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**Writing Race:
Patria, Mestizaje and Racial Identity in the Works of
José Martí**

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is entirely my own work. Ideas and passages reproduced from other sources have been properly acknowledged. The thesis has not been submitted for any other professional degree or qualification.



Oleski José Miranda Navarro
Edinburgh
1 May 2016

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Abstract

The research herein presents an analysis of the evolution of José Martí's racial thought throughout his written work. The principle focus of this investigation is to establish a comprehensive understanding of Martí's racial ideas and to explain how the author developed the anti-racist principles demonstrated in his final years of life. The thesis proposes that José Martí's ideas regarding race relations were shaped through a gradual process defined by his experiences of exile. To illustrate this position, I present a chronological mapping of his political and racial ideas, ranging from his early writings as a youth (1869), when he established his anti-colonial position against Spain, stretching forward through the end of his life, when Martí's staunch position against racism was most visible in the context of his writings (1892-1895) in preparation for the war of Cuban independence. This research also reflects on how the Cuban author's use of race and racism functioned as a principle node to address and promote change concerning political and social contradictions then present in Cuba, Hispanic America and the United States.

To understand the process of the construction of José Martí's racial position, texts he published during his stay in countries with a large indigenous presence, such as Mexico and Guatemala (1875-1878), are analysed. Additionally, the articles, essays and chronicles written by the author on the subject of race during his fifteen-year stay in the United States (1880-1895) are examined, as racial conflict was a prominent issue in political and national debates of the time. The thesis also focuses on the period of organisation and political activism when Martí presented his model for Cuba as a *patria libre*, defined by the heightened participation of Blacks and mullatos. My examination also focuses on Martí's 1891 proposal to adopt mestizaje as a regional identity, taking into account the ideological environment of the late eighteen hundreds, which was dominated by Positivism and Liberalism in Hispanic American governments and by economic expansionism in the United States. This study thus provides an approach to understanding the development of José Martí's racial thinking over the course of his lifetime, demonstrating how his racial ideas were defined and influenced by national and regional contexts, as well as by dominant ideologies, and proposes that Martí's views regarding race came about as a result of the author's intellectual and experiential progression, as opposed to being the result of a lifelong anti-colonial stance.

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Introduction

‘La raza es un altar de comunión: y quien la niega, o la desconoce, o la vicia o se quiere salir de ella, -desertor es,-traidor como el que pliega la bandera y huye ante el enemigo en hora de batalla, o se pasa a sus huestes.’

La biblioteca americana, *La América*. Nueva York, enero de 1883
José Martí

‘No hay odio de razas, porque no hay razas.’

Nuestra América, *El Partido Liberal*, México, 30 de enero de 1891
José Martí

The first time I came across the work of José Martí was in the latter years of primary school when his story *Tres héroes* was printed in a provincial Sunday magazine insert for a local Venezuelan newspaper. *Tres héroes* had been part of the Cuban author’s magazine for children, *La edad de oro*, originally published by Martí from New York in 1889. At first, the story aroused my curiosity because it began with a well-known anecdote about a traveller who, immediately after arriving in Venezuela, asked for neither lodging nor food, but rather to see Bolívar’s statue. The text served as a vehicle through which Martí depicted the lives of three iconographic continental figures: Simón Bolívar, Miguel Hidalgo and José de San Martín ‘a los niños de América’¹. Even though *Tres héroes* was written for children, it was full of abstract ideas and axioms otherwise difficult for young minds to grasp. I recall that one particular passage, exemplified through the Mexican *prócer*, caught my attention: ‘Desde niño fue el cura Hidalgo de la raza buena: de los que quieren saber. Los que no quieren saber son de la raza mala’.² In those terms, the Cuban author articulated a moral system of good and

¹ The magazine cover was engraved with the following caption: ‘La edad de oro, publicación mensual de recreo e instrucción dedicada a los niños de América’. See José Martí, ‘La edad de oro’, in *Teatro, novela, la edad de oro*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), XVIII, 295–503 (p. 299).

² José Martí, ‘Tres héroes’, in *Teatro, novela, la edad de oro*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), XVIII, 304–8 (p. 306).

evil that made me wish to be among those children of the good race, ‘de los que quieren saber’.

Many years after my childhood introduction to the work of José Martí, there arose the motivation for this thesis, which examines and discusses an issue confronted by the writer throughout his lifetime: that of race. Altogether, this study germinates from my interest in the writings of the Hispano-American essayist and the importance that the question of race held during the process of national construction throughout the Americas during the nineteenth century. Specifically, it was a reading of the brief, but well-known text from his later years, *Mi raza* (1893), which reignited my interest in the work of José Martí. Despite the short format of the text, Martí manages to deploy a complex and profound discussion of race relations and inclusion on the island of Cuba, his birthplace. In the eye of critics and scholars, *Mi raza*, alongside other texts published in the newspaper *Patria*, established Martí as a nineteenth century thinker who defined and held an anti-racist position at a time when positivist racist theories dominated the continental intellectual landscape.

The Cuban writer produced an extensive body of work developing and defining his ideas regarding race, not only from the Spanish American perspective but also from the standpoint of a political exile that spent more than half of his lifetime outside of Cuba, including a decade and half in the United States. Accordingly, this thesis seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of Martí’s racial thought; its evolutive process of development; its manifestation throughout his body of written work; and how Martí’s anti-racist principles were transformed as a result of his political struggles. Although Martí was not alone in placing great importance on issues of race during this period, the historical context and particular circumstances that framed the development of his thinking were exceptional. When taking a comprehensive look at Martí’s position on race, it is evident that his thinking transformed to the extent that it involved political discourse against the exclusive social structures of the colonial system still in play in Cuba and the free republics where he lived in exile. It can also be argued that the marked anti-racism the writer developed in his later years was the result of his political and social horizons being

broadened through the exile experience, culminating with the need to establish a post-racial society in his native Cuba. Martí utilised the question of race as one of the main nodes to address and promote change in political contradictions, social problems and unbalanced economic policies that prevailed in nineteenth century Cuba, Hispanic America and the United States.

An example of José Martí's most radical racial views can be found in his renowned essay *Nuestra América*, published in New York and Mexico in 1891. His famous statement: 'No hay odio de razas, porque no hay razas' was followed by a vibrant critique of the principles promoted by racial thinkers of the period: 'Los pensadores canijos, los pensadores de lámparas, enhebran y recalientan las razas de librerías'.³ With this idea, the author identified pseudo-scientific racist theories based on formulae constructed in texts but negated by nature. The author further emphasised his position, declaring: 'El alma emana, igual y eterna, de los cuerpos diversos en forma y color. Peca contra la humanidad el que fomente y propague la oposición y el odio de las razas'.⁴ Martí used this decree as a device to suggest that men have a universal identity, namely humanity, and that accordingly, race should be acknowledged as an artificial conception.

At an early stage in the planning of Cuba's fight for independence, Martí was convinced, as evidenced through private communication with Antonio Maceo, mulatto leader of the Cuban revolution, that in Cuba's case, fraternity between races could be achieved only through social recognition: 'a mis ojos no está el problema cubano en la solución política, sino en la social, y cómo ésta no puede lograrse sino con aquel amor y perdón mutuos de una y otra raza'.⁵ Martí's anti-racist and anti-discriminatory position, his focus beginning in the 1890s, was also based on his critique of the term 'racist', as expressed in the short but dense essay *Mi raza*: 'Esa de racista está siendo una palabra confusa, y hay que ponerla en claro. El hombre no tiene ningún derecho especial porque pertenezca a una

³ José Martí, 'Nuestra América', in *Nuestra América I*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), VI, 15–23 (p. 22).

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁵ José Martí, 'Carta a Antonio Maceo', in *Cuba, política y revolución I, 1869-1892*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), I, 171–73 (p. 172).

raza u otra: dígase hombre, y ya se dicen todos los derechos'.⁶ Therein, the Cuban writer negated the biological superiority of one race over another, a position predicated by emerging scientific, social and biological intellectual discourse during that period. Common perceptions of race generally relate to skin colour and physical characteristics, whilst other conceptions relate race to social groups based on origins and cultural elements, such as language and geography. In the context of preparation for *La Guerra Necesaria* (1895-1898) to liberate Cuba from Spain and to avoid the annexation of the looming, expansionistic United States, Martí recognised that the concept of race was a constructed intellectual notion developed as an instrument to justify colonialism and imperialism.

Whilst the excerpts mentioned above have prompted a great deal of academic discourse around the author's racial work, both in the context in which they arose as well as in the powerful message they promoted, it has been remarkable to discover what little research there is concerning how Martí developed such a radical position regarding the question of race when racism prevailed as an historical value throughout his lifetime. This is especially the case when considering that his ideas were presented during the latter half of the nineteenth century, when racial diagnoses influenced by European positivist values emerged as a means by which to explain the roots of social, economic and cultural problems in the region.⁷

The research compiled herein contributes to the understanding of Martí's racial thought within the historical milieu, whilst also demonstrating the chronological formation of his ideas on the subject of race over time. The development of this investigation is historic in the sense that it delineates, through the use of writings and events occurring during the second part of the nineteenth century, how Martí built his extensive, but intermittently crafted, racial position through observation, written work and life activities. The body of research presented here takes into account the influence his experiences as a

⁶ José Martí, 'Mi raza', in *Cuba, política y revolución II, 1892-1893*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), II, 298–300 (p. 298).

⁷ To expand on the subject see Martin Stabb, *In Quest of Identity: Patterns in the Spanish American Essay of Ideas, 1890-1960* (Durham: University of North Carolina Press, 1967) and Michael Aronna, '*Pueblos enfermos*': *The Discourse of Illness in the Turn-of-the-Century Spanish and Latin American Essay* (Chapel Hill: U.N.C. Department of Romance Languages, 1999).

youth in exile had on the development of his conception of *patria* whilst also analysing the influence that period of Martí's life had on the evolution of the Cuban intellectual's moral and ethical positions regarding race. The study begins with a discussion of the anti-colonial stance Martí established as an adolescent and follows with his vision of the indigenous, closing with the significant socio-political proposals drafted in the final fifteen years of his life, including his call for identity based on the plural paradigm of *mestizaje* and represented in his notion of *hispanoamericanismo*.

This thesis shadows the approach of historical sociological studies as defined by Theda Skocpol, drawing from the following characteristics: they analyse social constructions or methods understood as being concretely positioned within place and time; they confront practices over time, assigning temporal categorisations of utmost importance when assessing outcome; the majority of historical examinations concentrate on the relationship between significant actions and organisational contexts, as a way to assign meaning to the unfolding of both intended and accidental outcomes in singular lives and social adaptations; finally, historical sociological investigations focus on the specific and variable characteristics of unambiguous types of social constructions and patterns of adjustment.⁸ The primary sources for my investigation are twenty-six years of written work produced by José Martí, beginning with his early texts from 1869 and concluding with his final writings from the year of his death, 1895. The focal point of these written accounts is Martí's demonstrated interest in the subject of race and its connection with other related topics, such as slavery, exclusion, colonialism, assimilation and progress. The bulk of Martí's writings, with the exception of his first texts published during adolescence and his final texts penned before his death, were written and published outside of Cuba, counting works produced in Spain, Mexico, Guatemala, Venezuela and the United States of America. José Martí lived - and made a living - as a writer in those countries, whilst also developing other roles during his period of exile, including teacher, political organiser, journalist and diplomat. The mapping and contextualisation of this process of literary production, shaped during specific moments in the life of the Cuban author, suggests that it is possible, employing an historical

⁸ Theda Skocpol, 'Sociology's Historical Imagination', in *Vision and Method in Historical Sociology*, ed. by Theda Skocpol (Cambridge [Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 1–21 (p. 1).

sociological approach, to understand the influence of sociocultural environment on the ideas Martí constructed concerning the theme of race.

Fernando Ortiz, referencing Martí's work regarding race, indicated that the author's view on the subject 'no es un tratado didáctico, ni siquiera una faena sistemática, sino una producción fragmentaria y dispersa'.⁹ Ortiz's words are precise in this regard as the racial theme in Martí's texts is dispersed throughout the corpus of his work. In fact, the use of the term was employed arbitrarily throughout his writings to refer to groups of people, such as 'la raza indígena',¹⁰ 'los cubanos blancos',¹¹ 'la raza negra',¹² 'raza de color',¹³ 'razas mestizas'¹⁴ or 'raza hispanoamericana',¹⁵ to name a few examples. Indeed, 'race' has always been a very complex idea to assert, given the fact that it is not a neutral concept. From an anthropological standpoint, Peter Wade has suggested that the endeavour of defining race is almost impossible to accomplish.¹⁶ Acknowledging the epistemological and ethical implications encompassed in the subject, Wade's explanation of the impossibility of defining race has validity. However, 'race' is a meaningful and powerful idea that has been interpreted and applied in many ways and circumstances. Early in the 1940s, American anthropologist Ruth Benedict, in what she called 'a briefest possible definition of race,' explained the idea in terms of 'a classification based of traits that are hereditary'.¹⁷ Although she recognised the hereditary factor as a main aspect of the question of race, Benedict was very concerned that an important part of the misunderstanding when discussing race was due to confusing hereditary traits with those that are socially acquired. Indeed, in the past two hundred years 'race' has been related to and explained through varied notions, such as

⁹ Fernando Ortiz, 'Martí y las razas de librería', *Anales de La Universidad de Chile*, 89 (1953), 117–30 (p. 119).

¹⁰ José Martí, 'Manifiesto de Montecristi', in *Cuba, política y revolución IV, 1895*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), IV, 93–101 (p. 95).

¹¹ Martí, 'Manifiesto de Montecristi', p. 97.

¹² José Martí, 'El Plato de lentejas', in *Cuba, política y revolución III, 1894*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), III, 26–30 (p. 26).

¹³ José Martí, 'Sobre negros y blancos', in *Cuba, política y revolución III, 1894*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), III, 80–82 (p. 82).

¹⁴ José Martí, 'La protesta de Thomasville', in *Cuba, política y revolución III, 1894*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), III, 62–63 (p. 62).

¹⁵ José Martí, 'Nuestro comercio suramericano', in *Nuestra América III*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1992), VIII, 77–81 (p. 79).

¹⁶ Peter Wade, *Race, Nature and Culture, An Anthropological Perspective* (London: Pluto Press, 2002), p. 12.

¹⁷ Ruth Benedict, *Race and Racism* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1951), p. 6.

species, nation or ethnicity. Naomi Zack infers from the standpoint of the philosophy of sciences that 'race' means 'a biological taxonomy or set of physical categories that can be used consistently and informatively to describe, explain and make predictions about groups or human beings and individual members of those groups'.¹⁸ Clearly, Zack presents an instrumental definition, but her arguments are accompanied by the indication that race has been, at different times and in different combinations, connected to the notion of essences, biology or geography, drawing some similarities between her approach and that of José Martí.

For the purpose of this thesis, seventy texts have been selected from José Martí's diverse writings, including correspondences, chronicles, essays, articles, dramas and poetry. In each text chosen for analysis, his interest on the subject of race is addressed in one form or another. As a means to complement this investigation, the secondary sources I have selected are defined as those historical works addressing relevant socio-political aspects of the nineteenth century, such as the theme of race and its connection with the system of colonial domination; the process of Cuban independence; and, amongst other factors, dominant Hispanic American ideologies of the time. The thesis that follows is comprised of five chapters organised to chart a general, though not strictly, chronological structure mapping the development of José Martí's racial principles over time and place. Focusing on his childhood and adolescence in Cuba and Spain from 1853 to 1874, the first chapter emphasises how biographers and academics have interpreted the roots of his anti-slavery ideology and his commitment to racial equality. Diverging from the opinions they offer, I sustain in this section that the Cuban author's manifestations in favour of the rights of Blacks and against slavery, resulted from a maturing intellectual experience acquired during his years spent in exile. I include in this chapter an analysis of race relations in Cuba during the nineteenth century, as well as a synthesis of the events and influences that shaped Martí's early life and defined a great portion of his anti-colonial and anti-slavery tenets. This portion of the investigation relies heavily on historical analysis to elucidate the social and political realities of mid-nineteenth century Cuba, placing special emphasis on Martí's imprisonment and exile to Spain as the first nodes in training and shaping the Cuban

¹⁸ Naomi Zack, *Philosophy of Science and Race* (New York: Routledge, 2002), p.1.

writer's intellectual development. Finally, Martí's increased political activism, in the form of written demonstrations against the colony, is considered, placing a critical focus on *Abdala* (1869); the development of Martí's conception of *patria*; and on *El presidio político en Cuba* (1871), amongst other early texts.

Chapter two examines the Cuban writer's initial reflections on indigenous issues. His first comments regarding *los indigenas* were made in Mexico in 1875, when he returned to Hispanic America after four years of exile in Spain. Martí lived in Mexico and Guatemala between 1875 and 1878 and published a number of written accounts regarding the indigenous in newspapers in both countries. He also produced a play, *Patria y Libertad, drama indio* (1877) and the booklet *Guatemala* (1878), both of which examined the indigenous issue from the vantage point of his experiences. Also analysed in chapter two is the liberal ideological position Martí shared with the governments of Mexico and Guatemala, identifying homogenisation and assimilation as the solution to the indigenous' social and economic stagnation. This section of my research also focuses heavily on the genesis of Martí's perceptions of the indigenous, demarcating the influence that Martí's exile and travel in the Americas had on the progression of his work and the development of his racial thought.

The third chapter encompasses a discussion of Martí's period in the United States, framing the years from 1882 to 1890, when the U.S. was his home. It was during this period that the chronicles and articles specifically addressing his perceptions of the racial situation in the United States were authored. Here I explore the Cuban author's reflections regarding European and Asian immigration, a matter of major impact on the reconfiguration of the social and cultural national landscape of the U.S. at the time. Also discussed in this chapter are Martí's observations and representations of the indigenous population of the United States, whose status he evaluated through critiques of governmental policies; discussions of their situation; and explorations of their cultures. Similarly, I review the discussion posed by Martí regarding the problems of Blacks as free men and the political conflict between the states of the north and south. The Cuban writer presented his assessments on the subject through accounts published in *La Opinión Nacional*

in Caracas, beginning in 1882. Other texts of importance in this chapter are *El terremoto de Charleston*, published in *La Nación* of Buenos Aires in 1886, as well as three articles published in 1889 in *La Nación*, in the months of August, October and November. Analysing Martí's texts and experiences in the United States, these articles provide a clear indication of how his intellectual output and social interactions would shape and yield his reflections on race. Martí, as an interpreter of U.S. politics and culture, observed the great contradictions that race relations generated, even within the framework of a democratic and free society.

An examination of José Martí's famed essay *Nuestra América*, written in 1891, is the focus of the fourth chapter of my research. Here, I examine the proposal elucidated by Martí as a call to a continental mestizo identity and review the significance the concept of miscegenation had in the national formation processes of Hispanic American states. Martí's call for an autochthonous knowledge in *Nuestra América*, a result of the cultural mix and the racial composition in the region, as well as arguments the writer formulated in regard to the positivist ideological milieu that prevailed at the end of the nineteenth century, are also compared and contrasted in this portion of the thesis. Chapter four further functions to demonstrate how the radicalisation process for Martí's position on race began and how he redirected his criticisms against established racist ideologies in an attempt to circumvent the racism that had been instituted through colonial discourse. Hence, given the conflicting model represented in the colonial paradigm of racial division, I analyse his conception of mestizaje: a proposal articulated by the Cuban author and understood as a paradigm intended to promote racial inclusion.

Finally, chapter five focuses on the period from 1892 to 1895, exploring the thinking of a more politicised José Martí. An understanding of how Martí's condemnation of the colonialism that dominated Hispanic America and Cuba evolved into the founding of the Partido Revolucionario Cubano (PRC), an organisation that intended to organise the insurgent movement and promote racial inclusion for all Cubans, is established. Also considered in this chapter is the repeated idea of *patria* promulgated by the Cuban intellectual and its significance to his inclusion project, the newspaper *Patria*, which became

the ideological organism of the PRC. It was in this newspaper, between 1892 and 1894, that important articles, penned by Martí, promoted a discourse that would function to construct new social identities in search of the integration of races in Cuba. Using historical analysis, this portion also examines *Nuestras ideas* (1892), *Basta* (1892), *Mi raza* (1893), *El plato de lentejas* (1894), and *Manifiesto de Montecristi* (1895) to reflect on Martí's concepts of *patria* and race and how he used both concepts to promote a new social identity based on freedom and e

On Martí's racial thinking

From the 1940s there have been a vast number of articles and book chapters, and just recently completed books, written to address Martí's racial thought. Among these early works, there are writings by influential Cuban essayist Fernando Ortiz, who in 1942 published *Martí y las razas* and a decade later, in 1953, *Martí y las razas de librería*. In both works Ortiz demonstrates his admiration for the Cuban national figure by presenting an overview of the antiracial position Martí focused on during his later years. This is particularly the case in Ortiz's aforementioned 1953 essay, which depicts Martí's antiracism as genuine and recognises the role it played in helping organise the struggle for Cuba's independence. Other mid-twentieth century contributions reflecting on José Martí and race include Martin Stabb's article, *Martí and the racists*,¹⁹ which was published in 1957. In general, Stabb's article presents a position that contrasts with the pseudo-scientific thinking of Argentines Carlos Bunges and José Ingenieros, and with the *indianista* vision of Bolivian Alcides Arguedas, concluding in his text that through Martí's humanism the Cuban writer was able to question some of the racist assumptions held by his contemporaries, particularly when considering the ideological environment of late nineteenth century Latin America.

Cuban critic and essayist Roberto Fernández Retamar, who wrote *Caliban* in the early 1970s, described the search for autochthonous modernity through the antiracial, anti-colonial and anti-imperialist precepts made by Martí, within the framework of the construction of a mestizo identity proposed by the writer in his famous essay *Nuestra*

¹⁹ Martin Stabb, 'Martí and the Racist', *Hispania*, 40 (1957), 434–39.

América (1891).²⁰ Another Cuban scholar who has produced texts surveying the subject of Martí and race is Dionisio Poey Baró. In his article ‘Race’ and Anti-Racism in José Martí’s “*Mi Raza*” (1994),²¹ the author makes an historical analysis of the reasons that inspired Martí to pen *Mi Raza* in 1893, whilst also concentrating on the significance of the idea of race in Martí’s writings. In the same tradition, Leyda Oquendo, author of *José Martí: apuntes sobre su antirracismo militante*,²² focuses primarily on the discussion of the black situation in Martí’s texts. Oquendo’s article is a descriptive commentary that develops a political reflection on the validity of Martí’s antiracism, but from purely within the framework of Fidel Castro’s Cuban Revolution.

In the past decade there have been several works published by the American Academy discussing Martí’s racial ideas pertaining to the influence of his American exile, his nationalism and his anti-colonial stance. *Against Race*, a compact chapter within Oscar Montero’s biography, *José Martí an Introduction*,²³ addresses Martí’s method of reflecting on the problems and horrors of racial discrimination he observed both in the Cuba of his childhood, as well as whilst living in the United States. Montero’s work also analyses the influence of the United States on Martí’s writing and how the racism he observed in the country destroyed the democratic ideals much admired by the Cuban author. To illustrate his position, Montero describes the conditions under which the country lived during the years of post-Reconstruction, when racial apartheid gained ground. The text also focuses largely on the historical context of the time, discussing Martí’s relationship with leaders such as Antonio Maceo in the planning of Cuban independence, as well the racism proceeding U.S. intervention in Cuba. Montero’s perspective is that Martí’s position against the idea of race offered a counter image to the social fragmentation, racism and classism he observed in the United States. Lilian Guerra, in her chapter *Mystic, Messiah, and Mediator. Interpreting*

²⁰ Roberto Fernández Retamar, *Todo Caliban* (La Habana, Cuba: Fondo Cultural del Alba, 2006), pp. 43–46.

²¹ Dionisio Poey Baró, ‘Race and Anti-Racism in Jose Martí’s “Mi raza”’, *Journal Contributions in Black Studies*, 12 (1994), 55–61.

²² Leyda Oquendo, ‘José Martí apuntes sobre su antirracismo militante’, in *Raza y racismo*, ed. by Esther Pérez and Marcel Lueiro (La Habana: Editorial Caminos, 2009), pp. 261–72.

²³ Oscar Montero, ‘Against Race’, in *José Martí: An Introduction* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 59–84.

Martí through Texts and Contexts,²⁴ discusses Martí's political assessment of racial issues to achieve the unity of various groups committed to the cause of Cuban liberation. Guerra's arguments are framed on Martí's interpretation of the issue of equality, pointing out that Martí avoided the source of the problem in Cuba: 'white racism'. Guerra argues that Martí reoriented the debate on the biological inferiority of some races during the period when he published texts such as *Mi raza* and *El plato de lentejas* in the periodical *Patria*. It is evident that Martí was concerned with carefully managing the image of the political party he founded, El Partido Revolucionario Cubano, as well as with cultivating and maintaining relationships he formed with black intellectuals, leaders and minority organisations who joined the party. Through this approach, Guerra presents a coherent discussion of the strategies Martí's political project used to minimise class and race differences.

Another focal point debated by various scholars is Martí's essential *hispanicamericanismo*. Gerard Aching, in a chapter entitled *Against "Library-Shelf Races" José Martí's Critique of Excessive Imitation*,²⁵ presents an analysis of Martí's *Nuestra América*, contrasting the proposal of a racially inclusive *hispanicamericanismo* against the ethnocentric promotion of foreign values, legitimised through imitation and excessive use of cultural objects, as well as through embracing European and North American ideals. Aching discusses that this same criticism regarding the idealisation of the notion of race allowed the Cuban author to develop a modern proposal connected to nationality and regionalism. Accordingly, Aching maintains that Martí proposed the universalisation of *hispanicamericanismo*, which incorporated racial diversity through a collective 'nosotros'. In short, the idea of a mestizo *América* promoted, in theory, a state of inclusive society, but in practice, maintained the same antagonisms as a society racially divided.

Similarly, Julio Ramos' chapter entitled "*Nuestra América*": *arte del buen gobierno*,²⁶

²⁴ Lillian Guerra, 'Mystic, Messiah, and Mediator. Interpreting Martí through Texts and Contexts', in *The Myth of José Martí: Conflicting Nationalisms in Early Twentieth-Century Cuba* (Chapel Hill, N.C: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), pp. 23–45.

²⁵ Gerard Aching, 'Against "Library-Shelf Races": José Martí's Critique of Excessive Imitation', in *Geomodernisms: Race, Modernism, Modernity*, ed. by Laura Doyle and Laura A. Winkiel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), pp. 151–69.

²⁶ Julio Ramos, "'Nuestra América': arte del buen gobierno", in *Desencuentros de la modernidad en América Latina: literatura y política en el siglo XIX* (Caracas, Venezuela: Fundación Editorial El Perro y La Rana, 2009), pp. 393–

analyses Martí's proposal to understand what is defined as the Spanish American enigma. According to Ramos, the model of identity based on autochthony Martí proposed became a subaltern discourse against the modernising power of the period. At the turn of the twentieth century, Latin American societies were perceived of as sick bodies contaminated by impurities of race and by the stagnation of ethnic groups that had not yet assimilated within the liberal national projects. Ramos thus interprets the formulations created by Martí in *Nuestra América* as an inclusive project of Latin American traditional and subaltern cultures. On the other hand, Ofelia Schutte in her chapter entitled *Undoing "Race" Martí's Historical Predicament*,²⁷ takes on the difficult task of defining the Cuban author's conclusion regarding how to move beyond a historically oppressive paradigm such as the one promoted through racial division. Taking into account only two of his texts, *Nuestra América* and *Mi raza*, Schutter claims that Martí managed to find a new symbolic order to reject colonial race ideologies, which positioned one race over another and, instead, advanced with an inclusive project for the desired new republic. Focusing on Martí's 1891 essay, Charles Hatfield, in *The Limits of "Nuestra América"*,²⁸ suggests that although Martí proposed the idea that the racial issues within Latin American nations resulted from a conflict of ideologies and not of identities, racial conflict did not cease to be irrelevant.

An alternative critical approach can be found in Jorge Camacho's "*Sinos de propiedad*" *etnografía, raza y reconocimiento en José Martí*, in which Camacho suggests that the Cuban author referred to Blacks in the United States as being special and more capable than Whites at recovering and understanding the changes of nature.²⁹ This put forward the indication that Martí also resorted to the conflicting precepts defined in racial heritage to depict social behaviour. Under the same critical perspective, when highlighting the political differences between Martí and other Cuban independence figures, such as Antonio Maceo, Aline Helg points out that Martí's insistence on interracial brotherhood prevented him from

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²⁷ Ofelia Schutte, 'Undoing "Race". Martí's Historical Predicament', in *Forging People: Race, Ethnicity, and Nationality in Hispanic American and Latino/a Thought*, ed. by Jorge J. E. Gracia, Latino Perspectives (Notre Dame, Ind: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011), pp. 99–123.

²⁸ Charles Hatfield, 'The Limits of "Nuestra América"', *Revista Hispánica Moderna*, Año 63. N° 2, 2010, 193–202.

²⁹ Jorge Camacho, 'Signo de propiedad: etnografía, raza y reconocimiento en José Martí', *A Contracorriente, Revista de Historia Social Y Literatura de América Latina*, 5 (2007), 64–85 (p. 67).

denouncing white racism against Blacks. Helg explains that whilst Martí hoped for a harmonious society in which everyone shared the same rights and obligations, simultaneously respecting the hierarchies of knowledge and merit, Maceo perceived equality in practical terms: as social, legal and political equality.³⁰ Thomas Ward also observed the divergent and ethnocentric manner in which Martí enveloped the indigenous of his chronicles in stereotypes reveals how the author could, at times, mirror representations similar to those made by colonial writers.

Jorge Camacho's accounts of Martí and the indigenous, *Liberalismo y etnicidad: las crónicas mexicanas y guatemaltecas de José Martí*,³¹ as well as *Etnocentrismo, racismo, miedo: los indígenas y los incultos en Martí*³², both illustrate how Martí's Guatemalan, Mexican and North American chronicles discussing the indigenous can be divided into positives and negatives. At the beginning of his interval in Mexico and Guatemala, Martí observed the indigenous negatively, in concordance with the liberal intellectuals who promoted education and exploitation of the land as a means to modernise the nation. However, whilst in the U.S., Martí developed another perspective in which he referred to American Indians as heirs of a glorious past and held the opinion that their situation was the corrupted result of colonisation. Camacho explains that the Cuban author's change of position toward one of solidarity with the indigenous was assumed during his stay in the United States, from 1885. These ideas are also compiled in Camacho's book *Etnografía, política y poder a finales del siglo XIX: José Martí y la cuestión indígena* (2013). In Camacho's publication, the scholar confronts the type of criticism that has only focused on highlighting Martí's critical position toward the modernity that was established in the Americas. Camacho also comments on the lack of theoretical analysis that exists regarding support Martí gave liberal governments such as those of Mexico, Guatemala and Argentina, all of which were nations that sought development through the nullification of indigenous and mestizo populations. In

³⁰ Aline Helg, 'La Mejorana y la independencia cubana: un choque de ideas y liderazgo entre José Martí y Antonio Maceo', *Cuadernos de Historia Contemporánea*, 21 (1999), 227–57 (p. 244).

³¹ Jorge Camacho, 'Liberalismo y etnicidad: en las crónicas mexicanas y guatemaltecas de José Martí', *Ciberletras: Revista de Crítica Literaria Y de Cultura*, N° 19, 2008.

<<http://www.lehman.cuny.edu/ciberletras/v19/camacho.html>> [accessed 1 September 2013].

³² Jorge Camacho, 'Etnocentrismo, racismo y miedo: los indígenas y los incultos en Martí', *Cromobs*, N° 15, 2010, 1–25.

Camacho's opinion, there were not many differences between Martí's discourse on indigenous issues and those made by civilising liberal politicians in pursuit of national progress.

In the past two years, books providing broader explorations directed toward explaining Martí's racial thinking have been published, including *José Martí, the United States, and Race*,³³ by Anne Fountain and *¿Fue Martí racista? Perspectiva sobre los negros en Cuba y los Estados Unidos*,³⁴ by Miguel Cabrera Peña. Both works, published in 2014, are good examples of current interest in the Cuban author's racial writings. Anne Fountain sets a non-chronological analysis of Martí's racial thought in her book, placing strong emphasis on his poetry and its connection to issues of race. Among Fountain's central arguments is a comparison of the situation of slavery in the United States with that of Cuba's as a means to understand the milieu in which Martí wrote on the subject. The author also focuses on Martí's educational ideas and how they were used to create better conditions and promote social equality and unity between Whites and discriminated social groups such as Blacks, indigenous and immigrants. Fountain also takes the opportunity in her book to consider the influence Martí's fifteen-year stay in the United States had on the evolution of his racial thinking. In another recent study, Miguel Cabrera Peña attempts to determine whether or not Martí's writings were really an anti-racist effort. Cabrera Peña only focuses on black issues in his exploration, especially on the relationship Martí developed with the Blacks of Cuba, as well as on his anti-racism in the context of the 1895 war for independence. Cabrera Peña's study is centred on specific points, such as the issue of identity, Afro-descendant culture both in Cuba and United States, and the perspective of American criticism toward Martí's racial writings. His plated approach is based on those of Martí's writings reflecting on the slave situation and the vindication of the race of colour in Cuba and in the United States. Similarly, Cabrera Peña's book is a study of the affiliations the Cuban writer established with black intellectuals, as well as the racial discourse and reception of his work by U.S. academia.

