CÉSAR MORO BETWEEN INDIGENISM AND SURREALISM

by

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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Current scholarship too narrowly studies Peruvian surrealist César Moro's (1903-1956) graphic and poetic works as two equivalent mechanisms of expression and overemphasizes his rupture from surrealism in 1942. In this thesis, I integrate study of Moro's plastic and graphic works with his curatorial endeavors and revise common perception of his definitive break from surrealism, focusing instead on his turn to surrealism in 1927. Engaged in efforts to combat the repression of indigenous and pre-Columbian histories in Peru during the 1930s, I argue that Moro employed surrealist collage as a decolonial enterprise in order to oppose the entrenched nationalism of *indigenismo* artwork, the most important movement of Peruvian modernism. This thesis demonstrates that Moro's crticism of pictorial *indigenismo* artists like Peruvian José Sabogal (b. 1888-1956), leader of the movement, has its roots in his surrealist collage enterprise and continues even after his defect from surrealism in 1942.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure Page

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Peruvian artist César Moro (b. 1901-1956) has in recent decades, and more currently in the wake of the publication of a collection of his private papers by the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, been recognized as a leading conduit of the surrealist movement between France and Latin America during the interwar period. Because Moro's graphic works are few and rarely exhibited, exploration of the influence of surrealism on Moro's artistic practice has been limited to frameworks of poetry, surrealist journals, and exhibition planning. Few studies have integrated these activities with the specific formal properties of Moro's plastic and graphic works.

Despite this shortfall, Moro's commitment to the surrealist movement is identifiable in his experimentation with collage, one of the leading forms of plastic expression of interwar surrealism. The medium itself, which integrates both text and image, is exemplary of surrealist aesthetics through its cut and paste method to evoke displacement of space and time and decontextualize otherwise coherent narrative and visual forms. Engaged in efforts to combat the repression of indigenous and pre-Columbian histories in Peru, Moro employed surrealist collage in order to counter the representational tradition pervasive in the leading Peruvian artistic movement known as *indigenismo.* This thesis argues that Moro's turn away from *indigenismo* in his initial encounter with the surrealists in 1927 marks the beginning of the artist's adherence to a decolonial aesthetic enterprise whose aim is to expose a pre-rational aesthetic sensibility

which goes beyond Peru's colonial history.[1] Furthermore, this thesis demonstrates that Moro's surrealist collage tactics in the visual arts by the mid 1930s plays an informative role in his work on the organization of two international surrealist exhibitions held in Lima in 1935, and in Mexico City, Mexico in 1940, and his important anti-*indigenismo* critical essay "On Painting in Peru" published in 1939.

This thesis relies heavily on the research of scholars conducted as part of the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles symposium "Vivísimo Muerto: Surrealism in Latin America", a major initiative begun in 2009 in which scholars began to research the extensive archive of Latin American surrealist materials held at the GRI. The resulting anthology *Surrealism in Latin America: Vivísimo Muerto*, published by the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles in 2012, presents a rich and invaluable narrative of Moro's itinerant biography in three articles focused on Moro's art and poetry in relation to his surrealist activity.

Dawn Ades's essay "We Who Have Neither Church Nor Country", the first major source for this thesis, describes Moro's progressive ambivalence toward painting as a medium as an act on the part of the artist demonstrative of his wholehearted commitment to surrealism by the early 1930s.[2] Yolanda Westphalen studies the semiotics of time and space within epistolary and poetic writing of Moro in her essay "Semiotics of the Body and the Passions in César Moro's Love Letters and Poems." Kent Dickson's essay "Making the Stone Speak: César Moro and the Object" discusses the manifestation of

[1] The terminology used here, 'decolonial aesthetic enterprise' and 'pre-rational sensibility', is drawn from Alejandro Vallega's work on decolonial aesthetics. See Alejandro Vallega, *Latin American Philosophy from Identity to Radical Exteriority* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014).

[2] Dawn Ades, "We Who Have Neither Church Nor Country," in *Surrealism in Latin America: Vivísimo Muerto,* ed. Dawn Ades, Rita Eder, and Graciela Speranza (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2012), pp. 18-20.

Moro's interest in ethnographic and pre-Columbian artifacts in symbolic, poetic terms. Dickson considers Moro's conflation of ethnographic documents with the surrealist object as addressing "fresh analytical approaches to folk-art objects and pre-Columbian art in Latin American letters"[3] which engage nonnationalist conceptions of indigenous art that produce collateral social and aesthetic change.[4] Dickson's argument raises an important question concerning the intersection between the avant-garde and revolutionary aesthetic projects of modernism in Peru, a major point which this thesis addresses.

Annette Leddy and Donna Conwell's exhibition *Farewell to Surrealism: The* Dyn *Circle in Mexico* and their accompanying catalogue published by the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles in 2013, is the first English language publication to contextualize the extent of Moro's involvement with the dissident surrealist publication, *Dyn.* Donna Conwell's essay "The Photographic Aesthetic of *Dyn*" importantly frames Moro's postsurrealist contributions to the journal as a continuing critique of pictorial *indigenismo.*

Other scholars have addressed the topos of minerals, maritime themes, love and most significantly, exile, within Moro's poetry and personal correspondence. Most recently, in her 2012 presentation "César Moro: Exile and Poetic Imagination," Melanie Nicholson argues that Moro responds to the lived situation of exile in France and in

[3] Kent Dickson, "Making the Stone Speak: César Moro and the Object" in *Surrealism in Latin America: Vivísimo Muerto,* ed. Dawn Ades, Rita Eder, and Graciela Speranza (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2012), pp. 71.

[4] Dickson, "Making the Stone Speak" pp. 71.

Mexico City by engaging the poetic imagination and, in the face of displacement, continually reinvents his lyric identity.[5]

Yet, until present, scholars have too narrowly interpreted Moro's plastic and graphic works in terms of these motifs identified in his poetry and writing. For example, Kent Dickson's article "César Moro's Impossible Futures: *L'art de lire l'avenir*" considers Moro's 1935 collage *L'art de lire l'avenir* (fig. 1) and his 1942 poem of the same title as two episodes in a continuing meditation of a common theme.[6] Dickson describes this relationship as follows:

> "Both pieces [are] statements about artistic practice in two degrees of optimism. The collage, forcefully exemplifying surrealist technique through its construction, tears down bourgeois (that is, nineteenth-century) art but posits a revolutionary art working towards a hopeful future both at the level of the individual and that of the society. The poem, no less dedicated to the efficacy and value of new art (embodied in powerful trance the poet enters through automatic writing), leaves aside questions of social change to focus entirely on the poet-speaker."[7]

Though not exclusively concerned with the relationship between surrealist poetry and visual art, my thesis fully embraces scholarship that situates these two distinct aesthetic processes within the surrealist project of disruption. However, in my analysis, consideration of Moro's poetry and visual art as two equivalent processes of expression limits understanding of the revolutionary quality of Moro's plastic and graphic works in the context of Peruvian modernism.

What's more, analysis of visual strategies in Moro's drawings and collages to date

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[5] Melanie Nicholson, "César Moro: Exile and Poetic Imagination," (paper presented at the annual Mid-America Conference on Hispanic Literature, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, October 12-14, 2012). See also Nicholson's chapter "Peru: The Surrealist Space between Mariátequi and Vallejo" in *Surrealism in Latin American Literature: Searching for Breton's Ghost,* (New York: St. Martin's Press), 2013. pp. 77-102.

[6] Kent Dickson, "César Moro's Impossible Futures: *L'art de lire l'avenir*" Mester, 30(1) III (2001): 2, accessed September 25, 2013, permalink: http://escholarship.ucop.edu/uc/item/5qh2d2x0.

[7] Dickson, "César Moro's Impossible Futures: *L'art de lire l'avenir*" 2.

Figure 1
César Moro "L'art de lire l'avenir (The art of reading the future)", collage, 1935
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, CA

is limited. Michele Greet's recent article "César Moro's Transnational Surrealism," a major source for this thesis, is one of the first publications to assess Moro's plastic and graphic works for their formal properties. This thesis supports Greet's argument that Moro believed surrealism to be the "ideal visual and literary language with which to counter the entrenched nationalism of artistic production in the Americas,"[8] but builds from this analysis by contrasting the formal properties of Moro's surrealist collage enterprise with the constituent properties of *indigenismo's* aesthetic project. Historically, scholarship favors automatism as the dominant enterprise within the surrealist project due to founder of surrealism André Breton's (b. 1896-1966, France), dogmatic analysis of surrealist artwork. While this thesis entirely accepts this tradition, it also considers Moro's self-conscious mode of production in collages such as his 1927 *Untitled* (fig. 2) as a disruptive work in its provocation of *dépaysement*, or temporal displacement experienced by the viewer. Assessment of Moro's engagement of anachronic displacement in his aesthetic endeavors is a significant point of departure from *indigenismo's* nostalgia for the colonial past.

That Moro's surrealist collage enterprise should embrace displacement is not itself surprising considering that alternative sensibility of time's simultaneity through condensation and displacement was a central to the surrealist aesthetic enterprise from the outset. In the *First Manifesto of Surrealism* (1924), André Breton writes:

> The marvelous *is not the same in every period of history*: it partakes in some obscure way of a sort of general revelation only the fragments of which come

[8] Michele Greet, "César Moro's Transnational Surrealism" *Journal of Surrealism and the Americas* 7:1 (2013): 20, accessed October 10, 2013, permalink: https://jsa.hida.asu.edu/index.php/jsa/article/view/115/112.

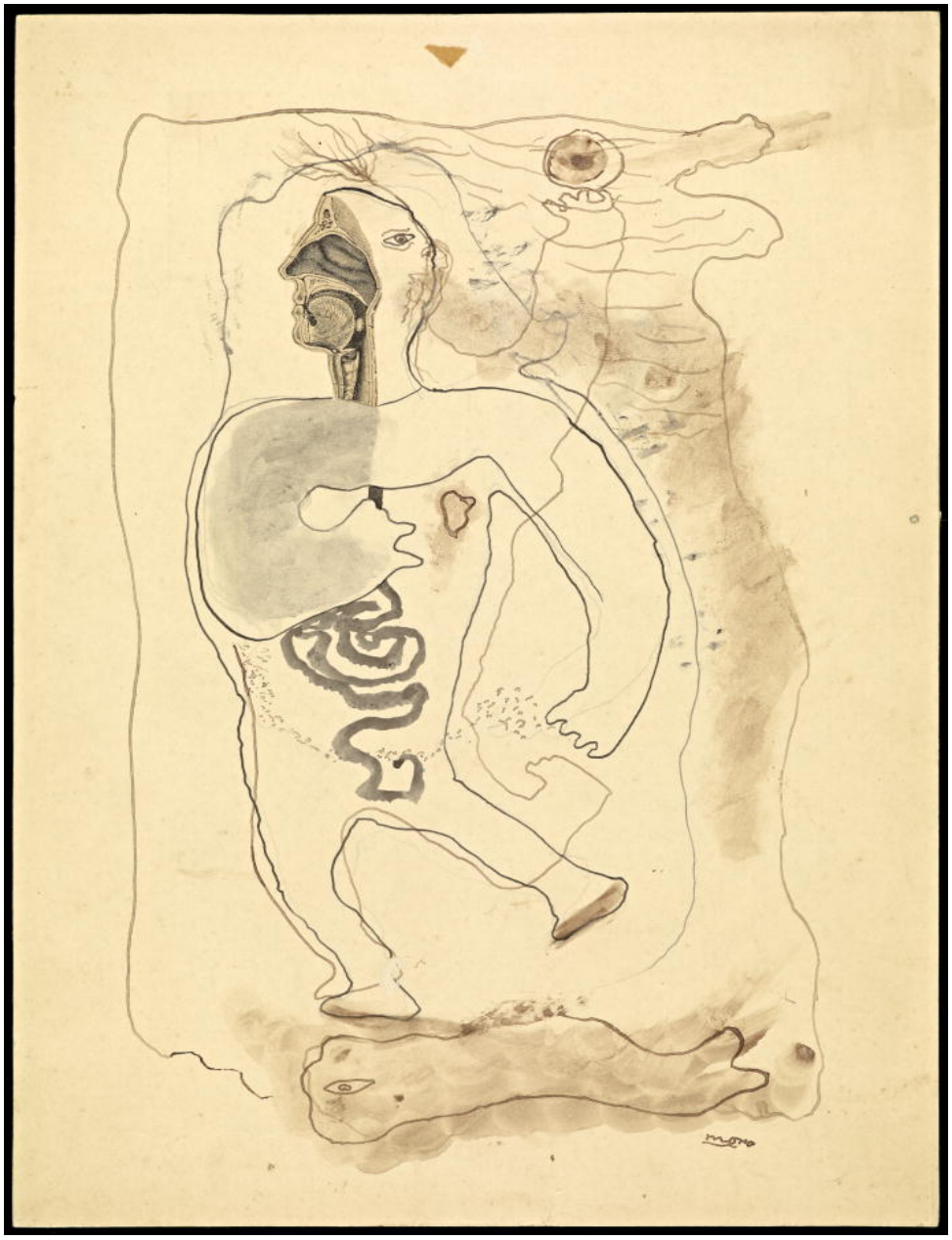

Figure 2
César Moro “Untitled (1927)”, collage, 1927
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, CA

> down to us: they are the romantic ruins, the modern mannequin, or any other symbol capable of affecting the human sensibility for a period of time.[9]

In identifying that the marvelous is mutable dependent on historical period, Breton accentuates a fragmented, layered, understanding of viewing history which is indeed critical in the discussion of Moro's collage process. However, this thesis also considers the presentation of an ambiguous, semantically parodic syntax[10] characteristic of displacement in Moro's collages as a specific, socially informed attempt on the part of the artist to engage local audiences in discourse surrounding the repression of indigenous populations in Peru in the 1930s and 40s.

Additionally, within study of Moro's biography, scholarship consistently places too much emphasis on his subversive rupture from surrealism in 1942. Although Moro fractured from the surrealist movement in 1942 when he was one of four artists to sign Austrian artist Wolfgang Paalen's (b. 1905-1959) manifesto "Farewell to Surrealism" published in Paalen's first edition of *Dyn,*[11] Moro's contributions to the journal reflect the artist's interest in reconciling with the particularities of indigenous history first established in his work as a surrealist. For example, his essay "Coricancha: The Golden

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[9] André Breton, *Manifestoes of Surrealism,* trans. Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1969).

[10] This terminology is employed by Elsa Adamowicz to describe the syntactical break implicit to surrealist collage methods in her book *Surrealist Collage in Text and Image: Dissecting the Exquisite Corpse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[11] *Dyn* was a journal publication founded by Wolfgang Paalen in 1942 and published in six editions between 1942-1944 in Mexico City, Mexico. In the first edition of the journal, Paalen, Moro, and Alice Rahon (then married to Paalen), and Eva Sulzer co-signed an essay entitled 'Farewell to Surrealism.' Paalen listed the pseudonyms 'Jean Caroux, John Dawson, Charles Givors, and Edward Renouf' in order to make the *Dyn* circle appear larger and more international in its nascent stages. The essay declares that Surrealism failed as an avant-garde enterprise due to its lack of engagement with science and empiricism, and has become decadent. Paalen included several pseudonyms on the manifesto in order to make the journal appear as if it had international support. The journal was published exactly contemporaneously to Breton's New York publication *VVV*, and was seen by Breton as a dissident act on the part of Paalen.

Quarter of the City" published in the Amerindian edition of Dyn in 1944 is accompanied by landscape photographs from Martín Chambí, one of the first indigenous Latin American photographers to receive international acclaim.[12] Moro and Chambí's combined text and images aim to interfere with contemporary nationalist rhetoric of the 1930s and 40s which appropriated pre-Columbian, indigenous traditions in order to visually describe an uninterrupted powerful, cultural tradition.

In this thesis, I integrate study of Moro's plastic and graphic works with his curatorial endeavors and revise common perception of his definitive break from surrealism, focusing instead on his turn to surrealism in 1927. I argue that Moro employed surrealist collage as an anti-picturesque, decolonial enterprise which opposes the typified nostalgia of *indigenismo* artwork, the most important project of Peruvian modernism. Surrealist implications of time's simultaneity, visually distinguishable in the movement's plastic arts such as Moro's collages, confront the viewer with visual metaphors that conflate past, present, and future in one frame. The particular type of displacement of time and space inherent to Moro's collages constitutes an interruption, a shock, that distinguishes the medium of surrealist collages from the ongoing *indigenismo* project of Peruvian modernism.

Furthermore, I suggest that engagement of surrealist collage tactics enabled Moro to extend surrealist poetics of place into the organization of eclectic, collective art exhibitions. I will suggest that the ethos of displacement[13] inherent in the visual

[12] Donna Conwell, "The Photographic Aesthetic of *Dyn,"* in *Farewell to Surrealism: The* Dyn *Circle in Mexico,* edited by Donna Conwell and Annette Leddy, (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2013). pp. 47.

