

# J PRACTICE

*Photography in the Southern Andes, 1900–1950*

As good a place to start as any is the photograph in image 1.1, taken by the photographer Sebastián Rodríguez in the highland town of Morococha in the department of Junín in about 1930. Rodríguez, a portraitist for hire, was prolific in his production. Like many photographers from the period and place, Rodríguez's training and practice led to multiple displacements. Morococha was one of the principal sites at which he worked. In the archive where it can be viewed, the portrait is referred to simply as "Mineros" or miners, although the point should be made immediately, in part to distinguish this portrait from other sorts of photographic production, that none of the images I work with in this book were the objects of titling, that is, they circulated with a sort of meaning that does not require a title. In archives and other institutions in which studio photography is conserved, titles often serve as a descriptive shorthand that facilitates both categorization and recognition. The titles used in this book, unless otherwise explicitly stated, pertain to this kind of use. While I have assigned some and have taken others from the institutional archives in which I found them, in few cases can they be taken to be of a piece with the origin of a particular



**IMAGE 1.1.** Sebastián Rodríguez, *Miners*, Morococha, Peru, 1930

photograph. We should therefore resist using them as a key to reading the image. In almost all cases, they are an afterthought.

I came across the image some years ago in the Fototeca Andina in Cuzco, as I was researching another photographer. I was taken by it enough to ask for a copy to be made. I also have a vivid memory that the same archive contained another image very similar to this one, with two sitters in precisely the same positions, also with the leisurely beer on the table, but perhaps not so insouciantly posed as this pair. The important detail is that the other image pictured two foreign-looking gentlemen, in all likelihood engineers or managers for the Cerro de Pasco Mining Corporation, a famously rapacious and much-studied North American mining concern whose introduction of massive scale extraction into the remote highlands signified a sea change in Andean rural life.

Upon seeing that second image of bespectacled North Americans or Europeans, it seemed clear to me at first blush that the image of the miners represented an imitation of observed behavior—the basics of the pose, but also the custom itself of having one's picture taken—as well as an act of self-fabrication. From the historiography, we know that the workers in the mines came almost entirely from local indigenous communities, often were Quechua monolinguals, that they worked in punishing conditions, and lived short lives in the inhospitable climate at an altitude of 4,500 meters (Flores Galindo 1974). Like so many other places and times in the history of Latin America, that one represents a scene of conflict and negotiation through which local people engaged in modernity. What better way, then, than a photograph for these workers to codify and own the transformation they were experiencing? The questions that this image and the circumstances of its production have led me to formulate are: how can this photograph be understood as an agential cultural practice? What if any significance does it hold in the context of Andean and Latin American cultural production? How does it *mean*, for those for whom it was presumably made as well as others?

These questions have taken on the nuances granted them by regional history and the diversity of social subjects involved as I have considered many other photographs and photographers over the course of composing this study. Scholarship on regional visual practices has been essential in contextualizing the breadth and importance of studio portraiture. Recent Latin Americanist scholarly work in visual culture has made great strides in thinking through the implications of photography and related practices for two principal actors across the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: the state and the cultural elites. Though “actors” may be a term that is either too loose or too innocuous, I use it primarily to signal the agency that is inseparable from how the effects of the state and the elite have been understood in Latin America, if not elsewhere too. This body of scholarship offers us an understanding of photography as the embodiment of a powerful, imported technology that allows the national territory as well as its diverse subjects to be reimagined from on high. Such studies have covered much of the region from the Rio Grande to Patagonia and across Hispanophone and Lusophone contexts and at the watershed moments of modern history.

Scholars such as Jens Andermann (2007), Esther Gabara (2008),

Rubén Gallo (2005), and more recently Paola Cortés-Rocca (2011), have made it a point to understand the implementation of photography in the context of lettered elites, in some cases artists and in others bureaucrats, who formed part of national and modernizing projects that took shape after 1810, whether in governmental form or not. In other cases, though attention is paid to elites and their management of photographic projects, the studies detail how visual practices enact the discourse of nation-building projects themselves. The distinction is an important one, insofar as in the first case it becomes necessary to inscribe the agency of image making within a particular human subjectivity, which in turn requires us to speak about “art” or “aesthetic practices,” or at the very least “cultural” ones, while in the second case we can speak of all these, but not in the service of a particular human subject. Rather, in this second instance these practices become the manifestation of power itself, in the service of nationalistic and normalizing goals. That state is most often identified as the agent here. Foucault’s critique of institutions and their formation of particular discourses that are the substance of power is not far from these readings, and it is also appropriate to signal the work of John Tagg (1993) and Allan Sekula (1986) as outside influences on these illuminations of the disciplining of human bodies and the lived environment through visual technologies. Nevertheless, it should not be overlooked that authors such as Gabara (2008) and Gallo (2005) make significant claims concerning the critical capacities of photographic production when in the hands of artists and intellectuals. This is also the case in Natalia Fortuny’s (2014) study of contestatory image culture in relation to the Argentinian dictatorship of the late twentieth century.

In at least one aspect these critical works stand in agreement, either implicitly or explicitly: the “appearance” of photography among the region’s technological but especially cultural practices constituted a powerful fellow traveler for that older technology, writing and by extension lettered practices, which had for so long already fulfilled a similar role. Visual technology and specifically photography is understood as an extension, in its socially formative possibilities, of writing and the social engineering that is often enacted through it. I would not categorize this agreement as explicit in all cases, but rather as an assumption that informs both the methodologies that animate these texts and the studies that they enable. As opposed to the work that often thinks of

resistance as it is manifested in Latin American literary practices—and a broad array of them as well—the consideration of a technological way of imaging emphasizes the latter’s complicity in the dominant and dominating regimes of symbolic and real order. It also, in the works I have mentioned, identifies photographic practice as by and large the realm of elites. An exception is Gabara’s illuminating reading of Mário de Andrade’s photographs of travel into the Brazilian interior, which still tend to highlight elite figures’—in this case the intellectual’s—privilege in using technology to shape modern (aesthetic) discourse. De Andrade would belong, then, to a photographic city that inhabits the same space as, or a neighborhood of, that other, lettered city that the Uruguayan critic Ángel Rama (1984) described some thirty years ago. Nevertheless, the photographs and associated practices that I study in this book are not those produced and carried out by elites, but rather are more closely aligned to those that, as the anthropologist Joanne Rappaport and the art historian Tom Cummins have termed in another context, are created in spaces “beyond the lettered city.” Their notion that “literacy also includes the visual,” elaborated in order to understand how indigenous peoples negotiated the hierarchies in which they were immersed during the colonial period, is pertinent to any study of visual culture in the Andes (Rappaport and Cummins 2012, 5).

