

RECENT LATIN AMERICAN PHOTOGRAPHY BOOKS

Edward Ranney
University of New Mexico

- GRANDDAUGHTERS OF CORN: PORTRAITS OF GUATEMALAN WOMEN.* By Marilyn Anderson and Jonathan Garlock. (Willimantic, Conn.: Curbstone Press, 1988. Pp. 124. \$35.00 cloth, \$19.95 paper.)
- EADWEARD MUYBRIDGE IN GUATEMALA, 1875: THE PHOTOGRAPHER AS SOCIAL RECORDER.* By E. Bradford Burns. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987. Pp. 136. \$35.00.)
- PICTURE COLLECTIONS, MEXICO: A GUIDE TO PICTURE SOURCES IN THE UNITED MEXICAN STATES.* By Martha Davidson, with Carlota Duarte and Raúl Solano Núñez. (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1988. Pp. 292. \$49.50.)
- PODRIA SER YO: LOS SECTORES POPULARES URBANOS EN IMAGEN Y PALABRA.* By Elizabeth Jelin and Pablo Vila, photographs by Alicia D'Amico. (Buenos Aires: CEDES and Ediciones de la Flor, 1987. Pp. 153.)
- JUCHITAN DE LAS MUJERES.* By Graciela Iturbide and Elena Poniatowska. (Mexico City: Ediciones Toledo, 1989. Pp. 107.)
- IMAGES OF HISTORY: NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY LATIN PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTS.* By Robert Levine. (Durham, N.C., and London: Duke University Press, 1989. Pp. 216. \$72.50.)
- WINDOWS ON LATIN AMERICA: UNDERSTANDING SOCIETY THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHS.* Edited by Robert M. Levine. (Coral Gables, Fla.: North-South Center, University of Miami, 1987. Pp. 142. \$14.95.)
- EARLY PERUVIAN PHOTOGRAPHY: A CRITICAL CASE STUDY.* By Keith McElroy. (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI Research Press, 1985. Pp. 192. \$42.95.)
- EL LIBRO DE LOS ENCANTADOS.* By Javier Silva Meinel. (Lima: Imágenes del Perú, 1989.)

Increasingly since the mid-1970s, a number of important books and articles presenting Latin American photography to the world have been appearing and gaining a widening audience. Also crucial to the contemporary scene have been photography conferences, two in Mexico accompanied by catalogues, *Hecho en Latinoamerica* I (1978) and II (1981), and the Tercer Coloquio Latinoamericano de Fotografía held in Havana in 1984. National colloquia have also been convened recently in Mexico,

Ecuador, and Peru. These meetings have served to define certain aspects and problematic issues of Latin American photography, giving contemporary practitioners increasing self-awareness and confidence in global as well as national terms. They have also helped establish Latin American photographic history as an important field in its own right.

Indications of reverberations of these activities outside Latin America have surfaced most evidently in large exhibits like that held at the Kunsthhaus, a museum in Zurich, in 1981, entitled "Latin American Photography from 1860 until the Present." This exhibit traveled widely in Europe and was accompanied by a catalogue in German, which was later translated into Spanish. Reproducing some 350 photographs of nineteenth- and twentieth-century practitioners, this catalogue constitutes a valuable visual reference to the field. Essays by curator Erika Billeter and by Boris Kossy and María Eugenia Haya provide helpful introductory background to the work presented.¹ Unfortunately, the exhibit did not travel to the United States, nor was the catalogue translated into English. In 1987, however, the prominent U.S. photographic organization Aperture devoted an entire issue of its *Quarterly of Photography* to Latin American photography and organized its own traveling show on the subject.² Events like these bring immediate if sometimes superficial visibility to a neglected field of interest, with the publications becoming important source materials. Other less publicized works, however, often provide the key resource material on which research in the field depends.

