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Abstract

This research paper examines the influence of the author and political activist, José Julián Martí Pérez, more commonly known as José Martí on the Cuban struggle for independence from Spanish colonial rule. The paper focuses specifically on the influence of Martí's literary works as well as the role played by the author himself in the Cuban independence movement. It also examines the ways in which Martí's legacy has lived on in the sphere of Cuban politics following his death.

Keywords: José Martí, cuban independence, cuban politics, Cuban Revolutionary Party, Montecristi Manifesto, Nuestra America

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INTRODUCTION

Rationale

The topic of this research project is the “The influence of José Martí and his literary works on the independence of Cuba from Spanish rule”. As a student of modern languages, studying both Spanish and French language as well as literature, literature has always been an immensely interesting field. This is especially true with regards to the relationship between literature and the social, political and cultural aspects of the authors’ countries that are often present in and constitutes a major part of their various works. Furthermore, during the course of selecting a topic for this research project, the number of topics that were related to literature over the last few years was fairly small as compared to non- literature topics. This was also evident during research through the use of the UWISpace platform, where not a lot of research projects about literary topics were readily available.

Parameters

The research done for this project, as it was a study of José Martí and his work and its influence on Cuban independence, focused heavily on the life and literary works of José Martí. The research conducted was therefore limited to the timeframe of 1869- 1902. Martí officially began his career as a writer in 1869 with the creation of his first newspaper. The latter end of the aforementioned time frame marks the independence of Cuba from Spanish rule.

Objectives

The main objective of this research project is to highlight the contributions of José Martí, as a patriot and political activist towards the independence of Cuba, as well as the way in which his views and ideas, through his literature, influenced Cuban independence.

Methodology

To gather information and conduct research for this project, a multitude of secondary sources were utilised. These sources include online databases, as well as articles. Given the nature of the topic, being a literature based topic, secondary sources proved to be more useful than primary sources as much of the research involved the works written by José Martí. Also, since the focus of the research was on an author who is deceased and on a historical event (the independence of Cuba), primary sources such as a questionnaire or an interview was not the most suitable source for gathering data. In addition to this, the current public health crisis; the Covid-19 pandemic, and the subsequent restrictions, made it difficult to have access to physical books and other research material and as such, the majority of research conducted for this project heavily relies on online secondary sources.

Chapter Outline

This research project is divided into three chapters. Chapter one is a review of the literature which examines the existing body of research on this topic. This chapter will review the content, as well as strengths and weaknesses of these sources. Chapter 2 will concentrate on the poems and other literary works of José Martí and seek to analyze its relationships and its

contributions towards the independence of Cuba. Chapter 3 centers on the author himself, José Martí, and his involvement in Cuba's political landscape.

CHAPTER 1: Literature Review

José Martí has been a historical figure of great importance in Cuba, and by extension, throughout the world. Like many of its fellow Caribbean countries, Cuba was colonised by Spain with the arrival of Christopher Columbus in 1492, and underwent many changes as well as difficulties over the course of its colonial era. In the quest for the independence of Cuba, several prominent figures emerged as political activists and patriots, one of which was José Martí. José Martí was born in Havana, Cuba on January 28th, 1853. He was an author and activist who fought for the independence of Cuba from Spanish rule. He was widely celebrated for his efforts towards the country's independence, becoming known as the founding father of Cuban independence after he died on the battlefield, fighting for his country in May of 1895. This literature review will examine several works in the existing body of research pertaining to José Martí, his literary works and his influence on the independence of Cuba.

A major theme present in many of the existing works on this topic is that of anti-imperialism, an integral part of José Martí's political ideology. Even during his youth, José Martí showed a marked interest in the political landscape of his mother country, Cuba. As a part of his schooling, Martí was enrolled at the Rafael Maria Mendive Colegio de San Pablo, where he excelled in various subjects. The schoolmaster, Mendive, who was himself an advocate for Cuban independence, proved to be a great mentor to Martí, and introduced him to the colonial issues faced by Cuba. One of Martí's main objectives was to free Cuba from the bonds of its colonial ruler, Spain. "In essence, Martí's political specific objectives were "to secure the complete liberation of Cuba and Puerto Rico from Spain, prevent their annexation by the United States, and establish democratic and free republics" (Lecuona 55). José Martí insisted that to be

