jewish identity: unlike Raquel, Miriam, and Rudmann's daughter, she finds happiness in the country with a Jewish, rather than criollo, partner. Consequently, Gerchunoff favors her more than he does his other heroines.

It's also important to note that Jeved has a choice: although many suitors vie for her affections, she's under no pressure to marry. In contrast, Raquel's family forces her to wed Pascual Liske, a fat, awkward young man whom she does not love (78). Even conservative rabí Abraham commiserates with Raquel, remarking, "'No quiero ofender á nadie; soy amigo de Liske, que es un hombre de religión, pero, Pascual es un bestia. [...] Créame, Rabí Israel: compadezco á la muchacha, que es linda y honesta...'' 'I don't want to offend anyone; I'm a friend of Liske, who is a religious man, but Pascual is a beast. [...] Believe me, Rabí Israel, I feel sorry for the girl; she's pretty and honest...' (84). The matarife also musters a defense of Raquel after she runs off, announcing, "'Pascual es un mozo serio y honrado, pero si ella [Raquel] no lo quiere no se puede obligarla'' 'Pascual is a serious and honorable young man, but she [Raquel] can't be obligated to love him' (90). At the same time, Abraham considers Raquel's decision to flee with Gabriel "una desgracia, un castigo de Dios" 'a disgrace, a punishment from God' (90). Is the matarife talking out of both sides of his mouth? With regard to Pascual, sure; otherwise, his
comments really aren't contradictory. He never justifies nor excuses Raquel's actions; rather, he takes a subtle jab at those who force her hand. In other words, Abraham asserts Raquel's right to choose her own (Jewish) husband, just as Jeved does in "La triste del lugar."

What to make of Gerchunoff's archetypal "gauchitas judías"? For Leguizamón, the rustic farm girls reflect Gerchunoff's enthusiasm for assimilation and melting-potism. It's true that "Las bodas de Camacho" finds the author empathizing with his runaways; the story's implicit critique of arranged marriage, however, does not equate to an endorsement of "blending in" at the expense of Jewish identity. On the contrary, Los gauchos judíos emphasizes the negative consequences of miscegenation: the criollo boys represent potentially dangerous partners, and the rebellious Jewish girls bring shame to their orthodox parents. By way of contrast, Gerchunoff praises his heroines by comparing them to the shepherdesses of the Hebrew Bible. On these counts, the young female colonists serve to affirm Jewish identity. At the same time, the author casts a sympathetic eye toward his wayward gauchitas, suggesting that they, too, deserve to partake of the blessed Argentine freedom that his text so frequently evokes.

In this sense, Los gauchos judíos qualifies as a feminist text. Ironically, Los judíos de Las Acacias, penned by a woman author and published twenty-six years after Gerchunoff's masterpiece first appeared, isn't so progressive. The female characters in Mactas's stories are even more repressed than their counterparts in Los gauchos judíos. In "La casa," for example, Ana never questions her husband Jaim's decision to emigrate from Russia to Argentina; rather, she submits completely to his will (11). For his part, Jaim appreciates his wife; as a general rule, however, he holds women in low regard:
"Aunque la mujer no es más que una mujer, una hembra se podría decir, cuya misión es la de todas las hembras, cuando resulta como la suya, una verdadera compañera, apta para compartir la miel y la hiel de la vida, capaz de ordeñar diez vacas, de cocinar para veinte personas y de labrar la tierra en momentos de necesidad, es una bendición divina"

'Although a woman is just a woman, a female whose mission is that of all other females, when she turns out like his, a true companion, capable of sharing life's good and bad, able to milk ten cows, cook for twenty people and work in the fields when needed, it's a divine blessing' (11-12). In this passage, the author uses free indirect speech to show that Jaim values Ana more as a farm hand than as a person: her ability to perform work-related tasks determines her worth. The rest of the story further strips Ana of individual identity by referring to her as "wife" and "mother"; her proper name appears only twice (11; 30).

