



Defining Indigenism And The Literary Location Of Primary Works: The Specific Case Of Mexico, Peru And Ecuador

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Abstract: This paper explores the complex and evolving concept of Indigenism, particularly in the context of Mexico, Peru, and Ecuador. The debate on the rights and citizenship of indigenous peoples has been a significant topic in Latin America, shaped by historical, social, and political factors. The study highlights the emergence of Indigenism as both a political and intellectual movement, particularly post-Mexican Revolution, focusing on integrating indigenous peoples into national societies. The paper examines how this movement was influenced by social anthropology and literary expressions, especially through the indigenous narrative, which portrays Indigenous struggles against colonialism and socio-economic marginalization. Key figures like Mexican anthropologist Manuel Gamio and the impact of Marxist and culturalist thought on the movement are discussed. The paper also delves into how Indigenous issues are portrayed in literature, particularly novels that reflect Indigenous communities' social, cultural, and political conditions. Finally, it touches upon the contemporary relevance of Indigenism, including the ongoing struggles for the recognition of indigenous rights and the complexities of defining indigeneity in modern Latin America. The comparative approach of the paper underscores the unique but interconnected challenges faced by indigenous peoples in these three countries.

Index Terms - Indigenism, Mexican Revolution, social anthropology, Manuel Gameo.

INTRODUCTION:

It has been a long and continuous debate in Latin America on the rights and citizenship of indigenous peoples. Almost all countries of the continent have tried to define *Indigenism* in different terms according to the social conditions, historical background, and political context according to the time and space of the given moment. So, in such a way of deferring to a different country and its aforementioned conditions, there are many debates and many questions about how to define it. There are few people satisfied with the term Andean Narrative. However, although there are disagreements about what the most commonly used term means? The terms that Mexican intellectuals deal with are commonly called social anthropology to refer to the problem of *Indigenism* as well as to defend it.

There have been several countries that began with the indigenous current as the main topic of study in socio-political matters in the public posture of the State and in Latin American anthropology of the 20th

century. Mexico is one of the countries where the debate on indigenous peoples began for the first time after the Mexican Revolution of 1910 A.D., when the problem of equitable integration of society arose.

Mexico, independence and *Indigenism*:

The Mexican Revolution left several social and political problems unresolved that continue to disappear on several occasions when dealing with the indigenous and marginalised sections. The integration of indigenous peoples in social, economic and political terms has been the primary problem for the rulers of constitutional Mexico and the country's scholars who are in charge of delving into the issue. From there, the studies, policies, and research work on the indigenist issue, which will later be called *Indigenism*, are sought, for which an attempt will be made to resolve economic inequality and social integration. "*Indigenism*" is a complex term, subject to multiple definitions and interpretations. According to Eugenio Chang-Rodríguez, it is a movement based on the indigenous people that describes their customs and aspirations, criticises the abuses of the indigenous people and demands actions to end these abuses. Antonio Cornejo Polar maintains that indigenous narrative is much more than simply a school or a literary movement. He says indigenism is still a manifestation ("The Indigenist *novel*").

It is important to emphasise that the indigenist narrative is a multifaceted movement that has its roots in the trauma of the conquest (discovery of America) and survives, in one form or another, to the present.

Mexico: *Indigenism* and social anthropology:

The current that begins in Mexico as *Indigenism* is defined as social anthropology, and confirmed as the policies of the state to achieve a just society that defends the rights of indigenous peoples in post-revolutionary Mexico. Defending rights, providing them with opportunities to integrate with the main society, and preserving their traditions and cultural specificities are once again main topics of debate under the so-called term Mexican indigenism, which will then open a space for intercontinental debate throughout Latin America that will force to think about them and execute the policies formulated through the organisations that study them. Contemporaneity has influenced the themes of the definition of indigenous people in Latin America. There are several criteria that were followed previously and another set of formulas that are the basis today. It is difficult to come close to an adequate definition of an indigenous person, especially in contemporary times. As is known, the idea of the Indian arises with conquest and imperialism to differentiate the conquered from the conquerors. According to Orin Starn, today people traditionally identified as Indians use other terms to identify themselves. Furthermore, there are no hermetic worlds: there is quite a bit of interaction between the world considered "indigenous" and the world considered "Western." He cites the case of a man who works as a farmer for part of the year, as a worker in Lima from May to October and is a Protestant. Another example is found in the novel *El gran Señor* (1994) by Enrique Rosas Paravicino, where a character laments the increasing participation of mestizos in the Qoyllurit'i religious festival. To distinguish them, he relies on the clothes they wear. It is obvious that the concept of *Indian* is more social than racial. There are several cases of how to define the term and the way of seeing the problem of Indigenism. It has been defined in time and space and according to the perspectives of the people and intellectuals who analyze and address it.

Manuel Gamio and the beginning of *Indigenism*:

Mexican anthropologist and archaeologist. He was director of the *International School of American Archeology and Ethnology* and the *Inter-American Indian Institute*. Author of the first comprehensive investigation of the settlement of the Teotihuacán Valley, where he discovered the temple of Quetzalcóatl, in his work he pursues the revaluation of the country's various ethnic groups and their integration into the national community. Among his works, it is worth highlighting *Forjando Patria* (1916), *The Mexican Immigrant* (1930) and *Considerations on the Indigenous Problem* (1948). He carried out his studies in archaeology in the country and in the United States of America.

