Documenting Indigenous and Human Rights
This paper is an effort to gain insights into the vast influence of José Carlos Mariátegui (JCM). Even prior to the initial issues of Amauta in 1926, and the 1928 appearance of his monumental Siete ensayos de interpretación de la realidad peruana, JCM’s role as a proponent of the indigenous had swelled to amazing proportions. As the Anuario Mariateguiano stated in 1989, the work by JCM (and about JCM) is “virtualmente incontrolable.” The need to understand JCM is essential if one desires to comprehend the surging indigenous movements of today’s Andes. This is in no way to overlook the influence of Manual González Prada’s early anarchism, and certainly not meant to deny the major impact of Haya de la Torre in Pan-Indigenismo, but JCM is unique in giving a lead voice to Marxism, transcending the limits of the Marxism of those years, and maintaining a major, leading intellectual presence today.

When the April 16, 1930 special issue of Amauta put forward the news of JCM’s death, he was only 36 years of age. The featured article lamented that the “más grande cerebro de América Latina ha dejado para siempre de pensar.” Nevertheless, his influence persists.

His life, in spite of persistent physical ailments, was remarkably rich and full. When the dictatorial Leguía government placed him in Italy in 1920-1923 to sideline him and his critical voice, JCM got exposure to a rapidly changing world as Europe emerged from World War I (the so-called war to end all wars). He came into contact with ideas on a broad scale. Mussolini and fascism were on the rise in Italy and elsewhere. In Russia, Marxism-Communism-Leninism-Trotskyism were working to weave the Soviet Union. And, of course, capitalism surged from the West, with British (and American) market penetration and consumerism digging roots into European and Latin American markets.

Peru was no exception. JCM returned to Lima in 1924 and found inspiration for his writings while the injustice from the legacies of colonialism continued to fester. Peru’s landless indigenous masses, tied to archaic social structures of forced labor and poverty, ignited his inner strength to action. Western materialism encroached on native traditionalism, but rendered little gain to Peru’s popular groups. The dogma and ideology of a highly charged Marxism dominated JCM’s work, but at the same time a keen sense of the avant-garde warmed and enriched his output and editing. JCM was one who
appreciated and defended creative personalities. In film, he found the mocking, social themes of Chaplin soothing to the pains of a mundane world. In music, he admired the freedom of Josephine Baker in the trials of racism. In the plastic arts, he embraced and promoted the use of indigenous images to humanize the struggles of the Andes.

It is striking to turn the pages of Amauta and to encounter the presentations of artists within JCM’s intellectual circle. Much of the cover art throughout Amauta’s 32-issue run (1926-1930) was the work of José Sabogal. His stark images of the typical drew inspiration from native craft etchings visible on mutes (household gourds). Sabogal’s lead can be observed later in the poignant domestic scenes of the painter Camilo Blas. Julia Codecido is another artist that captured JCM’s attention, and her portraits of the famous (such as Manuel González Prada) and the common (street scenes) add dignity and grace. Elena Izcue was a Peruvian who utilized pre-Columbian fabrics as a source for her paintings. In 1926, she did a book in Paris promoting indigenous art in Perú’s school systems. Also, the bold pencil stylings of Argentine artist Guillermo Buitrago were featured in the Amauta issue of June 1929. And JCM looked to Mexico for further material, highlighting Diego Rivera and Laura Rodríguez.

Looking forward from today’s perspective is a privilege. JCM and his influence are both mesmerizing and complex. Indeed, an essential place to start a contemporary review of JCM’s contributions to the indigenous is the Anuario Mariateguiano—published from 1989 until 1999. One of its goals was to gather unedited and lesser known writings from various and sundry sources. Although JCM lived for only 36 brief years, he was an extremely prolific writer and correspondent. Volumes of the Anuario have collected letters from and to JCM involving César Vallejo, Unamuno, Waldo Frank, and other such notable intellectuals. The Anuario also pulled together essays from and about his works, as well as long-lost photos and images of JCM, his family and his associates, and compiled bibliographic guides to critical studies on JCM.

As stated, the Anuario was founded in 1989, and its original editorial lead was under JCM’s sons, who remained involved throughout the Anuario’s 11-year run. Given access to inside-family confidential sources, the Anuario revealed, year after year, fascinating details on JCM’s extraordinary intellect and life. At the same time, it captured the frustrations of his personal and political ambitions, framing them in both past settings and contemporary positions.

The initial 1989 volume of the Anuario looks at the classic figure that JCM has grown to be, one that is not “aséptico” and rigid, but rather one that is alive and inexhaustible. This earliest volume of the Anuario sets the mold that other volumes would follow: re-editing unknown writings of JCM, offering transcribed letters with facsimiles of originals, and publishing critical essays. For example, Anuario volume 1 (1989) contained three “escritos olvidados” of JCM from the mid-1920s that were written for the Touring Club Italiano and its popular-market magazine Le vie d’Italia e dell’America Latina.
These are remarkable pieces as they give indications of the fire and rhetoric that would certainly mark JCM in later efforts, and thus certainly stand to add depth to JCM and his intellectual background and development. Indeed, the first of these articles for *Le vie d'Italia e dell'America Latina*, entitled “El desarrollo económico del Perú,” would evolve to essentially become the text for the initial essay in his *Siete ensayos de interpretación de la realidad peruana* collection, with JCM’s concluding paragraphs lashing out at Peru’s feudalistic *latifundistas* for subjugating the indigenous majority.