One such work is Keith McElroy's *Early Peruvian Photography: A Critical Case Study*, one of the few closely researched works outlining nineteenth-century photographic history in Latin America. This book is a condensed version of McElroy's dissertation, which covered the period from 1837 until 1876. The critical biographies of the major practitioners were omitted from the book, but it does include more than eighty images, along with appendices listing photographers active in Peru during the nineteenth century and a glossary of Spanish and Quechua terms. *Early Peruvian Photography* includes such chapters as "The Daguerrean Era," "The Age of the Carte-de-Visite," and "The Business of Photography." McElroy is particularly interested in the business topic, commenting that "photography in nineteenth-century Peru was more a business than an art." His detailed analysis of how a photographic studio functioned as a competitive capitalistic enterprise provides an in-depth economic portrait of the period. McElroy also addresses broader and richer cultural issues in

1. See Erika Billeter, *Fotografie Lateinamerika, von 1860 bis Heute* (Zurich: Kunsthhaus, 1981), published in Spanish as *Fotografía latinoamericana, desde 1860 hasta nuestros días* (Madrid: El Viso, 1981).

2. See *Aperture Quarterly of Photography* (published in New York), no. 109 (Winter 1987), a special issue entitled *Latin American Photography*.

discussing, for example, how the *carte de visite* was one of the few elements in Victorian society, especially in Latin America, that functioned in a truly democratic way. McElroy explains, "All men were truly created equal under the protection of that cardboard mount, and this became progressively true as the phenomenal output and heightened competitions of the palatial salons brought the price of owning portraits well within the reach of even the servant class" (p. 22). The visual stimulus to Limeños—whether frightened by portrayals of a mass murderer, confronted by images of Indians from the interior of Peru, or impressed and amused by their own images and social postures—was tremendous and marked the beginning of vernacular imagery that could be read as rich social history.

Although the earliest daguerreotype McElroy found in Lima collections dates from 1846, it is known that practitioners like French immigrant Maximiliano Danti were working by May of 1842, a full month before a similar studio opened in Berlin. The early practitioners were, predictably, foreigners. Not until 1856 did the first Peruvian national, Juan Fuentes, open a studio. He offered the innovation of selling his customers their portrait negatives, complete with instructions on how to print them. McElroy points out that the rapid growth of paper photography in the late 1850s set the stage for the grand salon, an important social and artistic innovation for Lima because it functioned as a gallery and evening meeting place. Stiff competition characterized the photographic community, with such prominent practitioners as H. D. W. Moulton and V. L. Richardson brought down from New York, only to be lured from one studio to another. This practice caused great rancor and ill-feeling, which were all recorded in the Lima newspapers. No other photographic historian, with the possible exception of Brazilian Boris Kossoy, has examined any aspect of Latin America's early photographic development as closely as McElroy has or provided as thorough a factual account of what actually went on. McElroy also considers broad cultural themes, relating photography's look at native customs to the "costumbrista" recording of Peruvian themes begun by artists like J. M. Rugendas in the early 1840s. The interesting photographic studies used by prominent academic painter Francisco Laso in his paintings around 1868 are also examined.

While the plates of *Early Peruvian Photography* are small and poorly reproduced, they nevertheless convey a distinct sense of the social and historical scenes in Lima. Items from the Courret archive of some two hundred thousand largely unprinted plates in Lima's Biblioteca Nacional figure prominently, as does the work of V. L. Richardson and Ricardo Villalba in documenting the development of Peru's southern railroad system.

The modest production of McElroy's book is not surprising, considering the publisher and the author's factual orientation. It is lamentable, however, that the University of California Press, in publishing E. Brad-

ford Burns's *Eadweard Muybridge in Guatemala, 1875*, did not understand the importance of using higher quality paper and reproduction for this volume. The photographs were selected from two rare albums of original prints, both entitled "The Pacific Coast of Central America and Mexico; The Isthmus of Panama; Guatemala; and the Cultivation and Shipment of Coffee. Illustrated by Muybridge, San Francisco, 1876." The two complete albums from which Burns reproduced images for this book are housed in the Department of Special Collections of the Stanford University Libraries. Other single albums of the photographs can be found in the collections of the California State Library in Sacramento and the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

Burns begins his brief text by acknowledging that "Muybridge was one of the most outstanding and innovative photographers of the nineteenth century." The author's perspective is underscored in the work's subtitle, *The Photographer as Social Recorder*, which also points out that the work was something of an anomaly for a photographer widely known for his meticulous landscape views of Yosemite. The Guatemalan photographs were done when Muybridge was at the height of his powers, working with the wet-plate process, and they represent a cohesive body of work unparalleled in Latin American historical photography. Given the clarity of the original prints, it is unfortunate that contemporary historians and students of serious photography cannot make out the detail and space of the images as clearly as these photographs merit.

