



Universality and Utopia

The 20th Century Indigenista Peruvian Tradition

By Daniel Sacilotto

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This book explores the intersection between philosophical universalism and revolutionary politics in twentieth-century Peruvian indigenista literature. It is the first book in English that discusses the Peruvian indigenista tradition extensively.

This book explores the intersection between philosophical and literary universalism in Latin America, tracing its configuration within the twentieth-century Peruvian socialist *indigenista* tradition, following from the work of José Carlos Mariátegui and elaborated in the literary works of César Vallejo and José María Arguedas. Departing from conventional accounts that interpret *indigenismo* as part of a regionalist literature seeking to describe and vindicate the rural Indian in particular, I argue that Peruvian indigenista literature formed part of a historical sequence through which urban mestizo intellectuals sought to imagine a future for Peruvian society as a whole. Going beyond the destiny of acculturation imagined by liberal writers, such as Manuel González Prada, in the late nineteenth century, I show how the socialist indigenista tradition imagined a bilateral process of appropriation and mediation between the rural Indian and mestizo, integrating pre-Hispanic, as well as Western cultural and economic forms, so as to give shape to a process of alternative modernity apposite to the Andean world. In doing so, indigenista authors interrogated the foundations of European Marxism in light of the distinctiveness of Peruvian society and its history, expressing ever more nuanced figurations of the emancipatory process and the forms of its revolutionary agency.

Key selling points

- The first extensive text in English on the Peruvian *indigenista* tradition, which was foundational for both Latin American Marxist thought and the adaptation of modernist literature to its unique social reality.
- An exploration of the relation of the evolution of Latin American Marxism in relation to contemporary philosophical and political imaginaries.
- The first extensive study in the English language showing the relation between the political and philosophical ideas of José Carlos Mariátegui and the literary works of César Vallejo and José María Arguedas.
- A unique approximation to the relation of the evolution of utopian imaginaries, weaving philosophical, political and literary ideas in twentieth-century Hispanic America.

Contents

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Daniel Sacilotto is a professor of critical studies at the California Institute of the Arts, and PhD in comparative literature from the University of California, Los Angeles.

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