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## **Modernizing the Andes: Literature and Mining Industry in a Foundational Novel**

Jack Martínez Arias

### **Introduction**

Peru was economically devastated after its defeat in The War of the Pacific (1879-1884). Without their territories rich in guano beds and nitrate mines, which were annexed by Chile during the War, Peru only had their mineral resources left as a way out of the economic crisis. This is to say, the beginning of the Peruvian national reconstruction depended to a large extent on the reinforcement of its incipient mining industry. Therefore, it's not surprising that Peruvian intellectuals with a renewed patriotic fervor and anxiety about their national particular economic context and urgencies (Lewis 66, Ferrús 46), supported liberal politics of attracting foreign capitals (Chacarría 257).

The most prominent and influent liberal intellectual of this post-war generation was Manuel González Prada (1844-1918). In his famous "Discurso del Politeama" (1888), he synthesizes his ideas on the urgency of establishing a new social, economic, and political model in Peru. In order to achieve these objectives, he addresses the Peruvian youth by pointing out that new generations had the mission of accomplishing the national re-foundation:

Niños, sed hombres, madrugad a la vida, porque ninguna generación recibió herencia más triste, porque ninguna tuvo deberes más sagrados que cumplir, errores más graves que remediar ni venganzas más justas que satisfacer. [. . .] Siendo superiores a vuestros padres, tendréis derecho para escribir el bochornoso epitafio de una jeneración [*sic*] que se va, manchada con la guerra civil de medio siglo, con la quiebra fraudulenta i [*sic*] con la mutilación del territorio nacional. ("Discurso del Politeama," *Páginas libres* 69)

González Prada wishes to inspire new generations which would be able to break with traditional and unproductive politics of government. His ideas had a great impact on other contemporary writers such as Mercedes Cabello (1845-1909), who also envisioned a society based on the spread of science and the growth of a liberal economy (Lewis 71). As I will detail later in this article, Clorinda Matto de Turner also agreed with those ideas,

and promoted the arrival of foreign capitals as well as the exploitation of Peruvian wealth minerals in her journal editorials and articles.

However, in spite of the intellectuals' enthusiasm for promoting a modern mining exploitation, the dynamics of its production were barely represented in the novels of the time. In light of this situation, this essay aims to analyze how the mining industry appears or how it is occluded in Clorinda Matto de Turner's *Aves sin nido*, a foundational Peruvian novel.

Before continuing, it is pertinent to clarify the foundational nature of *Aves sin nido*. Besides Matto de Turner's declared intention to publish a fiction which works as an allegory of the Peruvian nation, there are other factors that allow us to consider *Aves sin nido* as a foundational novel. In this sense, it is possible to argue that *Aves sin nido* and the novels studied in Doris Sommer's *Foundational Fictions* share the following characteristics: a. *Aves sin nido* is a bourgeois project (Matto de Turner was part of the intellectual and liberal Peruvian elite, and was very close to the Peruvian president Andrés Avelino Cáceres); b. As a public figure, the mediatic presence of Matto de Turner as an author was constant: besides being the author of the successful *Aves sin nido* (this novel was a bestseller in Peru and it was also published in Argentina, Spain and The United States (translated in 1903)), she was also the well-known director of one of the most important Peruvian journals, *El Perú Ilustrado*; c. *Aves sin nido* is a romantic novel in two senses: it narrates a love story and, at the same time, it constructs a national allegory; d. Under the logic of the affect, the novel's love stories seek to eliminate racial and cultural boundaries in the Andes, and they promote a peaceful conciliation of differences; e. The novel connects fiction and politics in a context of a historical national re-foundation, and it is considered as a cultural artifact which has the power of influencing the future of the nation (in this sense, the preface of the novel is openly programmatic); f. There is a desire for achieving a national prosperity based on domestic happiness. For all these previous reasons, this novel is not only a national allegory but also a narrative which encompasses a series of important proposals for the reconstruction and modernization of Peru after war times.

Secondly, in this essay, I will also try to find how this important novel, along with other non-fictional works written by the same author, imagined the future of Peru and the role of the mining industry in Matto de Turner's national project. In this way, I will identify constant narrative strategies which follow two opposite directions: on one hand, the strategies of occlusion of the figure of the exploited mining worker in Peruvian companies; on the other, the overexposure of difficulties that impedes the desired acceleration of modernization in the Andes: corrupt authorities, colonial system of administration, Andean nature, indigenous peoples. In the same line, the essay will try to respond to the following questions: What are the implications of those strategies of occlusion and overexposure? Why do Peruvian novels barely represent the different aspects of the incipient mining industry? Why does a Peruvian foundational novel of the 19th century represent the abuses against indigenous peoples in a pre-capitalist rural area, and why does it not represent the exploitation which involves the implementation of the capitalist system? How do Clorinda Matto de Turner's non-fictional works reinforce her novelistic project?

