Local Histories of Infamy: Photography, Popular Violence, and the Rehearsal of State Power in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Peru

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Revista de Estudios Hispánicos, Tomo 53, Número 2, Junio 2019, pp. 491-514 (Article)

Published by Washington University in St. Louis
DOI: *https://doi.org/10.1353/rvs.2019.0038*

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In 1858, a private citizen named Juan Fuentes submitted a petition to the Peruvian government to create a photographic registry of the nation. Following a lengthy bureaucratic debate and several subsequent proposals, the government approved a much more limited project: Fuentes would take pictures of prisoners. This essay offers a close reading of this episode, frequently retold but unanalyzed in histories of early photography. I examine the images and text from a sample register that accompanied one of Fuentes's many petitions, situating it within the debates regarding the representation and participation of popular subjects in public life. In the most immediate sense, this artifact illustrates elites' mounting concerns about criminality, during a time of convulsive modernization brought about by the guano export boom. More broadly, the desire to photograph prisoners constitutes an effort to subvert collective popular identities, precisely as the corporatist social order, a vestige of the colonial era, is ceding rapidly to another based on individual rights and responsibilities. Beyond a merely disciplinary function, photography enacts an emergent form of state power that seeks to disaggregate its own source of legitimacy, the pueblo.

. . . . .

> Los ejercicios de prosa narrativa . . . [a]busan de algunos procedimientos: las enumeraciones dispares, la brusca solución de continuidad, la reducción de la vida entera de un hombre a dos o tres escenas.
> —Jorge Luis Borges, "Prólogo a la primera edición," *Historia universal de la infamia* (7)

> Con el retrato del rematado se eterniza el recuerdo de su infamia, e impide que se pueda presentar sin rubor en la sociedad a que debe reingresar, una vez satisfecha la vindicta pública.
> —Manuel Vidaurre, Chief Justice of the Corte Superior de Justicia de Lima, February 16, 1861 (qtd. in Majluf and Wuffarden 61)

In June of 1858, a private citizen named Juan Fuentes petitioned the Peruvian government to create a photographic registry of the nation. He intended for this ambitious project to include images of monuments, buildings, and people, including prisoners, soldiers, students, and politicians. Various officials evaluated the proposal, eventually rejecting it as logistically and economically unfeasible.[1] Several months later, Fuentes submitted another petition with decidedly more modest aims: he would take portraits of prisoners. This second petition was also denied, perhaps because of the ineffectiveness of the penal system itself: as the prosecutor of the Superior Court of Lima quipped, "¿qué hacemos con retratos cuando los originales están paseándose por las calles de Lima y por los suburbios, cometiendo los mismos o peores delitos que aquellos por los que fueron juzgados?" (qtd. in Majluf and Wuffarden 58). In September of 1860, Fuentes submitted a revised proposal. Meanwhile, the government was considering a similar project introduced by Pedro Pablo Mariluz, a lieutenant colonel in the army.

Although these competing initiatives were also rejected in turn over the course of the next two years, Fuentes would submit three more modified versions of his plan. Finally, in July of 1861, less than a year before the inauguration of El panóptico del lima, the first modern penitentiary in Peru, the state approved Fuentes's latest petition. It appears that Fuentes never in fact carried out his project, and he subsequently disappears from the historical record entirely (McElroy, *History of Photography in Peru* 502). Nevertheless, Mariano Paz Soldán, who oversaw construction of the panopticon and served as its first director, included detailed instructions for taking and archiving photographs of new inmates in the *Reglamento para el servicio interior de la Prisión Penitenciaria de Lima* (1863). This protocol strongly echoed the language of Fuentes's petitions and the responses they generated.

The story of the photographic registry came to the awareness of contemporary scholars in 1970, when Alberto Rosas Siles published a short article in which he announced "el hallazgo de un raro expediente, encontrado por nosotros en el Archivo Nacional, dentro de los antiguos legajos pertenecientes al Ministerio de Justicia" (132). Based on these unnumbered, uncatalogued documents, art historian Keith McElroy wrote what remains the most detailed account of Fuentes's and Mariluz's petitions in his doctoral dissertation *The History of Photography in Peru in the Nineteenth Century: 1839-1876* (1977) and his subsequent

book *Early Peruvian Photography: A Critical Case Study* (1985). Since then, several studies of Peruvian, Latin American, and nineteenth-century photography have referenced the incident, often underscoring how it constitutes an early and isolated instance prefiguring the modern-day mugshot (Peñaherrera Sánchez 89; Milla Batres 236; Levine 29; Hannavy 1064).[2]

Within these larger histories, the vignette might evoke narratives of the experience of modernity in Latin America: akin to Roberto Arlt's inventors or José Arcadio Buendía, a marginalized individual conceives of an ambitious plan that is destined to fail due to the absence or scarcity of both the technology and wherewithal necessary to implement it.[3] More recently, however, Natalia Majluf and Eduardo Wuffarden have considered Fuentes's petitions and the ensuing bureaucratic debate as part of an essay included in the catalogue for *La Recuperación de la memoria. El primer siglo de la fotografía. Perú 1842-1942*, an exhibition held at the Museo de Arte de Lima in 2001-02. Like the aforementioned studies, this treatment is based mainly on McElroy's work and is situated squarely within the history of photography, but it suggestively points to how, "[a]unque el registro fotográfico con fines de identificación no fue aplicado de manera sistemática en el siglo XIX, se mantuvo como un ideal del aparato de control social" (Majluf and Wuffarden 61).

