

Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism

TCLC 147

Volume 147

Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism

**Criticism of the
Works of Novelists, Poets, Playwrights,
Short Story Writers, and Other Creative Writers
Who Lived between 1900 and 1999,
from the First Published Critical
Appraisals to Current Evaluations**



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Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism, Vol. 147

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Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism

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Preface

Since its inception more than fifteen years ago, *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism (TCLC)* has been purchased and used by nearly 10,000 school, public, and college or university libraries. *TCLC* has covered more than 500 authors, representing 58 nationalities and over 25,000 titles. No other reference source has surveyed the critical response to twentieth-century authors and literature as thoroughly as *TCLC*. In the words of one reviewer, “there is nothing comparable available.” *TCLC* “is a gold mine of information—dates, pseudonyms, biographical information, and criticism from books and periodicals—which many librarians would have difficulty assembling on their own.”

Scope of the Series

TCLC is designed to serve as an introduction to authors who died between 1900 and 1999 and to the most significant interpretations of these author's works. Volumes published from 1978 through 1999 included authors who died between 1900 and 1960. The great poets, novelists, short story writers, playwrights, and philosophers of the period are frequently studied in high school and college literature courses. In organizing and reprinting the vast amount of critical material written on these authors, *TCLC* helps students develop valuable insight into literary history, promotes a better understanding of the texts, and sparks ideas for papers and assignments. Each entry in *TCLC* presents a comprehensive survey on an author's career or an individual work of literature and provides the user with a multiplicity of interpretations and assessments. Such variety allows students to pursue their own interests; furthermore, it fosters an awareness that literature is dynamic and responsive to many different opinions.

Every fourth volume of *TCLC* is devoted to literary topics. These topics widen the focus of the series from the individual authors to such broader subjects as literary movements, prominent themes in twentieth-century literature, literary reaction to political and historical events, significant eras in literary history, prominent literary anniversaries, and the literatures of cultures that are often overlooked by English-speaking readers.

TCLC is designed as a companion series to Gale's *Contemporary Literary Criticism, (CLC)* which reprints commentary on authors who died after 1999. Because of the different time periods under consideration, there is no duplication of material between *CLC* and *TCLC*.

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A *TCLC* entry consists of the following elements:

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- A **Portrait of the Author** is included when available.
- The **Introduction** contains background information that introduces the reader to the author, work, or topic that is the subject of the entry.
- The list of **Principal Works** is ordered chronologically by date of first publication and lists the most important works by the author. The genre and publication date of each work is given. In the case of foreign authors whose

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- Reprinted **Criticism** is arranged chronologically in each entry to provide a useful perspective on changes in critical evaluation over time. The critic's name and the date of composition or publication of the critical work are given at the beginning of each piece of criticism. Unsigned criticism is preceded by the title of the source in which it appeared. All titles by the author featured in the text are printed in boldface type. Footnotes are reprinted at the end of each essay or excerpt. In the case of excerpted criticism, only those footnotes that pertain to the excerpted texts are included.
- A complete **Bibliographical Citation** of the original essay or book precedes each piece of criticism. Source citations in the Literary Criticism Series follow University of Chicago Press style, as outlined in *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 14th ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993).
- Critical essays are prefaced by brief **Annotations** explicating each piece.
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An alphabetical **Title Index** accompanies each volume of *TCLC*. Listings of titles by authors covered in the given volume are followed by the author's name and the corresponding page numbers where the titles are discussed. English translations of foreign titles and variations of titles are cross-referenced to the title under which a work was originally published. Titles of novels, dramas, nonfiction books, and poetry, short story, or essay collections are printed in italics, while individual poems, short stories, and essays are printed in roman type within quotation marks.

In response to numerous suggestions from librarians, Gale also produces a paperbound edition of the *TCLC* cumulative title index. This annual cumulation, which alphabetically lists all titles reviewed in the series, is available to all customers. Additional copies of this index are available upon request. Librarians and patrons will welcome this separate index; it saves shelf space, is easy to use, and is recyclable upon receipt of the next edition.

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José María Arguedas

1911-1969

Peruvian novelist, short story writer, poet, ethnologist, and translator.

The following entry provides criticism of Arguedas's works from 1982 through 2002. For criticism prior to 1982, see *CLC*, Volumes 10 and 18.