Muybridge's work was commissioned by the Pacific Mail Steamship Company. It was trying desperately to reawaken the interest of travelers and capitalists in sea travel, after completion of the transcontinental railroad had undercut the popularity of the Panama Canal maritime route. Burns explains that Muybridge photographed Guatemala during a period of transition and that the eighty-three photographs were selected and arranged "to highlight the process of transformation from a traditional to a more modernized society." The last sequence of thirty-two images entitled "Coffee, the Agent of Change" emphasize coffee's role in effecting change in Guatemala. Muybridge photographed the entire cycle of coffee production, from land clearing to shipment to world markets. The exceptional visual organization of the images reflect Muybridge's fifteen years as a landscape photographer. Here his work parallels that of Carleton Watkins, another California landscape photographer who documented man's role in modifying the natural environment. Like Watkins, Muybridge had an unusual ability to select a vantage point for his large-view camera, often shooting from above. He also took extreme care in arranging the figures in the landscape, creating exquisite compositions that convey a peaceful and orderly sense of scene. As Burns points out, this effect presumably was intended to reassure foreigners contemplating travel and investment in a relatively unknown area.

Muybridge's views of Guatemala City are as interesting for their sophisticated spatial rendering of architecture as for their documentation of colonial buildings, many of which were subsequently destroyed in the 1917 earthquake. The views of towns, villages, and the countryside display idyllic vistas and well-ordered rural settlements. Only occasionally are the highland Indians and the tropical laborers on the coffee plantations photographed close up, as in a startling image of an Indian face framed by a circular cut in a large altar stone once used for astronomical observation or calendrical ritual.

Aside from Burns's twenty-page introduction focusing mostly on the political development of Guatemala in the nineteenth century, he limits the text preceding each section of photographs to a few pages of historical background. These informative sections offer evocative references to Guatemalan fiction and travel accounts. More information on Muybridge himself, how he worked, and the photographic context in which he worked, however, would have given the reader a clearer sense of how unusual this work is in the context of Latin American photography. *Eadweard Muybridge in Guatemala* nevertheless takes its place as a key source book for Latin American images in the recent literature on the subject.³

It is intriguing to observe how source materials from some of the books just cited reappear in recent interpretive works such as Robert Levine's *Images of History*. As editor of the *South Eastern Latin Americanist*, Levine previously dedicated an entire issue (that of June–September 1987) to a volume entitled *Windows on Latin America: Understanding Society through Photographs*. This special issue featured twelve brief essays illustrated with photographs, ranging from a brief outline of nineteenth-century Brazilian photography by Boris Kossoy to examinations of vernacular images documenting baseball in Yucatán and soccer in Peru. The collection ends with a valuable bibliography on photography in Latin America compiled by Martha Davidson. It consists of four sections: historical photography, contemporary photography, photography as a research tool, and source directories. The bibliography represented a valuable addition to the field, but as Levine's own wide-ranging bibliography in *Images of History* indicates, it already needs to be updated with numerous additions.

The seeds of *Images of History: Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Latin American Photographs as Documents* are readily apparent in Levine's

3. Other major contributions to this literature are Gilberto Ferrez and Weston J. Naef, *Pioneer Photographers of Brazil, 1840–1920* (New York: Center for Inter-American Relations, 1976); Keith F. Davis, *Desiré Charnay, Expeditionary Photographer* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1981); Hack Hoffenberg, *Nineteenth-Century South America in Photographs* (New York: Dover, 1982); and Billeter, *Fotografía latinoamericana desde 1860 hasta nuestros días*.