truly free, Cuba needed to be fully responsible for all its own affairs and not depend on an outside power to assist in managing the affairs of the country. Lecuona highlights Martí's statement "To change masters does not mean that one is free" (57). This statement underlines José Martí's ideology of Cuban independence as being completely free from the influence of any foreign power. Similarly, Valenzuela quotes Mañach's biography of José Martí which states, "Martí serves as a model of a Cuban identity to which Cuba should be faithful in order to be "sole mistress of her own responsibility," independent of the colonial influences of Spain and the US" (759). Martí was also wary of the economic ties that Cuba shared with the United States, recognizing the interdependence of the economy and the politics of the country, "Martí viewed with alarm the danger of any closer commercial relations with their neighbor to the North. Realizing the economic importance of the United States and the geographical situation of Cuba, Martí advocated friendlier relations but without any political or economic dependence" (Suchlicki 35). Another tenant of José Martí's political ideology that is discussed in several articles is his focus on democracy. Throughout the process of advocating for Cuba's independence from Spain and the United States, Martí maintained that upon attaining independence, Cuba should implement a democratic government that did not allow domination by any one group or class as he stated in his newspaper *Patria*. "The Republic...should not be the unjust predomination of one class of citizens over the rest, but the open and sincere equilibrium of all the real forces of the country, and of the free thought and desire of all the citizens" (Gray 250). He wanted all citizens to be treated equally and have an equal say in the politics of their country. Lecuona quotes Martí as saying "a people is made up of the rights and opinions of all its members, and not of the rights and opinions of a single class...nor is it the will of a single man, however pure it might be" (56).

The martyrdom of José Martí is another central theme present in many of the sources reviewed. Through his beliefs, his actions, as well as his literary works, José Martí was celebrated as a hero in Cuba after his death. He also became known by several distinguished titles, conferred unto him by the Cuban people and political activists who came after him, which conveyed the high regard in which he was held. Enrico Mario Santí states that Cubans, both locally and internationally “revere Martí as the very spirit of their national identity” (141), and Valenzuela argues that biographies of José Martí not only celebrate him as a famous author, but as “an individual whose life and writings are inextricably tied to the process of national formation” in Cuba. José Martí did not see the independent Cuba that he had envisioned during his lifetime; however it was his ideas and his writings that laid the foundation for the revolutionary war that ultimately gained Cuba its independence. The level of reverence accorded to Martí following Cuban independence, did not come until several years after his death. Santí describes the treatment of Martí immediately after his death as ambivalent. “To say that Martí was simply forgotten and that his works remained unread during those pessimistic years of the early Cuban republic is perhaps to understate the initial reception of Martí” (144). According to Santí, to make amends for this ambivalence towards Martí and his commendable efforts towards Cuban independence; the ‘cult of Martí’ emerged (144). Consequently, Martí was referred to as ‘The father of the Cuban Revolution’, ‘The Apostle of Cuban Independence’, ‘The Saint of America’ and was even compared to Christ, ‘offering salvation to the Cuban people’ (Valenzuela. “Martí’s revolutionary spirit comprises a parallel with Christ’s power to raise the dead, lifting the spirits of the oppressed Cuban people just as Jesus was able to raise Lazarus from the grave” (Valenzuela 756). The legacy of José Martí, as offered by Valenzuela, is not primarily his literary works but “the act of stirring revolution in the heart of Cubans” (756).

While José Martí continues to be known as a legendary patriot and the founding father of independence in Cuba, his name and works has been used by many others for various reasons, not all of which have been in line with the political ideology of Martí. “History is falsified in Cuba, and the great events and heroes of Cuba’s past are manipulated by the government to justify its abuses of power” (Ripoll 3). The memory of José Martí and what he stood for during his lifetime has been used repeatedly by many Cuban politicians after his death. These politicians and political figures include former presidents such as Tomás Estrada Palma and Fulgencio Batista y Zaldívar and most famously, Fidel Castro. Martí’s longing for the liberation of Cuba and freedom from colonial powers such as Spain and the United States was used as a political tool by Castro to implement his own political ideology. “We can see that Castro’s learned and much-defended concepts of national pride are clearly informed by Martí’s own texts, both in their shared longing for an idealized “patria” and in their contempt for a despotic regime imposing itself against the will of the people” (López 149). Although Martí was never recorded as being pro-communism, and was in fact known for his love of democracy, Fidel Castro interpreted and used Martí’s works to encourage the Cuban citizens to accept communism, presenting it as a concept that was supported by the legendary patriot. López highlights that the Castro regime has been accused of “maliciously using the Martí legacy in order to itself enslave the Cuban people under the guise of a totalitarian communist state” (149). Further proof of Castro’s misrepresentation of Martí’s ideology can be seen in his response to his critics calling for the implementation of a multi-party political system in Cuba in 1991, “we will have one party and one party only...one party because José Martí founded just one to carry out our war of independence!” (Ripoll 14). The legacy of José Martí and his literary works continue to have two different effects in Cuban politics to this day and he is often cited to justify many activities in the