Like Ana, most married women in Mactas's stories are submissive and selfless. "Los judíos de 'Las Acacias,'" for example, profiles Sara Rabinoy, wife of "un hombre egoísta y dominante" 'an egocentric, dominating man' (90). She suffers her marriage in silence, willing to sacrifice everything for the sake of her children: "Su honda conciencia de madre la hizo sentir que sus hijos debían ser felices, pues para ello vinieron al mundo y que era ley que todos los dolores recayeran en ella" 'Her profound conscience as a mother made her feel that her children should be happy, since they had come into the world for that reason and it was the law that she bear all their pain' (90). The same story introduces the unnamed "wife of Sevel," who finds country life miserable and exhausting (87); nevertheless, she undertakes a struggle "cuyo objeto era colocar bien a sus hijas" 'whose objective was to place her daughters in good situations' (88).
In contrast, Mactas's men are more inclined to worry about themselves; a telling passage in "Un hombre de campo," for example, uses free indirect speech to reveal the male protagonist's me-first mentality: "¡Sacrificar su vida y su porvenir por los demás! ¡No era lógico! Cada cual debe buscar lo que más le conviene" 'Sacrifice his life and his future for the sake of others? It didn't make sense! Each person should seek that which suits him the best' (118). Similarly, Marcos refuses his brother Simón's desperate plea for a loan in "Fuego": "¿Cómo? ¿Hipotecando el campo, no? ¿Exponiendo el pan de los míos? ¡Sacrificando mi vida? Y todo, ¿por quién? Por un hermano que durante toda su existencia ni siquiera se dignó mirarme" 'What? You'd have me mortage my land? Place my family at risk? Sacrifice myself? All this, for whom? For a brother who's never even acknowledged my existence' (64). Although the above passages suggest that Mactas's male characters are out-and-out selfish, that's not the case. In fact, Marcos later decides to help Simón (68); he also mortgages his property to finance his nephew David's university studies in "Corazón sencillo" (43). Nevertheless, it's clear that sacrifice comes more naturally to the women of Las Acacias than to their husbands.

Los judíos de Las Acacias also features several young women who follow in their mothers' footsteps. In "Corazón sencillo," for example, Marcos's daughter Eva assumes the role of martyr. She is in love with her cousin, the aforementioned David, who lives in Buenos Aires; meanwhile Mauricio, a forty-year-old neighbor, proposes to her. Initially, this second option literally nauseates Eva (46); nevertheless, she resigns herself to Mauricio, in part because her father still needs her help on the farm. When Marcos dies unexpectedly, Eva has the opportunity to marry David and move to the city (49); instead, she opts for Mauricio and the struggles of country life. Her surprising decision reflects a
willingness to sacrifice: she chooses Mauricio because he needs her more than David does (51).

Clara, like Eva, feels obligated to suppress her dreams. In "Los judíos de 'Las Acacias,'" she takes over for her sickly mother by assuming all the household chores. Her situation is particularly exasperating: she is the only young person in the town of retired colonists. In other words, she has neither friends nor suitors. Furthermore, Clara's poor father can't afford to find her a husband outside Las Acacias. As a result, the girl's youth passes her by (86). She longs to escape the solitude of Las Acacias; nevertheless, she immerses herself in her daily responsibilities.

Miriam, the protagonist of "Primaveras," matches Eva and Clara with respect to her diligence; she is also beautiful and intelligent. Despite these attributes, Miriam is an outcast: the neighbors, having shunned Miriam's mother, Fanny, for unspecified reasons, ostracize the entire family. In other words, Miriam is guilty by association. Consequently her life in the colony is sad and solitary; only the girl's Hebrew teacher, Rabí Naftalí, recognizes her many merits (138-39). Miriam's prospects improve, however, when Juan, the son of the local shochet, returns to Las Acacias. The young man, who had moved to the city as a child, doesn't share the community's disdain for Miriam, and romance quickly blooms. Nevertheless Juan, blacklisted because of his relationship with Miriam, must soon leave the colony in search of work; Miriam stays behind, resigned to wait for her newfound love.

As the above descriptions suggest, Mactas's virtuous farm girls resemble Gerchunoff's biblical heroines: they are honest, good-hearted, and diligent. They also share an intimate connection with nature. In "Corazón sencillo," for example, Eva
perceives "el mudo lenguaje de la campiña" 'the mute language of the countryside' (47); the land speaks to her, teaching her lessons that influence her decision to marry Mauricio: "'Se vive únicamente cuando se da', tal es la ley de la tierra. 'Obsérvame siempre henchida o germinando; observa las bestias; observa a los pájaros creando sus nidos, ciegos de voluntad; observa a la gallina con su cloqueo, dulce como un canto, mientras su calor hace florecer los polluelos. 'Dar es vivir'. 'Dar es paz'" 'You live only when you give, such is the law of the land. Observe how I am always swelling or sprouting; observe the livestock; observe the birds, blind to will; observe the chicken that clucks, sweet as a song, as her warmth nurtures the chicks. To give is to live. Giving is peace' (50). Likewise, "Primaveras" finds Miriam communing with her surroundings; she thinks to herself, "'Solo [sic] en la soledad y en medio de la Naturaleza me siento bien'" 'I only feel comfortable when I'm alone, surrounded by Nature' (142). Miriam's connection to the countryside is so profound that Juan calls her "'la imagen viva de la Primavera'" 'the living image of Spring' (144).