introduction to the earlier *Windows on Latin America* and his lead essay, "Stillness and Time: Glimpses of History." In this essay, he points out that "the rise of photographic reportage to document social injustice in Europe and the U.S. in the 1880s did not occur in Latin America." Even in the twentieth century, he finds no publications that might have paralleled work like James Agee's and Walker Evans's *Now Let Us Praise Famous Men* (1936). Yet Cuban writer and photographer María Eugenia Haya (known as Marucha) points out early work indicating to her that Latin American photography did begin to serve as a social witness. She cites Marc Ferrez's photographic documents on mining in Brazil, W. Bati's images of war atrocities in Paraguay in 1866, and Cuban "country photography" that recorded "Mambisa" life between 1868 and 1895.⁴ Marucha might still concur with Levine's view that Latin American society tended to deny evidence of social inequality, resulting in a lack of work such as that published by socially aware photographers Lewis Hine and Jacob Riis in the United States. Levine concludes that researchers in Latin America must therefore look for the "intimate detail" of everyday life as clues to historical realities in photographs by amateurs and in family albums, in addition to analyzing the work of professionals. But even as he proposes guidelines for reading vernacular photographs, Levine is well aware of the complexities of subjective interpretation and the difficulty of interpreting family photographs not because of what they show (those often touching memories of ceremonial occasions) but because of what they omit (evidence of family discord or misfortune).

Before outlining an approach to reading photographs for their historical evidence in *Images in History*, Levine provides an interpretive overview of the history of photography in Latin America. In discussing photography's first decade in the region, he summarizes the early photographic experiments of Hercules Florence in Brazil, which presaged the official announcement of photography's invention in Europe by some six years. Like McElroy, Levine cites the *carte de visite* as the innovation of the 1860s that significantly opened up photographic activity and subject matter. It led to studies of "types," such as romanticized portraits of indigenous subjects, and also to the documents of street vendors (in the manner of August Sander) made in Rio de Janeiro by Marc Ferrez (1843–1923). Within the restricted development of Latin American photography, Ferrez stands out as a figure of major importance, although his significance is not apparent from the pictures reproduced in *Images in History*.⁵

4. *Aperture*, no. 109:60–62. The article in *Aperture* is the English version of Marucha's slide lecture, "Fotografía en Latinoamérica," given at the Primer Coloquio Nacional de Fotografía, held in Pachuca, Hidalgo, Mexico, 7–10 June 1984. The Spanish version of the talk is printed in the catalogue accompanying the conference, which was published by the Consejo Mexicano de Fotografía in 1984.

5. The work of Marc Ferrez is presented in a book just published: Gilberto Ferrez, *Photog-*

In this regard, the full-page reproductions in the 1981 Kunsthau catalog are helpful as a visual reference for juxtaposing the work of Ferrez with that of Benito Panunzi of Argentina and the photographer known only as Heffer of Chile. Levine cites them both as two of Latin America's best early documentarians.

Levine correctly asserts that Latin American "view photography" after 1860 fell behind that of the United States and Europe. Hence the salience of Muybridge's Central American work is to be found in its technical quality and consistency of seeing. Yet the work of other photographers like Argentines Fernando Paillet and Samuel Boote also have much to offer along these lines, specifically Paillet's direct, large-format views of provincial industrial interiors and Boote's striking images of the grimy conditions of gaucho life on the pampa.⁶ These images reveal the existence of professional photographers, along with amateurs, who were indeed paying attention to the banal realities of everyday life. Their stories are only just beginning to be appreciated and understood (let alone published) in instances where the material and data are recoverable. Augustín Víctor Casasola, the press photographer whose work followed the Mexican Revolution closely beginning in 1910, is the obvious major exception and a kind of watershed for Latin America's awakening to the emotional power as well as the historical value of photojournalistic imagery. Levine cites Casasola's work as having later influenced the art-photography movement, "personified by Manuel Alvarez Bravo." Unfortunately, Levine does not address the issue of whether the legacies of art photographers can provide relevant information about the period from which they date.

Levine concludes his historical overview, "Order and Progress," by examining work found in two unique twentieth-century archives of Peruvian studio photographers: that of Sebastián Rodríguez of Moracocha, which was found, studied, and reprinted by Fran Antman; and that of Martín Chambi in Cuzco, similarly brought to light in the past twenty years by this reviewer.⁷ Both photographers are unusual for their

raphy in Brazil, 1840–1900, translated by Stella de Sá Rego (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991).

