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Flora Tristan's Plural Identities in "Peregrinaciones de una paria": Challenging and Reproducing Existing Power Structures

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The influence that Flora Tristan's writing and militancy for women's and worker's rights had in France, and especially in Peru in the twentieth century is undeniable. In the early 1940s, Peruvian poet and political activist Magda Portal wrote a biography of Tristan (1803-1844) in which she acknowledges the Franco-Peruvian author as the "precursor of socialist feminism" (Pratt 156). This honor prompted Emilia Romero to publish, in 1946, the first Spanish translation of Tristan's famous travel book *Pérégrinations d'une paria*, first published in France in 1837 (Staedler 229). In this book, Tristan recounts her recent journey to Peru and includes her controversial opinions of Peruvian culture, as well as her progressive views on the role of women in society. By the 1970s, Peruvians started to officially recognize Tristan as a national writer and, in 1979, they honored her by naming one of the "most influential feminist institutions" in the country after her, the Centro Flora Tristán in Lima. Yet, with the exception of Lima based Bolivian writer Carolina Freyre de Jaimes, who "vindicated" Tristan's story in the 1870's (Pratt 156), Tristan's work and authority as a writer was overwhelmingly rejected by the Creole upper class society of nineteenth century Peru.¹ She was burned in effigy in Lima and Arequipa when *Peregrinaciones de una paria* arrived from Paris in 1838 and her book was banned and burned by the Catholic church.

These passionate actions and attitude against Tristan by the 1830s Peruvian ruling class and the subsequent revival and celebration of her work by Peruvian women of various classes in later generations point to Tristan's ambivalent self-representations as a woman writer and identification as a Peruvian subject in *Peregrinaciones*. In this essay, I look at some of the textual strategies that Tristan uses to define herself as a pariah on the basis of her national and gender identities and to represent herself as a

“site” from which she is able to challenge the Peruvian gender and social politics of her time. While this self-identification as an outcast emphasizes her exclusion from society, I demonstrate that, given the way she negotiates her plural identities in *Peregrinaciones*, her multiple selves are instead a source of empowerment and of inclusion for Tristan. Indeed, using the image of a metaphorical border, it is as if Tristan is standing in the liminal space between her different identities and, depending on the situation, chooses to be French or Peruvian or to act as male or female, in order to be granted access to and to gain influence within these different groups. Although other scholars, including Cristina Guiñazú and Jill S. Kuhnheim, have highlighted the ambivalent and shifting opinions that the narrative voice presents of Peruvians in *Peregrinaciones*, I focus on the way Tristan consciously performs her various identities to show that the result of these frequent border crossings is that Tristan negatively represents Peruvian men when writing from a French colonizer’s point of view, while she elevates Peruvian women when positively representing them from a female subaltern’s point of view.

In order to identify and isolate Tristan’s multiple selves, it is first essential to understand the conditions that produced *Peregrinaciones*, that is the social and political contexts that shaped Tristan’s identity. Her father, Mariano Moscoso y Tristán, a Peruvian colonel to the Spanish king, met her mother, a French petit-bourgeois who had fled the French Revolution, in Bilbao, Spain. They were married by a French priest and moved to France soon after the religious ceremony. Moscoso y Tristán was a member of one of the oldest and most opulent aristocratic families established in Arequipa, Peru. It is worth noting that Peru remained a viceroyalty of Spain until 1821 and that Tristan’s

father came from a Creole family. Tristan was thus born in a multicultural family in 1803 and is often described as having inherited her father's physical traits: "Tristan's tropical complexion, onyx eyes, and exceptionally dark hair could certainly be attributed to her Peruvian ancestry" (Talbot 7).

In 1808, Moscoso y Tristán died suddenly of a stroke. Since the Peninsular War had just started, Tristan's father was considered an enemy of France and the Tristans' family house was confiscated by the French government.² Flora was raised by a single mother with modest resources and only received a limited education. In 1818, Tristan discovered that her parents' marriage had never been legally authenticated and that she was, therefore, considered an illegitimate child under French law. She felt betrayed and humiliated by French society whose rigid and patriarchal laws marginalized her as a bastard. Her illegitimacy was indeed at the time a source of severe rejection within the formal and conservative bourgeois and petit-bourgeois society (Scurrah 13). As a woman, her status also meant that the prospect of marrying a man of her class would be limited at best.