Although they bear the archetypal traits listed above, Eva, Clara, and Miriam are round characters. Mactas gives the girls a psychological dimension, revealing their emotions and thoughts through frequent use of free indirect speech. In "Corazón sencillo," for example, the narrator describes David through Eva's eyes:

Eva puede ahora, en tanto asea las tazas, contemplar a su antojo la cabeza querida. ¡Ah! ¡Cuán hermoso e inteligente es! ¿Qué estará leyendo? Seguramente una novela. Sí, sin duda. Hasta diráse que una atmósfera de alta espiritualidad, desprendida del libro, va rodeando al lector. Pero de pronto se da cuenta de que David no lee. (42)

While she washes the glasses, Eva has a chance to contemplate her beloved to her heart's content. Ah! How beautiful and intelligent he is! What could he be reading? Surely a novel. Yes, without a doubt. It's as if a sacred cloud were
emanating from the book and enveloping the reader. But she suddenly realizes that David isn't reading.

The passage illustrates how Mactas's narrator temporarily assumes Eva's perspective to convey the girl's feelings, all the while maintaining the third person, singular present tense narration. In "Los judíos de 'Las Acacias,'" the author uses the same technique to register Clara's reaction to a neighbor's apocalyptic dream:

Los ojos de Clara brillaron como dos trozos metálicos frotados vigorosamente. Una llamarada de jubilosa inquietud calentó su corazón. ¡Ay! ¡Algo pasaría! ¡Algo vendría! ¡Por fin! Quizás las olas fecundarían el estéril suelo de "Las Acacias" haciendo brotar un manantial de vida o la conducirían lejos, lejos... (96)

Clara's eyes shone like two polished pieces of metal. Joyful restlessness enflamed her heart. Ay! Finally something would happen, something would come! Maybe the waves would fertilize the sterile soil of Las Acacias, creating a wellspring of life, or maybe they would carry her far, far away...

Here, free indirect speech communicates the otherwise silent Clara's restlessness in the colony.

In "Primaveras," Mactas uses free indirect speech to describe Miriam's first impression of Juan: "De una rápida mirada abarcó el aspecto de su interlocutor. Elevada estatura, rostro armonioso y ojos cálidos. Vió también que usaba bombachas y calzaba alpargatas. ¿Quién sería? De fijo que no de la Colonia. El desconocido la observaba a su vez y en sus ojos se iba encendiendo una llamita de admiración y sensualidad"

'She took in her interlocutor with a quick glance. Tall, with a serene expression and warm eyes. She noticed that he wore gaucho trousers and sandals. Who could he be? Surely he wasn't from the Colony. As the stranger watched her, his eyes gave off sparks
of admiration and sensuality' (143). Mactas also quotes Miriam's thoughts directly, as in the following example:

Ebría de felicidad su corazón naufragaba a veces en un loco egoísmo. "Ya se encargará la gente de hablarme mal de nosotros y quién sabe si lo vuelvo a ver". "En los galpones ya habrá alguien que sabrá reírse del 'ruso amargo'". "¿Y en el pueblo? ¿Las mujeres del pueblo? ¿Qué cosas le dirán?" "Ah, la mala suerte que persigue a mi familia, no va a permitir que yo disfrute de algo en la vida". (148-49)

Drunk from happiness, her heart drifted in and out of a crazy egotism. "People will soon begin to badmouth us; who knows if I'll see him again? Someone in the sheds will start making fun of the 'bitter Russian.' And in town? The townswomen, what will they say? Ah, the bad luck that follows my family around won't let me enjoy anything in life."

In this passage, we read Miriam's mind as she worries that the neighbors will squelch her one chance at happiness. Mactas introduces the flurry of thoughts with a reference to Miriam's emotional state; she also uses a series of quotation marks to attribute the first-person discourse to her protagonist.

