

Nina PLUTA 

Pedagogical University of Cracow

nina.podleszanska@poczta.up.krakow.pl

THE NEW MAN IN SPANISH AMERICAN ESSAY AND LITERATURE AT THE TURN OF THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to show how the “New Man” was defined in different literary and political conceptions that abounded in Spanish American culture at the turn of the 19th and 20th century. Although both Americas were perceived through the stereotype of newness from the very beginning of the colonial era, it is at the end of the 19th century when the necessity to integrate the extremely heterogeneous Spanish American societies brought forth a variety of renewal propositions. Focused on the spiritual or economic aspects of a given social or ethnic group (the elites, implicitly white, for Rodó or the working classes, mostly Indian, for the Indigenistas), those conceptions were not able to provide overall solutions for the Spanish American republics, struggling with a deepening neocolonial dependency. Nevertheless, many tendencies and formulas defined in that period – idealistic or politically subversive – have survived through the 20th century and resurfaced in new forms (e.g. the *nuevo hombre bolivariano* in Venezuela at the beginning of 21st century).

Key words: New Man, Spanish American essay in 19th and 20th century, Spanish American Cultural Identity, utopia

INTRODUCTION

The stereotype of “newness” clung to America from the very beginning of its common history with Europe. That world was new and unknown, but new also in the axiological sense, as an utopic space, where dreams were going to come true: about a pacific Christianization, about the happiness in the bosom of nature, or, in the 19th century, about well-organized, democratic republics.

From the beginning of the colonization there were, for instance, several advocates of the moral perfection of Indian customs and institutions. Columbus is traditionally considered the first to idealize Indians presenting them, in the journal of the first journey as *very well made, with very handsome bodies, and very good countenances*. Also, he found them friendly and susceptible to future Spanish ideological influence: *we might form great friendship, for I knew that they were a people who could be more easily freed and converted to our holy faith by love than by force*.¹

In the second half of the century, in the essay *Of Cannibals*, Michel de Montaigne enhances this paradisaical stereotype pointing to Indian common sense and straightforwardness, *they contend not for the gaining of new lands; for to this day they yet enjoy that natural ubertie and fruitfulness, which without labouring toyle, doth in such plenteous abundance furnish them with all necessary things, that they need not enlarge their limits. They are yet in that happy estate as they desire no more than what their naturall necessities direct them: whatsoever is beyond it, is to them superfluous*.²

Though restrained by the generalized discrimination of Indians in Spanish colonies, the tendency to idealize genuine inhabitants of the New World remained alive from the time of Bartolomé de las Casas, through the 17th and 18th Jesuits utopian proposals³, up to the sentimental visions of the Good Savage at the end of the 18th century. During the Spanish American independence era, since the emergence of more than twenty fledgling republics, reflecting on their inhabitants became crucial in the political thinking of leaders and intellectuals. The concept of a New Man continued to underlay their conceptions, even if, in order to forge patriotic symbols, they invoked the pre-Hispanic Indian past, allegedly pure and heroic, while considering the real Indians as barbarians. As for the empiric, socially rooted reality, most of the political leaders and intellectuals of the 19th century emphasized a lack of civil habits and values in the societies of postcolonial Spanish America

¹ C. Columbus, Extracts from Journal, Internet Medieval Sourcebook: Paul Halsall Mar, 1996, at <<https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/columbus1.asp>>, 13 May 2017.

² M. de Montaigne, *Essays*, transl. by J. Florio (1603), The University of Oregon, 1999. From the Everyman's Library edition of 1910, published by R.S. Bear; at <<http://www.luminarium.org/renaissance-editions/montaigne/index.htm>>, 15 May 2017.

³ Yet Jesuit missions were a kind of “utopia” that only theoretically provided Indians with legal equality, but in fact it also founded a proto-capitalist wage labor system in the peripheries of the Hispanic colonial world. Indians were put under a paternalistic, moral, and economic control. (cf. F. Gómez, “Jesuit Proposals for a Regulated Society in a Colonial World. The Cases of Antonio Ruiz de Montoya and Antonio Vieira”, in S. Negro Tua, M.M. Marzal (eds.), *Un reino en la frontera. Las misiones jesuitas en la América colonial*, Lima 1999, pp. 51-69).

(Bolívar, Alberdi, Sarmiento). They proposed several solutions to boost the emergence of a *new* society in the new republics, like education, civilizing and military campaigns in Indian areas, pro-immigration politics; some of them were partially adopted.

Nevertheless, it was in the last decades of the 19th and the first of 20th century when the impetus of the activity that Fernando Ainsa called *the utopian “dreaming awake”* – and what he considered inherent to Latin America’s modern history and culture⁴ – turned out to be particularly strong and resulted in a broad range of conceptions. The idea of a new American man rose to prominence once again, along with the restored hope for a more bearable, if not brilliant, future.

BETWEEN THE EXCELLENCE OF THE *LATIN RACE* AND EGALITARIAN LIBERALISM

Spanish American essay and literature of the first decades of the 20th century, which we refer to, drew together many intellectual trends, like arielismo, indoamericanism, indigenism, socialism, and communism and also aesthetic trends like criollismo, late modernism or Avant-garde movements. Many of them conveyed their particular vision of the future and of the New Man, ranging from a utopian option to a modern economic analysis. The New Man is sometimes represented by a white inheritor of the Latin civilization, at other times by a Mestizo (like in the radically idealistic concept of José Vasconcelos), or by a South American Indian.