³³ Anne Fountain, *José Martí, the United States, and Race* (Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 2014).

³⁴ Miguel Cabrera Peña, *¿Fue José Martí racista?: perspectiva sobre los negros en Cuba y Estados Unidos: una crítica a la academia norteamericana* (Madrid, España: Editorial Betania, 2014).

These critical visions suggest, on the one hand, that Martí reproduced some ethnocentric tendencies in relation to the indigenous, Blacks and even toward Whites, whilst on the other, they imply that Martí's antiracism was an exceptional posture sustained through a version of idealism that aimed for harmony of the races. Even though an ethnocentric character can be observed in some of Martí's texts discussing racial issues, he was able to develop an aggressive form of antiracism via an assertive political agenda. However, it is in his later writings, especially those published in *Patria* from 1892 to 1895, that Martí's staunch anti-racist positions were accompanied by concrete political actions, such as the formation of a political party, whose principal aim was the liberation of Cuba from Spain and which also sought to organise distinct racial groups through an inclusive model of political participation in post-colonial Cuba.

The study

The previous examples are all significant due to the contributions they offer regarding José Martí's racial philosophies. Nonetheless, many of these works only address singular or limited perspectives related to Martí's racial thought, as opposed to comprehensive syntheses. In contrast, the purpose of this thesis is to present a detailed, threefold perspective of the Cuban intellectual's thinking, beginning with a chronological mapping of the development of Martí's racial thought over the course of his lifetime, from his first exposure to slavery at age nine through to his death in the fight for Cuban independence at age forty-two. Secondly, the body of research herein presents a synthesis of José Martí's views on race and mestizaje, based on a corpus of his writings. Here, emphasis is placed on understanding how Martí's racial ideas took form, not only from the historical framework in which he wrote, but also in the cultural and national contexts where Martí spent his exiles before returning to Cuba, as well as how they played a key role in the development of his humanistic ideologies. Finally, this thesis makes the case that José Martí's anti-racist writings were developed not only as an anti-colonial stance in the midst of Cuba's independence movement but also as products of his intellectual progression through maturity and experience.

Instances of exclusion, poverty and discrimination that still mark current racial issues in the Caribbean, Hispanic America and the United States generally give Martí's racial thought an important place in the present day. Martí's insight on race relations, inclusion and assimilation are sociological statements related, in a broad sense, to interpretations directed toward 'examining the consequences of the socially constructed division of groups, or their so called race'.³⁵ African American sociologist William E. B. Du Bois, in his essay 'The Conservation of Race' (1897), proposed the idea that 'individuals are members of a race because they share impulses and ideals that result from their common history'.³⁶ For Du Bois, as Bernard Boxill points out, the belief that black-skinned people are an inferior biological race was based on practices expressing that belief.³⁷ In his mature years, Martí was able to recognise the notion of race as a culturally constructed precept. In part, the divergent reasoning of race as a socially constructed idea was used to refute the validity of the 'scientific' racialism of the nineteenth century, rooted in biological stance, a position also asserting that 'race' was a European construction.

Cuban essayist Roberto Fernández Retamar maintains that the true time of Martí was always in the future.³⁸ However, this study attempts to define Martí as a man of his time who was influenced by the ideologies, prejudices and cultural and social values that dominated the historical period in which he lived and wrote. Martí represents an exceptional case at a time when most Latin American intellectuals saw race as the reason for the social stagnation young republics of the region experienced during the period. Unlike previous research presented on the subject, this thesis emphasises the remarkable nature of José Martí's writings and the process through which the Cuban author formulated, assumed and manifested his radical anti-racist posture. Beyond ideas traditionally argued around the subject of Martí and race, the concepts presented herein focus not only on the manner in which he denied or criticized racial discourse presented by the dominant ideology, but also

³⁵ John Scott and Gordon Marshall, *Dictionary of Sociology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 624.

³⁶ Bernard Boxill, Introduction, *Race and Racism*, ed. by Bernard Boxill (Oxford, Oxford University Press), pp. 1-42 (p.30).

³⁷ *Ibid*, (p.32).

³⁸ Fernández Retamar, *Todo Caliban*, p. 40.

on Martí's ability to reformulate and adapt to the historical moment in which he was a prominent protagonist. To a certain extent, the significance of Martí's national unity formulations are still valid due to the fact that, as Thomas Ward points out: 'they represent a substantial advance over other speculative enterprises of their time.'³⁹ Nonetheless, this does not mean that the type of 'modernity' that Martí proposed in response to centuries of colonial influence was not also loaded with preconceptions and limitations. To misconstrue the racial formulations of Martí's later years as merely a discourse opposing the dominant ideologies of this period is to ignore the vast complexity framing the Cuban author's racial thinking, where the very idea of 'race' is presented from a polysemic perspective.

³⁹ Thomas Ward, 'From Sarmiento to Martí and Hostos: Extricating the Nation from Coloniality', *Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, Vol. 83 (2007), 83–104, (p. 83).

Chapter I

Martí and the formation of his anti-colonial stance, 1862-1872

José Martí, baptised José Julián Martí Pérez, was born in Havana 28 January 1853, to Spanish parents. His father, Mariano Martí Navarro, was a native of Valencia and a low-ranking Spanish government official who served as a sergeant in the Royal Artillery Corps of the Spanish Army before emigrating to Cuba in 1850. Martí's mother was Leonor Pérez Cabrera, a native of the Canary Islands. The island of Cuba, where José Martí was born and spent part of his teenage years, was an economically prosperous colonial territory, but was also politically troubled. This chapter addresses José Martí's early years, using biographical historiography to examine the influence of his first encounter with slavery on his initial political texts and also serves as a mapping of the young writer's development of the concept *patria*, both of which initiated his lifelong struggle against the Spanish colonial system.

Exploring recounted experiences and texts from 1862 to 1872, this portion of the thesis establishes elements important to the development of Martí's humanistic thinking, which would later greatly influence his views on race and anti-colonialism. Also found in this chapter is a review of the political situation and the reality of slavery in mid-nineteenth century Cuba. Contextualising this period in Cuban history, the purpose of this first chapter is to establish how Martí became a writer; how historical circumstances shaped his intellectual development; and finally, how the situation in his native Cuba influenced the development of the political and racial thought of his later years.

Witnessing Slavery

After a failed move back to Valencia where his father was born in June 1857, Martí's family returned to Cuba two years later. His home was one of a typical family in a colonial territory and was suffused with social and political narrow-mindedness.⁴⁰ The financial

⁴⁰ Juan Marinello, *José Martí* (Madrid: Júcar, 1976), p. 9.

situation in the household was also precarious at times, as Mariano Martí did not hold stable employment.⁴¹ From April to December 1862, José Martí accompanied his father to the Cuban countryside as he had recently been named *capitan juez pedáneo* of the Hanábana territorial area, jurisdiction of Colón, in the present province of Matanzas.⁴² This was a position that few wanted to hold as it confronted illegal slave trafficking, but one the father of the young writer accepted, due to the family's economic hardships. Mariano Martí took his son to live with him in the fields of Matanzas, an agricultural and sugarcane zone, giving the young writer the opportunity to have his first work experience, helping his father as an amanuensis. This period in the life of young Martí is depicted as a happy one. However, it was also at this stage that the nine year-old boy initially witnessed the horrors of slavery. In fact, scholarly literature and biographical accounts suggest that Martí was marked, specifically from this point forward, by the problems of slavery in Cuba. As indicated by Gonzalo de Quesada y Miranda, who was a close friend, personal assistant and editor of Martí's work, those months were a watershed moment in which Martí's affinity with the situation of Blacks in Cuba developed. In the biography *Martí hombre*, published in 1940 by de Quesada y Miranda, young Martí's awareness is described as siding with those men and women the writer had witnessed living as slaves. Through this portrayal it is apparent that Martí, from boyhood, felt deep sorrow for those who had come from 'padres africanos', living in foul barracks, who filled the silence of night 'con sus cantos de voces heridas, como lo están sus cuerpos por los latigazos impíos del mayoral.'⁴³ The boy would also feel helpless for the first time when witnessing the cruel treatment of a slave, 'el bocabajo de un infeliz esclavo, cruelmente azotado, mientras que él, con sus nueve años, quisiera saltar a la defensa del negro castigado.'⁴⁴

The *bocabajo* punishment, or the lashing of slaves whilst facing down on the ground, was a common form of reprimand to keep rebel slaves in order and was understood by his biographers to have been witnessed by a young Martí. *Nuestro Martí*, written by Herminio Almendros and first published in 1965, is another account of the author's life that

⁴¹ Marinello, p. 9.

⁴² *Atlas José Martí* (La Habana: Centro de Estudios Martianos, 2003), p. 26.

⁴³ Gonzalo de Quesada y Miranda, *Martí Hombre* (La Habana: Ediciones Boloña, 2004), p. 45.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 45.

highlights the dramatic event of seeing slaves treated brutally. Almendros confirms the same representation as de Quesada y Miranda of Martí walking among those who worked hard in the sugar fields and coming across, ‘los trabajadores negros, amontonados en barracones sucios’, but the boy would also see how ‘un mayoral de mal corazón castiga a latigazo a un negro esclavo, en un salvaje bocabajo’,⁴⁵ and as any nine year old boy who witnessed such an act would be, he was terrified. When setting this dramatic depiction, Almendros did so with a pedagogical mission in mind, as the biography would be read by many school children in Cuba in the 1960s. Thus, this profile of the Cuban author gives his story an epic feel to the point of signifying that Martí committed himself from that point forward in his life to redeeming the black race: ‘en aquel momento en que no pudo defender al desdichado, se revelo su alma de niño, y desde entonces nació en su corazón la piedad por lo que luego llamará “mis negros”’.⁴⁶

The label, ‘mis negros’ was the name of a book Martí had intended to write but never did.⁴⁷ Some notes written in one of his personal notebooks indicate that Martí wanted to write about the friendship he cultivated with el Negro Tomas, an older man he met when he made that trip with his father to Hanábana and to also demonstrate the fact that he wanted to write about the brutal practice of the *bocabajo*. Luis Toledo Sande, in his biography *Cesto de llamas: biografía de José Martí* published in 1996, has acknowledged that through this trip to the Cuban countryside, the young boy was able to discover closely, ‘en su violento rostro rural el crimen de la esclavitud, que hasta entonces sólo habría podido ver en la modalidad doméstica urbana, más benigna, o menos terrorífica’.⁴⁸ Being there during the years of clandestine operations of slave trafficking under inhumane conditions and seeing a slave hanged on a tree led to ‘su primer juramento revolucionario de que tengamos noticia: <Lavar con su vida el crimen> de la esclavitud’.⁴⁹ In another similar assessment of Martí’s first contact with the hardships of slavery, Oscar Montero, affirming that what Martí saw during those years haunted him the rest of his life, also contemplated this pivotal point

⁴⁵ Herminio Almendros, *Nuestro Martí* (La Habana: Editorial Pueblo y Educación, 1996), p. 5.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p. 5.

⁴⁷ José Martí, ‘Mis negros’, in *Teatro, novela, la edad de oro*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), XVIII, 285.

⁴⁸ Luis Toledo Sande, *Cesto de llamas: biografía de José Martí* (Sevilla: Ediciones Alfar, 1998), p. 26.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 26–27.

in Martí's life. The punishment of slaves represents, as Montero argues, the foundation on which the Cuban writer's dream of justice and equality is grounded.⁵⁰

The cornerstone of the theory focused on by biographers and scholars regarding the onset of his pledge to the cause of Blacks in Cuba can be found in the poem XXX of his book *Versos Sencillos* (1891), published by Martí almost thirty years after the stay with his father in the sugarcane zone of Cuba. As a whole, the *poemario* is the work of a mature Martí oriented by his experiences of the past and full of expressions of poetic self: yo sé, yo he visto, oigo, yo vengo, yo soy.⁵¹ The stanzas that compose the poem XXX, are articulated as the narrative of a child who observed the pain and sorrow of slaves to the point that the boy remained marked the rest of his life by the image of a hanged slave. In the closing statement, the child, third person, swears to avenge the crime committed against the dead black man he saw hung from a tree.

El rayo surca, sangriento,
El lóbrego nubarrón:
Echa el barco, ciento a ciento,
Los negros por el portón.

El viento, fiero, quebraba
Los almácigos copudos:
Andaba la hilera, andaba,
De los esclavos desnudos.

El temporal sacudía
Los barrancones henchidos:
Una madre con su cría
Pasaba, dando alaridos.

Rojo, como el desierto,
Salió el sol al horizonte:
Y alumbró a un esclavo muerto,
Colgado a un seibo del monte.

Un niño lo vio: tembló
De pasión por los que gimen

⁵⁰ Oscar Montero, *José Martí: An Introduction*, p. 59.

⁵¹ Ivan Schulman, 'Introduction', in *José Martí, Ismaelillo, versos simples, versos sencillos* (Madrid: Cátedra, 1982), pp. 15–61 (p. 50).

Y, al pie del muerto juró
Lavar con su vida el crimen!⁵²

By 1891, the year Martí published *Versos sencillos*, only five years had passed since abolition of slavery in Cuba was granted. In this case, ‘el crimen’ can not only be interpreted as the crime committed in Cuba through the colonial institution of slavery but also as the exploitation and exclusion of the black population, with Martí referring to the historical mistreatment of the black race. It is not surprising that the poem repeatedly alludes to experiences of the past, which serve to create a connection between incidents in Martí’s childhood and the anti-slavery political commitment developed through his activism for the liberation of Cuba in his mature years. Several annotations provided by the author in one of the many notebooks written during his stay in the United States, establish an additional motive for scholars to refer to Martí’s juvenile commitment to social justice. Therein, Martí endorsed his pledge to redeem the black race, posing a moral question: “¿Quién que ha visto azotar a un negro no se considera para siempre su deudor?”⁵³, and as in the poem, the notebook reaffirmed, in this case in prose, what he had seen: ‘Yo lo vi, lo vi cuando era niño, y todavía no se me ha apagado en las mejillas la vergüenza. (...) Yo lo vi, y me juré desde entonces a su defensa’.⁵⁴

In Hanabána Martí also witnessed his father’s struggle to prevent the illegal landing of slave ships in the region, a futile task that a humble official was unable to fight. From an historical perspective, Mercedes Santos Moray, in her book *Martí a la luz del sol* (1996), discusses this period in the life of Martí describing the context of corruption created by the colonial regime through the trafficking and ill-treatment of slaves: ‘Ante sus ojos inocentes se descubre la trata clandestina de esclavos que continúa, a pesar de las aparentes medidas de seguridad tomadas contra ella por el gobierno de Francisco Serrano.’⁵⁵ However, the business of *ébanos*, or sacks of coal, a name given the illegal slave trade, was one of many interests, as Santos Moray confers, ‘en él participan figuras del gobierno

⁵² José Martí, *Ismaelillo, versos simples, versos sencillos*, ed. by Ivan Schulman (Madrid: Cátedra, 1982), p. 201.

⁵³ José Martí, ‘Fragmentos’, in *Fragmentos*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), 189 (p. 189).

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 189.

⁵⁵ Mercedes Santos Moray, *Martí a la luz del sol* (México, D.F.: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Coordinación de Humanidades, Dirección General de Publicaciones, 1996), p. 25.

español, como el propio teniente gobernador de Colón, a quien responde en jerarquía el capitán pedáneo don Mariano Martí.⁵⁶ The plot line of the film *El ojo del canario* (2010) specifically focuses on Martí's early life and includes a re-enactment of this event, legitimised by historiography and the aforementioned biographical accounts. In the film, one of the most dramatic moments takes place when young Martí, played by actor Damilán Rodríguez, witnesses the illegal landing of a slave ship. Another pivotal point in the film takes place when the young writer establishes a friendship with an elderly black man who was a former slave. Agreeing with Emilio Berjel, the story the film poses is that 'the historical process that contextualised the cinematographic Martí ends up more closely related to mystifying retrospective memory than to a properly historical recreation because it leaves little room for a critical view of Martí'.⁵⁷

As explained in the previous passages, the period Martí spent exposed to and living in close proximity of slavery whilst with his father in Cuba's sugar cultivating region is a key stage emphasised by the historiography of his early life. Considering this position, the poem XXX in *Versos sencillos* and the fragments of text found in his notebooks from the U.S., both may be the references necessary to connect Martí's anti-slavery position with the situation of Cuban blacks during his adolescence on the island, prior to his exile to Spain in 1871. However, these references come from textual accounts written by an adult José Martí, rather than from manuscripts composed during his juvenile years. In fact, Martí barely discussed the issue of race in his first Cuban texts, excepting a few minor allusions, such as his description of black inmates imprisoned in his essay *El presidio político en Cuba* (1871). Otherwise, the author's early works were focused almost completely on the injustices of Cuba's colonial rule. Why did the writer not reflect on those horrific childhood experiences involving slavery when he started to write in his teenage years? In one of the most recent biographies of the writer, *Martí, A revolutionary life* (2014), Alfred Lopez contemplates that what should be focused on when considering the importance of this period is, unquestionably, how the nine year old's exposure to injustices committed against slaves had

⁵⁶ Santos Moray, p. 25.

⁵⁷ Emilio Berjel, *José Martí: Images of Memory and Mourning* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 73.

a profound impact on the life of the Cuban author.⁵⁸ An effect that seems to have erupted whilst in exile when he was able to compare the situations of Blacks in Cuba with that of Blacks during the period he lived in the United States. Accordingly, it can be said that Martí's commitment to improving the situation of the black race in Cuba emerged after a process of intellectual maturation, rather than being a pledge established during his childhood.

Colonial Cuba, Slavery and the Haitian Revolution

During the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804), the territory of Cuba began to develop a marked dependence on slavery, which led to a reconfiguration of the distinct social, economic, cultural and demographic scopes on the island. In this regard, it is imperative to examine the racial situation of Cuba in the nineteenth century, as well as the political environment where Martí lived his first years. The historical delay of Cuban independence and the permanence of the island as a colonial territory were especially obvious in respect to the institution of African slavery, which had been present in the Americas since the early decades of the arrival of settlers but had been eliminated almost everywhere else on the continent by the end of the 1860s. Cuba, however, would be precisely the final of the Spanish speaking countries in the western hemisphere to abolish slavery in 1886.⁵⁹ Due to Spain's continuing colonial presence in Cuba, independence and the detriments of the institution of slavery became the two primary issues to mark the social, economic, political and cultural spheres of the largest of the Caribbean islands throughout the nineteenth century.

After the only successful slave revolt in the Western Hemisphere began in 1791, ultimately leading to Haitian independence in 1804, Cuba was destined to become the

⁵⁸ Alfred J. López, *José Martí: A Revolutionary Life* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014), p. 22.

⁵⁹ Haiti was the first country to abolish slavery on the continent (1791), followed consecutively by Chile (1823), Central America (1824), Mexico (1829), Uruguay (1842), Bolivia (1851), Colombia (1852), Argentina (1853), Venezuela (1854), Peru (1854). In British Caribbean colonies slavery remained in place until 1853, in the French, until 1846; and in the US until 1863. Cuba (1886) and Brazil (1888) were the last territories to abolish slavery approaching the gateway of the twentieth century. See Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, *Slavery, Freedom, and Abolition in Latin America and the Atlantic World* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2011), p. 113; *Encyclopedia of Antislavery and Abolition*, ed. by Peter Hinks and John McKivigan, 2 vols. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2007), pp. xxxv–xxxviii; Jim Powell, *Greatest Emancipations: How the West Abolished Slavery* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 247–255.

largest sugar-producing colony in the Caribbean. Saint Domingue, the prosperous French colony later named Haiti, was the largest exporter of sugar and coffee in the region. However, as a consequence of the black revolution, disruption of the sugar and coffee-producing infrastructure became inevitable.⁶⁰ The influence of the Haitian Revolution on Cuba's economy was substantial and contributed importantly to development and economic growth on the island in the early part of the nineteenth century. For example, in 1759 there were eighty-nine *ingenios*, or sugar productive units, in Cuba. During 1792, the number increased to two hundred and twenty-seven; in 1802 there were three hundred and five; and in 1817, the number of *ingenios* reached a staggering six hundred and twenty-five.⁶¹ As early as the 1820s, the island became 'the richest jewel in the Bourbon crown, producing almost 55,000 tons of sugar per year'.⁶² In part, the relative prosperity experienced by Cuba's elite, as Laird Bergard points out, 'helps to explain why Cubans did not rebel early in the nineteenth century when the rest of Latin America was struggling for its autonomy'.⁶³

The result, as suggested by Sarah Franklin, was the transformation of the island by the Haitian Revolution: 'If Cuba had before been a society with slaves, it would be now a slave society'.⁶⁴ The growth in sugar production led to an increase in the demand for cheap manual labourers: 'Cuban labor barons knew of only one place where their needs could be speedily and easily met: Africa'.⁶⁵ Indeed, Cuba's dependency on slavery reached its highest level at this point. Although Cubans understood that they owed their good fortune to the Haitian Revolution and the destruction of Saint Domingue as the world's leading sugar producer, Haiti also demonstrated what could happen in a society where the number of slaves reached a significant percentage of the general population. With thousands of refugees streaming out of Saint Domingue into Cuba, their presence was a

⁶⁰ Laird W. Bergard, *The Comparative Histories of Slavery in Brazil, Cuba, and the United States* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 17.

⁶¹ Josep M. Fradera, *Colonias para después de un imperio* (Barcelona: Edicions Bellaterra, 2005), p. 41.

⁶² Leslie B. Rout, *The African Experience in Spanish America, 1502 to the Present Day* (London; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p. 289.

⁶³ Bergard, p. 18.

⁶⁴ Sarah L. Franklin, *Women and Slavery in Nineteenth-Century Colonial Cuba* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2012), p. 9.

⁶⁵ Rout, p. 289.

living reminder that the impossible, namely a slave revolt, was actually conceivable, and that such an occurrence could destroy everything Cubans had worked to accomplish.⁶⁶ After visiting Cuba from 1800 to 1801 and again in 1804, renowned Prussian naturalist Alexander von Humboldt wrote *Political Essay on the Island of Cuba* (1826). In this account of Cuba, von Humboldt noted that the white population of Havana and its environs, for example, grew by 71 percent in twenty years, whilst the population of free people of colour increased by 171 percent.⁶⁷ José de Bustamante's translation of *Ensayo político sobre la isla de Cuba* (1827) was banned by Spanish authorities due to the author's liberal position on slavery.⁶⁸ Some of his views were presented in a benevolent way when referring to the relationships he observed between people of colour and whites:

Nowhere in the world where slavery reigns are manumissions as frequent as on the island of Cuba. Far from hindering them or marking them onerous, as do the French and British laws, Spanish law favors freedom. The right that every slave has either to *buscar amo* (change master) or to emancipate himself if he can pay the purchase price; the religious sentiment that inspires many a lenient master to grant freedom to certain number of slaves in his will, the practice of engaging multitude of Blacks in domestic service and the affections that are born from his proximity to whites; the ease with which slaves can work for themselves and pay only a certain portion of their earning to their masters all these are the principal causes that allow so many slaves in the cities to attain their freedom.⁶⁹

The assessment delivered by Humboldt concerning slavery in Cuba led him to acknowledge that more than on any other island in the Antilles, Cuba had the ability to prevent what took place in Saint Domingue from occurring on its own soil: "This island has 455,000 free men and 260,000 slaves. By measures that are at once humane and prudent, it should be possible to prepare for the gradual abolition of slavery".⁷⁰ However, the conditions described by Humboldt might also have played a major role in delaying the process of the abolition of slavery, which took many decades to occur in

⁶⁶ Franklin, p. 13.

⁶⁷ Alexander von Humboldt, *Political essay on the island of Cuba*, ed. by Vera M. Kutzinski and Ottomar Ette (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2011), p. 78.

⁶⁸ Vera Kutzinski and Ottomar Ette, 'Introduction', in *Political essay on the island of Cuba by Alexander von Humboldt* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2011), pp. vi–xxxvi.

⁶⁹ Humboldt, p. 79.

⁷⁰ Humboldt, p. 68.

Cuba and was not achieved until 1886.

The growth of the plantation economy had a major impact on social and demographic behaviours in Cuba. The political and economic reconfiguration of the Caribbean in the early nineteenth century transformed Havana into the third largest Spanish American city in population, after Mexico City and Lima.⁷¹ The sharp increase of the slave population helped generate a demographic shift that affected the racial composition. Hence, in the period from 1790 to 1820, over two hundred thousand African slaves entered Cuba legally. Most newly arrived slaves were called ‘esclavos bozales’ to distinguish them from the ‘esclavos criollos’, which were born in America and were usually baptised and spoke Spanish.⁷² A *bozal* was a ‘slave brought directly to the New World from Africa and, therefore, was neither Christianised nor a Spanish speaker’.⁷³ Between the 1820s and 1850s, the overall population of the island, including slaves, expanded dynamically. There were over 700,000 people living in Cuba by 1827, and nearly 41 percent, or 287,000, were slaves. By 1846 there were 324,000 slaves, accounting for 36 percent of the general population of 899,000 inhabitants. The circumstances of slavery varied widely between Cuba’s cities and towns. In each setting, rural or urban, slaves filled a broad range of occupations, consisting of different characteristics and work rhythms. Rebeca Scott states that ‘though slaves in towns were highly visible to travellers –and are in some ways more visible to historians– most Cuban slaves in the 1860s lived in the countryside, and the largest group (47 percent) lived on sugar estates’.⁷⁴ Racial distribution was changing in the second half of the nineteenth century, which became apparent when the government conducted the 1861-1862 census. At that point, the entire population of Cuba had grown to nearly 1,400,000 people, with slaves comprising 27 percent of that total, or 370,000 enslaved individuals.⁷⁵

Cuba’s white population was overwhelmingly Creole (that is, born in the New

⁷¹ Jane Landers, *Atlantic Creoles in the Age of Revolutions* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2010), p. 210.

⁷² Fradera, p. 90.

⁷³ Rout, p. xix.

⁷⁴ Rebecca J Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba: The Transition to Free Labor, 1860-1899* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 10.

⁷⁵ Bergad, p. 18.

World), but also consisted of a substantial and disproportionately powerful minority of Spaniards (that is, those born in Spain), many of whom were merchants, shopkeepers, or government employees. There was frequent tension between Spaniards and Creoles over issues of politics and commerce, and occasionally, open separatism on the part of the Creole Cubans.⁷⁶ Spain viewed Cuba simply as a territory and did not take into account its diversity, its evolving demography, or shifts in allegiance by the Creole population. José Piqueras explains that in Cuba, throughout most of the nineteenth century, the concept of nation did not exist ‘porque no existe comunidad nacional ni se propone su constitución, excepto por una minoría intelectual y ello en un sentido limitado y excluyente, que identifica nacionalidad o *cubanidad* con la condición del colectivo formado con los criollos blancos’.⁷⁷ However, with the geopolitical changes in Atlantic slavery after 1860, including the abolition of slavery and the trading of slaves by the governments of Great Britain and France, the U.S. Civil War and its resulting slave emancipation, and aggressive Anglo-American initiatives against trading slaves with Cuba, slaveholders and Spanish authorities on the island were forced to reconsider the relationship between the metropolis and colonial forms of production.⁷⁸ Jill Lane proposes that this period of transition in Cuba was ‘not one from colony to national community, but rather a smaller but dramatic transition from colony to anti-colony’.⁷⁹ A manifestation of this transition would come about in 1868 in the form of an insurrection called the Ten Years War.

Cuba’s Ten Years War

On 10 October 1868, Carlos Manuel de Céspedes launched what is known as ‘El grito de Yara’ in the Manzanillo region of eastern Cuba, marking the beginning of what is known as the Ten Years War (1868-1878). By 1868, Creole elites were complaining about the political and economic situation in Cuba: ‘Spanish authorities raised tariffs on foreign goods entering Cuban ports. In the midst of economic decline, they also

⁷⁶ Scott, p. 7.

⁷⁷ José A. Piqueras Arenas, *Sociedad civil y poder en Cuba: colonia y poscolonia* (Madrid: Siglo XXI de España Editores, 2005), p. 31.

⁷⁸ Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, ‘From Slaves to Spaniards: The Failure of Revolutionary Emancipationism in Spain and Cuba, 1868- 1895’, *Illes I Imperis*, 1999, pp. 177–88 (p. 42).

⁷⁹ Jill Lane, *Blackface Cuba, 1840-1895* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), p. 61.

restructured the tax system, imposing a direct tax of 10 percent on the value of all rural and urban property.⁸⁰ The situation was most difficult on the eastern part of the island when compared to the wealthy west: 'Local landowners had less capital with which to expand, purchase slaves, or mechanise. In the east, the effects of economic downturn and aggressive taxation were more exacting, and irritation with the colonial government was more acute'.⁸¹

Céspedes rebelled against the Spanish regime, granting freedom to his slaves and inviting them to join the insurgency in order to achieve Cuban independence. On 27 December 1868, Céspedes, as leader of the insurgency, issued a decree proposing the abolition of slavery in Cuba, explaining that a *Cuba Libre es incompatible con Cuba esclavista*.⁸² The Ten Years War marked a turning point in Cuba's nineteenth century political history, introducing the idea of a Cuban nationhood and designating its emergence as a dynamic political ideology. The Ten Years War was Cuba's first war for independence from Spain, and though it did not achieve its purpose, it is recognised as facilitating the end of the Cuban slavery system:

Slavery was abolished in the early 1870s in those areas controlled by the Cuba Libre, as the insurgency was called, and escaped slaves from other areas were given freedom if they were able to reach rebel territory. 'The Ten Years War was the first phase of a revolutionary movement that culminated in Cuba's political separation from Spain in 1898'.⁸³

The uprising led by Céspedes attracted hundreds of slaves and men who joined the revolt. In the ten years of the offensive against the Spanish regime, two revolutionaries, Antonio Maceo and Máximo Gómez, became especially important. Maceo was the son of a freed slave who became an expert in the guerrilla warfare typically used by Cubans on the east side of the island. Máximo Gómez, who was Dominican born and had been a commander in the Spanish Army, led the more traditional revolutionary army. Gómez

⁸⁰ Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868-1898* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), p. 17.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, p. 19.

⁸² Hortensia Pichardo, *Documentos para la historia de Cuba*, II vols. (La Habana: Instituto Cubano del Libro, 1971), p. 370.

⁸³ Gerald E. Poyo, 'Key West and the Cuban Ten Years War', *The Floridan historical Quarterly*, Vol. 57 (1979), pp. 289–307 (p. 306).

and Maceo both enlisted into the Ten Years War as sergeants and ascended the ranks to become exceptional leaders. Although the two heroes would not be victorious in the Ten Years War, both would remain key figures to the independence movement, as well as play pivotal roles in José Martí's adult life.⁸⁴

Ada Ferrer and M. Ferrandis Garrayo have noted that revolt not only emerged mainly from the confrontation with the Spanish authorities, 'sino por el contrario, de conflictos profundos y continuos entre los separatistas cubanos respecto a lo que debía ser la nueva nación cubana y el papel que en ella debían jugar los diferentes grupos sociales'.⁸⁵ The insurrection, both in the eastern regions and in areas of Puerto Principe and Las Villas, was largely a rural uprising with relatively limited impact on Havana and Santiago.⁸⁶ Nonetheless, when the Ten Years War erupted, Cubans from all walks of life, representing vastly divergent interests and attitudes, joined the insurrectionary effort. Unfortunately, the broad base of support for the movement resulted in difficulty defining goals and tactics and in creating the necessary harmony for a successful outcome. Although the rebellion established a strong foothold on Cuban soil, by the end of 1869 it was clear that dissension within revolutionary ranks threatened to undermine the effort.⁸⁷

The war affected a significant part of the slave population, granting freedom to an estimated 62,000 slaves. Nevertheless, according to Rosalie Schwartz, this was more of a pragmatic necessity than a moral and humanitarian commitment. In Schwartz's opinion, Cuban patriots needed manpower to fight the Spaniards and groups of freed slaves formed that support, as well as the rank and file of the rebellion's fighting forces. Unfortunately, apprehension regarding an armed uprising, and the freed population it would produce, resulted in fear regarding the socioeconomic consequences of the rebellion, especially when considering demographics. Eastern and western Cuba were, in fact, quite different societies: 'Whilst sugar and slavery dominated much of the

⁸⁴ Jon Sterngass, *José Martí* (New York: Chelsea House, 2007), p. 17.

⁸⁵ Ada Ferrer and María Ferrandis Garrayo, 'Esclavitud, ciudadanía y los límites de la nacionalidad cubana: la guerra de los diez años, 1868- 1878', *Historia Social*, N° 22 (1995), pp. 101–25, (p.103).

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, p. 105.