On other occasions, Mactas's narrative shifts abruptly from the third to first person, and back, without quotation marks to indicate the change in perspective. The following excerpt, for example, describes Miriam's panic as she waits for Juan:

Sofocada de angustia se dió a correr rumbo al pueblo. Pero enseguida se detuvo. ¿Adónde voy? Es inútil que corra y me afane. Retrocedió hasta el sitio primitivo. ¿Qué será de mí si no viene? ¿Cómo vivir sin el sentimiento que aunque tan nuevo ya me abraza el pecho? No; no podría vivir. Mejor es la muerte. Un llanto convulsivo hizo presa de ella. (151)

Suffocated by her anguish, she began to run toward town. But immediately she stopped. Where am I going? It's useless to run and exhaust myself. She went back to the old spot. What will become of me if he doesn't show up? How can I go on living with that feeling that, while so new, has already taken hold of my heart? No, I couldn't. Better to die. She was overtaken by convulsive sobs.
The uninterrupted flow between Mactas's narrator and Miriam quickens the pace of the passage, intensifying the description of Miriam's desperation. The technique also blurs the line between character and narrator: either one could be responsible for the lines "No; no podría vivir. Mejor es la muerte."

By routinely exploring the thoughts and emotions of her young female protagonists, Mactas develops characters whose complexity rivals that of Gerchunoff's Jeved. Eva, Clara, and Miriam also take after Jeved by remaining in the country. I have shown how Jeved's choices in "La triste del lugar" affirm Jewish identity; does the same hold true for Mactas's heroines?

Although Mactas, unlike Gerchunoff, does not refer explicitly to the ideas of the Haskalah, she points out the relationship between the country and Jewish identity. For example, Las Acacias represents "un medio judío" 'a Jewish environment' (76); by way of contrast, Buenos Aires is "un medio pagano" 'a pagan environment' where ex-colonists forget about Judaism (90). Consequently, Eva's choice of colony over capital in "Corazón sencillo" can be interpreted as an affirmation of Jewishness, even if her decision to obey "la ley de la tierra" 'the law of the land' suggests pantheism more so than Judaism.

The case is harder to make in "Los judíos de 'Las Acacias'" and "Primaveras" because neither Clara nor Miriam have the opportunity to leave farm life. With no marriage prospects, Clara is trapped in Las Acacias. Miriam, meanwhile, hopes to follow Juan to the city, but he dismisses her pleas in a patronizing manner: "Piensa lo que dices, criatura. Ten calma y espera, que todo se arreglará" 'Think about what you're saying, dear. Relax and wait; everything will work out' (158). Although Miriam eventually
agrees with Juan, she also realizes that arguing is futile: even were the two to marry, Juan would still set off in search of work, leaving her alone (159).

While Clara and Miriam are short on options, neither considers running off as do several of Gerchunoff's heroines. Rather, their compliance with community standards recalls Jeved, the incomparable farm girl of *Los gauchos judíos*. Mactas's stories, however, lack the happy ending of Gerchunoff's "La triste del lugar": the young women of Las Acacias are left to derive contentment from a life of sacrifice. Consequently, the rewards of obedience for Eva, Clara, and Miriam are dubious at best.

The same holds true for young Frida in *Filipson*. Life in the agricultural colony implies accepting a subservient position to the men: women, defined as dutiful wives and mothers, are relegated to the domestic sphere. In "Passeio à Estação e Novidades," for example, Alexandr recalls how her father Toives and other male colonists routinely gathered at the train station to socialize, while their wives stayed home to care for the children (72). Frida's mother Eva, meanwhile, embraces her predetermined role and space, as the following passage from "Adolescência" (Adolescence) illustrates:

Mamãe não se interessava por política nem pela vida dos outros, permanecia em casa. Tinha o seu mundo que absorvia todo o seu tempo e todos os seus pensamentos. Por isso, discutia constantemente com papai porque êle se preocupava com os acontecimentos de fora. Achava que era tempo perdido, gasto inutilmente, pois tudo aquilo não agasalhava seus filhos do frio nem lhes saciava a fome. (158)

Mother wasn't interested in politics or the lives of others; she stayed at home. She had her own world, which occupied all her time and thoughts. For this reason, she argued a lot with Father, who concerned himself with outside events. She considered it a waste of time because it didn't clothe her children or put food on the table.
Here Eva, like Sara Rabinoy and Sevel's wife in Mactas's "Los judíos de 'Las Acacias,'" thinks strictly in terms of her children's welfare; her function as mother overrides all other concerns.