6. Paillet's work has been published in *Fernando Paillet: Fotografías, 1894–1940* (Buenos Aires: Fundación Antorchas, 1987).

7. Fran Antman's doctoral thesis, "Sebastián Rodríguez' View from Within: The Work of an Andean Photographer in the Mining Town of Moracocha, Peru, 1928 to 1968," was published by UMI Research Press in Ann Arbor in 1988. Antman is now adapting this material for trade publication with the University of New Mexico Press. A portfolio of Rodríguez's photographs was published in *Aperture*, no. 90 (1983) as "The Peasant Miners of Moracocha," text by Fran Antman. Numerous articles have appeared on Chambi's work since 1977. The most helpful are Edward Ranney, "Martín Chambi," *Earthwatch News* 1, no. 1 (1979), published in Belmont, Mass. (the same article, translated into Spanish and adapted by the editors, appeared in *Photo Vision*, no. 3 [1981], published in Madrid); Roderic Camp, "Martín Chambi, Photographer of the Andes," *LARR* 13, no. 2 (1978):223–28; Roderic Camp, "Pioneer

Indian heritage and the manner in which they readily adopted traditional studio conventions to an expressive documentary style. Rodríguez's work focused mostly on miners and their families employed by the Cerro de Pasco Corporation in the central highlands of Peru. In the voluminous archive of Chambi's photos, commissioned portraits of Cuzco's elite society are counterbalanced by his personal documents of indigenous life and the Inca heritage of southern Peru. Levine's reading of both photographers is instructive and provides a good transition to his final two chapters explaining the historical interpretation of photographs. In Chambi's work, Levine picks up on the relationships of social classes and the playful satire often conveyed by this mestizo in his commissioned portraits. It should be mentioned, however, that the photographer was partly able to depict the elite as he did because he was himself an acculturated member of Cuzco's bourgeois society. As is evident from his self-portraits, Chambi greatly enjoyed the improved products and refinements of European culture. In Rodríguez's work, the inescapable grimness of the mestizos' role in the mining industry is unequivocally depicted in matter-of-fact, often harsh images. Yet the effect of seeing mourners gathered around a dead miner or (as the caption states) an aging rapist photographed along with his child victim, two policemen, and a leering onlooker speaks poignantly of the conditions of these people's lives.

The second half of *Images of History*, "Photographs as Evidence," is considerably longer than the first part and contains the majority of the book's 225 photographs. Its content is generally more descriptive and questioning than the informative first half. In making suggestions for reading photographs, Levine applies ten general themes to selected images, asking the reader to examine them in light of such concerns as society's values and norms, the photographer's intention, the description of social relationships, and the possibility of finding unexpected or suppressed information. In discussing Muybridge's work in Guatemala in the context of society's values and norms, Levine interprets his photographs as endorsements of the government's program for creating a society in terms of European ideals, one lacking much concern for the native population. Levine introduces more complicated levels of reading images with thought-provoking questions. "Does the photograph reveal overt or covert culture?" (p. 106). "Does the photograph reveal something society chose to deny?" (p. 112). "Do photographs mislead inadvertently?" (p. 98). Several extremely important factors should be considered: where and in what

Photographer of Peru," *Americas* 30, no. 3 (1978); Max Kosloff, "Chambi of Cuzco," in *The Privileged Eye* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987); and Fernando Castro Ramírez, *Martín Chambi: de Coaza al MOMA* (Lima: Centro de Estudios e Investigación de la Fotografía, 1989). Several additional books on Chambi are being prepared in the United States, Peru, and Spain.

context a photograph was found; how it was originally captioned or later re-identified; and any cropping of the photo, either in its original version or in reproduction. Unfortunately, Levine himself seems prone to crop images without informing the reader in order to emphasize certain details. In cropping important images by Martín Chambi such as "Indians on a Bench" (originally captioned in exhibitions as "Indians Testifying, Palace of Justice, Cuzco") and the "Gadea Wedding," Levine sets an unacceptable precedent for other researchers, one that could lead to distorted readings. He also does the viewer as well as the photographer a grievous disservice. Cropping should always be identified and should be approved by copyright holders.