⁸⁷ Poyo, 'Key West and the Cuban Ten Years War', pp. 292–293.

western landscape, the eastern landscape was significantly more variegated. Coffee, tobacco, cattle, and other farms stood alongside sugar estates; and the population was distributed accordingly'.⁸⁸ In the west, the white population relied almost entirely on the slave population to maintain what was Cuba's most productive farming region. As a result, white Creoles were not prepared to declare themselves patriots of Cuba.⁸⁹ Furthermore, according to Ada Ferrer and M. Ferrandis Garrayo, the internal conflict of the revolt was undermined by difficulties presented by the new reality of former slaves being encouraged to fight for a cause beyond their freedom:

La confusión existente acerca de si los esclavos se unieron motu proprio o no, refleja la forma dudosa en que los jefes miraban a quienes habían prometido la libertad. ¿Se trata de hombres y mujeres dispuestos a escoger el camino de la independencia? ¿O eran simples siervos de los que se podía disponer, al igual que de otros medios propios, para hacerlos trabajar en los campos de batalla del mismo modo que en los de café o de azúcar? Los líderes, si bien de alguna manera ideológicamente comprometidos con la emancipación, se vieron obligados a dirigir y organizar la transición de la esclavitud a la libertad en las zonas rebeldes. Y en este proceso, revelaron cuanto podían temer de una abolición incontrolada que habría de incorporar al movimiento armado a los individuos recién liberados. Revelaron además lo difícil que era para ellos recibir y aceptar a estos individuos como soldados o ciudadanos libres.⁹⁰

Although suspicions and internal problems were common within the uprising, these first steps towards independence became an initial process that, for pragmatic or ideological reasons, joined many Cubans together to fight for a common cause, without differentiating between races. In part, the struggle, 'with its necessary sequence of risk, blood, and heroism, did away with supposed inferiorities or superiorities by confronting men with similar hardships'.⁹¹ The pairing of Cuba's independence movement with the struggle for abolition, 'first, and with social reform,

⁸⁸ Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868-1898*, p. 19.

⁸⁹ Rosalie Schwartz, *Lawless Liberators: Political Banditry and Cuban Independence* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1989), p. 42.

⁹⁰ Ferrer and Ferrandis Garrayo, 'Esclavitud, ciudadanía y los límites de la nacionalidad cubana: la guerra de los diez años, 1868- 1878', p. 116.

⁹¹ Roberto Nodal, 'The Black Man in Cuban Society: From Colonial Times to the Revolution', *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 16 (1986), pp. 251-67 (p. 252).

after the end of slavery, gave Afro-Cubans -approximately one-third of the population- a rare opportunity to push their own cause in arms within the nationalist agenda'.⁹² As the 1860s progressed, changing politics brought about by the Union victory in the U.S. Civil War, as well as Britain's vigilance in suppressing the transatlantic slave trade, through blockades off of West Africa and increased patrols around Cuba, meant the viability of 'the continued coexistence in Cuba of sugar, slavery, and colonialism' came more and more into question.⁹³

Political changes in Spain in 1868, coupled with the growing Cuban insurrection, marked a shift in momentum with reforms and a rapid transformation of conditions on the island.⁹⁴ Spain suffered through its own chapter of political conflict when, in September of 1868, Queen Isabel II of Spain was deposed and replaced by a constitutional monarchy which granted universal male suffrage. Hence, the 'ardent cries for "revolution" or for "liberty, equality, and fraternity" were the clarion calls of vastly different ideological struggles in Spain and Cuba'.⁹⁵ In 1871, however, a law was finally enacted in Cuba that granted freedom to children born to female slaves, thus reinforcing the movement for the abolition of slavery.

However, Cuban anticolonial sentiment could not be reduced to a simple or ideological attitude on the part of the colonised toward the coloniser. Political problems in Madrid also influenced the mismanagement of the colony: 'Cuban taxes and revenue from the island's production supported a continually bankrupt Spanish treasury; and

⁹² Aline Helg, 'Race and Black Mobilization in Colonial and Early Independent Cuba: A Comparative Perspective', *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 44 (1997), pp. 55–74 (p. 56).

⁹³ Scott, p. 38.

⁹⁴ After the Ten Years War was initiated, gradual changes were instituted. For example, José Piqueras indicates that: 'Los gobiernos reformistas de la metrópoli se plantearon la abolición de la esclavitud y la introducción de reformas administrativas y políticas que debían llevar a implantar en la colonia el régimen constitucional con posibles adaptaciones. Llega en Enero a la Habana el General Domingo Dulce con los decretos que concedían las libertades de proclamas en España -prensa, reunión y asociación, derechos individuales. Dentro de este clima se suprimió la censura, haciéndose una excepción: se mantuvo la prohibición de discutir sobre la esclavitud hasta que las Cortes constituyentes resolvieran el tema. A partir de entonces se editaron 77 periódicos y otras 23 publicaciones políticas de otro tipo, entre aquellos *Patria Libre* (José Martí) y *El diablo cojuelo* (José Martí y Fermín Valdés)'. See José A Piqueras Arenas, *Sociedad civil y poder en Cuba: colonia y poscolonia* (Madrid: Siglo XXI de España Editores, 2005), p. 152.

⁹⁵ Lane, p. 6.

whilst the planter elite could make their presence felt at the Spanish court, the majority of native born Cubans had little influence in the political arena'.⁹⁶ According to Jill Lane, the future of slavery was a primary factor attenuating explicit white anticolonial activism throughout the decade:

The criollo elite -plantation owners and those in business invested in the success of the sugar industry- felt ill served by Spain's self-interested control of tariffs and commercial policy, but their reliance on slave labor limited their options for social and political action.⁹⁷

The conflict that began in Cuba in 1868 can also be understood as a regional conflict; its support came mainly from the masses and elites of the eastern part of island. The differences, mainly economic, 'between eastern and western Cuba fostered feelings of exclusion among politically active easterners and added to other complaints'.⁹⁸ Ultimately, the leaders of the revolt were never able to ensure support in the rich regions of the western part of the island.

Spain and the insurgency put an end to Ten Years War with 'El Convenio de Zanjón' in 1878, which forced Spain to grant freedom to all of the slaves who took part in the conflict.⁹⁹ Obviously, blacks rebels did benefit from this struggle in the form of freedom, leading 'to the relative pacification of these Blacks as compared to those who had remained in the cities or in the regions not touched by the insurrectionary movement, and who had to wait almost ten years to be granted legal emancipation'.¹⁰⁰ As the end of the Ten Years War arrived, the struggle for the total obliteration of slavery and racial inequality surged forward 'debate over race and representation were central to any critique or defense of Cuban nationalism. The colonial state argued that the presence of a large slave population made Cuba a poor candidate for nationhood'.¹⁰¹ Aline Helg points out that the transformation of the insurgent army from a white planter

⁹⁶ Schwartz, p. 54.

⁹⁷ Lane, p. 63.

⁹⁸ Schwartz, p. 39.

⁹⁹ In the third article of the treaty it is stated: 'Libertad para todos los colonos asiáticos y esclavos que se hallen hoy en las filas insurrectas'. See Hortensia Pichardo, *Documentos Para La Historia de Cuba*, II vols. (La Habana: Instituto Cubano del Libro, 1971), p. 404.

¹⁰⁰ Nodal, p. 253.

¹⁰¹ Lane, p. 63.

force to a popular multiracial army in which free men of colour could rise to military power, deeply influenced the white leadership's decision to negotiate with Spain. Helg further explains that a large number of Afro-Cubans did not support the armistice as it would neither grant Cuba its independence, nor would it free the slave population, resulting in their taking up arms against Spain a second time in 1879, in what is now called the Little War (1879-1880).¹⁰² Clearly, the struggle for independence that began in 1868, combined with on-going abolitionist efforts on the island, resulted in an indelible link between Cuba's fate and the fate of slaves on the island.¹⁰³ The date of the Ten Years War insurrection, 10 October 1868, is of great importance in Cuban history, as it marks the beginning of an era of struggle that would define the concept of nationality between heterogeneous groups that made up the population of the island.¹⁰⁴

The emergence of Martí's political activism

In March of 1865, when he was twelve years old, José Martí entered the Escuela de Instrucción Primaria Superior Municipal de Varones in Havana.¹⁰⁵ Martí proved to be a good student, and whilst his mother supported him and wanted him to have an education, Martí's father wanted something different for his eldest child and only son. His father wanted him to leave school and get a job to help the family.¹⁰⁶ Later in his adolescence Martí would begin to have marked differences with his father because he was an officer loyal to the Spanish crown.¹⁰⁷ During the period he spent at the Escuela de Instrucción Primaria Superior Municipal de Varones, Martí met one of his teachers and guides, the poet and Cuban intellectual Rafael María de Mendive, whose influence would be significant to the development of the young author's libertarian ideas. As a teacher and school principal, Mendive instilled in Martí and the other students in his class

¹⁰² Helg, p. 56.

¹⁰³ Robin Blackburn, *The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the Americas: Slavery, Emancipation and Human Rights* (London; New York: Verso, 2009), p. 470.

¹⁰⁴ Aurelio Miranda, *Martí Político* (La Habana: Pueblo y Educación, 1969), p. 70.

¹⁰⁵ Roberto Fernández Retamar and Ibrahim Hidalgo Paz, *Semblanza biográfica Y cronología mínima* (La Habana: Editorial Pueblo y Educación, 1990), p. 23.

¹⁰⁶ Jon Sterngass, *José Martí* (New York: Chelsea House, 2007), p. 14.

¹⁰⁷ Mauricio A. Font and Alfonso W. Quiroz, 'Introduction', in *The Cuban Republic and José Martí: Reception and Use of a National Symbol*, ed. by Mauricio A Font and Alfonso W Quiroz (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006), pp. 1–4 (p. 2).

revolutionary political ideals, bequeathing ‘a sus discípulos su amor a la libertad y a la justicia, por lo que puede argüirse que así nace el amor de Martí por la poesía y la patria’.¹⁰⁸

In addition to his roles as teacher, poet and journalist, Mendive was also a patriot ‘cuya formación ideológica estuvo dada al calor de la persistente lectura, proveniente del iluminismo, especialmente francés, y de los clásicos de la literatura modernista, más allá de que Mendive fue un intelectual aficionado de la literatura Griega y Romana’.¹⁰⁹ Mendive not only offered Martí guidance and counselling but also the use of his library, which is where the young writer was able to draw on the classics and philosophical currents of the mid-nineteenth century. Of equal importance was the affection that Mendive developed for the young writer, resulting in Martí’s admittance to the Instituto de Segunda Enseñanza de la Habana, on 27 August 1866, where Mendive agreed to pay for his schooling through *bachillerato*, prior to parental consent. His hope was to: ‘premiar de alguna manera su notable aplicación y buena conducta’.¹¹⁰ In 1868 Martí moved to the teacher's house, where Mendive became Martí’s desired father figure at that stage.¹¹¹ Regarding this move, Martínez Estrada indicates that Mendive’s house provided Martí with a stimulating space:

Tanto la familia de Mendive como el ambiente debieron parecerle al joven insurrecto un oasis, el desiderátum para estudiar y vivir. Las amistades que frecuentaban el hogar de Mendive eran asimismo personas superiores, en las que le complacía escuchar y de las que obtenía siempre lecciones más preciosas que la de los libros.¹¹²

With the revolt of Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, revolutionary ideas began to spread around Havana, boosting the growth of independence sentiments among the Creole population. While Cuba remained under Spanish colonial rule, it was not surprising that a *criollo letrado* like Mendive would support the outbreak of the Ten Years War

¹⁰⁸ Louis Pujol, *Tres visiones del amor en la obra de José Martí* (Miami, Fla.: Ediciones Universal, 1989), p. 39.

¹⁰⁹ Germán Rodas Chaves, *José Martí: aproximación a sus 20 primeros años de vida* (Quito: Ediciones Abya-Yala; Escuela de Sociología y CCPP de la Universidad Central del Ecuador, 2001), p. 21.

¹¹⁰ Aurelio Miranda, ‘Cronología’, in *Martí político* (La Habana: Pueblo y Educación, 1969), pp. 91–123 (p. 92).

¹¹¹ Rodas Chaves, p. 22.

¹¹² Ezequiel Martínez Estrada, *Martí revolucionario* (La Habana: Casa de las Américas, 1967), p. 11.

and circulate support among his disciples. In addition to the objectifying conditions that led to the rebellion, ‘taxes were very high: Spanish trade restriction raised prices and prevented Cuba from developing any crops but sugarcane. Almost no native Cubans held government positions’,¹¹³ and education on the island was also significantly delayed. Pamela Maria Smorkaloff indicates that as the nineteenth century progressed and Cuba’s population increased, so did illiteracy: ‘Ever suspicious of their educated subjects, all the Spanish administration had to do in order to swell the rank of illiterate was to allow the population to grow without providing more schools’.¹¹⁴ Unfortunately, proponents of education reform directed their efforts ‘mainly against the meager budgets for schools and teachers rather than against its organisational aspects. The limited investment in colonial education resulted in a structural backwardness in rural and black sectors of society on the eve of Cuban independence’.¹¹⁵ Accordingly, as land holdings increased for Cuba’s sugar elite, the general population remained in the dark due to educational backwardness and substandard government investment in education, resulting in disagreements among intellectuals, the sugar elite and Spanish authorities:

Over the course of the nineteenth century the battler of Cuban culture was waged among the literate minority, a minority distributed between the literati, the university and the sugar elite. The changing policy and tactics of the monarchy toward its overseas possessions had immediate repercussions in educated society, often pitting one group against other aggravating divisions within each. The colonial administration’s vigilances of activities of the literati indirectly affected literacy production since it caused the “sugarocracy” to remain aloof, thus depriving Cuban writers of patronage, the natural base of economic and social support.¹¹⁶

Just months after Céspedes initiated the rebellion that would become known as the

¹¹³ Sterngass, p. 15.

¹¹⁴ Pamela M. Smorkaloff, based on the research by Ambrosio Fornet, indicates that in Cuba the illiteracy rate was 85% in 1827, in a population of seven-hundred thousand; in 1867, it was 80% in a population of one million; in 1887, it was approximately 72% in a population of one million, six-hundred thousand. Meaning that whilst the illiteracy rate dropped, the number of illiterates was on the rise. See Pamela María Smorkaloff, *Readers and Writers in Cuba: A Social History of Print Culture, 1830s - 1990s* (New York: Garland, 1997), pp. 4–5.

¹¹⁵ Alfonso W. Quiroz, ‘Martí in Cuban Schools’, in *The Cuban Republic and José Martí: Reception and Use of a National Symbol*, ed. by Mauricio A Font and Alfonso W Quiroz (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2006), pp. 71–81 (p. 72).

¹¹⁶ Smorkaloff, p. 5.

Ten Years War, the Spanish authorities began to feel pressure from the Cuban Creole population, producing raised tempers and, eventually, some small compromises on the part of the Spanish government. For example, in 1869 the new general stationed in Cuba, Domingo Dulce y Garay, promised successive changes such as: ‘la libertad de prensa y librería’,¹¹⁷ established by decree on 9 January 1869. On the other hand, there was also a part of Cuba’s population that still supported the colonial system. The prosperity that came with the growth of the sugar industry and the positioning of Cuba as the largest producer of this commodity especially influenced the allegiance of mill-owning elites who preferred the relative stability of the colony to the uncertainty of an emancipated nation.

Influenced by the effervescence of the historical moment and fuelled by the ideas inculcated by Mendive, Martí took advantage of the newly established freedom of the press in Cuba. On the 18 January 1869, just days after the decree established by General Dulce, the teenager published his first article in a small newspaper called *El diablo cojuelo*, edited by his friend Fermín Valdés Domínguez. In this article Martí addressed Cuba’s newly instituted freedom of the press with irony:

Esta dichosa libertad de prensa, que por lo esperada y negada y ahora concedida, llueve sobre mojado, permite que hable usted por los codos de cuanto se le antoje, menos de lo que pica; pero también permite que vaya usted al Juzgado o a la Fiscalía, y de la Fiscalía o el Juzgado lo zambullan a usted en el Morro, por lo que dijo o quiso decir’.¹¹⁸

Written in prose, the article appears to be Martí’s first public stance against the Spanish regime and is furthermore considered to be his first political text. In 1869 Martí also published a sonnet for *10 de octubre*, a paper established by students of the Institute of La Habana. The piece alludes to the Grito de Yara and the Cuban insurrection of 1868.¹¹⁹ However, the most significant text written by the fledgling author was published by 23

¹¹⁷ Ángel Esteban, ‘Apuntes para una biografía’, *Anthropos, Revista de La Documentación Científica de La Cultura*, 169 (1995), 8–20 (p. 9).

¹¹⁸ José Martí, ‘El diablo cojuelo’, in *José Martí, Obras Escogidas En Tres Tomos*, III vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1992), I, 11–12 (p. 11).

¹¹⁹ José Martí, ‘10 de octubre’, in *José Martí, obras escogidas en tres tomos*, III vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1992), I, 13 (p. 13).

January 1869 in the first and only issue of his newspaper, *Patria libre*, in which Martí presented his first play, *Abdala* (1869).¹²⁰ Through the work, Martí recapped ideas that had already influenced the rest of Spanish America: the need for a free country not dependent on colonial rule; hate for the oppressor of the *patria*; and the right of men to be free.

Although the story within the play is presented with fictional characters, one can easily see that it is based on Martí's native Cuba. *Abdala* is an echo of its author, inferring autobiographical features. The text also demonstrates how emotive of an adolescent Martí was in regard to maternal love, describing it in the relationship between the brave warrior *Abdala* and his anxious mother, who knows there is a possibility of losing her son in the war. Jacquelyn Kaye points out that from his earliest writings we can see in Martí's work the power of negative feelings, as well as his love for the use of polarity and duality.¹²¹ Through *Abdala*, the adolescent writer contrasted his two great loves: the love of his mother with the love for *la patria*. The main character, *Abdala*, is a warrior fighting against a nation oppressing a fictional country called *Nubia*. The Spanish government was represented here as the oppressor nation, whilst Cuba was symbolised as *Nubia*, the *patria* that wanted to be free. *Abdala*, the Nubian warrior hero, similar to Martí, was torn between the love felt for his mother and that of his country; however, despite the pain of doing so, the character chooses to fight for his country even though he sees his mother suffering. Before *Abdala* dies heroically in the play, he and the people of *Nubia* succeed in driving away the barbarous oppressor. Accordingly, 'from this early literary work, Martí has shown that literature was for him a vehicle to develop support and understanding for the cause of the *patria*.'¹²²

In one of the drama's dialogues, *Espirita*, *Abdala's* mother, asks her combatant

¹²⁰ José Martí, 'Abdala', in *José Martí, obras escogidas en tres tomos*, III vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1992), I, 14–24.

¹²¹ Jacqueline Kaye, 'Martí in the United States: The Flight from Disorder', in *José Martí: Revolutionary Democrat*, ed. by Christopher Abel and Nissa Torrents (London: Athlone, 1986), pp. 65–82 (p. 81).

¹²² John M Kirk, 'José Martí and His Concept of the Intelectual Comprometido', in *José Martí: Revolutionary Democrat*, ed. by Christopher Abel and Nissa Torrents (London: Athlone, 1986), pp. 108–23 (p. 120).

son: ‘¿Y es más grande ese amor que el que despierta en tu pecho tu madre?’ Without hesitation, her son responds: ‘¿Acaso crees que hay algo más sublime que la patria?’¹²³ Here the significance of Martí’s *patria* goes beyond parental attachment to the land; his patriotic sentiment is based on the exaltation of the homeland as much as it is on the feeling of belonging. However, Martí also conveys in *Abdala* that the sentiment of love for his country is not the only motivation to fight for it, but that it is also a consequence of hatred for the oppressor:

El amor madre, a la patria
No es el amor ridículo a la tierra,
Ni la yerba que pisan nuestras plantas;
Es el odio invencible a quien la oprime,
Es el rencor eterno a quien la ataca;
Y tal amor despierta en nuestro pecho
El mundo de recuerdos que nos llama
A la vida otra vez, cuando la sangre,
Herida brota con angustia al alma;
La imagen del amor que nos consuela
Y las memorias plácidas que guarda.¹²⁴

Using this drama as a vehicle to express his dissatisfaction with colonial Spanish rule, young Martí transformed the idea of *patria* into something sacred, more important than family, and worth dying for. The final words of *Abdala* in the play are: ‘Oh! Que dulce es morir, cuando se muere/Luchando audaz por defender la patria!’¹²⁵ Death is more important than glory if it comes about through the struggle for freedom. Martí viewed Cuba as a mother and portrayed the idea that with its liberation, the logical progression was that its children would also be emancipated. As a result, at home all of Cuba’s children would be treated equally and enjoy the same rights, which directly called into question the existent national identity of exclusion that was promoted in Spanish colonial Cuba.

Along with the article published in the *Diablo cojuelo*, Martí was introduced into Cuban politics with *Abdala*, and even though there are no references to themes of race

¹²³ Martí, ‘Abdala’, I, p. 20.

¹²⁴ Ibid, p. 20.

¹²⁵ Ibid, p. 24.

in the drama, Martí's *patria* is connected to the theme of freedom, a central idea to his vision of equality amongst the races a theme that he would develop at length at a later stage in his life. The form of expression Martí developed in *Abdala*, seen from the perspective of Fredric Jameson, was that of an individual piece, attributed essentially as a symbolic act. Jameson proposes that from this viewpoint, 'the aesthetic act is itself ideological, and the production of aesthetic or narrative form is to be seen as an ideological act in its own right, with the function of inventing imaginary or formal solutions to unsolvable social contradictions'.¹²⁶ The drama *Abdala* was presented by Martí as a representation for liberation on the island in a moment when the first steps leading to its eventual freedom thirty years later had just taken place.

***Patria*: Cuba's nineteenth century anticolonial pledge**

Although of great significance in Martí's early work, the notion of *patria*, denoted as a collective identity based on national sentiments, was not an unknown concept in Cuba. Patriotism on the island did have a heavy antecedent in the works of recognised Cuban romantic poet José María Heredia y Mieres (1803–1839). The exaltation of the motherland in his work was often perceived as an influence on the writings of other poets such as Mendive. According to critic José Miguel Oviedo, the historical condition of the island, still under the Spanish regime when other Hispanic American nations had already achieved their independence, resulted in Cuban romanticism, a movement founded by Heredia and charged with 'un urgente reclamo de patria, que se fija en la conciencia de la gran mayoría de los escritores como una alta tarea por cumplir'.¹²⁷ An example of Heredia's patriotic verses can be appreciated in his *epístola A Emilia* (1824), where the poet highlights national love by attacking the Spanish oppressor:

Al brillar mi razón, su amor primero
Fue la sublime dignidad del hombre,
Y al murmurar de Patria el dulce nombre,
Me llenaba de horror el extranjero.

¹²⁶ Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious, Narrative as a Symbolic Act* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), p. 79.

¹²⁷ José Miguel Oviedo, *Del romanticismo al modernismo* (Madrid: Alianza Ed., 1997), p. 69.

¡Pluguiese al cielo, desdichada Cuba,
 Que tu suelo tan sólo produjese
 Hierro y soldados! La codicia ibera
 No tentáramos, ¡no!... Patria adorada,
 De tus bosques el aura embalsamada
 Es al valor, a la virtud funesta.
 ¿Cómo viendo tu sol radioso inmenso,
 No se inflama en los pechos de tus hijos
 Generoso valor contra los viles
 Que te oprimen audaces y devoran?¹²⁸

In this excerpt from Heredia's poem, affection for the land and abhorrence for the Spanish oppressors is demonstrated, similar to sentiments Martí would also demonstrate years later in his dramatic poem, *Abdala*. Heredia's verses led to him being considered the first patriotic poet of Cuba. Another author who touched on the theme of *patria* was Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda (1814-1873). The novelist and poet focused on *la patria* in her poem *Al partir*, referring to her native land and departing from Cuba in this tone: '¡Adiós, patria feliz, edén querido! ¡Doquier que el hado en su furor me impela,/tu dulce nombre halagará mi oído!'¹²⁹ *Al partir* was her first important sonnet and was written by Gómez de Avellaneda when leaving Cuba to live in Spain in 1836.¹³⁰ *Al partir*, in addition to *La vuelta a la patria*, written twenty-three years later when she returned to Cuba, are both packed with patriotic sentiments for the island.¹³¹ Patriotic sentiment was a theme that poetry commonly dealt with in nineteenth century Cuba. However, Cuban nationality as defined by Cuban intellectual José Antonio Saco (1797-1879), was divided between *Criollos* and Spaniards, both forming part of two distinct *Patrias*, 'lo cual constituía un separatismo convicto y confeso, que irritaba el sentimiento peninsular'.¹³² Yet the manifestation of national identity opted for in 1868, with the *Grito de Yara*, can be seen as the turning point in which the subject of race constituted a fundamental part of the construction of the nation because, in part, 'slavery, race and ethnicity were intimately connected with the political issues of the war

¹²⁸ *Antología de La Poesía Cubana*, ed. by Lezama Lima, III vols. (La Habana: Consejo Nacional de Cultura La Habana, 1965), II, p. 25.

¹²⁹ Lima, p. 74.

¹³⁰ Oviedo, *Del romanticismo al modernismo*, p. 73.

¹³¹ *Encyclopedia of Latin American Literature*, ed. by Verity Smith (London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1997), p. 375.

¹³² Humberto Piñera, *Idea, sentimiento y sensibilidad de José Martí* (Miami: Ediciones Universal, 1982), p. 424.

and haunted the uneasy peace of the Pact of Zanjón in 1878'.¹³³ Nevertheless, this did not mean that prior to the abolitionist war of 1868 Cuban nationhood had not been historically affiliated with the subject of race as part of the construction of social identities. For instance, when analysing the British invasion of Havana in 1752, Guadalupe García states that the attack affected race relations momentarily, to the point that racial hierarchies were suspended to encourage a discourse where patriotism among habaneros could be grasped:

Race relations in Havana were formed in the context of the fortification and militarisation efforts that the city experienced almost from its initial founding and certainly from the time it was recognised as an important asset of the crown's Atlantic empire. The British military attack of 1762 and the occupation of the city that followed served to expose the inefficiency of the colonial measures in place and highlight alternative possibilities for the urban body beyond those prescribed by the military orientation of the city. The events surrounding 1762 illuminate an emerging, racially inclusive notion of "*patria*", facilitated by the habaneros who defended the city and the spaces where the defense was mounted. Havana became the rallying point behind an inclusive alliance of "*naturales*" that allowed habaneros to question the efficiency of the colonial administration and the hierarchies it imposed.¹³⁴

Accordingly, the notion of *patria* on the island was not just a desideratum linked to the idea of a free nation. For imperial Spain, the articulation of *patria*, as it related to *la integridad nacional*, promoted the preservation of an economically stable Cuba through slavery and the sugar market. *La integridad nacional* as a process of consolidating national identity 'is considered to begin when neighbouring Saint Domingue was eliminated as an economic rival after the 1791-1804 Revolution'.¹³⁵ However, the process was accentuated as a form of cohesion by colonial Spain in answer to the possible destruction of the nation. As Lisa Surwillo explains when summarising the way in which imperial Spain, after 1868, stressed the need for national integrity within its

¹³³ Franklin W. Knight, 'Blacks and the Forging of National Identity in the Caribbean, 1840-1900', in *Blacks, coloureds and national identity in nineteenth-century Latin America*, ed. by Nancy Priscilla Naro (London: Institute of Latin American Studies, 2003), pp. 81–94 (pp. 83–84).

¹³⁴ Guadalupe García, 'Nuestra patria La Habana: Reading the 1762 British Occupation of the City', *Nuevo Mundo/Mundos Nuevos*, 2011, p. 6 <<http://nuevomundo.revues.org/61119>> [accessed 10 June 2013].

¹³⁵ Jean Stubbs, 'Race, Gender, and National Identity in Nineteenth-Century Cuba. Mariana Grajales and the Revolutionary Free Browns of Cuba', in *Blacks, coloureds and national identity in nineteenth-century Latin America*, ed. by Nancy Priscilla Naro (London: Institute of Latin American Studies, 2003), pp. 95–122 (p. 100).

remaining colonies: the monarchy was tasked with maintaining unity among disparate regions through a homily of nationalism, founded on commercial colonisation and common cultural traits. This resulted in discursive depictions of the metropolis and its colonies as an imperial family being reformulated and disseminated as a tool against abolition. Abolition was framed in 1868 Spain, as elsewhere, as primarily an economic issue, but the proslavery contingent characterised it as a death toll for the nation of Spain. The imperial plea for *integridad nacional*, was as a tool used in the attempt to prevent Caribbean independence, ‘referred, not to ethics or purity, but rather to ‘integrity’ as ‘indivisibility’, positing an indivisible nation connected by a slave economy and a unified market’.¹³⁶ Slavery kept the nation whole; abolition would, it was argued, prompt national dissolution.

As portrayed through this approach, the slave economy had for years been one of the unifying elements of Spanish colonial national identity on the island. The colonial system, which sustained the growth of Cuba as an economic power, was based on exclusion, discrimination and racial domination, and became a unifying element among all of the social groups. It can be argued that during the colonial period in Cuba, as well as most of the nineteenth century, imperial Spain was charted on maintaining historical identities based on the distribution of labour and socio-racial hierarchies on the island as unifying elements. This idea of identity, defined through the framework of colonial domination, arose via the same process as the U.S. Constitution, and as explained by Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano, resulted from the establishment of colonial/modern euro-centred power. According to Quijano, in the mist of biological assumptions, the differences between conquerors and the conquered fostered the creation of new social identities legitimising relationships of domination imposed by conquest:

La formación de relaciones sociales fundadas en dicha idea, produjo en América identidades sociales históricamente nuevas: *indios*, *negros* y *mestizos* y redefinió otras. Así términos como *español* y *portugués*, más tarde *europeo*, que hasta entonces indicaban solamente procedencia geográfica

¹³⁶ Lisa Surwillo, ‘Enslaved by Liberalism: Spain after 1868’, *Republics of Letters: A Journal for the Study of Knowledge, Politics, and the Arts*, 3 (2012), p. 3 </rofl.stanford.edu/node/107> [accessed 10 June 2013].

o país de origen, desde entonces cobraron también, en referencia a las nuevas identidades, una connotación racial. Y en la medida en que las relaciones sociales que estaban configurándose eran relaciones de dominación, tales identidades fueron asociadas a las jerarquías, lugares y roles sociales correspondientes, como constitutivas de ellas y, en consecuencia, al patrón de dominación colonial que se imponía. En otros términos, raza e identidad racial fueron establecidas como instrumentos de clasificación social básica de la población.¹³⁷

Quijano suggests these new historical identities were produced based on the idea of race and were related to the nature of the roles and places in the new global structure of labour control.¹³⁸ Both elements, race and division of labour, were structurally related and mutually reinforcing, though neither was necessarily dependent on the other to exist or to change. This colonial model of identities named Blacks and mestizos as heirs to a history of slavery and domination. Accordingly, it is no surprise that Martí's construction of *patria*, from its initial stages and through years of development, came about as a model to challenge and replace already established identities. It was not only a matter of racial equality, as social hierarchy in Cuba had confined white creoles to minor positions, limiting their participation in decision making on the island.

The idea of *patria* proposed by Martí represented an anticolonial paradigm where all of the members of society would not only achieve the condition of free men, but would also be treated as equals in all social spheres. Martí's political activism did not culminate as an original idea of patriotism; there was little difference between his conception and those created during the struggle for emancipation in other early nineteenth century Hispanic American nations. Nonetheless, the political activism and patriotic discourse he used were attuned to the social and historical circumstances of the struggle for emancipation in Cuba, calling for integration through the necessary reformulation of social and racial relations demanded by internal and external conditions. Martí knew it would be impossible to 'forge a coherent society

¹³⁷ Anibal Quijano, 'Colonialidad del poder, eurocentrismo y América Latina', in *La Colonialidad del saber: eurocentrismo y ciencias sociales: perspectivas latinoamericanas*, ed. by Edgardo Lander, 1. ed (Buenos Aires : [Caracas, Venezuela]: Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales-CLACSO, 2000), pp. 201–46 (p. 202).

¹³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 204.

under the auspices of sugar plantation slave society',¹³⁹ seeing at this early stage that independence was the first step toward achieving an egalitarian society.

Condemning colonial Spain

In 1869 Martí's teacher, Rafael María de Mendive, was arrested after being linked to a political protest in a Havana theatre, and as a result, was exiled to Spain. The imprisonment and forced exile of Martí's *padre spiritual*, and soon after, Martí's own arrest, imprisonment, and expulsion from Cuba, give an indication of the increased oppression by Spanish forces on the island as the decade came to a close.¹⁴⁰ Earlier the same year, Martí had been accused of conspiring against the government of Spain with his friend Fermín Valdés Domínguez. Martí had written to a classmate encouraging him to desert the military in protest of Spanish colonial rule, but government officials discovered the letter. At 16 years of age, on 4 March 1870, Martí was sentenced to six years in prison, whilst his friend Valdés was sentenced to only six months.¹⁴¹ On 21 October, Martí was officially registered in prison.