[13] This expression is borrowed from the phrase 'ethos of détournement,' used by Elsa Adamowicz to describe the experience of displacement invoked by surrealist collage in her book *Surrealist Collage in Text and Image: Dissecting the Exquisite Corpse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

experience of Moro's collages is reflected in his endeavors to organize the *Exposicion de las Obras de Jaime Dvor, César Moro, Waldo Parraguez, Gabriela Rivadeneira, Carlos Sotomayor, & Maria Valencia* in Lima, Peru in 1935 and the exhibition *Aparicion de la Gran Esfinge Nocturna* in Mexico City, Mexico in 1940. It will become clear through this assessment that Moro's contestation of the social ambivalence of *indigenismo* artists like José Sabogal remains a constant concern for Moro despite the artist's rupture with the surrealist movement in 1942.

Finally, in using the term "decolonial" in my discussion of Moro's collage enterprise, I am drawing from current scholarship on decolonial philosophy. I thank Alejandro Vallega in whose class *Decolonial Latin American Philosophy* I was first exposed to current scholarship on decolonial aesthetics including the work of Walter Mignolo, Anibal Quijano, and Omar Rivera. The term "decolonial" is distinct from "postcolonial", and refers to the repeal of the continuing colonial system of power and knowledge in Latin America, originally defined by Peruvian philosopher Anibal Quijano.[14] Omar Rivera's 2014 article "Mariátegui's Avant-Garde and Surrealism as Discipline" has been instrumental in shaping my discussion of Moro's surrealist aesthetic practice as an action of revolutionary praxis.[15] Alejandro Vallega's 2014 book *Latin American Philosophy from Identity to Radical Exteriority* discusses displacement in

[14] Anibal Quijano, "Modernity, Identity, and Utopia in Latin America" *boundary 2,* Vol. 20, No. 3, The Postmodern Debate in Latin America (Autumn, 1993), pp. 140-155. Permalink: http://www.jstor.org/stable/303346

[15] Omar Rivera, "Mariátegui's Avant-Garde and Surrealism as Discipline" *Symposium,* Vol. 18, No. 1, (Spring, 2014), p. 102-124.

aesthetics as a decolonial strategy, terminology I employ in my discussion of Moro's aesthetic practice as revolutionary within the context of Peruvian modernism.[16]

The chapters in this thesis are organized in the following narrative. In chapter 1, I address Moro's early work produced between 1925-1927 when I consider his aesthetic project to be largely influenced by Peruvian *indigenismo*. This chapter focuses on a comparison between Moro's 1925 painting *Les "cholos"* (fig. 3) first exhibited in the 1926 exhibition entitled "Some Painters from Latin America" at the Cabinet Maldorer in Brussels, Belgium, and the *indigenismo* artwork of Peruvian painter José Sabogal. I relate Moro's evolution as an artist to the development of Marxist philosopher José Carlos Mariátegui's Peruvian aesthetic journal *Amauta* between 1926-1930. Mariátegui advocated for both *indigenismo* and surrealism, projects which after Mariátegui's death in 1930 devolved into antithetical aesthetic endeavors. In chapter 2, I address Moro's turn to surrealism, focusing on an assessment of five extant collages produced in Paris and Lima between 1927-1935. In chapter 3, I address Moro's work in the organization of two exhibitions, the *Exposicion de las Obras de Jaime Dvor, Cesar Moro, Waldo Parraguez, Gabriela Rivadeneira, Carlos Sotomayor, & Maria Valencia* in Lima, Peru and *Aparicion de la Gran Esfinge Nocturna* in Mexico City, Mexico in 1940, an exhibition which Moro organized with Wolfgang Paalen and André Breton, and his subsequent rupture with the surrealists in 1942. This section reassesses the significance of Moro's defect to *Dyn*, demonstrating that his contributions to the journal in fact demonstrate continuity with his 1938 anti-*indigenismo* essay "On Painting in Peru."

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[16] Alejandro Vallega, "The Fecund Undercurrent: On the Aesthetic Dimension of Latin American and Decolonial Thought," in *Latin American Philosophy from Identity to Radical Exteriority* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), pp. 341-380. Vallega's argument that the 'coloniality of being' may be undone through engagement of the aesthetic dimension is important to my argument for considering Moro's surrealist aesthetic practice as revolutionary.

Figure 3
César Moro "Les 'cholos'", oil on canvas, 1925-1926
Location unknown

CHAPTER II

CÉSAR MORO, SABOGAL AND *INDIGENISMO* IN PERUVIAN PAINTING, 1919-1927

In 1925, César Moro demonstrated his psychological allegiance with the indigenous history of Peru in the adoption of the pseudonym César Moro, changing his name from Alfredo Quispez Asín.[17] Yet, in 1939 he published the passionate essay "On Painting in Peru" (fig. 4) which ardently refutes *indigenismo*, the dominant movement in Peruvian modernism. In order to explain this discrepancy, this chapter explores Moro's early encounter with *indigenismo*, particularly in terms of the relationship between his early paintings and the contemporary work of José Sabogal, considered the father of Peruvian *indigenismo* in painting. Peruvian Marxist philosopher José Carlos Mariátegui published three poems by Moro in *Amauta* (no. 14) in 1928, a significant moment in Moro's career as a poet and artist. Moro's relationship to Mariátegui's *Amauta,* the organ of the *indigenismo* aesthetic movement between 1926-1930, further signals the artist's interest in aesthetics as a mechanism for social change in Peru.

Prior to leaving Lima for France in 1925,[18] Moro was exposed to the visual and

[17] See Ades, "We Who Have Neither Church Nor Country" pp. 15: " 'Moro' aligns him immediately against Spanish America: the Spanish conquerors brought to the New World ritual celebrations of Spain's defeat over the Moors in 1492, and in Peru dancers still annually don masks that indicate 'Españoles' vs. 'Moros.' As Spain's defeated opponents, the 'Indios' often became equated with the 'Moros.' With his adopted last name, Moro could be aligning himself with the Indian side of his mestizo background, while his first name, César, perhaps pays tribute to an earlier imperial conqueror. Certainly, the name César Moro seems crafted to distance Alfredo Quíspez Asín from Spanish Peru."

[18] This date is according to the biography provided in the preface of the French writer André Coyne's, a close friend of Moro's in Lima, *Amour à mort, et autres poèmes,* an anthology of Moro's poetry published posthumously. Moro would not exhibit in Europe until 1926, however.

A PROPOSITO de la PINTURA en el PERU

por César Moro

Figure 4
César Moro “A propósito de la pintura en el Peru”, journal article, 1938
Published in *El Uso de la Palabra* I*,* Lima, December 1939

intellectual canon of *indigenismo* which, by the 1910s, began to prevail in discussions of culture and the arts in major, print publications like the national newspaper *El Comercio.*[19] *Indigenismo* refers to a 20th century Peruvian political and intellectual movement whose adherents sought to valorize the class of the *mestizo* through the appropriation of 'authentic' indigenous themes and symbols into contemporary culture.

The term '*mestizo*' refers to an enduring descriptor employed to categorize a specific Spanish/Indian racial group in Peru. The period of Spanish colonialism established a *casta* system which perpetuated an intensely complex thematization of racial groups in Peru that are still existent: (1) indian, (2), mestizo, and (3) cholo.[20] Spanish nobility employed these terms in order to distinguish the regional identity of Peruvians of mixed noble Spanish/Indian heritage that lived in coastal Lima from native Indian populations of the mountainous, Andean region. Documents from the colonial period reveal that these categories were legally defined by the Spanish as follows: "From the male Spaniard and female Indian results a royal mestizo; from the royal mestizo and a female Indian, a cholo is born; from a cholo and female Indian, a common mestizo."[21] As

[19] *El Comercio,* founded in 1839, is the oldest, established newspaper in Peru. A recent exhibition catalogue *Sabogal,* edited by Natalia Majluf and Luis Eduoardo Wuffarden and published in accompaniment to the major retrospective dedicated to the José Sabogal, contains numerous excerpts of criticism written by *indigenismo* intellectuals in the 1910s and 20s and published in *El Comercio.* Bibliographic reference: Natalia Majluf, Luis Eduardo Wuffarden, Pablo Cruz, and José Sabogal, *Sabogal* (Lima: Museo de Arte de Lima, 2013).

[20] In summarizing these terms, I rely on the anthropological and social research conducted by Zoila Mendoza's in *Shaping Society Through Dance: Mestizo Ritual Performance in the Peruvian Andes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000) and Linda Seligmann's *Between Reform and Revolution: Political Struggles in the Peruvian Andes, 1969-1991* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004). Mendoza's *Shaping Society Through Dance* presents a study of 'comparsa' ritual performance in the Peruvian Andes and demonstrates how folkloric traditions were appropriated by *indigenismo* artists and intellectuals in the 19th and 20th centuries.

[21] Zoila Mendoza, *Shaping Society Through Dance: Mestizo Ritual Performance in the Peruvian Andes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), pp. 12.

a result, throughout the colonial history of Peru, these racial categories were exploited to perpetuate specific, imperialist ideologies that limited the political and social mobility of indigenous populations.

In similar fashion, *indigenismo* sought to manipulate racial categories through artistic representation by visually conveying an 'authentic' racial heritage of the *mestizo.* Paradoxically, *indigenismo* adherents idealized indigenous traditions while simultaneously distancing themselves from the reality of contemporary indigenous populations viewed as inferior in the global projects of modernity.[22] The movement split into disparate intellectual and social factions in the 1920s when the artistic endeavors of the movement grew increasingly nationalistic and disconnected from the plight of the contemporary peasantry.[23]

Indigenismo's foremost theoretician and considered the father of Peruvian anthropology, Luis E. Valcárcel, wrote extensively on Peruvian indigenous history. In order to present filial continuity between Incan heritage and contemporary peasants, *indigenismo's* constituent elements consisted of the romanticization of former folkloric traditions transposed into the rural present. Valcárcel's writing on Incan myth exemplifies

[22] Zoila Mendoza provides a summary of the movement as it developed in the arts in *Shaping Society Through Dance,* pp. 13-14.

[23] For a richer summary on this topic, see Mendoza's discussion "Folklore, Authenticity, and Traditions" in *Shaping Society Through Dance,* quotation provided here from pp. 53: "When in the 1920s there was a split between indigenista intellectuals and the peasant political movement, the idealization of Inca culture and society as well as the paternalistic attitude toward the contemporary peasantry became evident. At this point indigenistas were mostly concerned with problems of national and regional identity, and in their search for emblems they granted special attention to 'indigenous' music and dance, which provided the clearest contrast with European, U.S. and *criollo* culture (Turino 1991, 267-268). A very specific example of how music, dance, and theater became instrumental to the indigenistas' construction of [national identity] was the organization by Luis E. Valcárcel of the Misión Peruana de Arte Incaico (Peruvian Mission of Incaic Art). The performances of the Misión, which featured Bolivia, Argentina, and Uruguay between 1923-1924, displayed a combination of 'Incaic' themes – such as the Quechua drama *Ollantay* – with 'indigenous' or peasant musical and dance elements."

indigenismo's particular interest in the indigenous history of Peru.[24] However, Valcárcel's attempts to promote a romantic, pastoral nationalism drawn from representational traditions associated with indigenous populations carried with them a patronizing vision removed from the reality of the contemporary Indian.

Indigenismo as a movement in Peruvian painting is considered to begin with the paintings of José Sabogal, whose *indigenismo* compositions were first unveiled at the Casa Brandes, Lima during his solo exhibition *Impresiones del Ccoscco* in 1919.[25] Prior to the exhibition, Valcárcel published a review in *El Comercio* which proclaims the lyrical and spiritual authenticity of Sabogal's representation of the Andean region of Peru in paintings like *Lord of Our Strength* (fig. 5).[26] Many of the leading *indigenismo* intellectuals and art critics in Lima including Teófilo Castillo, Ramiro Pérez Reinoso, Gastón Roger, Carlos Solari (Don Quijote), José Varela y Orbegoso (Clovis), and Elvira Garcia y García, agreed with Valcárcel's assessment of the authenticity of Sabogal's indigenous paintings following the Casa Brandes exhibition, signalling Sabogal's inception as the promise of Peruvian *indigenismo* painting.[27]

Sabogal's paintings shown at the Casa Brandes such as *Lord of Our Strength* (fig. 5), which depicts Andean peasants in a ritual procession carrying a framed painting of the martyrdom of Christ, exemplify the essentializing pictorialism that Moro denounces in

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[24] Valcárcel founded the Museum of Ethnology at San Marcos University in the early 1950s.

[25] See See Natalia Majluf, "La exposición Brandes, 1919" in *Sabogal*, pp. 24- 29.

[26] See Natalia Majluf, "El Cuzco y el regreso al Perú" in *Sabogal*, pp. 20: "Telas de Sabogal desconciertan a las gentes habituadas al pictoricismo de receta', enfatizando que sus cuadros no impresionaban 'por lo 'bien hechos'-es decir por relamidos, por fotográficamente nítidos- sino por lo que en ellos hai de espíritu."

[27] See Natalia Majluf, "La exposición Brandes, 1919" in *Sabogal*, pp. 24: "Sin excepción, los críticos importantes del momento- Teófilo Castillo, Ramiro Pérez Reinoso, Gastón Roger, Carlos Solari (Don Quijote) y José Varela y Orbegoso (Clovis) – además de varios intelectuales, como Elvira Garcia y García y Luis E. Valcárcel, lo recivieron elogiosamente como la nueva promesa del arte peruano."

Figure 5
José Sabogal “Lord of Our Strength”, oil on canvas, 55.9 x 66 cm, 1919
University of Texas at Austin

the *indigenismo* enterprise in painting. The transposition of a romantic vision of folkloric rituals from the past such as the procession shown in *Lord of Our Strength* (fig. 5), into the geographically distant, rural present constitute the foundational elements of 'authenticity' according to the *indigenismo* aesthetic project.

The painting, which displays a ritual procession of peasants wearing contemporary farming clothes, hats, and shoes, typical of 20th century quotidian dress in the Andes, simultaneously idealizes an imported, European Christian tradition. Sabogal's celebration of occidental Christian traditions emphasized in the peasants' willing adherence to Christianity in *Lord of Our Strength* (fig. 5) also points to the larger paradox of the *indigenismo* movement, that often ignorance of pre-Columbian history informed contemporary misunderstanding of the authenticity of regional rituals.

Sabogal's *indigenismo* efforts also reflect the artist's exposure to the contemporary Argentinean *indigenismo* painting tradition, known as *nativismo*, which he encountered in his studies at the Academy of Fine Arts of Buenos Aires from 1912-1918. During Sabogal's studies in Buenos Aires, the *indigenismo* artwork of celebrated Argentinean *nativismo* artists such as Jorge Bermúdez, Fernando Fader, Césareo Bernaldo de Quirós and José Antonio Terry, could be found in almost every contemporary gallery.[28] Paintings Sabogal composed during this time period and selected for the VIII Salón Nacional of 1918 in Buenos Aires, demonstrates the artist's incorporation of idealized folkloric leitmotifs in painting.

One such painting, *Limeña* (fig. 6) portrays a young woman standing just left of the painting's vertical axis, her body extending the entire height of the canvas. The focus of the composition, the *Limeña*, refers to a tradition of dress worn by women during the

[28] See Natalia Majluf, "Argentina, 1912-1918: el periodo de formación" in *Sabogal,* pp.10-18.

