



FIGUEROA AZNAR, "WHAT THE TRAVELLER DREAMED" (CUZCO, C.1920).

On the Monumental Silence of the Archive

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Abstract: This essay grapples with the monumental silences, radical alterity, and frequent misappropriations of the images produced between the 1890s and 1950s by the Cuzco School of Photography. Taking stock of indigenous photographers' radical break with a long established western visual tradition of representation of indigenous peoples as mute and inscrutable, this essay examines the ironic results of *indigenismo* as an aesthetic movement. As it emerged in full force from the 1920s onwards in the search for the *authentic* that could be taken as a synecdoche of nationality, *indigenismo* would equate Indians with telluric forces, with the land, and in visual terms also with the permanence, grandeur, and inscrutability of lithic monuments. Photographers and artists alike implicitly contrasted the stark immobility (in time and space) of indigenous people to the profound transformations inaugurated by the arrival of modernity, particularly with regards to urbanization and urban life. In the face of this noxious epistemological opposition, the archive runs the risk of becoming yet another ruin, silent like the Inca monoliths that dominate the landscape of Cuzco. Spitta ends by underlining the necessity and urgency of creating public forums where the photographs may be discussed in and by different communities in Cuzco and surrounding areas, and by reaffirming the need to resist the "drag to the lithic" that underlies so many poetically made analogies that distort the lens through which we view the photographs of

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the Cuzco School.

The Andean Photography Archive (Fototeca Andina), located in Cuzco, was created in 1988 by the Center Bartolomé de Las Casas (CBC), an NGO founded by European anthropologists in 1974. Its aim has been to collect invaluable photographic archives not only to preserve the cultural patrimony of the city itself, but also that of the entire southern Peruvian Andean region. The Fototeca is a pioneer in the rescue and preservation of photographs from the 1870s to the 1970s. Cuzcoans are rightfully proud of this archive given that it holds an important key to understanding their city's centrality not only in the southern Peruvian Andes but also in relation to the rest of country. Once the capital of the great Inca Empire, Cuzco has always played an important role as a cultural and artistic center, often rivaling Lima and at times, even surpassing Peru's capital city in terms of artistic innovation. With its faster connection to Buenos Aires, thanks to the roads and railways constructed at the beginning of the 20th century, the city was, in many ways, closer to Europe than to Lima given its location on the Pacific coast and the often-impassable mountain roads that separated it from the highlands. Cuzcoans were thus uniquely situated, and the city was the site of important artistic movements, including the Cuzco School of painting (established during the colonial period but continuing to thrive to this day), the Cuzco School of Cinema in the 1950s and 60s, and the Cuzco School of Photography, largely archived at the Fototeca, and which registers the impact of the arrival of modernization in the Andes.

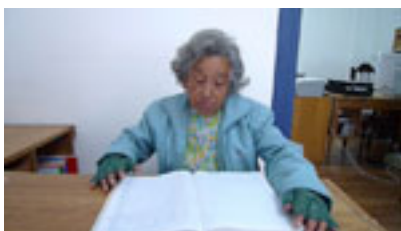
The archive currently holds more than 35,000 glass plate negatives taken by more than 40 photographers and thus offers "an authentic visual testimony of the history, culture, modernization, and transformation of the society in the southern Peruvian Andes and in the city of Cuzco in particular."¹ The photographs register the lives of the city's largely Incan-descended elites as well as those of rural and urban groups and do so, in most cases, from an indigenous point of view. Beyond traditional forms of social and studio photography (centering around typical family events such as engagements, weddings, burials, and religious celebrations), the photographs also record the impact of modernization and thus the fascination with extraordinary events of the time, such as the inauguration of the first rail line and the arrivals of the first car, motorcycle, and plane to Cuzco. Staged photographs, in true Andean comic fashion, also play with these symbols of modernization by showing scenes of simulated car crashes or onlookers gawking at a train derailment as if at a carnival. Stunning images taken with the large format cameras of the time also capture the devastating earthquake that destroyed much of Cuzco in 1950 as it was happening. Beyond becoming an important part of the archive, these photographs also served as a guide that assisted architects as they rebuilt the city. The preservation of the work of indigenous photographers active during photography's first century enables the rediscovery of some of the most valuable artistic and documentary expressions of a traditional Andean city on the road to modernization.