INTRODUCTION

Arguedas is less well-known than contemporaries like Gabriel García Márquez or his friend Mario Vargas Llosa, but his deep understanding of Peru's indigenous people has established his place among Latin America's most respected writers. Arguedas chronicled the social, economic, cultural and linguistic transformations wrought by urbanization and the massive migrations of highland Indians to Peru's coastal cities. Arguedas's fiction drew heavily from his accomplishments in ethnography and his intimate knowledge of Peru's history and geography. His childhood as a sort of mestizo—a white child more fluent in Quechua than Spanish—also informed his work; he wrote his fiction first in Quechua and then translated it himself to Spanish. Arguedas was a major figure in Peruvian life, receiving important appointments to governmental and cultural organizations and holding several university positions. His writings were also influential with the Liberation Theologians of the 1960s and 1970s.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Arguedas was born on January 18, 1911, in Andahuaylas, Peru. His father was an itinerant lawyer who traveled the countryside, and Arguedas's mother died when he was three. His father remarried, and Arguedas spent most of his childhood on his stepmother's hacienda in the Peruvian highlands. Because his stepmother "despised and hated me as much as [her] Indians," Arguedas wrote in *Páginas escogidas* (1972), "she decided that I was to live with them in the kitchen, eat and sleep there." His stepmother intended it as punishment, but Arguedas considered his experiences among the Indians one of the most spiritually nourishing developments of his life. The Indians treated him as one of

their own, and as he wrote in the introduction to *Yawar fiesta* (1941), "my protectors showered me with a deep and brave tenderness, . . . the purest love, which makes the individual who has acquired it absolutely immune to skepticism." Soon he was more fluent in the Indians' Quechua language than he was in Spanish. As a teenager, he alternated study at boarding schools with travels accompanying his father across the Peruvian highlands and to the cities on the coast. In 1931 he enrolled at the University of San Marcos, but his literature studies were interrupted a year later; authorities closed the University during political unrest, and his father's death and the subsequent need to support himself led him to take a job working for the postal ministry. He started publishing articles in 1934, and when the University re-opened in 1935 he began his anthropological studies. That year he also published *Agua. Los escolares. Warma kukay*, a collection of stories that won him second prize in an Argentine-sponsored competition. In 1937 Arguedas's political activity resulted in his spending eleven months in prison for protesting an event honoring an official of Mussolini's government and his firing from the postal ministry. In 1939 he married Celia Bustamante Vernal, wrote his dissertation on language differences between the Peruvian highlands and coast, and took a teaching position at a boys' school. He published his first novel, *Yawar fiesta*, in 1941, and he continued the steady output of works of ethnography, folklore, musicology, and studies of the Quechua language that would continue until his death. Despite being falsely denounced as a communist in 1947, Arguedas traveled often on behalf of Peruvian governmental agencies and cultural organizations, and he developed friendships with novelists Mario Vargas Llosa and Julio Cortázar. In the fifties Arguedas did extensive ethnographic work, earning him a professorship at the University of San Marcos in 1958, the same year he published his novel *Los ríos profundos* (*Deep Rivers*). Arguedas became prominent in Peruvian culture and politics, and he was appointed to many governmental and cultural positions, including director of the National History Museum. Despite his success, Arguedas was increasingly unhappy; he separated from his wife in 1965, and a year later he attempted suicide. He started a diary, which provided some material for his posthumously-published novel *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo* (1971; *The Fox From Up Above and the*

Fox From Down Below). He remarried in 1966, traveled frequently, and published prolifically, but in 1969 he shot himself and died on December 2, 1969.

MAJOR WORKS

Arguedas believed much of his work was the product of a "bedeviled struggle with language." His work reflects an attempt to bring forms of consciousness and reality he experienced and most easily expressed in Quechua to readers of Spanish, the language of the Quechua people's oppressors. Arguedas wrote *Agua*, his first collection of stories, in anger at the treatment of the Indians and out of disdain for the depictions of Indians in Peruvian literature. These stories lay out many of the themes and narrative patterns for all of Arguedas's stories and novels—the narrators are children struggling with their identity, the Indians are shown living in organic solidarity and in harmony with nature, but the lives and culture of the highland Indians are being threatened by the individual and rationalistic culture of the Spanish-speaking peoples on the Peruvian coast. *Agua* earned Arguedas second prize in an international contest sponsored by Revista Americana in Buenos Aires. Arguedas's first novel, *Yawar fiesta*, depicts an Indian community attempting to perform a ritual feast that is prohibited by the civil authorities of holding a bullfight. It is a sympathetic portrait of the Indians and their culture besieged by the cold brutality of the authorities acting in the name of civilization.