When André Chazal, her employer at a lithographic workshop, showed interest in her and was willing to overlook her illegitimate status, Tristan's mother forced her to marry him. Tristan admits to never having loved her husband who was obsessive and violent. She soon felt trapped in a bad relationship and, after four years of marriage and pregnant with her daughter Aline, she left Chazal, taking with her their two sons. This was a significant decision on her part and an unusual action for any married woman to make at that time. Under the Napoleonic Civil Code, family law established the supremacy of the husband with respect to the wife and children. Women were

considered to have “limited rationality and self-control, and the unruliness of their bodies, justified placing them under male control within the family” (Grogan 77). Furthermore, with the return of the monarchy, divorce was abolished in 1816. Chazal was thus entitled full rights of custody of their children and judicial separation was the only option for Tristan.

In an act of rebellion, Tristan abandoned her married name and reclaimed part of her father’s family name (Maclean 7). This was a highly symbolic gesture, not only because women were not allowed to change their names, but also because Tristan chose to reclaim a name that, according to French law, was not even hers to begin with. By leaving her husband and discarding his name, Tristan showed that she rejected the conventions that French society imposed on women. She made her own decisions and followed her own rules in ways that were only reserved and acceptable for men at the time. Although she was feminine in her physical demeanor, she identified or performed more as a man in the way she conducted her life.

As a result of her transgressions, Tristan became a social outcast and the years that followed her separation from Chazal (1825-1833) were extremely difficult. During this period, Tristan was regularly forced to lie about her marital status: “Bien acogida en todas partes como viuda o como soltera, siempre era rechazada cuando la verdad llegaba a ser descubierta” (84). She felt extremely vulnerable and her situation as an outcast became unbearable: “Mi vida era un suplicio a cada instante” (85). By lying about her identity, Tristan was able to obtain temporary social acceptance and favors that she would not have otherwise enjoyed as a separated woman. She became aware

of the advantages of performing different identities in different situations and she started to use this strategy on a frequent basis.

It is in fact by identifying herself as single and childless that Tristan was able to embark on *El Mexicano* in 1833 and to travel to Peru in search of an opportunity to break with her situation as a vilified outcast.³ Her departure is also the starting point of her book *Peregrinaciones de una paria*, which was written upon Tristan's return to France and published in French in November 1837. Her narration is influenced by her experiences in Peru, but also to some extent by the feminist and utopian socialist discourses that circulated in the French intellectual and artistic circles that she frequented between 1834 and 1837.⁴

As her biographical information revealed, Tristan's identity was complex and did not fit the mold of what a typical French petit-bourgeois wife was supposed to be. As a result, Tristan was treated as a social outcast by French society. While returning to her abusive husband might have helped her social situation, it is not an option that Tristan seemed to have ever considered. She had to find an alternative way to achieve social recognition and financial liberation. A visit to her Peruvian family was the one opportunity she had to find legitimization and to reinvent herself.⁵ It is thus with a sense of being rejected, marginalized and disillusioned as a French woman, that Tristan left France the way a young man would and set to seek her Peruvian identity in the New World.

Her experiences in Peru, but especially the subsequent partially fictionalized narration of her trip, mark a turning point in Tristan's life as they allow her to understand and reconstruct her multiple selves. While her various identities were part of who she

was prior to her departure to Peru, her trip marks a new beginning in the way she consciously negotiates between them.

In the “Prefacio” to *Peregrinaciones*, Tristan, first introduces her circumstances to the reader by briefly explaining her situation as a victim of spousal abuse and as a social outcast. She makes it very clear that she has to leave France in order to survive:

dejar mi país que amaba con predilección; abandonar a mi hija que no tenía más apoyo que el mío; exponer mi vida, mi vida que era una carga para mí, porque sufría (...). En fin, hacer todos esos sacrificios y afrontar todos esos peligros porque estaba unida a un ser vil que me reclamaba como su esclava. (89)

Once her background and ensuing rejection from French society is established, she starts her narration by describing her journey to Peru in a way that suggests a rebirth experience. For example, the reader learns in the very first sentence of the first paragraph that her departure for Peru coincides with her birthday: “El 7 de abril de 1833, aniversario de mi nacimiento, fue el día de nuestra partida” (95). With this opening line, Tristan draws the reader’s attention to the anniversary day of her birth.⁶ Florence Gabaude, who interprets Tristan’s trip as an initiatory journey, also explains that the idea of death and rebirth present from the first pages of *Peregrinaciones* is emblematic of the journey’s transitional nature (810). She thus begins during the crossing “to move toward an alternative definition of self” (Wettlaufer 340). It seems therefore that, as she crosses the Atlantic, a physical border space between the Old and the New Worlds, Tristan in a sense starts to consciously position herself on the

metaphorical border of her own various identities in order to control how she is perceived and, in a way, to construct a new social image of herself.