A future as a farm wife, however, holds little appeal for Frida; as we have seen, she feels bitter, helpless, and alone in the colony:

Chorei meus verdes anos perdidos nessas estradas lamacentas. Cada vez mais acerbamente, fazia-se sentir a revolta contra aquêle meu destino. Até quando correria estradas e campos sempre só? Quando regressaria Jacques ou Luís para me libertar daquele inferno? Eu ansiava por abandonar Filipson, agora que os manos haviam acenado com aquela possibilidade. Enquanto continuássemos na colônia, eu não mudaria de vida. Meus pais e a irmãzinha dependiam de minha ajuda. Como deixar de atendê-los? (221)

I cried over my green years lost on those muddy roads. I felt more and more disgusted and bitter about my fate. How much longer would I run along those streets and fields, always alone? When would Jacques or Luís return to free me from that hell? I longed to abandon Filipson, now that my brothers had introduced that possibility. As long as we continued in the colony, my life wouldn't change. My parents and my little sister depended on my help. How could I leave them?

Frida's situation resembles that of Clara in Mactas's "Los judíos de 'Las Acacias'": both girls can only watch as their youth passes them by. They long to leave the country, but are bound by a sense of obligation to their families. In Frida's case, the burden increases as her siblings set off for neighboring towns and cities: she remarks, "Depois do casamento de Adélia e do abandono de Jacques da colônia pela luta não menos árdua da cidade, eu me tornara indispensável a meus pais" 'After Adélia's marriage and Jacques's abandonment of the colony for the no less arduous struggle in the city, I had become indispensable to my parents' (209).
The above passages, which portray Frida's selflessness, also corroborate Igel's assessment that young women required a male escort, i.e., a brother or husband, to leave Filipson. Consequently Frida, like Clara, is trapped in the country, family obligations or no. While she pins her hopes for rescue on Jacques and Luis, Frida realizes that marriage offers another way to escape the colony; after all, she watches as her sister Adélia departs with new husband Jacob (146). By Alexandr's account, all of Filipson's girls want to be whisked away in similar fashion; they gather regularly at the train station in search of their own Prince Charming:

Essas cabecinhas cheias de sonhos românticos, que se ataviavam com as melhores roupas para assistir à passagem do trem, sonhavam com os heróicos personagens dos romances lidos até altas horas da noite. Parecia-lhes possível que eles pudessem apresentar-se na figura de alguns desses viajantes para, num momento qualquer, levá-las para longe daquela solidão insipida. (106)

Their young minds full of romantic dreams, they dressed up in their best clothes to meet the train and fantasized about the protagonists of the novels they read late into the night. It seemed possible to them that the heroic characters could appear in the figure of some of those travelers and, at any given moment, take them far from that insipid solitude.

Here Alexandr implies that Filipson's girls share not only the same dream, but also the same negative attitude toward country life. Consequently, Mr. Right represents a one-way ticket out of the colony.

I don't mean to imply that Alexandr gives love short shrift. On the contrary, she subtly criticizes loveless, arranged marriage. Take, for example, the following passage, in which Frida describes her neighbor, Pecy: "Parecia querer recuperar a mocidade frustrada por um casamento impôsto pela família com um homem inegávelmente bom, porém muito mais velho do que ela, do qual resultou numerosa prole" "She seemed to
want to recover her youth, frustrated by a marriage imposed by her family with a man who, although undeniably good-hearted, was much older than she, a match that produced many children' (55). By way of contrast, we have "O Namôro de Adélia," Alexandr's account of her sister's engagement. The story recalls Gerchunoff's "La triste del lugar": like Jeved, the beautiful Adélia turns down several marriage proposals (109); ultimately, she chooses her husband based on love (111).

While Frida celebrates her sister's match, she still associates wedded bliss with an escape from the rigors of farm life. Her heart fills with joy when she overhears Jacob's pledge to Adélia:

> Ouvi que prometia a Adélia uma vida de rainha e que não permitiria que suas mãos delicadas entrassem em contacto com trabalhos penosos. Dar-lhe-ia criadas e luxo e a faria feliz. (113)

I overheard him as he promised Adélia a life worthy of a queen, pledging that he would not allow her delicate hands to enter into contact with hard labor. He would give her maids and luxury and would make her happy.

Here Alexandr contradicts Gerchunoff and Mactas, whose heroines Jeved and Eva find fulfillment in the country: in "O Namôro de Adélia," the happy bride looks forward to a life of comfort outside the colony.