### ***Aves sin nido*, a Distorted Metaphor of the Nation**

In spite of being a very important liberal intellectual voice of her time, Matto de Turner's political and economic proposals were not received without conservative criticism. Matto de Turner was excommunicated by the Catholic Church and her novel was banned by the Archbishop of Lima, because *Aves sin nido* depicts a corrupt priest who abuses his power against the indigenous peoples—especially against women—of the small Andean town of Kíllac. In the novel, one of the protagonists, Lucía Marín, considers that a modern state should not allow the presence of corrupt ecclesiastical authorities which have a great influence on politicians. According to her, those authorities would represent the continuity of injustices and abuses committed, from Colonial times, to the detriment of indigenous exploited peoples. Hence, most scholars who study *Aves sin nido* address the novel highlighting the strong position of Matto de Turner against a patriarchal institution such as the Catholic Church (Ferreira 28). My work, however, takes a different perspective rather than a feminist one. Needless to say, I do not deny the enormous pertinence of the numerous feminist approaches to Matto de Turner's novel, but seek to contribute to open new ways to address this foundational novel, ways focused on the economic dimension of Matto de Turner's intellectual and novelistic national project.

### **Displaying the Modern Side of Mining Investors**

*Aves sin nido* is the story of a modern couple who arrived in Kíllac, a rural town in the Andes, from Lima, the Peruvian capital. There, they were surprised to distinguish a sociopolitical and economic structure which seemed to be anchored in the colonial past, a system in which the rights of indigenous peoples were not recognized by corrupt authorities. In view of this situation, the couple believed that their mission was to help to bring justice and democracy to Kíllac through its political and economic modernization. However, time passes and despite the actions taken by the couple—for the most part conducting interviews with the authorities of Kíllac in order to protect abused indigenous peoples—the situation of the town remained the same. Then, after many months of attempting to “modernize” Kíllac by pacific means and having failed constantly, the frustrated couple decided to adopt two orphans from the town and return with them to the city.

From the very preface, the author defines this story as an objective portrait of Peruvian society which is longing to transform the critical situation of the postwar national context (Ward 295).<sup>1</sup> However, in this work, rather than focusing on the analysis of a misconstrued or an accurate representation of reality, I am interested in identifying the ways in which the novel represents anxieties about a political and economic national modernization, because the major preoccupation of the novel is the struggle between modernizing forces represented by the protagonists and the pre-capitalist administrative system of Andean provinces represented by the authorities of Kíllac. In this sense, the priority of *Aves sin nido* is to present:

...una viva denuncia del estado general de descomposición y corrupción en que se hallaba el Perú en las décadas finales del siglo XIX [. . .] puesto que de lo que se trata es de resaltar y censurar la degradación de las autoridades y el lamentable estado del país. (Arribas 73)

Besides denouncing this “estado general de descomposición y corrupción,” the novel is also proposing the indigenous people’s integration into the idea of a modern nation. In this essay, I argue that this form of integration would be related to the insertion of indigenous people into a capitalist economic system of a mineral-exporting country.

It is important to note that Matto de Turner had first-hand knowledge of the process of exportation of raw material that she is promoting in her intellectual productions, because besides being a well-known writer, she also was an active businesswoman.<sup>2</sup> To this respect, the Peruvian writer Abelardo Gamarra, in his text “Apuntes de viajes” (1884) depicts the figure of Matto de Turner (who had recently widowed by that time) in the following terms:

[Clorinda Matto de Turner] se había puesto al frente del comercio de su casa y vivía consagrada al trabajo con constancia, fe y talento de una verdadera norteamericana. Así no nos fue menos grato, a nosotros [. . .], encontrarla en su escritorio rodeada del libro mayor, del borrador y de la caja, pluma en mano, haciendo el balance de partidas numéricas, como pudiera haber estado registrando antiguallas para encantarnos con una tradición. [. . .] He allí la mujer peruana, he allí la laboriosa mujer. (190)

According to Soledad Gelles, in this quotation Gamarra makes evident the elite’s fascination with the figure of a modern woman, with “la mujer burguesa que trabaja, como tropo de civilización y modernidad y como sujeto social” (Gelles 64).<sup>3</sup> In this essay, I consider that the same kind of fascination may be transmitted through the representation of the modern couple of *Aves sin nido*. Once they arrived to Kíllac, they were eager to modernize it. Here, however, it is important to bring up a simple but fundamental question: What was the primary reason for the Marín’s moving to Kíllac? Why a modern and an economically solvent couple decided to live in a pre-capitalist town located in the midst of the Andes? Is it because they felt that they had the need or desire to help to improve the Andean political and economic situation represented in the fiction? The answer to the last question is no. Primary, they moved to Kíllac because they had invested money in a mining company situated around there. The desire to modernize Kíllac appeared later, in a second instance, once they were installed there and witness the exploitation of indigenous peoples:

Establecida desde un año atrás con su esposo en Kíllac, (Lucía) habitaba la “Casa Blanca,” donde se había implantado una oficina para el beneficio de los minerales de plata que explotaba, en la provincia limítrofe, una compañía de la cual don Fernando Marín era accionista principal y, en la actualidad, gerente. (8)

Hence, the Marín's moving to Kíllac was merely motivated by economic reasons. From now on we need to ensure that we do not lose sight of this important fact. At the same time, it is important to question why the narrator mentions the main moving motive just once along the entire novel, and why the narrator does not emphasize this reason as much as it emphasizes the philanthropic dimension of the modern couple with respect to the suffering of indigenous peoples caused by corrupt authorities. Is it possible to argue that the novel does not mention the main motive (an economic one) of the Marín's moving more than once, and emphasizes the solidarity of the modern couple in many other episodes, in order to highlight that foreign capital, represented by these modern investors, brings along the promise of a better life for the Andean towns depicted as pre-capitalist societies?

### **The Ideal Mine is the Invisible One**

The reader of the novel recognizes the financial prosperity of the Marín, however, the reader does not get information about the details of the labor process which supports the Marín's financial success. In other words, the reader has no access to the actions developed in the interior of the Marín's mine, the reader has no idea of the conditions of labor of the mining workers. This lack of representation of the mining workers is meaningful if one considers that it contrasts with the numerous representations of the exploited indigenous peoples in Kíllac, where these are obligated to work in cotton plantations for the benefit of corrupt ecclesiastical and political authorities. Then, on one hand, the novel denounces the exploitation of indigenous peoples in the town of Kíllac, but on the other hand, the same novel conceals or omits the narration of the labor conditions of workers in the Marín's mine.

Before continuing, it is worth mentioning the common way in which Andean mines used to be exploited in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Most mining workers were indigenous peoples who were contacted by the "enganchadores" (employees of mining companies who were in charge of recruiting personnel). These "enganchadores" used to offer temporary job contracts under the following characteristics: "Comprometer el concurso del trabajador a través del adelanto de parte del salario, antes de que éste inicie efectivamente su trabajo, e incluso antes de que arribe al asiento minero [. . .]. Generalmente realizaban *in situ* el adelanto a cambio de una garantía (una parcela de tierra, por ejemplo) y costeaban los gastos del traslado del trabajador a la mina" (Contreras 9).

However, according to Heraclio Bonilla, this system was unjust and abusive, since most indigenous peoples were not able to read and used to sign those contracts just believing in the word and oral promises of the contractor (40). Then, indigenous peoples were received in mines and exposed to inhuman exploitation, without receiving the promised amount of money, without having enough resources for going back to their towns. To sum up, it was a system of indiscriminate exploitation which only benefited the mining companies (Salazar 69).

Interestingly enough, the system of exploitation that takes place in Kíllac, narrated in *Aves sin nido*, was very similar to the system practiced in Andean mines. In the town, the Marín

family appears as the protector of those unjustly exploited indigenous peoples, and as the modernizing hope in the midst of a society depicted as feudalistic. The Marín family is the symbol of order, justice and solidarity. Fernando Marín, for example, says about Kíllac's situation: "Aquí todos abusan y nadie corrige el mal ni estimula el bien" (123). Here it is possible to argue that the Marín's arrival to Kíllac initiates a series of dichotomies along the novel, all of those based on the opposition of modernizing ideas versus a pre-capitalist system of administration. Facing the constant interventions of the Marín, local authorities of Kíllac did not take long to demonstrate hostility toward the foreign investors' proposals for modernization. For example, there is an episode where Fernando Marín had an argument with those authorities for defending an indigenous man, and soon after the governor angrily says to the priest: "No faltaba más, francamente, mi señor cura, que unos foráneos viniesen aquí a ponernos reglas, modificando costumbres que desde nuestros antepasados subsisten, francamente" (16). It is clear that these authorities are aware of the continuity of an administrative model that has its origins in colonial times and that was practiced since the era of their ancestors. By the same token, it is also clear that Kíllac's authorities are not just comfortable in this system but they also refused to change it. Then, before the menace of changes that the family Marín represents, those authorities decided to plan a series of traps and attacks against the house of the modern couple in order to chase them away from the town. Finally, the hostile environment created by corrupt authorities was effective, since their actions end up with the Marín leaving Kíllac. Here I propose to read the authorities' resistance to change their modes of government also as a fear of accepting foreign ideas of modernization. On an allegorical level, then, Kíllac may be representing a rural and pre-capitalist side of the nation, and the Marín would be the foreign investors who are willing to modernize these territories. Hence, the resistance to change of Kíllac's authorities may be representing the lack of predisposition, or even the hostility, that part of the state would be demonstrating with respect to the arriving of foreign capitals. The novel, then, is criticizing the enormous difficulties that foreign capitalists may find in investing their money in Peru, especially in the Andean region of this country.