At the turn of the 20th century, less than hundred years after the former colonies gained independence from Spain, the question “who are we” was still valid. At the beginning of the 19th century, the main though negative point of reference was Spain (a „degenerated stepmother” in the words of Simon Bolívar), but as the next century dawned, the inhabitants of Latin America started to perceive themselves in opposition to the big „Other” – the dangerous neighbour from the North. The territorial expansion of the United States, which had been growing incessantly since the middle of the 19th century, as well as its influence on the South American economy, caused a rift in geopolitical preferences. That is why during the celebrations of the 100th centenary of independence (from 1908 to 1921), the South Americans forgot the postcolonial resentment and rediscovered their common cultural roots with Spain and other Mediterranean countries. There was obviously a need to redefine the collective Latin American soul in order to resist the „yankee” intrusion. At the same time, positivistic thought kept influencing Spanish American politics. In the name of progress and welfare, governments in some countries opted for colonization and immigration, in order to “whiten” the population⁵; generally, the positivists criticized the cultural and race patchwork in Spanish American republics.

⁴ Cf. F. Ainsa, *La reconstrucción de la utopía*, Buenos Aires 1999, p. 13.

⁵ E. Sánchez-Guillermo, „Crear al hombre nuevo. Una visión crítica de los experimentos de europeización en Veracruz en el siglo XIX”, *Nuevo Mundo Mundos Nuevos. Débats*, published online on 8.02.2005, p. 2.

In this regard, among the supporters of Positivism stand out the original and independent opinions of Jose Martí, a Cuban poet, essayist, and fighter for freedom against the long-lasting Spanish hegemony on the island. In his great essay *Nuestra América* (1891), Martí calls for the acknowledgment of genuine American values. For him, the diversity of traditions of white, African, and indigenous peoples is not an expression of “barbarism” but the essence of the Spanish American social reality, that should be decisive for the election of the government system, *Good government is nothing more than the balance of the country's natural elements*⁶. Martí refers to his continent as “our half-breed America”. With his humanitarian and antiracist beliefs and his allegiance to love, fraternity, and justice in social life⁷, Martí was one of the first intellectuals who made the Mestizo a symbol of the human and cultural potential of Latin America, *With the rosary as our guide, our heads white and our bodies mottled, both Indians and Creoles, we fearlessly entered the world of nations*⁸. Let us note that for Martí the Mestizo was not a project of an ideal “amalgamation of races in a completely new race”⁹, but rather an embodiment of Latin America’s inherent hybridity. Martí’s Mestizo gained a privileged, symbolic position in Latin American culture and his key concepts of heterogeneity and hybridity anticipated today’s cultural analysis.

Martí advocated “racial ecumenism” and had a humanitarian vision of a democratic republic based on solidarity, love, and fraternity between peoples. He moved away from the strict positivist method and adopted a position of a spiritual guide. It is because at the turn of the 20th century dominating Positivism was gradually giving way to more spiritual attitudes. One of the examples can be *krausismo*, a Spanish philosophy that united positive sciences with the idea of God and self-improvement.

This is the general ideological shift we can also observe in the essay entitled *Ariel* of the Uruguayan Enrique Jose Rodó, published in 1900. It would have an immense influence on two generations of Spanish American intellectuals and contribute towards the consolidation of a new, positive vision of the Spanish American collective identity. Ariel, mentioned in the title, is a winged spirit from Shakespeare’s drama *The Tempest*, who embodies “superior mind and emotions”, as well as “the instinct of self-improvement”, “unselfishness in conduct, a high taste in arts, heroism of action, delicacy and refinement in manners and usages”. The essay, written in an artful and rhetorical prose, takes the form of a lecture of an old master to his young disciples in a parlour adorned by a precious bronze statue of Ariel, Can you not picture to yourselves the America we others dream of? Hospitable to the things of the spirit, thoughtful without *sacrificing its energy of action, serene and strong and withal full of generous enthusiasm; resplendent*

⁶ J. Martí, “Our America” [1891], in J.A. Wood (ed.) *Problems in Modern Latin American History. Sources and Interpretations*, Plymouth 2014, p. 114.

⁷ J.F. Aguiar González, “El liberalismo republicano de José Martí”, in J. F. Aguiar González, A. García Ruiz, A. J. Leiva (ed.), *Entre líneas. Ensayos sobre literatura y sociedad*, Madrid 2012, pp. 62, 70-71.

⁸ J. Martí, “Our America”, p. 117.

⁹ A. Chanady, “National Reconciliation and Colonial Resistance. The Notion of Hybridity in José Martí”, in R. de Grandis and Z. Bernd (ed.), *Unforeseeable Americas. Questioning Cultural Hybridity in the Americas*, Amsterdam–Atlanta 2000, pp. 21-22.