Of this dynamic research on visual culture and its relationship to elite and state practices in Latin America, only a limited amount has focused on the Andean region. One exception is the work of the Peruvian scholar and curator Natalia Majluf. The scarcity of this sort of work in the area, however, is not because a critique of social control would not find fertile ground in the Andean context. On the contrary, one need only look to images such as those taken by the engineer César Cipriani’s 1906 government-sponsored survey of Peru’s jungle interior (image 1.2) in order to recognize the deployment of visualization as a means of symbolic, and eventually real, pacification of previously incomprehensible and unruly territories. Suddenly in a documentable format, that territory—in this case the Amazonian region—and the subjects who inhabited it became far less a threat, and more an opportunity for development. One could reasonably argue before such photographs that the fact of both the land and the natives’ conceptual capture in writing and image advances the process of constituting the object of development.



**IMAGE 1.2.** Fotografía Southwell, *Grupo de salvajes preparando Muzato* [sic], 1906

Cipriani's introductory words distill the identity of progress and social formation, even as the numerous photographs, apparently taken by a photographer or photographers from a studio called Fotografía Southwell, in the book-length report make clear that he is speaking of homogenizing the ethnic variety of the Andes: he clarifies that his twofold goal is: "to tear the masses from the sad ignorance in which they have lived up to now, and to construct railroads, prioritizing the one that is destined to fulfill the singular mission of uniting the greater port and capital of the Republic [Lima] with the heart of the Amazon region" (Cipriani 1906, iii).<sup>1</sup> Little work has been done on the massive, government-sponsored photographic production across the Andean nations, with the exception of the book on landscape photography titled *Registros del territorio* wherein Majluf begins to make a case for the complicity of photographic production with developmentalist goals on the coast of Peru as early as the 1880s (Contreras and Majluf 1997).

As suggested in Cipriani's work, the indigenous body and the nature associated with it were understood by elites and the state as a site of the

development of the nation and citizenship. This understanding is also demonstrated in the work of the *cusqueño* photographer José Gabriel Gonzáles (image 1.3). Gonzáles's archives in Cuzco contain a number of such images, in side poses as well as frontal ones. Over the course of the history of the Andean republics, it had been common practice to conscript indigenous subjects into military service, and photography made it a much more efficient matter to keep track of those conscripts who chose, as they quite commonly did, to resist the exigencies of citizenship as they were visited upon them in such instances. Much like modern mining, the modernizing military meant a harsh introduction to a state that sought to establish Western institutions locally, and with local resources. Unlike the case of the Morococha miners, these are not images that were taken at the sitters' behest. To the contrary, as evidenced in identification records belonging to the archive of the Cerro de Pasco Mining Corporation, which were in fact taken by Sebastián Rodríguez, photographers often found themselves in the service of international and national interests, codifying the place of local subjects in development.



**IMAGE 1.3.** José Gabriel Gonzáles, *Recruits*, Cuzco, ca. 1930

If, as the theoretician of photography John Tagg suggests, photography in and of itself has no identity, the practices I have just remarked on suggest it is almost impossible to find a context in which one is not granted to it by the social dealings in which it is immersed (Tagg 1993, 63). The case of portraiture is no exception, but it is special in that it can provide a counter-practice to the state and the industrial imaginings that I have just touched upon. It goes without saying that whatever portraiture means must be understood within the wider context of state and elite actors as the scholarship that I have referred to describes, as well as within the particular institutions—smaller-scale, quotidian, and obscure yet ubiquitous though they may be—that originate it.

This book studies the practice of portrait photography and its significance in the southern Andes in the first half of the twentieth century. It thus studies the practice within the admittedly ambiguous confines of a particular region and during a period that, if it does indeed signal a moment in which the practice flowered, does not hold hard and fast by the start and end dates of 1900 and 1950, respectively. The southern Andes represents an exceptionally broad area, which can include national spaces in Peru, Bolivia, Argentina, and Chile. Culturally, it includes the heritage of Quechua- and Aymara-speaking people as majority groups among indigenous peoples, as well as the often Hispanic-identified cultures of elites and mestizo populations. The larger space of the Andes can be used to refer to a much larger area that extends from the north of South America in Ecuador, Colombia, and Venezuela, and in the south to the countries mentioned. The majority of the photographic production here is from the sizable cities and towns that span from Huancayo and Huancavelica in the north to La Paz in the south. In no way is this study meant to be exhaustive of the extant photographic archive in the region, nor could it be.

While Lima, the capital city in Peru and also the principal urban center in the region for much of its history, is an important point of comparison in terms of local photographic production and represents a crucial point of entry and circulation for both materials and skills, it is not a primary site in this study. In part, and beyond the fact of the enormous output of photographs there, this choice has to do with the particular culture of the city that is not shared with that of the highlands. For example, despite quite notable differences in national and colonial his-



tory, the studio portraiture between Cuzco and La Paz shares crucial and defining similarities, as I will discuss. Beyond the similarities in context and the formal consistencies that the regional culture leads to, there is also the fact of photographic practitioners' exchange of knowledge and materials among themselves and their documented awareness of the place of their work in the region and, in turn, of the region in their work.

The first half of the twentieth century sees neither the introduction of photography into the region nor the disappearance of photographic studio practices from it. Photography is introduced in the middle of the nineteenth century, and Peru can claim a relatively early encounter with it, as Lima hosts one of the first daguerreotype studios established in the world. The studio founded by the French immigrant Maximiliano Danti first advertised its services on July 8, 1842, earlier than European cities like Berlin (McElroy 1985, 5). And the existence of photographic portraiture in the highlands is equally early, with cases of itinerant photographers offering daguerreotypes in towns such as Cajamarca as early as the 1850s (Janssen Samanez 2002, 12). And while studio portraiture becomes less popular after the middle of the twentieth century, it continues to exist in the Andes to this day, as indeed is the case at almost any global site. The first half of the twentieth century nevertheless witnesses the flowering and establishment of these practices in highland cultural life and does so before the tremendous changes wrought by an accelerated migration to the city that would occur after 1950. The second chapter will address this history in detail.