The questions that Levine raises in "Reading Photographs," particularly regarding looking for "unexpected or suppressed information," often elicit more clearly defined answers when two photographs are examined together, as in the final chapter, "Posed Worlds and Alternate Realities." Here Levine juxtaposes images from the professional studio with more casual photographs, often snapshots from family albums. The question "How did people pose for the camera?" actually asks several questions that relate as much to the conventions of studio photography as to sociological norms or the whims of different personalities. The line between the posed and unposed image can also be narrow, particularly if the photographer has a flair for orchestrating people and inspiring unexpected visual anecdotes, as Chambi's dynamic arrangements of group portraits reveal. Different pictures by one photographer can also provide strikingly different views of a scene or condition, as exemplified by the paired images of slaves by Marc Ferrez. One image shows the "coffee workers" beautifully arranged in a classically conceived landscape, another reveals a group of "tired plantation workers" posed close up. Like Levine, the reader is struck by "how their faces and slumped physiognomies convey weariness." In juxtaposing other images of commerce, the military, work, and urban versus rural life, Levine employs the historian's factual expertise to great interpretive advantage. Many images are certainly capable of reducing "truth to fact," yet the success of this endeavor depends not only on the degree to which an interpreter knows the "social context in which a photograph was taken" (to quote Levine) but also on his or her judgment in using selected information and on understanding the photographer's personality and methods. Photographs cannot always be counted on to yield a literal meaning or definitive reading, and this inherent limitation must be accepted as part of the medium's power and fascination. Yet Levine's efforts in intelligently discussing the historical and interpretive aspects of Latin American photography constitute a significant contribution to the field. It is to be hoped that such efforts will lead to support for necessary projects like a definitive, well-produced history of photography in Latin America during the nineteenth century.

Of timely importance regarding the developing interest in photographic archives is a resource volume entitled *Picture Collections, Mexico; A Guide to Picture Sources in the United Mexican States*. This volume was edited by Martha Davidson in collaboration with Carlota Duarte and Raúl Solano Núñez. It is a guide to more than five hundred sources of pictures—paintings, drawings, maps, posters, and stamps as well as photographs, all of which were made and preserved in Mexico (cinematographic material was excluded). Collections are listed in separate categories, such as public archives, libraries, museums, individual photographers, private collectors, and publishers. Six indexes itemizing topical subjects, geographic location, and individual artists allow the reader easy access to particular subjects. Each entry lists the collection's address and telephone, the nature and amount of material represented, subjects and dates covered, the archive's availability to researchers, fees for reproduction, and a brief comment on the collection. Davidson's short introduction provides explicit guidelines explaining how to use these collections and defines the categories of materials they hold. Some forty reproductions give the reader a sense of the resources available. The value of *Picture Collections, Mexico* to the nonspecialist as well as the specialized researcher is inestimable, and it can only be hoped that similar volumes on other Latin American countries will be published in the near future.

Forming a substantial part of Davidson's picture sources are listings for contemporary Mexican photographers. Although these kinds of resources are difficult to track down, the work of such photographers is now more widely known due to the Río de Luz series issued by the Mexican Fondo de Cultura Económica. Since 1984 more than fifteen well-printed paperback monographs have been published on topics ranging from the Víctor Casasola archive to contemporary national artists such as Pedro Meyer, Nacho López, and Graciela Iturbide as well as foreigners living and working in Latin America.⁸ Iturbide's most recent book, *Juchitán de las mujeres*, has also been published by Ediciones Toledo, bringing a larger format and distinctive treatment to an unusual body of personal work. Published with a brief introduction by Elene Poniatowska, these images convey a strong sense of the vibrant communal life and ritual that is so much a part of Juchitán's Zapotecan culture. They are particularly evident in the exuberant physicality of the women.

