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notas

Cruzando los Andes (1890-1891). Fannie B. Ward's Writings About Peru in the Postwar Era

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Afloat on Lake Titicaca! How the very name recalls schooldays and geography lessons, though in this early time, when we located unpronounceable names on the map of a country which to our young imagination did not exist anywhere but on paper, we had no idea of proving their reality by a personal visit. It is amusing to remember what incorrect pronunciation of most of these South American names the teachers laboriously drilled into us; and the fact remains in our best schools, by names which the residents of the places would hardly recognized.[1]

1 Ward, *The Salt Lake Herald*, October 6th, 1890, p. 16. Taken from the original published on October 5th, 1890, in *The Salt Lake Herald*. (Source: The Library of

This excerpt from Fannie B. Ward's article in *The Salt Lake Journal* is one of the many fascinating narrations included in *Cruzando los Andes. Crónica de un viaje al Perú (1890-1891)*, the critical edition that reunites her journalistic work during her travels to the South American country, edited and translated into Spanish by Carlos Arrizabalaga. The editor's rigorous and detailed work contextualizes Ward's various texts, corroborating the historical sources of her many observations and assertions about Peru's history and culture, and tracing their appearance in several North American newspapers, such as *The Salt Lake Herald*, *The Evening Star*, *Pittsburgh Dispatch*, *Anaconda Standard*, *The Record Union* (Sacramento), *The Daily Morning Journal and Courier* (New Haven), *Desert Evening News*. Ward was a freelancer that financed her travels and inquisitive spirit through journalistic writing. Even though she was a relevant figure at the press of her time, which frequently referred to as a «globetrotter», her work is vastly unknown nowadays, especially in a Latin American context. The fact that her texts are disseminated in different journals constitutes a major reason for such silence, which is aggravated by the lack of translations. Therefore, Carlos Arrizabalaga's critical edition of Ward's writings, with a foreword by Rocío Quispe-Agnoli, represents a major contribution to the fields of travel literature, women's writing, journalism, Latin American and Peru's literary and sociocultural studies.

Originally from Michigan, Fannie B. Ward was a schoolteacher devoted to journalism (p. 28). She arrived in postwar Peru in a journey full of adventures and hardship that she confronted with courage. Her conviction about the historical relevance of the places she was visiting, as well as her professionalism as a correspondent were the key for handling difficulties without fuss.

The critical edition of her work in and about Peru comprises the translation of twenty-six articles commenting historical and/or

Congress). Also in Arrizabalaga (2023, p. 171).

sociocultural details about the country's main cities and landmarks, such as Lima, Arequipa, Puno, Tumbes, Ica, the Lake Titicaca, as well as Tacna and Arica. When Ward visited these two cities, they were already under Chilean jurisdiction (because of the outcomes of the War of the Pacific, 1879-1883). In her accounts, the journalist traced a historical, geographical, political, and social cartography of the South American country.

Using different strategies, Ward asserted her legitimacy and authority: both by presenting herself as a first-hand observer and supporting her observations with historical sources. However, by the very nature of journalism and the type of correspondence she was engaged in, Ward, who lacked sponsors and lived off her writing (p. 26), was very aware of what her North American readers craved. This meant that she would not only report precise cultural and historical details, but also added doses of exoticism in her articles. For instance, she describes how people in the Paita region looked incredibly young and healthy, even when they surpassed the hundred years. According to Ward, such fact would explain the lack of graveyards in the area (p. 62).

Additionally, her accounts of the city of Lima frequently delved into the presence of North American citizens in the country. Thus, Ward praises the diplomat B. H. Kauffmann, the Consul of the United Sates in Pacasmayo (p. 64); as well as she celebrates the businessman Peter Bacigalupi (New York, 1855 - San Francisco, 1925), who also owned the newspaper *El Perú Ilustrado* (1887-1892). If Kauffmann is depicted as the embodiment of culture and sophistication, she presents Bacigalupi as the personification of the self-made man praised by North American culture (p. 111). According to Arrizabalaga, this exposes her bias, since even though she played a main role in professional associations of women in the United States, such as The Women's National Press Club (Arrizabalaga, 2023, p. 24), her newspaper articles about Peru do not mention women intellectuals who were prominent in the field of journalism,

such as Clorinda Matto (1852-1909), who also directed *El Perú Ilustrado*. Either because of her awareness of her North American audience, or because of her own agenda, she omits mentions to local women writers. Even though she acknowledges the development of the newspaper industry in Peru, she questions the editors' overall pretentious tone, in contrast to the straightforwardness and clarity of North American journalism (p. 111).