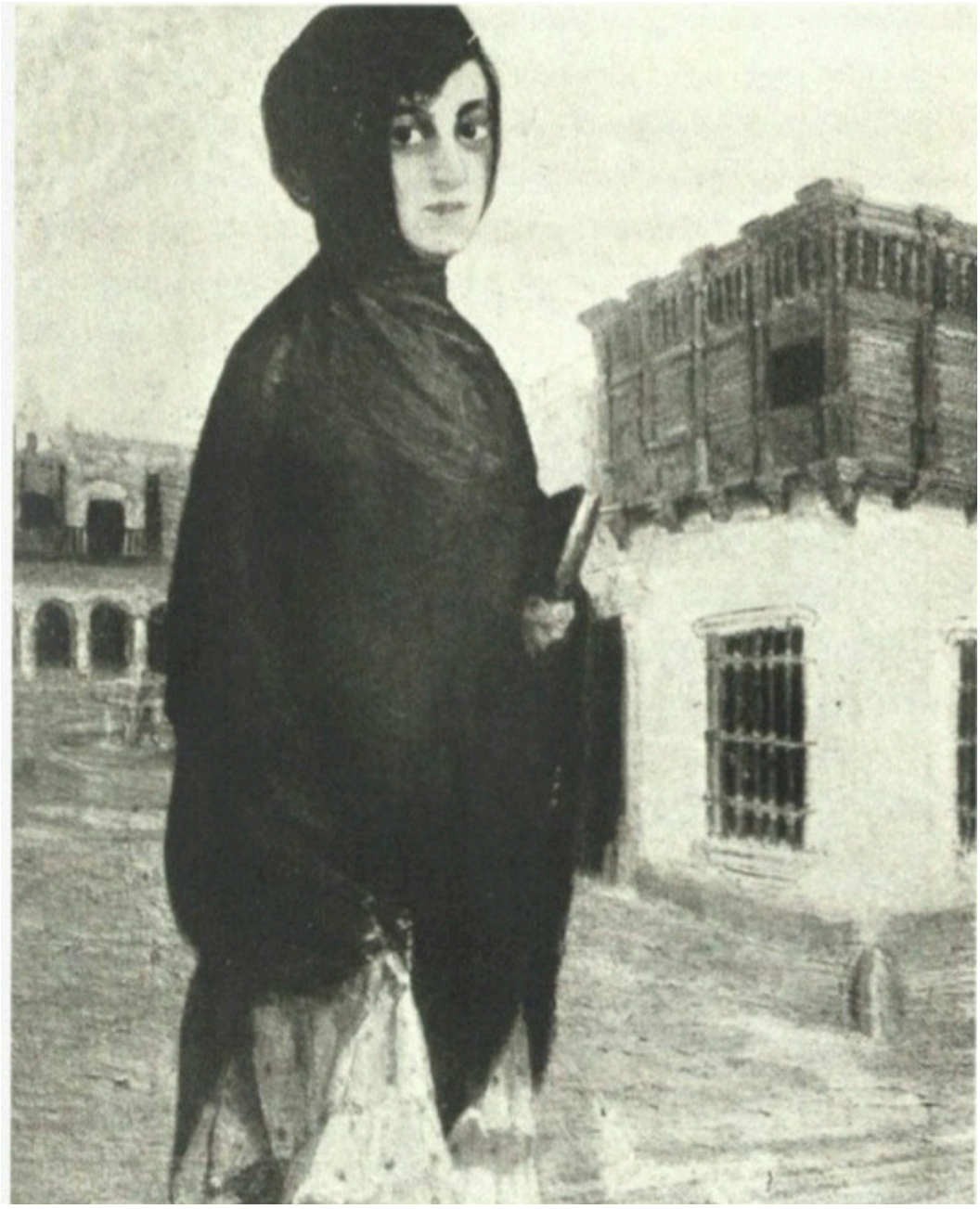

Figure 6
José Sabogal “Limeña”, oil on canvas, 1918
Private collection

viceroyal period of Peru. Known as the *limeñas tapadas,* or covered Limean women, the *limeña tapada* was a clothing tradition inherited from Moorish Spain which consisted of a puffy, European dress with an exaggerated skirt which extended down to the ground. Additionally, when in public, women wore a shroud that wrapped around the entire front of the body hiding its shape and covering her face. In an effort to romanticize contemporary dress of the Peruvian peasant, Sabogal shows a peasant with typified features, whose worn clothing recalls the pieces of an earlier sixteenth century *limeña tapada.* Sabogal frames the female mestizo peasant on either side depicting colonial architecture, a gesture signaling his effort to reconcile the pastoral myth of the rural Indian with her colonial heritage.

Sabogal's *indigenismo* enterprise played an influential role in 20th century Peruvian painting practices. Inspired by visits to the National Academy of Art in Mexico and the exposure to the Mexican muralists, particularly Diego Rivera, in a voyage during 1923,[29] Sabogal developed a typified, objectified manner of representing contemporary Peruvian peasantry. Stylistically, Sabogal's paintings were appealing for politically motivated adherents to *indigenismo:* rather than focusing on the appropriation of pre-Columbian symbols or geometric patterns, many of Sabogal's paintings like *Limeña* present an intensely nostalgic vision of regional identity that appealed to contemporary audiences. This vision, however, presents an aesthetic conception of identity shaped by Peru's colonial history: Sabogal's *Limeña* presents a figure of mixed European, Peruvian descent, in dress characteristic of the viceroyal period.

[29] Following a trip to Mexico in 1923, Sabogal declared his admiration for Diego Rivera and stated that Mexican muralism was the most serious art form in the Americas in an interview for the publication *Variedades*. See "Instantáneas. Breves entrevistas de Variedades. José Sabogal" in *Variedades,* Lima, n. 798 (16 de junio de 1923).

An instructor at the National Acadamy of Fine Arts (La Escuela Nacional de bellas artes), Sabogal's affiliation with *indigenismo* grew controversial in the 1930s culminating with Moro's essay "On Painting in Peru" in 1939. Moro's essay circulated with other criticism of the teaching of the ENBA, whose encoded *indigenismo* hagiography imparted nationalist rhetoric and social realism in their pupils.[30] In a way, Sabogal was not responsible for this negative perception of his leadership of *indigenismo*. It was Mariátegui in 1926 who employed Sabogal to design a woodcut of an *amauta* (fig. 7), a quechua word that refers to the wise instructor of noble Incan children that appeared on the cover of the *Amauta* journal's first edition. Mariátegui used the journal *Amauta* as a means to oppose the identity crisis resulting from colonial history and its effects on artistic production, and it was within *Amauta's* pages that Mariátegui articulated a connection between a concern for the indigenous population of Peru and the establishment of a Latin American avant-garde.[31]

Over time, Sabogal, whose woodcut became a type of logo for *Amauta*, came to represent the socialist concerns articulated by Mariátegui in the eyes of contemporary audiences in Peru, though the artist in reality distanced himself from the socialist prerogatives of *indigenismo* in the early 1930s. Indeed, as an instructor at the state funded National Academy of Fine Arts, Sabogal had little interest in supporting the revolutionary notions of the avant-garde during the staunchly conservative presidencies of Luis Sánchez Serro (1931-1933) and Oscar Benavides (1933-1939), both of whom supported

[30] For full history of Sabogal's involvement in the *indigenismo* polemic at the ENBA, see Natalia Majluf, "La polémica del indigenismo" in *Sabogal,* pp. 94-101.

[31] Michele Greet, "Return: Andean Journals in the 1920s" in *Beyond National Identity: Pictorial Indigenism as a Modernist Strategy in Andean Art, 1920-1960* (University Park: Pennsylvania University Press, 2009), pp. 70.

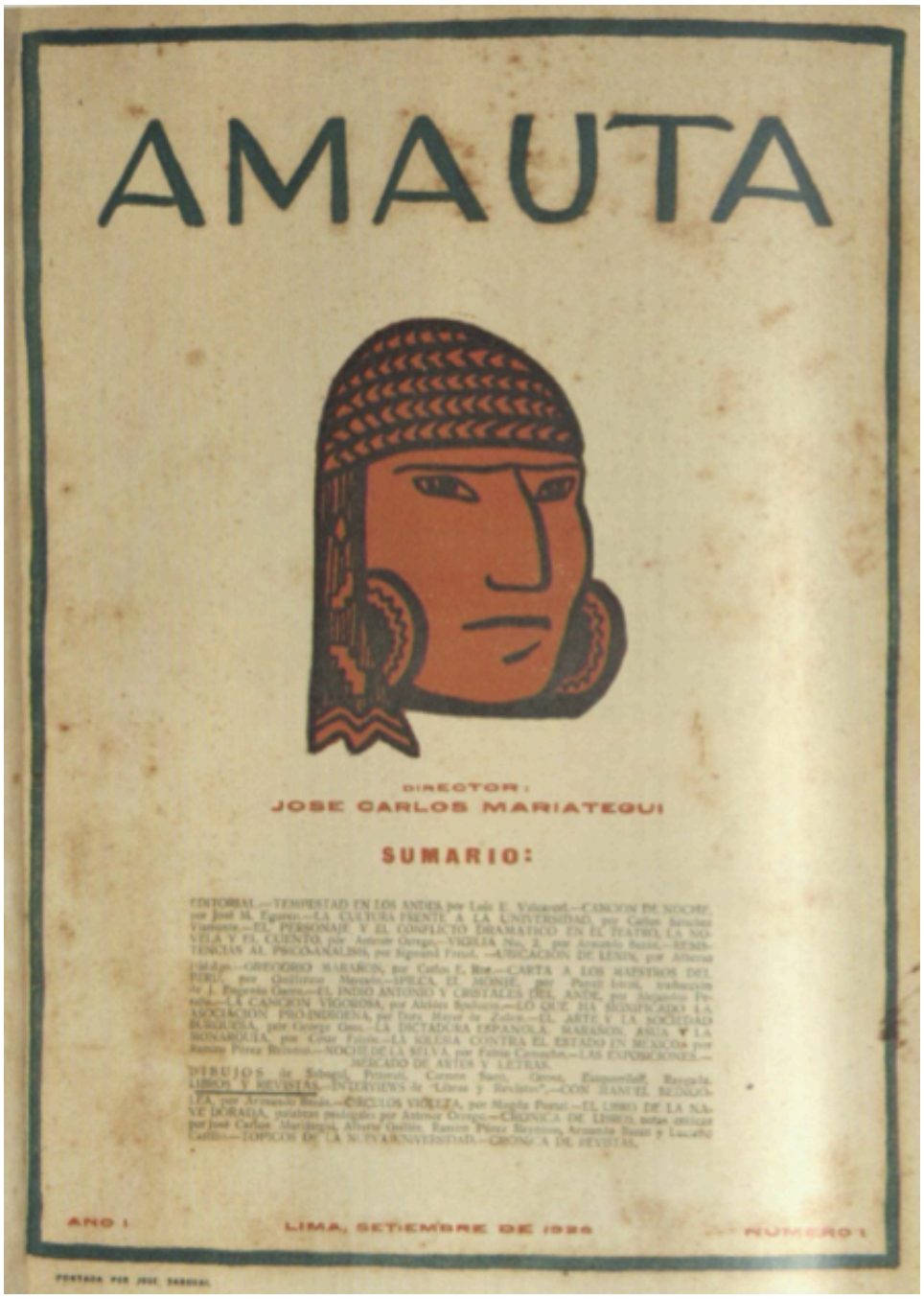

Figure 7
José Sabogal, cover of *Amauta,* September 1926 issue, woodcut
Published by José Carlos Mariátegui

fascist leadership in Europe.

Despite his later criticism of *indigenismo* in his essay "On Painting in Peru", Moro was tempted by *indigenismo's* nationalist themes in his early artwork completed in the mid 1920s. The early painting *Les "cholos"* (fig. 3), completed by Moro in Lima in 1925, draws upon the *indigenismo* iconography of the *tapada* seen in Sabogal's composition *Limeña* (fig. 6). The subject of the painting consists of a female figure, dressed in a traditional *limeña tapada,* with a frilly, billowing skirt extending downward to the ground. The female figure's upper body is shown wrapped in a black cloak flowing into the frills of her skirt. A male figure standing to her left wears twentieth century dress consisting of slacks, a blazer, tie, and bowler hat. Behind the couple, a street stretches diagonally upward and out of the right upper quadrant of the composition. Moro includes a series of flatly painted buildings occupying the upper left corner of the composition. Moro's juxtaposition of the female costume of the viceroyal *tapada* paired with westernized male dress reveals the artist's attempt to visually reconcile Peru's past with present in one image, a move which anticipates the anachronic displacement characteristic of his collage practice. Moro's painting capitulates, though, to an expression of a superficial vision of Peru's colonial history. The painting's title, *Les "cholos",* further emphasizes the racial categorization of the couple shown in the composition.

A second painting by Moro, *¡Señora Give it to Me! (1925-26)* (fig. 8), reproduced in color in Michele Greet's article "César Moro's Transnational Surrealism," further demonstrates Moro's appeal to national themes consistent with *indigenismo's* promotion of regional identity. The picture displays a contemporary street scene in Lima: two

Figure 8
César Moro "¡Señora Give it to Me!", tempera on cardboard, 1925-26
André Coyné Collection

female figures occupy the left side of the composition overlooking a bustling street of diverse merchants and shoppers in the lower right corner of the painting.

In *¡Señora Give it to Me!* (fig. 8) *,* Moro employs flattened and boldly outlined, geometric shapes and patterns characteristic of modernist, European styles, evidence of his interest in and exposure to art nouveau and cubism.[32] Moro's employment of bright colors and naïvely painted figures characteristic of European, modernist styles in order to represent a culturally diverse Lima in *¡Señora Give it to Me!* anticipates the artist's later criticism of the entrenched cultural nationalism of the *indigenismo* project. Furthermore, unlike Sabogal's nostalgic depictions of contemporary Peru, *¡Señora Give it to Me!* is reflective of Moro's use of art to critique social disparities of contemporary culture, an observation first made by Greet in "César Moro's Transnational Surrealism." Greet writes, the "vast incongruities of scale simulate the social disparity between the two elegant señoras on the left and the street vendors selling *anticuchos* (grilled meat skewers) squeezed into the lower right corner." As opposed to romantically depicting an indigenous Peruvian peasant, Moro's modernist paintings like *Les "cholos"* and *¡Señora deme a mí!* reveal the artist's interest in using aesthetic form to debunk the social inequalities in Peru.

The reception of Moro's early paintings including *Les "cholos"* and *¡Señora deme a mí!* exhibited in Europe by the French critic Francis Miomandre and Peruvian, Marxist philosopher Jose Carlos Mariátegui present two very different readings of Moro's paintings which anticipate his shift to surrealism. Moro first exhibited both *Les "cholos"* and *¡Señora deme a mí!* in a show entitled "Some Painters from Latin

[32] Ades, "We Who Have Neither Church Nor Country" pp. 18.

America" at the Cabinet Maldoror in Brussels, Belgium in 1926. French critic Miomandre's review of the works when they were shown in the Paris exhibition *Paris-Amérique Latine*, "We Demand Painting from Savages," supports the earlier critics of Sabogal in Lima, identifying in Moro's modernist compositions the promise of the Peruvian 'spirit.' Miomandre writes:

> But it's all of Peru that sings out in the watercolors and painting by the delicious César Moro, beautiful colonial Peru of the vice-roys and of the 'carrosse du Saint-Sacrement,' Peru of the ancient kings dressed in feathers, Peru of the Indians of the interior, mourning their dissolution with the sounds of the heart wrenching *quena*.[33]

Like Valcárcal's earlier commentary of Sabogal's paintings, Miomandre lauded the primitive content of Moro's artwork.

However, Miomandre's patronizing comments in the review reveal the depth at which colonial discourse informed the European imaginary of colonial Peru. He writes:

> What characterizes the youngest of the painters from [Latin America], is a need to renew contact with the Indian soul and the art forms that it generated, all while remaining up to date with the most audacious and new ideas in Europe.[34]

Moro's paintings exhibited evoke nothing of the 'Indian' soul in their content, and expose a sensibility of Peru's modern history as it was shaped by colonialism as opposed to an authentic, Peruvian identity.

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[33] English translation provided in Greet, "César Moro's Transnational Surrealism" pp. 21. She provides the original French quotation in footnotes to the article. For original French article see Francis Miomandre, "On demande de la peinture de sauvages" *Le Bulletin de la vie artistique* Aug. 1, 1926 7:15, 234-235.

[34] English translation provided in Greet "César Moro's Transnational Surrealism," pp. 21. In Greet's footnotes is included the original French text: 'Ce qui caractérise les plus jeunes parmi les peintres de là-bas, c'est un besoin de reprendre contact avec l'âme indienne et les forms d'art qu'elle a générées, tout en se tenant au courant de ce qui se fait de plus audacieux et de plus nouveau en Europe.' Francis Miomandre, "On demande de la peinture de sauvages" *Le Bulletin de la vie artistique* Aug. 1, 1926 7:15, 234-235.

A comment made by José Carlos Mariátegui published in the Peruvian newspaper *Mundial* in 1927 points to this discrepancy of self-criticism in the avant-garde, Peruvian artists working in Paris:

> From César Moro, Jorge Seoane, and the rest of the artists who have recently emigrated to Paris, native themes and indigenous motifs are requested. Our sculptor Carmen Saco brought the most valid kind of artistic passport in her sculptures and drawings of Indians.[35]

This cynical comment made by Mariátegui contrasts with Miomandre's review, which draws a parallel between European modernism and the renewal of the Indian soul in Moro's paintings, without concern for engagement with socialist causes. Mariátegui, dedicated to social revolution and the plight of the indigenous population in Peru, undoubtedly made this comment remarking that Moro, in addition to the other *indigenismo* artists working in Paris, capitalized upon Peruvian themes to benefit a European audience.

The crux of Mariátegui's argument concerning aesthetics enumerated in the pages of *Amauta*, was that art must function as a catalyst for social change. He obviously supported Moro, evidenced in his publication of three of Moro's poems in the no. 14 issue of *Amauta* in 1928. Consideration of the differing reviews of Moro's early work in these years is significant, however, in that they shed light on Moro's active search for an avant-garde pictorial language that suited the personal and political causes to which he was dedicated. Although Moro's early paintings exhibited in Europe present an ambiguous connection between avant-garde aesthetic form and socialist cause, they

[35] English translation provided in Greet "César Moro's Transnational Surrealism," pp. 23. In Greet's footnotes is included the original Spanish text. Greet includes original bibliographic reference as: José Carlos Mariátegui, "El indigenismo en la literatura nacional" in *Mundial,* 345, Lima, Jan. 21, 1927.

significantly anticipate the artist's turn to collage in 1927, an aesthetic enterprise with clear ties to Moro's political activism.