name of patriotism. “Martí’s writing thus remains a key ideological weapon, however double edged, in the battle over the fate of the Cuban nation, even while being read and interpreted in wildly conflicting ways” (Valenzuela 755). Martí is regarded as being important to the national identities of Cubans both in the Castro regime as well as the diaspora of Cubans in the United States. However, according to López, “the two “nations” also constitute wildly different representations of Martí’s revolutionary message and historians, scholars and others from each camp often accuse each other of having misappropriated Martí for their own ideological ends” (138).

The aim of this literature review was to examine the existing body of research regarding the influence of José Martí and his literary works on the independence of Cuba. The literature that exists based on this topic is extensive and covers a wide range of ideas and sub-topics associated with Martí’s involvement in the political landscape of Cuba. Through the review of the literature, several common themes were acknowledged including Martí’s political ideology of anti-imperialism and democracy, the martyrdom of José Martí, and the misappropriation of Martí’s thoughts for political gain. It is clear that the writings of Martí, as well as the man himself, have had, and continue to have, a significant impact on Cuban politics. This impact has manifested in both positive and negative ways, even decades after the passing of the political activist and author. This research project will further examine the role played by José Martí and his literary works in the independence of Cuba.

CHAPTER 2: José Martí's Literary Works

One aspect of the contributions of José Martí towards the liberation of Cuba from Spanish colonial rule is his extensive collection of literary works. Martí began writing from a very early age and was inspired in large part by the social and political conditions of his beloved mother country, Cuba. His first literary work was a dramatic poem entitled *Abdala*, which was written by Martí when he was only 15 years old. The poem was published on the 23rd of January 1869 in the newspaper founded by Martí himself, *La Patria Libre* (The Free Homeland), and describes the determination of a young man to defend his country against occupation by a foreign power. This poem foreshadows the death of the author and patriot who eventually died while fighting for his country's independence, in the same manner as the protagonist in his very first literary work. After his first poem, José Martí continued to add to his literary repertoire, writing several plays, poems, letters, essays and newspaper articles, which showcased his passion for the liberation of Cuba as well as other nations in the Americas, suffering under colonial rule. Unlike other authors, Martí did not seek recognition and fame in the literary world through his writing but wrote with a greater purpose in mind. "His literary production had significant practical dimensions as well: they were either largely intended to define, promote or defend Cuban independence and nationhood or they were executed to earn a living while laboring for the cause of a free Cuba" (Garcia 6). As such, his political ideology and desire for the independence of Cuba constituted an important and recurring theme throughout José Martí's body of work. This chapter of the research project will examine the influence of selected pieces of José Martí's body of literary works on Cuba's fight for independence.

Abdala

As mentioned before, *Abdala* was the first known literary piece written by José Martí at the tender age of fifteen years old. The piece was published in the first and only edition of *La Patria Libre*, a newspaper created by Martí himself. This dramatic poem consists of eight scenes and chronicles the experience of a young patriot fighting to protect and defend his country, Nubia, from invasion and occupation by a foreign power. This poem holds great significance with reference to José Martí's dedication to the freedom of Cuba. There are many aspects of the poem that serve as a reflection of Martí's political ideology and many similarities can be drawn between the character Abdala and José Martí himself.

The desire of the young man in *Abdala* to protect and defend his country from being occupied and ruled by a colonial power is a direct parallel to Martí's desire to liberate Cuba from Spanish colonial rule. When faced with the news of an impending invasion of his homeland Nubia by foreign Arabian forces, Abdala does not hesitate to join in battle and fight for his country's freedom.

“Born in Nubia, in Nubia we will know death.

Sons of the country, for her we will die,

And the sighs that comes out of my last lips,

For Nubia it will be”

In the case of Cuba, Spanish forces had occupied Cuba since 1511 and continued to rule until the signing of the Treaty of Paris on December 10th, 1898. Martí, from an early age, showed great interest in the politics of Cuba, and specifically, the independence of Cuba from rule by any external bodies. *Abdala* was only the first of many literary works that focused on the importance

of Cuba's liberation. Similar to Abdala, José Martí pledged his life to the cause of Cuban independence and was ready to fight until it was a reality.