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Fototeca andina, 1900-1950 (Cuzco: Centro Bartolomé de las casas, 2006).

Two summers ago I spent ten days at the Centro Bartolomé de las Casas familiarizing myself with the holdings and the staff at the Center and I returned there again this past fall. The archive consists of two small rooms open to researchers and contains the photographs that have been developed from the cabinets holding the glass plates inaccessible to researchers given the fragility and value of the collection. In the early nineties work was undertaken by Deborah Poole and Adelma Benavente to develop the glass negatives, and subsequently books about some of the photographers' works were published (Baldomero Alejos, the Cabrera brothers, and a few others). An exhibition toured across Latin America in 2005 to great acclaim. The stunning catalogue published in 2006 is now, however, out of print.² With the global economic downturn the archive has fallen on hard times and the work of developing and digitizing the collection has ground to a halt. The work promoting the archive has also been neglected. Indeed, few people know about it; thus I found out that I have been the only visitor to the Fototeca in two years.



Dr. Antuca Vega-Centeno at the CBC Fototeca with one of her notebooks. Photo: Silvia Spitta

The main person currently working in the archive is Dr. Antuca Vega-Centeno, a social anthropologist who once headed the important Center for Peruvian Studies in Cuzco. Since her retirement years ago, she has volunteered at the CBC and spent countless hours describing and dating each and every one of the over 35,000 glass

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plates in the archive. Her rudimentary catalogue is contained in twenty *handwritten* notebooks and she is currently transcribing them into digital form. A member of Cuzco's elite, Dr. Antuca is one of the last surviving members of her generation, and as such, one of the last to possess an insider's knowledge Cuzco society during the early part of the twentieth century. We spent countless hours perusing the photographs together and she was able to identify a number of the photographic subjects and also to explain some settings, corporate associations, as well as some racial and class categories that would have otherwise been difficult if not impossible for me to decipher. On one occasion, she told me about a photograph taken in the 1950s of a distinguished member of Cuzco's elite. When Dr. Antuca showed up at her house with the photograph, her friend, now ashamed of the sexy outfit and the suggestive pose she had adopted for the photograph, denied it was her.

Stories like these were interesting in and of themselves; more importantly, however, they brought the archive to life. In fact, the importance of Antuca's contribution to the archive became clear to me the following year when I returned to the Fototeca and was given a desk in another office, which meant that the natural flow of conversation between us stopped. I found myself sifting through a myriad photographs feeling epistemologically adrift and existentially alone amid what began to feel like a massive intrusion of the past in my life. Repeatedly reminded of Barthes' association of photography with death, I attempted to hold the ghosts inhabiting the archive at bay, making aesthetic judgments about the photographs and often feeling awed by them. Yet beyond these oddly reductive judgments that circumscribed the archive to the aesthetic realm, the archive remained silent and indecipherable.

It is widely recognized that photography is a Western invention and, until quite recently, a middle and upper class phenomenon. This is true of many of the photographs in the archive at the Fototeca, where a large majority are of Cuzco's elites who could afford to be photographed in the city's photographic studios, like Antuca herself. But what makes this archive so different from those in Lima is that many of the photographers were indigenous. They thus appropriated a Western medium often wielded by anthropologists, travelers, and tourists to "frame" indigenous peoples according to Western preconceptions.³ The best among them implicitly contested Western stereotypes of indigenous people through their intimate portrayal of a world to which they belonged, but many of them also began to feed the incipient tourist market with marketable images of Andean culture. The radical break with a long established western visual tradition of representation of indigenous peoples is the reason why scholars claim the very special status of the archive and consider the photographs at the Fototeca admirable as well as invaluable because of the ways in which they challenge our visual field. However, scholars repeatedly fail to come to terms with the radical nature of this new visual discourse, supplementing their frustration at the archive's indecipherability with epistemological schemes that reduce the alterity of this archive. In study after study, indigenous people emerge from archives such as that at the Fototeca either as an undifferentiated racial category (inflected by eugenics as abjectly poor or deranged) or epistemologically silenced as a people without history and associated with ruins and the