CHAPTER III

CÉSAR MORO'S SURREALIST COLLAGES, 1927-1935

Moro's earliest known, unpublished collage from 1927 is evidence of Moro's exposure to surrealist visual strategy of displacement beginning prior to his official participation in the surrealist movement and contemporary to his involvement with Mariátegui's journal *Amauta.* This chapter demonstrates the extent to which Moro's exposure to surrealist tactics of displacement influenced his visual strategy in collage and consequently became Moro's ideal, revolutionary aesthetic language. Current scholarship suggests that surrealist themes of enigma, obfuscated vision, and semiotics of the body contribute to Moro's formal, plastic vocabulary. I will extrapolate the ways in which Moro's employment of disruption of syntactical representation through the cut and paste technique of collage marks Moro's ideological break with the cultural prerogatives of the *indigenismo* aesthetic project as it evolved in the 1930s. Moro's employment of surrealist collage tactics resulting in displacement served to directly contradict visual strategies which perpetuated the entrenched cultural nationalism of the *indigenismo* movement.

César Moro's exposure to surrealism began in Paris in 1926 when he attended surrealist exhibitions including Man Ray's exhibition of photographs and artifacts from the Pacific Islands at the Galerie Surréaliste and Yves Tanguy's exhibition of ancient objects from Peru, Mexico, Colombia, and the Northwest Coast of the United States.[36] The exact date of initial contact between Moro and the surrealists is speculative, but by

[36] Moro's papers held at the Getty Research Institute include exhibition catalogues of the different art shows he visited while in Paris. Michele Greet points out that Moro possessed two exhibition catalogues of Giorgio de Chirico exhibitions from the same time frame.

1929 exchanges between Moro and several of the major figures of the movement including André Breton, Paul Eluard, and Benjamin Péret have been traced via letters.[37]

Moro's official artistic affiliation with the surrealists can be dated to 1933, when he participated in the fifth and sixth issues of *Le Surréalisme au service de la Revolution*. Moro's poem "Rénommée de l'Amour" was published in the fifth issue of the journal, and the artist was also one of a number of participants in the collective investigation "Recherches Expérimentales sur la connaissance irrationnelle de l'Objet" included in the sixth issue of the journal.

Moro's responses listed in "Recherches Expérimentales" are reflective of the artist's intellectual investigation of the transformative capacities of surrealist condensation and displacement ongoing in the thirties. Collective investigations such as "Recherches Expérimentales" were surrealist mechanisms for the achievement of 'pure psychic automatism' that dated to the foundation of the movement. Participants were asked to automatically respond to questions concerning a variety of objects, such as a crystal ball, in order to elucidate the enigma of the variety of sensations an object is capable of generating. Moro responses state that a crystal ball represents both night and day,[38] whose transformative capacity completely overtakes him.[39] Moro's collages would evoke similar, disruptive effects employing an ambiguous syntax to generate an ethos of displacement.

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[37] Moro's personal papers held at the Getty Research Institute include signed catalogues, publications, and letters containing affectionate inscriptions dedicated to the artist from his surrealist comrades dated throughout Moro's life, evidence of the friendships he maintained with his surrealist comrades.

[38] "Recherches Expérimentales sur la connaissance irrationnelle de l'Objet" in *Le Surréalisme au service de la Revolution,* no.6 (May 1933): pp. 10-11: "Est-elle diurne ou nocturne?" – "Diurne et nocturne." Henceforth referred to as *LSASDLR*.

[39] *LSASDLR,* edition 6 (May 1933): pp. 10-11: "Quelle est sa situation spatiale par rapport à l'individu?" – "Elle m'enveloppe."

Moro's earliest known untitled collage from 1927 (fig. 2) demonstrates Moro's adherence to surrealism prior to participation in official surrealist activities like *Recherches Expérimentales,* and simultaneously marks the artist's abandonment of the *indigenismo* aesthetic project. Moro's unpublished collage from 1927 is strangely grotesque: pen-and-ink drawing and brown ink wash on paper are composed surrounding a fragmented cut out from a medical journal. The cut-out displays a left anatomical profile section of a human body from the esophagus upward to the brain. The right side of the figure's head displays the left side of the figure's face, identifiable by the left-side eye drawn in with an angled eyebrow which descends toward the right. The outline of a human figure is boldly drawn, shadowed by a second figure whose outline gently overlaps and departs from the initial, bolder, figure, but both body outlines are conjoined at the head. The second outlined human form follows the shape of the original closely, but departs in two physical actions: one arm extends to the right upward holding what appears to be an eyeball, and the left leg curves upward to the right away from the original figure and then inward toward its body, positioned like a runner in motion. The human forms are suspended against a vacuous background, and the figures eerily float in the center of the composition.

The quality of suspension identifiable in *Untitled (1927)* (fig. 2) becomes an important displacement device in Moro's collage enterprise. The creation of a state of suspension engages an aesthetic space where individual pictorial elements no longer function linearly, and the syntax of pictorial narrative is disrupted. One art historian has[40]

[40] See Greet, "César Moro's Transnational Surrealism," pp. 23: "But while Moro's image juxtaposes internal and external views of the body as well as movement and stasis, it does not have the jarring quality of surrealist chance juxtapositions. Nor does it disrupt or transform the way the collage element can be read. The addition of the thick scrawling line in the figure's abdomen clearly continues the notion that we

suggested that the continuity of form between the fragmented medical journal clipping of a profile view of the nasal cavity and jaw and the drawn internal intestines in Moro's *Untitled (1927)* (fig. 2) collage runs counter to the surrealist project of disruption. However, the creation of a state of suspension simultaneously generates a semantically incoherent state while maintaining syntactical coherence, a surrealist trope in poetry and collage. Elsa Adamowicz demonstrates that Breton's collage poems often embodied such production of meaning through syntactical coherence but semantical ambiguity. For example, in Breton's *Poeme* (fig. 9) made from advertising and magazine clippings, Adamowicz writes:

> The lines 'une voie carrossable / vous conduit au bord de l'inconnu' can be read as an allegory of the very process with which the surrealists are engaged: the known path ('la voie carrossable') of familiar expressions and ready-made language is the vehicle which will lead to the edge of the unknown ('au bord de l'inconnu') in a defamiliarizing process where the poetic is awakened through the transformation of the hackneyed and the banal.[41]

Viewing *Untitled (1927),* the familiar depiction of the syntax between corporeal elements (brain, intestines, facial features) leads to the edge of the unknown: Moro provokes the experience of displacement by delinking representation of the body from familiar imagery, creating a boundless body which simultaneously appears and fades from the viewer's field of vision.

The use of text in a later untitled collage by Moro held at the Getty Research Institute (fig. 10) exemplifies Breton's syntactical/semantical structure of text in *Poeme.* Composed predominantly of cut out texts and newspaper clippings from Peruvian publications, *Untitled (1935)* adopts the 'poeme-affiche' verbal collage method first

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can see through the skin to the inner workings of the body. This continuity from collage to drawn element creates a sense of unity that runs counter to the surrealist project of disruption."

[41] Adamowicz, *Surrealist Collage in Text and Image,* pp. 53-54.

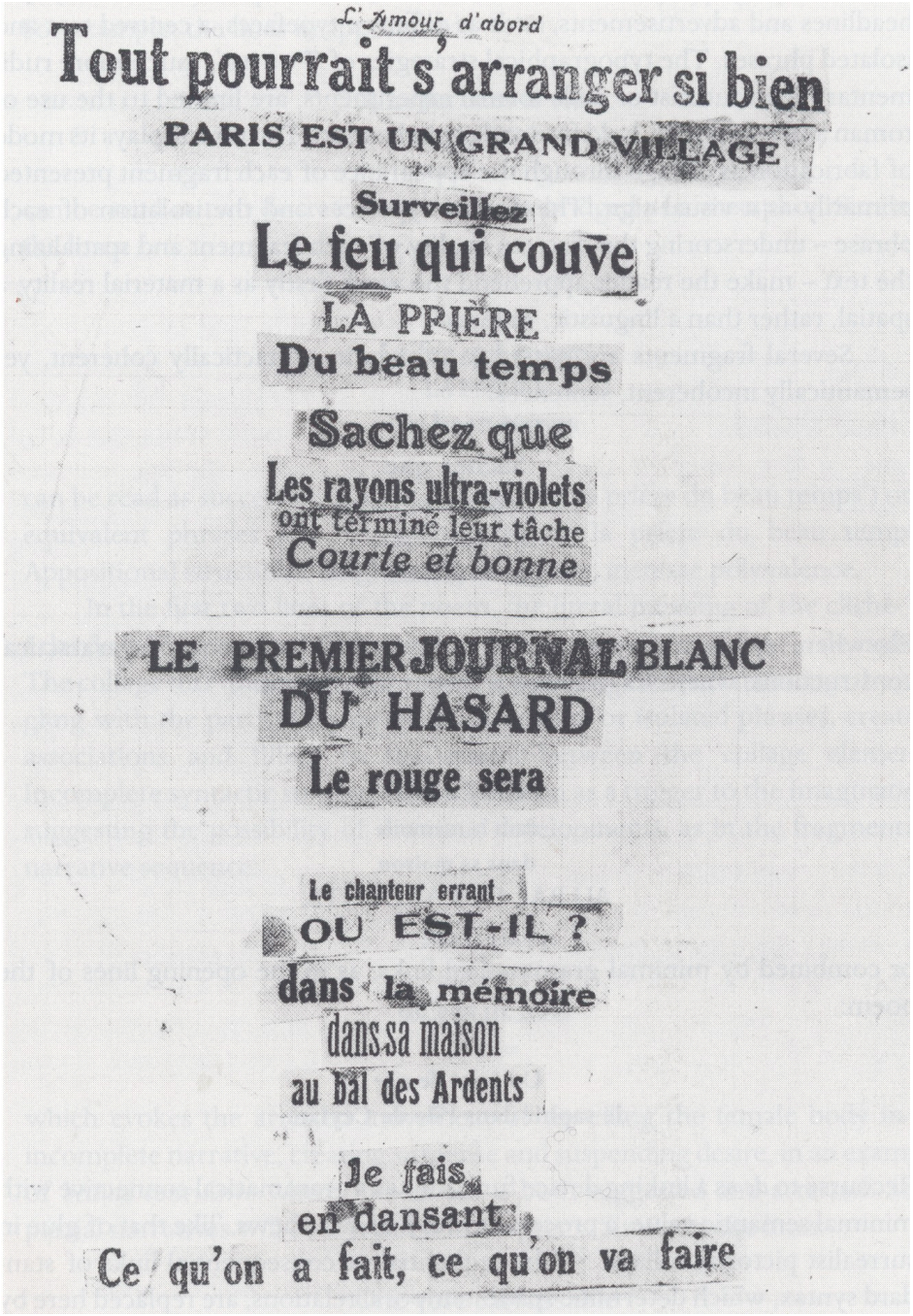


Figure 9
André Breton, "Poeme", collage-poem, 1924
Reproduced in Elza Adamowicz's *Surrealist Collage in Text and Image*

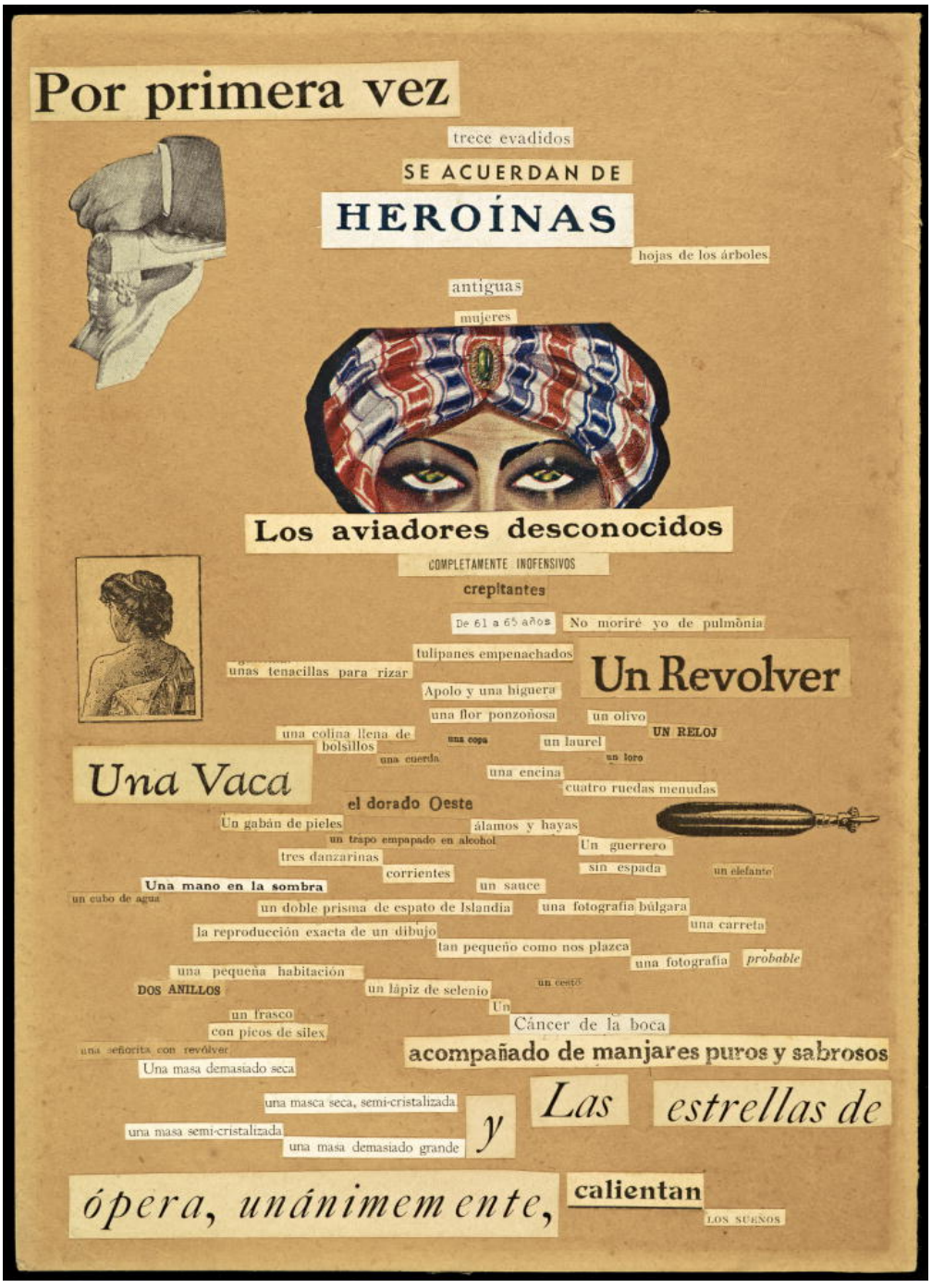


Figure 10
César Moro, “Untitled (1935)”, collage-poem, 1935
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

tested by Soupault and Breton in the early 1920s. In *Surrealist Collage in Text and Image,* Elsa Adamowicz demonstrates how the surrealist interest in pre-formed words and phrases from advertisements (as opposed to singular, individual words adopted by Dadaists and Futurists) is linked to Jean Paulhan's work on proverbs and clichés. She writes:

> [The Surrealists were] interested in proverbs as fixed linguistic units, and in the possibility of remotivating the signifier hence revitalizing meanings through strategies of defamiliarization.[42]

Moro's variance between typefaces, fonts, bold and italic, identify each phrase within the poem as a singular, functional syntactical structure. In Moro's collage *Untitled (1935)* the sequential links of standard syntax are replaced in the juxtaposition or apposition of certain textual fragments. For example,

> Un guerrero
> Sin espado

can be read as sequential *or* as equivalent phrases, heightening the ambiguity in order to trigger the imagination through the suggestion of possible drama.[43]

Moro's use of text extracted from vernacular publications is also significant with regard to the question of encoded meaning within the collage. Like Benjamin Péret's 1926 collage, *Hier en découvrant l'Amérique* (fig. 11), the use of fragmented text from faits divers articles and headlines in *Untitled (1935)* evokes a narrative that oscillates between reality and fantasy. The original meaning of each fragment is here transformed, and in so doing, each noun, article and pronoun lose the original meaning. The

[42] Adamowicz, *Surrealist Collage in Text and Image* pp. 51.

[43] Adamowicz, *Surrealist Collage in Text and Image* pp. 53.

Figure 11
Benjamin Péret, "Hier en découvrant l'Amérique", collage-poem, 1926
Reproduced in Elza Adamowicz's *Surrealist Collage in Text and Image*

reader/viewer is confronted with a discourse whose structure provokes an ambiguous reading of familiar words and phrases.

Moro's 1932 collage *Head* (fig. 12), reproduced in color in Michele Greet's 2013 article "César Moro's Transnational Surrealism" and Moro's only other known extant collage produced in Paris, demonstrates his identification with the surrealist aesthetic project by integrating popular surrealist imagery. The collage is a combination of cut out beige and rose paper and two oval magazine fragments of women staring into a void. The cut outs are grouped into two sections, each occupying the upper and lower halves of the paper. The top grouping consists of a rose colored, vertically positioned rectangular piece of paper tilted slightly at an upward angle toward the right. The rose paper is pasted over a beige oval piece of paper which extends toward the right of the composition. The lower grouping consists of the same materials: a rose colored, cut out piece of paper pasted over an oval beige cutout. Central to each beige cutout are two overlaid images of women staring into a void: the female figures shown appear to have been cut from contemporary journals documenting the latest news similar to the reproduction of racy news stories included in the surrealist journal *LSASDLR*.