Another similarity that can be drawn between the fictional character of Abdala and the author José Martí is that of their mothers' concerns for their sons. In his final letter to his mother in 1895, Martí acknowledges her worry for him as he continues his efforts in the fight towards Cuban independence. He goes on to write that "the duty of a man lies where he is most useful". The fourth and fifth scenes in *Abdala* recount the fear felt by Abdala's mother when she discovers her son is about to go to war for his country. She tries to persuade her son to avoid the danger of war but he insists that it is his duty to his country.

"Love for country, mother,

It is not the ridiculous love of the land...

It is the invincible hatred for those who oppress it"

Aside from being the first work produced by José Martí, *Abdala* is held in high regard as it turned out to be a remarkably precise prediction of what was to come later on in Martí's life. At the end of the poem, as he lies dying on the battlefield, Abdala is happy that the enemy has been defeated even though he had to sacrifice his life for his country's freedom. Even though Martí was killed in the early days of the battle for Cuban independence, just like Abdala, he died defending the freedom of his country.

Nuestra America

Nuestra America (Our America) is one of the most famous essays written by José Martí during his lifetime. This essay was published in the Mexican newspaper *El Partido Liberal* and the New York newspaper, *La Revista Illustrada* in January of 1891. This Essay was yet another one of Martí's works that held great significance in the Cuban fight for independence. It is important to note that the America that José Martí is referring to in the title of this essay (*Our America*) is Latin America as a whole. The term Latin America did not come into existence until much later and as such to describe the countries and in the Americas, including Cuba, Puerto Rico, Argentina and Venezuela among others, Martí simply used the term 'America'. The essay goes on to address several key issues related to Cuba's independence and Martí's views on Cuban politics and society such as the need for governance by locals as opposed to foreign colonial powers, appreciation of Cuban culture above American and European culture as well as the topic of race relations in Cuba.

Nuestra America begins by calling Cubans to wake up to the reality of their country's politics and be ready to fight for the collective good of Cuba. "Whatever is left of that sleepy hometown in America must awaken. These are not times for going to bed in a sleeping cap but...with our weapons for a pillow, weapons of the mind which vanquish all others" (Martí). As Martí identifies in the aforementioned quote, the weapons needed for this war for Cuban independence does not solely represent physical weapons, but also ideological weapons in the form of ideas, thoughts and beliefs. He urges the populations of Latin American nations to unite against the invasion of "giants with seven-league boots", referring to the United States. Martí emphasizes through this essay, the need for governments formed by locals of the respective

countries, as opposed to governance by foreign entities. “He who would govern well must attend closely to the place being governed...The government must arise from the country. The government’s spirit must be the spirit of the country. The government’s form must be in harmony with the country’s natural constitution” (Martí). José Martí was adamant that European and U.S. powers were not adequately qualified to manage the affairs of Cuba. He believed that Cuba should be governed by Cubans since they were well acquainted with the issues faced by the population. “No Yankee or European book could furnish the key to the Hispano-American enigma” (Martí). He also believed that a locally elected government would act in the best interest of the country and not with capitalist interests in mind like foreign powers have done historically.

Just as he viewed foreign governance of Cuba with disdain, Martí also rejected the cultural elements of the U.S and European countries that were becoming increasingly present in Cuban society. “Our young men go out into the world wearing Yankee or French-coloured glasses, and aspire to govern by guesswork over a country about which they know nothing” (Martí). He believed that the schools, institutions and media of a country must reflect the people of that country and not an Americanized or Europeanized version. “In the newspapers, the lecture halls and the academies, the study of the country’s real factors must advance” (Martí). The patriot also encouraged his fellow Cubans to show a greater appreciation for the attributes and charms of their motherland, even if it was not considered to be as elite or flashy as those of foreign countries. This was represented in the essay by Martí’s statement “Make wine from plantains. It may be sour, but it is our wine!”

The topic of race relations constituted another noteworthy, yet contentious segment of Martí’s *Nuestra America*. Martí believed that racial unity was of paramount importance in

Cuba's fight for independence and as such, the need for harmony among all races is emphasized throughout the essay. "Anyone who promotes and disseminates opposition or hatred among races is committing a sin against humanity". At the time, the enslavement of Africans was still very much a reality in Cuba and discrimination on the basis of race was rampant. Some argue that this racial tension was a contributing factor to the failure of the Ten Years War, a previous war in the fight towards Cuban independence. Following the slave rebellions and the revolution in Haiti, many creoles (persons of Spanish or European descent in Cuba) were fearful that the large number of blacks in the rebel army "cast abolition as the twin goal of independence and were radicalizing the social vision of the independence movement" (Hatfield 194). This sheds some light as to why Martí viewed racial unity as such an important part of the revolution's success. However, not all of Martí's views on race relations were met with positive feedback. In *Nuestra America*, Martí states "There is no racial hatred because there are no races". According to Hatfield, "Martí's new language of national identity- in which 'Cuban' means more than white, more than mulatto, more than Negro- denies the very grounds on which the question of Cuba's racial composition might be posed in favour of an all-inclusive *Cubanidad* constituted not by identity (black, white or mulatto) but instead by ideology (what you believe and whether or not you support Cuba's cause for independence)" (195).