Walter Mignolo's description of the border "as a threshold and liminality, as two sides connected by a bridge" is especially useful to explain Tristan's situation (309). Her ability to stand in the liminal space that separates her plural selves allows her not only to decide which identity to perform, but also to easily cross the metaphorical border that separates them. To extend on this concept of metaphorical border, Renato Roberto explains that "social borders frequently become salient around such lines as sexual orientation, gender, class, race, ethnicity, nationality, age, dress, politics, food, or taste" (208). As we shall see, Tristan is able to navigate back and forth between her plural identities as circumstances demand, to pose as French or Peruvian, to act as male or female. Drawing on Judith Butler's work on performativity, gender here should be seen as a fluid variable, which shifts and changes in different contexts and at different times rather than being a fixed attribute in a person. Masculine and feminine are defined in terms of constructed identity performances and Tristan is therefore performing what was considered masculine and feminine acts in nineteenth century France and Peru. Furthermore, Tristan is aware of her plural identities and manages them in a way that reminds us of Gloria Anzaldúa's new mestiza whose "pluralistic personality" allows her to "operate in pluralistic mode" in order to "juggle her cultures" from the borderline of the various groups in which she holds membership (95). By crossing the border of her identities, Tristan challenges the traditional and then emerging modern concept of identity that emphasized the existence of a static, stable, coherent and essentialized

self. She instead presents an alternative definition of self that is unstable, fragmented and hybrid.

As explained previously, Tristan often acted and directed her life in ways that only a man could. This assertive side of her personality, which corresponds to a then socially accepted way of understanding masculinity, reappears and is reinforced throughout her journey to and in Peru. Indeed, Tristan clearly insists in some situations on portraying herself as a heroic and mentally strong person who is not afraid to act as a man when necessary.

She first draws the reader's attention to her courage when describing the tumultuous transatlantic crossing that she undertakes on *El Mexicano* to get to South America. From coping with severe seasickness, to braving storms and being forced to sleep on deck, Tristan writes a detailed account of the four months she spent as the only woman amongst men. She then writes about how, upon arrival in Peru and against local advice, she decides to travel from Islay to Arequipa on horseback instead of waiting for her uncle's visit or joining him in Comara. In the chapter "El desierto," she recounts her journey through the arid pampa and the mountains of Peru showing, once again, that she was in charge of her own life: "Todas las personas que estaban alrededor de nosotros me decían que cometía una imprudencia al partir tan mal montada" (215). Her refusal to attend a dinner served in her honor upon her arrival in Arequipa and, most notably the way she favors her independence in Lima when choosing to stay in a hotel instead of accepting her aunt's hospitality, are further examples of her unwillingness to conform with her gender's expectations and of her decisions to act as a man would once in Peru.

While it is probable, as Susan Grogan argues, that Tristan “enacted a womanhood that was powerful and authoritative in an attempt to mold her feminine anew and expand its parameters,” she did not always represent herself in such a self-assured way (80). Furthermore, and as we shall later see, the discourse that she adopts about Peru when representing herself in this forceful way did not transcend the traditional colonial discourse of the French white male and thus did not necessarily provide a liberating discourse for women.

There are indeed many passages where Tristan shifts from identifying herself as a heroic masculine character to portraying herself as a weak woman battling what often resembles feelings of depression and despair. Tristan fell sick on several occasions during the Transatlantic crossing and spent days closed up in her cabin. In one of those dramatic instances, she even explains that she wishes to die: “Desde la salida el sol hasta las seis de las tarde sufría tanto que me era imposible hilvanar dos ideas. Me sentía indiferente a todo. Deseaba solamente que una cercana muerte viniera a poner término a mis males” (104). Further references to her poor physical and mental health are included in her narration and each instance appears to contradict the strong image that Tristan is promoting when performing as a man.

Furthermore, and in contrast with her identification as a strong person in charge of her own life, Tristan often identifies herself as a woman victimized by the patriarchal system. One of these first instances occurs on *El Mexicano* when she explains that she had to refuse Chabrié’s protection and marriage proposal because, despite her separation from Chazal, she was still legally his wife: “¡Yo, unirme a un ser de quien me sentía amada! ¡Imposible! Una voz infernal me repetía con una risa burlona: ‘¡Tú eres

casada! Con un ser despreciable, es cierto, pero encadenada a él para el resto de tus días, y no puedes sustraerte a su yugo” (145). Not only does she lament the fact that she is forced to stay married to Chazal, but she also complains about not being able to marry Chabrié whom she does not love. This example is especially significant because it clearly contradicts her masculine self, who by no means is shown to need or want protection from anyone.