*with the charm of morning calm like a smile of a waking infant, yet with the light of awakening thought. Think on her at least.*¹⁰

In this quotation, America has the glamour of youth, even of childhood, promising spiritual and intellectual feats. By the way, this image activates a 19th century cliché attributed to Hegel – that of America being a continent of the future – of pure and appealing potentiality¹¹. Its young inhabitants are able, with their energy, enthusiasm, and capacity for rejuvenating hope, to guide it on a path of progress and spiritual development, “in the march of human societies”¹². The positivist values are reinterpreted here – economic and civilizational progress depends on spiritual evolution. Ariel becomes the symbolic leader of Latin America, who defies pragmatism and materialism. He emerges at the time to increase the morale of the inhabitants of Latin America, who were looking apprehensively at the growth of economic and political strength of the United States.

What is interesting and typical for Latin American writers is that looking out to the future they often evoke the myths of the first colonial period. The essay mentions the “sweet and distant mirages which wake in [the soul] mysterious impulses, like the visions of Cipango and Eldorado”¹³. Rodo’s critics pointed in this idealistic programme for America an absence of Indians, or any other ethnic groups or races other than the white. The same applies to the intellectuals called *hispanistas* (José de la Riva-Agüero, Francisco García Calderón), who tended to reduce the cultural history of the continent to the white civilisation, originated in the Mediterranean area.

The *Arielistas* were two generations of philosophers and scientists, who admired the Ancient Mediterranean culture and appealed for reform in the fields of spirituality, aesthetics, and morality. But they did not neglect local cultures to which they dedicated comprehensive studies in different fields (works on archaeology, history, and national literatures). We have to mention here José Vasconcelos, who was an atypical *Arielista* because, as an influent politician in Mexico in the 1920s, he engaged in cultural campaigns promoting Indian art and supported, among others, painters like Diego Rivera or David Alfaro Siqueiros. He also took credit for wide-ranging reform of Mexican education after the 1914 Revolution. And apart of his pragmatic talents, he conceived one of the most bizarre visions of a new American man, based on the conviction that the Mestizo essence of Mexican culture is the most promising formula for the future. It is an idea that originates in biology but Vasconcelos transforms it from a scientific into a messianic vision of a “cosmic race”, which will mark the future of the continent. *In Spanish America, Nature will no longer repeat one of her partial attempts. This time, the*

¹⁰ J.E. Rodó, *Ariel*, transl. by F.J. Stimson, Houghton 1922, p. 137, at <https://archive.org/stream/arielrod00roduoft/arielrod00roduoft_djvu.txt>, 18 May 2017.

¹¹ Hegel considers América to be a land of “the future”, outside history and philosophy, because it is only a “possibility”, not a reality (result), nor rationality (process). The “future” of America is not a hopeful promise but a mere potentiality, negligible from a philosophical perspective, yet only the rational, historical facts can be reflected and represented in mind (Krüger Castro 1994, online).

¹² J.E. Rodó, *Ariel*, p. 23.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

*race that will come out of the forgotten Atlantis will no longer be a race of a single color or of particular features. The future race will not be a fifth, or a sixth race, destined to prevail over its ancestors. What is going to emerge out there is the definitive race, the synthetical race, the integral race, made up of the genius and the blood of all peoples and, for that reason, more capable of true brotherhood and of a truly universal vision.*¹⁴

Besides the idealistic conceptions centered on cultural identity, sometimes even within them, other issues arose, inspired by the anarchist, socialist or communist theories. Both literary and political essays assume problems like the exclusion of Indians, that is, of the urban and rural proletariat, as well as economic underdevelopment and neo-colonial dependency¹⁵. An example can be Manuel Ugarte, Argentinian writer and diplomat, who was a staunch enemy of United States' expansionism and of its followers among the local oligarchy. He sympathized with the socialist party, though he did not deny the role of industrialization as a source of welfare. For a while he even supported the new order in the Soviet Union. At the same time, he always manifested in his writings a special sense of patriotism¹⁶, an aspect which is rarely avoided by Spanish American intellectuals, even the Marxists, because they realize within the regional culture, a new symbolic world for the liberated America since the beginning of the 18th century and the mission of forming a collective identity. Ugarte uses the concept of "Patria Grande", taking over Simon Bolivar's pan-American tradition, but he assigns to it several discrepant meanings. At one time he desires to defend the spirit of the Latin race (*espíritu inmortal de nuestra raza*), at another time he evokes the beneficial influence of immigrants on the Argentinian society, and sometimes he refers to the "glorious past", that is to say to the independence uprisings from the 19th century.¹⁷ In *Porvenir de la America Latina* [The Future of Latin America] from 1910, Ugarte believes that the citizen of the future *Big Motherland* (*Patria Grande*) will live in a multiracial society, organized in what we would call today, a welfare state. He does not transform a race into a myth, like Vasconcelos, but he emphasizes the American multiracial nature as real human capital, *Under the dome of glory the New Latin World will have risen at a height of races which refuse to disappear. Preserving their traits and their conceptions of freedom and progress, they protect an essential part of the universal soul.*¹⁸

¹⁴ J. Vasconcelos [1925], *The Cosmic Race*, transl. by D.T. Jaén, Baltimore 1979, p. 20.

¹⁵ At the end of the 19th century the forefathers of Latin American socialism were already working in Spanish America, like José Ingenieros. In his theories, this Argentinian sociologist and psychologist referred to biological evolutionism, at the same time laying the foundation for the socialist movement in his country.