Moro was familiar with the surrealist fascination with macabre imagery of suicide, hysteria, and the transformation of the female form as metaphors for sensuality and contemporary decadence. Such imagery was incorporated into the fifth and sixth editions of *LSASDLR* to which Moro contributed. Stills from Luis Bunuel's film *L'Age d'Or* (fig. 13) in the first edition of *LSASDLR* and the haunting before and after photographs of the Papin Sisters (fig. 14), two maids convicted for double homicide of their employers, were published in accompaniment to the essay "Notes en vue d'une

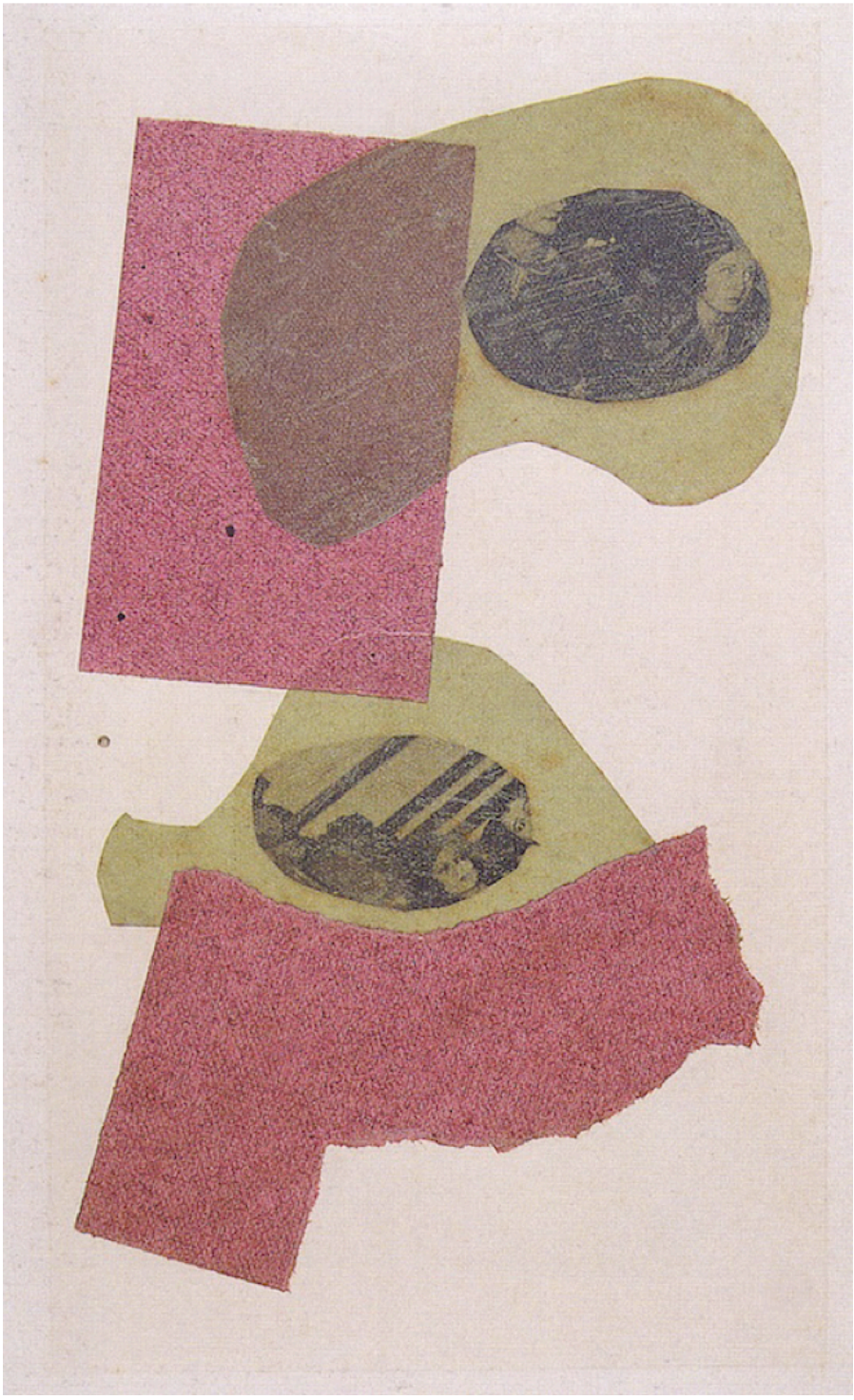


Figure 12
César Moro, “Head”, collage, 1932
E.A. Westphalen Collection

Figure 13
Luis Bunuel, “L’Age d’Or”, film still
Published in *Le Surréalisme au Service de la Révolution,* 1932

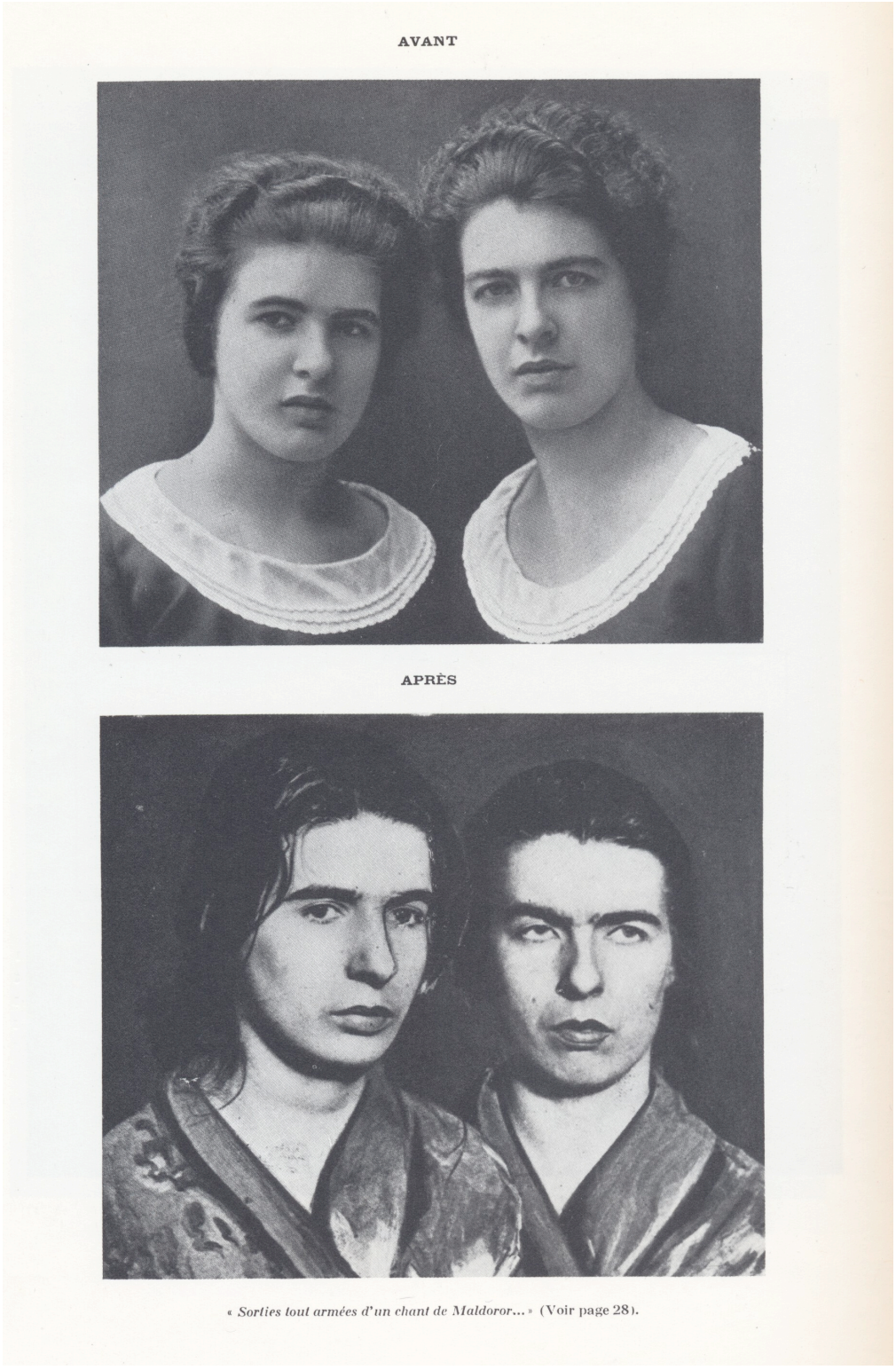


Figure 14
— "Les Soeurs Papin", photo diptych
Published in *Le Surréalisme au Service de la Révolution,* 1932

Psycho-Dialectique" by René Crevel in the fifth edition of *LSASDLR.*

Moro shared an interest in themes of hysteria with the surrealists,[44] demonstrated in his contribution to the 1933 surrealist publication *Violette Nozière,* an anthology of poems the surrealists distributed during the media frenzy surrounding Parisian Violette Nozière's double parricide. The surrealists came out in defense of Violette, alluding that the girl's murder of her parents was the cumulative result of the decadence of the Parisian middle class. Moro's poem appears in the publication accompanied by a drawing from Marcel Jean.

Moro's collage *L'art de lire l'avenir* (fig. 1) produced in 1935 in Lima, demonstrates that Moro promoted collage visual strategies for a Peruvian public following his return. Moro returned to Lima in 1933 for financial reasons, but missed his engagement with the surrealists in Paris. Moro organized the exhibition *Exposicion de las Obras de Jaime Dvor, Cesar Moro, Waldo Parraguez, Gabriela Rivadeneira, Carlos Sotomayor, & Maria Valencia,* where he first exhibited *L'art de lire l'avenir*, in an effort to present the surrealist aesthetic project to audiences in Peru and combat the repressive political and cultural environment of Lima.

L'art de lire l'avenir was particularly important to Moro, as he chose to exhibit the work in a second international exhibition with surrealist ties, *Aparicion de la Gran Esfinge Nocturna* (Apparition of the Great Sphinx of the Night), that he organized with André Breton and Wolfgang Paalen in Mexico City in 1940. Moreover, *L'art de lire*

[44] Moro's papers held at the Getty Research Institute Los Angeles include a handwritten copy of fragments from Breton's *Trajectoire du rêve* entitled *Trajectoire du rêve - documents recuilles par André Breton*. In Ades's article "We Who Have Neither Church Nor Country," she includes an omitted passage from Moro's introductory text to the 1940 exhibition catalogue. It reads: 'At this precise moment the Christian era ends. A great wind has been unleashed, at whose origin we see the moral, poignant support of Sigmund Freud, which has just dispersed forever the props of Golgotha, and death-loving ivy detours the crosses where birds would never live. Surrealist clairvoyance situated the end of the Christian Era in 1925; in 1939 we need to remember this.' (pp. 31).

l'avenir exemplifies the artist's interest in presenting an anachronic syntax to evoke displacement identified in his earlier collages produced in Paris.

That Moro was interested in employing surrealist aesthetic strategy in order to combat the entrenched cultural nationalism of Peru in the 1930s is evident in Moro's unpublished manuscript "Los anteojos de azufre" from 1934. Moro describes the situation in Lima as conservative and oppressed. Moro condemns all of Peru except " 'the texts, objects and pictures of the mad in the lunatic asylum of the Hospital L.H. Luego [Larca Herrara Hospital]," where he was curator of the museum hospital, and a 'monument in Lima to Begasse du Petit-Thouars.'[45] The political situation in Lima was tenuous under dictator Luis Miguel Sánchez Cerro (1931-1933) who Moro condemned in René Crevel's 1933 anti-war manifesto *La mobilization contre la guerre n'est pas la paix.* Following Cerro's assassination, nationalist president Óscar Benavides outlawed the APRA[46] and repressed the Communist Party arguing that both were representative of international political platforms. Benavides came to power in support of Franco's fascist rebellion in Spain and invited Italian fascist advisers to instruct the Peruvian police force on suppression and dissent, and annulled elections in 1936.

Furthermore, *indigenismo* artists like Sabogal were well established instructors in the National Academy of Fine Arts supported by the state by the early 1930s. As early as 1935, Moro criticized the entrenched nationalism of *indigenismo* artists like Sabogal in interviews published in the periodical *Cascabel.* In an interview with Ernesto More in 1935, Moro describes *indigenismo* artists as promoting the auspicious, controlled

[45] César Moro, *Los anteojos de azufre,* ed André Coyné (Lima: Ediciones Tigrondine, 1958), pp. 2-3.

[46] Acronym for Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana, or American Popular Revolutionary Alliance. A left-wing Peruvian political party founded in 1924.

endeavors of the oppressive state, referring to Benavides, rather than supporting the school's mission of promoting the polyvalent expression of human temperament.[47]

Moro's collage *L'art de lire l'avenir* (fig. 1) can be seen as the artist's attempt to visually enable revolutionary praxis building from his surrealist aesthetic strategy in the Peruvian context. *L'art de lire l'avenir* repeats the surrealist tactic of integrating magazine advertisements and text seen in Moro's *Untitled (1927)* (fig. 2)*,* here capitalizing on fetishistic imagery of the fragmented body. In the upper left quadrant of the work, a profile cutout of a beheaded male figure is pasted. Moro cut three sections from the face including the eye, nose and ear, such that the male figure's face appears in three closely placed, but discrete, pieces. The convex parabola of the male figure's eyes is directly mirrored by a contingent, concave, pale green parabolic piece of paper. The face is positioned directly opposite the vertical axis from a decapitated male body, clothed in a bathing suit. Several cut geometric shapes are pasted in between the two body fragments, occupying the middle of the composition. A checkered green and yellow piece of paper forms the base of the central arrangement: Moro pasted paper of the same pattern just right of the vertical axis before lifting it off, leaving a faded imprint of the pale green and yellow were the paper had been placed. The act of vanishing is echoed literally through the placement of the Pond's Vanishing Cream advertising image placed at the bottom of the composition. The 'V' on the label of the Pond's jar is formally reiterated in the cutout of the downward facing V of a diver at its right.

[47] Ernesto More, "Se impone una reforma en nuestros institutos de arte, en el Perú," in *Cascabel,* Lima, I, no. 55 (19 October 1935): 11, quoted in Natalia Majluf, "La polémica del indigenismo" in *Sabogal,* pp. 95. Moro's original Spanish reads: "No veo por qué la Escuela de Bellas Artes no siga cumpliendo su mission: desviar, limar, borrar las inquietudes humanas que a través del temperamento artistico suelen manifestarse. Todo ese caudal de inadaptación hay que domarlo, y lo que pudo ser algo, termina dentro de un marco dorado, ornando cualquier salón."

The compositional arrangement of forms and objects in *L'art de lire l'avenir* thematizes the notion of transformation. Tiny, black dots of graph paper located in three sections of the composition formally echo the leopard speckling of the blue and green rectangles at the center of the composition. The remaining imprint of the green and yellow checkered pattern next to the vertical axis demonstrates the literal act of vanishing by presenting evidence of the paper's former presence. Each human form in the image represents the human body in an ambiguous position of vanishing referencing a state of transformation. For example, a moment after the graphic of the diver was taken, the figure would have plunged head first into a pool of water, disappearing from view, while the male body is figuratively transformed through the cut and paste process.

The title of the work exemplifies the semantically parodic syntax of Moro's collage enterprise to provoke an ethos of displacement: the first word of the title, 'l'art,' is written in art nouveau, gestural script in the upper left quadrant of the composition, a nod to the integration of text in his earlier painting *¡Señora Give it to Me!* (fig. 8) . The verb and object of the sentence, 'of reading the future' are omitted, causing the viewer to use the title in order to decode the meaning of the collage. The semantic reading of the collage remains ambiguous: through the process of decoding, the viewer is projected into an enigmatic space and consequently forced to displace the original symbolic meaning of form.

Moro's collage *Adorée au grand air (The Art of Reading the Future)* (fig. 15), also produced in Lima and exhibited with *L'art de lire l'avenir* in his 1935 exhibition in Lima, is especially important because it shows that Moro wants to incorporate

Figure 15
César Moro, “Adorée au grand air (The Art of Reading the Future)”, collage, 1935
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Mesoamerican history into the surrealist conception of the world. *Adorée* (fig. 15) exemplifies Moro's employment of his collage enterprise to convey an anachronic vision of history, an objective enabled by his surrealist practice that marks his opposition to the *indigenismo* aesthetic project in Peru.

Adorée au grand air (fig. 15) features four cutout, isolated images of heads and torsos sourced from journal clippings, pasted onto a small piece of black sandpaper. Pasted in the upper left corner is a black and white image of a young female whose hands, decorated in bangles, are clutched beneath her chin. The heightened tenebrism of the light and dark contrast illuminating the females face recalls the female imagery drawn from surrealist journals Moro employed in *Head* (fig. 12). Moro has positioned the figure such that her gaze is directed at the back of the head of a pre-Columbian mask cut from a 1930 issue of the Parisian journal *L'Art Vivant.*[48]

This particular edition of *L'Art Vivant* featured a spread of a variety of masks of different cultures and time periods, and it is likely Moro glued a hand-drawn wreath of flowers crowning the pre-Columbian mask and a sequin over its left eye in order to comment on the tendency to "[collect] and display [these] objects for their decorative potential without understanding their cultural signification."[49] A medallion used for exchange featuring a man in profile is pasted on top three alternating decaying molars: the three teeth attach just where his neck stops. The medallion faces a cut out of a neoclassical, stone bust of a female figure overlaid in wet drapery.