Another significant example of Tristan’s portrayal as a victimized woman follows an episode in which she describes how she stood up to her uncle, the way a man would. When her uncle refuses to give her the inheritance she felt was hers, she shows how fearless she is by insulting him and by not caring about her words’ possible negative consequences:

¡Ah, hombre sin fe, sin honor, sin humanidad, yo le rechazo a mi vez! ¡No soy de su sangre, le entrego a los remordimientos de su conciencia! No quiero nada suyo. Desde esta tarde saldré de su casa y mañana toda la ciudad conocerá su ingratitud para con la memoria de ese hermano que provoca sus lágrimas cada vez que pronuncia su nombre, su dureza para conmigo y la manera cómo ha burlado la imprudente confianza que yo había depositado en usted. (314)

Then, Tristan almost immediately shifts from describing this highly virilized performance to portraying herself as the abused victim of the society she lives in:

¡Destruída mi última esperanza! (...) Fue también una de esas épocas de mi vida en la que todos los males de mi destino se dibujaron ante mis ojos con todo cuanto tenían de cruel tortura. Nacida con todas la ventajas que

excitan la ambición de los hombres, éstas no me eran mostradas sino para hacerme sentir la injusticia que me despojaba de su goce. Veía abismos por donde quiera; a las sociedades humanas, organizadas contra mí; seguridad y simpatía en ninguna parte. (315)

It seems therefore that these shifts between her feminine and masculine identities allowed her on one hand to be admired as a hero of exceptional character, and on the other hand to be perceived as victim, a character for whom the reader might feel empathy. By portraying this duality between her male self and her female self, Tristan appears to be perpetuating society's perception of the gender difference at the time. Yet, she also demonstrates that, as woman, she is able to be both male and female at once and delivers a powerful feminist message.

It is important to note that Peruvian society was not more liberal towards women than French society was at that time. As Francine Masiello explains, in most of the new Latin American nations "motherhood and domesticity played a significant part in the national program of advancement, and the family unit was perceived as an arena for the training of future citizens" (19). During Tristan's visit in Peru in the early 1830s, the masculine domain was still mostly identified with the public sphere and the feminine with the private (18). Although her situation in Peru as a single woman was different from that in France where she was a separated wife and a mother, Tristan's actions nevertheless trespassed gender norms in Peru. Identifying with her French or with her Peruvian nationalities, depending on the situation, became therefore a useful strategy for Tristan.

The power that came with her French identity was made clear to her as soon as she disembarked in Valparaiso, Chile. There, as she explains, all the men spoke French and many wanted to see her and know her only because she was French (178). Her French nationality was a source of recognition and authority. In Peru, as the elite worked on building a new national identity that would distinguish itself from Spain, French culture became very popular and was seen by many in the Peruvian aristocracy as fashionable and highly respectable (Staedler 221). Thus, just like it had been in Chile, her French nationality was regarded in Peru as a positive attribute.

Her French identity paired with her forceful “masculine” actions, distinguished her from the other women in her family, and enabled her to gain access to the masculine public sphere of Peruvian society and to be treated by Peruvian men in ways that no Peruvian woman could. In the chapter “La república y los tres presidentes,” she explains that her uncle, a revered and powerful Peruvian leader, supposedly sought out her political advice following the revolution that exploded in Lima in 1834. This anecdote highlights her ability to portray herself as a French man would, and of the advantage that this identification brought her. Thanks to her French identity, many Peruvians visited her and shared important information about the political situation. She was then able to use what she had learned effectively to empower herself. As she explains, her uncle came to highly respect her: “Mi querida Florita, estoy muy inquieto. Aconséjeme. Usted tiene apreciaciones tan justas en todo y es realmente la única persona aquí con la cual puedo hablar de cosas tan graves” (326). Her ability to portray herself as a French outsider allowed her to gain the trust and the respect of the Peruvian political elite.