¹⁶ J. Moyano, "El concepto de América Latina en el pensamiento de Manuel Ugarte y Deodoro Roca", in A. Granados, C. Marichal (eds.), *Construcción de las identidades latinoamericanas: ensayos de historia intelectual, siglos XIX y XX*, México 2004, pp. 186-188. Ugarte's major works are *El porvenir de la America Latina*, 1910, *El destino de un continente*, 1923, *La patria grande*, 1924.

¹⁷ J. Moyano, "El concepto de América...", p. 192.

¹⁸ M. Ugarte, *El porvenir de la América Latina*, Valencia 1911 (ca.), p. 319, transl. by N. Pluta; at <<http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra/el-porvenir-de-la-america-latina-la-raza-la-integridad-terriorial-y-moral-la-organizacion-interior-780660/>>, 21 June 2017.

At the same time, other idealistic proposals take a more conservative course. In his novels and essays, the Argentinian writer Manuel Gálvez is full of admiration for Christian spirituality that can compete with modern materialistic attitudes and can “promote our spiritual rebirth” (*impulsar nuestro resurgimiento idealista*¹⁹). As a novelist, he depicts different social groups in Argentina, favoring an idealized anti-urban lifestyle, rooted in the alleged spiritual values of the landscapes of the homeland. There is a clear reference to similar “spiritualized” tendencies in Spanish prose of the so-called “98 generation” (Ramiro Maeztu, Ángel Ganivet, José Martínez Ruiz, alias *Azorín*, Miguel de Unamuno), that sought to compensate for the Spanish political crisis with theories about imperishable moral and cultural values linked to local geography and popular customs and traditions²⁰. When Gálvez comments on his journey across the Castillian part of Spain (that preceded the publication of a volume of literary impressions *The Lineage of a Race* [El solar de la raza, 1913]), he casts a nostalgia-filled glance at the Spanish medieval cities with their *spiritual energy*, absent from the modern, cold metropolises, European as well as Argentinian²¹. Gálvez used the past-oriented Spanish landscape/soul pattern to enhance the collective dream about the wealth and prosperity of his country, Argentina, which would flourish in the future as “the promised land of the new, predestined race.”²²

Such kinds of vaguely utopian writings, which combine the anti-imperialist attitude – either left-oriented or more right-wing – with reflections on the race and the Latin tradition, illustrate well the multidirectional character of the Americanist thought of the beginning of the 20th century, especially around the turn of the first and second decade. The Spanish American republics celebrated 100 years of Independence around this period, having rediscovered their Latin and Mediterranean cultural origins after almost a century of official rejection of Spanish heritage.

UTOPIA OR REVOLUTION? THE ‘INDIGENISM’

The next period that marked Spanish American projects of renewal was closely influenced by the growth of proletarian movements worldwide and two important massive upheavals, namely, the democracy-oriented Mexican Revolution (with its

¹⁹ P. Ledesma Fernández, “Manuel Gálvez con Toledo al fondo. España como utopía crítica y hogar de las almas bellas”, in D. Abraldes (ed.), *Ideas que cruzan el Atlántico: utopía y modernidad latinoamericana*, Madrid 2015, p. 151.

²⁰ The myth of the rural Golden Age, situated in a vague past, is, as argued by Sarlo, an imagined reconstruction of the past, which means a sharp conflict with present values brought along with by a new social order (i.e., capitalism). B. Sarlo, *Una modernidad periférica. Buenos Aires 1920-30*, Buenos Aires 2003, p. 32.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 155-156.

²² F. Quinziano, “Miradas rioplatenses en los albores del siglo XX: Manuel Gálvez, viajero espiritual”, *Cuadernos Canela*, vol. 17, no. 5 (2005), p. 139, at <<http://www.canela.org.es/cuadernos/canela/canelapdf/cc17quinziano.pdf>>, 30 May 2017.

long-lasting consequences, up to the middle of the 1920s) and the left-oriented Soviet Revolution of 1917.

In the 1920s and 30s, important voices raised a call for the right of indigenous people in the countries of the Andean region and in Mexico. The movement called *Indigenismo* developed under strong influence of both the worldwide factors – the growing importance of socialism and communism, and the creation of the Soviet Union – and local factors, like the Mexican Revolution (1914-18). From the 1920s to the 40s, for the first time since the debate between Las Casas and Sepúlveda over Indians' rights in Valladolid in 1550, the situation of Indians became a question of vital importance for intellectuals and even for governments in countries like Mexico or Peru. The issue of economic and social problems of the Indians was finally brought to the fore, which made it possible to move the discussion beyond usual stereotypes about the unproductive mentality of Indians²³. The *Indigenistas* elaborated on projects of political reorganization of the continent (for instance, the *Indoamérica* of Haya de la Torre), analysis of the economic system that condemned Indians to poverty (Mariátegui), and also measures to protect and revitalise Indian material and spiritual culture (Luis Eduardo Valcárcel, Julio C. Tello). Some elements of the *Indigenistas'* projects were even included in governmental agendas²⁴. Nevertheless, after a few decades of increased intellectual activity in favour of the Indians, it turned out that big macrostructural problems like land-tenure system remained unsolved. Anyway, the “discovery” of Indian cultures by writers, artists, and intellectuals permanently influenced arts and literature in many Spanish American countries.