Later in this article, I will mention how this figure is also found in other Matto de Turner's cultural productions, such as the magazine *El Perú Ilustrado*, where she insisted in the need to attract foreign capitals in order to reconstruct and modernize the nation. In this way, among the numerous legal reforms that she proposes to facilitate the arrival of those capitals, "Matto proponía específicamente una rebaja de impuestos, de derechos fiscales y de una exoneración de los derechos de exportación" (Gelles 77-78).

### **Investors without a nest**

In the conventional interpretation of the novel, the birds without a nest are, metaphorically, the indigenous peoples who suffer the abuses of political authorities, who have no access to education, who are not treated as citizens, who are not protected by the state (Cornejo Polar 196, Arango-Keeth 198). In the novel, those "birds" are represented by the orphan indigenous children adopted by the modern couple who commit to raise those children in order to incorporate them into the urban and modern society of the capital. Hence, indigenous peoples are represented as infant, ignorant, and naive persons who require a western education, a paternalistic guide, and adult white protectors in

order to be incorporated in the idea of a modern nation. In other words, indigenous peoples are not seen as equals: “Más que como “hermanos” de las élites criollas, los indígenas son incorporados a la familia-nación de forma infantilizada, como “hijos adoptivos” de un ángel de caridad que los educa, acultura y “civiliza” desde el ámbito del hogar” (Peluffo 21).

However, I would add a complementary interpretation where the birds without a nest are not just the indigenous peoples but also the modern couple installed in the midst of the Andes, since they are the only couple who is fighting for modernizing the town and their attempts are easily frustrated. Furthermore, besides the modernizing attempts of the Marín against the corrupt authorities, the novel also depicts two different spatial places which seem to be in constant tension. We have the rural town but, in this space, we also have the Casa Blanca (White House), which is a modern space inhabited by the Marín. While in the Casa Blanca's exterior injustices and abuses against indigenous peoples take place, inside this house the reader perceives order and peace. For example, the narrator describes one of the living rooms in the following manner: “La mesa de comer, colocada al centro de la habitación, cubierta con manteles bien blancos y planchados, lucía un servicio de campo, todo de loza azul con filetes colorados” (11). Everything in the house seems to be symmetric, harmonious, and perfect. When the narrator personifies the house, it also appears ideal: “Aquella mañana la casa blanca respiraba felicidad, porque la vuelta de don Fernando comunicó alegría infinita a su hogar donde era amado y respetado” (14). As in the material dimension of the house, the characters who inhabit it also enjoy an absolute comfort. We can read, for example, that even Marín's employers had a room for spending their leisure time: “A la derecha se veían dos pequeñas mesitas, una con un tablero de ajedrez, y otra con una ruleta; como que aquel era el lugar que los empleados de los minerales habían elegido para sus horas de solaz” (11). Considering that depictions of perfection and illumination are creating an illusion of an ideal modernized place, one can argue that the novel is trying to transmit the apparent but deceptive benefits that a capitalist system of administration may bring to the nation. Here, we should not lose sight of the fact that the novel only shows the conditions of life of employees who live inside the house. As readers, we do not have access to know what was happening with workers inside the Marín's mines, in the basis of the system of production of the company.

At some point in the storyline of the novel, the barbaric exterior threatens this ideal interior of the Casa Blanca. This happened when the authorities of Killac attempted to assassinate the modern couple. These authorities had lied to the indigenous people in order to make them believe that the Marín represented a great danger for the survival of that society. Then, part of the indigenous peoples was organized to attack and invade the Casa Blanca. Just once they were inside, about to kill to the modern couple, they discovered the truth, the fact that they were deceived by the authorities, and they decided to leave the house. This episode marks a turning point in the novel, since the Casa Blanca became vulnerable and there was no calm inside it anymore. The modernizing power of the couple, then, is not just insufficient but too weak to support the attacks of pre-capitalist agents. From this episode on, Lucia and Fernando realized their failure and are almost obligated to abandon their home and the town.