The role she was allowed to play during the tumultuous days that surrounded the battle of Cangallo also demonstrates how Peruvian men came to identify her as one of them. Throughout the days that preceded the battle, Tristan kept herself informed of what was happening on the front and, while none of the other women in her uncle's house were involved in the political conversations, Tristan explains that she participated in heated debates, visited the soldier's camp, checked on the status of the battle from the roof-top and briefly remained alone in the house when everyone evacuated. Finally, she admits to have served as a war advisor to her uncle during these difficult times by suggesting the overthrow of Nieto, an advice which was later successfully carried out: "Tío, la batalla está *perdida*. Este hombre no está en su razón. Sus miembros le niegan sus servicios. Es absolutamente preciso reemplazarlo, de otra manera mañana coronará todas sus necedades" (418). By strategically choosing to perform like a man would and by identifying herself as French in these crucial political situations, Tristan was granted a privileged access to the masculine public sphere and was included in Peruvian society in ways that few Peruvian women ever were.

Tristan was also able to cross back to her woman's identity when she needed access to the private sphere of Peruvian society. It is important to remember though that even this identity was a performance since she was not identifying herself as the separated mother of two that she truly was, but as a single childless woman. As such, she was able to visit and briefly stay in two Catholic convents and share the concealed life of the nuns. And, while her French identity was a source of amusement for the nuns, it is her powerful Peruvian last name that opened her the convents' doors.

It should first be noted that Tristan identified as Peruvian even before setting foot in Peru. When one of her fellow passengers on *El Mexicano* makes insulting remarks about Peruvian people, Tristan proudly claims her Peruvian nationality: “Yo nací en Francia, pero soy del país de mi padre” (158). Tristan’s response indicates her determination from the beginning of her trip to redefine herself and to use the nationality and the name inherited from her father to her advantage. As mentioned earlier, Tristan’s last name belonged to one of the most prominent families in the country and was directly linked to the foundation of the Peruvian republic. As a matter of fact, her very first Peruvian experience is marked by the recognition of her last name when she arrives in Islay as a single woman: “Se pidieron los pasaportes y cuando leyó el mío se elevó entre los dos o tres hombres de la aduana un grito de admiración. (...) El capitán de puerto vino respetuosamente a decirme que era un antiguo servidor de mi tío, a cuya generosidad debía su puesto, pues don Pío se lo había concedido cuando fue prefecto de Arequipa” (196-197). Tristan, whose name was illegitimate in France, immediately realized the advantages that her identity as a Tristán y Moscoso could offer her in Peru. As a Peruvian woman, she was indeed able to find social recognition from the elite women of her cousin’s and aunt’s social circles.

By crossing the borders between her masculine and feminine identities, as well as between her Peruvian and French identities, Tristan demonstrates that she was looking to be included within Peruvian society in every possible way. Yet by claiming her plural identities, she also actively sought to maintain herself outside of the norm and, in a way, consciously redefined herself as an outcast. This redefinition however, does not include the negative implications of what being a pariah had signified for her in France.

Indeed, the performance of her plural selves in the previously discussed situations allowed her to be included in the various groups that she represented. When acting as a French man, she could be admired as a person of exceptional character and was allowed access and participation in the public sphere. When identifying as a Peruvian or French woman, she could be seen as a victim and was accepted in the domestic sphere. Therefore, and as Gabaude notes, Tristan's went from being a rejected social pariah to being a proclaimed pariah, a status that allowed her to find her place in society, to participate and to become an agent of changes (810). Her ability to stand on the border of her various identities and to choose which identity to perform in specific situations allowed her, therefore, to transcend the dualities of her own identity. Yet and as we shall now see, these dualities remained somewhat present in her written discourse about Peru and in the ways that she represents Peruvian people in *Peregrinaciones*.

Tristan's ability to cross the border of her plural identities is not limited to the way she represents herself as a character in her story, but also extends to her identities as a writer. As a result, Tristan identifies as a man in some of the choices she makes as such. It is first important to remember that travel writing was a masculine genre at the time. As Francesca Denegri points out, "traveling and writing about it implied violating two tacit demands made on elite women in Hispanic and French societies" (353). Travel writing was the preferred genre of European explorers, pilgrims, scientists or, as Pratt calls them, the "capitalist vanguardists" who tended "to emplot their accounts as quests of achievement fueled by fantasies of transformation and dominance" (155). Given the limitations imposed on women at the time, Tristan's account might appear at times to

follow the fantastic pattern of the European men's of the period, especially when she describes the importance and the impact that her political advice had on her uncle for example. Nevertheless, Tristan's text, like those of the male travelers, includes several chapters of predominantly ethnographic information such as "Lima y sus costumbres," in which she describes Peruvian culture, society and landscapes. When identifying as a male writer, she also rejects "sentimentality and romanticism almost as vehemently as the capitalist vanguards did" (Pratt 159). Furthermore, and given her access to the male restricted political sphere, Tristan's account, like those of men, includes a considerable amount of interpretations and opinions related to the political situation of Peru at the time. Since women were confined to the domestic sphere, they usually did not participate in politics and thus rarely wrote about it.