Yawar fiesta was followed by several years of writer's block, but in 1958 Arguedas published *Deep Rivers*, considered by many his masterpiece. It follows the young child Ernesto, like Arguedas, the white son of an itinerant lawyer who is raised by Indian servants. It begins by describing a wondrous world of magic and nature, viewed through the mythical perspective of the Indians. Eventually, however, Ernesto is sent away to school, where he encounters loneliness and sees how the rational and individualistic society of the Spanish-speaking dominant classes impinges on the freedom and dignity of the Indians, forcing them into futile rebellion against their military-backed oppressors. Arguedas's later works, including *El sexto* (1961) and *Todas las sangres* (1964) were more overtly socially and politically pointed. While critics generally do not hold these works in as high a regard as *Deep Rivers*, Liberation Theologians such as Gustavo Gutierrez were inspired by these works to call for the Catholic Church to seek harmony with the indigenous peoples through respect for their forms of communal solidarity and pre-rational consciousness. Arguedas's last novel, *The Fox From Up Above and the Fox From Down Below*, takes place in a coastal town where the culture of the Indian migrants from the highlands clashes with rootless cul-

ture and urban poverty of Peru's teeming cities and contains diary entries from a despairing narrator. It was published posthumously.

CRITICAL RECEPTION

Arguedas's engagement with the language, consciousness, and power are fundamental to almost all appraisals of his life and work. From his earliest stories, according to Christian Fernández's profile of Arguedas for the critical edition of *The Fox From Up Above and the Fox From Down Below*, "We see the beginning of the apprenticeship and representation of a reality that apparently was carefully planned from the beginning by Arguedas . . . Arguedas is already previewing the problems he will represent in subsequent works. In all of them, the narrator is a child with a problem of cultural identity . . ." Arguedas had an obvious affinity with the culture of the Quechua Indians. Alita Kelley sees Arguedas as a "translator" of Quechua culture, and Lucía Lockert has written in the *Michigan Academician* that "Arguedas captures the acculturated language that one hears in every Andean corner of Peru from the mouths of mestizos who speak Spanish." In *Modern Language Quarterly* Walter D. Mignolo found in Arguedas's work the "legacies of the linguistic conflict created by migrations from the metropolitan centers to the colonial domains, and the fractures of local languages introduced by colonial ones" that date back to the sixteenth century. In *GeoJournal*, geographer César N. Caviedes praised *The Fox From Up Above and the Fox From Down Below* as "a synthesis of contemporary Peru" crafted by Arguedas "with perhaps more propriety and sensitivity than a historian, sociologist or geographer." In his introduction to *The Fox From Up Above and the Fox From Down Below*, Ciro A. Sandoval went even further, declaring that "as an author, Arguedas's concern was the totality of human culture." One of Arguedas's most engaged and perceptive critics is his friend, fellow Peruvian novelist Mario Vargas Llosa. In *Review of Contemporary Fiction* Vargas Llosa wrote that Arguedas's first novel, *Yawar fiesta*, succeeds as fiction because the narrator presents the world of the novel "as an indivisible though heartbreaking totality" from an anti-rational perspective that Vargas Llosa nevertheless concludes is deeply conservative. But as his career progressed, Vargas Llosa believed Arguedas succumbed to the pressure to produce literature that supported his social and political commitments. In *Harper's* Vargas Llosa concluded that *Todas las sangres* was a "very ambitious book, in which [Arguedas] tried, escaping from himself, to describe the social and political problems of his country. The novel is a total failure: the vision is simplistic and even a caricature . . . The book is the classic failure of an artistic talent as a result of the self-imposition of social commitment."