Martí's adolescence from that point forward was marked by the harsh reality of being a political prisoner and an exile from colonial Cuba. Like all other detainees in Havana at the time, Martí was made to do daily forced labour in a quarry located a mile from the prison.¹⁴² Not only were the working conditions whilst incarcerated extreme, but between October and April, 'el frío de su celda le calará hasta los huesos; más tarde, en mayo, junio, julio y los primeros días de agosto, el sol le castigará con un baño de fuego en la profundidad de la cantera'.¹⁴³ After almost a year of hard labour, severe weather and punishment, Martí's family was able to convince government officials to deport him to Spain, rather than keep him in prison, and so it was that on 15 January 1871, young Martí began a period of exile from Cuba that would last six years.

¹³⁹ Knight, p. 89.

¹⁴⁰ Kirk, p. 120.

¹⁴¹ Richard Butler Gray, *José Martí, Cuban Patriot* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1962), p. 5.

¹⁴² Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring, *Martí: síntesis de su vida* (La Habana: Oficina del historiador de la ciudad, 1953), p. 11.

¹⁴³ Luis Enrique Ramos Guadalupe, 'De la sombra al sol. El estado del tiempo en la habana durante el presidio político de José Martí', *Anuario Del Centro de Estudios Martianos*, 27 (2004), 75–87 (pp. 78–79).

José Martí spent nearly four of those years, until January of 1875, primarily in Madrid and Zaragoza, where he was a student. Martí arrived in Spain in 1871 broken in health, and during his stay led an intense life of study and political activism with other Cuban exiles. He was a regular participant in gatherings at the Ateneo de Madrid, a hub for Spanish intellectuals of the period. At the Ateneo he witnessed ‘los discursos políticos del momento,’ and was a witness to ‘grandes oradores como Castelar, Sagasta, Cánovas, y aprende mucho de su oratoria, así como el despertar de su espíritu crítico’.¹⁴⁴ It was here that Martí learned from different Spanish intellectuals, ‘con los cuales compartía el dolor de las infamias del gobierno español para con los insurrectos de la isla. En esos hombres reconocerá Martí a la España verdadera, progresista y popular’.¹⁴⁵

Upon his arrival in Spain in 1871, at the age of eighteen, Martí wrote *El presidio político en Cuba*. Through the text he was able to denounce and narrate his difficult experiences in prison on the island. The document created a clear image of the injustices of the Spanish colonial system and presented the brutality of the prison system from the perspective of a young intellectual in formation. In his narration Martí tells readers that he suffered after being ‘apaleado, ser pisoteado, ser arrastrado, ser abofeteado’.¹⁴⁶ However, he also reinforces his anti-colonial position in the text, demonstrating a more vehement commitment than ever against Spanish colonial rule in Cuba. In *El presidio político en Cuba*, Martí begins with a calm attitude forged from the ordeal of surviving imprisonment. Hence, ‘la literatura será, como siempre, su mejor bálsamo consolador ante el sufrimiento y la ruindad humanas’.¹⁴⁷ This text, which can be

¹⁴⁴ Ángel Esteban, ‘Apuntes para una biografía’, *Anthropos, Revista de La Documentación Científica de La Cultura*, 169 (1995), 8–20 (p. 10).

¹⁴⁵ Aurea Matilde Fernández, ‘Estudio preliminar’, in *El Partido Revolucionario Cubano* (Oviedo, España: Universidad de Oviedo, Vice-Rectorado de Extensión Universitaria, Servicio de Publicaciones, 1998), pp. IX – XLV (p. xix).

¹⁴⁶ José Martí, ‘El presidio político en Cuba’, in *José Martí, Obras Escogidas En Tres Tomos*, III vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1992), I, 25–52 (p. 26).

¹⁴⁷ Maritza Carrillo Guibert, ‘La sintaxis en el presidio político en Cuba, (apuntes para un estudio)’, in *En un domingo de mucha luz: cultura, historia y literatura española en La obra de José Martí* (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 1995), pp. 263–68 (p. 266).

regarded as book, pamphlet, chonical, brochure, testimony and condemnation, is divided into 12 sections, or parts.¹⁴⁸ From its first to its fifth section, *El Presidio* is a short essay, and from the sixth to the final, it is presented as a narrative.¹⁴⁹ The author's accusations begin restrained as he declares that he no longer hates his captors: 'Ni os odiaré, ni os maldeciré. Si yo odiara a alguien, me odiara por ello a mí mismo. Si mi Dios maldijera, yo negaría por ello a mí Dios'.¹⁵⁰ Martí addresses his captors, who seized him and forced his suffering for almost a year in the quarries.

With the introductory words in *El presidio*, Martí denotes a change in attitude and an emotional maturity fraught with suffering, compared with his pre-exile writings. Within a few years, the young Martí transformed from being an enthusiastic teenager promoting the freedom of his country, into a political exile, a consequence of the excesses of his thoughts and actions against the colony. It can be argued that over time his idea of hatred was reformulated, especially when considering how in his drama *Abdala*, written at age 15, the young Martí declared in one of its dialogues that the love of *patria* could not rely solely on the love of the land of one's birth, but that it was also based on hatred toward those who may oppress the *patria*.¹⁵¹

As the narrative in *El presidio* continues, the sixth part is much more emotional, describing in vivid detail raw moments of his lived experience in prison. This section represents a deep spiritual communication with some of Martí's companions in misfortune. In jail, the: 'intercambio diario con ellos lo enriqueció aún más en el aspecto humano. Del presidio salió convencido de la divinidad del hombre en la que las

¹⁴⁸ These different denominations for *El presidio* can be seen in Rubén Pérez Nápoles, *José Martí: el poeta armado* (Madrid: Algaba Ediciones, 2004), p. 80; Imilcy Balboa Navarro, 'Presidarios por esclavos. Mano de obra cautiva en la transición al trabajo libre', in *Trabajo libre y coactivo en sociedades de plantación*, ed. by José A Piqueras Arenas (Madrid: Siglo XXI de España, 2009), pp. 253–79 (p. 258); Márcio Seligmann-Silva, *O local da diferença: ensaios sobre memória, arte, literatura e tradução* (São Paulo, SP, Brasil: Editora 34, 2005), p. 88; Mauricio Núñez Rodríguez, 'La Narración Como Denuncia: "Castillo" Y El Presidio Político En Cuba', *Anuario Del Centro de Estudios Martianos*, 29 (2006), 126–40 (p. 128); Federico García Godoy, 'José Martí', in *Así Vieron a Martí*, ed. by Gonzalo de Quesada y Miranda (La Habana: Instituto Cubano del Libro, 1971), pp. 97–102 (p. 101).

¹⁴⁹ Ana Cairo, 'Un altivo Prometeo, escritor de El presidio político en Cuba', in *José, Martí, En un domingo de mucha luz: cultura, historia y literatura españolas en la obra de José Martí* (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 1995), pp. 257–58 (p. 258).

¹⁵⁰ Martí, 'El presidio político en Cuba', I, p. 25.

¹⁵¹ José Martí, 'Abdala', I, p. 20.

diferencias entre ellos, poco cuentan'.¹⁵² In his reflection, Martí invokes the memory of several cellmates who lived with him during those days. He presents the reader with a range of characters who should not be imprisoned, opening the section describing a seventy-six year old man with bloodstained clothes, who, like Martí, is a political prisoner. The image of the elderly man, devastated and hurt by the exhausting work in the quarry, struck Martí so strongly he indicated that along with his own pain, 'el dolor de Nicolas del Castillo será su perenne dolor'.¹⁵³ An outraged Martí tells readers of another inmate he met among the many incarcerated. Lino Figueredo, a twelve year-old boy, was just a few years younger than the author, and had been sentenced to ten years in prison. In the description given by Martí, the boy does not even understand why he is in jail. Martí questions the morals of the colonial authorities who condemned the boy as a prisoner, and notes that considering the child's emotional innocence, he wonders why the authorities will not let him be with his father and mother.

Martí's narrative becomes a clear attempt to gain the attention of his readers, thus declaring: 'Doce años tenía Lino Figueredo, y el Gobierno español lo cargaba de grillos, y lo lanzaba a los criminales, y lo exponía, quizás como trofeo en las calles'.¹⁵⁴ As indicated by Salvador Arias, the exalted tone of this broad perspective was effective in drawing attention to Martí's criticisms:

Pero también era vehículo ideal para que el adolescente dejara escapar sus emociones y su talento. Las evidentes intertextualidades sólo hacen destacar el poder creativo del autor. Se han mencionado, o Martí mismo lo explicita, fuentes como el Dante, Víctor Hugo o la *Biblia*. Y todo un aparataje expresionista, simbólico y épico de indudable estirpe romántica. Pero con una diferencia clave: el *yo* se transforma en *nosotros*.¹⁵⁵

El presidio was a complaint addressed to the Spaniards who would read it. According to Mauricio Núñez Rodríguez, it is appropriate to speak of a José Martí before and after

¹⁵² Dionisio Poey Baró, 'Visión martiana del negro interiorización de una mirada', *Anuario Del Centro de Estudios Martianos*, 21 (1998), 144–56 (p. 146).

¹⁵³ Martí, 'El presidio político en Cuba', I, p. 35.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p. 42.

¹⁵⁵ Salvador Arias, 'El "exabrupto" martiano de Sus dieciocho años', *Anuario Del Centro de Estudios Martianos*, 29 (2006), 122–25 (p. 124).

his experience in prison: ‘Este espacio significó la pérdida de la inocencia del adolescente. Fue un brusco y precoz crecimiento. Fue un salto súbito a la adultez, a la madurez, a la consolidación de su carácter.’¹⁵⁶ His accusations and testimony served the young writer as a balm and a catharsis, dedicated to the memory of those who still tormented him: ‘necesitaba, por él y por todos los que dejó en las canteras, dar a conocer ese régimen porque era la patria la que estaba siendo oprimida. Martí comienza, pues, a expresarse por una urgencia visceral de hacerlo’.¹⁵⁷ Whilst Martí does mention his own situation at times, he focuses instead on the pain of others, and as a reflective exercise, echoes their suffering to help mitigate his own pain: ‘Yo suelo olvidar mi mal cuando curo el mal de los demás’.¹⁵⁸ In this way we can all relate to the horrors he saw, heard and bore in prison. The young man’s pen, still incredulous in the face of so much evil, explained just how much was suffered there. Never before had Martí identified so greatly with his *patria*, nor would the reflection of one in the other ever be more evident. Of note is the fact that Martí, when referring to the elderly Nicolas del Castillo and the young Lino Figueredo, makes use of the polarity of age to highlight how colonial Spanish authorities had neither compassion, nor did they discriminate, at the time of punishment.

In *El presidio* Martí also makes use of two other characters that follow a similar type of polarity, though in this case they are not as well developed as del Castillo and Figueredo. He speaks of an older black man with mental problems, named Juan de Dios, as well as a young black boy, ‘el negrito Tomás,’ who was a political prisoner and also *bozal*, or a slave who did not speak Spanish. Claims made by Martí regarding the situation of these two characters mark the first time that the author would refer to Cuban blacks in his work, yet it is striking that his comments about the two are not as developed as comments regarding Nicolas del Castillo and Lino Figueredo. Perhaps this is because the situation of two black prisoners, regardless of age or health status, would not have had the same impact as the image of descendants of Spanish whites

¹⁵⁶ Mauricio Núñez Rodríguez, ‘La narración como denuncia: “Castillo” y El presidio político en Cuba’, *Anuario Del Centro de Estudios Martianos*, 29 (2006), 126–40 (p. 130).

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 130.

¹⁵⁸ Martí, ‘El presidio político en Cuba’, I, p. 46.

being humiliated and tortured. Martí's discussion of Juan de Dios is based on the memory of his innocence juxtaposed with his senility: 'Reía cuando le pusieron la cadena. Reía cuando le pusieron a la bomba. Reía cuando marchaba a las canteras. Solamente no reía cuando el palo rasgabas aquellas espaldas en que la luz del sol había dibujado más de un siglo'.¹⁵⁹ In this same pattern of polarity Martí comments on the situation of another child, discussing el negrito Tomás whilst maintaining his tone of indignation:

Ah! Su recuerdo indigna demasiado para que me deje hablar mucho de él. Trabajo me cuesta, sin embargo, contener mi pluma, que corre demasiado rápida, al oír su nombre. Tiene once años, y es negro, y es bozal. ¡Once años, y está en presidio! ¡Once años, y es sentenciado político!¹⁶⁰

In writing *El presidio* Martí was able to condemn some of the situations he had witnessed during his childhood; it was a cry of rebellion from deep within his psyche and settled a debt he felt he owed himself and his country: '*El presidio político en Cuba* no es una obra casual ni fortuita en la creación del joven Martí. Es una derivación lógica y necesaria de un proceso de maduración evolutiva, de sucesivos descubrimientos y autorreconocimientos socioculturales que se experimentan en su siquis inconscientemente'.¹⁶¹ On 17 May 1873, José Martí requested to move to Zaragoza to continue his education, where one year later he would graduate from high school with a diploma in the Arts, afterward becoming licensed in Civil and Canon Law, and followed finally by a degree in Philosophy and Letters.¹⁶² During the period Martí lived and studied in Spain, society was immersed in a state of political crisis. From 1868 to 1873, Spain experienced a period of revolutionary turmoil, as the new King, Amadeo of Savoy (1845-90), who was brought from abroad, arrived in Spain in December of 1870.¹⁶³ The reign of King Amadeo I was characterised by instability, including ministerial crises, attacks, republican conspiracies,

¹⁵⁹ Martí, 'El presidio político en Cuba', I, p. 47.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 48.

¹⁶¹ Núñez Rodríguez, 'La narración como denuncia: "Castillo" y El presidio político en Cuba', p. 136.

¹⁶² José Martí, *Contra España*, ed. by Andrés Sorel (Tafalla: Txalaparta, 1999), p. 25.

¹⁶³ Julia Ortiz Griffin and William D Griffin, *Spain and Portugal: A Reference Guide from the Renaissance to the Present* (New York: Facts on File, 2007), p. 84.

conservative conspiracies, and even worse, by the war in Cuba, which required more men and more money.¹⁶⁴

Whilst the rebellion in Cuba continued in 1872, Spanish Carlists launched their third war in favour of the Carlist pretender, and due to the ‘financial strains that the wars caused to Amadeo’s struggling government, ordinary Spaniards greatly resented the system of military conscription that took young men from their homes, and they did not support either war wholeheartedly’.¹⁶⁵ The inability to establish a stable exchange of power between the two parts of the Progressive Party, rejection by the Progressives of the king’s army, and the withdrawal of the landed nobility and bourgeoisie, all contributed to the abdication of the king in February of 1873. Spain’s monarchical courts were forced to proclaim the Republic as a final resort.¹⁶⁶ The new monarchy under King Amadeo I lasted only three years, replaced later by the first Spanish Republic in 1873-74.¹⁶⁷ This particular political juncture in the history of Spain provided the context for Martí to again criticise the colonial system in another article, *La Republica española ante la revolución cubana* (1873).¹⁶⁸ Like *El presidio*, the new text was also edited in Madrid, where the Cuban writer saw in the new Republic the possibility for Cuba, which by then had been in the throws of several years of insurrection, to gain its independence. From this point forward Martí dedicated himself to the cause of Cuban independence.

Through criticism directed at the idea of integrity between Cuba and its colonisers, which constituted a dynamic of domination, Martí reformulated and brandished a new conception of *patria* in *La Republica española ante la revolución cubana*.

Saludo a la republica que triunfa, la saludo hoy como la maldeciré
mañana cuando una Republica ahogue a otra República, cuando un
pueblo libre al fin comprima las libertades de otro pueblo, cuando una

¹⁶⁴ Fernández, ‘Estudio preliminar’, p. xix.

¹⁶⁵ William D Phillips and Carla Rahn Phillips, *A Concise History of Spain* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2010), p. 222.

¹⁶⁶ Fernández, ‘Estudio preliminar’, pp. xix–xx.

¹⁶⁷ José M. Magone, *Contemporary Spanish Politics* (London; New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 5.

¹⁶⁸ José Martí, ‘La República española ante la revolución cubana’, in *José Martí, obras escogidas en tres tomos*, III vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1992), I, 53–61.

nación que se explica que lo es, subyugue y someta a otra nación que le ha de probar que quiere serlo. Si la libertad de la tiranía es tremenda, la tiranía de la libertad repugna, estremece, espanta. (...) La República española abre eras de felicidad para su patria: cuide de limpiar su frente de todas las manchas, que la nublan, que no se va tranquilo ni seguro por sendas de remordimientos y opresiones, por sendas que entorpezcan la violación más sencilla, la comprensión más sencilla del deseo popular.¹⁶⁹

For Martí, the conception that suggested a national identity proposed by Spain for Cuba was not sustainable, with the writer declaring: ‘Y si faltan, pues, todas las comunidades, todas las identidades que hacen la patria integra, se invoca un fantasma que no ha de responder, se invoca una mentira engañadora cuando se invoca la integridad de la patria’.¹⁷⁰ When Martí assesses the *integridad de la patria*, as proposed by the colonial rulers, he explains to his readers that *patria* is something more than oppression, or a territory without liberties, or the right of possession by force. His idea of *patria*, presented here in a more developed sense, describes the concept as ‘comunidad de intereses, unidad de tradiciones, unidad de fines, fusión dulcísima y consoladora de amores y esperanzas’.¹⁷¹

The subject of freedom is assumed as the great problem of Cuba, the theme most discussed from the time the Cuban writer was very young. His attack on the colonial regime promoting its consolidation of a *patria libre* that would permit its inhabitants to make decisions about its destiny, would not only be the leitmotiv of his first writings, but was also the cause behind his first experiences of carnal suffering as a result of his struggles. At this stage, Martí fumbled with the racial problem in Cuba from a holistic view of freedom. He knew of the suffering of slaves but also ‘sabe que entre los blancos hay muchas diferencias, porque el hecho de haber nacido en la Península es fuente de irritantes privilegios que van en contra del decoro criollo convirtiéndolo en ciudadano de segunda categoría’.¹⁷² The strong allegations *El presidio político en Cuba* and *La República española ante la revolución cubana* both contain can be understood as a manifestation and a willingness to serve the cause of a

¹⁶⁹ José Martí, ‘La República española ante la revolución cubana’, I, p. 53.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 57.

¹⁷¹ Ibid, p. 57.

¹⁷² Humberto Piñera, *Idea, sentimiento y sensibilidad de José Martí* (Miami: Ediciones Universal, 1982), p. 74.

free Cuba. Martí recognised that the construction of a *patria libre* would come from within the community of interests and identities, a position that would be maintained in his later work and contained a more comprehensive view of the problem of black and indigenous races, to whom, by that point, he had devoted an important part of his writing in the framework of his political struggles.

Chapter II

Martí and Indigenous Issues in Mexico and Guatemala, 1875-1878

Concluding a five-year period of exile in Europe, Martí established himself in Mexico City in February of 1875 and two months later accepted a teaching position at the prestigious Liceo Hidalgo. Shortly after, he began publishing work in the government funded *Revista Universal*, using the pen name of *Orestes*, and from 1876, printed work in *El Federalista* and *El Socialista* papers, which also supported the liberal government of Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada. After stopping in Havana in 1877, Martí arrived in Guatemala, where, in April of the same year, he joined Escuela Normal in Guatemala City as academic staff and began teaching as a professor of literature. During the period spanning from 1875 to 1878 the Cuban writer and academic lived and made a life for himself between Mexico and Guatemala, publishing his first insights in examination of the indigenous theme. These early pieces written about Hispanic American Indians proved a disconnect from Martí's later humanistic writings, as much of what he wrote during the time spent in both countries exhibited a lack of regard for, criticism of and a belligerence toward, the indigenous and often contained patronising manifestations from the perspective of a young intellectual whose perceptions of Hispanic America were in the process of development. The chronicles, articles and other texts published by the Cuban author during this period reveal a young man who reproduced existing predominant ethnocentric thoughts toward the Hispanic American *indio* in the face of the challenges assimilation presented to the idea of progress in new nations with marked heterogeneous populations.

During the period ranging from 1875 to 1878, Martí shared the ideals and supported the liberal governments of Sebastian Lerdo de Tejada (1827-1889) in Mexico and Justo Rufino Barrios (1835-1885) in Guatemala, both of which prescribed to the tonic of governments assuming social and economic progress through the cultural and social homogenisation of the indigenous population. This was based on the notion of assimilation where the assumption was that the *indio* needed to change and adapt in order for modernisation to be achieved. This chapter reviews Martí's early visions of indigenous

issues, focusing specifically on the context of his stay in Mexico and Guatemala, both of which were nations in the midst of undergoing major liberal reforms that included addressing the ‘problem’ that indigenous populations represented. Accordingly, the purpose of this chapter is to examine the author’s early texts concerning the *indio*. The analysis presented comes from a review of his thoughts as reflected through his texts speaking of the indigenous, beginning with his arrival in Mexico in 1875 and later, with his stay in Guatemala from 1877 to 1878. It is thus understood that these visions of the indigenous are a departure from Martí’s racial thinking, influenced by the social and political context in which he was immersed, causing him to engage and develop his point of view beyond the Cuban racial reality, where the *indio* had not been present.

Raza muerta: the indigenous texts of Martí in Mexico

With his European political exile over, José Martí, now a young lawyer, began a new migratory experience that would enrich his perspective and mature his thinking. He reached Mexico in February of 1875, at the age of twenty-two. When Martí arrived in the country, Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada was president, and was continuing the agenda of Liberal political reform promoted by late President Benito Juárez (1806-1872), who had been dead for three years and had been of indigenous descent.¹⁷³ Mercedes Santos Moray synthesises the idea that the Mexico to which José Martí arrived was an excellent school of political praxis, with the nation having overcome the Maximilian Empire and the army of Napoleon II, and where the Reform foresaw infighting among the ranks of those who won the war and projected social crisis. Martí interpreted what he observed in Mexico as follows: ‘En la sociedad mexicana el joven emigrado abre sus horizontes y enriquece sus ideas, nacen

¹⁷³ About this period in Mexican history Pedro Henríquez Ureña presents the following summary: ‘El movimiento de innovación política, propiamente llamado de la Reforma, adquirió forma legal en la constitución liberal de 1857. A la muerte de Juárez (1872), su sucesor Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada, brillante orador, llevó adelante el programa de reforma liberal. Vino después Porfirio Díaz, y durante su largo y pacífico período –aunque no democrático– gobierno (1876-1911), el país entró francamente por el camino del progreso material que los esfuerzos de Juárez y Lerdo habían abierto’. See Pedro Henríquez Ureña, *Historia cultural y literaria de la América Hispánica* (Madrid: Editorial Verbum, 2007), pp. 172–173.

nuevos conceptos que él perfila a lo largo de su vida, como la visión integral de nuestra América donde se inserta Cuba'.¹⁷⁴

The young Cuban intellectual quickly integrated into the national culture through what he did best: journalism. Martí befriended Manuel Mercado, a young Mexican lawyer, who later introduced him to Pedro Santacilia, director of the *Revista Universal*. In May of 1875 the author joined *La Revista Universal* and using the pseudonym *Orestes*, Martí began to write for the periodical via a column he called *Boletines*. Martí covered, through his alter ego, 'gran parte de la problemática nacional: el movimiento obrero mexicano, la situación del indio, la defensa del desarrollo económico basado en la agricultura, la lucha política contra el caudillismo, así como la defensa de la democracia liberal'.¹⁷⁵ Just as he had in Spain, Martí integrated himself into intellectual circles in Mexico through public debates in forums like Liceo Hidalgo, a prominent educational institution, where his natural curiosity was nourished and he continued forging his intellect whilst also cultivating friendships with writers and personalities of note, such as Francisco Pimentel, Manuel Gutiérrez Nájera and Justo Sierra. From the time of his arrival in Mexico, political speculation was common in the national ambiance. As he became more outspoken, fame and intrigue around Martí grew more prominent as did annoyance with his proselytizing in support of the government.¹⁷⁶ Since his arrival in Mexico the author's position was aligned with the government of Lerdo de Tejada, who the writer praised and defended from political enemies through his *boletines*. Martí referred to Lerdo's political administration as 'el decoro de la patria, y la patria no debe tener enemigos en sus propios hijos'.¹⁷⁷

Mexico represented Martí's first experience in Spanish America, apart from his native Cuba, implying that whilst there his thinking acquired larger dimensions related to the region, further developing his writing aesthetic. Mexico was key in the development of

¹⁷⁴ Santos Moray, p. 50.

¹⁷⁵ Laura Hernández M., 'Martí en México', in *José Martí: poética y política* (México, D.F., La Habana: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana Unidad Iztapalapa, Centro de Estudios Martianos, 1997), pp. 107–115 (p. 109).

¹⁷⁶ Alfonso Herrera Franyutti, *Martí en México: recuerdos de una época* (México, D.F: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 1996), p. 102.

¹⁷⁷ José Martí, 'Revista Universal, 6 de mayo de 1875', in *Nuestra América I*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), VI, 208–15 (p. 214).

his thinking in the sense that it became his gateway to the Hispanic American world. Living in countries like Mexico and Guatemala during times of liberal reform, Martí tried to interpret what he observed in these societies and political landscapes and with, as Francisca López Civeira comments, ‘una perspectiva crítica, a partir de su convicción de la necesidad de crear soluciones propias para problemas propios’.¹⁷⁸ Martí scrutinised the reality of the *indio* concluding that they needed to be lead to a better future and saved from their own condition by those capable of doing so: intellectuals and ruling elites. One can argue that whilst in Mexico, his vision of ‘Nuestra América’ began to take shape, later deepening in Guatemala and eventually becoming a central concept in his philosophy and his Pan-American project. Also important to acknowledge is that it was in Mexico that his first writings regarding the *indio* were obviously conflictive, given to his lack of understanding of issues related to the indigenous condition.

Criticism Martí directed toward the political opposition that President Lerdo faced was based on the manipulation of the indigenous and the working masses. Accordingly, in his journalistic reflections, Martí considered the indigenous, workers and peasants as social groups unprepared to exercise their right to vote: ‘Los cargos sobre el sufragio comenzarían a ser un tanto justos, cuando tuviéramos un pueblo de votantes perfectamente entendidos, que por sí mismos fueran capaces de señalar su voluntad a la Nación’.¹⁷⁹ Through this commentary, the Cuban author assumes that the lack of education among the indigenous and peasant populations rendered them vulnerable as voters. Therefore, Martí’s solution was for every voting citizen to be educated by those more capable when preparing for the responsibility of casting a vote. From these admissions concerning the Mexican population, and especially the *indio*, the young Cuban intellectual began to ask who are the indigenous? Who should be tasked with awakening the dormant spirit of *los indios* he encountered in Mexico.

¹⁷⁸ Francisca López Civeira, ‘Martí, la revolución y el liberalismo de fines de siglo XIX’, in *Congreso Internacional José Martí en Nuestro Tiempo*, ed. by José Armillas Vicente (Zaragoza: Institución ‘Fernando el Católico’, 2007), pp. 171–83 (p. 173).

¹⁷⁹ José Martí, ‘Revista Universal, 24 de junio de 1875’, in *Nuestra América I*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), VI, 241–45 (p. 244).

¿Quién despierta a ese pueblo sin ventura? ¿Quién reanima a ese espíritu aletargado? No está muerto: -está dormido. No rehúye, espera. Él tomará la mano que le tiendan; él se ennoblece con el conocimiento de sí mismo, y esa raza, llena de sentimientos primitivos, de natural bondad, de entendimiento fácil, traerá a un pueblo nuevo una existencia nueva, con todo el adelanto que ‘ofrece la moderna vida, con la pureza de afectos y de miras, el vigoroso empuje, la aplicación creadora de los que conservan el hombre verdadero en la satisfacción de sus apetitos, el cumplimiento de sus necesidades, y la soledad de una existencia escondida y tranquila.’¹⁸⁰

Martí’s position concerning the awakening of the *indio* translated into the necessity for reforms that would enable the indigenous of Mexico to truly achieve assimilation. Thus, the writer stressed the point that the *indio* needed to transform into *un nuevo hombre*, ready for work and for the modernity required of a liberal State. As a result, Martí constructed a model for assimilation using the image of Benito Juárez and expressed as: ‘Un indio que sabe leer puede ser Benito Juárez; un indio que no ha ido a la escuela, llevará perpetuamente en cuerpo, raquítico un espíritu inútil y dormido.’¹⁸¹ During this period, Martí viewed public education as a civilising project that would facilitate indigenous assimilation. Juárez was the icon of the Mexican liberal State, given that his figure was a representation of the potential changes that assimilation could deliver, especially with regard to the consolidation of creole values that the indigenous would need to adopt in order to exercise a new citizenship. Social values such as freedom, labour and individual capacity required an education to be achieved. Accordingly, creoles intellectual, named themselves as the only group able to civilise and prepare the masses for the challenge of nation building. In the July *boletín*, written as an editorial letter for the *Revista Universal* on 10 July 1875, Martí, who had been in Mexico for several months at that point, launched an earnest and patronising discussion of the Mexican indigenous situation. In the article he comments on two social groups of great importance in Mexican society: *los trabajadores* and *los indios*. Martí began exalting the capacity for work and the level of knowledge among Mexican *trabajadores*: ‘Así nuestros obreros se levantan de masa guiada a clase consciente: saben ahora lo que son, y de

¹⁸⁰ José Martí, ‘Revista Universal, 10 de julio de 1875’, in *Nuestra América I*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), VI, 265–67 (p. 266).

¹⁸¹ José Martí, ‘Revista Universal, 26 de octubre de 1875’, in *Nuestra América I*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), VI, 351–53 (pp. 351–352).

ellos mismos les viene su influencia salvadora. Un concepto ha bastado para la transformación: el concepto de la personalidad propia.¹⁸² Whilst Mexican working class and individual achievement was seen in a positive light, his tone markedly changes when referring to the *indios* and their place in Mexican society. Martí's comments illustrated a harsh and inflexible position depicting the indigenous peoples he found in Mexico as humans with no soul, who had been denigrated but who had also degraded themselves. Martí went so far as to use the epithet of *hombres-bestias* in his depiction of the indigenous. In his *boletín* the author demonstrated a feeling of irritation caused by the servitude, quietude and lack of self-dignity that he perceived in the indigenous. It is necessary to share Martí's comments at length to appreciate the mood in which he realised his observations:

Irritan esas criaturas serviles, estos hombres bestias que nos llaman amo y nos veneran: es la esclavitud que los degrada: es que esos hombres mueren sin haber vivido: es que esos hombres avergüenzan de la especie humana. Nada lastima tanto como un ser servil; parece que mancha; parece que hace constantemente daño. La dignidad propia se levanta contra la falta de dignidad ajena, quisiérase crear, transformar, producirse en los demás; quisiérase dar de sí mismo para que los serviles fueran iguales a nosotros.

Avergüenza un hombre débil: duele, duele mucho la certidumbre del hombre-bestia. Pululan por las calles; quiebran en la extensión que su cuerpo indolente cubre, las raíces que comienzan a brotar; echados sobre la tierra, no la dejan producir; satisfacen el apetito; desconocen la nobleza de la voluntad. –Corren como brutos; no saben andar como hombres; hacen la obra del animal: el hombre no despierta en ellos.¹⁸³

With these first notes on the subject, Martí is far from presenting a comprehensive and humanist vision on race, which he developed years later and which embraced racial pluralism, a posture reflected in his philosophy as a much needed formula in the construction of Hispanic American societies. Here, the prejudice Martí demonstrates is loaded with the plea to integrate the indigenous with the development efforts he believed the Mexican nation required at the time to advance. Yet, it is also in these first notes that Martí falls into the idealistic position of saving the 'other', the outcast. Martí considers that the indigenous are asleep and that the nation sleeps on top of them:

¹⁸² Martí, 'Revista Universal, 10 de Julio de 1875', VI, p. 265.

¹⁸³ Ibid, pp. 265–266.

La raza está esperando y nadie salva a la raza. La esclavitud la degradó, y los libres lo ven esclavos todavía: esclavos de sí mismos, con la libertad en la atmosfera y en ellos; esclavos tradicionales, como si una sentencia rudísima pesara sobre ellos perpetuamente. La libertad no es placer propio: es deber extenderla a los demás: el esclavo desdora al dueño: da vergüenza ser dueño de otro.¹⁸⁴

To grasp Martí's view toward indigenous people at this stage, insight into the historical importance of this period in the political life of the country is beneficial. During his term as president of Mexico (1872-1876), Lerdo de Tejada, formerly Chief of the Supreme Court during Juárez's tenure in office, was able to strengthen the role of the state significantly.¹⁸⁵ The Mexican nation was entering the phase of capitalist accumulation and struggled in the economic sphere between two fundamental positions. One side posed the option of a nationalist agrarian capitalism whilst the other presented an industrial and financially driven American infusion: 'La primera postura la defendía el gobierno liberal de Lerdo, la segunda, Porfirio Díaz, quien finalmente saldrá victorioso imponiendo una larga dictadura que terminará con el estallido revolucionario de 1910'.¹⁸⁶ With the rise of capitalism and changes in the modes of production in the latter quarter of the nineteenth century, in Hispanic American countries like Mexico indigenous issues took center stage for liberal intellectuals searching for solutions to the economic and social crises that engulfed the nations of the region.