Among the *Indigenistas'* concepts of the new order we can find an ambitious project of continental reorganization called *Indoamérica*. The author, Victor Haya de la Torre, was a Peruvian politician, who founded the APRA or The American Popular Revolutionary Alliance in 1924 – the oldest surviving political party in Latin America. Haya de la Torre gained political experience as a young activist in the so-called movement for University Reform (from 1918), that had spread from Argentina to Peru, Chile, Bolivia, and some other countries to become a political platform for liberal and reformist youth in the continent. The speeches of the University Reform activists abound in expressions like “the new humanity [*la nueva humanidad*]”; “the new generation” [*la nueva generación*]; “the new youth” [*la nueva juventud*]; “the new era” [*la nueva época*]²⁵. They all evoke a genuine American rhetoric of freedom, and also “refer to revolutionary contents of a possible history”²⁶. “The new egalitarian society in progress”

²³ Manuel González Prada was among the first who adopted anarchist thought to criticize the economic exploitation of Indians (*Nuestros Indios* [*Our Indians*] 1909).

²⁴ Vasconcelos' literacy campaign in Mexico, constitutional rights for Indians and the foundation of a Department of Indian Rights (Sección de Asuntos Indígenas) in the Development Ministry in Peru, in 1920, may serve as examples.

²⁵ L.A. Torres Rojo, “La semántica política de Indoamérica, 1918-1941”, in A. Granados, C. Marichal (eds.), *Construcción de las identidades latinoamericanas: ensayos de historia intelectual, siglos XIX y XX*, México 2004, pp. 212-213.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

(*Una nueva sociedad igualitaria y en avance*²⁷) mentioned by Haya de la Torre himself in his speech to Mexican students in 1924, led to an arousal for a continent-wide political and cultural organization called *Indoamérica*, uniting all the republics with a dominant indigenous population. Unlike the more radical *Indigenistas*, Haya de la Torre did not consider the necessary changes in America as part of a world proletarian revolution, and he distanced himself from international Marxism, demanding a recognition of singularly the Indian states. He called for a renewal of economic and social nature, deriving from the Indian consciousness or the subconscious; more specifically, he called for a creation of autonomous Indian provinces, the recovery of traditional agriculture and cooperative activity similar to that of the Andean traditional communities called *ayllu*. This was the bottom line of Haya's revolutionary proposal: the struggle between the *ayllu* and the latifundia system²⁸. He argued that unlike former feudal or later capitalist owners, Indians did not necessarily have to possess the land – they cared about cultivating it, practicing a specific “agrarian communism” and exhibiting even a sort of mysticism²⁹. Those Indians would constitute the social base of a radical transformation for *Indoamérica* and would accelerate the coming of the future; Indians “eager to re-establish the social system from the past”³⁰.

Competing both with communism and *Panamericanism* pushed forward by the United States to defend its sphere of economic interests, *Indoamericanism* was a project of a new, revolutionary historical time, that included Indian distinctiveness and gave it a universal character, *Europe has given many formulas of realization and affirmation to statements that are driving forces of history. But perhaps what is most important in the “new political language” of Indoamérica is to demonstrate that, beyond and against the European canons, our nations are able to find its own regulations of Justice and Freedom... Do not us be ashamed of calling ourselves Indoamericans*³¹.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 226.

²⁸ R. Haya de la Torre as cited in: M.A. García, *Indigenismo, Indio, Izquierda. Perú. 1900-1930*, Sevilla 2010, p. 271.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 287.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 290. Looking back to the past in search of models for future social organization can turn out to be ambiguous, because between the past and the future visionaries tend to avoid the raw reality of the present. Fernando Aínsa points to this contradiction when he discerns in present revolutionary, ecological and/or pro-Indian proposals the eternal utopian topoi, rooted in the past, present in Western thought. “La relación tensa que la utopía mantiene con el pasado reanima los estereotipos arcaicos de la conciencia, lo cual puede conducir al utopismo conservador que pretende buscar soluciones a los problemas actuales en modelos históricamente obsoletos. Más frecuente de lo que se imagina, los tópicos del utopismo fundado en el pasado pueden rastrearse en los planteamientos revolucionarios y en ciertos planteamientos ecologistas e indigenistas que se han manejado en América Latina, al reivindicar una presunta Edad de Oro prehispánica destruida con la llegada de los conquistadores” (F. Aínsa, *La reconstrucción de la utopía*, México 1999, p. 38). Nevertheless, this notorious utopian escapism does not characterize Haya de la Torre's thought in its entirety. At most, he can be faulted for an excessive idealization of old Incan institutions, a tendency he shared with other Indigenista intellectuals of his time.

³¹ V.R. Haya de la Torre, [1938-40], *El lenguaje político de Indoamérica*, México 1979, pp. 6-7, transl. by N. Pluta.