In light of the previous episode, I argue that Killac, in the novel, also became the representation of the supposed barbarian side of the nation, a side that resists to be modernized. In relation to this interpretation, the following paragraph may result illuminating. After the attack to the Casa Blanca and facing its consequences, Fernando Marín claims:

¡Qué horror! ¡Muchos sabrán lo que es despertar en la bulla del desorden, el tiroteo y la matanza, porque en el país se soportan y se presencian con frecuencia esos levantamientos y luchas civiles, que ya en nombre de Pezet, Prado o Piérola, llevan el terror y el sobresalto, sea en el aura de una revolución, sea en los fortines de una resistencia! ¡Pero lo que poco sabrán es el despertar del sueño y la felicidad, entre el plomo homicida y la voz del degüello lanzados en los muros de su propio dormitorio! (49)

Here it is the protagonist himself who sets an analogy between the uprisings of the country and what just happened to his place. In this analogy in which the barbaric violence seems to be predominant, Fernando Marín, once more, is not depicted as a war hero but as a hero who does not take arms, and who has as a priority his and his wife's survival:

Estuve resuelto, joven Manuel, a ofrecerme al sacrificio y seguir matando. Pero las lágrimas de mi buena y santa esposa me hicieron pensar en salvarme para salvarla también. Ambos huimos por la pared de la izquierda y fuimos a refugiarnos detrás de unos arcos de piedra, fronterizos, precisamente, del lugar del ataque, y desde allí hemos presenciado impasibles el asalto a nuestra casa, el heroísmo de usted, la abnegación maternal de doña Petronila, el fin de nuestro pobre Juan, y la victimización de la desgraciada Marcela. (50)

The *Aves sin nido*'s hero did not exert violence but rationality and sentimentalism: he does not risk his life because he loves his wife.<sup>4</sup> The people who were killed in the invasion of the Casa Blanca, however, were some indigenous peoples who worked there. Among them were the parents of the children that were finally adopted by the Marín. Lucía laments the assassination of the indigenous couple in this manner: “¡Pobre Juan!, ¡pobre Marcela!, ahora que la desventura nos ha hermanado, mis afanes serán para ella y sus hijas –dijo Lucía, suspirando con profunda pena e interrumpiendo a su marido” (50). And Fernando replied: “¡Oh, sí! Margarita, Rosalía, desde hoy esas palomas sin nido hallarán la sombra de su padre en esta casa” (50). The orphan children, then found a nest in the family Marín, but what Fernando and Lucía did not consider is that they themselves, after the attack of the Casa Blanca, were also people whose “nest” was in risk. Their home, represented as an ideal and modern place before the attack, was destroyed. The modern couple took pity on the orphans, without noticing that these protagonists were, at the same time, without a safe place to live in Killac.

### A Nation Derailed

The modern couple failed to achieve the modernization of Killac and decided to return to the city. However, in their travel, an unexpected event took place: in the midst of the Andes, the couple and the indigenous children experienced a train accident. Interestingly enough, as Antonio Cornejo Polar pointed out, this episode is completely dispensable in the story, because it does not modify either the storyline or the ending of the novel (152). Using a similar reasoning, this episode was entirely suppressed in the novel's first translation into English. I believe, however, that it is precisely because this episode seems to be incompatible with the rest of the story that this derailment may be symptomatic and significant in light of the modernizing discourse of the novel. In other words, given that the railway in Latin America is considered to be one of the most important signs of modernization, how should an episode of a derailment in the midst of the Andes be interpreted? How can we read this accident if it is inserted in a plot of a liberal and pro-capitalist novelistic project?

First, we should take into account that most of the railways in the Andes were built by foreign capital, because in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the priority was to constitute an efficient way of transporting minerals from the Andes to coastal ports (Deustua 183, Cotler 156). Then, transporting people was not the main reason for these constructions. By the same token, in the novel, as I mentioned before, the modern couple went to Killac for economic reasons. Once in the Andes, they decided to attempt to change the economic and political structure of the town, but this was not initially their priority. Investors who encouraged modernization arrived in the Andes in order to take economic advantage of its mines and natural resources.

Second, in *Aves sin nido*, the railway arrives in the Andes; however, this system of transportation is not totally implemented or consolidated. The train, for example, just runs twice a month. This non-total modernization could be explained by the fact that trains cannot be mobilized easily in the difficult terrain of the Andes and this factor caused derailments such as the one depicted in the novel. As the train that the couple was traveling on was about to cross a railroad bridge, the engineer noticed that a group of cattle was there. He was alarmed and tried to avoid the collision but failed. It is worthwhile to read how the accident is described in the novel:

En ese trecho del camino se alzaba un puente de madera y hierro, artísticamente colocado sobre un río vadeable.