The lengthy bureaucratic process surrounding the unrealized photographic registry signals a broader and decidedly modern debate about the relationship between the consolidation of state power and the production and circulation of images. Such a notion resonates with Carlos Aguirre's assertion that the penitentiary of Lima (where Fuentes was presumably going to take his portraits) "was immersed in a wider attempt at refining and optimizing social control, a project closely related to state formation in nineteenth-century Peru and informed by the elites' sense of danger in the face of the rebellious and disrespectful 'lower orders'" ("The Lima Penitentiary and the Modernization of Criminal Justice" 68). In other words, the photographs of prisoners, as well as the prison itself, ought to be understood as manifestations of the modernizing designs that formed part of Peru's rapid and convulsive insertion into the global economy during the guano export boom (1845-70). Photography in this context was not simply a mechanical procedure that passively documents socioeconomic transformations,

but rather an emerging visual technology that helped classify, restrict, and regulate the social behaviors of a growing population. As Jens Andermann has observed in the cases of *fin de siglo* Brazil and Argentina, photographs "were at one and the same time representations and means of a moment of capture" during "a particular moment in the expansion of state power and capitalist relations" (*The Optic of the State* 186). In the case of guano-boom Peru, the widespread adoption of inexpensive techniques for printing multiple copies from a single negative coincided with an ascendant liberalism, both economic and political, that resulted in the displacement and heightened visibility of popular subjects.

It was in this sociopolitical context that Juan Fuentes submitted a sample registry to the Peruvian government in 1860, as part of one of his multiple petitions. This artifact is, to the best of my knowledge, the only existing sample of Fuentes's aborted project. Yet, given that "[a]n imbrication of the sayable and the seeable, telling and showing, the articulable and the visible . . . occurs at every level of verbal expression, from speech to writing to description, figuration, and formal/semantic structure" (Mitchell, "Interdisciplinarity and Visual Culture" 542–43), this prospective catalogue of criminals, a composite of image and text, constitutes a kind of dress rehearsal for an extension of state power regarding the classification and vigilance of subaltern subjects. Carlos Aguirre has demonstrated how "[e]n este proceso de construcción de la 'cuestión criminal', el desarrollo de una opinión pública sustentada cada vez más en el poder de la palabra impresa desempeñó un rol central" ("Los irrecusables datos de la estadística del crímen" 275).

Photography and, more generally, visual culture also played an important role in the reconfiguration of state authority in a fledgling civil society. As evinced by elites' responses to a popular protest that took place in late 1858, this period was marked by a heightened concern for the lower classes coalescing around a common cause and acting as a unified popular force. While Fuentes's petitions never explicitly address this particular event, his sample registry proposes a new mode of representation that counteracts emergent collective identities potentially formed through subaltern violence. At the same time that the vestiges of a corporatist society, established during the colonial period, were giving way to a new order defined according to liberal conceptions of individual rights and obligations, the registry imagines a classificatory scheme for identifying criminal types according to racial, occupational,

and class attributes. Beyond serving a merely disciplinary function, photography played a role in an effort to disaggregate the identities and activities of various popular groups who might otherwise undermine a republican project still trying to constitute and consolidate its sovereignty.

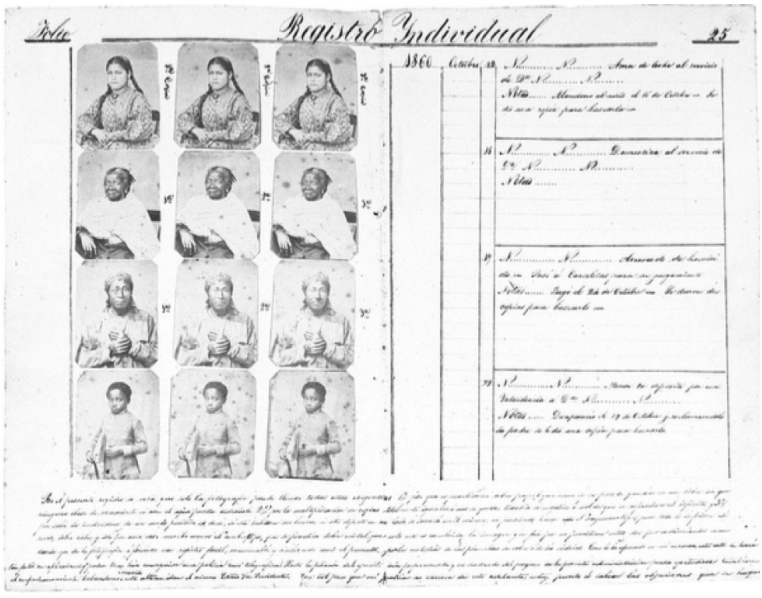

Figure 1. "Registro Individual" submitted by Juan Fuentes to the Peruvian Government, 1860.
Archivo General de la Nación del Perú.

As with many other post-independence societies in Latin America, economic stagnation and internecine struggles among local caudillos marked the first decades of Peruvian independence. However, beginning in the 1840s, with the exploitation of offshore guano deposits, Peru experienced a sudden and dramatic increase in revenue, controlled largely by an export-oriented elite class concentrated in Lima. In short order, these elites set about dismantling a protectionist economic model inherited from the colonial period and "began a wrenching but surprisingly rapid transition to laissez-faire and free trade as cornerstones for the state and economy" (Gootenberg 27). This

growing wealth promoted a physical transformation of Lima, which included the construction of new plazas, public buildings, mansions, theaters, and a modern penitentiary. Members of the upper strata of society were also able to enjoy luxury imported goods, like daguerreotype portraits, first introduced to the city in 1842. Indeed, as Jürgen Osterhammel notes in his global history of the nineteenth century, "[t]he 1840s were a boom age for Peru, and the new medium fit perfectly into the boisterous atmosphere" (41). By the early 1860s, there were numerous photography studios operating in the center of Lima, and the costly, unique daguerreotype images had been supplanted in popularity by the relatively inexpensive and easily reproduced *carte-de-visite* portraits (McElroy, *Early Peruvian Photography* 20–25). For those select Peruvians who profited most from the guano boom, the enthusiasm for these photographic calling cards facilitated a further, more intimate integration into the world market. As Deborah Poole observes, the repetitive nature of the content, production, and exchange of such portraits "distilled many of the economic and moral dispositions that remained unsettled in the new structures of feeling that would eventually form what we might think of as a mature, international bourgeois culture" (Poole 113). In other words, at the same time that portraiture required its subjects to imitate and embody pre-determined behaviors and dispositions, the consumption and circulation of photographic images helped reconfigure networks of social reproduction.