Another *Indigenista* and left activist, Jose Carlos Mariátegui, founder of the Peruvian Socialist Party, approached Indian problems with help of Marxist conceptual instruments, for instance, in his most influential work entitled *Seven Interpretive Essays on Peruvian reality* (1928), *The socialist critic exposes and defines the problem because he looks for its causes in the country's economy and not in its administrative, legal, or ecclesiastic machinery, its racial dualism or pluralism, or its cultural or moral conditions. The problem of the Indian is rooted in the land tenure system of our economy. Any attempt to solve it with administrative or police measures, through education or by a road building program, is superficial and secondary as long as the feudalism of the gamonales continues to exist.*³²

He called for a new law regulating the property of land, which, in his opinion, was more relevant than education or civilization of Indians promoted by the moderate wing of Indigenism. Mariátegui also criticized reforms based on racial criteria (whitening the population, immigration, idealization of the Mestizo)³³. He rejected the idealistic vision of American spirituality favored by the Arielistas. A myth of a Latin American culture devoted to arts and sublime activities was in his view, an “irreversibly discredited” topos, a “caricature” and “simulation” of an ideology: *The opposition of languages, races, minds, does not have any decisive sense. It is ridiculous still speaking of the contrast between a Saxon, materialistic America and a Latin, idealistic America, between a blond Rome and pale Greece [...]. Rodo's myth does not act yet – has never acted – deeply and efficiently on souls.*³⁴

It is significant that Mariátegui's projects of changing Andean societies goes hand in hand with his interest in European and American artistic avant-garde. In 1926, he founded *Amauta*, one of the best Latin American avant-garde reviews. The novelty opposed to all traditions was an inner quality of the avant-garde artistic expression. Similar to European avant-garde movements, Latin American manifestos – for instance, that of the Mexican *Estridentismo* – assert the present as an absolute dimension of temporality, thus they assess the novelty, everything that is contemporary³⁵. Also, leftist political movements were grounded on the expectation of novelty. But while the political left wanted a revolutionary social change for a more or less utopian future, the avant-garde artists were performing the new with each work they created. *The avant-garde is a utopia that transforms present aesthetic relations: an instantaneous and stunning imposition of the new.*³⁶

³² J.C. Mariátegui, *Seven Interpretative Essays on Peruvian Reality*, transl. by J. Basadre, Austin 1971, p. 22.

³³ He says on the Ariel myth that it is “an anti-sociological naïveté” fabricated by a “rudimentary mind of an importer of merino sheeps” (J.C. Mariátegui, “Aniversario y balance” [*Anniversary and balance*], [1928], in J. Schwartz (ed.), *Las vanguardias latinoamericanas. Textos programáticos y críticos*, México 2002, p. 337, transl. by N. Pluta).

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ V. Gelado, „Arte de la negación: el manifiesto de la vanguardia en América Latina”, *Revista Iberoamericana*, vol. 74, no. 224 (2008), pp. 650-653.

³⁶ B. Sarlo, *Una modernidad periférica*, p. 101, transl. by N. Pluta.

Nevertheless, Mariátegui noticed the superficial nature of some of the avant-gardist claims of renovation. As a left activist, he argued that the real avant-garde nature of an artistic movement consisted in an active response to the changing circumstances of the social reality. *We have never felt more ferociously, efficiently, and religiously idealistic than settling down our idea and feet in the matter*, he affirms. Instead of waving the banner of novelty, the new generations of artists had to become “adults” and “creatives”, by joining the world socialist revolution.³⁷

As for the new order, Mariátegui strived for the emancipation of Indians from poverty, oppression, and submission. The Indian was a rightful inhabitant of the Andean region and reforms had to restore, to some extent, the precolonial organization. Mariátegui, like Haya de la Torre, argued that *ayllu* had much in common with the communist structures. Hence, the New Man would mean an emancipated Indian, and Mariátegui considered him the representative of a world proletarian uprising. But, he was criticized himself, already in his time, firstly for contributing to a simplified vision of Andean history, without taking into account either the social hierarchy during the Inca Empire, or the economic oppression of its subjects³⁸, and secondly for ignoring other races' interests: [*For Mariátegui*] *the national literature was, in that period, an abstract space where only an Indian could enter [...] and he left beyond that conceptualization the Mestizos, Chinese, Blacks, persons who [...] did not possess artistic and cultural potentiality.*³⁹

Some *Indigenistas'* proposals aimed at modernization of the Indians in a European way. Theoretically they supported indigenous people but at the same time expected them to Occidentalize. Others, like Mariátegui, claimed the liberation of Indians from social and political injustice, picking elements from the pre-Colombian past to build a socialist, but also somehow utopic new order. The indigenist programs were criticized for making Indians an object of activities undertaken in their name and for their benefit, instead of helping them to become active subjects. They were also criticized for attempting to reform the Indian world by applying European values of progress and modernization and for using the concept of Peruvian or national culture as an instrument to invalidate political claims of the indigenous people.

To some extent it also applies to the so-called *novela indigenista* (indigenist novel). These works of fiction, published from 1920s to 1940s, described the hard, everyday life of the Indians. But even if they were complementary to reformist programs, it does not necessarily mean that we have to always contend with harsh, naturalist literature of propaganda. The description of the Indians' vital environment abounds in suggestive ethnographic detail of undiscussed cognitive value. Although they present a collective hero (an Indian community), we can also find in them some more expressive characters

³⁷ J.C. Mariátegui, “Aniversario y balance”, pp. 336-337.