The refusal of the indigenous to abandon the concept of communal property represented, in virtue, an obstacle to the expansion of the nation, as leaders attempted to overcome pressing economic problems. By mid-century in Mexico, perceived stagnation of indigenous peoples had certainly become a national problem. The state of the *indio*, the organisation and management of land and the power of the Church were prominent themes in the debate on constitutional reform in 1855. These deliberations pointed out the deplorable state in which the indigenous were living, as well as the need to study indigenous customs to gain a better understanding of how they might adapt to the new laws of the

¹⁸⁴ Martí, 'Revista Universal, 10 de Julio de 1875', VI, p. 266.

¹⁸⁵ Friedrich Katz, 'The Liberal Republic and the Porfiriato, 1867-1910', in *Mexico since Independence*, ed. by Leslie Bethell (Cambridge [England]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 49–124 (p. 62).

¹⁸⁶ Hernández, 'Martí en México', pp. 108–109.

nation.¹⁸⁷ Two decades before Martí's arrival in Mexico, on 25 June 1856, Lerdo de Tejada, who then served as Secretary of the Treasury, issued what is known as the Ley Lerdo. This law focused on limiting the build-up of land by civil corporations and ecclesiastical groups.¹⁸⁸ The idea was to avoid inactivity on unworked lands, weaken the economic power of the Church and promote the establishment of small and medium-sized entrepreneurs. However, the law also affected indigenous communities since it attacked the idea of communal property.

As a legal instrument the Ley Lerdo was meant to provide indigenous peoples with the tools necessary for economic and political progress.¹⁸⁹ Although the principle of the reform was to introduce among Mexican Indians the figure of landholders, the law did provide any preparation for the indigenous communities affected to be able to realise the new role expected of them within the national framework of liberal reforms.¹⁹⁰ For liberals the desideratum of private propriety became an inherent right every man should have, as well as a form of individual and social progress fostering a new class of owners who would contribute to political stability and democracy.¹⁹¹ Reviewing his texts published during this period, it would appear that Martí held a conflictive position regarding how private property could work within indigenous communities. He observed a deep-rooted problem in Mexican society that might compromise the growth and evolution that private property and a free market could deliver. For example, in an article he wrote on the 14 July in the *Revista Universal*, Martí reviews his distrust in the capability of the Mexican population to take advantage of the mineral wealth of the country. In the text he declared that the nation was endowed with a level of wealth it was not prepared for. At this point Martí was referring not only to the *indio*, but also to what he considered the *perezosa naturaleza* of the Mexican people in general:

¹⁸⁷ Francisco López Bárcenas, *Autonomía y derechos indígenas en México* (México, D.F.: CEIICH/UNAM, Ediciones Coyoacán, 2005), pp. 64–65.

¹⁸⁸ Juana Vázquez Gómez, *Dictionary of Mexican Rulers, 1325-1997* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1997), p. 150.

¹⁸⁹ Karen Deborah Caplan, *Indigenous Citizens: Local Liberalism in Early National Oaxaca and Yucatán* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2009), p. 174.

¹⁹⁰ Wilfrid Hardy Callcott, *Liberalism in Mexico 1857-1829* (Connecticut: Archon Books, 1965), p. 64.

¹⁹¹ Antonio Escobar Ohmstede, Teresa Rojas Rabiela and Patricia Lagos Preisser, *La presencia del indígena en la prensa capitalina del siglo XIX: catálogo de noticias* (México: INI-CIESAS, 1992), p. 18.

En vano es que la tierra mexicana brinde a las manos laboriosas sus entrañas de plata y oro: antes es desventura que las abra, porque confiada en los exuberantes dones de la tierra, a ellos fía la perezosa naturaleza de los mexicanos un porvenir que un día ha de extinguirse con lo accidental que lo enriquece y alimenta.¹⁹²

Martí believed in the importance of commercial development, industry, labour and individual capacities,¹⁹³ and although he viewed the working masses that elevated Mexico in a positive light, he regarded the capacity of Mexicans to leverage their wealth with suspicion. These limitations constituted a serious problem from the point of view of Mexican intellectual elites of the nineteenth century. Historian and scholar Charles Hale has discussed how the liberal ideology rooted within Mexican ruling classes of the second half of the nineteenth century embraced a vision of social progress and economic development focused on the idea that the individual could be left to his natural inclinations or to pursue his own interests freely. The result of which was supposed to be spontaneous identification of common interests and social harmony.¹⁹⁴ However, Martí questioned how it would be possible to lead the indigenous and Mexican peoples to achieve this harmonic state, when the first group had lived in a communal order and individualism had not been a traditional value, whilst the latter group, according to Martí, had a tendency to laziness rendering them incapable of taking advantage of the wealth and fertility offered by the land. Sustaining liberal arguments regarding welfare, Martí argued that general contentment had to be achieved through work and personal interest: ‘La única manera de concebir el bien general es halagar y proteger el trabajo y el interés de cada uno’, continuing with the statement: ‘La generación actual es eminentemente individualista’.¹⁹⁵ Nevertheless, Martí’s mistrust regarding the capacities of the indigenous and the Mexican people in general, contradicted the classic liberal postulation in which individual wellbeing would lead to general social

¹⁹² José Martí, ‘Revista Universal, 14 de Julio de 1875’, in *Nuestra América I*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), VI, 267–71 (p. 268).

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 269–271.

¹⁹⁴ Charles A. Hale, *The Transformation of Liberalism in Late Nineteenth-Century Mexico* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1989), p. 4.

¹⁹⁵ Martí, ‘Revista Universal, 14 de Julio de 1875’, VI, p. 271.

harmony. Furthermore, in the particular case of the *indio*, the idea seemed to be that their own interests were not important if not aligned with what the nation expected from them.

After more than seven months in the country, the twenty-two year old author continued focusing his writings on the indigenous, chronicling them through a decadent and dishonored image that was in opposition with the fast pace at which the Mexican nation endeavored to rise. In another *boletín* published on 14 September 1875, Martí continued to paint his vision of the lethargic *indio*:

No quiere el boletinista hablar de cosas tristes, por más que sea para él día oscuro el día en que vagando por las calles grupos acusadores de infelices indios, masa útil y viva, que se desdeña como estorbo enojoso y raza muerta. Y es que hacen dolorosísimo contraste la mañana, nacer del día, y el indio, perpetua e impotente crisálida de hombre. Todo despierta al amanecer, y el indio duerme: hace daño esta grave falta de armonía.¹⁹⁶

Here the character of the *indio* is described using concepts like darkness and unhappiness to define them as a *raza muerta*. Reflecting on their state and situation, Martí also wondered what could save them. Of note in this particular text is Martí's position that compulsory education would not be sufficient to help the indigenous. Despite Mexico's national education reform, which began with Juárez in 1867 and gained broad and articulate support during the regime of Lerdo de Tejada,¹⁹⁷ the Cuban author believed well-paid work and aspirations that would create new needs might be the only things to redeem the indigenous. Jorge Camacho observes that these accounts describe how 'el letargo, la pereza, la constitución física de los indígenas y la exuberante imaginación de los mexicanos se unían para conspirar contra la nación y el avance económico.'¹⁹⁸ According to Camacho, newspapers of the time frequently discussed economic policies that the State should continue. The issue of indigenous people was one of them. Based on data obtained from T. G. Powell in 1875, Camacho explains that about forty percent of the population of Mexico, (then 9.5 million inhabitants) was indigenous. They had a subsistence economy outside of

¹⁹⁶ José Martí, 'Revista Universal, 14 de Septiembre de 1875', in *Nuestra América I*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), VI, 327–30 (p. 237).

¹⁹⁷ Hale, *The Transformation of Liberalism in Late Nineteenth-Century Mexico*, p. 226.

¹⁹⁸ Jorge Camacho, *Etnografía, política y poder a finales del siglo XIX: José Martí y la cuestión indígena* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: North Carolina Studies in the Romance Languages and Literatures, 2013), p. 49.

the national circuit, which condemned them to a life of poverty and malnutrition. In short, Camacho notes that in 1850, the Mexican government began to divide the communal lands of the natives (called ejidos) into farms, which was something they opposed. Liberals viewed the *indio* as an obstacle to the progress of the nation, precisely because of their lack of individualism. The answer then proposed to "fix" this "problem" was to either bring foreign settlers over to exploit the fertile land of the country, or to ask the indigenous to do so, based on profit motive.¹⁹⁹

It is understood that the period in Hispanic America following the wars of independence was also an important time of complete transformation. Pedro Henríquez Ureña defines the years between 1860 and 1890 in the region as a period of readjustment and organisation in the republics, including emancipated Mexico. Henríquez Ureña explains that whilst new political institutions changed the structure of society, education also took new directions: 'Por ejemplo en la educación, después de diversas influencias filosóficas que suplantaron la tradición escolástica de la era colonial, se impuso el positivismo francés e inglés, señaladamente en el Brasil, México, la Argentina y Chile'.²⁰⁰ As Juan Blanco points out, José Martí, like most Latin American intellectuals of the nineteenth and much of the twentieth century, was seduced by the cultural hegemonic paradigm of the Old World. Those overseas realities were the spirit in which young Martí first evaluated intellectual and cultural benchmarks against many American realities. Blanco suggests that the search for modernity inferred by Martí at this stage made his commentaries and judgments of the history of America examples of, *un espíritu ilustrado*, which although located in the New World, still had its eyes on those civilising possibilities drawn from the Old World.²⁰¹

In his *boletines*, Martí speaks of the indigenous race as a race apart, found in the margins of Mexican society, and that the failure to integrate them into the mainstream would stop the progress of the nation. Martí, through this model, continued homogenizing

¹⁹⁹ See Jorge Camacho, 'Liberalismo y etnicidad: en las crónicas mexicanas y guatemaltecas de José Martí', *Ciberletras: Revista de Crítica Literaria y de Cultura*, 2008. <<http://www.lehman.cuny.edu/ciberletras/v19/camacho.html>> [accessed 1 September 2013].

²⁰⁰ Henríquez Ureña, p. 171.

²⁰¹ Juan Blanco, 'Modernidad y metamodernidad en el discurso de José Martí sobre el indígena', in *130 años de Martí en Guatemala* (Ciudad de Guatemala: Armar editores, 2007), pp. 57–108 (p. 61).

the indigenous, reproducing the viciousness established by colonialism that he had been so critical of during his early youth in Cuba: the coercion of self-determination; the negation of the other; and the imposition of foreign models on the realities of new nations. According to Mayra Beatriz Martínez, the criteria of race proposed by Martí at this stage, beyond the morphological spelling: ‘desemboca en el entendimiento cultural como etnia, y así es que se refiere a los aborígenes precolombinos como una raza, reuniéndolos indistintamente bajo el calificativo de ‘indios’ (indígenas, aborígenes) e ignorando sus particularidades, a pesar de haber logrado conocerlas’.²⁰² The vision that positions *los indios* as a social group following a different path from that which the nation required, mirrors the central argument of one of the major works written about indigenous Mexican during the period, *Memoria sobre las causas que han originado la situación actual de la raza indígena en México y medios para remediarla*, penned between 1862 and 1875 by intellectual and educator Francisco Pimentel. The author was well known by Martí, as he was the director of Liceo Hidalgo, the education centre where Martí was an educator. By 1864 Pimentel had already placed a great deal of emphasis on the isolation of the indigenous with respect to the rest of the Mexican population. Pilar Máynez has noted the type of nation professed by Pimentel had nothing to do with the reality of a pluriethnic Mexico. Pimentel, like most other intellectual elites, believed that to achieve unity it was necessary for the indigenous to forget their language and customs.²⁰³

In Mexico, Martí’s presence was embedded in a stage of Hispanic American development valued not by virtue of what it considered itself but instead measured by the progress it emulated from a Europe consisting of ‘the’ model to replicate through its speeches, cultural productions and its own value of reality. Insert Martí into that vista and the result was the indigenous being treated in many of his early writings with all of the prevailing prejudices afforded those groups at that time, many of whom comprised a large percentage of the population in most Hispanic American countries. Beyond the ethnocentric position Martí demonstrated in Mexico, it was also there that he began to weave together his Pan-American conception. In an article published in *Revista Universal* on

²⁰² Mayra Beatriz Martínez Díaz, *Convivencias del viajero* (La Habana: Instituto Cubano del Libro, 2011), p. 87.

²⁰³ Pilar Máynez, *Lenguas y literaturas indígenas en el México contemporáneo* (México, D.F: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2003), p. 22.

15 January 1876, Martí used the term “nuestra América” for the first time, which he would later construct through the experiences, approaches and observations of realities he lived in countries like Cuba, Spain, Mexico, Guatemala, Venezuela and, of course, the United States.

In 1876, the political situation became critical and those in opposition to President Lerdo de Tejada gathered in Oaxaca and proclaimed the Tuxtepec plan, naming General Porfirio Díaz as chief.²⁰⁴ The softening of the political structure of the government and the country’s instability were becoming obvious, so Martí, apprehensive about the rise of coming *caudillismo*, decided to leave Mexico, despite the stability and recognition he had gained after a year in residence. Whereas in Cuba the historical extermination of indigenous peoples created a nationality devoid of pre-Columbian tradition,²⁰⁵ in Mexico Martí had been offered a complex and unfamiliar pre-Colombian reality with racial issues concerning the idea of how to integrate indigenous peoples into the national project. This was a distinct situation from his experiences witnessing slavery and the African diaspora. The writer said farewell to Mexico with an article titled *Extranjero*, which was published on 16 December 1876, in *El Federalista*. Although sad, his final words had the tone of serenity that a person who is doing the right thing would have: ‘Y así, allá como aquí, donde yo vaya como donde estoy, en tanto dure mi peregrinación por la ancha tierra,-para la lisonja, siempre extranjero; para el peligro, siempre ciudadano’.²⁰⁶

Guatemala: optimism for the *indio*

After his stay in Mexico for a little over a year, Martí reached Guatemala on 2 April 1877. Upon his arrival he joined the faculty of Guatemala City’s La Escuela Normal as a professor of literature, directed by José María Izaguirre, another Cuban exile. A mere five days after his arrival, by request of the government, he began writing the play *Patria y Libertad (un drama indio)*, which was commissioned by the Guatemalan authorities to celebrate national holidays. After only several weeks in the country, on 29 May, he was

²⁰⁴ Santos Moray, p. 55.

²⁰⁵ Enrique Ubieta Gómez, ‘José Martí y el proyecto emancipador cubano’, in *Latinoamérica, cultura de culturas*, ed. by Leopoldo Zea and Mario Magallón (México, D.F.: Instituto Panamericano de Geografía e Historia : Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1999), pp. 107–19 (p. 113).

²⁰⁶ José Martí, ‘Extranjero, El Federalista. México, diciembre 16 de 1876’, in *Nuestra América I*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), VI, 360–63 (p. 363).

appointed professor of French, Italian, and German literature and of the History of Philosophy in the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Guatemala.²⁰⁷

Martí began his first tour of the countries of Central America when he decided to leave Mexican territory; precisely at the moment General Días' dictatorship began.²⁰⁸ He arrived in Guatemala during the period when the liberal revolution was beginning to show its aspirations. The intellectual society, *El Porvenir*, would be among the first to receive the Cuban writer on Guatemalan soil.²⁰⁹ Similar to the milieu he found in Mexico, it was a time when the liberal wave shook Central America and Guatemala, ruled by a new generation of liberals who history has distinguished for their pragmatism and positivist ideas. In 1871, the Liberals won leadership of Guatemala, with Justo Rufino Barrios, who Martí knew personally, leading the country between 1873 and 1879.²¹⁰ Landing in Guatemala from Mexico in 1877, Martí's ideas regarding the indigenous remained unchanged to some extent. Jorge Camacho argues that Martí arrived in Guatemala during the middle reaches of the liberal revolution that had led Miguel García Granados (1809-1878) and later, President Justo Rufino Barrios, into power. Among the major resolutions that both leaders had adopted were issues such as 'la expulsión de varias comunidades religiosas, entre ellas los jesuitas, la expropiación de las tierras y edificios que pertenecían al clero, y una fuerte campaña educacional que se extendió a los indígenas en la década del 1880'.²¹¹ Rufino Barrios was in favour of Cuba's independence and allowed a group of Cuban exiles to settle in Guatemala and influence political and public life in the country.

Martí's thinking at the time identified utility with goodness, novelty, workmanship, industry, and trade, all realised and promised by the government of Guatemala, which in search for the general wellbeing of the population performed a variety of actions.²¹² When José Martí arrived in Guatemala, the government had just begun to enforce the regulation

²⁰⁷ Artemis Torres Valenzuela, *El Pensamiento positivista en la historia de Guatemala (1871-1900)* (Guatemala: Caudal, 2000), p. 166.

²⁰⁸ Adalberto Santana, 'Guatemala en la vida y obra de José Martí', in *130 años de Martí en Guatemala* (Ciudad de Guatemala: Armar editores, 2007), pp. 109–21 (p. 110).

²⁰⁹ Blanco, 'Modernidad y metamodernidad en el discurso de José Martí sobre el Indígena', p. 68.

²¹⁰ Santana, pp. 112–113.

²¹¹ Jorge Camacho, 'Liberalismo y etnicidad: en las crónicas mexicanas y guatemaltecas de José Martí', p.6.

²¹² Torres Valenzuela, p. 169.

of day labourers, a nod to the former colonial system. Indigenous communities were forced to provide temporary workers, obliging them to landowners. The new regime was further supported using repressive laws of vagrancy and policies promoting political and social control. Barrios established a neo-colonial order of domination that generated the development of dependent capitalism but subsequently converted into a system beneficial to and at the service of the local oligarchy. Supporting the philosophies of liberal government, the young Cuban intellectual was aligned with president Barrios in promoting a staunch anticlericalism and the need for educational reform.²¹³ Like in Mexico, Martí was welcomed into Guatemalan academic and cultural circles, and was often visited by General Garcia Granados, former president of the Liberal government. There, alongside distinguished men from academia, ideas were argued and spread.²¹⁴

Indigenous peoples, or *los indios*, are present in Martí's Guatemalan texts, but are alluded to with more optimism than in Mexico. He acknowledges that they wanted self-determination but that they knew this issue, ominously deep in the Americas, would take an indefinite time to be resolved.²¹⁵ In Guatemala Martí delved deeper into the reality of the Hispanic American people, maturing both politically and socially. Here, his concept of *Nuestra América*, the idealistic project born in Mexico, was detailed and enriched through his contact with the Latin American reality present in republics emerging from the colonisation, including the great contradictions between past and present, between methods and colonial structures and in the need to change that which fuelled these new republican societies. During this time, José Martí viewed the political and social situation as a result of separation from Spain, and that a new republic had to be created, free, independent and sovereign, confronting the evils that emerging nations face after liberating wars in a complex and difficult battle.²¹⁶

To understand the configuration of the Guatemalan *indio* depicted by Martí is to

²¹³ Marco Vinicio Mejía, 'José Martí en las tierras de Los falsos liberales', in *Martí en América: el viajero ante la ruta de la dignidad* (Ciudad de Guatemala: Armar editores, 2011), pp. 45–55 (p. 46).

²¹⁴ Torres Valenzuela, p. 170.

²¹⁵ Rose Lima, 'Martí en Guatemala', in *José Martí: poética y política* (México, D.F., La Habana: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana Unidad Iztapalapa, Centro de Estudios Martianos, 1997), pp. 117–23 (p. 119).

²¹⁶ Santos Moray, p. 59.

make a direct connection to the discursive construction of the indigenous in Guatemala during the liberal era. Juan Blanco explains that the *indio* created by Martí and reflected in his drama *Patria y Libertad*, presented in April of 1877 by the students of the Escuela Normal,²¹⁷ demonstrates the following characteristics: ‘a) es un personaje empoderado, dueño de sí y partícipe del proyecto patrio; b) anticlerical; c) reconoce su lugar subalterno frente al bien mayor de la patria. Estas tres características manifiestan la representación del indígena ideal requerido por el proyecto liberal.’²¹⁸ Here, Martí retook much of the dramatic position used in the play *Abdala* (1869), written in his youth in Cuba, where he spoke of freedom, courage and patriotism. In this later drama, the Cuban writer pairs noble characters Doña Casta and Doña Fe against Indiana, an *indio* patriot who knows her rights and has strong ideals. The empowerment of the character of Indiana in the drama is depicted when she responds angrily to one of Doña Fe’s maids, who asks her to withdraw from the front of the church with her entourage because Doña Fe and Doña Casta do not want see common people in their path:

Y ¿por qué? La calle es libre.
 Y, esta calle, calle es de nuestra tierra.
 Que aunque nosotras somos de la plebe
 Y Doña Casta es de la nobleza,
 Nosotras somos hijas de este pueblo
 y ella no es nada más que una extranjera²¹⁹

However, depicting the *indio* in Guatemala in this manner demonstrates that Martí had not yet found his own voice and still held onto an illustrated and prejudiced position reflected by the intellectual environment. In Guatemala, as noted by Juan Blanco: ‘Martí será un prototipo de intelectual decimonónico que asume el proyecto de *progreso* civilizacional como bandera de lucha ideológica ante las manifiestas necesidades que este proyecto ascensional demande’.²²⁰ Martí’s use of pride for what he regarded as the *indios’* glorious past seems to follow what Rebeca Earle has describe as the constant use of pre-Columbian history to

²¹⁷ Roberto Fernández Retamar and Ibrahim Hidalgo Paz, *Semblanza biográfica y cronología mínima*, p. 32.

²¹⁸ Juan Blanco, ‘Colonialidad del saber y literatura: invención y anulación del indígena en *Patria y libertad* (drama indio) de José Martí’, *A Parte Rei: Revista de Filosofía*, 2010, p. 16
 <<http://serbal.pntic.mec.es/~cmunoz11/blanco72.pdf>> [accessed 10 August 2013].

²¹⁹ José Martí, ‘*Patria y libertad* (drama Indio)’, in *Teatro, novela, la edad de oro*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), XVIII, 129–151 (p. 132).

²²⁰ Blanco, ‘Modernidad y metamodernidad en el discurso de José Martí sobre el indígena’, pp. 77–78.

construct a national past that accorded little place for the contemporary indigenous population. This reinforced the notion that ‘preconquest Indians were good to build nations with, but contemporary Indians were not.’²²¹

Nonetheless, as Martí demonstrates in his introduction to the booklet *Guatemala*, which was published in Mexico in early 1878, not all pre-colonial indigenous traditions were essential to build and solidify national identities. Traditional culture and customs had immobilised Central American Indians on their march to advance. In *Guatemala*, Martí expresses his dislike for some archetypal elements of native culture still in use in the country at the time: ‘Derribaré el cacaxte de los indios, el huacal ominoso, y pondré en sus manos el arado, y en su seno dormido la conciencia.’²²² Figuratively, this reflexion on forcefully replacing the ‘cacaxte’²²³ with new cultural values and with new tools to work the land, infers that the changes proposed by Martí were profound and would include altering anything from the habits of the indigenous to their cultural materiality. Yet, it is important to note that Martí made those comments after giving thanks for all that he had received up to that point in Guatemala. He acknowledged that the country had made him ‘maestro que es hacerlo creador’,²²⁴ where contributing to the transformation of the indigenous people was his form of payment. Robert Huish and George Lovell contend that for the Maya majority, who in the early nineteenth century accounted for four out of five Guatemalans, conservatism meant an extension of cultural traditions ‘that native communities had shaped for themselves during colonial times. On the other hand, liberalism signalled assimilation into a modern, outward-looking state run not only by criollos but also by mestizos (mixed blood people known in Guatemala as ladinos)’.²²⁵

²²¹ Rebecca Earle, *The Return of the Native: Indians and Myth-Making in Spanish America, 1810-1930* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), p. 183.

²²² José Martí, ‘Guatemala’, in *Nuestra América II*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), VII, 113–58 (p. 117).

²²³ The cacaxte, or cacaxtle, is a basket used to haul cargo and is placed on a person’s back, and the huacal or guacal also has the same function. See Esther Hernández, *Vocabulario en lengua castellana y mexicana de fray Alonso de Molina: estudio de los indigenismos léxicos y registro de las voces españolas internas* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1996), pp. 72, 104.

²²⁴ Martí, ‘Guatemala’, VII, p. 117.

²²⁵ Robert Huish and George Lovell, ‘Under the Volcanoes: The Influence of Guatemala on José Martí’, *Cuban Studies*, 39 (2008), 25–43 (p. 30).

This notion of national progress is consistent in pointing out that heterogeneous cultural production of marginal and subaltern groups, including the indigenous, was not sustainable as such group could become an obstacle to material, social and cultural development. Reflecting on Martí's view of the Guatemalan indigenous, David Vela has discussed the contradictory feelings the Cuban writer must have experienced, seeing in the indigenous 'condiciones positivas y negativas, en modo alguno consubstanciales, Martí se llena de un confuso sentimiento de tristeza y esperanza, de compasión y de optimismo'.²²⁶ Contrary to Martí's depictions of indigenous Mexican Indians, in Guatemala the political context seemed to bring a more optimistic and hopeful view of the indigenous situation, as reflected by his demonstrated support and appreciation for President General Justo Rufino Barrios, who Martí had met and interviewed after arriving in the country:

Enseñar mucho, destruir la centralización oligárquica, devolver a los hombres su personalidad lastimada o desconocida; tales cosas propónese y prométese el gobierno actual en Guatemala, que pone contribución sobre los caminos, pero con ella abre escuelas. El Presidente suele traer entre su escolta pobres indios, pobres ladinos, que recoge por los míseros campos para que sean enseñados en las nuevas escuelas de la capital. Vienen con los pies desnudos; vuelven profesores normales. Traían la miseria cuando Barrios los recogió; llevan a sus pueblos una escuela, un hombre instruido y un apóstol. Sepan cumplir y agradecer. Lo sé bien y lo veo. Presidente y ministros anhelan atraer gente útil, que lleven una industria, que reformen un cultivo, que establezcan una máquina, que apliquen un descubrimiento. No parcos, pródigos son de dádivas. Hay afán por ocupar a los inteligentes. Los hombres de campo tienen allí su techo y su mesa. Quiere el Gobierno que den ejemplo, inteligencia y fuerza a los campesinos, a menudo desidiosos, del país. Resucitar; esto quiere el Gobierno. Cultivar, emprender, distribuir.²²⁷

Similar to his expression of support for Mexico's president Lerdo de Tejada, in the pages of the brochure *Guatemala*, Martí articulated his enthusiasm for President Barrios' program. For example, as an important point the author emphasised the changes implemented to integrate the Guatemalan indigenous. The slogan with which Martí condenses these reforms

²²⁶ David Vela, *Martí en Guatemala* (Ciudad de Guatemala: Editorial del Ministerio de Educación Pública, 1954), p. 124.

²²⁷ Martí, 'Guatemala', VII, pp. 134–135.

is summarised in: ‘Cultivar, emprender, distribuir’.²²⁸ Unlike his Mexican reflections, in *Guatemala* the author describes a young nation that was not burdened by the obstacles and vices other young nations in similar points of development had been. According to Martí, his support and optimism were based on what he observed, and with Barrios he believed the *indio* would leave behind misery and be educated. Whilst in Guatemala, Martí also used the word *resucitar*. Perhaps he did so because he had once referred to the indigenous as a ‘raza muerta’, an expression he had utilised in Mexico. Martí constantly repeats his apparent support for the efforts of the government, which he felt were respectful toward the indigenous:

El país tiene la firme decisión de adelantar: va por buen camino, piensa más en la agricultura que en la política. La política grandiosa es el primer deber; la mezquina el mayor vicio nacional. Ni la pereza, ni la incuria son vicios guatemaltecos.²²⁹

To reaffirm his comment the author uses the style of an eyewitness to positively describe the achievements of the government, ‘Gocé mucho viendo a un ladino, allá en el fondo de un monte, leer atento, mientras su hijo aderezaba la carga, un libro de muestras de centrífugas. Los indios apáticos se quejan, pero el gobierno respeta a los buenos’.²³⁰ Using this method, the author presents a promising future for the Central American nation, to the point of showing a complacent interest in adapting his views to what was expected by the political elites in charge:

Sobrada está Guatemala de talentos; la libertad los hará muy pronto florecer. Penetración, espíritu de independencia, impaciencia noble e hidalguía; esto observo en los hombres jóvenes de la mayor de las repúblicas centrales. Tengo fe en su naturaleza bondadosa, en su inteligencia clara, en su costumbre de trabajo, en su honroso y seguro porvenir.²³¹

In the brochure, Martí presents the reality of indigenous peoples as victims of colonialism, thus emphasising the work that the nation should confront in preparation for its

²²⁸ Martí, ‘Guatemala’, VII, p. 135.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

transformation and for its indigenous population to overcome the stagnation caused by the colonial order. Martí believed that the government was taking appropriate measures to do so, such as adopting the enterprise of education as being an effective means to achieving a positive future. As had been proposed by liberal reformers in Mexico, it was the author's view that the *indios* of Guatemala should also be assisted by the government to achieve a similar degree of civilisation to that of its other citizens. The ideas presented in the brochure, a document commissioned by the government, were conformed to the role that national history played in the process of nation building in nineteenth century Spanish America. Rebecca Earle has recognised this role as 'sites of memory,' which function to pursue and create new national memories. José Martí's *Guatemala* booklet would contribute to that patriotic history, 'often explicitly, at developing a sense of national history that it was the patriotic duty of the state to propagate'.²³²

Under this perspective Martí's perception of the indigenous in the early years of his return to the region, as indicated by Juan Blanco, reflects the footprint of the era, 'es decir, repiten los discursos predominantes en aquel momento histórico; discursos de evolución y configuración de una margen del indígena permeada por prejuicios ilustrados modernos que le consideran un obstáculo para el desarrollo de las naciones recién independizadas'.²³³ His position did not take indigenous cultural reality into account, nor did he perceive of the *indio* as part of a social group to be integrated with the idea of nation, even if forcibly. In the context of utilising paternalistic imposition, Martí professes a love for indigenous Guatemala, but does so at the expense of declaring the need for the *indio* to be saved with education, as reflected in the final pages of his Guatemala brochure. This task as the writer himself acknowledges, was a task that could even go against the will of indigenous people:

El porvenir está en que todos lo desean. Todo hay que hacerlo: pero todos, despiertos del sueño, están preparados para ayudar. Los indios a las veces se resisten; pero se educará a los indios. Yo los amo, y por hacerlo haré.²³⁴

Martí proposed and hoisted the flag of industrialisation as a model for social

²³² Earle, p. 101.

²³³ Blanco, 'Modernidad y metamodernidad en el discurso de José Martí sobre el indígena', p. 67.

²³⁴ Martí, 'Guatemala', VII, p. 157.

transformation, manifested in his reflections and created from reports on proposals made by Guatemalan political leaders in May of 1878: 'La riqueza industrial necesita larga preparación y poderosas fuerzas, sin las cuales entraría vencida en una concurrencia múltiple y temible'.²³⁵ He also placed great emphasis on education as a powerful instrument for progress:

La Instrucción acaba lo que la Agricultura empieza. La Agricultura es imperfecta sin el auxilio de la Instrucción (...) La instrucción abriendo a los hombres vastos caminos desconocidos, les inspira el deseo de entrar por ellos (...) Nada garantiza tanto los sentimientos liberales del Gobierno actual, como la prisa que demuestra por difundir la instrucción.²³⁶

This report, which discussed the issue of combining industry with instruction, addresses the *indio* as another substantial issue for the nation. On the one hand, his contemplation questions the customs and attitudes he perceived the indigenous clinging to, whilst on the other hand, he highlighted their loyalty to their own values, making them antagonists of government policies that tried to change their habits:

A estas dos, únase una tercera cuestión importantísima. La raza indígena. Muy difícil problema, que demasiado lentamente se resuelve; sobre el que se echan con descuido los ojos, cuando el bienestar de todos los que en esta tierra viven, de él depende. Estos informes confirman lo que de los indígenas se sabe. Son retraídos, tercos, huraños, apegados a sus tradiciones, amigos de sus propiedades, enemigos de todo Estado que cambie sus costumbres. Pero estos mismos defectos, estudiados en su origen, acusan las inapreciables cualidades de los indios. Dedúcese de ellos que son constantes, leales, firmes y severos; que aman profundamente; que rechazan fieramente lo que no creen bueno.²³⁷

As this discussion confirms, José Martí was a liberal intellectual during that period, and that he himself was a participant in what liberals considered an enlightened and progressive spirit for nineteenth century intellectual elites. The liberal position represented a hegemonic vision focused on the idea of national progress above all, in which the particularities of the indigenous, their demeanour and their complex problems were thought of as obstacles to

²³⁵ José Martí, 'Reflexiones destinadas a preceder a los informes traídos por los jefes políticos a las conferencias de mayo de 1878', in *Nuestra América II*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), VII, 159–169 (p. 163).