Interestingly, her identification as a man in her narration and her identification as a male writer resulted in her adoption of the French colonizer's discourse when writing about certain aspects of Peru and especially about Peruvian men. By French colonizer's discourse, I mean a discourse of domination that asserts France's superiority over any colonized population (even if France did not actually colonize Peru) and that construes the colonized as a population of uncivilized and degenerate types in order to justify the conquest (Bhabha 70).

The first example of this kind of discourse in Tristan's text is found in the dedication written in French and addressed "A los peruanos" that she includes at the beginning of her book. This dedication, as well as the untitled section that immediately follows it, were written and added to her book after her narration was complete and present the "masculine" public image that Tristan wanted for herself, that of world

traveler who had been to Peru and had first hand experience with the foreign land she was about to describe (Guiñazú 2). She asserts herself as an authoritative and experienced writer when pointing out to her Peruvian “compatriots” what she thinks were poor judgments on their part: “al ver que andáis errados y que no pensáis, ante todo, en armonizar vuestras costumbres con la organización política que habéis adoptado, he tenido el valor de decirlo, con riesgo de offender vuestro orgullo nacional.” She then proceeds with an explanation of what she believes are the causes (the corruption of the governing elite and “el embrutecimiento de un pueblo”) and the solution (education for all) to Peru’s backwardness (71).

With this discourse, Tristan clearly shows arrogant feelings of superiority towards the Peruvian people. First, she addresses herself in French to all Peruvians and signs as “Vuestra compatriota y amiga” which highlight the fact that, in this passage, she identified as a French writer and not as a Spanish speaking Peruvian (33). Secondly, she infantilizes all Peruvians with her patronizing tone and by arrogantly assuming that, after spending less than a year among the Peruvian elite, she not only has identified what caused the social unrest she witnessed but also has found a solution that would establish order and prosperity, two Euroimperialist ideals. In this discourse, she also completely ignores the fact that Peru is a multicultural and multiracial nation. Her support for education echoes the need for civilizing the entire Peruvian population that she sees as inferior.⁷

Tristan’s discourse as a white French male is also prevalent in many of her ethnographic passages which, given Pratt’s definition of ethnographic texts as “means by which Europeans represent to themselves their (usually subjugated) others,” implies

the use of power from the writer over the subjects that she is describing (7). Many of Tristan's descriptions of Peruvian culture are based on comparisons that she makes to her French experience. This is apparent for example when she describes Peruvian cuisine: "los arequipeños son muy aficionados a la buena mesa y, sin embargo, son poco hábiles para procurarse un placer. Su cocina es detestable. Los alimentos no son buenos y el arte culinario está aún en la barbarie" (281). This comment implies that Arequipean food is mediocre because it is not French or prepared the French way. As Katharina Staedtler explains, in Tristan's opinion "everything that came from France had a civilizing impact on the childish and provincial Peruvians. Learning the French language, she thought, listening to French music and wearing French fashion were the only ways to become intelligent and fashionable" (219). In a similar fashion, Tristan shuns local representations and traditions as ridiculous and uncivilized: "El grado de civilización alcanzado por un pueblo se refleja en todo. Las diversiones del carnaval no son más decentes en Arequipa que las farsas y bufonadas de la Semana Santa." She sees European celebrations as more spectacular: "En Europa la bellas artes cubren por lo menos con un brillante barniz la insípida esterilidad de las ceremonias" (285). The Eurocentric view of these remarks is thus evident in her obsessive desire to compare everything to Europe, and especially to France, and it highlights her view of France as civilized and of Peru as barbaric.