[48] Greet, "César Moro's Transnational Surrealism," pp. 33-34.

[49] Greet, "César Moro's Transnational Surrealism," pp. 33-34.

Moro's placement of the pre-Columbian Mexican mask and the neoclassical bust before the seeing figures emphasizes the notion of combinatory vision. Such association between seeing and nonseeing objects, symbolizing disparate, historical contexts, negates a singular temporal/spatial reading of the collage. Adamowicz demonstrates how André Breton emphasized combinatory vision as a strategy central to the surrealist aesthetic project.[50] For example, Breton documents an encounter between two British Columbian masks positioned on either side of Giorgio de Chirico's painting *Le Cerveau de l'Enfant* (fig. 16) in his studio. The subject of the *Le Cerveau de l'Enfant,* whose eyes are closed, is able to interact and see through the process of exchange with the neighboring objects. Drawing from this experience, Breton later created '*Réveil du 'Cerveau de l'enfant,'* in which he pasted open eyes onto a cheap print of de Chirico's painting.'[51]

Echoing this strategy, Moro integrates combinatory vision as a mechanism for displacement in *Adorée au grand air.* Both seeing objects are placed behind a blind object: the wide eyed, female figure grasping her throat engages through her line of vision with the blinded pre-Columbian mask appearing before her. The woman's gaze is enabled by the mask between her and the composition's frame, obstructing her line of sight. Similarly, the profile medallion peers directly toward the neoclassical bust who blindly faces outward at the viewer.

As a visual strategy of displacement in *Adorée au grand air*, combinatory vision serves to semantically connect four objects representative of disparate cultural time

[50] Adamowicz, *Surrealist Collage in Text and Image*, pp. 43: "Le tableau chez moi ayant pris place entre deux masques 'à transformation' de Colombie Britannique, un dispositive de ficelles permet à volonté d'ouvrir ou fermer les yeux… il m'est difficile de savoir si le besoin de prêter un regard à ce visage (exsangue sans âme?) a été surdéterminé par le voisinage des masques ou si, au contraire c'est ce besoin, encore subconscient, qui m'a incité à les suspender de part et d'autre de lui."

[51] Adamowicz, *Surrealist Collage in Text and Image,* pp. 44.

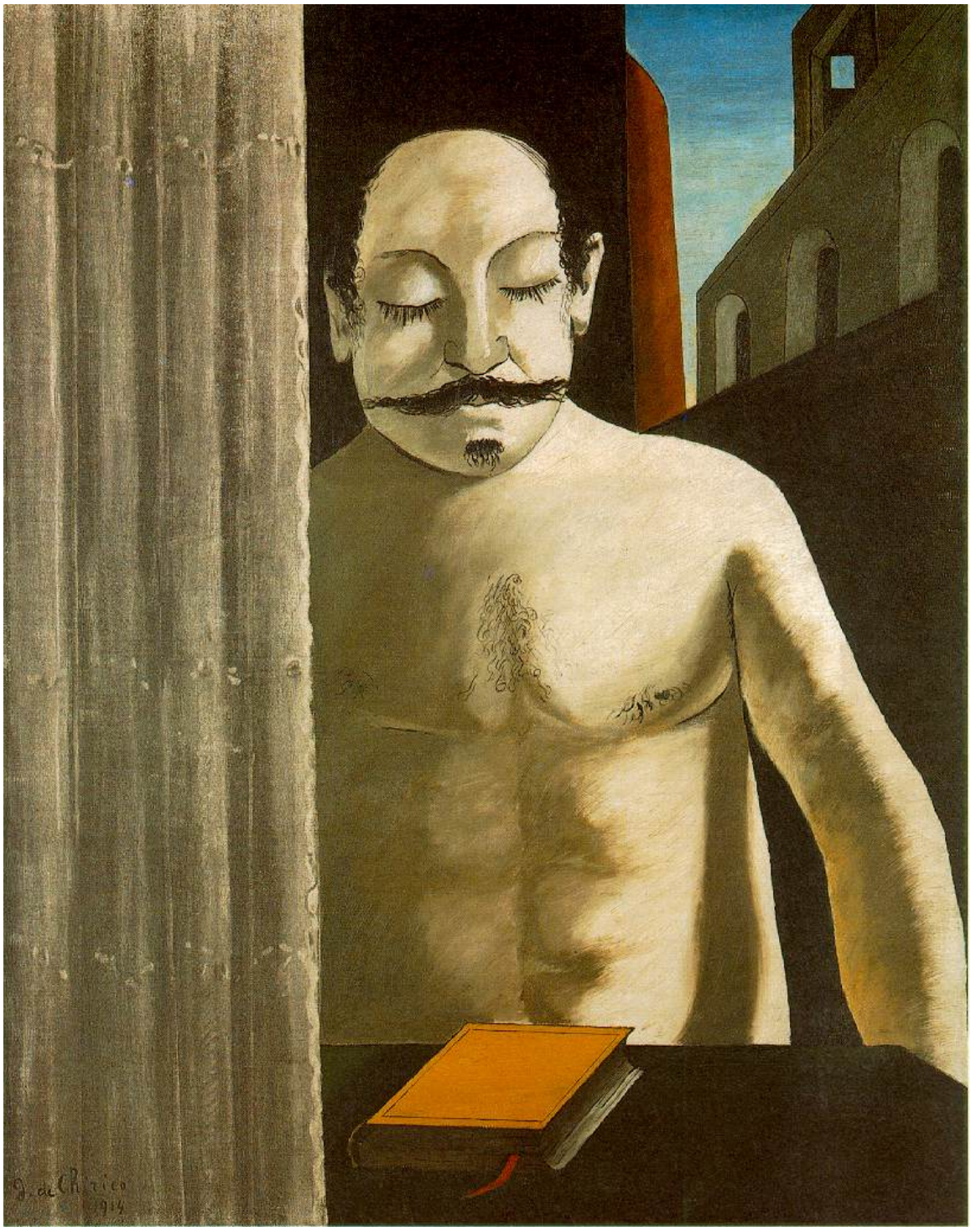


Figure 16
Giorgio de Chirico, “Le Cerveau de l’Enfant (The Child’s Brain)”, oil on canvas, 1914
Moderna Museet, Stockholm

periods and aesthetic signification. Suspended against an enveloping black background, Moro forces the viewer to look beyond each object's encoded meaning in the search for a syntactical reading of the image. The feminine verb 'adorée' implies that a female object is being the subject of attention, but specificity with regard to which object is adored remains open ended through the cyclicality of the objects' gazes. This experience produces a semantically ambiguous narrative for the viewer, who, faced with a seemingly random assortment of images, is projected into an unfamiliar space where the narrative disrupts the symbolic order of the aesthetic hierarchy of these objects. In symbolically removing the aesthetic hierarchy through displacement in *Adorée,* Moro creates a space where equal signification between Eurocentric and Latin American, central and peripheral, perspectives are stressed. Because of the intentional manner in which Moro composed this collage, *Adorée* exemplifies the revolutionary potency of Moro's surrealist practice in the Peruvian context.

CHAPTER IV

MORO AND SURREALISM IN DISPUTE, 1935-1942

Both *Adorée au grand air* (fig. 15) and *L'art de lire l'avenir* (fig. 1) were exhibited in *Exposicion de las Obras de Jaime Dvor, Cesar Moro, Waldo Parraguez, Gabriela Rivadeneira, Carlos Sotomayor, & Maria Valencia,* a show Moro organized in 1935 at the Academía Alcedo in Lima with the assistance of Peruvian writer Emilio A. Westphalen (b. 1911-2001), responsible for securing the venue in Lima, and Chilean visual artist Maria Valencia who played an instrumental role in arranging artwork to come from Chile.[52] Moro's opening passage of the 1935 catalogue essay declares the artist's interest in using the exhibition space to create alternative platforms of expression for artists, distinct from the 'mechanical vacuum' of academic painting, referring to the *indigenismo* instruction at the National Academy of Fine Arts.

Parallel to his efforts organizing the exhibition in Lima in 1935, Moro grew increasingly involved in anti-nationalist activism in Peru. Moro's activist affiliation with the group *Comité de Amigos de los Defensores de la República Española* eventually forced him into exile in Mexico City, Mexico in 1938 where he affiliated with Wolfgang Paalen's surrealist circle and composed his important, anti-*indigenismo* essay "On Painting in Peru." The objective of this chapter is to reframe Moro's engagement with the dissident surrealists led by Wolfgang Paalen in Mexico City, Mexico. Because Moro is one of four artists to sign Paalen's manifesto "Farewell to Surrealism" published in the first edition of the journal *Dyn* in 1942, current scholarship frequently considers Moro's

[52] Ades, "We Who Have Neither Church Nor Country," pp. 38.

aesthetic endeavors after 1942 within an anti-surrealist framework. The point I want to focus on particularly however, because I believe it was undeniably important to Moro, is that his contributions to *Dyn* maintain continuity with the collateral sociopolitical and aesthetic interests as they originally manifested in his collage practice. This chapter will demonstrate that Moro's contributions to the "Amerindian Issue" of *Dyn* in fact preserve his decolonial endeavor originally established in his surrealist collages, and which he expands in his writing and organization of exhibitions from the mid to late 1930s.

Moro describes in a letter to his friend André Coyné that the 1935 *Exposicion de las Obras de Jaime Dvor, Cesar Moro, Waldo Parraguez, Gabriela Rivadeneira, Carlos Sotomayor, & Maria Valencia* in Lima is intended as "an exhibition of reduced size, but one that represents for the first time a collective, continental effort."[53] With the exception of Moro, all of the artists included in the exhibition were Chilean, all of whom he had poached from an exhibition organized by Vicente Huidobro in Santiago, Chile in 1933. Maria Valencia played a critical role in organizing the participation of Jaime Dvor, Waldo Parraguez, Gabriela Rivadeneira, and Carlos Sotomayor, who indicated that they would not have participated in the exhibition had they known Moro's dissident intentions.[54]

Judging by the content of the exhibition, Moro clearly sought an ethos of displacement in the organization of disparate objects, mediums and imagery. Perhaps due to organizational difficulties, Moro's own artwork greatly outnumbered that of the

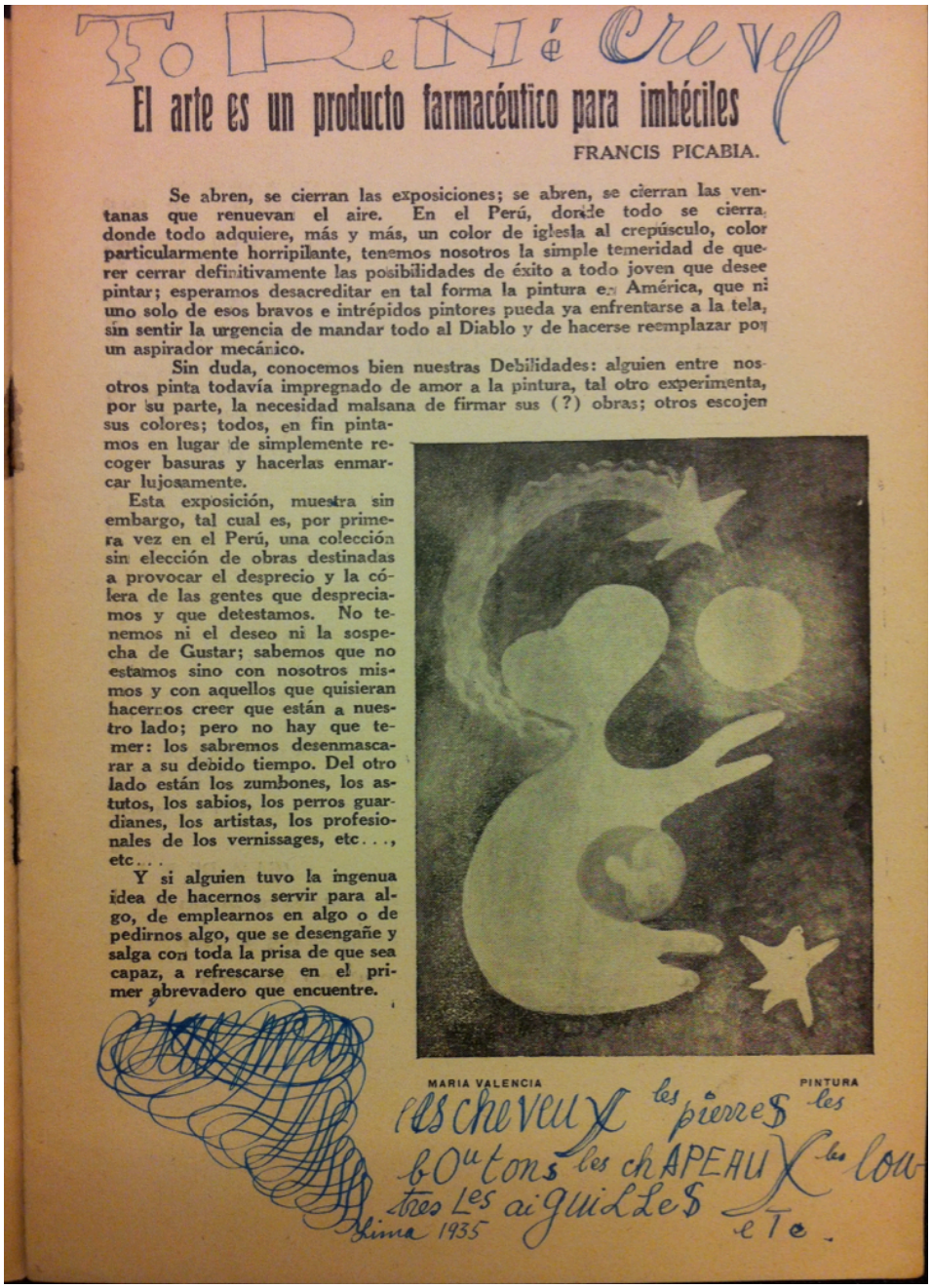
[53]André Coyné, *Amour à mort et autre poèmes,* pp. 12: in French, the passage indicated reads "une *Exposition* de format réduit, mais qui représente une première continentale."

[54] In her footnote 33 to her article "We Who Have Neither Church Nor Country," Ades elaborates on this point writing that "Maria Valencia, seems to have been instrumental in arranging for works to come from Chile; subsequently, several of the other exhibitors objected that they had not been consulted and would never have agreed to the exhibition had they known of the catalog's slant and Moro's attack (in the catalog) on Vicente Huidobro," pp. 38.

collaborating artists: thirty-two of the exhibited works were his own, including twelve collages. Despite Moro's disproportionate contribution to the exhibition, the diversity of works exhibited reflects Moro's passionate interest in the haunting transformation and immateriality of remnants of history and forms first activated in his collages. Moreover, Moro's inclusion of the collage *Adorée* represents the artist's interest in including primitive objects like the Mesoamerican mask parallel to traditional mediums within the space of the exhibition, a maneuver consistent with surrealist exhibition practices of the 1920s and 30s.

In an effort to distinguish art from the Peruvian master narrative of *indigenismo,* Moro developed an ethos of displacement by moving away from the paradigmatic exhibition typical of the Salon and the Academy and exhibiting art that presented an alternative imaginary of reality. Far from the nostalgia of paintings like Sabogal's *Limeña,* Maria Valencia's untitled painting, (fig. 17) displays a strange, amorphous form occupying the majority of the composition, framed by childlike shooting stars and an orb. Moro's naively painted image *Piéton* (fig. 18) recalls his earliest collage by repeating the iconography of a bizarre, unrecognizable floating creature.

Furthermore, Moro wanted to distinguish surrealist practice from other master avant-garde narratives in Latin America. Moro's presentation of the Chilean artists in the exhibition within a surrealist context reframes their work as surrealist as opposed to Huidobro's *creativismo*, an avant-garde movement which promoted the creation of 'art for art's sake.' 'Art for arts sake' as an avant-garde endeavor goes against Mariátegui's belief that the Latin American avant-garde should engage socially, a reason for his



El arte es un producto farmacéutico para imbéciles

FRANCIS PICABIA.

Se abren, se cierran las exposiciones; se abren, se cierran las ventanas que renuevan el aire. En el Perú, donde todo se cierra, donde todo adquiere, más y más, un color de iglesia al crepúsculo, color particularmente horripilante, tenemos nosotros la simple temeridad de querer cerrar definitivamente las posibilidades de éxito a todo joven que desee pintar; esperamos desacreditar en tal forma la pintura en América, que ni uno solo de esos bravos e intrépidos pintores pueda ya enfrentarse a la tela, sin sentir la urgencia de mandar todo al Diablo y de hacerse reemplazar por un aspirador mecánico.

Sin duda, conocemos bien nuestras Debilidades: alguien entre nosotros pinta todavía impregnado de amor a la pintura, tal otro experimenta, por su parte, la necesidad malsana de firmar sus (?) obras; otros escojen sus colores; todos, en fin pintamos en lugar de simplemente recoger basuras y hacerlas enmarcar lujosamente.