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

be overcome through systematic governmental policies to achieve national integration and development. According to Juan Blanco, the Cuban author's vision during this period was reflected in a 'hegemonía racionalista a través del desdén de aquellas realidades anquilosadas en tradicionales configuraciones culturales y políticas, realidades que ya no hacen justicia a este afán de claridad, a este espíritu exigente de investigación.'²³⁸ Up to that point Martí had not yet demonstrated the maturity to confront the dominant ideology and propose a project based on a local or regional perspective. As Jorge Camacho summarises, to liberal intellectuals, including Martí in his Mexican and Guatemalan period, the way to uplift these free nations was to align with the power of the free market, individual interests, creativity, racial homogenisation, land reform and educating the indigenous.²³⁹ The last of whom were viewed as the most important of all the social groups because their stagnation, in the eye of the governmental elites, represented a major obstacle to national progress.

Education and literacy, areas where Martí began to play a prominent role, remained a key point in boosting the nation toward progress. As stated in the official document: 'Saber leer es saber andar. Saber escribir es saber ascender. Pies, brazos, alas, todo esto ponen al hombre esos primeros humildísimos libros de la escuela'.²⁴⁰ Later the author and educator again emphasised in his writings the importance of educational reform for the *indio*, who for the government, according to Martí, was an essential part of the country. This position was also affirmed in another document presenting his reflections in May of 1878, which commented on government policies:

Educados los indios, crecería, con el buen acuerdo en el reparto de las tierras, el área cultivada; reunidos los esfuerzos individuales, aumentarían en importancia las poblaciones; y no habría que volver con tanta ansiedad los ojos a tierras extranjeras, en demanda de brazos y aptitudes, que con habilidad y blandura podríamos conseguir en nuestras tierras.²⁴¹

Ottomar Ette suggests that these reflections demonstrate that whilst his exile in Mexico and

²³⁸ Juan Blanco, 'Modernidad y metamodernidad en el discurso de José Martí sobre el indígena', (p. 3).

²³⁹ Camacho, *Etnografía, política y poder a finales del siglo XIX*, p. 69.

²⁴⁰ Martí, 'Guatemala', VII, p. 157.

²⁴¹ José Martí, 'Reflexiones destinadas a preceder a los informes traídos por los jefes políticos a las conferencias de mayo de 1878', VII, (pp. 165–166).

Guatemala lasted, Martí was provided the opportunity for exploration of the past, present and in his projection of identity of the future of the Indians.²⁴² Although it was a future connected to the interests of the political model that sought material development as an output, rather than answers to the differences and social problems that indigenous and peasant populations were facing in countries such as Mexico and Guatemala. The awakening of the *indio* intellectuals and governments were proposing under the liberal ideology, as seen in many of the texts written by Martí from 1876 to 1878, fostered the principle that all indigenous groups be required to abandon their traditional communal values for new ones, such as the satisfaction of individual achievement. Integration for *los indios* through a process of assimilation, not as indigenous peoples but as Mexicans or Guatemalans, was essential. Mexican Benito Juárez was an assimilated Zapotec Indian who had reached the post of president of the country and supported the notion that to improve their living conditions *indios* needed to integrate and leave behind their traditions. Education conducted in the official language of the country and following the European models of positivist instruction was widely considered to be the tool that would accomplish this end. From the liberal perspective there was an imperative interest in adding indigenous social groups to the work force, not only as contributors to the economic development required of the times, but also for national development plans designed by non-indigenous elites. The reality was that most elites were composed of *criollos* and mestizos who had assumed the right to make decisions regarding the nation's future and to administer political power.

The viewpoint Martí contemplated concerning racial differences at this point in his intellectual development was one dominated by the cultural distinctions between educated society and the indigenous, who had been stalled by historical factors such as colonialism and religion. Certain references can be found in these particular writings, where his position is placed within a reductive analysis based on the homogenisation of the other through issues related to character and condition. This infers that Martí's racial vision was constructed by comparing the disabilities and differences amid the indigenous with those considered more capable (*criollos* and mestizos) of being part of the agenda for national

²⁴² Ottomar Ette, 'Apuntes para una orestiada americana. José Martí y el dialogo intercultural entre Europa y América Latina', *Revista de Crítica Literaria Latinoamericana*, Vol. 12, N° 24 (1986), 137–46 (p. 141).

progress. However, this does not mean that Martí's racial thought in this period was directly marked by an evolutionary biological racism. What the writer demonstrated was more related to an arbitrary formula used to adjudicate and classify the other from those who held what he believed was a more enlightened stance. In early 1878, news on the progress of the war for independence in Cuba left Martí deeply disturbed. The updates he received through letters and newspapers whilst in Guatemala were confusing, but it seemed that insurrectionary actions that had begun ten years prior were coming to an end without achieving their goal. Soon after reading the sad news of the end of the Zanjón Pact, which had allowed Spaniards and insurgents to get along, warlike hostilities erupted due to the promise of rapid reforms granted to Cuba by the metropolis. This precarious political situation prompted Martí to return to Havana in mid-1878.²⁴³ It was in this manner that Martí departed Guatemalan and Mexican soil, leaving behind his first testimonies regarding the indigenous.

²⁴³ Raúl Fornet-Betancourt, *José Martí (1853-1895)* (Madrid: Ediciones del Orto, 1998), p. 17.

Chapter III

Martí and interpretation of race in the United States, 1882-1890

This section explores the opinions published by José Martí in the U.S. and Hispanic American press, after becoming established in New York City in 1880. In the form of chronicles, columns and articles, the author launched a discussion on the subject of race in late nineteenth century United States of America. The analysis in this chapter is based on commentaries and essays written by Martí that reflected on the harsh situation of European and Asian immigrants, displaced North American Indian communities, and the condition of Blacks as freemen. The Cuban writer viewed these social groups within Anglo-American society as excluded clusters of the white-dominated democratic rule in place during the period. Much attention is paid to the framework of political reform that, in 1882, continued to define race relations in the country after the abolition of slavery in 1865. Understanding the influence of this socio-political context drove Martí to develop, in the Hispanic American press, a vast positioning in regard to racial issues in the United States of America.

In the decade and a half lapse that Martí remained in the city of New York, his approach to the issue of race would be reshaped, contributing to the construction and strengthening of the ideas that would develop into his later antiracial thinking and toward the organisation of the final war to liberate Cuba from Spanish colonial rule. Similarly, it is suggested that these features, articles and texts, although written by Martí to paint a portrait of and reflect on American society, also constituted sketches that allowed for a comparison of the racial problems that the author had observed and were still prominent in the nations of Hispanic America.

The bulk of Martí's reflections addressing the status and situation of racial groups, such as North American Indians, Blacks and immigrants, within the establishment of dominant white supremacy, depart from the precepts of social justice, demonstrating a humanistic morality opposed to the conflict between races. However, Martí's vision is not portrayed without contradictions. There are points when he falls into using racist stereotypes and classifications that predominated in the late nineteenth century. In order to

obtain an overview of his racial thought within U.S. society, a synthesis of the most relevant approaches is presented, which he undertook in writing for various newspapers throughout the Americas from 1882 to 1890, an historical period of important transformations within the racial order lived by the United States of America.

Martí's deliberations are set by the course of events, coinciding with the years when race relations were being rearranged within the political power structure. The Cuban writer's work reflects on the post-Reconstruction process, a period that began after 1887, when the integration of emancipated slaves into society became known as 'the black problem', triggering the installation of a segregated society that reproduced divisions that existed during slavery. A period of socio-racial reconfiguration shaped by national groups was also prompted in the latter two decades of the century from the wave of millions of European and Asian immigrants arriving via the Atlantic and Pacific. Similarly, this period was of great importance regarding indigenous issues, with assimilation having constituted a long-standing problem due to the continuous exclusion of the Natives American from the nation building project, after spending centuries under colonial rule.

The long period that Martí lived in the United States, between 1880 and 1895, was comprised of important phases of great change in all spheres of national life in the country. The United States had finally recovered from the devastation of its civil war at this point and the economy was beginning to thrive.²⁴⁴ It was also an era when colonisation of the vast Indian territories within this North American nation took place. During this interval, Indian lands were taken by the State for exploitation of resources to support the vibrant and growing economy. Manuel Pedro Gonzalez explains that these years, 'at the end of the century marked the culmination of a democratic experiment, of capitalistic expansion, of rugged individualism. (...) The motto was "Each man for himself".²⁴⁵

Martí's writings from New York were not aimed only at a select group of readers as they had been in Mexico, Guatemala and Venezuela. His articles and features now spanned

²⁴⁴ John Solomon Otto, *The Final Frontiers, 1880-1930: Settling the Southern Bottomlands* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1999), p. 20.

²⁴⁵ Manuel González, *José Martí, Epic Chronicle of the Eighties* (La Habana: Centro de Estudios Martianos, 1961), p. 23.

out to several countries in Hispanic America and were published by *La Opinión Nacional* of Caracas, *El Partido Liberal* of Mexico City, *La Nación* of Buenos Aires, *La Opinión Pública* of Montevideo, as well as several other newspapers that reproduced his texts without permission. Martí would also publish his writings in the U.S. itself in newspapers like *La América*, *The New York Sun*, *The Hour* and *El Avisador Cubano*. The audience of Martí readers grew and spread throughout the Americas, from the United States to the countries in the southern most parts of the continent. Despite the fact that Martí's racial thoughts can be defined as fragmentary because they were prepared under the hurried pace demanded by the press, his deliberations were not superficial. His observations and interpretations stemmed from insight that could go from the political to the social, or from the cultural to the spiritual, portraying the complex ethnic and racial reality of the late nineteenth century in the United States from a deep frame of reference.

Arrival in New York

When introducing Martí's racial accounts written in the United States, it is essential to review some relevant biographical data that occurred between 1878 and 1881, which led Martí to settle in the city of New York in 1880, where he would spend the majority of his final 15 years of life. After several years of exile from Cuba, at age 27 Martí returned home in late 1878, a crucial time for the country. The Zanjón Treaty had just been signed, finally putting an end - at least momentarily - to the first Cuban independence war, which had lasted a decade. The young intellectual and lawyer did not return to Cuba alone, setting himself up in Havana with Carmen Zayas Bazán, daughter of a Cuban exile whom he had met in Mexico and taken as his wife 20 December 1877. Adding to this, the couple, who had arrived from Central America, were awaiting their first child. Once in Cuba, Martí began to realise that the Zanjón Treaty had only given rise to hostilities and that the political situation was not headed toward change. As a result, Martí began his revolutionary work again.

During this stay on the island, Martí worked in the law office of Nicholas Azcárate. It was there that he first met Juan Gualberto Gómez, with whom he developed an important friendship over the years and with whom he would found the Cuban

Revolutionary Party in 1892. Gómez was a distinguished intellectual and revolutionary of colour who had been born into a slave family. Gómez, like Martí, had also returned from exile, in his case returning from Paris, where he had mobilised Cuban exiles for the Cuban Ten Years War. Both intellectuals began to work for the cause of Cuban independence, with Gómez publishing articles in the newspaper *La Libertad*, a new journal founded in Havana by Adolfo Márquez Sterling, whilst Martí began to organise other adept sectors to the cause of independence through meetings and rallies.²⁴⁶

On the 26 August 1879, *La Guerra Chiquita* (1879-1880), an uprising against the newly signed Zanjón Treaty, broke out and conflict within Cuba resumed. The leaders of this second attempt were General Calixto García, José Maceo, Emilio Antonio Núñez, Francisco Carrillo and Serafín Sánchez, who mobilised a part of the army known as *el ejército mambí*, which had participated in the previous war. With the resumption of hostilities, Spanish authorities began to pursue and arrest those they considered to be the destabilising factors. Martí, who was at that point a father as his son had been born in Havana on 22 November 1878, again faced another deportation and on 25 September 1879, was expatriated for the second time to Spain for sedition.

As previously indicated, Martí's stay in Cuba did not last long, as his reputation as an agitator had already caused resentment among Spanish authorities years before. However, this second deportation to Spain was relatively short, and after arriving in Santander in northern Spain on 11 October 1879, he would not be detained long. Martí was released on bail after two days. Understanding that he should not remain in Spain, he evaded surveillance and in December of the same year escaped to Paris. He departed from The Hague to New York on 20 December 1879, on a transatlantic steamer, reaching U.S. soil on the 3 January 1880.

In March 1880, Martí was visited by his wife and son in New York, but the deterioration of their marriage due to Martí's political pursuits was imminent. After a year in

²⁴⁶ Philips S. Foner, 'Introduction', in *Inside the Monster* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976), pp. 15–48 (p. 26).

New York, the Cuban writer decided to move elsewhere, embarking on a journey to another emancipated country, this time in South America. He reached the port of La Guaira, Venezuela in January 1881, where he first sought to establish himself alone, joined later by his family. Similar to his protagonist in *Tres Heroes*, Martí arrived seeking Bolívar's sphinx and ready to dedicate himself to teaching and writing. Just as he had in Mexico and Guatemala, Martí began his public participation by publishing articles. The newspaper *La Opinión Nacional* of Caracas would be his first podium until July of 1881, at which point he founded the *Revista Venezolana*. His stay in the land of Bolívar did not last long though, and after the publication of the second issue of *La Revista Venezolana* on 15 July 1881, Martí was ordered to leave the country by General Antonio Guzmán Blanco. The reason for his expulsion was an essay that appeared in the magazine about deceased Venezuelan humanist and intellectual, Cecilio Acosta, who had been an opponent of then Venezuelan President.²⁴⁷ Once again, the cycle Martí had experienced in Cuba, Mexico and Guatemala repeated itself. The writer was again perceived of as instigator by a government – this time Venezuela's - reinforcing an idea later developed by Martí regarding the dangers of caudillismo in the region.

After his expulsion from Venezuela, Martí arrived in New York City for the second time on the 10 August 1881, and established himself in the city where so many Cuban exiles had already begun to gather. This time Martí arrived in the United States with a firsthand understanding of the reality faced by numerous Spanish-speaking nations after years of independence, including unresolved problems that constituted major obstacles to the construction of these new Latin American nations. At this point Martí also had a concrete understanding of Europe's attitude toward the colonial world, as his time in Spain had afforded him the knowledge that the metropolis, which still exercised its power over Cuba, was at the point of ceasing to possess many of its territories in the Americas and was embroiled in debates and internal conflicts of all kinds: social, political and economic. On the other hand, the United States in the late nineteenth century sustained significant growth in all areas as a nation. Economic progress, industrialisation and democratic consolidation

²⁴⁷ José Gomariz, 'José Martí', in *Dictionary of Literary Biography. Modern Spanish American Poets*, ed. by María A. Salgado (Detroit: Gale Research, 2003), CCXC, 196–209 (p. 205).

had all been established following the civil war that devastated the country. However, the former British colony was also beginning to show its own expansionist interests with the incisive annexation of large territories from countries like Mexico.

Martí's return to the United States came at a time of radical change in the country's northern sector. The decade of the 1880s was characterised by rapid growth of American industry, accompanied by an immense growth in capital and the establishment of large corporations. Monopolies increased with the establishment of industrial trusts held by companies like Standard Oil Company and major banks, such as J. P. Morgan & Co. The so-called era of New Feudalism began to reign at the end of the nineteenth century.²⁴⁸ Martí drew on a wide knowledge of American history, and being a privileged observer of contemporary cultural, political and social realities there, Martí took on the role of interpreter of the American reality for Hispanic readers.²⁴⁹ In this way, Martí demonstrated his great admiration for the flourishing nation, but he was also able to be critical of the profound social problems and contradictions observed in American society in the late nineteenth century.

Martí and the immigrants

After settling in the United States, the Cuban author's first writings from New York discussed the theme of race and ethnicity as the country was still in the midst of an immigration boom that had begun during the opening decades of the nineteenth century. From 1820 to 1920, approximately 35 of the 50 million immigrants who left Europe to seek material improvement and opportunities for a better life settled in the United States.²⁵⁰ The wave of immigrants was so large that in the latter three decades of the nineteenth century alone (between 1871 and 1900), some 11.7 million immigrants entered the United States.²⁵¹ Spanning the years from 1880 to 1895, the period when Martí was in America, there was a great demand for cheap labour, driven by national economic growth and capitalist

²⁴⁸ Foner, p. 32.

²⁴⁹ González, p. 27.

²⁵⁰ David Gerber, *American Immigration. A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), p.2

²⁵¹ *Ibid*, p. 35.

expansion in the country.²⁵²

During the time Martí lived in New York, the city was a hub through which a population of largely European immigrants entered the country. In his first article on the subject, which appeared in Caracas's paper *La Opinión Nacional* on January 21, 1882, Martí presented to his Hispanic readers notes on the exodus that many European nationals had undertaken toward the American continent. Martí defined immigrants, in the framework of this process, as the secret to the prosperity of the United States. The issue of immigration, likewise, allowed the author to make comparisons between what he referred to as the Southern and Northern breeds:

Y hay razas avarientas que son las del Norte, cuya hambre formidable necesita pueblos vírgenes. Y hay razas fieles, que son las del Sur, cuyos hijos no hallan que caliente más sol que el sol patrio, ni anhelan más riqueza que la naranja de oro y la azucena blanca que se cría en el jardín de sus abuelos: y quieren más su choza en su terruño que palacio en tierra ajena.²⁵³

The Cuban author admired the work capacity of the various ethnic groups that came from the northern races, as he called Europeans and their descendants, and especially those who arrived in the United States to improve their personal living conditions and contribute to the growth of Anglo Saxon America. However, his biased interpretation led him to a distinction that positioned the European immigrant as a 'race' not only ready to exploit countries in need of development but also as a race capable of doing so. On the other hand, Martí also situated Hispanic Americans as an example of the 'southern races', defined from a romantic dimension stressing their attachment to the land and family affinity as their principle characteristics. In his text, Martí connected European qualities from the cultural heritage of each national group he saw arriving in New York. Martí presents a descriptive taxonomy that does not lack evocative adjectives with statistical data on the reasons why ethnic and national groups like the Germans, Irish, French, Italian, Scandinavian, Bulgarian, Dutch and Hebrew arrived in the United States to forge their future. Martí also recognises that the immigrants arrived in the most adverse of conditions, and his presence as a first-

²⁵² Manuel Pedro González José Martí, *Epic Chronicle of the Eighties*, p. 24

²⁵³ José Martí, 'La Opinión Nacional, Caracas 21 de enero de 1882', in *José Martí, En los Estados Unidos Escenas Norteamericas 1881-1883*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1992), IX, 221–228 (p. 224).

line witness in New York detailed the overcrowded conditions on transatlantic steamers where entire families, full of hunger and hope, would arrive.²⁵⁴ Axiomatically, Martí did not overlook the situation of immigrants. In them, he saw his own experiences as a recent arrival, more so due to his history as an exile.

Whilst establishing himself in this city, where an immense degree of multiculturalism converged, he also recognised that the large wave of immigrants was comprised mainly of poor families. He demonstrated this point months later as he continued his commentary on the situation of European immigrants in another column for *La Opinión Nacional*, dated 11 April 1882. There, Martí discussed the unconstitutionality of a 'head tax,' which the New York government required every immigrant to pay when they arrived at the port.²⁵⁵ Whilst he understood that the fee was improper, it gave rise to pragmatism and debate around the idea of questioning the requirement. Martí defended his position that there was a basis for the fee because he understood that the money was used to provide for those immigrants who arrived with the most need, which was becoming an increasing problem.²⁵⁶

Martí's approach regarding the subject of European immigration suffered more critical moments where his usual benevolence would give rise to a more critical position on the theme, as demonstrated almost two years later in a text written in *La América* of New York's February issue, 1884. Influenced by information he came across when writing *La inmigración inculta y sus peligros*, Martí implied that immigration could also be a detriment to the process of nation building:

Hablando de esos inmigrantes sin educación industrial y sin familia, espuma turbia de pueblos viejos y excrecencias de cueva, que de Europa vienen a los Estados Unidos en bandadas demuestra una estadística reciente que no hay

²⁵⁴ José Martí, 'La Opinión Nacional, Caracas 21 de enero de 1882', p.225

²⁵⁵ In 1876, as Sarah F. Martin has indicated, state laws implemented early in the century in Massachusetts and New York required charging a fee of \$2 per immigrant. The laws were used to discourage the landing of potential indigents and sick immigrants and were eventually declared unconstitutional because they were a state infringement on the federal right to regulate immigration. See Susan Forbes Martin, *A Nation of Immigrants* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 134.

²⁵⁶ José Martí, 'La Opinión Nacional, Caracas 11 de abril de 1882', in *José Martí, en los Estados Unidos, escenas norteamericanas 1881-1883*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1992), IX, 285–290 (p. 290).

alimento más abundante para las cárceles, ni veneno más activo para la nación, que estas hordas de gente viciosa y abrutada. No embrutecida, no: abrutada.²⁵⁷

An overpopulation of immigrants existed in many New York neighborhoods, which had an impact on the low levels of health and quality of life in general. Oscar Handlin explains in his canonical book *The Uprooted*, originally published in 1951, that immigrants of that period, ‘were men and women in the prime of life, yet they died more rapidly than the generality of Americans. Everywhere their life expectancy was lower’.²⁵⁸ Handlin suggested that within public opinion a prejudiced and hostile position had been established toward immigrants by the late nineteenth century. In this way, many compassionate citizens troubled by the conditions of squalor those living in working class sectors were exposed to, were hesitant to accept that such societal shortcomings were unique to the New World. Using the epithet of “gente abrutada”, Martí viewed the unemployed and immigrants with lack of instruction in a skill or trade with prejudice, referring principally to those who are without a craft but who also lack the desire to learn one. It is important to point out that although Martí takes into account the difficult conditions in which they arrived, he does not discuss the exploitation that many immigrant workers faced as part of the process of expansion of the capitalist economy that defined the United States during that period.

The open door policy for transatlantic migration attributed to the final decades of the nineteenth century had become a myth. Far from finding the land of opportunity and equality that was promised to them, the United States was anything but an economically or socially advantageous place, full of equalities for new immigrants.²⁵⁹ Instead, it was more appealing to attribute the problematic conditions that were emerging for the newly arrived to their carelessness, messiness and their lack of education, rather than to the lack of opportunity for earning enough to survive.²⁶⁰ To exacerbate the situation, the materialisation of an aversion to non-Nordic European immigrants beginning in the middle of the

²⁵⁷ José Martí, ‘La América, Nueva York, febrero de 1884’ *Nuestra América III*, 26 vols, (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1992), VIII, pp. 382-384 (p.382)

²⁵⁸ Oscar Handlin, *The Uprooted* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1973), p. 139

²⁵⁹ Ali Behdad, *A Forgetful Nation: On Immigration and Cultural Identity in the United States* (Durham, NC [u.a.: Duke University Press, 2005), p. 100.

²⁶⁰ Handlin, p. 243.

nineteenth century took place. The phenomenon formed a racial distinction whereby Anglo-Protestant elites developed an ideology placing the superiority of the Saxon-descent ‘raza blanca’ over other European races. As a consequence, ‘a great fear among native-born Euro-Americans was that mixing of the Nordic race with the inferior white races would “mongrelize” and destroy the true white race’.²⁶¹ In his text published in New York in February of 1884, Martí, unaware of this disproportion, was influenced by the widespread criticism directed towards immigrants, as well as the existing prejudices against their poverty and their unwillingness to mix with groups different to their own.

To follow the situation desired by ‘nativists,’²⁶² where races were labelled through the line of colour, Dale Knobel proposed that the inclination and vigour of nativists to distinguish between white men contradicted racial thinking of the time, holding that the most vital distinctions were those made ‘between ‘Whites’ and ‘Blacks’, ‘Yellows’ and ‘Reds’. Even more discordant were the efforts of some nativists to follow the logic of their arguments and demonstrate that other races, such as African Americans and Native Americans, might be more logical candidates to become citizens than their white immigrant counterparts.²⁶³ It is important to point out that with the perspective Martí presented in this short article, the Cuban writer did not adhere to these extremes, nor establish a relationship with a specific ethnic group with some disadvantaged racial issue. For Martí, it was not a convenient idea to oppose immigration as demonstrated by the activism of ‘nativist’ sectors, which were against the increasing growth of immigrants. The Cuban author maintained his openness to what he understood as a necessity for young republics:

Se piden inmigrantes en muchas de nuestras Repúblicas. Los pueblos que tienen indios, deben educarlos, que siempre fructificarán mejor en el país, y lo condensarán más pronto en nación, y la alterarán menos, los trabajadores del país propio que los que le traigan brazos útiles, pero espíritu ajeno.

²⁶¹ Joe Feagin, ‘Old Poison in New Bottles. The Deep Roots of Modern Nativism’, in *Immigrants out!: The New Nativism and the Anti-Immigrant Impulse in the United States*, ed. by Juan F Perea (New York, New York Univ. Press, 1997), pp. 13–43 (p. 20).

²⁶² According to Dale Knobel, from the Civil War up until the mid-1880s, many groups of American nativists were taking form as ‘agents of middle-class, where Anglo-American Protestantism was often on the offensive in promoting cultural values which had become fused with the political existence of the nation. See Dale T Knobel, *America for the Americans: The Nativist Movement in the United States* (New York; London: Twayne Publishers; Prentice Hall International, 1996), p. 189.

²⁶³ Knobel, p. 141.

Porque esa es la ley capital en la introducción de inmigrantes: sólo debe procurarse la inmigración cuyo desarrollo natural coincida, y no choque, con el espíritu del país. Vale más vivir sin amigos, que vivir con enemigos. Importa poco llenar de trigo los graneros, sí se desfigura, enturbia y desgrana el carácter nacional. Los pueblos no viven a la larga por el trigo, sino por el carácter. En inmigración como en medicina, es necesario prevenir. No se debe estimular una inmigración que no pueda asimilarse al país.²⁶⁴

Even though his interpretation is based on American society, it can be argued that the caution regarding the theme of immigration demonstrated in this article can also be applied to Latin American countries. Although he did not share the same ethno-racial vision as the nativists of the United States, the point where he was consistent with them was in critically outlining the problems dissonant immigration posed to national needs, which in the eyes of both the Cuban author and U.S. nativists supported the inability of many European immigrants to assimilate. From Martí's perspective, this promoted social divisions that were not beneficial to the national interest.

Chinese Immigration

Of all the immigrants who arrived in the United States during this period, Asians entering the country via the west coast were the most widely discriminated against because of their ethno-racial status. With the signing of the Chinese Exclusion Act by President Chester Alan Arthur (1829-1886) on 6 May 1882, for the first time in the history of the United States, a federal law that prevented entry into the country of an ethnic group based completely on race and nationality, was approved.²⁶⁵ By the late nineteenth century, racism towards the Chinese, unlike racism towards Blacks, was defined by a form of ethnic and cultural rejection, rather than biological racism.²⁶⁶

In part, the exaggerated xenophobia in the immense state of California, primary

²⁶⁴ José Martí, 'La América, Nueva York Febrero de 1884' (p.384).

²⁶⁵ Andrew Gyory, *Closing the Gate: Race, Politics, and the Chinese Exclusion Act* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), p. 254.

²⁶⁶ Luther W. Spoehr, 'Sambo and the Heathen Chinese: Californians' Racial Stereotypes in the Late 1870s', in *Race and U.S. Foreign Policy in the Ages of Territorial and Market Expansion, 1840 to 1900*, ed. by Michael L. Krenn (New York: Garland Pub, 1998), pp. 149–68 (p. 166).

entrance for Chinese immigration to the U.S., was sustained due to a negative image of the culture's habits and customs. Chinese immigrants were relatively new to the United States, causing them to differ from the racial consensus that existed, for example, in relation to Blacks, who had experienced extensive contact with American culture and were a part of it. A crusade against Chinese immigrants gained national reach, ultimately resulting in the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882.²⁶⁷ The Chinese provided labour in gold mines and farms that fed the mining industry, and finally in the construction of rail lines that connected the west coast with the east. In 1870, in an attempt to undermine the economic boom of the State of California and to push the economy into a state of depression, white workers took action when they perceived of their jobs being in jeopardy due to the low wages most Chinese immigrants accepted. Their cause encouraged by a combination of financial uncertainty, racial conflict and an opportunistic political environment, which resulted in bringing an end to the influx of Chinese immigrants and ultimately in Chinese re-emigration.²⁶⁸

In March of 1882, more than a year after his arrival in New York, Martí reflected on the debate taking place in the U.S. Congress prior to the signing of the a law that would close entry to Chinese immigration. The Cuban author's review was presented in a section of his column published on 31 March 1882 in *La Opinión Nacional*. Martí presented his observations of the current political climate that would bring to fruition limitations on the arrival of Chinese nationals, as well as propagate their expulsion from the United States. Although he understood the problem to be a long-standing one, he knew that San Francisco was the epicentre of the issue and so explained the scenario of xenophobic discrimination toward the Chinese to his Hispanic readers as a 'teatro de más extraña lucha'²⁶⁹ and indicated that it was 'el duelo mortal de una ciudad contra una raza'.²⁷⁰ Martí also commented on the on-going debate in the U.S. Congress to pass this act, viewed by many as unconstitutional:

²⁶⁷ Ibid, p. 152.

²⁶⁸ Gerber, p. 25.

²⁶⁹ José Martí, 'La Opinión Nacional, Caracas, 31 de marzo de 1882', in *En los Estados Unidos*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), IX, 275–283 (p. 282).

²⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 283.

En vano imponentes grupos en la alta y baja Cámara decían que prohibir la entrada de hombre alguno, y de un pueblo entero de hombres, a esta tierra, era como rasgar con daga la Constitución generosa de este pueblo, que permite a todos los hombres el ejercicio libre y libre empleo de sí.²⁷¹

Against this bleak backdrop, the Cuban author questioned how a city could petition this type of sanction against a race that he considered servile and hardworking. To clarify the long aversion in California to the Chinese, the author forges his position through comparison: 'Por mantener la esclavitud de los negros hizo una guerra el Sur. Pues por lograr la expulsión de los chinos hubiera hecho una guerra el Oeste'.²⁷² Martí saw the case, overall, as the reflection of a crisis and as a consequence of the economic threat presented by Chinese nationals, who were a source of cheap labour with whom Whites could not compete.

Weeks later, in the final section of another column for Caracas' paper *La Opinión Nacional*, written 26 April 1882,²⁷³ the Cuban author again referred to the debate covering the political pages of the press. Martí, who carefully followed the deliberations taking place, revealed complacency toward the fact that during those days in April, the President of the United States, Chester A. Arthur, had vetoed the agreement to prevent Chinese immigration.²⁷⁴ He describes the veto by the Republican President, who had come to power only a few months prior, after the assassination of President James Garfield (1831-1881), as a clear act of wisdom. Martí understood that to impede the entry of a ethno-racial group was no more than a 'acuerdo loco, por lo que los representantes cierran esta nación cuya gloria y poder viene de ser casa de todos los hombres'.²⁷⁵ Martí did not envision that it would be the same president who would sign, less than two weeks later and with the majority of votes of the Republican and Democrat representatives in Congress, a final act of exclusion where the entry of Chinese immigrants on American soil was prohibited for 10

²⁷¹ José Martí, 'La Opinión Nacional, Caracas, 31 de marzo de 1882', IX, p. 282.

²⁷² Ibid, p. 282.

²⁷³ José Martí, 'La Opinión Nacional, Caracas, 26 de abril de 1882', in *En los Estados Unidos*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), IX, 275–283.

²⁷⁴ President Arthur's objections to the veto concerned specific points of the Act, such as reducing entry for 10 years instead of 20. See Najia Arim-Heriot, *Chinese Immigrants, African Americans, and Racial Anxiety in the United States, 1848-82* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), p. 210.

²⁷⁵ Martí, 'La Opinión Nacional, Caracas, 26 de abril 1882', IX, p. 298.

years. This act would be seen as a ‘shorter experiment,’²⁷⁶ as President Arthur would call it, which was also extended to prohibit entry to other Asian groups, such as Japanese and Koreans, along with other groups of Europeans in the early decades of the twentieth century.²⁷⁷

With the door to the country now closed to Chinese nationals, Martí’s apology to them was clarified years later in a section of his column for *La Nación* of Buenos Aires on 23 October 1885. Martí saw how Chinese workers remained in the U.S. even in the face of so much adversity and how, despite being banned from entering, they risked coming into the country despite the difficulties that awaited them. Martí’s idea for the article was to describe the violence committed against the Chinese by white workers, who viewed them as a threat.²⁷⁸ To introduce the topic, the author compares and highlights the work capacity of the Chinese to those who pursued them. Thereafter, he attributed distinctive characteristics to the Chinese worker:

El chino no tiene mujer, vive de fruslerías, viste barato, trabaja recio; persiste en sus costumbres; pero no viola la ley del país; rara vez se defiende: nunca ataca: es avisado, y vence en la lucha, por su sobriedad y su agudeza, al trabajador europeo. (...) Pero como trabajador el chino es sobrio, barato, bueno. Como vive en condiciones diversas del trabajador blanco, ni consume lo que éste, ni los problemas de éste--necesidades, salario, huelga--le alcanzan de igual manera; por lo que, satisfecho siempre de una retribución que nunca está por debajo de lo que necesita, por ser esto tan poco, rehúye la liga con los trabajadores blancos, y se sabe odiado de ellos.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁶ Aarim-Heriot, p. 214.

²⁷⁷ Gyory, p. 1.