A selection of Iturbide's work was also featured in *Aperture's* issue on Latin American photography. Edmundo Desnoes commented in that issue on Latin American photographers' inclination to "let [themselves] be seen, included, accepted" while working. He relates this tendency to the social function of the plaza, a space where people gather to be seen, to

8. A list of titles in the Río de Luz series may be obtained from the Fondo de Cultura Económica, México, Avenida de la Universidad 975, 03100 Mexico D.F.

exchange gestures and words. This trait is also evident in the role played by the photographic book for the contemporary Latin American photographer. Editor and designer Pablo Ortiz Monasterio, who has helped shape many of the books in the Río de Luz series, explains, "We make a special effort to do books, because we don't have a market to sell photographs and we can't organize a show that will circulate nationwide with lots of publicity. . . . To circulate our discourses, the book is very important. . . . We all understand, in terms of political education, how this nation is being influenced by other nations, that it [publishing] is an important project, not for short-term, but long-term results, like your own Farm Security Administration."⁹ These same attitudes and needs were manifested recently in Peru with the publication of *El libro de los encantados* by photographer Javier Silva Meinel. This work begins to set standards of production for personal expression as well as for social self-awareness in that country. Released concurrently with Peru's first photography colloquium in November 1989, Silva's book was recognized as an affirmation of the medium's potential for personal expression and a serious building block for a national photographic tradition.

Two other recently received works are notable for their personal statements. Marilyn Anderson, a U.S. photographer, has been working in Guatemala with highland Indian women, documenting their weaving traditions while honoring their courage as they endure the brunt of the abuse of human rights in their country. In *Granddaughters of Corn: Portraits of Guatemalan Women*, Anderson's beautifully printed static portraits of women and children are juxtaposed against factual writing and quotations compiled by Jonathan Garlock evoking the tribulations of Guatemalan people at the hands of the military. The names, ages, and dates of disappearance of women who vanished in Guatemala between January 1983 and August 1986 run like a leitmotif below the photographs, a litany of repression (see illustration on p. 234).

A second work with a similar perspective is the modest Argentine volume published by the Centro de Estudios de Estado y Sociedad (CEDES). *Podría ser yo: los sectores populares urbanos en imagen y palabra* is composed of photographs by Alicia D'Amico and text compiled by Elizabeth Jelin and Pablo Vila. Unlike *Granddaughters of Corn*, this work is intended to be seen not as a photographic monograph but as a document of social self-examination, thanks to text selections recording the subjects' reaction on seeing their lives and conditions in the photographs. This experiment is a fascinating one—a raw, newspaper-like document of aspiration and despair, of debased living conditions underscored by poignant moral and political observations. Historian Robert Levine would have appreciated

9. See *Aperture*, no. 109 (Winter 1987):73.

the visual material very much, had it have been unearthed from fifty years earlier. In the case of *Podría ser yo*, the photographer and authors seem to be not only relinquishing technical finesse for factual legitimacy but yielding the book's content and organization to a collaborative voice of the people who are struggling to survive in the barrios of Buenos Aires. It is significant and, one hopes, instructive that books like these are appearing in Latin America at this time.

It is also to be hoped that, along with a widening audience for Latin American photographers within their own countries and abroad, increased support will become available for investigating and preserving historical Latin American photographic archives. Despite difficult circumstances in countries facing internal terrorist threats, such as Colombia and Peru, encouraging developments indicate that even in these beleaguered areas, certain individuals and institutions are aware of the unique legacies that their historical photographic archives constitute.¹⁰ Preservation of many unappreciated private collections still remains possible and is needed in the metropolitan centers of Latin America as much as in isolated provincial areas.

10. Patricia Londoño summarizes activities recuperating historical archives in Colombia in "El patrimonio fotográfico en Colombia: estado de la cuestión," *Estudios Sociales* 2 (May 1988). This journal is published by the Fundación Antioqueña para los Estudios Sociales, Apartado 8650, Medellín, Colombia. The Fototeca Andina, functioning as part of the Centro de Estudios Rurales Andinos "Bartolomé de las Casas" in Cuzco, has established itself as a major resource for early-twentieth-century photographs, negatives, and material focusing on Cuzco and Peru's southern highlands. Fototeca's first publication will present the photographs of Juan Manuel Figueroa Aznar (1878–1951). Further information may be obtained from Fototeca Andina, Casilla 265, Cuzco, Peru.