Esta exposición, muestra sin embargo, tal cual es, por primera vez en el Perú, una colección sin elección de obras destinadas a provocar el desprecio y la cólera de las gentes que despreciamos y que detestamos. No tenemos ni el deseo ni la sospecha de Gustar; sabemos que no estamos sino con nosotros mismos y con aquellos que quisieran hacernos creer que están a nuestro lado; pero no hay que temer: los sabremos desenmascarar a su debido tiempo. Del otro lado están los zumbones, los astutos, los sabios, los perros guardianes, los artistas, los profesionales de los vernissages, etc..., etc....

Y si alguien tuvo la ingenua idea de hacernos servir para algo, de emplearnos en algo o de pedirnos algo, que se desengañe y salga con toda la prisa de que sea capaz, a refrescarse en el primer abrevadero que encuentre.

MARIA VALENCIA — PINTURA

les cheveux les pierres les boutons les chapeaux les lou tres les aiguilles etc.

Lima 1935

Figure 17
Maria Valencia, untitled painting, oil on canvas, 1930s (date unknown)
Location unknown, reproduced in exh. cat. *Exposicion de las Obras de Jaime Dvor, Cesar Moro, Waldo Parraguez, Gabriela Rivadeneira, Carlos Sotomayor, & Maria Valencia*
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

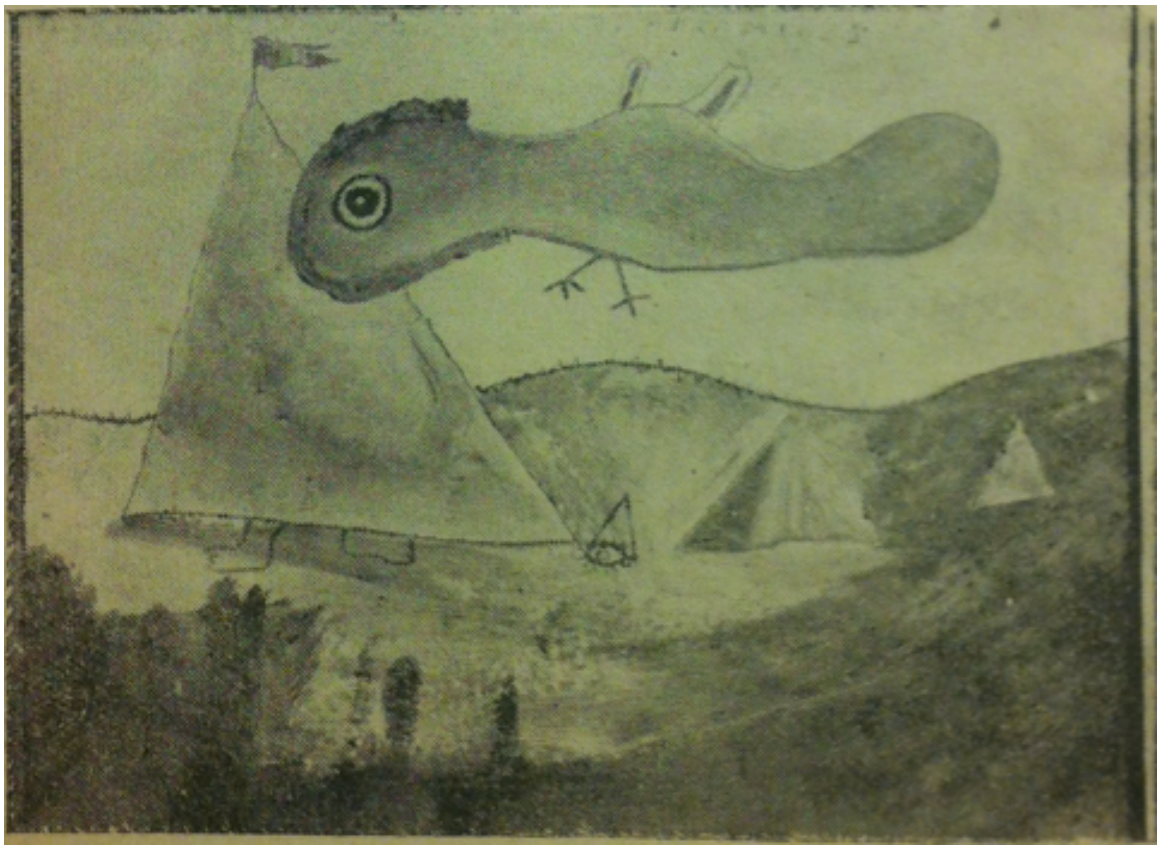


Figure 18
César Moro, “Piéton”, oil on canvas, 1935
Location unknown, reproduced in exh. cat. *Exposicion de las Obras de Jaime Dvor, Cesar Moro, Waldo Parraguez, Gabriela Rivadeneira, Carlos Sotomayor, & Maria Valencia*
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

support of surrealism as revolutionary praxis and cause for Moro's interest in the group of Chilean artists specifically.

Although Moro did not label his 1935 show in Lima a 'surrealist' exhibition, Moro's employment of surrealist collage tactics to engage this sensibility of displacement is evident in the layout of the exhibition catalogue. The catalogue appears almost like a surrealist review in that it includes juxtaposed poetry, declaratory statements, and famous surrealist quotations translated into Spanish and haphazardly formatted in the catalog's pages. The inclusion of texts and statements by Francis Picabia, Breton, de Chirico, Compte de Lautréamont and others, make evident Moro's intention to draw a connection between the works exhibited by artists in Peru and the international surrealist movement through the employment of collage-like layout typical of surrealist publications. The content of the passages included ranges between insulting comments directed at the public such as Picabia's "Art is a pharmaceutical product for imbeciles" and surreal, such as Breton's 'lo imaginario es lo que tiende a ser real.'[55]

Organizing the Lima exhibition in 1935, Moro's visual strategy of displacement expanded from collage to the exhibition in an effort to circumvent the deeply entwined cultural and political nationalism of modern Peru. Moro's catalog essay echoes his anti-*indigenismo* sentiment expressed in the *Cascabel* review, writing "we hope to [discredit] painting in America… This exhibition shows for the first time in Peru a collection of unchosen works intended to provoke the scorn and the anger of the people whom we

[55] *Exposicion de las obras de Jaime Dvor, Cesar Moro, Waldo Parraguez, Gabriela Rivadeneira, Carlos Sotomayor, Maria Valencia,* exh. cat. (Lima: C.I.P., 1935), n.p.; Held in the Moro papers at the Getty Research Institute.

despise and detest."[56] In the catalogue essay, Moro is making two claims: in referring to 'painting,' he critiques the instruction of the National Academy of Fine Arts which employed *indigenismo* artists rather than the medium of painting. Second, in referring to unchosen works, Moro criticizes the state funded Salon whose objects were selected by government representatives and where artists like Sabogal gained widespread notoriety. Equally engaged in activist efforts to combat the repression of indigenous populations and the surrealist aesthetic project, by 1935 Moro henceforth employed his visual strategy of displacement in order to engage a decolonial sensibility of history.

Moro's political endeavors in Lima forced him into exile, and by 1938 he had resettled in Mexico City, Mexico. One example of his political engagement that led to police violence, forcing him into exile, was his adherence to the *Comité de Amigos de los Defensores de la República Española,* a group which opposed president Oscar Benavides's support of Francisco Franco's overthrow in Spain. Moro declared in one of the *Comité de Amigos's* published bulletins:[57]

> To help distribute this pamphlet is a cultural duty in the face of the barbarism and oppression that blind our country. Intellectuals, workers, students for a united front against the murderous fascism of Spain, conqueror of Ethiopia, persecutor of Jews, and enemy to the death of culture and democracy.[58]

[56] Spanish translation provided in Ades "We Who Have Neither Church Nor Country," pp. 26. Otherwise see César Moro, untitled text in *Exposicion de las obras de Jaime Dvor, Cesar Moro, Waldo Parraguez, Gabriela Rivadeneira, Carlos Sotomayor, Maria Valencia,* exh. cat. (Lima: C.I.P., 1935), n.p.

[57] Ades, "We Who Have Neither Church Nor Country," pp. 27.

[58] Kent Dickson, "César Moro and Xavier Villaurrutia: The Politics in Eros," (PhD dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 2005), pp. 115 (author's translation).

Comité de Amigos published five issues of anti-fascist, anti-Benavides bulletins. Resulting from these activities, Westphalen was arrested by the police and Moro fled to Mexico in 1937.[59]

That Moro continued to ponder the cultural nationalism of Lima, Peru while in exile is evidenced in the publication of his essay "On Painting in Peru," composed in Mexico City in 1938, and published in his journal *El Uso de la Palabra* co-edited with Emilio A. Westphalen in 1939. The journal was only published in one edition: Moro and Westphalen abandoned the endeavor following the publication of the French review *L'Usage de la Parole* which used the same title. Moro envisioned his endeavors in *El Uso de la Palabra* as an extension of the 1935 Lima exhibition, evidenced in his publishing an early image of the journal's cover in the 1935 exhibition catalogue (fig. 19).

Moro wrote "On Painting in Peru" in Mexico City, Mexico in 1938 (fig. 4). In the essay, Moro illuminates the paradox of the *indigenismo* aesthetic project. He describes how, without a tradition of pictorial representation in Peru and a lack of resources to draw from for modern imagery, the *indigenismo* project mimics modern, European primitivism. Rather than using art to promote the social mobility of the indigenous populations, Moro claims that primitive painters of Peruvian modernism like Sabogal capitalize on imagery of the Indian.[60] Moro blames the National Academy of Fine Arts for perpetuating the myth of the Indian in Peru, writing that repeatedly the salon presents

[59] Ades, "We Who Have Neither Church Nor Country," pp. 27.

[60] César Moro "A Proposito de la Pintura en el Perú," in *El Uso de la Palabra* 1 (1939): 2: "En el Perú, pais sin tradición pictórica, la barbarie pobre que nos caracteriza como conjunto se empeña, afanosamente, por crear dentro la horrible penuria de recursos, una pretendida pintura que no tenga nada que ver con la pintura

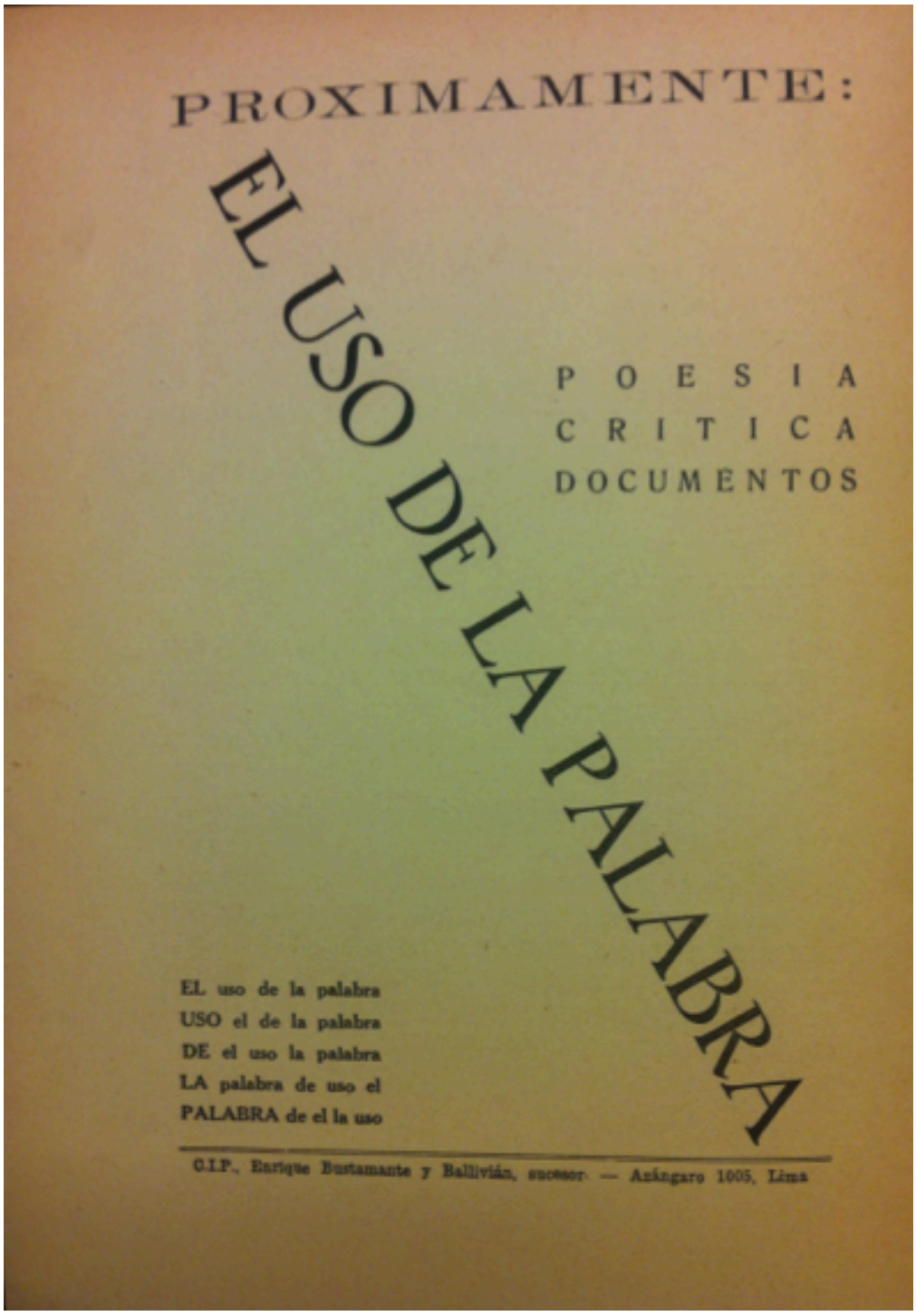


Figure 19
César Moro, advertisement for *El Uso de la Palabra*, 1935
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

europea: es decir, que un lugar de las rollizas bretonas, holandesas y de más suizas que poblaron otrora la pintura en Europa, tendremos ahora indios a granel."

artwork to the public that continues to represent the pastoral Indian as primitive subject, completely distanced from the reality of indigenous populations.[61]

Moro goes further than critiquing *indigenismo,* and describes that the ingrained nationalism of the project has misconstrued representation of Peruvian identity in modern thought. Moro identifies the incoherence between the social situation of the contemporary Indian and the idealization of 'Indianness' exemplified in the *indigenismo* endeavors of figures such as Valcárcel, as the major failure of the *indigenismo* movement.[62] Although Moro's essay specifically targets *los pintores indigenistas* [*indigenismo painters*], Moro opens "On Painting in Peru" stating that the failures endemic to Peruvian *indigenismo* painting are inherent to the entire intellectual movement, comparing *indigenismo* nationalism with the hegemonic writing of German historian Oswald Spengler.[63]

Moro argues that the *indigenismo* project is the result of the pervasiveness of coloniality in Peruvian thought, stating that modern Peruvians are unable to think beyond colonial history. Even when employing Incan imagery, *indigenismo* artists glorify the conquering imperial heritage of the Incan empire. According to Moro, though originally

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[61] César Moro "A Proposito de la Pintura en el Perú," pp. 3: La Escuela de Bellas Artes en el Perú es el baluarte más fuerte de esta anodina tendencia; de ella salen, año tras año, hasta la nausea, los innumerables mantenedores del arte cretinizante, los que creen cumplir con la mission profundamente transformadora del Arte, devorando diariamente su ración de indo al óleo."

[62] Current scholarship on Peruvian social history presents Valcárcel's efforts, while originally interested in socialist concerns, as incompatible to the contemporary situation of the indigenous populations of Peru. This led to a fracture in the *indigenismo* movement in the 1920s between the intellectuals and artists such as Valcárcel who continued to romanticize the 'indigenous' history, with the contemporary Peruvian peasantry.

[63] Full analysis of Moro's 1938 essay *On Painting in Peru* will be addressed in the third chapter of this thesis. Quotation paraphrased here from César Moro [Alfredo Quíspez Asín], "A propósito de la pintura en el Perú," in El uso de la palabra (Lima, Perú), (December 1939): 3: "El indigenismo no se circunscribe, como es fácil de comprender, solamente a la pintura; toda la gama de intelectuales en el Perú quiere levantar las nuevas murallas chinas que nos aíslen de Europa, a quien nuestros sabihondos lectores de las traducciones de Spengler."

indigenismo emerged in an effort to seek solutions for the contemporary Peruvian peasant, by the 1930s, it is evident that *indigenismo* artists no longer sought future revitalization of indigenous communities.

While in Mexico City, Moro also sought to counter cultural nationalism through the organization of the first international exhibition of surrealism in the Americas, *Aparicion de la Gran Esfinge Nocturna* (Apparition of the Great Sphinx of the Night). The exhibition opened at the Galeria de Arte Mexicano in Mexico City, Mexico in January 1940. Organized by Moro in collaboration with André Breton, founder of the movement and Austrian surrealist Wolfgang Paalen, Moro authored the catalogue essay for *Aparicion*, a responsibility that signals his leadership in the curatorial vision of the show.