²⁷⁸ The violence against Chinese immigrants, mostly in the west, took place especially from the decade of 1870s, with great repercussion on the national press. Among the most infamous events, accounts Los Angeles Riots of 1871, of October 24, where 15 Chinese immigrants were hanged by a group of white people. On October 31, 1880 in Denver, Colorado, rioters beat dozens of Chinese and destroyed their property, killing one man. Anti-Chinese violence reached its peak with the most violent sinophobic riot, taking place in Rock Spring, Wyoming, on September 2 of 1885. There, around 100 to 150 white armed men killed 28 Chinese immigrants and looted and destroyed property. The chaos extended to a point where federal troops were ordered to secure the area. See Paul A. Gilje, *Rioting in America* (Bloomington, Ind: Indiana Univ. Press, 1999), p. 152; Scott Zesch, *The Chinatown War: Chinese Los Angeles and the Massacre of 1871* (London; New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Liping Zhu, *The Road to Chinese Exclusion: The Denver Riot, 1880 Election, and Rise of the West* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2013).

²⁷⁹ José Martí, ‘La Nación. Buenos Aires, 23 de octubre de 1885’, in *José Martí, En Los Estados Unidos. Escenas Norteamericanas, II, 1884-1886*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1992), X, 301–10 (pp. 305–306).

The full text illustrates the idea he conceived of to highlight the injustices that overwhelmed the Chinese, and in this way, introduce a more concrete complaint to his Hispanic audience. Whilst it is true that with his use of generalisations, Martí fills his text with racial stereotypes, it is important to note that he also highlighted the conditions faced by Chinese immigrants under the climate of hostility toward them in the country. Martí tried to maximise the value of Chinese labourers' work capacity by suggesting that they worked harder than other immigrant groups and observed that they were resigned to working hard at any type of labour, which was the reason they were highly sought after by mining companies in the west. This depiction presented the Chinese worker as an immigrant willing to work for less and do more than his caucasian counterparts. In Martí's view, it was unacceptable that white workers see Chinese workers as a threat; this racial dimension made the Chinese immigrant, 'no menos diestro y vigoroso que los trabajadores de otra raza'.²⁸⁰

Martí concludes the synthesis presented in his column regarding the persecution of Chinese immigrants by describing the destruction of a worker village and the murder of 150 Chinese workers by a band of white miners. Though his description of the number of killings that took place was not precise, his discussion of the event, which happened a few weeks before he published his article in the Argentine paper *La Nación*, was to bring attention to the fact that one of the worst attacks on the Chinese community ever registered in the United States had just been carried out. The violence, known as the Rock Spring Massacre, took place on 2 September 1885, in a village located near Rock Spring, Wyoming. It is of note that Martí exaggerated the number of victims to describe the event, or otherwise arguably confused the figures, as the death toll was actually 28 Chinese miners, a big discrepancy from the 150 dead of which he spoke in his newspaper column. In any case, the population of the village did have a total of 150 people.

The victims had been killed by coal miners as a way of protesting against the Union Pacific Coal Company and the low wages Union Pacific paid the Chinese, whom the white miners accused of usurping their jobs. It became unstated at this point that violence against the Chinese had not disappeared since the time of the signing of the 1882 Chinese

²⁸⁰ Ibid, p. 306.

Exclusion Act that banned their entry into the country. Much of the violence and tension between white miners and the Chinese had actually escalated in many cases.²⁸¹ Beyond Martí's inaccuracies, his discussion of the event was not limited to expressing his outrage at white miners hunting down and killing Chinese workers in protest. The author also tried to comprehend the impunity that prevailed in the aftermath of the event, reflecting that those who perpetrated the murders had not yet been captured: 'La ley anda despacio en perseguirlos'.²⁸²

Thus, his comments regarding the impunity that followed the persecution of the Chinese was a way to expose the type of action that persisted when it came to providing justice to races Martí perceived of as excluded and stigmatised by Saxon America. In his texts reflecting on the Chinese situation in the United States, the Cuban author recognised that Asian immigrants did receive less compensation than white labourers for the same work, the consequence of which was persecution. What should have been an economic issue, ultimately became an issue of race and racism. The accounts Martí provided created the vision that Chinese immigrants were regarded using a social justice approach, where racism toward them was actually political and economic in character.

Martí and the Indigenous of the United States

The 'indigenous' texts Martí wrote in his early years in the United States described his vision regarding the status of North American Indians, targeting a Spanish audience. In contrast to the indigenous texts of his years in Mexico and Guatemala, there is a noticeable change in viewpoint in Martí's perception of the North American Indian. From 1883 to 1886, Martí began to develop an understanding of the problems that existed for the indigenous in the United States, byproducts of the domination and exclusion imposed for centuries on these social groups, not just in Hispanic America but also in Anglo America. The theme of race in the U.S., especially the indigenous question, became one of the topics that the Cuban writer would address recurrently and with great importance during his tenure in the U.S.

²⁸¹ Aarim-Heriot, p. 222.

²⁸² Martí, 'La Nación. Buenos Aires, 23 de octubre de 1885', X, p. 307.

It was during this period that Martí's early vision of Mexican and Guatemalan indigenous issues, with the historical moments that the young writer had lived in those countries, transformed from an inequitable into a benevolent posture. During his stay in New York his views on the indigenous would take on further nuance. Martí reformulated his notion of the American Indian allowing him to comprehend the indigenous issue from a more historical perspective, rather than purely a sociocultural understanding. He observed that, unlike the nations to the south where the indigenous populations predominated, in the U.S., despite the great economic, political and social progress, Native Americans remained marginalised and excluded from the great national project raised by the founding fathers of the American union.

Martí's texts from this time demonstrate his position that without education there would be no opportunity for work or for progress within the indigenous population, but he also realised that the prostrate attitude of American Indians was the result of years of colonialism and domination. Martí tried to understand the situation of the North American Indian in a nation that enjoyed economic wealth and social and political order, recognising the idea that the lack of progress in indigenous communities came from their 'natural' disinterest in integrating with the national development plans of liberal democracies. From the time Martí wrote about the indigenous after his arrival in Mexico in 1875, until the mid-1880s in New York, notions of the North American Indian were dominated by the ideology of positivism. Prejudiced ideas that alluded to the behavior and biology of the American Indian already existed at that point. On the other hand, whilst in the U.S., Martí contrasted the image of the Hispanic American indigenous with the process of extermination and exclusion that the governments of the United States had conducted with American Indians. He closely followed U.S. politics and published his observations and critiques in *La Nación* of Argentina. Martí did not present his observations from a simple and descriptive journalistic perspective, instead creating truthful analysis of the situation from a place of morality.

Through the reformulation he constructed regarding the indigenous theme, Martí moved beyond the negative connotation that had addressed the subject for centuries and

which he had reproduced as a first approach to the indigenous reality years before in Central America. In the United States, as suggested by Ángel Esteban, Martí began to criticise the posture that relegated the North American Indian to second-class human being, an inferior race by nature, now inadmissible in the Cuban's socio-moral context. He also considered pernicious that which exalted the indigenous ideally, that which qualified him as a good savage but did not address the situation objectively in order to give concrete and quick fixes.²⁸³ Why did Martí transform and reformulate his vision of the indigenous after arriving in the United States? In part, his change of vision is shown as a logical progression in the process of Martí intellectual maturity. However, this shift was also the result of the writer pouring through various readings, such as archaeological and artistic expositions about North American Indians, as evidenced through the reviews he published in the newspaper *La América* of New York.²⁸⁴

Martí's experience in the U.S. allowed him to gain an understanding of how the progress made by this particular republic, more than any other emancipated nation in the Americas, had excluded large sectors of its population, such as the indigenous and Blacks, which Martí considered a detriment to national development. In this way, the Cuban author began to realise that in Spanish and English speaking America alike, the underdevelopment of the indigenous peoples was largely due to white dominance over them, which Martí identified as being closely tied to the evil of colonialism that still governed Cuba.

Commentary on the North American Indian

²⁸³ Ángel Esteban, 'Introducción', in *La edad de oro y otros relatos* (Madrid: Catedra, 2006), pp. 11–80 (pp. 48–49).

²⁸⁴ These reviews are of different types, ranging from chronicle and general commentary, to review and critique of anthropological books on Indian literature. They were published between June 1883 and June 1885 in *La América* of New York, and among them are: *Antigüedades mexicanas* (Junio de 1883), *Arte aborigen* (Enero de 1884), *El hombre antiguo de América y su arte primitivo* (Abril de 1884), *Autores americanos aborígenes* (Abril de 1884), *Un libro sobre los indígenas de Norteamérica* (Abril de 1884), *Una comedia indígena "El greguence"* (Junio de 1885). See José Martí, 'Antigüedades mexicanas', in *Nuestra América III*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1992), VIII, 27–29; José Martí, 'Arte aborigen', in *Nuestra América III*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1992), VIII, 29–32; José Martí, 'El hombre antiguo de América y su arte primitivo', in *Nuestra América III*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1992), VIII, 29–35; José Martí, 'Autores americanos aborígenes', in *Nuestra América III*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1992), VIII, 35–37; José Martí, 'Un libro sobre los indígenas de América', in *En los Estados Unidos norteamericanos. Letras, pintura y artículos varios*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1992), XIII, 445–446; José Martí, 'Una comedia indígena "el greguence"', in *Nuestra América III*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1992), VIII, 38–39.

In 1884, Martí wrote a series of short anthropological texts about the indigenous cultures of the continent for the New York Hispanic paper, *La América*. In these reviews, Martí commented on archeology, culture and indigenous art in a generally informative but also vindicating manner. For example, in *Arte aborigen*, a text that appeared in the paper in January of 1884, a Martí more closely aligned with the indigenous cause began to be more apparent. Through this brief text Martí reveals what could be defined as the launch of his writings in defense of the indigenous, whilst still maintaining a stereotyped and romantic image of them. At the beginning of the text Martí denounced the following:

El indio, que en la América del Norte desaparece, anonadado bajo la formidable presión blanca o diluido en la raza invasora, en la América del Centro y del Sur es un factor constante, en cuyo beneficio se hace poco, con el cual no se ha querido calcular aún, y sin el cual no podrá, en algunos países al menos, hacerse nada. O se hace andar al indio, o su peso impedirá la marcha.²⁸⁵

This marks the inception of his reformulation of opinion regarding indigenous issues, even though his work still suggests an ethnocentric vision. For example, had his claim to be committed to walking alongside indigenous peoples really been a call for inclusion, arguably it would not have emphasised the liberal notion Martí held during his time in Mexico and Guatemala, where the *indio* was expected to integrate himself into the march of national progress without taking into account his diversity, needs or uniqueness. Martí's call for an indigenous vindication in this text was also accompanied by a positive reworking of the North American Indian:

El indio es discreto, imaginativo, inteligente, dispuesto por naturaleza a la elegancia y a la cultura. De todos los hombres primitivos es el más bello y el menos repugnante. Ningún pueblo salvaje se da tanta prisa a embellecerse, ni lo hace con tanta gracia, corrección y lujo de colores.²⁸⁶

This reference contrasts with the first dormant visions of Central American Indians made available by José Martí and discussed in the previous chapter. However, his vision remains,

²⁸⁵ José Martí, 'Arte aborigen', VIII, p. 329.

²⁸⁶ José Martí, 'Arte Aborigen', VIII, p. 329.

in this instance, a position that cannot be seen as an objective reality, but instead appears as a mental construct in the writer's text. It was nearly a decade after those guilt notions whereby Martí claimed that indigenous Mexicans and Guatemalans needed to develop more attitude for work and a readiness to embark on the liberal project, that Martí expressed his admiration for the technical progress he observed among the indigenous of the United States. This reinforced his position that national and regional progress continue on a foundation calling for education of the *indio*: 'En América, pues, no hay más que repartir bien las tierras, educar a los indios donde los hayas'²⁸⁷, the sort of education that incorporates technical and scientific instruction as an element essential for development: 'sustituir la instrucción elemental inútil, - con la instrucción elemental científica- y esperar a ver crecer los pueblos'.²⁸⁸

Martí addressed a different and wider audience through these articles, speaking to the Hispanic community in New York, whilst maintaining a paternalistic position regarding educating the *indio* and beginning to question the widely held view of the indigenous as prostrate and unaware. An important point to note is that the Cuban author began to show admiration for aboriginal art forms during this time, as indicated in another article from April of 1884, *El hombre antiguo de América y sus artes primitivas*, also published in *La América*.²⁸⁹ Again, in another text titled *Autores americanos aborígenes*, Martí conceptualised American intelligence metaphorically through North American Indian creations. Martí defined the *indio* as an important part of the present and declared it was not only important to acknowledge their past but to also expose why it was essential to include them when defining identity in the Americas:

El espíritu de los hombres flota sobre la tierra en que vivieron, y se le respira. ¡Se viene de padres de Valencia y madres de Canarias, y se siente correr por las venas la sangre enardecida de Tamanaco y Paracamoni, y se ve como propia la que vertieron por las breñas del cerro del Calvario, pecho a pecho con los gonzalos de férrea armadura, los desnudos y heroicos

²⁸⁷ José Martí, 'Inventiones recientes. Quinientas patentes', in *Nuestra América III*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1992), VIII, 438–40 (p. 439).

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 439.

²⁸⁹ José Martí, 'El hombre antiguo de América y su arte primitivo', VIII, p. 30.

caracas!²⁹⁰

Whilst in Venezuela Martí gained knowledge of the Tamanaco and Paracamoni Indians, whose culture had already been obliterated. He recognised that even though he came from Spanish parents, he was from the Americas and presented the idea that the American identity also sprang from the experiences of its indigenous peoples. As a result, he began to promote the need to develop a regional identity that included the weight of the history of native peoples. Doing so launched his efforts against the marginalisation of the *indio* in already emancipated countries, whilst also promoting their importance to these nations and to the continent as a whole:

Bueno es abrir canales, sembrar escuelas, crear líneas de vapores, estar al lado de la vanguardia en la hermosa marcha humana; pero es bueno, para no desmayar en ella por falta de espíritu o alarde de espíritu falso, alimentarse, por el recuerdo y la admiración, por el estudio justiciero y la amorosa lastima, de ese ferviente espíritu de la naturaleza en que se nace, crecido y avivado por el de los hombres de toda raza que de ella surgen y de ella se sepultan. Sólo cuando son directas, prosperan la política y la literatura. La inteligencia americana es un penacho indígena. ¿No se ve cómo del mismo golpe que paralizó al indio, se paralizó América? Y hasta que no se haga andar al indio, no comenzará a andar bien la América.²⁹¹

It was in this way that Martí insisted upon the necessity of including all *indios* in nation-building plans. The idea for his call was vindication whilst also presenting an urgent warning. Martí continued the process of adjusting his approach in an attempt to answer the questions that defined the indigenous reality in many Spanish speaking countries. What should be done with the *indio*? Whilst Martí did not directly respond to the questions he posed, he did insist that it would be necessary and essential to incorporate the indigenous to achieve progress on the path toward economic and social development.

As has already been implied, Martí did arguably maintain a position similar to his first vision of the *indio* in accordance with the liberal policies of the Mexican and Guatemalan governments when addressing the theme of indigenous inclusion in the United

²⁹⁰ José Martí, 'Autores americanos aborígenes', VIII, p. 336.

²⁹¹ Ibid, p. 336.

States. Even though some progress was made in terms of Martí's ideas regarding the homogenisation of the indigenous, it is also true there was a change of attitude in accepting and seeking those who scrutinised indigenous history and ancestry in the construction of the present. This was framed in a conception of American identity Martí had already begun to develop during his stay in Central America, and reaches toward the Americanist concept described in his famous essay *Nuestra América* in 1891.

The assimilation of the indigenous subject into the construction of an American continental identity also formed a part of his sympathy for the indigenous. Martí spoke of the visions people had of the indigenous when voicing his complaints regarding policies pitting the U.S. government against the North American Indian. In 1884, Martí complained in these terms: 'De la barbarie de los indios hablan, fuera más justo hablar de sus virtudes y prudencia. Las tropas norteamericanas, abatidas mil veces y puestas en rota por los guerreros indios, los van acorralando, apresando, tragando'.²⁹² In his article, Martí's critique poses different questions about injustice and the way the treatment of the indigenous was handled by official institutions:

¿Por qué les quitan sus valles donde nacieron, y nacieron sus hijos y sus padres? ¿Por qué les prometen, al despojarlos de una feraz campiña, guardarles otra que no parece tan fértil, y apenas se descubre que lo es, los echan de ella, quebrando el tratado; y a ellos, y a sus esposas, y a sus hijuelos, los clavan a los árboles y los ametrallan si resisten?²⁹³

With this difficult range of questioning, Martí reasoned from a political standpoint, that serious failures could be observed in the U.S. democratic system. Exclusion, injustice, and racism were discussed, whilst through his chronicles he simultaneously deciphered United States society. Via his interpretation of North American culture, Martí was developing an anti-imperialist consciousness in the presence of the nation's annexist pretensions that were becoming apparent through actions like taking over much of the Mexican Territory, its closest neighbor, and aiming its sight further, toward Cuba and Puerto Rico, as regions of possible interest.

²⁹² José Martí, 'El "Century magazine"', in *En los Estados Unidos norteamericanos. Letras, pintura y artículos varios*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1992), XIII, 447–50 (p. 447).

²⁹³ José Martí, 'El "Century magazine"', p. 447.

In defence of the savage

From 1885 to 1886, José Martí published a series of articles and chronicles concerning indigenous issues in the United States for the Argentine newspaper *La Nación*. The first of these chronicles appeared in September of 1885 and highlighted his view that President Grover Cleveland (1837-1908) was trying to improve the lives of the North American Indian. However, Martí criticises at length the hatred that existed between Cleveland's emissaries and the Indians. Martí, of course, regarded this as being a serious problem because, according to the Cuban writer, the prejudices displayed by Cleveland's emissaries toward the indigenous represented an obstacle in the attempt to create conditions that would allow the North American Indians to be included in society. Here his vision of the Indian arose from sympathy for a 'primitive race'. However, Martí does not blame the indigenous for their breeding or their customs, instead blaming those who 'los tienen como bestias; y los odian; y se gozan en envilecerlos para alegar después que son viles'²⁹⁴ for their social status.

Martí illustrates his claim by making a comparison between the way the army and civilians treated North American Indians. According to Martí, the army respected Indians as enemy combatants, whilst in Martí's opinion, civilians simply hated them. The author's Manichean conception refers mostly to the agents who dealt with the problems of the Indians and who Martí believed should no longer be in a position to take advantage of their vulnerability.²⁹⁵ His representation of the situation was a critique of government bureaucracy and its handling of the issue. Martí's position was that U.S. governments had a history of being unjust to the indigenous and that they had no choice but to resist due to the many deceptions they had endured.

In another article published in *La Nación* on 4 December 1885,²⁹⁶ Martí again

²⁹⁴ José Martí, 'La Nación. Buenos Aires, 20 de septiembre de 1885', in *José Martí, en los Estados Unidos. Escenas norteamericanas, II, 1884-1886*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1992), X, 285-91 (p. 287).

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 288.

²⁹⁶ José Martí, 'Los indios en los Estados Unidos. La Nación. Buenos Aires, 4 de diciembre de 1885', in *José Martí, en los Estados Unidos. Escenas norteamericanas, II, 1884-1886*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1992), X, 319-27.

discusses indigenous issues in what can be considered his most clearly defined text regarding the defence of the North American Indian. The text is a chronicle of the Third Annual Conference of the Friends of the Indians, held at Lake Mohonk in upstate New York. Although there is no evidence that Martí attended the event, it can be assumed that the author probably received news and updates about the conference through daily newspapers, ultimately motivating him to pen this important chronicle on the indigenous reality, which would later become the document delineating the Cuban author's defence of the indigenous peoples of the United States. The annual conferences of Friends of the Indians were held each fall beginning in 1883, and were a forum where reformist groups presented their work regarding indigenous issues.²⁹⁷ The annual meetings at Lake Mohonk had no official status but worked as a means for lobbying public opinion to the benefit of the indigenous through aggressive propaganda in the press and the government.²⁹⁸ The Cuban author would have received favorable information on U.S. indigenous issues from press coverage during the conference in 1885. His interpretation of what he read about the conference, aimed at his Hispanic readers, became an analytical document denouncing the Indian situation in the U.S., and where it can be deduced that he was influenced by pro-Indian ideas presented by the participants who raised their voices for the cause.

Before developing the ideas put forth in his chronicle, Martí explained to his readers that, in his opinion, there had been two women who sought to ease the miseries of two of the most excluded and harassed social groups in the U.S.: Blacks and Indians. Both abolitionist author Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896) and writer and poet Helent Hunt Jackson (1830-1885), were described by Martí as important figures dedicated to the cause of the weak and excluded.

In this regard, the Cuban author draws on those who had worked to improve the condition of the Indian. For instance, Martí translated Hunt Jackson's *Ramona*, an important novel written in 1883, into Spanish. It had been Hunt Jackson's intention to set 'forth some

²⁹⁷ Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), p. 617.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 618.

Indian experiences in a way to move people's hearts'.²⁹⁹ Her novel was modeled after Uncle Tom's Cabin by Beecher Stowe, which touched on and described the slave situation.³⁰⁰ Inspired by these examples, Martí's article was filled with a belligerent tone that had been cultivated from his early stages as a writer and clarified what he was already working on, the idea that the Indian problem was not represented in the Indian status, but in the system that had corrupted the culture. This emphasis can be seen throughout the text and materialises in the following words:

Que los indios de las reducciones son perezosos y amigos de jugar y de beber lo sabía toda la convención; y que habilitados ya por un sistema malo de gobierno a un descanso vil, no gustan del trabajo; y que hechos a recibir del gobierno paga anual, y comida y vestidos, resistirán toda reforma que tienda a elevarles el carácter compeliéndoles a ganar su sustento con la labor propia; y que, privados de los goces civiles y aspiraciones sociales de la gente blanca, verán sin interés el sistema de escuelas públicas que tiende a ellos, y no se desprende de la existencia salvaje de las tribus ni les parece necesaria en ellas. Todo eso lo sabía la convención; pero sabía también que el indio no es así de su natural, sino que así lo ha traído a ser el sistema de holganza y envilecimiento en que se le tiene desde hace cien años.³⁰¹

In speaking of a man who has been held down and reduced to allocated lands, Martí helps us understand that the great problems of the North American Indians were products of the submission to which they had been subjected, as well as the detrimental public policies created to address the issue. The indigenous had been coerced with a 'sistema vil que apaga su personalidad: el hombre crece con el ejercicio de sí mismo, como con el rodar crece la velocidad de la rueda; y cuando no se ejercita, como la rueda, se oxida y se pudre'.³⁰² Hence, the author negated the reasoning that would allow society to place the blame on the indigenous for their alcoholism, tendency to play, or their violence.

Martí recognised that Native Americans on reservations suffered from these ills, but also suggested that any human being would end up this way if enslaved. The Cuban author

²⁹⁹ Helen Hunt Jackson, *The Indian Reform Letters of Helen Hunt Jackson, 1879-1885*, ed. by Valerie Sherer Mathes (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), p. 298.

³⁰⁰ Debra J Rosenthal, *Race Mixture in Nineteenth-Century U.S. and Spanish American Fictions: Gender, Culture, and Nation Building* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2004), p. 43.

³⁰¹ Martí, 'Los indios en los Estados Unidos. La Nación. Buenos Aires, 4 de diciembre de 1885', X, p. 322.

³⁰² *Ibid*, p. 323.

closes the critical tone of these chronicles with a review of a long report published by the Minister of the Interior for President Cleveland, Lucius Q. C. Lamar (1825-1893), who was named, “el soñador del gabinete.” Martí’s text was called ‘*El problema indio en los Estados Unidos*’³⁰³ and in it he adhered to the Minister’s position that it was time for America to solve the indigenous problem, which was at a critical point. From among Lamar’s proposals, the Cuban writer emphasised those that suggested American Indians be educated by American Indians.³⁰⁴ With this idea the romantic vision held even by Martí, that state education was a suitable instrument for including the indigenous in society, was questioned. Lamar’s ideas were appealing to Martí, who warned that the indigenous required not only education, but an education that they would accept and deem appropriate for themselves. From this perspective, Martí saw a possible solution to what he considered necessary to improve the indigenous condition, without neglecting to consider the conqueror:

Así educados por maestros de su propia raza, encariñado con su labor en tierra definitivamente suya, y ayudado, en vez de burlado sangrientamente por sus conquistadores, podrá, con paz segura, con los placeres de la propiedad, con la conciliación de la vida de su raza y la vida civilizada, con la elevación de la mente instruida, permanecer el indio como elemento útil, original y pintoresco del pueblo que interrumpió el curso de su civilización y le arrebató su territorio.³⁰⁵

Whilst these texts demonstrated Martí was aligned with the indigenous struggle to improve their condition, it is also accurate to indicate that the author maintained the use of racial epithets to classify and accept the idea that some indigenous groups are more civilised than others.³⁰⁶ When Martí identifies this problem as being a result, in part, of white domination over the *indio*, the author deviates, at least in these texts, from the widely accepted view of the inferiority of races that prevailed in the late nineteenth century. His stay in the United States allowed him to develop a discourse against the dominant power that excluded social groups in the process of nation building. With these textual representations Martí also saw

³⁰³ José Martí, ‘El problema indio en Los Estados Unidos. La Nación. Buenos Aires, 18 de Febrero de 1886’, in *José Martí, En los Estados Unidos. Escenas norteamericanas, II, 1884-1886*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1992), X, 370–76.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid*, p. 373.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 374–375.

³⁰⁶ Martí, ‘El problema indio en Los Estados Unidos. La Nación. Buenos Aires, 18 de Febrero de 1886’, p. 372.

an opportunity to continue his struggle against Spanish colonialism in Cuba, which in the mid-1880s was still a slave society. It can be argued that during those first years in the United States, Martí began to solidify an ideology through his journalistic texts that would allow him to construct an antiracist conception that was the result of intellectual growth that hinged on his accumulated experiences.

The Blacks of the United States

Along with indigenous issues and questions raised by the onslaught of European and Asian immigrants arriving daily during his exile in New York City, the problems that framed the reality of Blacks were of the utmost significance for Martí when it came to addressing issues of race and society in the United States. There are several reasons one might consider this to be the case: firstly, a couple of decades earlier, the country had fought a war: the Civil War (1861-1865), between the northern and southern states, with the latter declaring the secession from the Union to form the Confederacy of the south in an attempt to preserve the institution of slavery. Secondly, the war culminated with the victory of the north in 1865, giving way to the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, which abolished slavery.³⁰⁷ Lastly, during the early 1880s, when Martí came to America, there was an estimated population of more than 6.500.000 free black men and women, representing 13.1% of the total population of the country,³⁰⁸ whose social status in society was still being debated politically, long after the *postbellum* reconstruction stage ended in the late 1870s.

The position of Blacks in U.S. society, despite being a topic of great social importance, was barely touched on as a theme of interest by the Cuban author in his early

³⁰⁷ The Thirteenth Amendment which served to outlaw slavery became part of U. S. Constitution on December 6, 1865. The amendment included the following: Section 1. Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction. Section 2. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation. See Charles H Sheldon and Stephen L Wasby, *Essentials of the American Constitution: The Supreme Court and the Fundamental Law* (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, 2002), p. 174; David A Schultz, ed., 'Thirteenth Amendment', in *Encyclopedia of the United States Constitution* (New York, NY: Facts on File, 2009), pp. 735–736 (p. 735).

³⁰⁸ The estimated total of Blacks by the 1880s was of 6,580,793, representing 13.1% of the total population of 50,155,783 in the country. See United States. Bureau of the Census, *Negro Population in the United States, 1790-1915*, ed. by John Cummings and Joseph Adna Hill (Arno press and The New York Times, 1968), p. 25.

stay in New York City. This is explained, in part, by the fact that Martí was closer to the issue of the great wave of immigrants who came from different corners of Europe. Upon his arrival this was a situation that the Cuban writer lived with daily, whilst in those early years, Blacks and indigenous were still a more distant reality. The plight of the immigrant became a familiar issue as Martí was a witness, on the front line, to the many vicissitudes of those who were arriving in New York to build better lives. However, this would change mid-decade, after 1886, when black issue began to constitute a recurrent discussion among the various newspapers in which Martí published his columns and chronicles.

In this context, his analysis and interpretation of the black problem was presented through journalistic sources and the growing political debate that continued within the post-Reconstruction agenda prominent in the 1880s. For historian Eric Foner, the period defined as the Reconstruction took place chronologically from the emancipation proclamation ending slavery in 1863 through the year 1877, when the political dominance of Republicans in the southern region dropped and the last of federal troops attending to regional policy were retired.³⁰⁹ This span of time was one of major political, social, cultural and economic transformation. Driven by the rupture of the old racial system, these changes were determined, in part, by the process of conversion implied when transitioning from a slave society toward a society where, in theory, the Black population should have started to integrate into national life, not only as freemen but also as citizens with rights. However, this status of racial and legal equality was far from becoming a reality. During those years a new society emerged, mainly in the southern states, where the majority of the black population lived. That society was based on white supremacy and divided by segregationist order, where Blacks did not have the same status as Whites.

One of Martí's first commentaries on the status of Blacks in the United States appeared inserted within a column published on 31 March 1882, in *La Opinión Nacional*, where Martí pays tribute to Reverend Henry Garnet (1815-1882), a famous public figure and Black antislavery speaker, who had died about six weeks prior. In his commemorative

³⁰⁹ Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Perennial Classics, 2002), p. XXV.

note, Martí refers to Garnet as respected not only by blacks but also by white men:

Con el brazo derecho paraba todo golpe que el negro injusto dirigiese al blanco que había ayudado a libertarlo, y con el brazo izquierdo desviaba de la cabeza de los negros todo golpe que ellos enderezasen los blancos que los desdeñan sin razón, porque les ve victimas del mal que les hicieron. Garnet que ha muerto de ministro de los Estados Unidos en Liberia, ni se avergonzaban de las miserias de su raza, ni las compartía. Odiaba el odio. Amaba vivamente a los blancos y a los negros. Ha muerto amado.³¹⁰

Martí thus explored the theme of blacks with this commemorative note about Garnet, admiring the propensity of a tolerant man from a race that until a few years prior had been slaves. In the eyes of Martí, Garnet had earned his reputation as a fair man and the respect of Whites. His importance as a public figure also stemmed from being appointed prime minister of the fledgling republic of Liberia in West Africa, created with the support of the United States for the return of emancipated blacks.

After his brief mention of blacks in this 1882 article, it would be four years before Martí addressed the issue again with any significance. That text, written in 1886, can be considered one of José Martí's most important works commenting on the racial situation in the United States. Within the article, Martí depicted and contrasted the manner in which Blacks and Whites lived through and confronted the difficulties after the devastating earthquake that took place on 31 August 1886 in Charleston, South Carolina. Coincidentally, Charleston was also where the U.S. Civil War had begun two decades earlier. This chronicle is among the most recognised of those summoned as *Escenas norteamericanas*, for the distinctive description Martí provided his Spanish speaking readers regarding the upheaval in the aftermath of the most powerful earthquake recorded up to that point on the east coast of the United States.³¹¹

According to Susana Rotker, every detail about the tragedy came to the Cuban author through newspapers, such as *The New York Times*, *The Baltimore Sun*, and *The Tribune*.

³¹⁰ José Martí, 'Henry Garnet, notable orador negro. La Opinión Nacional, Caracas, 31 de marzo de 1882', in *En Los Estados Unidos. Letras, pintura y artículos varios*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), XIII, 233–36 (p. 236).

³¹¹ Susan Millar Williams and Stephen G Hoffius, *Upheaval in Charleston: Earthquake and Murder on the Eve of Jim Crow* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011), p. IX.

These publications reported the catastrophe through a series of cables with the name of the city, dates of origin, and a bulk of data and names. As a result, each wire is presented as a chapter in itself.³¹² Martí broke down the various articles and press releases that covered the event to build an epic tale of devastation.

The fact that Martí did not focus on the material damages, the number of deaths or other specificities commonly expected from a chronicle or a story about a natural disaster of this type is of note. Instead, his treatment of the event focused on a representing marked differences between Black and White residents of Charleston as a means to measure the consequences of the disaster. Martí suggested in his description of events that there was a ‘supernatural’ resilience that emanated from the Black population who survived and suffered the earthquake. Their racial heritage was reflected by the spirituality that emerged from the tragedy in escalating religious prayers:

La ciudad era un jubileo religioso; y los blancos arrogantes, cuando arreciaba el temor, unían su voz humildemente a los himnos improvisados de los negros frenéticos: ¡muchas pobres negritas cogían del vestido a las blancas que pasaban y les pedían llorando que las llevasen con ella, que así el hábito llega a convertir bondad y a dar poesía a los mismos crímenes, ¡así esas criaturas, concebidas en la miseria por padres a quienes la esclavitud heló el espíritu, aún reconoce poder sobrenatural a la casta que lo poseyó sobre sus padres! ¡así es de buena y humilde esa raza que sólo los malvados desfiguran o desdeñan!, ¡pues su mayor vergüenza es nuestra más grande obligación de perdonarla!³¹³

Martí attributed ancestral power to the blacks, from which he believes they were able to mitigate the trauma of their history, and in this case, the trauma of the tragedy. Nonetheless, whilst situating blacks under this spiritual supremacy, the Cuban writer does use racial stereotypes, sustained in the assumption of black mysticism, where the author recognises the inherent power of this particular race to overcome tragedies and harsh circumstances. Martí writes that the spiritual heritage among the blacks of Charleston reemerged from the

³¹² Susana Rotker, *The American Chronicles of José Martí: Journalism and Modernity in Spanish America* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2000), p. 98.