If the title as well as the materials in the book emphasize a particular place and time, the study has nevertheless been deeply informed by histories of adjacent periods, particularly that of the nineteenth century, as well as by historiographic work on photography in other world regions and countries. Theoretical and critical work in the fields of art history, visual cultural studies, and visual anthropology have provided indispensable models, but most important, they represent key interlocutors for my understanding of photographic practice in the Andes during this period. In short, photographic practice in the southern Andes cannot be studied in isolation from the contextual history of photography, in particular in what concerns its global dimensions, nor can its analysis avoid historical and theoretical approaches that originate in other periods and different traditions. Practically, this means that as a his-

torical object of study and an object for critical reflection, the practice of Andean studio photography articulates and in turn is articulated by much broader transdisciplinary approaches as well as complex global flows and exchanges. In short, the practice of taking portraits of Andeans during this period—in businesses that ranged from large to small and from proper, established studios to whatever spaces itinerants could find to photograph in—carried with it a significance that was outsize in relationship to the relative innocuousness of the everydayness of having portraits taken. The speed and definitiveness with which portrait making becomes part of Andean culture is remarkable. This study is thus primarily preoccupied with understanding the meaning of portraiture as a sociocultural practice and it is through this lens that its materiality and form, and the physical photographs that ground them, will be considered.

That being said, and taking into account the theoretical and historical interlocutors, this book is neither a history of photography in the Andes nor a purely theoretical reflection on photography as such. While certainly this study makes forays into history and theory, both of these broad areas of study are well populated with scholarly contributions that, even in the relatively lesser studied geographical zones of Latin America, amply contribute to our understanding of historical developments in the technology and its circulation as well as its significance. Luckily, there exists an important body of work on the topic on which to rely. In Latin American studies broadly writ, one has only to delve into the work of Boris Kossoy, Beatriz González Stephan, and others who, since the 1970s and 1980s have been engaging the theory and practice of photography in the region or its subregions. Similarly, in regard to the lesser worked-on Andes, there have been important early studies, first and foremost by two North American scholars, Keith McElroy and Edward Ranney, and later in a wealth of more recent research by scholars such as Mayu Mohanna, Silvia Spitta, Herman Schwarz Ocampo, Adelma Benavente, Michele Penhall, Fran Antmann, and Deborah Poole. These contributions have been essential to mapping the history and critical purchase of these practices and their production.

In this array of scholarship, perhaps no other text has been as significant as Natalia Majluf and Luis Eduardo Wuffarden's *La recuperación de la memoria, Perú, 1842–1942* (Majluf et al. 2001). From 2001, the long

essay and catalog accompanying it maps out Peruvian photography from the beginnings to the mid-twentieth century. That work has the ambition of being comprehensive, and in large part achieves its goal. Most centrally, it provides perhaps the most complete and succinct overview of photographic history in Peru to date. Moreover, and as befits the art history background of at least one of its authors, it addresses questions of form and genre and their significance in the many practices that encompass photography in the Andes, from landscape and *cartes de visite* to art photography and mug shots. The reach of this and other work by these authors is broad, augmented only by the substantial catalog that was put together as a result of the curating of a photography exhibition on the topic at the Museo de Arte de Lima (MALI) in 2000. That exhibition, notable as well because of its concentration on the history of Andean photographs in the capital city, was succeeded by a signal event: the inauguration of a “Sala de fotografía” or Photography Hall at the MALI in 2006. The creation of such a space consolidated the MALI’s photographic archives in the city of Lima, which have proved to be a prime resource for the study of photography in the region.

At least in part and paradoxically, for reasons that will be explained later, it is precisely this institutionalization of photographic production into museums and archives that facilitated this study. Archives such as the MALI’s and the crucial collections held at the Fototeca Andina at the Centro Bartolomé de las Casas in Cuzco, created in 1988, have supplied an important portion of the materials on which this book is based. Fortunately, and with different apparent levels of organization and funding, both these institutions conserve materials that facilitate critical, theoretical, and historical scholarship on the array of practices represented in their archives. Most of these, it must be noted, contain almost exclusively images, in various forms, and do not conserve additional materials that have to do with the business of studios.

Nevertheless, this study has also had recourse, again fortunately, to other sources for the study of portraiture. These have consisted of a variety of smaller collections, some held by families of the photographers themselves, interviews with scholars and witnesses of the photographic production studied herein (and in some cases participants in these practices), and individual collections. These resources reside in capital cities as well as the smaller urban centers in which the pho-

tographs were originally taken. Photographic portraits tend to be ill at ease in the photographic archive, in a way that approximates Carol Duncan's description of the transformation of visual objects as they enter the domain of the museum institution. She describes Goethe, in the late eighteenth century, as wary of "the very capacity of the museum to frame objects as art and claim them for a new kind of ritual attention [because it] could entail the negation or obscuring of other, older meanings" of visual objects (Duncan 1995, 16). Effectively, they transform into art under the powerful effect of the museum. I have no doubt that the process of institutionalization also transforms the portrait photograph, and it is possible that this transformation is more advanced at those global sites where photography's role as an aesthetic practice has been made independent of its other varied functions. But the variety of archives I have described above and, in particular, the levels of institutional support for such collections, which are null in some instances, attest to the incompleteness—but also the implacability—of the process of institutionalization in the Andes. In part, the ambiguity of the process stands as one of the factors that drives this study's understanding of portraits' circulation and production. I will return more explicitly to this point in chapter 6.