past—in other words, as dead culture.⁴

In contrast to the photographs at the Fototeca, which are largely taken by indigenous photographers, in Lima, the Courret Brother's studio covered almost the same period of modernization yet with radically different results. French immigrants, the Courret Brothers, became renowned for their studio in Lima, where they photographed diverse groups from all classes as the city was undergoing rapid transformation. Unlike the Cuzco archive, however, this studio became iconic among Lima's elites *precisely* for the anthropological eye with which the brothers photographed the mixed race inhabitants of the city. A recent exhibition *La destrucción del olvido: Estudio Courret Hermanos (1863-1935)* highlights the brothers' work creating the visual icons that would shape the contemporary national imaginary. Crucial to my argument here is how the curators of the exhibition (and editors of the catalogue) frame the Courret Brothers' work for the contemporary viewer. Central to the exhibition is the portrait of Miguel Grau, Perú's hero in the Pacific War who embodies, in their eyes, the highest values of the Peruvian spirit, the symbol of generosity, intelligence and courage ["representa, sin duda, los más altos valores y cualidades del espíritu de los peruanos. Para nosotros Grau es el símbolo de la entrega, la generosidad, la inteligencia y el coraje"]. While one could dismiss this type of rhetoric as fairly typical of the hyperbole that characterizes much Latin American academic discourse, I dwell on it here because the description of Grau is profoundly different from the language used to describe the castes in the Courret brothers' archive. Indeed, while the Courret brothers photographed Lima's elites (both native and immigrant), they also photographed important mixed race families in the city. Their archive of over 135,000 glass plates therefore constitutes an important document regarding the development of the castes in Lima that undermined early notions of mestizaje as the "marriage" of two elites: a Spanish and an Incan.



Estudio Courret, "Melanie Cocale y ama" (1884). Archivo Courret, Biblioteca nacional, Lima, Perú.

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The most disturbing images are those in the gallery dedicated to Lima residents of African descent, in which wet nurses are shown with the babies and children they raised for both Peruvian and European immigrant families. “Melanie Cocle y ama” shows the baby held by a nanny photographed with her face and body entirely covered by a black shawl. The blatant literalness with which the photographers chose to re-present the nanny’s social facelessness is quite shocking, as are many of the Courret brothers’ photographs. While the curators do not focus on the cumulative distortive effect of that part of the archive represented in the catalogue, they *do* however focus on one photograph of a caste family. This photo was chosen for the cover and is contrasted with the photograph of national hero, Grau. Titled “Mr. Shu” (1886), it shows a larger than life patriarch with his European-looking wife, a friend, and his family. Nothing is known about Mr. Shu, because the inscription that the Courret brothers had attached to the glass plate was destroyed due to Lima’s humidity. Because of this loss of information, the curators are forced to conclude that when dealing with cases like these, history resembles an archeological dig [“la historia se parece más a la arqueología”] (Deustua 2009, 17).

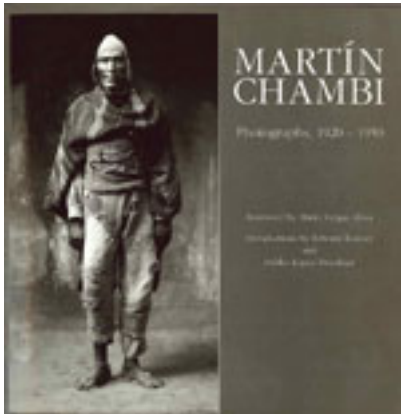


Estudio Courret, "Mr . Shu" (1886). ARCHIVO COURRET, BIBLIOTECA NACIONAL, LIMA, PERÚ.

They go on to reinforce the underlying poetic analogy between history and archaeology, and—by implication—the analogy made between Indians and monuments that becomes a trademark of scholars when confronted with the silence of the archive, when they compare Mr. Shu [“parece un gigante”] (18) to another giant in the annals of Cuzco School photography: the famous photograph of the “Giant of Paruro.” This photograph has become iconic of the Cuzco School of Photography ever since it was placed on the cover of the Smithsonian catalogue of Martin Chambi’s works.⁵ What these underlying poetic analogies highlight is the mono(lithic) silence of Inca and pre-Inca monuments (evident as you wander among the many ruins, despite the loud proclamations of a myriad tour guides) that has come to characterize our

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conception of Andean culture and now also is transferred to discussions of photographic archives such as the Fototeca. Indeed, of all Cuzco School photographers, the work of Martín Chambi is perhaps the best known since his work was celebrated by a major retrospective in cities across Latin America and the US, culminating in an exhibition at MOMA in New York City in 1979 and the publication of the Smithsonian catalogue which has obtained wide circulation.