Change was not limited to economic policy or questions of upper-class tastes, however. As competing leaders sought to legitimize their efforts to control a growing state apparatus, they elicited the participation of popular sectors in the political process. In doing so, "suponían reconocer a dichos grupos como sujetos conscientes y activos, a quienes había cuando menos que persuadir a aceptar un orden político carente de respaldo en la tradición, y a menudo también convocar para establecer pactos o concitar apoyos que hiciesen posible el afianzamiento de ese nuevo orden" (Pinto 549). Most conspicuously, during the so-called Liberal Revolution of 1854, Ramón Castilla abolished the longstanding indigenous tribute and, several months later, issued a decree outlawing slavery, in part to secure greater support for his struggle against his rival and then president José Rufino Echenique. The national constitution of 1856 was the most liberal of the six constitutions adopted following independence (though it would be replaced in 1860 by a markedly more

moderate charter). Changes to the legal regime and political system led to an expanded electorate (Peloso 193–95), and "[n]ew forms of political mobilisation imported from Europe, such as the banquet and the political club, were also brought into use" (Sobrevilla Perea 215). Liberal reforms did not simply lead to an increase in eligible voters, but also caused political awareness to spread into previously excluded parts of the population through novel forms of sociability. Moreover, even those who resisted the changes had to frame their opposition in terms of citizenship, individual rights, and representation. Though the precise nature of the pact between sovereignty and the people remained a matter of protracted dispute, there existed a tacit—if reluctant—consensus that the model of governance was fundamentally republican.

The cost of the vertiginous economic and political modernization was high and met with resistance from members of different social classes and ideologies. The newly paved streets of the capital's center with their gaslight lamps coincided with an increase in the price of living, a swelling urban population, a scarcity of food, and new forms of taxation, "lo que incrementó a su vez el desempleo y con ello el malestar social" (Méndez 14). In other words, the costs of the new economic model were borne mostly by the lower classes that were partially comprised of those black and indigenous laborers nominally freed by Castilla's 1854 decrees.

Lima's artisans felt this transformation acutely, because their products could not compete with those produced in industrialized nations. Moreover, their guilds, colonial-era institutions that provided some measure of protection and self-regulation for their trades, were targets of the increasingly dominant liberalism and would be abolished (formally, if not in practice) by the early 1860s.[4] Artisans voiced their opposition to the shift toward a political economy based on principles of free trade, but these formal protests to Congress fell on deaf ears. In late December of 1858, their frustrations turned violent. A group of artisans gathered in the port of Callao to impede the entry of doors and windows manufactured in the United States, destined for the stations of the railway line that was being extended to Chorrillos. As Ricardo Palma recounts in *La Bohemia de mi tiempo*, the protest coincided with the premiere of his play *El santo de Panchita,* co-written with Manuel Ascencio Segura:

> Recuerdo que, á la hora en que se levantó el telón, supimos que el pueblo estaba batiéndose en el Callao, á dos leguas de Lima, contra una parte del ejército, á la cabeza del cual se encontraba el Presidente de la República don Ramón Castilla. Aquel día tuvo principio el famoso bochinche conocido por el de *las puertas y ventanas*, que no fue sino una protesta, nada pacífica, de los artesanos contra un decreto gubernativo, que acordaba ciertas franquicias aduaneras á los artefactos venidos del extranjero. A pesar de lo poco propicio de la noche, la beneficiada tuvo teatro lleno, y la comedia fue calurosamente aplaudida. Llamados los autores á la escena, éstos se hicieron sordos. (30)

Palma vividly captures the heightened tensions and unrest that would influence the conservative and authoritarian turn of Castilla's second presidency (1858-62). The author of the *Tradiciones peruanas* recalls the artisans' revolt as a manifestation of a broader discontent that directly pits the pueblo against the president and the armed forces.

The following nights the protests would spread to Lima, as well, and, as reported in *El Comercio* on December 22, "muchos grupos de gente de toda clase recorrieron las calles y avenidas de la estación; había también en ellas destacamentos de infantería y caballería para preservar el orden. En una ocasión la tropa cargó al pueblo y algunos hombres tiraron piedras . . ." (qtd. in Quiroz 26). Those participating in the uprising chanted slogans like "¡Viva el pueblo!" (Méndez 11). The capital, which "had burgeoned from a sluggish postindependence town of some 55,000 to an overcrowded city of 94,195 inhabitants by 1857" (Gootenberg 67), had also become a space marked by greater stratification along lines of race and class, as the deafening applause of Palma's recollection evokes. At the same time, the violence brought together not only artisans but also the "muchos grupos de gente de toda clase" that identified as a unified group, if only temporarily. The mere specter of mass opposition to liberal hegemony would seem to constitute a dangerous, unintended consequence of the expanded involvement of popular sectors in political processes. Such a possibility contrasts with the status quo of prior decades, when no movement existed to reconcile the competing demands of different populations—indigenous, mestizo, African slaves—that comprised the lower strata of society (Flores Galindo 181). As the corporatist structure of the caste system was dissolving, so too were the divisions among lower and working classes that previously kept them in competition with one another. What the words and actions of the December 1858 uprising might have suggested to

upper-class *limeño* was that these unrestrained urban masses, disengaged from productive forms of labor, could threaten the elites' modernization projects as an undirected multitude who regarded their diverse demands as equivalent.