Finally, one of the most revealing example of Tristan's identification with the French colonizer's discourse is evident in her portrayal of Peruvian men as useless politicians and incapable soldiers. Indeed, in several occasions, Tristan models her negative opinions of Peruvian men on those of Althaus, her cousin's husband, a

professional soldier who before moving to Peru had fought in different fronts of the Napoleonic Wars, including Waterloo, and who represents the typical European imperialistic man. Among many of Althaus' negative comments about Peruvian soldiers, he feminizes them as "muñecas peruanas" and underlines their inferiority to European men: "Esos imbeciles peruanos están tan hinchados de orgullo que tienen la estupidez de creer que sobrepasan en valor y en inteligencia a los Alejandros, los Césares y los Napoleones" (354). Tristan's admiration of Althaus is evident throughout her account and her adaptation of his masculine Eurocentric discourse is best summed up in her description of the Peruvian male leadership at the start of the Cangallo battle:

Entonces se demostró la profunda ignorancia y la absoluta nulidad de esos jefes presuntuosos, tanto civiles como militares, que dirigían los asuntos de este desgraciado país. Temería fatigar al lector y no ser creída por él si le refiriera el derroche que se hizo en todas las cosas, las escenas de desorden y de indiscipline que se exhibieron en aquel momento de crisis y la conducta de los oficiales quienes en la víspera de la batalla en lugar de hallarse en sus puestos jugaban o se embriagaban en las casas de sus amantes. Todo lo que ocurrió aquella tarde y en la noche siguiente sería increíble para todo europeo. (372)

In a way, given the fact that women could not participate in politics, Tristan also feminizes the Peruvian male elite by portraying herself as a key player in helping the Arequipean leaders in their decision making during the tumultuous time that surrounded the battle, as well as the Lima revolution.

Writing part of her account using the typical ethnographic and travel writing genres of the European male writer and writing from the subject position of a French male in those sections of her text, resulted in her adoption of the white French male colonizer's view of the Other. In these instances, "Tristán asume la postura de un sujeto activo que formula juicios valorativos sobre los peruanos a quienes otorga la posición de objeto pasivo" (Guiñazú 3). Indeed and as we have seen, Tristan resorts to numerous generalizations and stereotypes about Peruvian culture and Peruvian men. By doing so, she clearly portrays them as weak and inferior, and in a typical European male fashion negatively feminizes them.

However, thanks to Tristan's ability to cross the border of her various identities, these negative views of Peruvian men and culture are punctuated by a divergent discourse that is produced by Tristan as a self-consciously constructed woman writer. Indeed, Tristan also resorts in parts of her text to use writing genres that are considered to be feminine. She sometimes chooses romanticism when portraying herself as victim and includes some aspects of the epistolary genre with the various letters that she includes in her text. It is, however, her use of the biographical genre that seems to be her most important strategy to counter her Eurocentric male's discourse and to give a voice to the Other, the Peruvian female.

She first uses the autobiographic genre to introduce her own life. In the "Prefacio," Tristan switches from her previously authoritative masculine voice to that of an inexperienced female traveler who, through her biographical information portrays herself as a victim of the patriarchal system. She reintroduces the biographical genre later in her account to tell the unusual stories of two women, that of her cousin

Dominga, a nun in the convent of Santa Catalina, and that of Doña Pancha, the wife of Peru's president who was said to have run the country in his place. The fate of these two women allows Tristan to link them to her own plight as a victimized woman. Dominga, like Tristan, was forced into a "union" she did not want and, unable to break her vows, had no choice but to escape the convent. Doña Pancha, whom Tristan admired for her leadership and participation in the public sphere, was forced, partly due to the refusal of Peruvian men to continue supporting a woman, to surrender and leave the country. Furthermore, through these two accounts, Tristan also includes other sources than that of her own observations. As Julio Ramos explains, these biographies present "voces subalternas mediante un complejo panoplio de técnicas de cita y discursos referidos, posiciones múltiples de los sujetos que cuentan y que conforman las fuentes complejas de un archivo de voces y de una memoria alternativa" (203). Tristan thus gives a privileged position to the biography of these two women, whom she admired for transgressing the gender norms and, whose stories might not have survived otherwise.

Finally, when identifying as a woman writer, Tristan includes what Pratt calls "feminotopias," that is "episodes that present idealized worlds of female autonomy, empowerment, and pleasure" (167). Tristan for example describes the ravanas, a group of indigenous women who followed and maintained and at times fought alongside the Peruvian troops, as exceptional women who were much more courageous than their men: "No creo que se pueda citar una prueba más admirable de la superioridad de la mujer en la infancia de los pueblos" (367). Tristan also insists on the superiority of the women of Lima, whose independence, intelligence and grace fascinated her: "las

mujeres de Lima gobiernan a los hombres porque son muy superiores a ellos en inteligencia y en fuerza moral” (495). In these episodes, Tristan thus elevates all Peruvian women, a striking contrast from her representation of Peruvian men.