Martín Chambi: Photographs 1920-1950.(Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution catalogue, 1993).

Born in a remote village in the highlands around Lake Titicaca, Chambi learned photography from English engineers when the mine that probably forced his migration from his village in the first place, opened in the area.⁶ Aspiring to register the entire gamut of life in the Andes, and considering himself to be the “representative of his race,” he endeavored to make that region a major tourist destination and moved to Cuzco in 1920 where he opened the studio that would make him famous. Critics celebrate his exquisite and dramatic photographs of Machu Picchu, now one of the marvels of the world, shortly after its “discovery” in 1911. And his photographic manipulation of light and chiaroscuro has earned him the title “painter of light” and led to comparisons with European masters. But Chambi is also recognized because he possessed the ability to make his photographic subjects feel fully at ease before the camera. They emerge from his photographs as subjects looking at us full of self-possession and dignity. Regardless of the terrible circumstances in which they often find themselves, it is a gaze that simply arrests the eye, marking the distance between Chambi’s photography and the resistance and even outright hostility with which photographic subjects subjected to an anthropological frame look back at us across time.

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Horacio Ochoa, “Campesinos en Sacsayhuman” (1940). Fototeca Andina, centro Bartolomé de las Casas.

The images taken in his studio, as well as those taken in various locations across the Andes where he travelled often and extensively under the brilliant skies at 10,000 feet, are stunning for these reasons alone. But they are also stunning for the profound glimpse they allow us into a culture rendered silent, if not actively misrepresented since the conquest. While many photographs from Chambi’s archive would have undoubtedly called attention to the book equally effectively, it is no accident that out of all the photographs that the Smithsonian could have picked for the cover of the catalogue, they chose the “Giant of Paruro.” Indeed, this image does work that is very different from that of the thousands of others in the archive, because it readily facilitates a poetic analogy between the mute giant and the ruins of pre-Hispanic Andean civilization. Much like the Easter Island monoliths lined up staring out to sea fascinate us, the often-gigantic pre-Hispanic monoliths across the Andes impress us with their sheer size and their profound silence. That is how the “Giant of Paruro” looks at us across time. That is also how we cannot help but read this photograph of campesinos posing in Sacsayhuman taken by Horacio Ochoa, one of the Cuzco School’s major photographers.⁷ It is at the level of this indexicality that the photographs of the Giant and the peasants posing at Sacsayhuman *work*. Both images establish an underlying poetic analogy between the monumental silence of pre-Hispanic monuments (that we call ruins) and Andean culture today. While poetic and easy for us, this analogy is a *symptom* of our inability to come to terms with the radical alterity that Andean cultures present to us, and thus our inability to really come to terms with the archive.

Indeed, there is a telling difference in the way the photographs of Grau, Mr. Shu, and the Giant of Paruro are discussed by scholars. While all three are by now iconic and all are made to serve as national symbols, one is “ours” (Grau), while the other, an icon of nationality and ours also, is rendered mute by the lack of the tag that would have placed Mr. Shu in history. The disappearance of the descriptive note regarding the subjects of the photographs typically attached by the Courret brothers reinforces what is already experienced by the curators as the

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monumental silence of the archive. As they write, thanks to the Courret brothers, “we have inherited the image of mute faces of people of different races that confront us looking at the camera of the photographer” [“Hemos heredado la imagen de rostros mudos de distintas razas que nos enfrentan mirando la cámara del fotógrafo y que por lo tanto nos miran desde nuestro pasado] (Deustua 2009, 3). In the case of the photograph of the Giant of Paruro, the subject’s muteness is quite literal and visible. Yet in all three cases, despite the different contexts and institutional framing devices they find themselves in today, the implicit references to muteness remain the same. They mimic, undigested, the very language created by lettered indigenista intellectuals in the early part of the 20th century, who viewed the indigenous population as a “powerful force” but “invariably mute.” As Jorge Coronado argues, this [inability or unwillingness to understand the other?] made “demands on the intellectuals that wish[ed] to represent it.” (Coronado 2009, 151). These “demands,” this wish “to represent”—and in fact speak for the other, of course, has been justly critiqued for its paternalism, but what is surprising is that, despite this critique, it continues unabated and unexamined persisting in much of the scholarship regarding photographic archives.