I signal these two kinds of sources at the outset—institutional archives and small collections—because they, together, clearly evidence a transformation in the use of these photographs over time, that is, from their original function to their function now. One can designate the current function as an expansive historical and critical use that inevitably leans toward, on the one hand, using photographs as historical evidence and, on the other, considering the formal qualities of photography and thus stressing the object. The first tendency is clearly the case among historians and social scientists and the second is so among art historians. The former can be seen in books such as Robert Levine's *Images of History: Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Latin American Photographs as Documents*, which opens a fecund avenue of study in this way. His study not only showcases the history of the introduction of the technology into the region, it also explores the kinds of information about the past that can be gleaned from what they represent. He proposes that "preserved visual images complement the historian's effort to reconstruct the past. They illuminate special qualities inherent in the subject

or in the mind of the photographer, or in the relationship between the two” (Levine 1989, 75). Furthermore, “photographs probe beneath the surface of generalization to offer concrete evidence of social conditions” (Levine 1989, x). While never taking images at face value, Levine does nevertheless insist that they are able to, on their own, provide depth to otherwise already studied historical contexts.

Formal analyses of photographs are on display in studies of the cuzqueño photographer Martín Chambi, including my own. These rely on or in some cases favor a reading of formal features in photographs (Coronado 2009a, 134–62). Such studies are not limited to the field of art history. As a methodology, formal reading of photographs can be found across fields involved with visual objects, such as cultural studies, media studies, and visual cultural anthropology. Furthermore, the rarefying tendency of some formalist approaches is not a foregone conclusion: many are the works that seek to coordinate the analysis of material and organizational aspects of the art objects with the diachronic methods of reading that make them legible, often with different meanings depending on how they are read.

In reality, in neither case is the rendering of photographs-as-evidence or photography-as-art object absolute. Yet both approaches must rely on presuppositions. In the first case, the photograph must be understood as being an accurate representation of the real. That is, it must rest on the claims that were first made about the practice as a scientific discovery and that stressed the faithfulness of the photograph to its object. As Louis Daguerre said about the photographic process he invented, “the DAGUERREOTYPE is a chemical and physical process which gives [nature] the power to reproduce herself” (R. Hirsch 2009, 11). In this conceptualization, the photographic image functions as evidence, to whatever end, precisely because it is a vehicle for the real that, importantly, does not suffer the interference of the subjective hand of man.

The second approach to photographs as objects of analysis, the formal one, tends to emphasize the common terrain and ascendancy with pictorial traditions that originate in Europe. Therefore, beyond the problem of aestheticizing works and removing them from a sociohistorical context, the larger issue lies in identifying portrait photographs with art objects through an operation that involves applying similar techniques to these two sets of objects. Both procedures certainly have

a reasonable basis for making such suppositions. Yet they can also be limiting.

Between and beyond these two poles, I have strived to follow a different model that has nevertheless benefited greatly from these two approaches. I have had recourse to an understanding of photography as a window onto a historical reality by following the mechanism of reading what is pictured, as well as to the tools of formal interpretation, whether this is understood as relating to the possibility of bodies within the photographic frame or, as importantly, to the techniques used to achieve the physical image. These are indispensable tools that help us interpret and assign the influence and role of photographic images in everyday life.

In taking up portraiture from this period, the goal has been to understand the role of photographic manifestations of it as a cultural practice embedded within an array of other socially symbolic practices. That is, photographic images—here portraiture—are taken as an index or trace, not primarily of reality at a particular moment, but rather of particular social subjects' active and agential engagement with the world.<sup>2</sup> Contrary to theorizations of image culture that conceptualize photography's increasing abstraction of the world and thus propose its alienating effect on humans' connection to their milieu, this book proposes photography as a symbolically rich, directed visual practice that orders and signifies the world, in this case Andean reality in the twentieth century.<sup>3</sup> In this way, without casting aside the imbrication of these practices in local hierarchies and regimes of power, photographic portraiture is taken up in a register that assimilates it to the symbolic uses of other cultural practices.

It is helpful to situate the photographic representations studied here among these cultural practices and the representations that they generate. Recent scholarship has served to open up the notion of representativity to a wider spectrum of practices in the Andes (Mendoza 2000, 2009; Muñoz Cabrejo 2001). And scholars such as Deborah Poole (1997) have taken up this kind of analysis in their work. Luis Millones has provided fundamental studies on image culture in the Andes, for example, in his work with Moisés Lemlij on the visual artifacts made in the highland town of Sarhua as well as in Lima (Lemlij and Millones 2004).

A bumper crop of scholars working on media, especially film, across the Andes in the past few years has bolstered earlier work (Schiwy 2009; Geidel 2010)

The reader will notice that with some small exceptions, this book on Andean photographic portraiture and its meanings engages minimally with the idea of nation, whether in the Bolivian or Peruvian case. This is not because the national frameworks in either or any case are not significant. On the contrary, the period of the first half of the twentieth century is generally regarded as one in which a flowering of national projects took place and predominated in the region's cultural production. Whether in Lima or La Paz, or for that matter in Quito or Bogotá, such projects were linked to urban sites and especially to capital cities, which constituted the centers from which the idea of nation was meant to radiate outward and organize a given country's territory. While it would not be possible to identify such projects with a particular political agenda, since they ranged broadly across this spectrum, they quite often originated with lettered intellectuals who worked alongside the state, or at the other end, organized a critique of it. The cultural objects at the center of this study, however, by and large exist beyond such projects. Unlike photographs such as Cipriani's, they tend to represent the engagement of lower- and middle-class Andeans with their contemporary moment as it made itself visible to them. In a region where the idea of nation is still very much a utopian horizon, and where this was certainly the case for vast parts of the territory in the first half of the century, nationalism and nation arise only in glimpses. They are not a primary way in which everyday Andeans image themselves.

Finally, it is worth stressing that the photographic production studied here was both created and consumed, in a first instance, at a particular historical moment in the highlands of the Peruvian and Bolivian national territories. I have not studied, for the most part, the afterlife of these images, with the exception of my discussion of the archives into which portrait images from the period are often deposited in the present day. Therefore, the large markets for collectors in which such images presently circulate have not been a prime focus of this study, though certainly the topic is ripe for future work. The focus on this particular geographical and geopolitical site matters very much to the consistency

of photographic practice across the region. This consistency has to do with the rural context in which the small to midsize towns taken up here were situated as well as the culture of that rural and urban context that defined, sometimes in unpredictable ways, what could and should be imaged by photography.

Consider, for example, image 1.4 by the cuzqueño photographer Fidel Mora. At first glance, it might be taken to be a portrait of the six women who take up most of the picture plane. With the exception of the woman who is the center of the image, they dress in similar fashion and wear their hair the same way, so one might reasonably assume, at minimum, that they come from the same social group if not the same family. The photographer is known for having taken various pictures in Calca, which is a town and region some thirty kilometers to the north of Cuzco. The dress of the more central woman is similar to that found in other images of indigenous people from the region.