El silbato dio la voz de alarma con repetidos resoplidos, pues al centro mismo del puente se encontraba una tropa de vacas, cuya presencia no fue notada por los maquinistas sino cuando ellas huían despavoridas, mas no con la rapidez que la velocidad del tren exigía.

[ . . . ]

Todo el convoy iba con la destructora velocidad del rayo, y alcanzando a los ganados, pasó sobre ellos, triturando sus huesos y abandonando la vía trazada por sus rieles. ¡Iba a precipitarse al río!

Míster Smith, el valiente maquinista, prefirió el sacrificio de su vida al de tantas existencias confiadas a su vigilancia, y quiso reventar los calderos

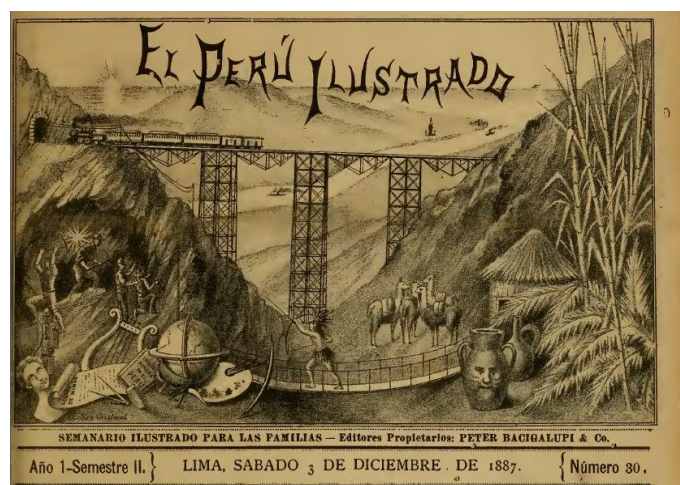
con los tiros de su revólver, mas era tarde, y el coche de primera, desabracado por el brequero, fue a encallar en las arenas mojadas de la ribera izquierda del río. (153)

Here we have a railroad bridge, a symbol of the modern communication between cities on the coast and the rural villages in the Andes. However, this bridge appears invaded by disorganized cattle. Modern constructions and machines, such as trains, confront Andean elements, such as the big animals on the bridge. Furthermore, before the accident, the narrator refers to the cattle as “tropa,” which could also have a military connotation; and the narrator also tells us that the train encounters the cattle “con la destructora velocidad del rayo.” As a result, a violent collision occurs. The train is derailed.

However, a few hours later the problem seems to be solved. The accident does not result in human death and the train resumes its journey. In other words, the argument of the novel seems to show us that the process of modernization may face inconveniences, but these problems should not be big enough to stop the advance of national economic progress or the future full implementation of a modern transport system in the Andes. Taking all these episodes into account, one may argue that this foundational novel represents the difficulties of the modernization of the Andean region, but at the same time, it seems to be optimistic about the future overcoming of those barriers.

### Imagining the Nation in Non-Fiction Publications

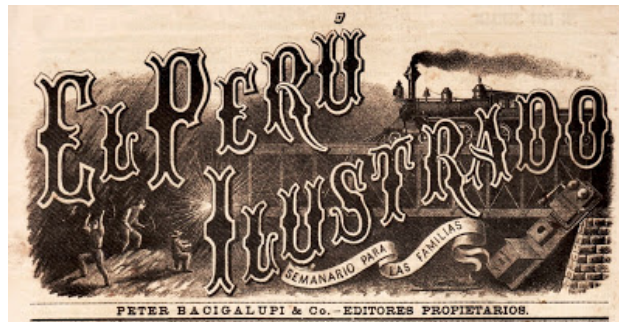
As I pointed out before, the author of *Aves sin nido* is not just a writer of novels but also a well-known journalist in Peru. In the years when her novel became a bestseller she was also working as a director of *El Perú Ilustrado*. In the magazine, she promotes a realistic literature with nationalistic tendencies, writing in favor of the political modernization of Peru and proclaiming the need to achieve a solid economic and national stability (Tamayo 12, Arando-Keeth 189).



(Fig. 1. Cover of *El Perú Ilustrado*, from 1887 to 1888)

The very cover of the magazine is an example of how the nation is imagined by Matto de Turner and her collaborators. In the image one can see a train crossing a monumental

steel railway bridge installed in the Andes, well-equipped workers in a mine, and a series of objects coming from Europe. According to Isabelle Tauzin, these representations provide the idea of a nation which takes advantage of its natural resources by means of modern systems of communication in contrast to the indigenous world represented on the other side of the cover (136). On that other side, we can see an indigenous man who is crossing a precarious bridge and aiming his arrow at the train. However, neither the Andean plants nor the animals nor the indigenous man seem to represent a real threat to the apparently unstoppable and rapid modernization of the Andes.