Lice-pickers, cartes de visite, Album "Types et coutûmes indiens du Pérou et de la Bolivie."

Indeed, even when tags attached to the photographs by the Courret brothers are legible, the archive remains monumentally silent since little or nothing is known about the people identified by the tags. The tags nevertheless help to constrain interpretations. In contrast, in the case of the photograph where Mr. Shu is central, the lack of a descriptive tag allows the curators more freedom to speculate and associate. In this case they compare Mr. Shu to one other whom they consider “like” him, despite abysmal differences. Deborah Poole has discussed these strategies of classification in terms of the “equivalence” of images in her analysis of the early *cartes de visite*, which have continued to inform modern photography, despite having gone out of fashion long ago.⁸ “As neutral or equivalent images,” she writes, “the *cartes de visite* lent themselves with equal facility to the imaginative construction of racial hierarchies and classification, the formation of voyeuristic albums, and the imagination of national types.” (Poole 1997, 134) Falling in line with this early visual logic and the false equivalences regarding race and “types” that shaped early photography, the curators compare Mr. Shu to the Giant of Paruro, even though they are separated by enormous class differences, and even though Mr. Shu is *not* a giant. Calling him “casi un gigante,” however, allows them to establish the link to the Giant of Paruro that they then go on to make immediately afterwards. In this move they are in fact (even if inadvertently) mirroring the distorting lens with which the Courret brothers viewed Lima society despite—or precisely because—they were such gifted photographers.

Instrumental in founding the Fototeca Andina, Deborah Poole has also written one of the first and most important books on the Cuzco School of photography, *Vision, Race, and Modernity: A Visual Economy of the Andean Image World*, published in 1997. In her extended study she traces the development, transformation, and uses of photography in the Andes since the arrival of the invention there. This outstanding historical and semiotic analysis of the ways in which photography registered modernity in Cuzco, however, ends with a sobering reflection on the limits of photography, namely, a photograph's inability to tell a story once that story has been lost. Poole paradoxically concludes voicing her uncertainty regarding her inability to answer the very questions about identity and modernity that had driven her study. "As an anthropologist," she writes, "I am skeptical about my ability to answer these questions concerning Cusqueños' modernities, selves, resistances, and identities by simply looking at pictures." More tellingly even, she continues, "Even after my excursion into the historical archive, I retain a residual unease about *speaking for these mute Andean subjects*" (213 emphasis mine). Similarly to the curators of *La destrucción del olvido*, who feel their work on the Courret brothers is more akin to archeology than history, in her conclusion, Poole too views her role not as that of an anthropologist (which she is by training) but as a ventriloquist who makes the mute speak all the while remaining unsure of what it is the archive is saying. Indeed, what story can a scholar studying the archive tell other than that of the arrival of modernity in the city of Cuzco at the turn of the century—which is a story that we know only too well, because it is repeated almost identically regardless of where it takes place (i.e., Lima or Cuzco and the arrival of the first train, motorcycle, camera, the modern citizen, etc).⁹



Martín Chambí, "Indian and llama" (1930).

But if we backtrack a bit, along with Poole, and follow a different line of inquiry, we note that the arrival of photography in the Andes actually coincided with the emergence of tourism and nationalist indigenism across the Americas. That is, almost one hundred years after independence, political, artistic, and social movements arose that argued for the inclusion and representation of indigenous peoples in national narratives. The "discovery" of Hiram Bingham of the ruins of Machu Picchu in 1911 is therefore doubly significant within the context of the emergence of a Cuzcoan indigenismo. Unremarkable in and of itself because these ruins had been known to locals, the "discovery" of Machu Picchu led to the naming of Cuzco as the "Archaeological Capital City of South America" in 1933, thanks to the propagandistic efforts of

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Albert Giesecke. A Philadelphia-born economist and university reformer, Giesecke became head of Cuzco's most prestigious university and instrumental in its modernization. He aided Bingham and advocated tirelessly to make the archeological value of Cuzco and environs known worldwide. His work as a promoter of tourism was recognized by the Peruvian government in 1936, when the Ministry of Foreign Affairs officially entrusted him with the touristic promotion of Peru abroad (Zoila Mendoza 2008, 72). Largely thanks to Giesecke's efforts and in particular his promotion of Hiram Bingham's discovery of Machu Picchu, Cuzco became a "the major Peruvian center for tourism, an opportunity for the study of Andean history and archaeology, and a crucial element in developing a national identity" (74). Martín Chambi, already then held as one of the stellar Cuzco School photographers, also clearly understood the role his photographs played in making the archaeological greatness of the city visible to the world. His famous photograph "Indian and Llama" instantly became a postcard that set the framework for all representations of indigenous peoples by and for tourists.