Moro's catalogue essay continues his theme first developed in *"*On Painting in Peru" by emphasizing the role of artists and intellectuals to challenge the aesthetic hierarchy implicit within modern art practices and representational traditions. The text of Moro's introductory essay to the 1940 *International Exhibition of Surrealism* emphasizes the artist's belief in collage as a significant medium for conveying an alternative sensibility of time through a visual, plastic language.

Collage gave plastic expression to Moro's firm belief in inverting western conceptions of contemporary human achievement through an upheaval of values, a task Moro emphasizes in his essay for *Aparicion*:

> For the first time in centuries, we witness a heavenly combustion in Mexico. A thousand tokens mingle and are seen in the conjugation of constellations that renew the brilliant pre-Columbian night. The most pure night of the new continent where great dream potentialities made the powerful jaws of civilizations in Mexico and Peru clash together. Countries that keep, in spite of the invasion of

> the Spanish barbarians and their followers of today, a thousand luminous points that must join very soon the line of fire of international surrealism.[64]

Objects included in the show, pre-Columbian artifacts, masks, and the Northwest Coast art of Paalen's collection displayed next to paintings by contemporary artists, created a setting of displacement by engaging combinatory processes between objects analogous to the imagery in Moro's collages. Moreover, the inclusion of primitive artifacts and objects in the 1940 exhibition extends Moro's mission of integrating pre-Columbian histories into the 1935 exhibition space.

Moro hoped the ethos of displacement provoked by the exhibitions of 1935 and 1940 would dislodge the cultural hierarchy of master narratives inherent to the social fabric of postcolonial America. Seen from this perspective, each work within the 1940 exhibition could hypothetically function as representative of an encoded meaning (its provenance), and simultaneously, a new meaning intuited through its engagement with other objects in the exhibition.

Moro's introductory essay for the exhibition furthermore articulates a brief history of 20th century modernism which culminates in the invention of collage. Reading Moro's introduction, one has the impression the exhibition is organized around collage. Written in a surrealist, stream-of-conscious style, Moro connects the development of collage with cubism in the opening paragraph of the essay:

> [Towards] 1910, [the] historical date in which Pablo Picasso, the peerless, begins his quest known *by the improper name* of cubism. The miracle then begun does not end even [with] the devouring stretch of darkness of the Great War.[65]

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[64] César Moro, untitled introduction, trans. by J. Vazques Amaral, *Exposición internacional del surrealismo,* exh. cat. (Mexico D.F.: Galeria de Arte Mexicana, 1940), n.p.

[65] César Moro, untitled introduction, trans. by J. Vazques Amaral, *Exposición internacional del surrealismo,* exh. cat. (Mexico D.F.: Galeria de Arte Mexicana, 1940), n.p.

In referencing the period of synthetic cubism in which Picasso and Braque's technique progressed toward the inclusion of extant media in 1912, Moro identifies a tendency toward collage in the visual arts at the outset of the 20th century. The 'miracle then begun by Cubism' that Moro describes, culminates with the *naissance* of collage in his discussion of modernism:

> Thus, from year to year, the Fumes multiply. The *collage* is born, Francis Picabia, the Dada movement and, later, the superb materialization of the great desire, the irreversible longing, [of the] will to master and the conquest of man over the shifting field of the spirit.[66]

When discussing surrealist technique in painting, Moro includes descriptive phrases which associate the medium of painting with terms more typical of collage practice. Moro writes:

> Freedom to paint like Picasso, for those who maintain that it is easy to paint thus, is hereby inaugurated. And why not? Man is endless and can give us the greatest surprises. Surrealism shows its awful weapons; words, a canvas, colors, smoke, glue**.** What cretinized man for centuries is now in his hands and not in those of academic phantoms.[67]

Though Moro describes Surrealist painting as the 'concrete adventure par excellence' for its ability to visually articulate alternative visions of reality in a plastic vocabulary, it is clear that Moro's definition of painting extended to polyvalent artistic practices such as collage. Describing the medium of painting as a pastiche of materials such as 'a canvas, colors, smoke, glue,' further demonstrates this belief.

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[66] César Moro, untitled introduction, trans. by J. Vazques Amaral, *Exposición internacional del surrealismo,* exh. cat. (Mexico D.F.: Galeria de Arte Mexicana, 1940)*,* n.p.

[67] César Moro, untitled introduction, trans. by J. Vazques Amaral, *Exposición internacional del surrealismo,* exh. cat. (Mexico D.F.: Galeria de Arte Mexicana, 1940)*,* n.p.

Moreover, the violent tone adopted by Moro and used throughout the essay accentuates both the artist's inherent belief that the surrealist collage aesthetic serves as a mechanism for defiance against capitalist structures of power and his argument against those powers. In his essay for *Aparicion*, Moro expands his earlier critique included in "On Painting in Peru" of Peruvian nationalists and applies it to a global audience, articulating how collage is the transformative and revolutionary weapon that combats conformism. Moro describes the tense atmosphere of WWII as the 'ideal climate' to make the 'timorous souls' responsible for the war question their passive acceptance of contemporary circumstances which resulted in this global conflict.

Aparicion was a large exhibition featuring fifty international artists, the majority of whom were still in Europe or were displaced due to the war overseas. Paalen's advisory statement which follows Moro's introductory essay indicates how the cost of transportation between Europe and Mexico City greatly influenced the show's content. Paalen's preface also describes how sculptures originally slated for the show were forced to be omitted. Paalen writes:

> Transport difficulties due to the present situation have unfortunately prevented us from worthily representing the surrealist sculptors Hans Arp, Alberto Giacometti and Henry Moore, and have deprived us of sculptures by Picasso and Max Ernst.[68]

Many of the more delicate objects listed in the exhibition catalogue such as pre-Columbian masks and antique artwork were drawn from the private collections of Diego Rivera and Wolfgang Paalen, and were already stored in Mexico City making their exhibition possible. Paalen laments the unfortunate excision of many Surrealist 'extra-

[68] Wolfgang Paalen, untitled notice, trans. by J. Vazques Amaral, *Exposición internacional del surrealismo,* exh. cat. (Mexico D.F.: Galeria de Arte Mexicana, 1940), n.p.

plastic' objects that the organizers were unable to include due to security at customs in the wartime climate:

> Much to our regret, we are also unable to present, in the profusion we should have wished, those 'extra-plastic' contrivances, time-bombs of the conscience, which, for several years now, have been the consternation of the custom's men, the vexation of collectors, and the rage of critics. I mean the OBJETS SURREALISTES, held of prime importance in the surrealist conquest.[69]

Despite these logistical problems, Moro enabled displacement in the curation of *Aparacion* by integrating a collage of mediums into the exhibition. In *Surrealist Collage in Text and Image,* Adamowicz describes the *wunderkammer* quality of Breton's studio 'where primitive masks were placed next to surrealist paintings, found objects and personal mementos':

> A British Columbian mask alongside a painting by Douanier Rousseau, a case of tropical butterflies next to an Ormec statuette, a schizophrenic drawing by Wölfi, an inua mask from Alaska: the surrealists were alert to the hallucinatory, auratic, fetishistic or disorienting character of certain elective objects, images or textual fragments. [The studio] was less a depository of fixed images than an active collage space [with its] bric-à-brac of curios displayed in a seemingly haphazard fashion, rather than the museum's systematic organization of data.[70]

The transformative capacity of presentation spaces emphasized by the surrealists, be it the object, the surrealist journal, or the exhibition itself, played a direct role in Moro's conceptualization of the 1940 exhibition space.

Aparacion was not well received in Mexico, and the Mexican muralist David Alfaro Siqueiros went so far as to call the show an "aesthetic crime of Bretonism."[71] Siqueiros's statement indicates how the strategy of displacement in the

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[69] Wolfgang Paalen, untitled notice, trans. by J. Vazques Amaral, *Exposición internacional del surrealismo,* exh. cat. (Mexico D.F.: Galeria de Arte Mexicana, 1940), n.p.

[70] Adamowicz, *Surrealist Collage in Text and Image,* pp. 43.

[71] Ades, "We Who Have Neither Church Nor Country," pp. 30.

1940 exhibition was too esoteric and lost on the audience in Mexico City, and in some cases was interpreted as decadent disengaged from revolutionary potentiality. Moro defected to Paalen's *Dyn* circle in 1942 shortly after the exhibition, signing an essay entitled "Farewell to Surrealism." In reality, the *Dyn* circle's aesthetic intentions were very similar if not entirely consistent with the surrealists. However, Moro, who considered aesthetic projects a cell for activism like Mariátegui's sentiment in *Amauta*, realized surrealism would not succeed as a revolutionary aesthetic project in the Americas. Moro's defect to *Dyn* was a question of self representation rather than one of ideology.

Moro contributed several poems to the journal *Dyn*, and for the 1943 Amerindian double issue, wrote an important essay entitled "Coricancha: The Golden Quarter of the City." Building from his theme first developed in "On Painting in Peru," Moro connects the Inca capital to a still earlier precedent. He writes:

> The worship of Pachacamac had spread, well before the total submission to the Incas. In spite of the fact that by definition he is the invisible god to whom one does not build temples, the ancestors of Hatun Apu Cuismancu, before he became vassal to Pachacutec Inca, had already given the name of Pachacamac to the valley and erected his temple.[72]

Moro describes how modern Peru is completely removed from this history, but states that the history of the unknown informs the imaginary. He concludes, writing that this former unknown is his reality:

> I salute you, vanished strength, whose shadow I take for reality. And, as is right, I let go the prey for the shadow. I salute only you, great shadow, strange to the country that saw my birth. You no longer belong to it, your domain is vaster, you inhabit the hearts of poets, you dampen the wings of the ferocious eyelids of the imagination.[73]

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[72] César Moro, "Coricancha: The Golden Quarter of the City," *Dyn,* nos 4-5 (1943): 75.

[73] César Moro, "Coricancha," pp. 75.

The expansive territory described by Moro is far greater than the national territory of Peru, securing Moro's anti-nationalist stance in poetic terms.The essay is flanked by Martín Chambí's haunting photographs of the empty ruins of the Incan capital (figs. 20, 21). Chambí became famous for his photographs of the horrific conditions of indigenous populations in Peru published in *El Comercio* and *Mundial* in the 1920s. In "Coricancha" however, Chambí employs distance in order to evoke the haunting language of Moro's essay.

Combined, Moro's essay and Chambí's images transpose remnants of Peru's precolonial history into the present. Chambí's poignant imagery of Peru's former capital evokes the sense of loss described by Moro's prose. Moro's language is evocative, and suggestive of his engagement with an anachronic temporality and way of seeing modern Peru. Moro's difficulty in coming to terms with the modernization of Peru, as he indicates in "On Painting in Peru", is in part rooted in Peru's negation of its own pre-Columbian history. Moro's essay "Coricancha" exudes the artist's interest in indigenous motifs illustrated in Chambí's photographs, an interest which that was shared by other contributors to Dyn, but also builds from Moro's surrealist practice.

Moro's description of the past as a shadow in this essay expands from the artist's narrative of history in his essay for the 1940 exhibition catalogue. Luminosity was clearly important for Moro, as it served as a metaphor for the human conception of history in the catalogue essay: Moro describes how, prior to the surrealist exhibition, pre-Columbian thought remained shrouded in darkness. According to Moro, Darkness and Light are not allegorical for positive or negative qualities; rather, they are ways of interpreting the

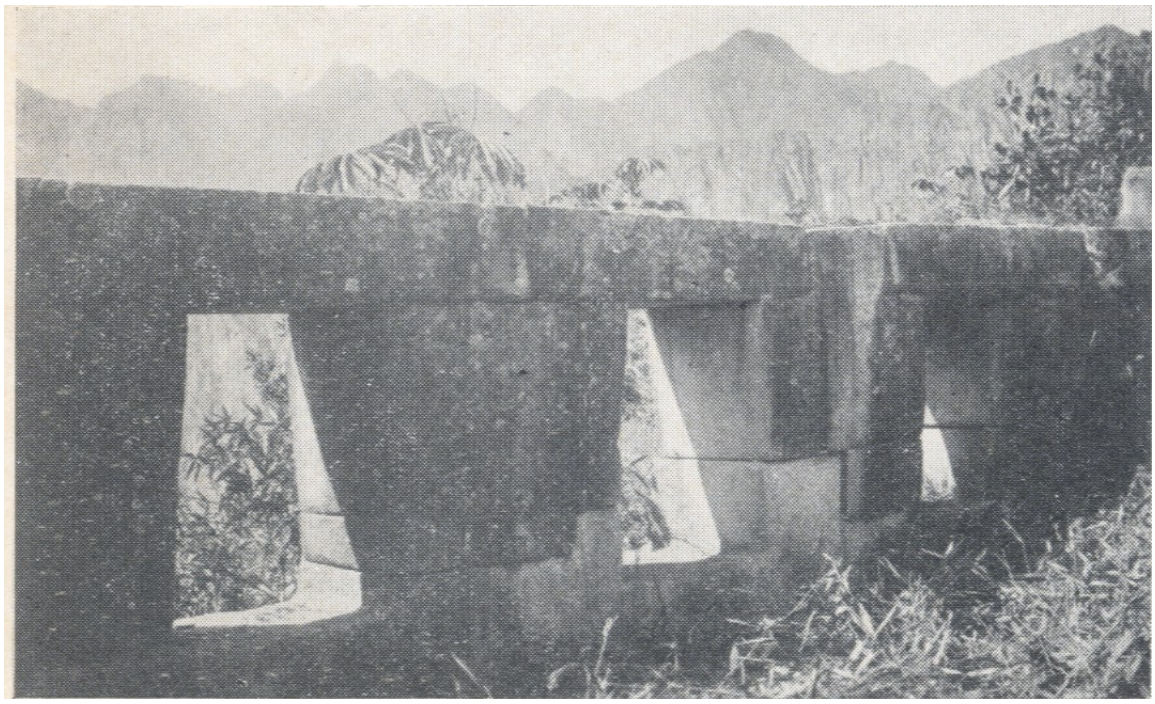

Figure 20
Martin Chambí, “Machupicchu”, photograph, 1943
Published in *Dyn,* no. 5, 1943

Figure 21
Martin Chambí, “Panoramic view of Machupicchu”, photograph, 1943
Published in *Dyn,* no. 5, 1943

space of history. Illuminating for Moro was a metaphor for the exploration of possible meanings offered by the pre-Columbian past. Most significantly, however, Moro first employed dark and light motifs as a metaphor for anachronic temporality in his powerful 1935 *Adorée,* in which four, disparate, objects suspended against a pitch black background symbolized Moro's alternative interpretation of the chronology of history.

At the end of his life, Moro wrote in response to Breton's questionnaire in *L'Art Magique:*

> Neither science nor religion – as they seem to me – suffice for the need to express, to realize, desire, art alone being able to establish the unconditional, nonutilitarian irrational. Essentially unreadable, one can only get close to it intermittently, and its attraction, alas is not as violent as it once was. Artist and magician are divorced.[74]

Although Moro expresses the certain failures of the 20th century avant-garde in this quotation, he upholds the potential of an aesthetic language to articulate the unconditional, nonutilitarian irrational experience of precolonial history he sought to create through his tactics of displacement in collage.

To conclude, Moro's surrealist collage practice emerged in correspondence to collateral social and aesthetic concerns over the representation of the history of the indigenous populations of Peru in artwork and the relationship between the avant-garde and socialist endeavors in Latin America. Moro's adoption of surrealist collage tactics in the years leading to the publication of "On Painting in Peru" parallel to the artist's

[74] Translated quotation provided in Ades "We Who Have Neither Church Nor Country," pp. 35. See also André Breton with Gérard Legrand, *L'art magique,* rev. ed. (Paris: Éditions Phébus, 1991), 306-7.

political, anti-nationalist activism demonstrate a critical attempt on the part of the artist to employ surrealist aesthetics as revolutionary praxis.[75]

Though Moro's artwork did not visually represent the indigenous populations of Peru, this analysis has demonstrated that the artist's interest in surrealism developed from a need to reconstruct Peruvian identity by deconstructing the history of colonialism which informed Peru's nationalist, modernist projects. For Moro, the ethos of displacement produced in the syntactical deconstruction of collage enabled a pre-rational, pre-linguistic sense of time and space,[76] a decolonial enterprise that echoes José Carlos Mariátegui's interest in the engagement of a revolutionary avant-garde in his journal *Amauta.*

This analysis of Moro's interwar collages was non-exhaustive, but has contributed to better understanding of the relationship between Moro's visual artwork and his political engagement in the interwar period. Study of Moro's biography between indigenism and surrealism contributes to better understanding of how modernism and avant-garde aesthetic practices in Latin America intersected, an area of art history which is oversimplified in current scholarship.

[75] This is terminology borrowed from Omar Rivera's current work on Mariátegui and surrealism. See Rivera, Omar. "Mariátegui's Avant-Garde and Surrealism as Discipline" *Symposium,* Vol. 18, No. 1, (Spring, 2014), p. 102-124.

[76] See Alejandro Vallega's discussion of displacement in aesthetics as a liberatory strategy in "The Fecund Undercurrent: On the Aesthetic Dimension of Latin American and Decolonial Thought," in *Latin American Philosophy from Identity to Radical Exteriority* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014), pp. 341-380.

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