The Montecristi Manifesto

The Montecristi Manifesto is considered to be one of the most important documents of the Cuban Revolution and consequently the Cuban War of Independence (1895-1898). The war began on February 24th 1895 but José Martí was still in Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic) in a town called Montecristi. It was there that Martí, in his role as Delegate of the Cuban Revolutionary Party, co-signed the Manifesto of Montecristi with Máximo Gómez, a Dominican Major General who served as the military commander in the Cuban war of Independence. The Manifesto, signed and issued on March 25th 1895, addressed the Cuban people and outlined the policy and the objectives of the Cuban liberation movement and the War of Independence. “In this document...Martí reaffirmed the right of Cuba to obtain, through self-sacrifice and determination, its freedom and independence from Spain” (Suchlicki 31). The Manifesto of Montecristi held great political and historical significance in the Cuban fight for independence but also served as an ideological weapon against Spanish colonial rule as well as the impending threat of American imperialism.

The Montecristi Manifesto highlighted the importance of mutual respect for Spaniards who did not object to the Cuban’s fight for Independence. Martí wrote “This is not a war against the Spaniard, who, secure among his own children and in his deference to the patria they win for themselves, will enjoy, respected and even beloved, the liberty that will sweep away only those imprudent individuals who seek to block its path”. Even during the process of fighting for the liberation of Cuba, Martí placed high value on the respect of the lives of others and encourages his compatriots to do the same and calling them to let good sense prevail over hatred. He does however go on to state that those Spaniards who do oppose the fight against Spanish colonialism

in Cuba should be met with a fitting response. “If they do not mistreat us, we will not mistreat them. If they show respect, we will respect them. The blade is answered with the blade, and friendship is answered with friendship”.

The topic of race was also featured in this document, describing the roles to be played by the Cuban population in the war of independence. Martí called Cubans of all races to join forces as one Cuban nation and fight to liberate their homeland. Martí refers to the unfounded and unjustified fear of Negroes, instilled in Cuba by the Spaniards with the intention of creating division amongst Cubans and thus weakening their strength in revolting against Spanish rule. This was a tool used by the Spanish regime to create fear surrounding the blacks and thus reduce the chances of any revolutionary action by the Cuban people, with the example of the Haitian Revolution of 1791 in the not-so-distant past. However, Martí was determined to destroy this untrue and divisive stigma through his words in the Montecristi Manifesto. “Only those who hate the black see hatred in the black, and those who traffic in such unjust fears do so in order to subjugate the hands that could be raised to expel the corrupting occupier from Cuban soil”.

The Manifesto of Montecristi is only one of the many writings of José Martí that played an integral role in the Cuban Independence War of 1895. Martí hoped that through the combined efforts of Cubans on the island as well as those who constituted the diaspora of Cuban exiles, the Spanish colonial regime in Cuba would be dismantled. In its place, Martí envisioned a new Cuba that prioritized the specific needs of the Cuban people through a locally elected, democratic government. “The patria must be constituted in viable forms, forms born of itself, so that a government without reality or sanction does not lead it into biases or tyranny”.

CHAPTER 3: José Martí's Involvement in Cuban Politics

The previous chapter of this research project discussed the influence of José Martí's literary works on the Cuban liberation movement and the subsequent Cuban Independence War. This chapter will examine the involvement of Martí himself, and his influence on the politics of Cuba. As mentioned before, José Martí was introduced to the Cuban political issues from a very early age, mostly thanks to Rafael Mendive, an author and teacher at the Rafael Maria Mendive Colegio de San Pablo, where Martí was a student. Mendive became a mentor to Martí and introduced him to the political and social issues faced by Cuba during that time. Over the course of his lifetime Martí was dedicated to the cause of liberating Cuba from Spanish colonial rule as well as avoiding US annexation of Cuba. "Martí's political ideology pointed to the suppression of the Spanish colonial system and the establishment of a Republican type of government in Cuba...It would be the fatherland where everyone could live in peace with freedom and justice –a nation based on law, order and the hard work of its inhabitants" (Suchlicki 33). Through his efforts and his contributions towards Cuban independence, Martí became known as 'the founding father of Cuban Independence' and the 'Apostle of Cuban Independence' and his political ideology has continued to influence the political landscape of Cuba even after his death.