Though it was hardly the first time that post-independence Peru experienced popular violence, contemporaneous commentators were quick to insist that there was something new about the phenomenon.[5] In *Breves reflexiones sobre los sucesos ocurridos en Lima y el Callao con motivo de la importación de artefactos* (1859), published in the immediate aftermath of the artisans' revolt, the jurist José Silva Santisteban emphasizes its potential to establish a dangerous precedent for future unrest. Silva Santisteban's text, dedicated to President Ramón Castilla, depicts the conflict between protectionism and free trade in stark terms, going so far as to invoke "the classic liberal dichotomy of 'civilization versus barbarism' presented in the classic work *Facundo* (1845), by the Argentine liberal Domingo Faustino Sarmiento" (García-Bryce 65). The *Breves reflexiones* is at once a defense of economic orthodoxy and a proposal to civilize the artisans who constitute a new threat to this order. To underscore the novelty of the events, the introduction of *Breves reflexiones* begins with an anaphora that announces, "*[p]or primera vez*, las pacíficas poblaciones de Lima y el Callao han sido teatro de luctuosas escenas, entremezcladas de sangre y exterminio; *por primera vez* las furias populares se han desencadenado en la Capital del Perú; *por primera vez*, hanse levantado las masas en nombre del trabajo y de la protección a la industria nacional" (5, my emphasis). Expanding the theatrical metaphor, Silva Santisteban stresses that the protest was a mere rehearsal for subsequent performances: "El pueblo ha ensayado sus fuerzas: un principio popular que fascina y deslumbra a la muchedumbre incauta es el lema escrito en la enarbolada enseña, y los enemigos de la patria, los genios turbulentos que conspiran sin tregua contra el actual orden de cosas, no dejarán de poner en juego este resorte" (6). The pueblo emerges as an ambivalent figure, powerful but susceptible to the manipulations of faceless agitators. In this respect, and in spite of the putative novelty of the action, Silva Santiseban echoes the critiques of earlier artisan protests.[6] Their actions, if not their affections, are ersatz and of uncertain origin, for the unrest is "nada mas que un triste remedo, una miserable parodia, de las tempestuosas escenas de París en 1848, a nombre del Derecho al trabajo" (15). Yet on the following page,

Silva Santiseban questions the true identity of those involved and links the revolt to a longstanding, local form of disorder, surmising that "[l]os supuestos artesanos han querido pues parodiar la conducta del bandido, pidiendo justicia con la violencia y el incendio" (16). Whether Parisian revolutionaries or colonial-era bandits are the model for the uprising seems secondary to the inauthenticity of the events of December 1858. If "political interlocution" requires "knowing whether the subjects who count in the interlocution 'are' or 'are not,' whether they are speaking or just making noise" (Rancière 50), then the principle strategy of Silva Santiseban's narrative consists of reducing the mass protests to little more than sound and fury. In other words, the *Breves reflexiones* advocates for progressive measures to prevent similar protests in the future, because popular violence only provides an outlet for passions, not intelligible political demands.

The official response of the Castilla regime to the artisans' revolt was similarly harsh and echoed an increased emphasis on its criminality. In a communiqué published in the government newspaper *El Peruano* on December 29, the president laments "los escandalosos y degradantes acontecimientos de que han sido teatro la Capital y el puerto del Callao en estos últimos dias" (159). Like Silva Santiseban, Castilla claims that those responsible for the violence were not artisans but "[u]nos pocos aventureros y algunos de esos hombres aciagos que contribuyeron a dilapidar las rentas nacionales y á desmoralizar el pais, [que] han pretendido extraviar el ánimo de una gran parte de nuestros obreros" (159). Once again, without naming those involved in mobilizing the workers, the president depicts the mob as a force acting blindly, not out of self-interest, but for the benefit of the enemies of the state. Indeed, he accuses "[l]os principales autores del desorden" for destroying "el camino de fierro, el gas y el telégrafo eléctrico, como si los progresos que ha hecho nuestra naciente civilización en medio de los incendios civiles, pudieran oponerse á la prosperidad de nuestras clases industriosas y el aumento de nuestra riqueza" (159).[7] The true object of the uprising, then, is not simply the presence of the doors and windows manufactured in the United States, but rather the entire modernizing project embodied by the expansion of the railway line.

Invoking the same opposition between civilization and barbarism as Silva Santisteban, Castilla calls for the anonymous conspirators and the misled artisans to feel the full weight of justice. But he differs

from Silva Santisteban and the *El Comercio* report in that he explicitly refuses to link the uprising with any expression of general popular will. Indeed, he goes so far as to insist that, in addition to being able to announce the reestablishment of order, "[i]gualmente satisfactorio me sería que en el pueblo menos ilustrado y mas pequeño de la República, no asomasen ni por un momento las perniciosas ideas que han venido á turbar, aunque muy pasajeramente, el reposo de Lima y del Callao" (159). Beyond merely confronting what he describes as a criminal act—"los artesanos . . . han reconocido la gravedad de su crímen y extravío y vuelto á la calma y a la razón . . ." (159)—Castilla presents the state as an authority that attends to the conduct and attitudes of its citizens, among them the least educated. It is notable that in the above quote and elsewhere in the statement, the president employs the commonly used plural form of pueblos. As a synonym of cities, the term echoes the so-called *reasunción del poder por los pueblos*, the doctrine used to justify the initial acts of independence in Latin America (Chiaramonte 64). His language implies that the pact between the source of sovereignty and the government that exercises it remains fundamentally unchanged: this self-declared pueblo has no constituent power. Castilla not only refuses to accept the content of the demands made by those protesters he confronted in person, but also their capacity to speak as a unified group. His pronouncement, then, is less concerned with an effort to identify or punish the specific individual responsible for the unrest than it is with intervening in the broader struggle to define the terms that regulate the legitimacy of different social actors in the political sphere.[8]