Upon scrutiny, however, it seems unlikely that the portrait is in fact of the six women. Rather, the little girl at the center bottom of the image takes preeminence. That preeminence is produced by her difference, which is ciphered across various visual registers, corporeal, sartorial, and expressive. For example, she is dressed in the same light color of many of the women, but importantly she has been placed in front of the only darkly dressed woman in the background. This choice highlights her small figure as much as it clearly consigns the indigenous woman behind her, as we surmise from her garments, to a secondary status. The little girl's hands, moreover, touch each other, twisting in a show of animation that is absent in the women in the background, whose hands sit rigidly at their sides. While such physical rigidity is quite common across classes and cultures during the period, in this image it functions to produce a counterpoint and distinction rather than as an independent visual feature. Similarly, the girl's clean white socks and shoes appear in sharp contrast to the bare feet of the women. Lastly, the girl's expression, the scrunched up face typical of children who have yet to assume particular strategies of self-representation before the camera, shows a world of distance from the expressionless faces of the women. These are particularly notable because in almost every instance they seem to be of a nature different from the typical, serious stare that is often found





IMAGE 1.4. Fidel Mora, *Women from Calca*, Calca, Peru, 1940

in the period's images in the region. Rather, and like other portraits such as Ochoa's so-called *El gobernador* (image 2.6), their faces express reticence through the projection of absence.

By the consistency of this image and the others studied in this book, I indicate precisely the features that make it Andean. They are features that, in a general way, can be found in other visual traditions, to be sure. But some pertain specifically to this place and time. From the particular variety of dress of the women, ranging from store-bought clothes to traditionally woven Andean textiles, from jewelry like rings and earrings to the headdress associated with rural communities, to the social dynamics that are gestured to in the evocation of a secondary status of the women in relation to the little girl, photographs such as this one indeed evoke a long history of social division and conflict in the region. Moreover, pictures like this one, for example, in the detail of the little girl's bow and the woman's trapezoidal hat, highlight more than social rifts. They also illustrate the coexistence and even flourishing of such distinct cultures side by side, though it is true, in dependence on one another.

Certainly, these dynamics existed before and after the historical

period studied herein. But photographic studio practice took a different form before 1900 and after about 1950. As Majluf and Wuffarden (2001, 126) have suggested, by the mid-twentieth century photography had undergone significant transformations in the region due to the relative staidness of photographic innovations, with the exception of the introduction of color images. I would add that the growth in amateur photography was also a decisive factor in the dwindling of traffic in studio work. While I do not entirely agree that studio work suffered a precipitous decline after 1942, certainly the fact is that photography would never again see the growth and vitality of portraiture practice, both in and out of the studio, that it had undergone from the end of the nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth.

Previous scholarship has provided useful precedents in approaches to the practices of Andean portraiture and to its objects. In an important work on what the anthropologist Deborah Poole describes as the “visual economy” of the Andes across roughly three centuries, she begins and closes her study with images from the period and place studied here. Poole makes powerful and persuasive arguments, in looking at an expansive array of visual practices, for the centrality of the notion of race in deployments of vision, visibility, and visual images about and in the region. Her study presents a finely grained discussion concerning the convergence of racial and visual discourses in the nineteenth century and the subsequent “disciplining of vision as a spatializing technology” and the constitution of racialized images as a reality of their own, and an authoritative one at that (Poole 1997, 214). Following Foucault, she seeks to understand how race was visualized and made visible in the colonial and postcolonial contexts of the Andes.

Poole’s argument spans an impressive array of visual practices, from painting and engraving to cartes de visite and family photography. The variety of the materials analyzed as well as the fine-grained points that arise from the discussion are framed by subjects that Poole identifies as “peasants” or “working-class.” Framed because, in her definition of the term “visual economy,” she understands “Andean peoples” to be portrayed by intellectuals engaged in elite image production in the earliest moments of her study through to the early twentieth century (1997, 10). On the other hand, and alongside intellectuals’ activity, she considers that peasants’ access to photography in the twentieth century resulted in a

“possession of photographs [that] conferred special status on their owners” (1997, 11). As such, Poole clearly understands that the greater porosity of modern technology permitted lower-class Andeans—the majority of the population—to create meaning and thus value in the symbolic order.

She is careful to contrast these subjects to the “rising and upper-classes,” by which she signals and identifies the middle class and above. Beyond the assignments of class status—she does not tend to use terms like “indigenous” and makes a point of staying away from the term “culture” in her study—“peasants” differ from other Andean subjects in a crucial way, according to Poole’s argument: despite their access to the technologies associated with it, they seem to have a distance from modernity itself, that is, to constitute an “outside” for it. As such, for the Andean peasant family “neither ‘culture’ nor ‘race’ had yet been naturalized as a fetishized marker of difference.” In this way, Poole insists on the idea that the “Andean peasant family . . . had no particular investment in proving either its cultural or its racial identity” and thus differed markedly from the tenets of European modernity that she sees as coveted among Andean elites (1997, 212). In reading images such as group portraits taken by the Cabrera brothers in Cuzco, she focuses on how they resist institutions such as the nuclear family, how they struggle against standards of portraiture, and thus ultimately contest “the embodying and enframing and technologies of race, type, and photography itself” (1997, 213). While she does not explicitly state as much, it is clear that lower-class Andeans’ resistance is rooted in what Poole considers to be their residence in modernization’s exterior and thus to their foreignness to the modernity represented by hegemonic groups. Thus the articulation of identity in terms of race, perhaps in any terms, is the province of the middle class and elites (1997, 212). On the contrary, for subaltern Andeans the photograph is “not in itself an act of self-definition” and it is this refusal of identitarian claims that Poole cites as defining of the lower-class attitude toward portraiture (1997, 209). Moreover, portraiture from the lower echelons of highland societies makes it “difficult to discern hierarchies and relationships” in what the pictures represent (1997, 209). Poole’s reading of ambiguity is telling in terms of what she does not read in images of lower-class Andeans: relations of power, articulations of race, and the markings of hierarchy. Poole offers this reading of inscrutability in these images even as she communicates her unease,

from her disciplinary position as an anthropologist, with “[answering] these questions concerning Cusqueños’ modernities, selves, resistances, and identities simply by looking at pictures. . . . I retain a residual unease about speaking for these mute Andean subjects” (1997, 213).