Cuba's Fight for Independence

In 1868, Martí was sentenced to six months of hard labour in a Cuban prison as a result of his political activities and ideas which were deemed to be anti-Spanish and treasonous. Martí was later deported to Spain in 1871 where he continued studying and received degrees in both law and liberal arts. Martí also travelled to several other countries before returning to Cuba in 1878, but was again deported to Spain in 1879 as a result of his continued political activities against Spanish rule in Cuba. Despite not being able to reside in Cuba, Martí's remained steadfast in his desire to help Cuba achieve independence. With this in mind, in 1892, Martí created the Cuban Revolutionary Party (El Partido Revolucionario de Cuba) to aid in this goal.

The foundation for the Cuban Revolutionary Party, came from a set of resolutions previously written by José Martí and outlined the purposes and aims of the Party. These resolutions, also called articles, included "complete independence for Cuba and Puerto Rico", "establishing democracy capable of defeating, through real work and the equilibrium of social forces, the dangers of sudden freedom in a society reared for slavery", and "to disseminate the knowledge of the spirit and method of the revolution in Cuba, and to create in the inhabitants of the island a favorable disposition toward a revolutionary victory, which would not place Cuban lives in unnecessary jeopardy" (Suchlicki 30). Martí also stated that the articles of the Cuban Revolutionary Party were "established to remedy past mistakes...and to assure the continuous intervention of the Cuban people in the control of its own affairs" (Suchlicki 30). José Martí was elected 'delegado' (delegate) of the Cuban Revolutionary Party and was charged with mobilizing Cuban forces in their fight for independence.

From the formation of the party in 1892 to 1895, Martí spearheaded the operations of the Party and was able to organize forces to begin the Cuban revolution and the war of independence. In New York, Martí planned the invasion of Cuba by the Cuban Revolutionary Party and left New York for Santo Domingo on January 31st, 1895, and later arrived in Cuba. Led by the Major General Máximo Gómez, Cuban revolutionary troops began their war against the Spanish troops in February of 1895. Máximo Gómez suggested that as the delegate of the Cuban Revolutionary Party, Martí should not personally participate in the war, but Martí insisted that he would be a part of the revolution. “And so, unwilling to stand on the sidelines while others risked their lives, Martí chose spontaneously to lead by example, thus leaving his own death as the greatest, highest model of Cuban patriotism and nationalist ardor” (Lopez 268). On May 19th, 1895 the Cuban revolutionary forces were ambushed in Dos Ríos by Spanish military forces that were significantly larger in number. José Martí joined with his compatriots in fighting against the Spanish soldiers but he was shot by a Spanish adversary. Unfortunately, this proved to be fatal for Martí, and his body was immediately taken by Spanish soldiers. The death of Martí positioned him as a martyr for the independence movement but also caused great disarray and a loss of morale for the Cuban revolutionary troops and created an opening for the U.S military to intervene.

Despite the best efforts of Martí and the Cuban Revolutionary Party to gain Cuba’s independence from Spain without U.S intervention, after the death of the legendary patriot, the United States did intervene, demanding the withdrawal of the Spanish forces and supporting Cuba’s right for independence. The Cuban War of Independence thus evolved into the Spanish-American War in April, 1898. After being engaged in war for the past few years with the Cuban revolutionary forces, the Spanish army had been significantly weakened and not prepared to face

the might of the United States' military forces and by July of 1898, the United States' military came out victorious against Spain's military forces. To signify the official end of the Spanish-American War, the Treaty of Paris was signed on the 10th of December, 1898.

Through the Treaty of Paris, Spanish forces finally withdrew from Cuba. Puerto Rico and Guam were also ceded to the United States, and they purchased the Philippines from Spain for 20 million. Additionally, although Cuba gained its independence from Spain at the end of the Spanish-American War in 1898, Cuba became a protectorate of the United States. This allowed the U.S government to intervene in the international and domestic affairs of Cuba for the purpose of safeguarding and maintaining Cuban independence. An amendment to the U.S. declaration of war against Spain stated that the U.S. "disclaims any disposition of intention to exercise sovereignty, jurisdiction, or control over said island except for pacification thereof, and asserts its determination, when that is accomplished, to leave the government and control of the island to its people". Cuba formally gained its independence from the U.S on May 20th, 1902, but the Platt Amendment which followed, imposed several stipulations on Cuba and was drafted into the constitution of Cuba. These stipulations allowed the U.S to buy land to establish naval bases in Cuba as well as to intervene in Cuban affairs if ever Cuba's independence was threatened. The Platt Amendment was eventually annulled in 1934, but the United States continue to have a naval base in operation in Cuba today.