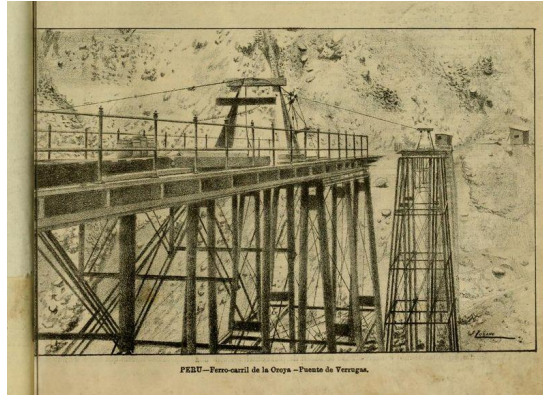


(Fig 2. Cover of *El Perú Ilustrado*, from 1888 to 1891)

In 1888 this cover was modified. The new one preserved the train, the railway bridge, the workers in the mine, and introduced a telephone. The representations of Andean nature, people and animals were totally erased. In this new image, the modernization seems to have completed its process in the Andes. It is clear that *El Perú Ilustrado* is promoting the idea of a modern nation constructed on the basis of extraction and export of mineral resources. Ideally for the collaborators of this magazine, any trace of the Andean nature and indigenous people has been erased.

In line with the idealized vision of modernization depicted by these covers, in the novel *Aves sin nido*, Clorinda Matto de Turner omits the labor conditions of workers in the mining company owned by the protagonists. On the other hand, workers and their equipment on the covers of the magazine are depicted as workers in developed and industrialized countries.

The images on the covers of *El Perú Ilustrado* do not reflect reality, but allow us to trace how liberal intellectuals imagined modernization in the Andes. If the failure of the protagonists in the rural town of Killac and the derailment of the train in the novel demonstrate an uncertainty with respect to the still-unfinished process of absolutely modernization, the covers of *El Perú Ilustrado*, especially the second one, suggest confidence.



(Fig. 3. “Ferrocarril de La Oroya,” in *El Perú Ilustrado* 133)

However, unlike the desired nation represented in these covers, I found, inside the edition 133 of *El Perú Ilustrado*, the image of a broken railway bridge in the midst of the Andes. It is the Verugas Bridge, which connects Lima to the Central Peruvian Andes. Part of the text which accompanies the image says that this railway bridge “was broken by landslides of mud and rocks whose ravages will never be lamented enough by miners and businessmen” (1010, *my translation*). While the covers are able to represent an imagined nation, inside, the magazine has to acknowledge and lament the difficulties in the implementation of a modern system of transporting minerals and miners through the Andes. Similarly to the episode of the train derailment in the novel, in this image, it is part of the Andean nature that impedes the proper functioning of the rail system. Hence, even in these cultural productions (the novel and the magazine) where a liberal intellectual such as Matto de Turner promotes the image of a desired modern nation, the fear of a failed process of modernization becomes evident in one way or another.

Finally, I will refer to an unsigned article in the same edition of *El Perú Ilustrado*, announcing the constitution of a mining company in the country: “The International Mining Company Limited.” Interestingly enough, the complete article is written in English, which is unprecedented in the history of the magazine. Besides the usual audience of *El Perú Ilustrado*, one may argue that this article could be addressed to foreign people as well, ideally, to English or American investors.

The members of the new company are mentioned at the beginning of the text and the article highlights the fact that two of them are congressmen. In this way, the beginning of the article illustrates that the proximity of businessmen to the State was more than approved by Peruvian intellectuals in late 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the same vein, after enumerating the members of the company, the article moves on to announce the main objectives of the company:

This Company is formed with the object of exploring on an extensive scale, by a competent staff of English and American Mining Engineers, assisted by practical and local Miners, the principal renowned mineral districts of Peru. [. . .] To search for mines and minerals, and to obtain proprietorship of same when of value, by denouncement, concession, purchaser or other legitimate title. (994)

This company offers everything that liberal intellectuals desire: the exploitation of the mineral resources, international engineers, legality. It offers the complete modernization of the modes of mineral exploitation. This text does not represent an idyllic view of the nation, as the covers of the magazine do, but points out the current precariousness of the reality and proposes an apparently concrete project of development:

Until very recently the mining operations in Peru have been conducted in a most primitive manner, without any scientific direction or the employment of any machinery of importance. This neglect of the mining industry of Peru may to some extent be attributed to the lack of good roads in the interior, the unfinished state of the railroads, and also, if not principally, to the scarcity of working capital. (995)