The violent protests of December 1858 occasioned an immediate and prolific discursive response, which informed an ongoing debate about the relationship between popular subjects and state power. As Aguirre argues, the period between 1855-60 witnessed a sustained effort among Peruvian elites to address what they saw as an increase in criminality, a perception that "fue el resultado, sobre todo, del clima autoritario y conservador que, justamente en este período, surgió en respuesta a una serie de cambios políticos y sociales" ("Los irrecusables datos" 275). The emphasis on crime was a reaction to the liberalizing reforms of recent decades and formed part of a broader effort to implement new mechanisms of social differentiation to replace outmoded ones that had been eclipsed along with the organicist conception of the colonial order. As Castilla's forceful declarations suggest, this process implies

the intervention of the state in regulating the habits and passions of its citizens, in order to determine what actions or words can be described as authentic expressions of the pueblo and what must be dismissed or repressed as the senseless noise of its enemies. In doing so, the state must reinvent itself as an arbiter of subaltern acts and enunciations. In contrast to corporatist forms of belonging, this requires deploying criteria of race, gender, class, conduct, etc., to distinguish between citizens and non-citizens. Such a process presupposes an unmediated relation between the state and those it represents. In this context, modern techniques of policing and incarceration serve to register and regulate the acts of those it recognizes as outside the law, delimiting those behaviors that disqualify individuals from active forms of citizenship.

A handwritten note, signed by Manuel Atanasio Fuentes, offers a unique insight into how the state constructs its power through the production of criminality. Fuentes was a conservative jurist, editor, and prolific author whose works "expresan las voces del sector ilustrado emergente durante el apogeo la prosperidad guanera" (Ramos Núñez 57). Perhaps his best-known work is the *Estadística general de Lima*, first published in 1858, which is an encyclopedic guide to the capital that, among other things, advanced the notion that the putative increase of criminality was connected to "ciertas formas de sociabilidad y cultura popular" (Aguirre 290). At the same time that the petitions of Juan Fuentes (no relation) were circulating among bureaucrats, Manuel Atanasio began the publication of *Colección de causas célebres contemporáneas, civiles y criminales del foro peruano y extranjero*. Appearing between 1860 and 1862, the 10 volumes of the *Causas célebres* contain narrative accounts of recent court cases in Peru, the United States, and Western Europe. It was in regards to this project that Fuentes wrote the Superior Court of Justice on July 10, 1861 to request access to files relating to criminal cases held by the Court. In his petition, which was eventually approved, the author of the *Estadística general de Lima*, recalls that "el gobierno ejerciendo conmigo un acto de su acreditada munificencia y de la protección que dispensa á los trabajos literarios en el país, se ha servido suscribirse á cierto número de entregas de la colección de causas célebres que he principiado a publicar."

In expressing gratitude for government support, Fuentes's letter recognizes the multiple roles played by the state within a cultural field without autonomy and closely linked to politics. The government

provides Fuentes with the source materials for his literary work and, by purchasing copies of the work, in turn subsidizes it. The following year, the government awarded Fuentes a commission to print the penal code (beating out rival publisher Silva Santisteban) and, beginning the following decade, he served as the director of both the Imprenta del Estado and the government office of statistics (Ramos Núñez 66, 73). Simultaneously occupying these two posts, he dedicated himself to "la edición de cuantiosa información sobre demografía, comercio e industria y sobre aspectos diversos de la administración pública" (73). To borrow what Ricardo Piglia says about twentieth-century authoritarian regimes, Fuentes's work embodies how "el estado es una máquina de producir ficciones, una máquina sobre todo de hacer creer" (102). With respect to an emerging discourse on criminality, the state intervenes in the production of a body of writing in multiple ways. Particularly in the context of the mid-nineteenth century, when the republican order was still provisional, the now-consecrated forms of literature, such as novels, generated "foundational fictions" alongside other textual, visual, and performative modalities.[9] In the particular case of guano-boom Peru, as Manuel Atanasio Fuentes hints, one of the many forms of making literature consists of the inscription of crime as a judicial procedure and, in turn, rewriting the legal document in narrative form. We might apply what Alberto Flores Galindo says about Fuentes and Ricardo Palma's efforts to understand the late colonial period within their own historical reality: "en lugar de una novela o de un vasto fresco histórico, la generación que vino después de la independencia, para entender a su ciudad, encontró un instrumento adecuado en ese conjunto fragmentario y disperso de relatos, donde se confundieron recuerdos, imaginación y documentos" (144).

One such document in the fragmentary corpus of literature on crime would be the sample register Juan Fuentes had submitted to the Superior Court of Lima. On the left-hand side of the sheet, beneath the title of "Registro Individual," there are four rows of portraits, with three copies of each photograph, depicting a young mestiza woman, an elderly black woman, an adult male with indigenous features, and a young black boy, respectively. There is a regularity, if not a rigid uniformity, to their poses. The women are seated, with the back of a chair visible in the lower corner of the frame, while the men are standing. The shots are all frontal, although only the man faces the camera

directly, while the other three pose with their heads turned slightly toward their right shoulders. The boy's body is visible from mid-thigh upwards, whereas the adult subjects all appear roughly from the waist up. In all four portraits, the individuals' hands rest at their midsections, either crossed or clutching an article of clothing. There is, then, a play of minimal differences among the images, which may anticipate a systematic effort to catalogue discrete physical features (as per Gustave Bertillon's system, pioneered in the 1880s), but also resembles a gallery of popular subjects that echoes *costumbrista* imagery.[10] The young woman wears a brooch pinned to the collar of an elaborately patterned dress; an earring is visible in the left lobe of the older woman, and the thumb of her left hand is hooked beneath the white, woven shawl that wraps her upper body; the man wears a cloth or cap covering his hair; and the boy wears a high-collared waistcoat and presses what seems to be a hat or satchel against his body. In revealing differences of race, gender, and class and among the four subjects, these minor details signal the tension between the ability of photography to document individual identities and its capacity to reaffirm collective ones based on existing stereotypes. Moreover, they underscore the act of sitting for this particular kind of portrait as a symbolic rehearsal of the state's newfound ability to register individuals through a modernized penal system. Such is the performance that Paz Soldán's *Reglamento para el servicio interior de la prisión penitenciaria* requires to be restaged with each prisoner:

> Recibido el preso, tal cual llega, se le subirá hasta la galeria de fotografia para retratarlo. Concluido el retrato, se le baja á las celdas de recepcion, se le pesa y despues se le hace bañar, y cuando esté perfectamente limpio, se toma razon de sus señales interiores. . . .
>
> De cada preso se tomará un retrato de frente y otro de perfil, el dia de su entrada y despues cada dos años. De cada retrato se sacarán tres copias, una para el archivo y los otros para remitirlos á la policia en caso de fuga. El negativo fotográfico tendrá el mismo número de filiacion del preso. Los retratos se conservan reservados por el Director. (40–41).

The protocol of the prison manual makes explicit that which is implicit in the numbered, identical portraits by Fuentes: each copy forms part of a larger sequence within a duplicate archive. The portrait is taken immediately prior to submitting the prisoner to the hygienic measures also stipulated in the *Reglamento* and his or her formal entry into the

prison itself. The photograph captures a moment of transition, when the institution's disciplinary measures transform the criminal body.

While the text beneath the images promises that photography can identify "los individuos de modo positivo," the multiple copies of the portraits and their accompanying text instead emphasize the subjects' alternating movements of capture and flight, undermining Fuentes's claim. To the right there is a chart that contains information corresponding to each of the accused. As with the images themselves, there are patterns, but no rigid formula that would, like the Bertillon method, anticipate "a massive campaign of *inscription*, a transformation of the body's sign into a *text*, a text that pared verbal description down to a denotative shorthand" (Sekula 33). Instead, the brief notes to the right of the portraits provide a space for the subject's name (in these cases, left blank), biographical information, the nature of the alleged crime, whether the individual is a fugitive, and an account of how (and how many) copies of the photograph are in circulation, presumably to aid recapture. The young woman is identified as a servant, presumably a wet nurse, who "[a]bandonó al niño el 16 de octubre Se dio una copia para buscarla," which suggests the possibility of a prior offense. The older woman is described merely as a domestic servant. The man depicted in the third row, accused of homicide, "[p]asó a Carceletas para su juzgamiento . . . Fugó el 24 de octubre. Se dieron dos copias para buscarlo." Lastly, in the case of the boy, the note accompanying his photograph states, "desapareció el 29 de octubre y reclamándolo su padre se le dio una copia para buscarlo." Each micro-narrative imagines the same basic sequence of actions: a crime is committed, the suspect is detained and processed, a portrait is taken and copied, the subject escapes, the reproduced image is circulated, capture is immanent. By virtue of this schematic narrative structure, the image appears as more than a mere supplement or record of incarceration, but instead constitutes an additional corrective measure, an autonomous instrument of social control that addresses potential vulnerabilities.

Such a notion is underscored in a skeptical statement penned by a judge evaluating Fuentes's proposal. In a document dated February 16, 1861, several months after the photographer submitted his sample register, Melchor Vidaurre, chief justice of the Superior Court of Justice of Lima, opined that "[c]on el retrato del rematado se eterniza el recuerdo de su infamia, e impide que se pueda presentar

sin rubor en la sociedad a que debe reingresar" (qtd. in Majluf and Wuffarden 61). Adopting the liberal position that former criminals ought to be reintroduced to civilian life without bearing the stigma of being a convict, Vidaurre protests against a technique that results in, as Borges describes his narratives of notorious criminals (many from the nineteenth century), "la reducción de la vida entera de un hombre a dos o tres escenas" (7). At the same time that Fuentes's sample exhibits the likenesses of accused criminals, it offers photography as a potential solution to address the presumed weakness of the existing prison system by providing an answer to the seemingly rhetorical question posed by a court prosecutor in response to an earlier petition ("¿qué hacemos con retratos cuando los originales están paseándose por las calles de Lima y por los suburbios . . . ?"). Fuentes's proposal does not just promote photography as a mere extension of a repressive apparatus, but also as an instrument capable of regulating and reforming the inefficiencies of the penal system; it promises to capture (the image of) those prisoners who manage to escape or elude incarceration. As Vidaurre stresses, the effects of a prisoners' registry will exceed its intended uses.

Beyond the limitations of contemporary forms of policing, Fuentes's proposal alludes to techniques for imagining a collective popular subject through the serial reproduction of images. The document does not specify, however, whether those photographed were in fact criminals or simply anonymous models posing for Fuentes's project, or whether the images were taken in Fuentes's studio or elsewhere. The sample register is a speculative work that juxtaposes the silent presence of anonymous subjects' gazes with compact vignettes of dereliction, crime, and escape. Given the uncertainty of its subjects' identities, it calls attention to certain racial and cultural traits that prefigure such activities. As such, the artifact embodies the "double poetics of the image," which Jacques Rancière identifies as integral to photography: "the legible testimony of a history written on faces or objects and pure blocs of visibility, impervious to any narrativization, any intersection of meaning" (*The Future of the Image* 11). This poetics operates "by making the face of anonymous people speak twice over – as silent witnesses of a condition inscribed directly on their features, their clothes, their life setting; and as possessors of a secret we shall never know" (15). Arranged in a grid, framed by written commentary, these photographs activate a tension that cannot be reduced to a simple opposition between

an ostensible meaning and something which interrupts that meaning, but instead signals an indistinctness between the biological and social lives of the nameless subjects depicted.[11] Standing in for an imaginary whole, a larger and potentially unbound photographic registry, Fuentes's sample suggests a mode of representing the pueblo generally, as it integrates the photographic image into a discourse concerning the movements and activities of social actors in terms of patterns, tendencies, and habits. In contrast to the spontaneous outbursts of those who participated in the artisan protests of December 1858—"¡Viva el pueblo!"—, it imagines a collectivity rendered visible only through the internal exclusion of certain subjects. The sample register not only serves as an appendage of the Panopticon, it is also symptomatic of the broader debates regarding the criteria for citizenship and the nature of the sovereign bond.