PRINCIPAL WORKS

- Agua. Los escolares. Warma kukay* (short stories) 1935
Yawar fiesta (novel) 1941
Canciones y cuentos del pueblo quechua [*The Singing Mountaineers: Songs and Tales of the Quechua People*] [translator] (songs and short stories) 1949
Diamantes y pedernales. Agua (short stories) 1954
Los ríos profundos [*Deep Rivers*] (novel) 1958
El sexto (novel) 1961
La agonía de "Rasu-Niti" (novel) 1962
Túpac Amaru Kamaq taytañchisman; Haylli-taki. A nuestro padre creador Túpac Amaru; Himnocación (poetry) 1962
Todas las sangres (novel) 1964
El sueño del pongo [translator] (short story) 1965
Dioses y hombres de huarochirí [translator] (novel) 1966
La amante de la culebra (short stories) 1966
Amor mundo y otros relatos; enlarged Amor mundo y todos los cuentos de José María Arguedas (short stories) 1967
Las comunidades de España y del Perú (prose) 1968
El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo [*The Fox From Up Above and the Fox From Down Below*] (novel) 1971
Páginas escogidas (collected works of fiction, poetry, and ethnographical and biographical prose) 1972
Cuentos olvidados (short stories) 1973
Relatos completos (short stories) 1974
Formación de una cultura nacional indoamericana (essays and lectures) 1975
Señores e indios: Acerca de la cultura quechua (essays and lectures) 1976
Obras completas. 5 vols. (short stories) 1983
Indios, mestizos y señores (prose) 1985
Un mundo de monstruos y de fuego (prose) 1993

CRITICISM

Braulio Muñoz (essay date May-June 1982)

SOURCE: Muñoz, Braulio. "Indian of the Heart." *Americas* 34, no. 3 (May-June 1982): 25-9.

[In the following essay, Muñoz examines Arguedas's struggle to describe a future for the Andean Indians that relies on neither liberalism nor western socialism and retains their sense of the magical.]

*But if I die of
 life, and not of time, . . .*

—César Vallejo

I first met José María Arguedas when he came to Chimbote, my native port in northern Peru. He came to write a novel about despair and hope—a novel about Peru. He was the first "Indian" I really knew. He was born in the Andean highlands, had learned the Indian worldview through the Inca language, and had grown up in the *ayllus* (Indian communities that to this day infuse their members with the old ways). But this *indio sonqo*, this Indian of the heart, did not remain in the highlands for long. His mestizo ancestry proved too strong for the claims the *ayllu* had on him, and eventually succeeded in drawing him to the coast.

The childhood experiences were not to be erased, however; until his death, J. M. Arguedas remained an Indian of the heart. Through Ernesto, the central character of his best novel, *Los Ríos Profundos* (1958) (*Deep Rivers*, 1978), Arguedas evokes memories of his own childhood:

To escape cruel relatives, I had thrown myself on the mercy of the Indian community that grew corn in the smallest, happiest valley I had ever known. The flame-blossomed thorn trees and the songs of the wild doves illuminated the corn fields. The family chiefs and the older women, the mamakunas of the community, protected me and instilled in me the kindness in which I live and which I can never repay.

These memories, repeated throughout his work, are witness to a desire to return. In these memories he sought solace from the onslaught of injustice and inhumanity that makes of Peru a tragic society.

For too brief a period, Arguedas was my teacher. Under his guidance I entered the distorted and fragmented world of the Indian, who barely existed in his shantytowns scattered on the outskirts of the port. It was a world in which Indians, through their rather awkward speech and mannerisms, showed their disdain and even contempt for their native culture. As I followed this *indio sonqo* among the Indians of the port I began to wonder what he could be searching for, why he became suddenly silent as he heard the sorrowful tune of a blind beggar's harp, why his eyes moistened as he spoke in Quechua to a drunken Indian who would not answer except in a badly learned Spanish.

Only years later, when I reread his work and remembered our experiences, did I begin to understand why he always seemed to be searching for atonement. In rereading his books I grasped the extent of his love and respect for the Indians who had nurtured him. And his love and respect seemed to develop, quite naturally, into a deep desire to liberate the Indian from centuries of oppression. But if the wish to liberate seemed a most human stance, the consequences of such a redemptive posture seemed most unfair. For Arguedas was caught on the horns of a dilemma: the liberation of the Indians

whom he loved and respected for being what they were seemed to demand that he ask them to become other. Indeed, as one reads his novels a paradox immediately manifests itself: for the Indians to be saved they had to vanish. This paradox underlay Arguedas' existential predicament and affected him in untold ways.