Frida's eagerness to marry, which she expresses in "Casamento de Zelde" (96), probably reflects her well-documented desire to abandon Filipson. At the same time, Frida, like Gerchunoff's and Mactas's heroines, has a special connection to the country; her nickname, "Alegria dos campos" 'Happiness of the Fields,' suggests as much. When she makes a long-awaited trip to the town of Uruguaiana, for example, Frida soon finds herself nostalgic for the fields of Filipson; she even misses the poverty in which she and
her family lived (124-25). As she prepares to move for good to Porto Alegre, Frida still feels conflicted, remarking, "De minha parte, eu me sentia tentada a ficar em Filipson e a continuar a ser o que era, uma semi-selvagem" 'As for me, I felt tempted to remain in Filipson and to continue to be what I was: a semi-barbarian' (237). Does Frida's ambivalence connote concern over Jewish identity?

 Probably not. As I discussed in Chapter 4, Alexandr's treatment of the city/country dichotomy differs from that of Gerchunoff and Mactas. It's true that she portrays Filipson as a Jewish environment; the exodus from Filipson, however, does not necessarily occur at the expense of Jewishness. In other words, Jewish identity isn't always at stake when Alexandr's colonists migrate to neighboring towns and cities.

 For the most part, Alexandr's description of the lives of women in the colony resonates in Adão Voloch's trilogy. Tanha, a character based on Voloch's mother, plays a similar role to that of Eva in Filipson: she maintains the family home and cares for the children. She is relegated to the domestic sphere; in Os Horizontes do Sol she comments, "'Não saio quase de casa' 'I hardly ever leave home' (77). At times, however, Tanha must also help in the fields (Os Horizontes 77).

 Tanha follows her husband, Natálio, to three agricultural colonies: Basalvibaso, in Argentina, and Filipson and Quatro Irmãos, in Brazil. Unlike Eva, however, she does not embrace her role as a farm wife. Accustomed to life in the city, Tahna feels abandoned, sad, helpless, and scared in the country (Os Horizontes 69). She finds the work exhausting (O Colono 141), and misses her friends, the theater, and the library (Um Gaúcho 24).
Tanha's daughter, Flora, also struggles in the colony. Like Jeved in Gerchunoff's "La triste del lugar," Flora daydreams about her childhood in the city: "Queria ter uma sombrinha e passear com as amigas por uma rua cheia de gente e lojas. Ela ainda se recorda da cidade grande. E, depois que os irmãos se foram, as saudades fazem-na lembrar e fantasiar outra vida" "She wanted to have a parasol and stroll with her girlfriends down a street filled with people and stores. She still remembers the big city. And, after her brothers had gone, her nostalgia made her remember and fantasize about another life' (O Colono 158). As the passage suggests, Flora also shares quite a bit in common with Frida in Filipson. Both girls, for example, feel abandoned by their brothers, who set off for the city. Furthermore Flora, like Frida, hopes that her older brothers will rescue her from solitude; she asks, "Eles não voltarão mais? Vamos ficar sozinhos?" 'Won't they ever return? Are we going to be all alone?' (O Colono 159). Eventually Flora escapes the colony when her parents decide to move, just as Frida does in Filipson.

When it comes to the city/country dichotomy, Flora also shares Frida's ambivalence. Following her move from Quatro Irmãos, she struggles to readjust to city life. According to the narrator, Flora's years in the colony stunt her social development (O Colono 60); consequently, she feels overwhelmed and inadequate around other people, remarking:

"Tenho medo na loja, medo na rua, medo de dia e medo de noite. Não sentia isso na colônia. Sozinha, no mato...Todo dia entra gente à procura de emprego e eu não tenho instrução, sou menos competente. Na rua os mocinhos, à beira das calçadas, dizem sem-vergonhices e seguem a gente. Os integralistas formam grupos em frente aos estabelecimentos israelitas e falam abertamente que somos agiotas e exploradores...Não me dou com ninguém." (Um Gaúcho 144)
"I'm afraid in the store, in the street, during the day and at night. I didn't feel that way in the colony. Alone, in the wilderness...Every day people come in looking for work and I have no education, I'm less competent. In the street young boys, from the side of the road, call out shameful things and follow people. The Integralists gather in front of Israelite businesses and say publicly that we are usurers and exploiters... I don't trust anyone."