José Sabogal, "Alcalde/Varayoc" (1925).

Beyond Cuzco, the visual repertoire created by photographers of the Cuzco School also influenced artists across Peru. It has become a visual repertoire that has become altogether familiar to us at the expense of denser, more nuanced, forms of understanding. For example, in a similar vein to Chambi's "tourist" photographs, José Sabogal, one of Peru's greatest artists and an early proponent of indigenismo in Cuzco in the 1920s nevertheless established the frame for future highly stylized representations of Andean culture. While his art works represent a wide swath of life in the Andes, the works that have become most iconic have become iconic *precisely* because they emphasize the mute monumentality of Andean culture and its people.

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Indigenismo, then, as it emerged in full force from the 1920s on in the search for the *authentic* that could be taken as a synecdoche of nationality, would equate Indians with telluric forces, with the land, and as I am arguing here, in visual terms also with the permanence, grandeur, and inscrutability of lithic monuments. Photographers and artists alike implicitly contrasted the stark immobility (in time and space) of indigenous people to the profound transformations urban life was undergoing thanks to the arrival of electricity, water, cars, and other markers of modernity. Despite being theorized as a force for the future, Andean indigenismo, then, tried to insert Indians into an emergent national narrative, but ironically, as Coronado has pointed out, they did so “by insisting that those characteristics of the indigenous population most strongly associated with the non-modern be, in fact, the motors of this transformation” (Coronado 2009, 136). Because of the implicit dichotomy underlying indigenismo, the movement ended up undermining its own agenda of vindicating the rights of Indians. It is ultimately ironic then, that the underlying poetic analogy between Indians and lithic monuments and thus a culture viewed not as living and thriving but as past, ultimately served to undermine that movement of indigenous pride and vindication of the rights and culture of Indians. In the end, while the indigenista movement went on to create novel cultural forms (such as the Cuzco School of Photography, the indigenista novel and other experimental narrative forms, as well as the Cuzco School of Film) it always did so at a distance symptomatic of “the gap between Hispanic society and indigenous cultures” (17).



Figuroa Aznar, "what the Traveller dreamed" (Cuzco, c.1920).

Given this “framing” of indigenous people, technological advances that led to a fast rate of transculturation are marked by the archive visually by coding urban dwellers as mestizos and rural ones as campesinos and/or Indians.¹⁰ For all practical purposes, then, the transformation Cuzco underwent while it was modernizing in the early part of the century rendered the Indian presence in the city impossible. Or “Indians” persisted as performance. Reminding us of indigenismo’s celebration of indigeneity, Andean forms of theater, music, and dance with “Incaic” themes dominated the cultural landscape of the period. The Inca tragedy *Ollantay*, performed to this day, gained prominence and theater troupes toured across Latin America. This context may help explain one tag Antuca attached which repeatedly confused me causing me to question her. It was usually attached to photographic subjects wearing traditional indigenous dress. Antuca had invariably labeled these “disfrazados” [“disguised”]. Sometimes this category was very clearly used to point to one of the many theatrical representations that accompanied and promoted the early indigenismo. But

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at other times it was not quite clear to me whether the people represented were indeed indigenous or mestizos dressing up. When I pressed her about this, Antuca was adamant that they were always groups “disguised” as Indians, to repeat her choice of words.

The fascination of the citizens of Cuzco with all things Indian, then, is interesting and symptomatic of the times’ valorization of the vestiges of Inca culture as anchors for the nation as it was undergoing rapid transformation and modernization. For practical purposes however, Indians have been banned from the city only to be recalled as and by performance all the while they have been rendered doubly mute and equated with the monumental past that persists in the city drawing thousands of tourists annually. Indeed, in Cuzco itself, “Indians” sit with their llamas on street corners to be photographed or pose as great Inca heroes (again to be photographed), while Indians as such have ceased to be visible; indigeneity has been relegated since the early part of the century to the countryside and today “Indian” and “campesino” have become synonymous across Peru. Beyond Cuzco, paradoxically, the collapse of indigeneity with the invention of Cuzco as an archeological treasure and a tourist destination situated Indians and pre-Hispanic monoliths on the same plane—both intrinsically mute.