The reticence with which Poole approaches her study and the subject matters involved in it is commendable. And yet the mechanics of how she positions subaltern subjects before the local middle class and elites, and indeed the ways in which they are described, mean that she does engage in a representation of them, and in a markedly familiar lettered register. Poole’s unwillingness to see, but especially to ascribe either claims about the self or about race and class within such portraits imposes a reading that finds in them negation and absence of the classes above the subjects portrayed, and so too their power. Resistance is a familiar key in which such subjects and their culture are interpreted. Ultimately, however, and in the absence of more nuanced interpretations, this optic flattens its object of study. Moreover, the absence of hierarchies clearly makes the Andean peasant family, and by extension the society from whence it springs, a utopian space, free from the workings, differentiations, and exclusions of power.

The characterization of Andean subaltern subjects as existing within an alternative space, unknown yet reactive to Western power structures, rests on the powerfully tempting theoretical proposal that an outside to modernity is its most powerful source of contestation and that this outside is coincident with alterity. Again, this proposal is persistent in the history of studies of the Andes, if not also the larger region of Latin America. It often functions as a way of responding to modernity and its trappings, in the multiple ways in which the former term can be understood. The literature on the concept is extensive, and hardly any two scholars agree precisely on what the term “modernity” describes. For some, it marks the vast economic, social, and epistemological changes triggered by the Enlightenment, as in the classic case of the German critic Jürgen Habermas (1989). In this conceptualization, the phenomenon of modernity radiates out from Europe because the principal historical factors that originate it, such as the transformation of societies by industrialization, are specific to that geopolitical site. In turn, this localization of the phenomenon in Europe leads to a spatialization of modernity itself, whereby sites in the North, principally Europe and

Anglo-America, export modernity to sites in the periphery, that is, the rest of the world. Thus, a sort of disjuncture in historical periods arises: as described by the anthropologist Johannes Fabian, the center is understood as being in a more advanced historical period while the periphery is “backward.” Importantly, this divvying up of the contemporary moment—any contemporary moment in the modern period—is often codified through cultural factors. In this way, the concept of “primitive” cultures in contrast to modern ones, or in terms that are more familiar within Latin American studies, barbarism versus civilization, often finds its basis in this fundamental division of human societies into past and present. As we will see, the implication of this division is not exclusive to relegating particular groups to the past and to their management by others in the present.

The idea of a singular modernity that radiates out from Europe is far from the only theorization of the phenomenon, and does not predominate in Latin American studies. Authors such as Anibal Quijano and Walter D. Mignolo conceptualize modernity not from the emergence of industrial capitalism but rather from a perspective that intriguingly places the epistemological processes that began with the conquest of the Americas at the origin of the phenomenon. As such, modernity is taken to be, on the whole, a global phenomenon in its origins and not one that can be identified as emanating from the European continent. The usefulness of this perspective in expanding our understanding of how early capitalism functioned in order to alienate labor from the production of wealth, within the very structures of the colonialist enterprise, cannot be overvalued (Quijano 2008, 183–84). Essentially, Mignolo’s and Quijano’s separate discussions of modernity in relationship to Latin America allow us to understand modernity as an integrative occurrence, insofar as it only takes place at the historical moment when the world truly becomes global (Mignolo 2005, 6). Precisely this globality, in an epistemological sense, is what is at stake in the notion of Edmundo O’Gorman, Quijano and Mignolo’s predecessor, about the “invention of America” as the initiation of a procedure that puts an end to the difference that separates Latin America and Europe (1958). In these conceptions, the physical encounter of the New and Old Worlds and the triggering of those epistemological, social, and economic phenomena that characterize modernity become inseparable.

Nevertheless, both Quijano and Mignolo, as well as the scholarship that has built on their considerable contributions, have tended to insist on an alterity that not only triggered the genesis of modernity but also represents the solution to its problems. Mignolo, for example, considers the critical theory he practices, which he terms decolonial theory, as a “decolonization of knowledge and being; an attempt to rewrite history following an-other logic, an-other language, an-other thinking” (2005, xx). The language of alterity resonates here, and tellingly it becomes unclear, after absorbing Mignolo’s powerful critique of Western modernity, whether the referent is his own highly sophisticated approach to the problem, or in fact the culture and wisdom of indigenous peoples and other subalterns that purportedly lies beyond that modernity.

Implicitly, Mignolo articulates the solution to modernity in much the same way that Quijano has, over the years, approached possible ways out of the European Enlightenment’s dead ends in Latin America, as he sees them. In the first place, Quijano explicitly signals a similar figure, that of the lettered intellectual, as a prime site for identifying such liberatory options. In his case, figures such as Alejo Carpentier and Gabriel García Márquez take a central position (1993, 150–51). But undoubtedly, it is the Andeans José Carlos Mariátegui and José María Arguedas who most make possible solutions visible. In the case of Arguedas especially, Quijano sees proof that “the masses of the dominated are building new social practices founded on reciprocity, on an assumption of equality, on collective solidarity, and at the same time on the freedom of individual choice and on a democracy of collectively made decisions, against all external impositions” (1993, 154). For Quijano, this utopian—as he terms it—response to the problems of Enlightenment and particularly capitalism originates precisely in “the original Andean rationality” that is deployed by the new, subaltern participants in the modern Latin American city (1995, 154). While Quijano is careful not to propose a return to indigenous forms of social organization, as had been proposed by well-known *indigenistas* such as Luis Valcárcel at the beginning of the twentieth century, he nevertheless stresses cultural difference as an exteriority to the processes of modernity.