³⁸ H. Aguirre Gamio as cited in: L. Veres, “El problema de la identidad nacional en la obra de José Carlos Mariátegui”, *Annals. Revue de Civilisation Contemporaine de l'Université de Bretagne Occidentale*, vol. 2 (2002), pp. 15-16.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 43, transl. by N. Pluta.

and dramatic action. The result is almost never happy for the Indians, who fall victim to abuses and illegal practices of the so called *gamonalismo* – weeding out Indians from their communal land, as in *Raza de bronce* (1919) by Bolivian writer Alcides Arguedas or *Huasipungo* (1934) by the Ecuadorian Jorge Icaza. However, the best indigenist novels, like *Broad and Alien is the World* by Peruvian author Ciro Alegría (1941), convey something more, sketching a wider anthropological perspective. They contain a message about genuine human values in the Indian world, which are in danger of extinction and require protection. Indians are assigned a strong emotional bond to the native landscape – for instance, to rapid mountain rivers, picks, rocks, lakes – rooted in the animism of ancient American religions. That is why, the narrator's attitude of an "outraged defender of Indian rights", goes hand in hand with his deep admiration for nature. We can find in *Broad and Alien is the World* fragments of artful prose, similar to the modernist style, *The fleshy leaves were studded with fruits that looked like rubies and topazes [...] The clumps of uñicos [...] were now full of ripeness. In the ravine on the side of Rumi hill they formed a kind of violet blanket. The berries they yielded were shaped like little squat vases and had a pleasant tart sweetness. The boys and girls of Rumi, leading their younger ones by the hand, would go to the ravine and all come back with purple lips. They liked the berries, as much as turtledoves did.*⁴⁰

The narrator's commentaries explain that for Indians to understand the world means to grasp it in an intuitive, irrational way, *The Indian Rosendo believed that he understood its physical and spiritual secrets as though they were his own. Or rather, those of his wife, for love is a stimulus to knowledge and possession.*⁴¹ This kind of mentality, together with communal traditions, could establish an idealistic social and economic model for the future, *The few Indians, whose lands had not been taken from them decided to keep on with their community system, for work is not meant to make die or suffer, but to bring them well-being and happiness.*⁴² Nevertheless, this New (but in fact historically old) Man initiated an unfinished discussion between the supporters of a renewal through a return to the Indian tradition and the pragmatic liberals, who could see no merit in going back to the idealized past and called for integration into Spanish American culture – for instance, Mario Vargas Llosa's polemic with José María Arguedas.

At the same time, the Mestizo appears as a protagonist and cultural type, representing a more active aspect of the intercultural liaison than the Indian. Let us recall José Martí's "natural half-breed" as opposed to the artificial white dandy in a Parisian frock-coat. His biological and moral characteristics were described and praised by some *Indigenistas* like Manuel Gamio or Vasconcelos, as we have mentioned before. The Mestizo appears also in the so-called *telluric novel* from the 1920s. A gaucho mestizo, *Don Segundo Sombra* from the hominime novel of the Argentinian Ricardo Güiraldes, or a Mestizo son of Marcos Vargas from *Canaima* of the Venezuelan Rómulo Gallegos, embodies the hope for what we could call today a sustainability in their homeland, the

⁴⁰ C. Alegría, *Broad and Alien is the World*, transl. by H. de Onís, London 1942, p. 56.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 5.

⁴² Ibid., p. 13.

big South American regions like La Pampa, Amazon region or the Orinoko planes. Guided by instincts, respecting the law of nature – they seem to be an embodiment of the picturesque scenery in which they act. But at the same time, the white component in their blood makes them able to exploit those natural forces using a “superior mind” and technological advances.

CONCLUSIONS

In political programs for Spanish America from that period between 1890-1940 – a „turn of the centuries” in a broad sense –fantasy competes with the rational critique of the economic system, often in the work of a single author. It is an important period because, as it seems, no other radically different ideological proposals of New Man or renovation would appear in the following decades. The ones inspired by psychoanalysis of the collective soul, like *The Labyrinth of Solitude* by Octavio Paz (1950), are in fact idealistic (in spite of its accuracy in observing cultural behaviours), because they look at collective identity as it if were only a state of mind. On the other hand, the concept of the „new socialist man” by Che Guevara derives his mentality from the mode of production and land-tenure system, but it also assumes idealistically the liberation of the allegedly good and honest mankind. The indigenism, dominated by urban intellectuals, disappeared, although its reminiscences can be found in Hugo Chávez’s neo-Bolivarian rhetoric; instead, other emancipatory movements have been emerging, such as contemporary Indian indigenism, alter-globalism or the Zapatista’s anti-capitalism with its slogan “mundo nuevo anti-capitalista (new anti-capitalist world)”.

Today, both the ideas of Pan Americanism and of a unified nation persist only in political rhetoric. Culture, in turn, has taken a position at the other extreme, and is betting on the diversity and heterogeneity of the region that cannot be homogenized.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aguiar González J.F., “El liberalismo republicano de José Martí”, in J.F. Aguiar González, A. García Ruiz, A. J. Ribes Leiva (eds.), *Entre líneas. Ensayos sobre literatura y sociedad*, Madrid 2012.
- Aínsa F., *La reconstrucción de la utopía*, Buenos Aires 1999.
- Columbus C., “Extracts from Journal”, Internet Medieval Sourcebook: Paul Halsall Mar 1996, at <<https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/columbus1.asp>>.
- Alegria C., *Broad and Alien is the World*, transl. by H. de Onís, London 1942.
- Chanady A., “National Reconciliation and Colonial Resistance. The Notion of Hybridity in José Martí”, in R. de Grandis, Z. Bernd (eds.), *Unforeseeable Americas. Questioning Cultural Hybridity in the Americas*, Amsterdam–Atlanta 2000.
- García M.A., *Indigenismo, Indio, Izquierda. Perú 1900-1930*, Sevilla 2010.