In addition to the sparse notes regarding each subject, Fuentes's registry includes a lengthy paragraph that focuses on the specific photographic process employed and proposes other potential applications for the technology. Beyond any apparent panopticism, the repeated insistence on the reproduction and reproducibility of the photographic image corresponds to a logic of pure accumulation. In seeking to establish the worth of his initiative, Fuentes underscores that, unlike the fragile mirror-images impressed on the metal plates via the Daugerrean method, these photographs are—like *cartes-de-visite*—printed on durable paper, which is superior, because this material "puede quedarse en un libro, sin que ninguna clase de rosamiento, ni aun el agua puede destruirlo," and this technique makes possible "la multiplicación de copias totalmente iguales, a mas de quedar todavía el negativo ó molde que se reproduce al infinito" (see Figure 1). In this way, Fuentes continues, it is easy to assemble "un registro fácil, manuable y acelerado como el presente" and apply the method to a variety of situations, "[h]asta la filiación del ejército . . . habiéndome sugerido esta última idea el mismo Excelentísimo Señor Presidente."

This final comment reveals that, if Fuentes's original plan of realizing a national photographic registry was rejected, its organizing principle continues to underpin and justify its more modest variant. The prospectus forms part of an imaginary album, one that is indestructible and that endlessly gathers more images of all classes of national subjects.[12] In this respect, Fuentes's registry of prisoners anticipates the

simultaneous fads of bourgeois portraiture and the collectors' albums that assembled *cartes-de-visite* of subaltern subjects, which Deborah Poole studies in *Vision, Race, and Modernity: A Visual Economy of the Andean Image World*. She critiques Allan Sekula's study on nineteenth-century photographic archives of criminals, insisting that what is missing from his account "is any mention . . . of the thousands of native and criminal cartes de visite that joined—and indeed anticipated criminal photography in delimiting what Sekula aptly refers to as the 'terrain of the *other*'" (140). This "terrain of the *other*" is not, she emphasizes, solely the product of photography, but rather "specific conceptual linkage among race, photography, and the systems of commodification and exchange associated with capitalism" (140). The images of alterity contained in Fuentes's project articulate an alternative, if compatible logic of accumulation to the bourgeois *cartes-de-visite* and the *costumbrista* photographs, export items assembled in albums by European collectors. Whereas such albums stress the transference of images, the pictures of criminals are destined to be held by the state. This immobility contrasts with the transgression, capture, and (potential) escape that each individual photograph supposedly documents. In this respect, much more than offering a technology capable of identifying and apprehending individual criminals, Fuentes's insistence on the photographic image's reproducibility underscores how his registry carries out something akin to what Jens Andermann calls "visual primitive accumulation."[13] That is, the brute presence contained in these images is also a register of the displaced indigenous populations, former slaves, domestic workers, and underemployed artisans, among other popular subjects, whose positions within the corporatist colonial society have been rendered obsolete by the accelerated insertion of Peru into the global market with the onset of the guano boom. The speculative criminal profiles of Fuentes's registry associate images of Otherness with abandonment, disappearance, and flight; in other words, they illustrate the dangerous freedom of subjects who elude integration into a new economy and, in turn, into civic life.

Juan Fuentes's sample photographic registry exhibits a deep ambivalence toward popular subjects during a moment of conservative reaction to the rapid political and economic liberalization brought about by rapid growth. Instead of a curious footnote in the history of photography, an isolated effort of an enterprising eccentric, this project documents a moment that is hardly exceptional in the history of

nineteenth-century Latin America, but is instead, perhaps, an acutely intense version of the dilemmas faced throughout the continent. At the same time that its portraits of anonymous individuals traverse the limit between inclusion and exclusion, between visibility and invisibility, they also rehearse the potential powers of a state still in the process of construction. These composite vignettes of text and image constitute micro-narratives in which the state is, simultaneously, author, object, and audience, inscribing itself in the bare life and the histories ciphered in the faces of those outlaws it includes, and in those bodies it must count to legitimate itself. Fuentes's petitions and the prolonged debate they inspired were an integral part of a sustained response to what Silva Santisteban called the "furias populares" unleashed in reaction to laissez faire liberalism. They demonstrate how photography may have promised increased social control, but instead produced and reproduced an image of a pueblo that always eluded definitive capture.

As Ulrich Mücke points out in a review essay, a series of recent studies have proposed alternatives to the durable accounts of Latin American history in which the political lives of the fledgling countries were largely reduced to either conflicts between great men (*letrados* vs. caudillos) or inevitable, structural reactions to large-scale, geopolitical shifts. These works—by Erik Ching, Juan Luis Ossa Santa Cruz, and James E. Sanders, among others—"focus on the role of ordinary people, epistemological power, contingencies, and agencies of a great number of decision makers" in order to demonstrate the variety and intensity of debates regarding political modernity throughout Latin America during this conflictive period (697). A much-expanded archive of the nineteenth century demonstrates that the terrain of the battles to promote and legitimize a postcolonial order exceeded the boundaries of the so-called lettered city. A new understanding of the nineteenth century does not simply promote eclecticism for its own sake. Instead, it suggests how, during an accelerated period of modernization, different and sometimes competing forms of perception concurrently shaped the relation between popular actors and a nascent state apparatus.