Through the inclusion of the subaltern voices of women and through the favorable representations of indigenous and Creole Peruvian women, Tristan offers, as a female writer, a counter-discourse to that of the white male colonizer’s view that she presents when identifying as a male writer. With her own subjugated voice as a female, she is also able to criticize the French patriarchal system that maintains her, and other women like her, in the margin of French society.

As a writer, Tristan is thus engaged in two clearly distinctive discourses. When identifying as a French male in her narration and when adopting a male’s writing style, her discourse is that of the dominant imperialist French male of her time who sees the Other, the Peruvian, as inferior and uncivilized. By placing herself in that position, she asserts her power as a French subject over that of the Peruvians, whom she feminizes and infantilizes and objectifies. She therefore reproduces the prevalent dichotomies of barbarie/civilization and that of colonizer/colonized that shaped the power structure between Europe and Latin America in the nineteenth century. Yet, when identifying as a woman character in her narration and as a woman writer, her discourse is that of a subordinated female subject, who denounces the patriarchal power structure in France and in Peru by resorting to “the master/slave dialectic” (Wettlaufer 26). Within this discourse, Tristan also provides a space for subaltern voices to be represented and to be heard. She produces therefore a type of resistant discourse that denounces the power structures of her time.

In conclusion, given the co-presence of these two divergent discourses, *Peregrinaciones* could be seen as what Pratt calls a “contact zone”, that is an imaginary space of colonial encounters where the colonizer, Tristan the dominant French/male, and the colonized, Tristan the subordinated Peruvian/female are co-present and interact (7). This contact zone is ultimately the space where Tristan, as a Franco-Peruvian subjugated female, is driven to reproduce some of the characteristics and ideals of the dominant French male and where she also shows her ambivalence towards and at times her rejection of such model, which could be interpreted as an adaptation of what Homi Bhabha refers to as “colonial mimicry” (86). Furthermore, by writing about Peruvian women in a positive light, through short biographical accounts and feminotopias, Tristan includes in her book a new discourse that elevates Peruvian women and that demonstrates the positive influence that the “Other” had on her and her work. Tristan’s personal experience in her contact-zone could thus be interpreted as transculturation. This term, which was first coined by Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz in the 1940s, consists of the “complex processes of adjustment and re-creation - cultural, literary, linguistic and personal - that allow for new, vital and viable configurations to arise out of the clash of cultures and the violence of colonial and neo-colonial appropriations” (Spitta 2). Tristan’s performance as a transcultured subject who is constantly mediating between her cultural, social and gendered subjectivities, as well and her activism as a socialist feminist upon her return to France indicate that, ultimately, it is her identification as a subordinated female that is favored over all others in this hybrid text and that inspired generations of Peruvians (and French) to follow in her footsteps and fight for gender equality.

Notes

¹ Creole here refers to “a person born in the West Indies or Spanish America but of European, usually Spanish, ancestry” (Merriam-Webster).

² Napoleon had crowned himself Emperor in 1804 and started the Napoleonic Wars to expand the French Empire. The Peninsular War was part of the Napoleonic Wars fought in the Iberian Peninsula, where the French were opposed by British, Spanish, and Portuguese forces.

³ In 1828, Tristan agreed to give custody of her only surviving son Ernest to Chazal on the condition that her daughter Aline remained with her. In 1833, Tristan left Aline in the care of friends before embarking alone for Peru (Scurrah 25). While transatlantic travel was rare for French women at the time, those who traveled were accompanied by their husbands. By traveling alone, Tristan defied the proper social conventions of her time.

⁴ While utopian socialists such as Charles Fourier's and Saint-Simon's ideologies influenced Tristan's socialist thought and actions after 1837, their advocacy of women participation in the public sphere created a space for women like Tristan to speak out when returning from Peru (Talbot 3).

⁵ In 1829, when meeting Chabrié, the captain of a Peruvian vessel traveling in Paris, he inadvertently reminded her of her father's family important status and fortune in Peru. Tristan, who had no contact with her Peruvian family, decided at that point to connect with them and to fight for her birthrights and for her inheritance (*Pérégrinations* 54).

⁶ A more common way to convey this information would have been to say: “El 7 de abril de 1833, día de mi cumpleaños, fue también el día de nuestra salida.”

⁷ According to Pratt: “Another branch of the civilizing mission, social reformism might be said to constitute a form of female imperial intervention in the contact zone” (160).

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