In her visit to Puno and Lake Titicaca, Ward recounts how she defies the recommendation of her local guides and embarked, with her daughter, on a dangerous journey to the Esteves Islands. The reason of her urge was the fact that North American professor, James Orton, was buried there. Orton was a prominent scientist from Poughkeepsie, author of the celebrated book *The Andes and the Amazon* (1870). Ward expressed the need to honor his memory with her visit:

> We made a pilgrimage to the spot in honor of his memory, going out from Puno in a canoe, against the protests of the villagers who assured us that we could not possibly land anywhere on the island, it being completely surrounded by an impassable march.
>
> Padding all around it, we found a place where the swampy soil was somewhat firm, and using a thick growth of reeds for improvised bridges, by dint of considerable leaping and the trilling inconvenience of going over shoe in the ooze, we succeeded in passing the barrier. The island is nothing but a high rocky hill, rising so precipitously out of the water that hardly a goat could scale it, except on the farther side, where the ascent is not very difficult through winding and pathless, and one is often compelled to stop and recover breath in the thin air.[2]

Ward's writings seemed inclined to demonstrate the reach of the United States and its prominent incidence in Peru. This probably frames in the tenets of the Monroe Doctrine (1823), which aimed to reinforce the unicity and greatness of American territories, and foremost the centrality of the United States.

2 Ward, *The Salt Lake Herald*, 1890. Also in Arrizabalaga (2023, p. 177).

Therefore, even though she constantly condemns Spanish colonialism and presents it as culprit for many of Peru's current problems, her praise of the United States, depicted as a significant political, cultural, and economic power in the country showcases another form of imperialism, for which Ward is an effective agent. In Ward's texts, the Spaniards were drunk criminals expelled from Spain and sent to adventures overseas.

Moreover, her comments about the devastating outcome of the War of the Pacific demonstrate the degree of involvement of the United States in South American political affairs, a matter that has been carefully studied by historians such as José Julián Soto Lara (2019). Even though Ward asserts having no intention of discussing political matters, she would constantly take a stand and emphasize the criminal and bloody behavior of the Chilean army, depicted as looters that ignored the war codes of civilized nations (p. 85):

> Through sheer malicious vandalism, regardless of the rights of non-combatants and in violation of the laws of civilized warfare, the Chilian army created about as much devastation in this part of Peru as Pizarro caused when he invaded the homes of the peaceful Incas. Their lines of march were shown by the destruction of everything that would break or burn. Towns, villages, farms, and factories were swept away by the use of dynamite and other explosives through their vicious determination to do as much injury as possible.
>
> Exquisite marble statues were scattered in fragments on the ground; shade trees that had been carefully irrigated for a century or more, were wantonly girdled; fountains were broken, irrigating ditches destroyed, not only upon the property of Peruvians, but upon that of foreigners, whose claims now being pressed upon the Chilian government for damages amount to a very large sum. Many flourishing sugar plantations were rendered useless, because the machinery by which they were operated was broken in pieces and their owners are too poor to buy more; and to this day scores of farms and haciendas remained untilled because their buildings were burned, and their laborers killed or conscripted.
>
> In Lima, the splendid trees of the parks and boulevards, even those of the botanical gardens, were chopped down for fuel by Chilian soldiers, the entire museum of Peruvian curiosities—one of the largest

> of its kind in the world—was packed up and shipped to Santiago. The most valuable books of the national library, including a vast collection of old manuscripts, Inquisition relics and other priceless relics were thrown into sacks and sent after the museum.[3]

Ward also takes a stand when it comes to the description of the *islas guaneras*, which represented a major source of wealth for the country before the war against Chile. Her narration summarizes the history of abundance and precariousness after a poor administration. She celebrates the controverted Grace-Donoughmore Contract (p. 135) and condemns the naturalized exploitation of black and Chinese labor. Ward mentions how they could even opt for suicide rather than supporting the abuse and mistreatments of their masters (p. 139).

Other targets of her critique are local citizens whom she describes as extremely polite, but, at the same time, merciless when it comes to animals. She denounces their cruelty against donkeys, reduced to beasts of burden, and, therefore, presents them as the real savages:

> In all months I have remained in this country I have never seen a child whipped and have scarcely heard one cry. The poorest of them loves music and poetry, flowers, and sentimentality more than his daily meat and drink; yet a vein of coldest cruelty and utter heartlessness runs through the best of them. This is evidenced in many ways besides the bull-fight, the cock-pit and their conduct in war. Perhaps the most common example is their treatments of donkeys. No tongue can tell what those patient and tractable little creatures are made to endure till merciful death at last releases them from torment, over-work and slow starvation. Everywhere we see pitiful examples of beasts bearing heavy burdens upon raw and bleeding backs, which daily press deeper and deeper into the festering flesh until the bone is laid bare, and still no attention is paid to it, nor is the burden in any way lightened. We see them with huge welts crisscrossed along their backs and flanks, raised by the merciless whip, which falls unceasingly, whether the poor animals travel fast or slow. Some have their ears lopped and broken by

3 *The Salt Lake Herald,* January 4th, 1891, p. 11.

> blows from cudgels, and many have their nostrils silt up on each side the nose, so that there may be «no nonsense» in the way of difficulty in breathing and consequent loss of speed in the higher altitudes.[4]

Ward condemns children's violence against animals as a form of amusement, and these practices lead her to question the hegemonic notions of brutality and bestiality. In Ward's account, the barbarous ones are those incapables of compassion.

