Indigenismo

The term *indigenismo* designates a wide range of trends in the arts, politics, and social sciences of twentieth-century Latin America (especially Mesoamerica and the Andes) concerned with indigenous peoples. As a current of social thought, indigenismo resisted the economic exploitation, social prejudice, and legal disabilities that had affected the Indian ever since the colonial era. Flourishing in the 1920s and 1930s, its major advocates included José Carlos Mariátegui, Tristán Marof, Pío Jaramillo Alvarado, and Manuel Gamio. A parallel to social indigenismo, early indigenista narratives primarily portrayed the struggles between indigenous peasants and powerful landlords supported by Church and State, as in the novels of Alcides Arguedas, Jorge Icaza, and Ciro Alegría. Literary indigenismo eventually shifted to a broader exploration of the Indians’ worldview and subjectivity in an effort to depict indigenous life from the inside. This cultural turn, which accentuated the complex relation of artistic and political representation, was most notably expressed in the work of the Peruvian novelist José María Arguedas. Although in decline since the 1960s, indigenismo has left traces in the contemporary reflection on coloniality, postcoloniality, and subalternity. Beyond academia, it has also anticipated the rise of indigenous politics as a global movement.

Bibliography: Estelle Tarica, *The Inner Life of Mestizo Nationalism* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

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