But great artists are never alone in their predicaments; they are never "ahead of their time." They articulate that which is felt by the many who are unable or unwilling to articulate their hopes or their dis-ease. Thus, Arguedas was not alone in his anguish; he only gathered and reflected a collective dis-ease through his life and work. He did this better than anyone else because he was an *indio sonqo*, and felt these fateful, paradoxical demands in his very being.

When I first encountered it, I thought that Arguedas' dilemma was Peruvian property. After all, had not César Vallejo—the Peruvian poet who looked at death all too soon—stated with the full force of his own Indianness: "In sum, I do not have anything with which to express my life except my death" (*Poesía Completa*, 1978)? But reflecting about it, I realized that the dilemma underlying Arguedas' life and work was neither a uniquely Peruvian dilemma nor, for that matter, a Hispano-American dilemma. It is in fact a dilemma that envelops today's humanist posture and points out the need for its justification. Let us use the Indian case to sharpen our focus on it, given that Arguedas reaches us from that context. To do this, it is necessary to discuss, however briefly, the socioliterary movement of which he formed an essential part, and of which he was the conscience; namely, *Indigenismo*, the Indianist movement.

The influence of Indianism as a socioliterary movement was felt across Hispanic America and lasted from about 1919 to roughly 1964. In its artistic expression, the Indianist movement aimed at shattering old myths about the Indian in Hispanic America. It pitted itself against two traditional views—the old image of the Indian as a cross between a noble and a savage (an image found in half-forgotten accounts by half-forgotten chroniclers who in their dreams saw the Spanish conquest of America as a destruction of Arcadia), and the romantic view of the nineteenth century, which saw the Indian living exotically in remote corners of Hispanic America. Against the first view Indianism insisted on speaking about the Indians of the present. Against the second it insisted that the Indian did not live a romantic life in exotic places but a sordid one amidst white and mestizo landlords. In short, the Indianist literary movement presented itself as part of a larger social movement to liberate the Indian. That aim expressed itself initially in a liberal and later a socialist literature. The Indianist novel of the Andes is focused on here for two reasons—it is from the Andes that J. M. Arguedas speaks, and the work of the Andean writers is paradigmatic of the movement as a whole.

The liberal writers presented the Indian characters as almost subhuman, and incapable of acting on their own behalf with any hope of success. Yet, in their view, Hispanic America needed to move beyond neocolonialism and its ultimate result, exploitation of the Indian. The redemptive fervor of the liberal writers led to their demand that the Indian be liberated at all costs; that he be incorporated into a liberal society as a citizen—even if that meant dictatorship. Thus, ironically, liberalism was to be born out of despotism. And the irony concealed the paradox that in order for the Indian to be liberated he had to become something other than what he was. For liberalism and Indian culture are incompatible. The paradox remained concealed from the liberals because to them the only life worth living was that of a member of the bourgeoisie. All other conceptions of life were seen as either hopelessly romantic or decidedly backward.

Socialist writers, among whom Arguedas must be included, articulated the paradox more fully. But, except for him, even these writers did not grasp the paradox in its full import. Instead, they viewed the paradox as a fateful and fitting event. In their eyes the Indian came to constitute the messianic subject-object of history. In their very hearts, these writers believed, Indians were socialists; and they pointed to the remnants of communal life in the *ayllus* as examples of the ancient socialist spirit. All the Indians needed was to be shown their past that they might claim a future. Once having grasped their true desire, the Indians would come down from the mountains to stamp out the evils of bourgeois society that radiated from the capitalist centers of the cities.

The paradox concealed from the liberal writers was thus made explicit and "solved" at the same time. No, the Indians were not asked to vanish; they were being asked to "return" to their "true" being. The Indians would save the Andes from centuries of injustice with a last effort that was at the same time their self-immolation. The Indians were praised for sacrificing their Indianness in pursuit of socialist society where all men would be free. But they would make good their promise only if they acted not as Indians but as free men. And free men do not follow the whims of magic or deceive themselves by believing in drawing strength from mythical inspiration. Free men act rationally; their acts are grounded in a true and scientific understanding of history and the world. In other words, for the socialist writers, too, the Indians had to become other.

Looking back at the Indianist movement one may well ask what reasons could these writers give for demanding the Indians' cultural death? That the Indianist writers' hopes for either a liberal or a socialist society in the Andes did not materialize should not preempt the asking of the question. For, whatever the outcome, it is the ground for the demand itself that stands in need of

justification. It is here that we appreciate the seriousness of the humanist dilemma exemplified by Indianism.