Given the context I have been outlining above, how can the archive speak to us? How can we contest the monolithic with the archive’s polyphony? The stories Dr. Antuca told me as we perused countless photographs animated it for me in ways that will soon be lost as her generation gradually passes. If the stories that anchor a photograph to a space and a culture at a specific time in history are lost, what remains? Is a photograph’s indexicality replaced by another much more general, classificatory, form of indexicality? I.e., X is no longer a person with a biography but rather X is reduced, once again, to an instance of the typical, (as was the case in the *cartes de visite* or today’s postcards)? Does the archive then become monumentally silent much as the monoliths upon which the Spaniards rebuilt the colonial city of Cuzco? Given the poetic drag—that underlying analogy of indigeneity with silent, lithic, monumentality—that I have been unpacking, what remains of the argument that archives such as that at the Fototeca are invaluable *because* they display the work of indigenous photographers and the Andean world seen through their eyes? How does one contest the drag to the lithic with which we supplement our inability to decipher the archive?

As I continue to work and reflect on the Cuzco School of Photography, the necessity and urgency of creating public forums where the photographs are discussed, in and by different communities in Cuzco and surrounding areas, is becoming increasingly clear to me. So too is the urgency of resisting the “drag to the lithic” that underlies so many poetically made analogies that distort the lens through which we view the photographs of the Cuzco School. These then, tend to distort the scholarship produced about indigeneity regardless of whether it is undertaken by indigenous scholars or not and regardless of whether the photographer was indigenous or not. While the public forums will certainly be unable to provide the lost biographies of many of the photographs, they will nevertheless hopefully “anchor” Cuzco

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School photographs in other ways that will render the photographs polyphonic and draw them away from the sharp dichotomy created between narratives inflected by the lithic that tends to dominate our discussions of them to the detriment of much more interesting nuances, distinctions, and registers. This is the work that needs to be done in order to fully understand photographs *as indigenous* and in order to prevent the archive itself from becoming yet another ruin.

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Notes

¹ Language used by the Fototeca in various grant applications.

² 2006. *Fototeca andina, 1900-1950*. Cuzco: Centro Bartolomé de las Casas.

³ C.f. Spitta, Silvia. 2009. *Misplaced Objects: Collections and Recollections in Europe and the Americas*. Houston: University of Texas Press.

⁴ Eric Wolf's book title: *Europe and the People Without History* (University of California Press 1982) sums this up brilliantly.

⁵ Chambi, Martín. 1993. *Martín Chambi: Photographs, 1920-1950*. Foreword by Mario Vargas Llosa and Introductions by Edward Ranney and Publio López Mondéjar. Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press.

⁶ C.f. Coronado, Jorge. 2009. *The Andes Imagined: Indigenismo, Society, and Modernity*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

⁷ Horacio Ochoa worked in Cuzco in a photography studio on Almagro Street until 1964.

⁸ The *cartes de visite*, or calling cards of sorts (forerunners of modern day calling cards and postcards) were usually quite small. They were kept in albums by bourgeois European families who arranged them according to a thematic ordering which typically began with portraits of the royal family, followed by portraits of politicians and important public figures, and then family and friends. The image reproduced here stems from the album of *carte-de-visite* portraits of exotic others organized by nation that were collected by Dr. L.C. Thibon, the Bolivian consul in Brussels who donated his album to the Geographic Society of Paris in 1885. Poole, Deborah. 1997. *Vision, Race, and Modernity: A Visual Economy of the Andean Image World*.

New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 123.

⁹ This was poignantly brought home to me in Lorie Novak's 2001 video adaptation exhibition *Collected Visions* at MARCO in Monterrey, Mexico (in conjunction with the Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics). In this exhibit, photographs from different family albums are simultaneously projected on two screens with the result that after a while, the viewer realizes with a slight shock that she could be that girl in that photograph shown happily on a swing or that she too could be that girl blowing out the candles on a birthday cake.

¹⁰ Silvia Spitta. 1995. *Narratives of Transculturation in Latin America*. Houston: Rice University Press.

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