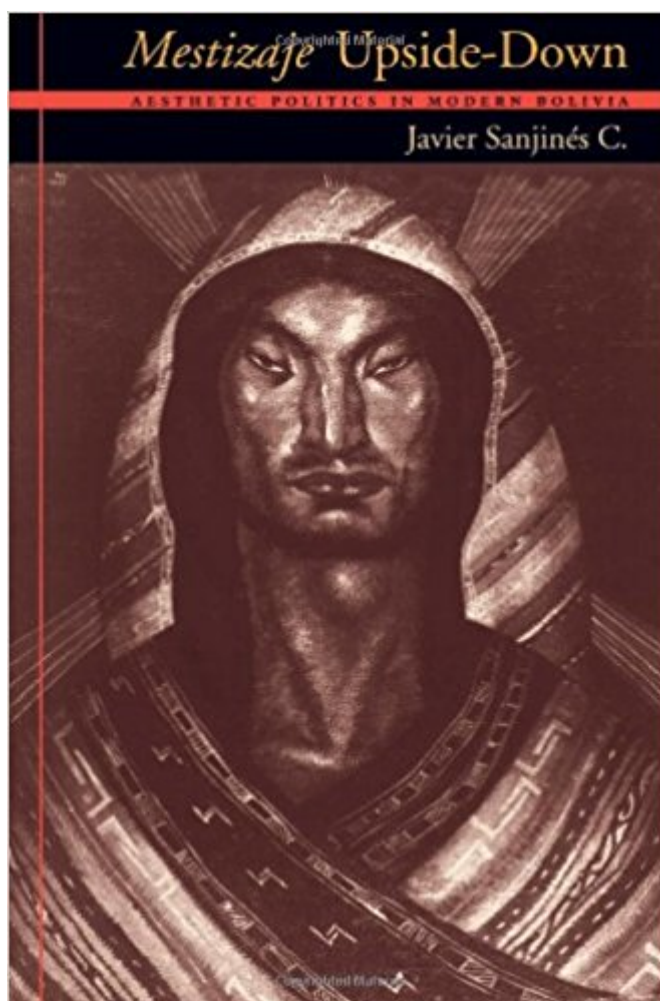


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Mestizaje Upside Down: Aesthetic Politics In Modern Bolivia (Pitt Illuminations)



Synopsis

Mestizaje "the process of cultural, ethnic, and racial mixing of Spanish and indigenous peoples" has been central to the creation of modern national identity in Bolivia and much of Latin America. Though it originally carried negative connotations, by the early twentieth century it had come to symbolize a national unity that transcended racial divides. Javier Sanjinés C. contends that mestizaje, rather than a merging of equals, represents a fundamentally Western perspective that excludes indigenous ways of viewing the world. In this sophisticated study he reveals how modernity in Bolivia has depended on a perception, forged during the colonial era, that local cultures need to be uplifted. Sanjinés traces the rise of mestizaje as a defining feature of Bolivian modernism through the political struggles and upheavals of the twentieth century. He then turns this concept upside-down by revealing how the dominant discussion of mestizaje has been resisted and transformed by indigenous thinkers and activists. Rather than focusing solely on political events, Sanjinés grounds his argument in an examination of fiction, political essays, journalism, and visual art, offering a unique and masterly overview of Bolivian culture, identity, and politics.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A combination of sociopolitical history and literary and artistic criticism, Sanjinés' book is an erudite meditation on Bolivian nationhood. Focusing on the concept of mestizaje, he skillfully interprets essays, novels, paintings, and photographs to illustrate the evolving vision of the nation

held by the country's mestizo-criollo elite."--Journal of Interdisciplinary History

"Sanjinés provides a brilliant reflection on the differences between the ideal mestizo and the visceral cholo in the construction of Bolivian modernity in the twentieth century. His essays take us from the mestizo nationalist pedagogy of Franz Tamayo to the indigenous insurrections of Felipe Quispe (El Mallku) and the Katarista movement."-José Rabasa, University of California, Berkeley

"Far from reproducing the mestizo's 'representation' of the indigenous people (indigenismo), Sanjinés turns around and takes 'Indianidad' (which is coloniality turned upside-down and taken as a location of pride instead of the location of shame) as an-other-epistemology, as border thinking from where mestizos and Latinidad are being looked at instead of being the locus of observation."-Walter D. Mignolo, Duke University

"Sanjinés's erudite book analyzes the presentation of mestizaje in the sociohistorical, political, and aesthetic traditions of twentieth-century Bolivia. This remarkable project is especially innovative because it addresses the distinctive work of essayists, painters, journalists, and political figures. . . . The author's provocative reading of the visual and lettered construction of mestizaje in Bolivia is a major contribution to Latin American and subaltern studies."-Marcia Stephenson, Purdue University

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