- Gelado V., "Arte de la negación. El manifiesto de la vanguardia en América Latina", *Revista Iberoamericana*, vol. 74, no. 224 (2008), pp. 649-666, <https://doi.org/10.5195/REVIBEROAMER.2008.5249>.
- Gómez F., "Jesuit Proposals for a Regulated Society in a Colonial World. The Cases of Antonio Ruiz de Montoya and Antonio Vieira", in S. Negro Tua, M.M^a. Marzal (eds.), *Un reino en la frontera. Las misiones jesuitas en la América colonial*, Lima 1999.
- Haya de la Torre V.R., *El lenguaje político de Indoamérica*, México 1979.
- Henríquez Ureña P., *Utopía de América*, 1925, Antología del ensayo. Proyecto ensayo Hispánico, at <<https://www.ensayistas.org/antologia/XXA/h-urena/>>.
- Krüger Castro J.C., "Filosofía, América y futuro en Hegel. A propósito del mito del «fin de la historia»", in *Logos Latinoamericano*, Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, Instituto de Investigación del Pensamiento Peruano y Latinoamericano, Lima 1994, at <http://sisbib.unmsm.edu.pe/bibvirtual/publicaciones/logos/1994_n1/america.htm>.
- Ledesma Fernández P., "Manuel Gálvez con Toledo al fondo. España como utopía crítica y hogar de las almas bellas", in D. Abraldes (ed.), *Ideas que cruzan el Atlántico: utopía y modernidad latinoamericana*, Madrid 2015.
- Mariátegui J.C., *Seven Interpretative Essays on Peruvian Reality*, transl. by J. Basadre, Austin 1971.
- Martí J., "Our America" [1891], in J.A. Wood (ed.), *Problems in Modern Latin American History. Sources and Interpretations*, Plymouth 2014.
- Montaigne M., *Essays*, transl. by J. Florio (1603), The University of Oregon, 1999. From the Everyman's Library edition of 1910, published by R.S. Bear; at <<http://www.luminarium.org/renascence-editions/montaigne/index.htm>>.
- Moyano J., "El concepto de América Latina en el pensamiento de Manuel Ugarte y Deodoro Roca", in A. Granados, C. Marichal (eds.), *Construcción de las identidades latinoamericanas: ensayos de historia intelectual, siglos XIX y XX*, México 2004, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv3f8ntm.9>.
- Quinziano F., "Miradas rioplatenses en los albores del siglo XX. Manuel Gálvez, viajero espiritual", *Cuadernos Canela*, vol. 17, no. 5, (2005), pp. 123-141, at <<http://www.canela.org.es/cuadernoscanela/canelapdf/cc17quinziano.pdf>>, 30 May 2017.
- Rodó E.J., *Ariel*, transl. by F.J. Stimson, Houghton 1922, at <https://archive.org/stream/ariel-rod00roduoft/arielrod00roduoft_djvu.txt>.
- Sánchez-Guillermo E., "Crear al hombre nuevo. Una visión crítica de los experimentos de europeización en Veracruz en el siglo XIX", *Nuevo Mundo Mundos Nuevos. Débats*, published online on 8.02.2005, <https://doi.org/10.4000/nuevomundo.447>.
- Sarlo B. (ed.), *Una modernidad periférica. Buenos Aires 1920-30*, Buenos Aires 2003.
- Schwartz J., *Las vanguardias latinoamericanas. Textos programáticos y críticos*, México 2002.
- Torres Rojo L.A., "La semántica política de Indoamérica, 1918-1941", in A. Granados, C. Marichal (eds.), *Construcción de las identidades latinoamericanas. Ensayos de historia intelectual, siglos XIX y XX*, México 2004, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv3f8ntm.10>.
- Ugarte M., *El porvenir de la América Latina*, Valencia 1911 (ca.), at <<http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra/el-porvenir-de-la-america-latina-la-raza-la-integridad-territorial-y-moral-la-organizacion-interior-780660/>>, last access on 21.06.2017.

Vasconcelos J., *The Cosmic Race*, transl. by D. Tisdell Jaén, Baltimore (1925) 1979.

Veres L., "El problema de la identidad nacional en la obra de José Carlos Mariátegui", *Amnis. Revue de Civilisation Contemporaine de l'Université de Bretagne Occidentale* vol. 2 (2002), <https://doi.org/10.4000/amnis.172>.

Nina PLUTA – an Associate Professor of Hispanic Literature at the Pedagogical University of Cracow (Poland). Co-author of *Historia literatur iberoamerykańskich* (2010). She published *La sombra del crimen. De la influencia del género criminal en la narrativa hispanoamericana* (2012). She is interested in links between literature and politics and works on the social functions in Spanish and Spanish American novel.