Alterity can thus be charged as having the potential to disrupt modernity. In this way and within these theories, that which in part originates the processes of Latin American modernity is also the solu-

tion to their “dark” products, to paraphrase Mignolo, at the other end of the historical process. Alterity stands as a profoundly useful notion when it is understood to characterize the culture of those human groups that inhabited the western hemisphere before the Spanish appeared there. However, “alterity” as a term becomes more problematic when it becomes an essentialization that allows particular social groups and their culture to represent the inversion of or even antidote to historical procedures. A contestatory alterity has been amply documented. But to understand the cultural practices that make alterity visible as inherently opposed to capitalism, Enlightenment, and Eurocentrism fails to understand the ways in which that same alterity often adapts within these frameworks and, as Arguedas would say, triumphs. Alterity as cultural difference can coexist and indeed become part and parcel of modernity, rather than having to be isolated from the tremendous historicospatial construct alluded to in that term.

Elsewhere, I have argued for an understanding of modernity as a historical, tectonic shift in temporal and spatial orders that, on a basic level, coheres across Latin America. As such, modernity can be understood as the social, political, and economic processes that were introduced but also as importantly were produced at the moment of first contact between the Americas and Europe. Here I follow Quijano and Mignolo and, to a certain extent, the propositions made by the Mexican philosopher O’Gorman already in the 1950s. Putting aside their ultimate treatment of alterity, there exists a surprising agreement among these different authors in how they understand the consistency and, to put it another way, the belonging of modernity to the entire spatiotemporal continuum that, since the late fifteenth century, constitutes Latin America.

It is the absence and indeed the implicit denial of this notion that enables a reading of purportedly nonmodern Andean subjects whose alterity exceeds what we can understand from within the framework of modernity. This book, to the contrary, takes as a point of departure the supposition of an acute alterity that manifests in dizzying variety across the Andes but that, nevertheless and inevitably, dwells within modernity. That alterity manifests multiply and across different human systems, including social, economic, and political ones—the recent Bolivian Constitution of 2009 is a prime example of the latter—such that,

in the visual register, photography is capable of making them visible. As such, and as much as the disagreements and resistance that subaltern subjects rightly and forcefully have articulated to specific aspects of their social realities, their cultural alterity is understood here in its capacity to be of a piece with modernizing tendencies in twentieth-century Latin America. More than resistance and refusal, the photographic practices that are deeply a part of subalterns' experience and negotiation of modernity are just that, a reflection of how tenaciously subaltern subjects enact strategies that allow them access to the fruits of modernity. Historians, with characteristic attention to detail, have left us a rich record of such quotidian strategies (Taller de Historia Oral Andina 1986; Gotkowitz 2008; Kuenzli 2013).

In this sense, understanding subalterns' engagement in photographic practices as their attempt to resist the modern is unsatisfying at best. Strangely, such an interpretation tergiversates the intense interest that lower- and middle-class Andeans have in one of the central pillars of modern capitalist culture, consumption, and seeks to transform it into its negation. But the act of buying these photographs and later of conserving them over generations belies this view. The sheer volume of portraiture in the Andes supports the idea that photographic portraits had broad value in terms of their possession and exchange, and so too in terms of their usefulness in crafting a symbolic order. It follows that the fact of the acquisition of the photograph, and indeed of its creation, must be at least as equally significant a moment as the subsequent life of any given picture. That transaction occurs according to the logic and rules of the deep and encompassing economic market, and it is in the pervasive act of consumption that the engagement with the market is realized. Chapter 4 will address centrally this notion of consumption.

Why did Andean indigenous and mestizo subjects in the first half of the twentieth century want pictures of themselves? Why did they frequent and use photography studios as customers? How and why did mestizo and indigenous subjects become practitioners themselves, and what did photography become in these cases? Why did they, along with so many of their compatriots and communitarians, engage themselves in the possibilities offered by photographic image making? The short answer is that this is a way, among many, in which they laid claim to their ownership of themselves and their fates, their lives and cultures,



in the modern moment. It constitutes a strategy through which they possessed that which they, already and irrevocably, were: modern.

The long answer to those questions is the reason for this book. In what follows, I will nuance the admittedly blanket and too-broad term “modern” in order to suggest the ways in which a technology of vision was cast, by both photographers and subjects, into practices and objects that accessed ownership of aspects of their cultural, political, and economic milieu. Doing so requires an important theoretical reinterpretation of photography. As I noted above, the process of researching and composing this book has entailed familiarizing myself with disciplinary traditions beyond literary studies and their approaches to photography. It has further required a twofold reflection on the goals of this study in addressing photography both as a formal object and as one whose social value must be understood in the context of particular subjects’ conception of self and community. Perhaps most important, it has required reflection on what it is that critics and scholars mean when they designate a practice as “photography” or an object as “photographic” or a “photograph.” The distance between these meanings and what I have understood photography to mean here has been a powerful driver of critical reflection, for it has become clear to me that photography transforms at least some of its properties according to its uses, but especially in relation to what sociocultural contexts it circulates within, which therefore imbue it with a particular sense.

On this note, I came upon a fundamental conceptualization of photography in my reading of the art historian Geoffrey Batchen’s masterful thesis “Desiring Production” on the originating circumstances behind the technology. The essay is a reiteration of an influential idea, first suggested in his earlier texts, proposing a ground that is common to all the practices that led up to and constituted photography. That ground consists of the desire to fix reality through technological means, and in Batchen’s recounting of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century history, he traces the growing focus on this project across scientific and artistic endeavors as early as 1782 (2002, 12). Because of this periodization and importantly with respect to the generally accepted moment in the early nineteenth century when photography is invented, Batchen’s argument squarely fits into one periodization of modernity. The significance of this fit in the essay is purposeful because it allows Batchen to make

the convincing argument that in the realm of vision, modernity meant producing a technology that could signify the removal of human agency from the creation of images.

According to Batchen, photography had been imbued with this meaning even before its invention. The most famous inventors, such as William Henry Fox Talbot, Sir John Herschel, Joseph Nicéphore Niépce, and Louis Daguerre, coming mostly from France and England, express to a man the *desire*, as Batchen terms it, to capture reality in visual form (2002, 5). This desire predates by many years the scientists who developed the first processes of photography in the third decade of the nineteenth century. Again according to Batchen, it finds its germ in the Enlightenment and is visible in the efforts of the English Romantics to register the experience of nature (2002, 15–16). He ascribes in part the appearance of photography to the desire of a cohort of protophotographers, as he terms them (2002, 6). They were of a moment, shaped and influenced by it. That moment was one of scientific advance, ocular curiosity, and anxiety about how to fix a reality constantly in flux. These scientists have left a record of the spirit of the pure quest for knowledge, an attitude that they could assume in their experiments because of the economic independence they enjoyed due to their almost unanimous origin in the upper classes. Even in those cases, such as Daguerre's, in which clearly the economic possibilities of photography are meant to be developed and exploited, the notion of photography as a business occupies a secondary place in the discourse that surrounds its presentation to the world. This holds for the historical moment as well as the historiography that chronicles it.