Here, Flora's insecurity prompts her to privilege the country over the city. Later, while speaking to Arturo, she again concludes that the grass was greener in Quatro Irmãos:

"Poucas alegrias tem o pobre. Há quanto tempo não saíamos de casa juntos? Nunca fomos ao cinema. Não há música em nossa casa, nem estante com livros. Que vida é essa? Não é? Olha, mano, na colônia era melhor" 'The poor have few pleasures. How long has it been since we went out together? We've never gone to the movies. There's no music in our house, no shelves with books. What kind of life is this? Don't you agree? Look, brother, things were better in the colony' (Um Gaúcho 150). In this passage, Flora complains that "civilization" remains out of her family's reach, even in the city. Better to live among her fellow poor in the country, she reasons.

In Os Horizontes do Sol, Voloch uses another female character, Raquel, to invert Sarmiento's city/country dichotomy. Like her namesake in Los gauchos judíos, Raquel turns down a Jewish suitor, Júlio Feferman, in favor of a gaucho, Francisco Dornelles Castilhos. Castilhos gives Raquel the comforts of city life, but at the expense of her freedom: she lives like a prisoner in her own home, accountable to Castilhos for her every move. Accustomed to roaming Filipson's wide-open spaces on her own, the repressed Raquel becomes suicidal (84).

The reasons behind Raquel's choice of a gaucho are a matter of debate among the characters in the text. Raquel insists that, had she married Júlio, Castilhos would have killed him (76; 82). In other words, she claims to have married Castilhos in order to
sake Júlio. Raquel's skeptical sister, Rebeca, questions this explanation, commenting, "'Quem sabe se isso é verdade, minha irmã. Acho que pode ser, mas também acho que você não resistiu bastante, como filha judia'" 'Who knows if that's true, sister. I think it's possible, but I also think that you, as a Jewish girl, didn't put up enough resistance' (82). Tanha, meanwhile, speculates that Raquel may have fallen in love with the gaucho (78).

Although controversy swirls regarding Raquel's motives, the disastrous consequences of her decision are clear. She and Castilhos are a dysfunctional couple, in part because the latter is unfaithful and violent by nature. The gaucho's irascible character makes communication difficult, as Raquel points out when she confronts her husband: "'Você tem seus costumes, e suas crenças, assim como eu, só que há uma distância que deve ser aclarada e compreendida entre nós, para não chegar a um impasse. Você vem logo com brutalidades, não sabe conversar...É autoritário'" 'You have your customs and your beliefs, just like I do, but there is a distance between us that ought to be clarified and understood, so that we don't arrive at an impasse. But you fly off the handle, it's impossible to talk to you...You're too controlling' (88). Raquel's accusation alludes to problems stemming from their different backgrounds: the incompatibility of their customs and beliefs drives a wedge between the two.

The Raquel saga raises some red flags about relationships between Jews and non-Jews: Castilhos represents a poor, and potentially dangerous, match for the girl. On the other hand, Júlio doesn't exactly light Raquel's fire. Prior to making her choice, Raquel expresses some reservations about her Jewish suitor; she asks Rebeca, "'Você acha que o amor surge porque se é amada? Ou há imposições válidas, aqui neste novo mundo?'" 'Do you think that love arises because one is loved? Or are there valid impositions here in
this new world?’ (75). Raquel’s question suggests that she does not love Júlio; she also doubts that she will come to love him over time. Raquel's parents, however, want her to marry: she is "of age," which appears to be a more important consideration than her feelings (76).

It's not the first time that Voloch turns a critical eye toward marriage practices in the agricultural colonies. *O Colono Judeu-Açu*, for example, offers the story of Suzana, the beautiful daughter of Sephardic immigrants to Quatro Irmãos. She is betrothed to Polit, a chauffeur who turns out to be not only unfaithful, but also physically abusive (57). Later in the same text, George, a young colonist, presumptuously declares himself Flora's fiancé. Taken aback, she responds, "'É uma declaração? Pois é, mas eu...não tenho que consentir ou botar condições?' 'Should I take that as a declaration? Well, OK, but...don't I have to give my consent, or set some conditions?' (O Colono 62). Flora's question flies in the face of the colony's conventions: she challenges George's disregard for her feelings and argues that she, too, has a say with regard to her future husband.