José Martí's Memory in Cuban Politics

José Martí dedicated his life to the cause of Cuban independence from Spain and worked incessantly towards this cause. Unfortunately, Martí died in 1895 during the Cuban Revolutionary War, just seven years before Cuban independence was achieved. Even though Martí was not able to see his dream of an independent Cuba come true during his lifetime, his years of work towards independence movement as well as his writings laid the foundation for the revolution and the eventual independence of Cuba from Spanish colonial rule. “Martí’s death represented a tremendous blow to the morale of the revolution; his voice was not to be heard again, but his writings and ideas remained to be studied by the following generations” (Suchlicki 31). The memory of Martí as a figure of great importance in the fight for independence has been used by many Cuban politicians that succeeded him, to promote their own political agendas. Martí’s name had been used by Cuban presidents such as Estrada Palma and Fulgencio Batista to gain the favour of Cuban citizens who had a high level of reverence and respect for José Martí, “as the very spirit of their national identity” (Santí 141). Another Cuban president whose political ideology was heavily influenced by the writings and ideas of Martí is Fidel Castro. Castro adapted and modified Martí’s writings and ideas to promote his communist agenda and to convince the Cuban people that his ideology was in line with that of the national hero.

One of the major tenets of José Martí’s political ideology was the concept of democracy. Martí resented the fact that Cuba was being ruled by Spain during the colonial era. This resentment was the driving force behind his political involvement and his desire to gain Cuban independence. Martí envisioned a republican style of government where Cuba would be governed by a democratically-elected local government that would put the interests of the Cuban

citizens at the forefront of their political activities. “Martí was a firm believer in democracy and in periodic elections... He felt that elections were fundamental for the preservation of democracy and warned against ambitious men, who wanted, through flattery and empty promises to the voters, to perpetuate themselves in power” (Suchlicki 33). When Martí created the Cuban Revolutionary Party, he indicated that the role of Delegate would be determined by democratic elections.

These views of José Martí were distorted by Fidel Castro, who used pieces of Martí’s ideology to advance his own ideas of what Cuban government should be. Castro used the creation of the Cuban Revolutionary Party to validate his single party system of governance. Under Castro regime, a communist model of governance was implemented. Critics of the Castro regime demanded that a multi- party system be established but Castro’s rebuttal was that there would only be one party since the ‘Apostle of Cuban independence’ had created only one party in the fight to achieve independence. The Cuban Revolutionary Party was created with the intention of uniting Cubans to achieve a common goal. Conversely, Castro’s motive behind the single party was to avoid opposition and to be able to impose his communist ideals regardless of the population’s views, thus creating a dictatorship.

While some may argue that both Martí and Castro shared a longing for an idealized ‘patria’, Martí firmly denounced any desire for Cuba to be a socialist or communist state. “Perhaps fearing a misunderstanding of his political ideas, Martí clearly indicated his repudiation of a socialist system for Cuba. Marquez Sterling cites Martí’s words to the effect that “the man who now wants to be taken care of by the state, will have to work on everything that the state orders him to do” ” (Lecuona 56). Lecuona confirms this statement of Martí claiming that

“Under Castro’s Cuba today, that is precisely what the Cuban man has become: a slave of the Cuban communist state. Nothing could be further from José Martí’s vision of a free Cuba.” (56). As stated by Ripoll, “Martí’s democratic vocation not only inclined him towards pluralism, but demanded it” (21). Nonetheless, Castro repeatedly mentioned Martí and used his writings to justify his political activities and to paint himself as a political hero like Martí in the eyes of the Cuban people. In Fidel Castro’s *History Will Absolve Me*, he writes “we have grown up hearing of liberty, justice and human rights...Céspedes, Agramonte, Maceo, Gomez and Martí were the first names engraved on our minds”. López argues that “By invoking the name of Martí and other Cuban patriots, Castro is clearly positioning his rebellion within the tradition of Cuban nationalism associated with those names” (148). The Cuban Communist Party even created an institution, The Center for Martí Studies. Santí describes the purpose of this institution as being “To appropriate Martí, to promote the interpretation of his works from the vantage point of Marxism-Leninism, and implicitly to legitimize the current Cuban government in terms of Martí’s thought” (142).