Interestingly for this discussion, the French-Brazilian Hercules Florence, simultaneously with his European counterparts, invented a photographic process and even coined the term “photography” before anyone in Europe. The Brazilian critic Boris Kossoy has detailed the history of both the discovery and the use to which it was put. A Frenchman who first traveled to Brazil as part of a scientific expedition led by the Baron of Langsdorff, Florence settled in Campinas after the end of the expedition in 1829. There, he set about making a living and, given his previous work as an illustrator and cartographer, he took an interest in printing techniques and technologies. By 1833 or 1834—roughly five years

before the announcement of the daguerreotype—Florence, through trial-and-error procedures, had invented a photographic method in which mechanical reproducibility was heavily emphasized as a goal (Kossoy 1998, 22).

Image 1.5 provides an example of the fruits of Florence's labor. It is representative of the sort of rote, bureaucratic purposes toward which Florence geared his invention. He sought, above all, practical applications for his research that would offer him an economic benefit. In this way, Florence's work leads to the discovery of a chemical process for *reproducing documents*, thus offering the possibility of *making copies* of titles, forms, and other bureaucratic paperwork. At a much earlier point in the history of photographic technologies, Florence puts great emphasis not on the single image, but rather on the possibility of developing a system that would allow for the serial production of multiple images. So his research and eventual discovery centered on how to create a template from which such serial images could be made. His work would result in the use of a negative that, when combined with sensitized paper and later fixed in a process that was very similar to those invented in Europe around the same time, produced multiple drawings and texts faithful to the template.

Florence's invention of photography, in its technical aspects as well as its concrete form, is governed by the market and above all its demands and possibilities. As a foreigner and, at least at the beginning, as an adventurer in Brazil, Florence lived under the pressing need to secure financial stability. In part, his marriage into a landowning family in Campinas met this need. But he also sought financial independence. The goal, after all, was not merely to survive but to flourish in a society that, in Roberto Schwarz's famous characterization, relies on favor rather than meritocracy in order to designate individuals' possibility of stability and ascent in the socioeconomic order (Schwarz 1992).

In contradistinction to his European contemporaries, Florence's "desire," to appropriate Batchen's term, did not center on the possibility of having nature "copy herself." From the inception, his focus was on mechanical reproducibility of print culture, because this is where practical and profitable possibilities lay (Kossoy 1987, 40). Although the episode of Florence's invention is obscure and has, moreover, been

obscured by the idea of a photographic history that is rooted in European conceptions of the Enlightenment and its science, it is worth considering the ramifications of this Latin American inventor engaging in the pursuit of reproducibility for a mass market. His need for personal gain further influences the meaning of his invention in his particular sociohistorical context.

Where Batchen has described a desire for an autonomous representation of the world as the source for the creation of photography in the European case, Florence's inspiration did not arise from these same conditions, which Batchen locates within the Enlightenment, and the resulting transformations in subjectivity. Where subjectivity in the early nineteenth century cannot be ignored in the Brazilian case, Florence's invention rests on another, preponderant factor of modernity, just as much a part of the rationalization of the world as scientific discoveries and applications: the economic market and the necessity of finding security within it—in other words, precarity.

The specific context that produced Florence's discovery also influences Andean photography as I have conceived it in this study. If there is such a thing as Andean photography, then its history must be understood according to parameters and desires that are quite distinct from totalizing histories of photography. Such histories are valuable and extremely informative, but their primary strength of unifying all photography, which operates through recourse to a declared or, more often than not, undeclared universality, also represents their most significant drawback. There is a great deal to be learned from understanding photography as a nineteenth-century European and then world phenomenon, inscribed but also congealed with a history of Renaissance vision and Enlightenment science. The perspective is deeply revealing of particular notions of science and intellectual developments at the level of a history of ideas, and let us not forget, also, elite visual practices such as painting and sculpture.

However, that particular cultural-historical context obscures the depth of photography's imbrication in more far-flung, and also more preponderant, systems of human organization and exchange. Can or should the phenomenon of technological image making or better yet, image fixing, in Latin America be understood as being of a piece with its origins in the nineteenth-century technologies that would coalesce

into what we know of photography, and should we then understand that moment and event as a sort of needle's eye that connects the perspectival experiments of the Renaissance with our current explosion of photographic production? What is to be gained? As importantly, what is lost?

The photography that I address in this book neither invalidates nor contradicts other, equally valid notions of photography, such as the one I have just mentioned. The obvious should be stated: Andean photography implies Latin American photography, Bengali photography, *limeño* photography, Latino photography, and so on, to infinity. What I am concerned with then, in the particular case that I study, is understanding the factors that led to this particular practice and so, I maintain, lend it its particular shape. But as I forecast this argument, let me state at the outset that I am not interested in evoking a simple contextualization, that is, of understanding photography as merely a matter of relativism as it might appear along historical and geopolitical lines. Rather, I will argue that photography in the Andes responds to origins altogether



**IMAGE 1.5.** Hercule Florence, mechanically reproduced image of document, 1839

different from those of photography and its so-called historical origins, whether they are located in the Renaissance, nineteenth-century technology, or the Enlightenment. The connection with those historical events is of course undeniable, but the cultural significance of Andean photography and in particular the manner in which it took root in the surrounding society responds to an order that lies beyond that of nineteenth-century Europe.

Beyond the notable and insufficiently researched exception of Florence, we cannot speak of inventors in the Latin American and thus also Andean cases. Rather, there the business and economic needs are paramount and preeminent drivers of the practice. In other words, if we are to understand Andean photography as such, it must be understood as part and parcel of what used to be called “underdevelopment,” as a business practice, as one of consumption, as a negotiation and an opportunity in an unstable (in both positive and negative ways) economic and social environment. Chapter 4 will address the forms that this alternative origin of photography, founded in commerce, takes in the region.