It is not necessary to add anything else to have a clear idea of what the company is proposing. Furthermore, taking into account that it was published in a very well-known cultural magazine, one can argue that economic, political, and main cultural intellectual projects went hand in hand in the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Peru. Because, even though the author of this article is unknown, what we find in the very following edition of the magazine is an editorial signed by Clorinda Matto de Turner where she supports and praises the constitution of this new mining company:

Nuestro número anterior, registró íntegro el texto inglés de los estatutos provisorios de la “internacional de Minas” [. . .] llevando al seno de las mencionadas sociedades los vehementes votos que hacemos por su prosperidad; porque, como peruanos, anhelamos ver multiplicadas las compañías del género de las que nos ocupan, para las que pedimos toda la protección de nuestro honorable gobierno y todo el entusiasmo de nuestros compatriotas. (1015)

What this editorial proposes is very important, because unlike the article in English, Matto de Turner links the idea of an economic “prosperity” based on the mining industry with a “patriotic spirit.” Therefore, any Peruvian who loves his or her homeland should long to see foreign capital invested in the Andean mining industry. Furthermore, the state should protect and promote the arrival of new capital.

Then, as a “patriot” intellectual, Matto de Turner insists in the necessity of the Andean modernization. She does it through the novel and the magazine, through the fiction and the journalism. However, besides highlighting the modernizing desires in the cultural productions of this intellectual, I also would like to identify the fears of failure. I argue that the existence of episodes such as the failure of the Marín in Killac and the derailment of the train described in *Aves sin nido*, or news such as the broken bridge in the Andes that appeared in *El Perú Ilustrado*, constitute evidences of this fear. From the perspective of these cultural representations, neither Andean nature nor people such as the authorities and indigenous peoples in Killac seem to be willing to embrace modernization. Narrating these tensions, Matto de Turner reveals the gap between her intellectual discourse and reality, between what she desires and the concrete barriers of her project. Matto de

Turner exposes all the difficulties or impediments that a process of modernization and the introduction of capitalism in the Andes may face, but, at the same time, she occludes other aspects. Because on the other hand, one of the most important aspects that she does not reveal but intends to cover in many ways is the new modes of exploitation that the desired capitalism and modernization would be bringing to the Andes.

She is openly interested in the expansion of foreign capital in order to reinforce the incipient mining industry even if to do so she has to idealize it and omit (as in the novel) or distort (as in the magazine) the figure of mining workers exploited by foreign companies in the Andes, because in Matto de Turner's perspective, the encouragement of the mining industry is the most effective manner for the State to accumulate riches and, in consequence, to extend and accelerate the process of modernization in the entire country. The development of the mining industry, then, is the first requirement for dreaming with a future modern nation, and the occlusion of the exploitation of indigenous peoples in this sector seems to be a necessary narrative strategy even for major *indigenista* intellectuals such as Clorinda Matto de Turner.

Finally, one question remains: besides *Aves sin nido*, why are there no Peruvian novels which represent some aspects of the mining industry? In light of the analysis of Matto de Turner's work, I argue that intellectuals' desires for promoting an ideal economy based on exportation of mineral resources clashed with the cruel reality of the exploitation of the Andean mining workers. Consequently, it was impossible for those writers to portray a utopic capitalist system without falling into paradoxes and contradictions. In this sense, as we have seen in this article, Matto de Turner's novel, the only one which attempts to avoid these inconsistencies, is indeed forced to conceal and omit the situation of workers. Just two decades later, at the beginning of the twentieth century and after the expansion of Marxism in the Andes, other novelists will begin to face the contradictions of liberal discourses, paying attention to the inhuman treatment of workers of the Andean mining industry. This will be the case of Jaime Mendoza's *En las tierras de Potosí* (1911) or César Vallejo's *El Tungsteno* (1931).

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**Notes**

- <sup>1</sup> In line with 19<sup>th</sup> century novelistic trends, the first pages of *Aves sin nido* describe this book as a “photograph” which reflects society (3).
- <sup>2</sup> Matto de Turner and her husband were, for many years, the owners of a business dedicated to the international commercialization of wool (Manrique 131).
- <sup>3</sup> The same kind of fascination for the American economic system was also expressed by Matto de Turner. When she used to write in *Los Andes* (1892), for example, Matto de Turner was convinced that a national progress may be possible only if Peruvian peoples imitate the American progressive and practical peoples (Gelles 78).
- <sup>4</sup> Comparing the political proposals of González Prada and Matto de Turner, Anna Peluffo points out that the first configures a national subject “alrededor de la figura de un soldado capaz de morir heroicamente por una idea de nación,” and the second prefers to “un tipo de ciudadano más humanitario que patriótico que pueda ejercer las virtudes de la filantropía” (136).



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