Martí’s views on U.S imperialism as well as the involvement of the United States in Cuban politics constitute another point of contention with regards to its adaptation by the Castro regime. Initially, Martí regarded the U.S capitalist society with admiration, given all that it had been able to achieve. Martí later began to notice the downfalls of placing excessive importance on wealth and this informed his opinion of the United States. “They cannot honestly believe that excess individualism and reverence for wealth are preparing the United States to be the typical nation of liberty” (Suchlicki 34). While Martí did not want Cuba to fall prey to the negative aspects of a capitalist society, he also did not condone communism. “Martí was a firm believer in individual initiative, private property and honest profit” (Suchlicki 34). Fidel Castro manipulated

Martí's views on U.S. capitalism to suggest that communism was the answer to this issue. By highlighting Martí's unfavourable views on this matter, Castro tried to bolster his own political ideology in the eyes of the Cuban population. In a similar manner, Castro took Martí's desire to achieve independence without the intervention of the United States and used this to defend his own anti-American views. Lecuona writes that "Martí's position vis-à-vis the United States and Spain was merely an extension of his overall political philosophy, which calls for a free Cuba: free from the United States, free from Spain, and free from anyone else...including the Soviet Union. Fidel Castro's political views and behaviour...have totally subordinated the people of Cuba to the ultimate power of the Soviet Union" (57). Therefore, although both Martí and Castro had reservations about U.S. involvement in Cuba, Martí's views on the matter are in no way equal to the views of Castro. Castro used Martí's reservations about the United States in Cuba to stir fear into the minds of the Cuban people and fuel his own anti-U.S. agenda.

CONCLUSION

José Martí has been called ‘The Apostle of Cuban Independence’, ‘The Founding Father of Cuban Independence’ and ‘The Christ of the Americas’. His life’s goal was to lead his beloved country, Cuba, towards liberation and achieve its independence from Spain. José Martí was killed in Dos Rios on the frontlines of the Cuban War of Independence in 1895, and died at the premature age of 42. Although his life was cut short, Martí spent almost the entirety of his lifetime fiercely dedicated to his goal of defending his country’s independence from colonial rule. As well as being a devout patriot and political activist, Martí was also an author, whose literary works, from the very beginning highlighted the issues faced by Cuba as well as Martí’s longing for a free Cuba.

As a result of the strong foundation laid by Martí and other Cuban patriots in the Cuban Revolutionary Party, as well as the eventual intervention by the United States military, Cuba was able to achieve its independence from Spain in 1898. However, the United States’ continued involvement in Cuban affairs even after the withdrawal of the Spanish forces from the island stood in the path of the free Cuba that Martí envisioned. In fact, the ideal Cuba that Martí so passionately fought for is still not a reality today. Martí saw liberty from any foreign powers as well as democracy in Cuba’s governance as integral factors for the ideal Cuban society. However, under the Castro communist regime, these Martíán principles were not prioritized.

Over the course of the years following the Cuban War of Independence and the Spanish American War, Martí has been recognized as a legendary patriot and has been praised for all of his contributions to Cuban independence. His name as well as his many writings has been heavily used by politicians and public figures to advance their own political causes and to

influence the Cuban population. This has proven to be both positive and negative as Martí's writings and ideologies have been interpreted in various ways and manipulated by those who succeeded him to bolster and lend credibility to their agendas even when they were vastly different from what José Martí intended for Cuba.

The incredibly good standing of José Martí during his lifetime has allowed the mere mention of his name to evoke a sense of national pride and unity in the hearts of Cubans even to this day. His memory has been kept alive in Cuba, Latin America and by extension, throughout the world. In the United States, a bronze statue of José Martí, mounted on a horse, sits in the famous Central Park. Additionally, the José Martí Park in Tampa, Florida is actually owned by the Cuban government and contains soil from each province in Cuba. The José Martí Memorial located in Plaza de la Revolucion Square, the tallest structure in Havana, Cuba as well as The José Martí Military Technical Institute serve as constant reminders of José Martí in Cuba. One of Cuba's airports in Havana is also named after the poet; José Martí International Airport. Recently, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Cuba developed a vaccine which was named the Abdala vaccine, drawing reference to José Martí's first poem Abdala. The effect that José Martí and his efforts towards independence in Cuba have been undeniably tremendous. Though he died before he was able to see this dream become a reality, the independence of Cuba may not have been achieved, if not for the years of dedication and determination to the cause by patriots such as Martí. In the words of Martí, "Men of action, above all those whose actions are guided by love, live forever".

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APPENDICES



Appendix A- Image showing the José Martí Monument in Havana, Cuba



Appendix B- Image showing a statue of José Martí in the José Martí Park in Tampa, Florida.



Appendix C- Image showing a statue of José Martí in Central Park in the United States.