The dilemma can be stated as follows: On the one side, to have "left the Indians alone" in the highlands under real and perceived conditions of oppression would have been willfully to ignore the evils feeding on Indian poverty, thus abandoning the humanist stance. On the other, to demand changes in the Indians' culture in view of liberating them from oppression necessarily meant to ask for their cultural death, a demand not altogether consonant with a humanist position respectful of all human efforts toward self-fulfillment.

It is at this juncture that the issues transcend a discussion of Indianism. The questions surrounding the Indianist dilemma are the same as those enveloping the dilemma of humanism in general. For at the bottom of the humanist stance there lurks the question: How does one justify decreeing how others ought to live?

Western humanism has always been dual. While it manifests a contemplative concern with man's understanding of his existence—which ultimately implies an anthropocentric, a panhuman, conception of the world—it also sustains an active intervention in the world to make that world comply with the demands of thought. The interplay between the contemplative and the interventive faces of humanism, however, has not always been auspicious. Often its anthropocentric conception of the world has turned into an ethnocentric conception as soon as Western man has attempted to act. Thus, humanism often changes into its opposite and shows its Janus face. The proverbial contradiction between thought and action has here one of its most telling tales. A tale, one might add, that reaches deep into Western history, and is well exemplified in two concrete instances in Latin American history—the colonial experience and Indianism.

The earliest grounds for humanism were furnished mainly by religion. Socrates affirmed this with his life, and Christ gave it a sublime character. Until recently the idea that all men were created in the image of God and therefore shared in His essence was taken as given. This fundamental postulate of Christian theology furnished the basis for Charity and Love—the cardinal tenets of a religiously based humanism. But this religious grounding also gave humanism a militant edge. Martyrdom—perhaps the purest form of militancy—and proselytizing translated the Christian faith into practice. And in the translation something was certainly lost. Let us recall the soldier-priests who carried out the deeds of conquest in Hispanic America: the Indian soul had to be "saved"; the Indian had to be converted at all costs, even if he had to be eliminated in the process. The Janus face of humanism in this instance was shown to be of a purple color.

This religious ground for humanism began to erode around the fifteenth century. By the end of the eighteenth century the once solid religious base had virtually disappeared. The expansion of the West—so effectively supported by its religious zeal—eventually worked against those values that sustained it. From conquerors, missionaries, converted natives, pirates, and adventurers, the eighteenth century *philosophes* had gathered evidence to use against their own church and state. By the end of the eighteenth century the Christian Godhead had been largely replaced in the minds of humanists by a new one: Nature. And attached to this God-term there were two minor gods: Human Nature and Reason.

But, as it turned out, the attempts by the *philosophes* of the Enlightenment were half-hearted. They could claim to have found a Human Nature only because they did not look hard enough. As anthropologists examined the evidence, the concept of Human Nature all but evaporated. Anthropologists became convinced that if there was something constant in all cultures, it was a tendency to be different. To be sure, all men belonged to one family, but now the ground for the obvious unity was no longer obvious. As the social sciences increased their participation in the general discussion, the conception of man and his world on purely religious grounds was left behind. The development of the social sciences was marked by a shift to scientism—a reliance on the scientific method—and a pronounced preoccupation with the classification and analysis of "hard facts." The old concept of Reason gave way to a conception of reason as instrumental; the traditional concept of Human Nature gave way to one couched in the theories of socialization and propaganda that saw man as manipulable and malleable. As to humanism, having lost faith, it embraced science. It came to rely more and more on the correct reading of "hard facts" ostensibly gathered through work done with full impartiality and objectivity.

The new grounding of humanism when translated into practice brought about another turn of its Janus face. This is clearly exemplified by the case of Indianism, for the humanism of the Indianist writers was certainly grounded in scientism. It was no longer based on religion or notions of Human Nature, as were the romantic Indian novels of the nineteenth century. Indianism was a naturalist-realistic movement. These novels report "hard facts," and the assessment of these facts undergirds the author's humanist stance. After all, the hard facts were all too eloquent in showing the Indian exploited by a corrupt white minority. Convinced by their readings of the available hard facts, these writers saw no choice but to wrest the Indians from their shackles—and thus reaffirm their own humanism.

The problem was that their stance was too "objective." These humanists looked at the Indian from the outside