Manuel Gamio was in charge of large archaeological projects such as *Cuiculco*, the *Templo Mayor* and the *Temple of Quetzalcóatl* in Teotihuacán (1920). Considered the initiator of modern American Indigenism, Gamio founded important institutions for the study of Mexican History. In 1916, he organised the Office of the Directorate of Anthropology; at the same time, he carried out the excavations in Teotihuacán. In 1925, he was appointed Undersecretary of Public Education, and in April 1930, he founded, together with other researchers, the Institute of Social Research, which is the oldest of the fifteen institutes and research centres of the UNAM.

The debate on indigenism and the Hispanic American indigenous narrative in Latin America: Indigenism and literature:

The social situation is reflected in literature, in which the figure of the Indian appears in different ways throughout the centuries. Indeed, we find numerous texts from the time of the conquest, not only in Peru but also in other Latin American countries (Alonso de Ercilla in Chile, Bartolomé de las Casas in Mexico and Guatemala, etc.). The numerous Indian chronicles reflect the life of the American Indians always from a Western perspective, adding a fantastic vision of America and its inhabitants in many cases. Rousseau's ideas during the 18th century and romanticism will have a profound impact, representing the figure of the Indian as that of the “*noble savage*”, who lives in harmony with nature, in a state of naivety and goodness. Already at the end of the 19th century, the Indian ceased to be the admired and exotic character of the literature of previous years, to become a victim of Western society and development. It is when American writers begin to write about the subject, with a closer vision. Then what we properly call Indigenism in literature arises texts centred on the Indian, which denounce the social injustice that falls on him and which make a protest to defend the Indian of the time, contemporary with him.

Latin America and its indigenous debates:

Mexico, Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Guatemala, and Nicaragua are the Latin American countries that have the largest indigenous populations, whereas in almost all of these countries, they are segregated and live in marginalised states. Due to their geographical isolation, which is concentrated in the hills and mountains, they have also tried to defend and protect their culture and tradition. However, in recent years, there has been a high trend of migration to the cities, which has forced them to stop practising their own and live with a citizen of the mainstream society, also in search of work and no longer being part of the economic exploitation in the national economic model. The issue of inclusion with other citizens has been an issue in the sphere of national and, to a certain extent, international debate. For example, in *El mundo es ancho y ajeno*, the main discourse

reflects the foundations of modern Peru, which is largely mestizo and rich in diverse regions, cultures and customs. Its characters leave their Andean community (Rumi), forced by the unjust plundering of their land by a cruel landowner (Don Álvaro Amenábar), and move throughout Peru, trying to make a living. The story has two central characters or heroes: Rosendo Maqui, who represents the wise, older and traditional Indian, and Benito Castro, the young cholo who returns to his community when Rosendo dies in order to defend the right of his people to live on their lands.

The location of Indigenous in the narrative:

The history of the exploitation of indigenous peoples has been demonstrated in the works of the great writers of the 20th century in Latin America. They have come forward to defend these marginalised peoples in the form of artistic, literary, and narrative expression. Culturalism and Marxism are among the currents of thought that make up the indigenous movement. Henry Favre cites different authors, including Vicente Lombardo Toledano, José Carlos Mariátegui, Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán and Moisés Sáenz, among others. To talk about indigenism is to give rise to a great debate in relation to social positions and public policies aimed at the indigenous peoples of Mexico or possibly the countries of Latin America. It is also an expression that describes and explains the expressive connotations of the conditions in various aspects of the life of existing indigenous communities, living in a region or nation. Indigenism is a term derived from the word indigenous, this being a synonym for Indian frequently used in ordinary language in Mexico and even pejoratively and also in anthropological work to avoid the pejorative connotations that until recently the word Indian had when used by non-Indians or mestizos and common people.

Alejandro Marroquín, in his work *Balance of Indigenism, Report on Indigenous Policy in America* (1972), defines indigenism as "the policy carried out by American states to address and resolve the problems faced by Indigenous populations, with the aim of integrating them into the corresponding nationality." Similarly, the Inter-American Indigenous Institute, its main promoter, recently defined Indigenism as "a political formulation and an ideological current, both fundamental for many countries in America, in terms of their viability as modern nations, of realising their national project." and definition of their identity" (Inter-American Indigenous Institute" 1991: 63).

According to Henri Favre, an indigenous classic from Mexico

"However, indigenismo is also an ideological movement of literary and artistic expression, although equally political and social, that considers the Indian in the context of a national problem." (Favre, 1998:8)

("Sin embargo, el indigenismo es también un movimiento ideológico de expresión literaria y artística, aunque igualmente político y social, que considera al indio en el contexto de una problemática nacional". (Favre, 1998:8))

Conclusion:

To talk about indigenism is to give rise to a great debate in relation to social positions and public policies aimed at the indigenous peoples of Mexico or possibly the countries of Latin America. It is also an expression that describes and explains the expressive connotations of the conditions in various aspects of the life of existing indigenous communities, living in a region or nation. Indigenism is a term derived from the word indigenous, this being a synonym for Indian frequently used in ordinary language in Mexico and even

pejoratively and also in anthropological work to avoid the pejorative connotations that until recently the word Indian had when used by non-Indians or mestizos and common people.

Given the lack of research on Indigenous peoples in Mexico, it is relevant when identifying and analysing the government policies of the various governments, since in various aspects, both social and economic, in Mexico, they present characterised, if not similar, conditions. The primary indigenous literary works delve into various aspects, such as health, security, poverty, culture, land, political position and economic conditions, among others, of indigenism and the discussion that occurred on the subject after the Mexican Revolution in 1910.

The indigenous peoples in these countries also have their differences and similarities at the social and political levels for which the State has continually tried to improve their economic conditions, eliminate poverty, and provide health and economic security, among other purposes.

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