The matter of consent reappears, albeit in a different context, in *Um Gaúcho a Pé*. When Daniel, a boorish traveling salesman, boasts of his many sexual conquests in the colonies, Arturo replies, "'A gente não 'pega' uma mulher como se fosse uma rês. Ela tem que estar de acordo e querer também. Isso vale tanto pra cidade quanto pro campo'" 'You don't 'catch' a woman as if she were an animal. She has to consent and want to, also. This goes for the city and the country' (61). In this passage, Voloch uses his literary alter ego both to condemn male chauvinism and to assert that women have rights when it comes to relationships.
The examples above illustrate Voloch's tendency to distance himself from the repressive, patriarchal systems in Filipson and Quatro Irmãos. Of the four main authors in this study, he mounts the most aggressive defense of women in the colonies, allowing his characters to speak out directly against sexist attitudes and practices. In addition to dialogue, Voloch uses third-person, omniscient narration and quoted monologue to represent the perspectives of his female characters. Overall, however, the status of women in the Jewish farming communities is a minor theme in the trilogy. Like Gerchunoff, Voloch focuses most of his attention on the negotiation of national identity and Jewishness; consequently, the colonists' wives and daughters play only supporting roles in his books.
CONCLUSION

Regarding Alberto Gerchunoff’s place in Jewish Argentine literature, Lockhart writes that Gerchunoff "represents the 'kilómetro cero,' the place from which all subsequent writers depart, and to which they return time and again" (Argentine-Jewish Essayists 67). In this study, I have juxtaposed two groups of Jewish writers—"parricides" and "cyclists"—who began with Los gauchos judíos as a common starting point, yet headed in opposite directions.

The first group, skeptical of the ease with which Gerchunoff's Jewish gauchos adjust to life in the Argentine pampas, cast the author as an apologist for the turn-of-the-century Argentine elite, claiming that he endorsed the official crisol de razas ideology at the expense of Jewish identity. Taking my cue from Aizenberg, I have challenged the parricides' portrayal of Gerchunoff by showing how the latter's stories convey serious apprehensions about assimilation and miscegenation. Specifically, I have studied how Gerchunoff uses the short story cycle's characteristic features, including collective protagonists and thematic rather than chronological arrangement of stories, to affirm as well as celebrate the Jewish identity of his colonists. Furthermore, I have detailed Gerchunoff's appeals to the freedoms guaranteed by the 1853 Argentine Constitution, his efforts to establish the compatibility of criollo and Jewish traditions, and his conspicuous use of heteroglossia throughout Los gauchos judíos. Each of the rhetorical moves cited
above show that *Los gauchos judíos*, far from a lockstep endorsement of melting-potism, promotes Gerchunoff’s vision of Argentine cultural pluralism.

The second group consists of Jewish authors—Argentine Rebeca Mactas and Brazilians Frida Alexandr and Adão Voloch—who, like Gerchunoff, use story cycles to fictionalize their childhood experiences in JCA colonies. Although direct influence is impossible to prove, the structural, thematic, and narrative similarities between *Los gauchos judíos* and Mactas's *Los judíos de Las Acacias*, Alexandr's *Filipson*, and Voloch's *O Colono Judeu-Açu* make a compelling case for intertextuality. In these cycles, the JCA farming communities serve as backdrops for the authors' discussion of two related themes: the city/country dichotomy and the negotiation of national and Jewish identity. Although their descriptions of rural and urban life vary considerably, Gerchunoff, Mactas, Alexandr, and Voloch ultimately privilege colony over city. Because Entre Ríos, Las Acacias, Filipson, and Quatro Irmãos all represent loci of Jewish orthodoxy, the authors' favoritism implies the value and continued relevance of Jewish identity in Latin America. Furthermore, their references to life beyond the confines of the colonies raise questions about the viability—and advisability—of assimilating to dominant national culture.

For Gerchunoff and his critics, the year 2010 marks two historic occasions: the one-hundredth anniversary of the publication of *Los gauchos judíos* and the Argentine Bicentennial. With regard to the former, the past one-hundred years have produced relatively few of what Borges would call "good readers" of Gerchunoff; meanwhile, the "father of Jewish Latin American literature" has seen more than his fair share of parricides. With regard to the latter, Argentina—and Latin America in general—have
fallen short of the vision of a tolerant and pluralist society that Gerchunoff sets forth in his story "Historia de un caballo robado": "Yo quiero creer, sin embargo, que no siempre ha de ser así y los hijos de mis hijos podrán oír en el segundo centenario de la república, el elogio de próceres hebreos, hecho después del católico Tedeum, bajo las bóvedas santas de la catedral... " 'I want to believe, however, that things will change and that, by the Republic's Bicentennial, my children's children will hear praises sung to illustrious Hebrews under the cathedral's sacred arches, after the Catholic Te Deum... ' (127). For both of the reasons mentioned above, the reevaluation of Gerchunoff's literary legacy that I have undertaken in this study is not only timely, but also necessary.
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