Photography does not merely reflect or reinforce the express designs of the political elites who wish to utilize it, because it also registers the corporeal presence of subjects that can never be fully inscribed within official history, national or otherwise. In this respect, this intervention aspires to dialogue with a growing body of work on

the place of the image in nineteenth-century Latin American culture. More broadly still, it seeks to contribute to Ana María Ochoa's call for "a more diverse and contested history of the senses in the relation between listening, vision, orality, and the politics on inscription of sound than implied by the notion of the lettered city" (16). As Osterhammel states at the opening of *The Transformation of the World*, "[t]oday's perceptions of the nineteenth century are still strongly marked by its own self-perception" (3). If this is indeed the case, then our efforts to understand nineteenth-century Latin America as part of the convulsive processes of a global modernity must focus on the interaction between the manifold perceptual and political regimes of this era.

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NOTES

[1] I wish to offer my sincere thanks to Keith McElroy, who graciously shared his notes detailing the bureaucratic procedure surrounding Fuentes's multiple petitions.

[2] Fuentes's and Mariluz's proposals roughly coincide with the initial efforts to photograph prisoners in various locales. As Jonathan Finn notes, "[a]s early as 1841, the French police began producing daguerreotypes of prisoners. In the United States, the San Francisco Police Department began daguerreotyping prisoners in 1854, followed by police departments in New York in 1858, Cleveland in the late 1860s, and Chicago in 1870" (6). In "Fotógrafo de cárceles: Usos de la fotografía en las cárceles de la ciudad de México en el siglo XIX," Rosa Casanova and Olivier Debroise identify the publication of the *Reglamento para asegurar la identidad de los reos cuyas causas se sigan en la Ciudad de Mexico* (1855) as the first effort to take prisoners' photographs during a moment of intense political instability (18).

[3] As Beatriz Sarlo observes, "[l]a figura del inventor es clave tanto en *El juguete rabioso* como en *Los siete locos* y *Los lanzallamas*" (57). In these novels, as well as in several of Arlt's non-fiction *aguafuertes*, inventors aspire to strike it rich by making breakthrough scientific advances using only the scarce materials they have at hand. In García Márquez's classic novel *Cien años de soledad*, José Arcadio tinkers with alchemy, as well as with a daguerreotype, in hope of proving the existence of God (71).

[4] For an account of the attacks on guilds, see García-Bryce, especially pages 62–69.

[5] As Iñigo García-Bryce points out, "[t]he role of artisans as active political participants in crowds was not a new phenomenon" (59). He cites an adage that, according to Jorge

Basadre, circulated in the mid 1830s, surrounding the contested election between Gamarra and Orbegoso of 1834: "When the cathedral bell clanged, the artisans of Arequipa were noteworthy for abandoning their workshops and hurling themselves out into the streets, weapons in hand with a single question on their lips: whom do we fight for?"

[6] Natalia Sobrevilla Perea describes the raucous public demonstrations in favor of both Vivanco and Echenique during the 1850 presidential elections, and notes that "[e]lite groups found these public displays very threatening and were opposed to what they considered was the manipulation of artisans" (204).

[7] Silva Santisteban echoes this comment in his *Breves reflexiones*, when he muses that "la cuestión es una lucha de la holganza contra el trabajo, de los monopolios contra la libertad, de la barbarie contra la civilización" (25).

[8] As Graciela Montaldo argues, "la política moderna, y el siglo XIX particularmente en América Latina, será una lucha por definir el sentido de la palabra 'pueblo' y un uso de los otros términos colectivos para designar el lado peligroso del pacto político; entre ambos extremos la cultura ocupará un lugar central para legitimar o deslegitimar sujetos o grupos a través de las ideas de saber y gusto" (32).

[9] It is worth recalling an important, if often overlooked dimension of Doris Sommer's argument, explicitly laid out in the introduction of her influential *Foundational Fictions*: that most of the romantic novels she studies, while written during the middle decades of the nineteenth century, only became elevated to the status of national novels when intellectuals selectively adopted them as part of nationalist pedagogical projects towards the end of the century (30–31).

[10] As Sekula describes in "The Body and the Archive," Bertillon devised a "bipartite system" that first "combined photographic portraiture, anthropomorphic description, and highly standardized and abbreviated notes written on a single *fiche* or card" and then, "organized these cards within a comprehensive, statistically based filing system" (18). For a discussion on the relationship between photography and *costumbrismo*, see the first chapter of Erica Segre's *Intersected Identities: Strategies of Visualisation in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-century Mexican Culture* (5–58).

[11] Agamben argues that "the decisive fact [of modern politics] is that, together with the process by which the exception everywhere becomes the rule, the real of bare life – which is originally situated at the margins of the political order – gradually begins to coincide with the political realm, and exclusion and inclusion, outside and inside, *bios* and *zoe*, right and fact, enter into a zone of irreducible indistinction" (9).

[12] As Alan Sekula asserts, the nineteenth-century reformists that conceived of modern penal discourse did so by using race, class, and physiognomy to determine which

criminals could potentially be reformed. As such, "it was on the basis of mutual comparison, on the basis of the tentative construction of a larger, 'universal' archive, that the zones of deviance and respectability could be clearly demarcated" (Sekula 14).

[13] Andermann argues, "as a visual narrative, the expansion of the liberal state and the capitalist form of production work by means of the capture of subaltern bodies and 'natural' spaces, in a temporality that moves toward a constantly deferred scene in which the capture of space and violent submission of a body cast as bare life come to coincide" (203). What Fuentes's registry—focused more on urban criminality—suggests, rather than the frontier violence (that is the focus of Andermann's study), is that photography is less about effecting a definitive capture than it is about regulating the flows and movements of those elements of a population the state cannot fully control or assimilate into a national pueblo.

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Keywords: photography, popular subjects, republicanism, Peru, guano.

Palabras clave: fotografía, sujetos populares, republicanismo, Perú, guano.

Date of Receipt: March 8, 2018
Date of Acceptance: August 2, 2018