Nevertheless, Ward herself is uncompassionate when it comes to the *rabonas*, the impoverished and racialized women who accompanied soldiers in the battlefield. She portrays them with disgusts and presents them as the greatest embodiment of barbarism. This is especially relevant: whereas in other writings she showcases her interest in history and culture, the *rabonas*, being women in a traditionally masculine space, do not arouse her interests, nor a positive perception. In fact, Ward's narration moves them away from the historical narrative or the epic discourse (p. 117):

> With each company of soldiers there goes a squad of women who are called rabonas—a dozen of them to every twenty or thirty men. These female volunteers serve without pay, but are given rations and free transportation; for the government not only tolerates but encourages their presence, as it serves to make the men more contented. They are really of much service—on the march, in camp and in battle. They share the same fatigues, and exposures as their lords and masters besides doing most of the foraging for the messes to which they belong, not to mention the cooking, washing and other necessary work. They are always with the men, are officially enumerated in the rosters of troops, as also in the reports of casualties—so many men and so many rabonas killed and wounded—for they share the soldiers' death as uncomplainingly as they do his privation. […] The custom of allowing rabonas to go with the army grew of the habit the Incas had of taking their wives to war; but as time went on, the martial ties among this class became lessened

4 *The Salt Lake Herald,* January 11th, 1891, p. 14. Also in Arrizabalaga (2023, p. 129).

> by common consent. The rabonas today are not much like Mama Della, their ancestress, who instructed the Indian women of the older time […]; for they are about the most miserable and degraded specimens as one can find hardly a degree above the dogs with which they sleep.[5]

Ward underscores the distance of the actual rabonas from solemn figure of Mama Occllo (which she incorrectly calls Mama Della, as it is pointed out by Arrizabalaga). Therefore, she excludes them from a historical lineage that would confer them any form of legitimacy or relevance. Moreover, she questions their extramarital relationships with men, which goes along their alleged unsuitability for motherhood. According to Ward, they rather have their babies die in the journeys than care for them:

> The children of the regiment have the hardest time, being homeless from birth as well as nameless, generally without rest or shelter and often without food. When one of them dies in the march, the mother strips of the rags and throws the poor little body into sand or leaves it under a tree, glad to be relieved of the encumbrance.[6]

Ward portrays the *rabonas* as monstrous, because of what she conceives as a negligent motherhood linked to an unthinkable lack of affection. Moreover, she stresses their savageness given the enormous hardship they are able to endure. This can be read along with Edward Said's statements about the process of othering, one of which's main methods consists of highlighting the enormous load such degraded bodies can bear, in contrast to the fragile civilized subject.

This can also explain her positive view of the city of Arequipa. She celebrates it because of its overall order, and, especially, because of the existence of a children hospice where women can leave their unwanted offspring without injuring them, as, she mentions,

5 *The Salt Lake Herald*, January 4th, 1891, p. 11.

6 *The Salt Lake Herald*, January 4th, 1891, p. 11.

happened in «more civilized» countries, such as the United States (p. 241). She is very careful in avoiding mentioning the term «abortion» in her writing, a practice she links with debauchery.

Ward's accounts about Peru go beyond the realm of curiosities aiming to entertain her North American readers. She selects, and, sometimes, alters the information she is presenting after intentions that are both economic, i.e., the need of writing for a living, and political. Moreover, her writings constantly challenge the patriarchal and hegemonic discourse by being a professional woman «in transit» (Miseres, 2019), traveling with her daughter (which explains the use of the pronoun «we» in many of her narrations), defying the recommendations of her local guides, and altering the information presented in the historical sources she resorts to when writing about Peru's past. Such practice, constantly highlighted and corrected by Arrizabalaga's profuse footnotes accompanying this critical edition, can be read in line the author's irreverence and utmost commitment to intellectual freedom. As she mentions in the well-known letter to her friend, Clara Barton (the founder of the North American Red Cross (1882), «[a]ll my life I have gone on my own independent way, regardless of who might disapprove of my course» (Ward cited in Arrizabalaga, 2012, p. 158). Ward's determination and autonomy also explain her constant questioning of traditional hierarchies, imaginaries, and meanings (such as those linked to civilization and barbarism), as well as her unyielding curiosity. It is such curiosity the main mobile of her travels and the cornerstone of her critique to the education system in the United States. As we can see in the fragment quoted at the beginning of this essay, Ward strongly censors an education that consists of drilling and acritical repetition. The fact that she is a relentless traveler is not detrimental to her formation as a schoolteacher. Thus, her journeys and journalistic texts constitute a fundamental instance for reflecting, even on educational matters.

To conclude, Arrizabalaga's translation, contextualization, and edition of Ward's journalistic texts, disseminated in several news-

paper, unwraps a fundamental piece for Peru's historical and sociocultural archive, especially in terms of its dynamics and practices during a postwar era. Ward's accounts, as well as her tergiversations, and fabulations, pave the way for new studies that, grounded on the works of professional women, like Fannie B. Ward, challenge, expand, and, foremost, rethink, the notions and categories fossilized in the fields of travel literature, journalism, and Peru Latin America's 19th century studies.

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