*Anuario* volume 2 (1990) begins by pointing to the collapse of the Soviet Union, stating that these events reinforce the need to study JCM. Moving beyond these Marxist lines, this volume goes on to offer an essay on JCM by Rodrigo Montoya that leads with a portion of two texts from JCM’s hand that appeared in the journal *Mundial*. “Original sin” is the image that JCM invokes as he deplores Peru’s marginalization of its indigenous majority.

*Anuario* volume 3 (1991) marked the 50th anniversary of JCM’s death, and again makes reference to the crisis of world socialism. An insightful inclusion in this 3rd volume is the reprint of a short note from JCM in 1926 to a colleague in the highland city of Juliaca (Peru) concerning *Amauta* and how its “primer número está agotado.” Let it be noted that many libraries today are fortunate to hold facsimile runs of the important and scholarly *Amauta*.

*Anuario* volume 4 (1992) features an impressive image of JCM done in bronze. Editors comment on delivering “con mas puntualidad” this issue of the annual, and that makes an interesting connection to JCM’s 1926 note on *Amauta*’s initial print run and distribution. This issue of the *Anuario* also picks up on the impact of JCM as seen in the eyes of contemporary critics in Japan and China.

*Anuario* volume 5 (1992) gives another color portrait, and lays out photos of JCM’s youth and his early work in the Círculo de Periodistas. This *Anuario* gives revealing links to JCM as a commentator on the history of the New World, noting that JCM viewed Cristóbal Colón as one not to be scorned and castigated, but rather a man of vision. In his essay “Día de la raza,” JCM celebrated latinidad—somewhat ironic given his role in indigenismo, much of which has grown to reject Western traditions. This also gives insights into JCM’s rifts with Haya de la Torre.

*Anuario* volume 6 (1994) marked the centennial of JCM’s birth, and featured a contribution by Cuba’s Roberto Fernández Retamar of the Casa de las Américas cultural agency and publisher, which reissued JCM’s *Siete ensayos* in 1963. Additionally, this issue of the *Anuario* culls a text from Roland Forgues (Mariátegui y la cuestión negra), which juxtaposes, in fascinating manner, the racial attitudes of the colonial era and the 1920s.

*Anuario* volume 7 (1995) offers impressive portraits of JCM by David Alfaro Siqueiros and the aforementioned Julia Codecido, as well as personal photos from his days in Rome. Also, there is an article by Nélida Flórez on the
theme of women in JCM’s work, and another by Rodrigo Montoya on ethnicity in JCM’s times.

Anuario volume 8 (1996) reviews the Casa Museo José Carlos Mariátegui—a historic structure saved from demolition and declared a national historic monument by the government.

Anuario volume 9 (1997) is remarkable for its presentation of several never fully published speeches, probably from 1924, including JCM’s first intervention on indigenous issues (with obvious influence by González Prada).

Anuario volume 10 (1998) focuses on Haya de la Torre and his break with JCM, with 20 pages of source documents related to APRA.

Anuario volume 11 (1999) is unfortunately the final issue; as is the case in most journals’ ceasing, there is no notice of the termination.

In conclusion, there is value to the study of JCM and the indigenous-themed matter in his work. JCM’s life and influence are important for Latin American Studies specialists to gain understanding of the fundamental changes in today’s Andes. And, indeed, the Andes as a region is undergoing sweeping change. Be it separatist movements in Bolivia and Ecuador, environmental health issues in Peru, border tensions between Venezuela and Colombia, or feminist politics in Argentina and Chile, the Andes are breaking the structures of the traditional and reaching for reform. Librarians need to address information needs to facilitate user understanding of all of this. The influence of Mariátegui is one of the fundamentals to insights.

NOTES
2. Diccionario literario del Perú, tomo 2, p. 61.

BIBLIOGRAPHY
Primary sources: by José Carlos Mariátegui
Amauta (Sociedad Editora Amauta, 1926-1930).
“En el día de la raza.” In La novela y la vida. (Lima: Biblioteca Amauta, 1967).
7 ensayos de interpretación de la realidad peruana. (Lima: Biblioteca Amauta, 1928).

Secondary sources: on José Carlos Mariátegui
Arriola Grande, Maurilio. Diccionario literario del Perú (Brasa, 1996).
Cuadernos americanos (UNAM, special issue no.48, 1994).
“El fallecimiento del periodista Mariátegui.” In El Comercio, April 17, 1930: p. 3.
“Sobre la captura de un grupo de comunistas” In El Comercio, June 10, 1927: p. 14