³¹³ José Martí, ‘El terremoto de Charleston, La Nación, Buenos Aires, 14 y 15 de octubre de 1886’, in *En Los Estados Unidos. Escenas norteamericanas III*, 1886-1888, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), XI, 63–76 (p. 70).

earthquake with: 'lamentosos himnos, y en terribles danzas, el miedo primitivo que los fenómenos de la naturaleza inspira a su encendida raza'.³¹⁴ Their primal fear was seen as the product of a heritage that blacks had passed down through generations and was accepted by the whole of society. Martí proposed that their fears turned into prayers and as such, this fear, once seen as primitive and superstitious, was accepted by white people after the tragedy, suggesting that nature had zapped them of their arrogant attitudes toward blacks. Mother Nature had succeeded in uniting Blacks and Whites like never before. Although all the inhabitants of Charleston were suffering after effects of the disaster, through Martí's narrative, the idea that nature recognised the strength of the black race is presented. From this interpretation Martí proposed that the black race was prone to a primitive inheritance that could emerge in times of crisis.

Nodding to this dimension of race, the Cuban author was emphatic that the spirituality of blacks be accepted; and that although theirs may be seen as an oddly primitive spirituality, it is perhaps the one most connected with nature:

Tiene el negro una gran bondad nativa, que ni el martirio de la esclavitud pervierte, ni se oscurece con su varonil bravura. Pero tiene, más que otra raza alguna, tan íntima comunión con la naturaleza, que parece más apto que los demás hombres a estremecerse y regocijarse con sus cambios.³¹⁵

Martí's intention was to simultaneously portray the earthquake-affected blacks as a suffered race, as well as a racial group who knew well how to overcome adversity, unlike the white residents of the same city. From another perspective, the idea of the text was also to question modernity or the social order in the city, which appeared broken in the aftermath of the earthquake.³¹⁶ As suggested by Rotker, this vision produced a shift in the system of representation:

...si para los románticos costumbristas, realistas, positivistas o hasta los periodistas liberales que eran sus contemporáneos, la razón y la inteligencia eran los instrumentos para domesticar la barbarie natural; si la industria se

³¹⁴ José Martí, 'El terremoto de Charleston, La Nación, Buenos Aires, 14 y 15 de octubre de 1886', XI, p. 72.

³¹⁵ Ibid, pp. 72–73.

³¹⁶ Julio Ramos, *Divergent Modernities: Culture and Politics in 19th Century Latin America* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), p. 120.

imponía sobre lo escondido homogeneizado y ordenado, para Martí la naturaleza haría volver a su cauce una realidad que él sentía estaba en crisis.³¹⁷

Through this chronicle, Martí effectively lashes out against progress and the modern order to reveal that nature is the only way to reverse that which threatens the harmony of men. If this modern order imposed by Whites created divisions between races, then according to Martí, nature could bring back what had been lost: a natural communion of races. Martí grasped at the idea that the earthquake had gotten the city to return to a state of spiritual community union, where Whites prayed next to Blacks. However, it is also plausible to interpret the tragedy as having brought about the compromise of a pragmatic racial encounter, a form of mechanical solidarity beneficial for both racial groups, mainly necessary for the reconstruction of the city. On the historical level, as explained by Susan Millar Williams and Stephen Hoffius, late nineteenth century Charleston did not present an extensive level of segregation compared to other southern cities. Blacks and Whites could be seen living in closer proximity to one another there, even in the wealthier areas of the city.³¹⁸

In the first paragraphs of his chronicle, Martí seems to be aware of this possibility and highlights it in these terms: ‘Los blancos vencidos y los negros bien hallados viven allí después de la guerra en lánguida concordia.’³¹⁹ As stated above, the perspective used by the Cuban writer was mainly to connect the tragedy with an encounter between races, but according to Williams and Hoffius, the tragedy contributed to the accentuation of the conflict between Blacks and Whites. The huge relief effort following the earthquake upset many Whites, who thought that blacks were getting too much help. Also, the destruction created a windfall for black workers and craftsmen, who dominated the construction business in the city, allowing them to receive better pay and better labour conditions.³²⁰ Overall, Martí’s account of the earthquake was conceived of from a place of vindication for blacks, but to arrive at that vindication, Martí used racial stereotypes where some races,

³¹⁷ José Martí, *Crónicas*, ed. by Susana Rotker (Caracas: Random House Mondadori, 2006), p. 147.

³¹⁸ Williams and Hoffius, p. XIV.

³¹⁹ Martí, ‘El Terremoto de Charleston, *La Nación*, Buenos Aires, 14 y 15 de Octubre de 1886’, XI, p. 64.

³²⁰ Williams and Hoffius, p. XIV.

according to their spiritual heritage, had a better connection with nature. Also, the assertion was that if slavery had failed to break the spirit of an historically oppressed race, it was far less likely that a natural disaster, even one as devastating as the 1886 earthquake, would break that same group of people.

Martí exploited the issue of racial heritage with this account to the point of suggesting that each race, by natural order, is marked by elements that are essential and unique. Similarly, his observation is sustained by the idea that the historical suffering of blacks could also be seen as a balsam, enhancing the black race in the face of adversity. Beyond inferring biological racism, Martí strives to shape a focused approach to racial heritage defined as an essential spiritual heritage that each race ensures: ‘Trac cada raza al mundo su mandato, y hay que dejar la vía libre a cada raza, sino se ha de estorbar la armonía del universo’.³²¹

Blacks and the political dispute between north and south

Commencing with his chronicles of the 1886 earthquake in Charleston, Martí’s opinions regarding the Black problem in the United States began to emerge through different reflections made on the political developments during post-Reconstruction. The 1880s were marked by the establishment of segregation laws, known as Jim Crow legislature, in the southern states. This legal framework separating Blacks and Whites spread throughout the south, effecting the transportation infrastructure, public and private establishments, schools and churches. This division did not work to recreate exactly the old system of master and slave, but it was successful in legitimising a social state where both races lived together but without the same level of equality.

This time period conformed to a new relationship between Blacks and Whites, as indicated by Jerrold M Packard, and quite significantly, lasted about one hundred years, from the end of Civil War until the Civil Rights Act was passed in 1964.³²² In his column from *La Nación*, dated August 16, 1887, Martí, reflected on the process of exclusion

³²¹ Martí, ‘El Terremoto de Charleston, La Nación, Buenos Aires, 14 y 15 de Octubre de 1886’, p. 72.

³²² Jerrold M Packard, *American Nightmare: The History of Jim Crow* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2002), p. 64.

occurring for free black men and women within the same nation where that freedom was born:

¿Qué han de hacer los negros, perseguidos por todas partes en el Sur del mismo modo, expulsados hoy mismo de la orilla del mar en un poblado religioso del Norte porque los cristianos que van allí a adorar a Dios se enojan de verlos, más que apretar como aprietan, la línea de raza, negarse a recibir del blanco, como antes recibían, la religión y la ciencia: levantar seminarios de negros y colegios de negros, prepararse a vivir fuera de la comunión humana, esquivados y perseguidos en el país donde nacieron?³²³

Martí's critique is developed in the framework of the attacks and the problems that blacks were enduring daily in the south; violence and coercion against blacks had been radicalised through para-legal groups, such as the Ku Klux Klan.³²⁴ The constant news of the violence and discrimination directed toward freemen began to impact the Cuban writer to the point that he would maintain a discourse on the subject in many of his subsequent articles for the next three years. Following a text published in August of 1887, Martí recognised that those who had been slaves until recently, were beginning to demonstrate the attitude of freemen. However, he also understood that their freedom was being truncated because the nation was not doing enough to eliminate the disadvantageous social and economic situation that still existed for Blacks, the result of centuries of slavery:

Harto lucen ya, en estos hijos de padres desgraciados por la esclavitud, el carácter e inteligencia del hombre libre. ¡Se les debe, por supuesto que se les debe, reparación por la ofensa; y en vez de levantarlos de la miseria a que se les echó, para quitarles su apariencia antipática y mísera, válese de esta apariencia que criminalmente les dieron para rehusarles el trato con el hombre!³²⁵

Through this condemnation, Martí's approach comprised a vision of social justice that

³²³ José Martí, 'La Nación. Buenos Aires, 16 de agosto de 1887', in *En Los Estados Unidos. Escenas norteamericanas III*, 1886-1888, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), XI, 231–238 (p. 237).

³²⁴ The Ku Klux Klan is an organisation formed at the end of the U.S. Civil War in December of 1865, which initially arose as a club of ex Confederate officers looking for a way to defend themselves against the radical legislation calling for 'social and political emasculation of Southern whites and the exaltation of Blacks. Their intimidation tactics intensified through violence not only against freed slaves but also against Northern Carpet-Baggers, emissaries who arrived seeking out financial opportunities during the reconstruction process, and even Southern citizens who demonstrated sympathy toward the Union. For more on the subject see Sara Bullard, *Ku Klux Klan: A History of Racism and Violence*. (Montgomery: Diane Pub Co, 1997), pp. 7–8; Wyn Craig Wade, *The Fiery Cross the Ku Klux Klan in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 31.

³²⁵ Martí, 'La Nación. Buenos Aires, 16 de agosto de 1887', XI, pp. 237–238.

rebuked the slow process of national integration of the black population from the point of emancipation, whilst also reproaching the obstructions meant to barricade Blacks from asserting certain rights they should have been able to enjoy as freemen, such as the right to vote. In September of 1887, Martí's article in *La Nación* also brought critical attention to the increased number of killings the black community suffered at the hands of white southerners, as well as the growing intimidation tactics put in place to prevent Blacks from exercising their right to vote in state and federal elections:

Los negros, tristes porque ya no hay sol que no salga sobre el cadáver de uno de ellos, muerto a manos de los blancos del Sur por tener amistad o consorcio con mujeres blancas, celebran un congreso; determinan que ya no vote el negro, como hasta hoy votaba exclusivamente por los republicanos que por azar vinieron a libertarlo y en realidad lo odian y abusan de él, sino que como todo ciudadano vote por quien le plazca, y en todas partes proteste contra los que, disfrazando su odio con el deseo de mantener la raza blanca pura, toman bandera de uno u otro matrimonio mestizo para echar a balazos de los pueblos a los negros en quienes luce más la razón, a sus sacerdotes, a sus poetas, a sus periodistas, a sus políticos.³²⁶

It had been more than seventeen years since the Fifteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, ratified in 1870, gave Blacks the right to vote.³²⁷ But over that expanse of time, when Blacks tried to vote in elections in the south, many became victims of racial violence. Reports of violence and lynchings were often exploited by the northern press, which was controlled by the Republicans.³²⁸ Voting rights that had been granted to Blacks represented a threat to the white segregationists of the South. As a result, black suffrage became a dangerous activity in the 1880s, and acts of terrorism by groups like the Ku Klux Klan kept many Blacks out of voting centres, especially in rural areas, as a way to prevent

³²⁶ José Martí, 'La Nación. Buenos Aires, 29 de Septiembre de 1887', in *En Los Estados Unidos. Escenas norteamericanas III*, 1886-1888, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), XI, 261–270 (p. 264).

³²⁷ The fifteenth amendment 'added to the constitution in 1870, prohibited discrimination against voters on the basis of race or previous condition of servitude. It was intended to ensure that black men were able to vote in federal and state elections'. The amendment was divided into two sections: Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, colour, or previous condition of servitude. Section 2. The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation. See Ellen Ann Andersen, 'Fifteenth Amendment', in *Encyclopedia of the United States Constitution*, ed. by David A Schultz (New York, NY: Facts on File, 2009), pp. 271–272 (p. 271); Sheldon and Wasby, p. 176.

³²⁸ Fernald Joseph Bryan, *Henry Grady or Tom Watson?: The Rhetorical Struggle for the New South, 1880-1890* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1994), pp. 37–38.

political changes that would result from the black vote³²⁹

On 10 November 1889, Martí revealed his opinions regarding the harsh situation of Blacks in his well-known column in *La Nación*. Using the framework of the anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, signed in 1863 by President Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865), Martí continued to demonstrate his concern for the vile hunting of Blacks then taking place in the southern states. In the text, he assumes, through representation, what many Whites must have been thinking about those who were their former slaves:

En la ciudades (...) dicen los finos caballeros: la negrada toda es una ingratitude, que en veinte años de ese trato amable no quiere tener amor por sus dueños antiguos, ni aprender las artes y ciencias que no tienen donde lucir ni cultivar, ni venir a las escuelas donde les enseñan los maestros pagados por aquellos mismos que aplauden y favorecen y aconsejan la persecución y la carnicería.³³⁰

This reflection enabled Martí to better explain to his readers how, after all of the years that had passed since abolition, Whites were still not in a position to accept Blacks as equals. Martí was even more categorical in this instance, declaring that he believed Whites preferred to exterminate or exclude Blacks, rather than mix with them, or be dominated by them. Whilst acknowledging that northern Blacks had achieved many improvements in status, Martí also recognised that the country was far from solving the serious racial problems that had begun to appear with the emancipation of slavery:

Crece el negro en el Sur, y el blanco indígena no crece como él ni van al Sur, que sólo por donde toca al Norte resucita, las arribadas de inmigrantes blancos. Y el blanco del país, antes que verse dominado por el negro o mezclarse con él de hembra o varón, decide exterminarlo, espantarlo, echarlo de la comarca como al zorro.³³¹

When Martí spoke of the extermination of Blacks in the South, he portrayed the situation as a moral problem. In an article in the form of a letter, dated 26 August 1889, and published the same month in *La Opinión Pública* of Montevideo, Martí states that lynchings were like:

³²⁹ Packard, p. 67.

³³⁰ José Martí, 'La Nación. Buenos Aires, 10 de noviembre de 1889', in *En los Estados Unidos. Escenas norteamericanas IV, 1888-1891*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), IV, 333-43 (p. 335).

³³¹ Martí, 'La Nación. Buenos Aires, 10 de Noviembre de 1889', pp. 335-336.

‘la llaga que llevan en el corazón los que se alimentan de sangre esclava, rechazando con furia el aire negro, el amor negro, la ambición negra: no hay un día sin asesinatos en los Estados del Sur.’³³² However, Martí interpreted the basis for the immoral and dehumanising trend being committed against Blacks as a byproduct of the political struggle maintained by the Democratic and Republican parties to gain political power in the south. It was his position that, based on the tension that prevailed among the regions that had carried out the Civil War, southern Blacks had become an instrument used by the north to undermine the political freedom of the southern states, through federal laws and the vote. This analysis allowed Martí to establish a connection between political affairs and what he viewed as an increasing violence against Blacks: ‘desde que los demócratas cayeron, porque los negros están más erguidos, y los blancos más alarmados, con el anuncio de que los republicanos, para adueñarse de los Estados demócratas del Sur, fungirán de protectores del voto de color’.³³³

After more than two decades of living in supposed freedom, Blacks were still suffering from discrimination at the hands of Whites, whilst also remaining at the core of the political dispute between North and South, via the struggle between the Republican and Democratic parties. The arguments endorsed by Martí were a prelude to what would be established between the late 1890s and the early 1900s. As described by Susan Gilman, ‘Anti-Black repression took multiple forms, legal and extra-legal; the political and social gains made by Blacks under Reconstruction were gradually eroded; and the ideology of white supremacy ultimately institutionalised itself in a series of Jim Crow laws defining the “Negro’s place” in a segregated society’.³³⁴ Martí goes further with his interpretation and describes how institutions, such as schools and seminaries, served to encourage a segregated order in society. Martí’s criticism of these institutions was emphatic, condemning how through them, exclusion and domination had been promoted whilst simultaneously

³³² José Martí, ‘La Opinión Pública, Montevideo, 26 de agosto de 1889’, in *En los Estados Unidos. Escenas norteamericanas IV, 1888-1891*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), IV, 321–231 (pp. 323–324).

³³³ *Ibid*, p. 324.

³³⁴ Susan Gillman, ‘The Mulatto, Tragic or Triumphant. The Nineteenth-Century American Race Melodrama’, in *The Culture of Sentiment: Race, Gender, and Sentimentality in Nineteenth-Century America*, ed. by Shirley Samuels (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 221–43 (p. 222).

encouraging racial inequalities that should have disappeared with the abolition of slavery:

¿A qué la escuela donde le enseñan que nació para ciervo por el castigo del color, y que jamás podrá gozar en su suelo nativo de los derechos plenos del hombre? ¿A qué el seminario donde enseñan que Dios sentará a todos los hombres a su lado por igual, si los ministros blancos de Dios son más que Dios mismo y van contra su ley, y no quieren sentarse al lado de los ministros negros?³³⁵

Indeed, in the post-Bellum period, consistent with what Susan Ryan called the pedagogies of emancipation, benevolent teaching represented the best defense by white America to circumvent the repercussions of an educated freed slave population. As depicted by Ryan, the education of Blacks was generally accompanied by significant opposition: ‘one of the great inconsistencies of mid-nineteenth century culture is that the endorsement of benevolent pedagogy coexisted with marked resistance on the part of many Anglo-Americans to literacy education for slaved and free African Americans.’³³⁶

Before abolition, the efforts of the pro-slavery regime to prevent slave literacy were founded on the possible association of education with liberation. Later, the arrival of emancipation resulted in an enthusiasm to open doors to education. This was conducted through the Blacks’ own initiatives with the help of white charities. The expansion of schools became a collective affair, instrumental in the formation of black communities and the founding of churches.³³⁷ The assessment raised by Martí about schools and seminaries was directed at the type of education Blacks settled for, to the benefit of Whites, and that despite the good intentions in educating black people, the fear remained that this could undermine the security of the dominant white race.

On 22 November 1889, in a written collaboration for *La Nación de Buenos Aires*, Martí highlighted a scandalous event that had recently taken place. In June of 1889, President Benjamin Harrison (1833-1901) appointed a famous mulatto activist and former

³³⁵ Martí, ‘La Nación. Buenos Aires, 10 de noviembre de 1889’, XII, p. 336.

³³⁶ Susan M Ryan, *The Grammar of Good Intentions: Race and the Antebellum Culture of Benevolence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), p. 114.

³³⁷ Adam Fairclough, *Teaching Equality: Black Schools in the Age of Jim Crow*, Mercer University Lamar Memorial Lectures, no. 43 (Athens, Ga: University of Georgia Press, 2001), pp. 4–5.

slave, Frederick Douglass (1818-1895), U.S. Ambassador to Haiti. Martí reported that the Republican officials in charge of the warship where Douglass and his white wife were to be transported to fulfil his duty as ambassador had refused to travel with him because they did not want to sit at the same table with a mulatto. In the observation Martí delivered, he suggests that the scandal did not benefit the Republicans, who had been established as the defenders of Blacks. The Cuban writer stressed Douglass' reaction, acknowledging him as experienced in such matters: 'Douglass, que ha alquilado la vejez, dice que no hay mayor fineza, ni amigos más tiernos, que aquellos caballeros del buque: que no han ido con él.'³³⁸ Martí satirised Douglass's comment saying there had been a quick change of command on the ship and some letters were exchanged that would never reach the public eye.³³⁹

In another edition of his column in *La Nación*, this one on 23 February 1890, Martí would re-emphasise the situation and problems faced by Blacks in the south. However, his discussion of the matter here demonstrated other nuances, as his position came in support of the south, strongly criticising what he considered the political demagoguery of the Republican north. In the article, Martí paid tribute to a young orator and southern journalist named Henry Grady, who died in December of 1889. The Cuban writer was fond of the journalistic prose of this southern writer and editor³⁴⁰ as evidenced by references made to Grady's own chronicles written about the Charleston earthquake.³⁴¹ Martí saw the opportunity with this tribute to Grady to suggest that the Republican Party's excuse for retaining the power of the union was based on the oppression that Whites kept over Blacks in the U.S. south.

Although the racial problems in the southern region of the United States constituted an unequivocal reality, according to Martí, they also served as a political pretext

³³⁸ José Martí, 'La Nación. Buenos Aires, 22 de noviembre de 1889', in *En los Estados Unidos. Escenas norteamericanas IV, 1888-1891*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), XII, 345–355 (p. 352).

³³⁹ *Ibid*, p. 351.

³⁴⁰ Salvador Arias, 'Catastrofismo en José María Heredia y José Martí', in *Aproximaciones a las Escenas norteamericanas* (La Habana, Cuba: Centro de Estudios Martianos, 2010), pp. 127–64 (p. 147).

³⁴¹ Martí said about Grady's Charleston earthquake chronicles: 'escritas sobre las ruinas, entre las carretas y tiendas en la plaza, a la puerta del baile frenético, tienen notas durables de sociólogo, rasgos de naturalistas, páginas de poemas.' See José Martí, 'Desde el Hudson, La Nación, Buenos Aires, 23 de febrero de 1890', in *En Los Estados Unidos. Letras, pintura y artículos varios*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), XIII, 391–399 (p. 396).

for those who mistreated Blacks in the north. For the Cuban author, the true intentions of the northern politicians were approved through the U.S. Congress, ‘una ley de elecciones federales que quite de las manos de los blancos la supremacía que aún conservan los estados rebeldes y asegure con el aumento del voto negro republicano el imperio del Norte en los asuntos nacionales’.³⁴² This idea was reinforced in a comment months later in his already famous column in *La Nación*, dated 29 March 1890, where Martí again discussed the subject, indicating that the Republican party ‘fomenta en el Sur el descontento de los negros, y les ofrece ponerlos en el gobierno del Estado, sobre sus amos blancos, si los negros les dan representantes suficientes para mantener su mayoría.’³⁴³ Martí was inferring that whilst the situation of Black people in the southern states was serious and disadvantageous, he was also aware that the north manipulated racial issues for their own political interests.

Martí recognised that Blacks were caught in the midst of a political conflict between north and south, and that the real problem was not slavery, but sovereignty. In leveraging the tribute to Grady, Martí was advocating a more independent south as a possible solution to the many problems still plaguing the region. The Cuban author echoed the ideas of change promoted by the south and arising through figures like Grady, who was one of its most active thinkers on the subject. However, Martí also recognised that this southern journalist was not always on the side of the Blacks, being in fact a defender of segregation.³⁴⁴ Grady was the editor of the *Atlanta Constitution* and in 1886, had declared the creation of the ‘New South’, a vision where the resurgence of the southern region would come through a process of industrialisation to replace slave-driven agricultural production. Grady’s belief was that through this change, racial conflict in the south and the nation would be resolved.³⁴⁵ However, with through this text, Martí warned that the south's racial problems ran deeper and he placed himself on the side of the attacked region. The article

³⁴² Martí, ‘Desde el Hudson, La Nación, Buenos Aires, 23 de febrero de 1890’, pp. 397–398.

³⁴³ José Martí, ‘La Nación. Buenos Aires, 29 de marzo de 1890’, *En los Estados Unidos. Escenas norteamericanas IV, 1888-1891*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), XII, 398–409 (p. 404).

³⁴⁴ James C. Cobb, *The Brown Decision, Jim Crow, and Southern Identity* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005), p. 27.

³⁴⁵ Douglas A Blackmon, *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black People in America from the Civil War to World War II* (New York, NY [u.a.: Doubleday, 2008), p. 88.

mainly questioned the eagerness of the northern demagogue and using anti-abolitionist politics to exalt racial division in the south without recognising its own history of slavery and imperial profit, or the existent racial problems faced by Blacks, Indians and immigrants also in dispute in the north.

In a text written by renowned sociologist and black academic W. E. B. Du Bois in 1898, Du Bois noted that the so-called 'black problem' should not be presented as only one, but as many, considering seven million African descendants lived at the time in the United States. Du Bois suggested that the situation of Blacks was not only determined by social conditions, but also by an atmosphere of ideas that affected the historically established manner for understanding the black condition.³⁴⁶ The annotations and reviews presented by Martí in the Spanish American press regarding the black problem in the United States were marked by the same questions that dominant white society was asking: After having already circumscribed the emancipation of the slave population, what should be done with them? As previously mentioned, Martí analysed the situation of Blacks based on the social and political context that existed in the United States of that era. It was a period when political power in the hands of northern and southern whites permitted the establishment of a segregated society that, in many instances, denied citizenship to Blacks and would continue to do so for a hundred years, until the nineteen-sixties. On the other hand, whilst Martí spoke of the black race from the standpoint of advocacy and social justice, he also drifted away from one of the leading nineteenth century racial paradigms and intellectual positions: the query of biological heritage. In his journalistic conception, beyond questioning not only the status of Blacks, Martí acknowledged the substantive problems seen in the struggle between political parties, embodied as the Republicans and Democrats, in the framework of the regional division between northern abolitionists and the former slaveholding southern states.

One could argue Martí's ideas concerning Blacks and other racial groups, such as the indigenous and immigrants, may have derived from what Du Bois defined in his 1898 article on the subject of race relations. There, the sociologist conveyed his belief that many

³⁴⁶ W. E. Burghardt Du Bois, 'The Study of the Negro Problems', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 11 (1898), 1–23 (p. 10).

of the opinions on the subject were based more on faith than knowledge because their study and understanding was incomplete and unsystematic. Martí presented his opinions conforming to the analysis demanded by press and journalistic discourse. Nevertheless, he was able to envision much of what would later position Blacks as second class citizens in post-slavery society, as well as the social division that would reinforce the old relationship between races, where the social and legal supremacy of one group over another was legitimised.

Chapter IV

Mestizo América and the ideological milieu at the turn of the century

‘Si Europa fuera el cerebro,
Nuestra América sería el corazón’
Revista Universal, 15 of January, 1876
José Martí

After nearly a decade of exile in the United States, by 1890 José Martí held an esteemed reputation in many countries of the continent for the columns and articles he submitted biweekly to different newspapers throughout the Americas. With a collection of themes and topics that he named *Escenas Norteamericanas*, the United States-based Cuban writer lectured on a range of issues, from national and international events, to political figures and personalities in the fields of science and the humanities. As a result of his journalistic and literary activity, four-hundred columns and articles and another one-hundred biographical profiles were published in *La Nación* of Buenos Aires, *La Opinión* of Caracas, *El Partido Liberal* of Mexico City, *La Opinión Pública* of Montevideo, *La Pluma* of Bogota, *La América* of New York, and *La República* of Tegucigalpa. By the end of 1891, Martí made the decision to stop publishing for the continental press and resigned from his position as consul of Uruguay and Argentina in the United States to devote himself, instead, to organising the war against Spain’s colonial government in Cuba. In January of the same year, Martí produced the cardinal essay *Nuestra América*,³⁴⁷ one of the most famous essays written in nineteenth century Spanish America. Within the text he demonstrates a distinct ability to synthesise the multiple issues he had been exploring throughout his years in exile. Although *Nuestra América* is a short manuscript, it can be read and interpreted in a number of different ways. One of the main ideas of the text is directed at accepting miscegenation as a fundamental condition for achieving a harmonious continental development.

³⁴⁷ José Martí, ‘Nuestra América’, VI, 15–23.

Following an historical perspective, this chapter discusses the question of miscegenation in Latin America and reflects on how Martí's *Nuestra América* became a call for continental identity in order to overcome racial and social conflicts that still prevailed in the emancipated nations of the late nineteenth century. Accordingly, the ideological environment dominated by positivist theories present at the time when Martí wrote his essay are also discussed. Similarly considered are the positivist ideas raised by essayist and Argentine politician, Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, who Martí contested in *Nuestra América*. Martí addresses Sarmiento regarding the justification of regional stagnation through Spanish racial heritage and as a result of the condition of mestizaje. Whilst in *Nuestra América* the writer retakes the term mestizaje, an ideology that emerged from early Spanish American independence movements, such as the search for identity, the need for innovation; ethnic reconciliation; and the distrust of the Anglo-speaking America, he also challenges many of the dominant thoughts about Latin America that prevailed at the end of the nineteenth century. In particular, Martí addresses the positivist-scientific argument that assumed backwardness in the Spanish American republics resulted from the issue of race. This influential work by Martí is a good example of how the author handled the discourse of dichotomies. Accordingly, *Nuestra América* is a proclamation sustained by the questioning of old ideas, while at the same time holds onto established beliefs that the writer attempted to refute.

Mestizaje and the quest for identity

Mestizaje is a concept of some importance to understanding Latin America in its continental dimension. The mere idea of mestizaje has been used broadly within literature, as well as in social and cultural cataloguing, to decipher the way in which the region has been constituted. Therefore, the term not only defines the accidental way in which colonial expansion took place, but also the process by which many racial groups in Latin America have come together through several biological and cultural means during centuries of Spanish colonisation. Such social and cultural processes were of concern to early thinkers during the primary stages of colonial governance. Namely, in *Comentarios reales de los Incas*, first published in 1609, Garcilaso de la Vega provides insight on the meaning of being

designated a mestizo:

A los hijos de español y de india, o de indio y española, nos llaman mestizos, por decir que somos mezclados de ambas naciones; fue impuesto por los primeros españoles que tuvieron hijos en Indias y por ser nombre impuesto por nuestros padres y por su significación me lo llamo yo a boca llena, y me honro con él. Aunque en Indias, si a uno de ellos le dizen “sois un mestizo” o “es un mestizo”, lo toman por menosprecio.³⁴⁸

Geographically, the continent was still recognised as the Indies, and in this excerpt, de la Vega speaks of nations, and not of race, to refer to the mixture between Indians and Europeans. However, the most important thing to note from this excerpt is that the writer, born in Peru, acknowledges the negative connotations associated with being a mestizo, as either a biological condition or a geographic category. To some extent, the meaning of mestizaje, as Jacques Audinet has pointed out, corresponds to the experience of colonisation of the American continent, which can then lead us to an association between ideas of race and domination.³⁴⁹ Indeed, sociologist Aníbal Quijano explains that social relations based on the category of race on the new continent produced new social identities. The classifications of Indians, Blacks and mestizos also helped redefine other identities. According to Quijano, the terms Portuguese and Spanish, and later European, not only had a geographical connotation, they also acquired a racial connotation in relation to new identities.³⁵⁰ Hence, races and identities that were formed from this designation were established as basic instruments of social classification.

Like many of those born in Cuba in the mid-nineteenth century, Martí lived his adolescence on the island being aware of another historical division imposed by the Spanish colonial regime: the classification between *criollos* and *peninsulares*. The *criollos*, who had been born in Hispanic America of Spanish parents, as Mario Roberto Morales explains, suffered a conflict of dual identity, living between the worlds of the coloniser and the colonised, although they were or were trying to remain in a state of colonisation. In a sense *criollos* lived

³⁴⁸ Garcilaso de la Vega, *Comentarios reales de los incas* (Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1985), p. 266.

³⁴⁹ Jacques Audinet, *The Human Face of Globalization, From Multicultural to Mestizaje* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2004), p. 32.

³⁵⁰ Aníbal Quijano, ‘Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism and Social Classification’, in *Coloniality at Large: Latin America and the Postcolonial Debate*, ed. by Mabel Moraña, Enrique Dussel, and Carlos Jáuregui (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), pp. 181–224 (p. 182).

a conflict of a differential *mestizaje*, where its euro centrism was emphasised to overcome and deny its native components. Morales added that the *indios*, who perceived the ideals of the *criollos* as desirable, discerned these values in a dignified way whilst simultaneously hating them because they were unreachable.³⁵¹ With the establishment of the colonisation of America and the expansion of European colonialism in the world, notions related to the categories of European and non-European superiority and inferiority and to the dominant and the dominated, achieved legitimacy.³⁵²

Even after gaining independence, each of the nations in Hispanic America continued to operate with colonial structures in place because they depended on the decisions coming from the metropolis and were governed according to ordinances that bureaucracy had established to service the monarchy in different cultural and social expressions. On the other hand, whilst national consciousness began with the independence process, *criollos* pursued independence by seeking political freedom as ‘Americanos’ rather than, for example, as ‘Mexicans’, ‘Guatemalans’ or ‘Peruvians’. Claudio Esteva-Fabregat suggests that American Hispanic nationalities emerged as a product of unconscious pressure from the pre-Hispanic identities dominant at the time of the conquest by Spain.³⁵³ These reproductions of old identities transformed original cultural forms and reconfigured new valuations, grounded in hybridity representing the ‘Americano’. In the Latin American scenario of race relations, mestizos were viewed with suspicion by local elites and with enmity by the *indio*. Mestizos were the product of sexual mixing between Europeans and the indigenous; nonetheless, the concept also widely included mulattos and other groups who were products of racial mixtures that had occurred during colonial rule. Mestizos were widely present in the military throughout Hispanic America as it provided them with an opportunity to gain status and power. After the mid-nineteenth century, the prominence of mestizo leadership in the armed forces was a result of national armies taking shape when

³⁵¹ Mario Roberto Morales, ‘Peripheral Modernity and Differential *Mestizaje* in Latin America: Outside Subalternist Postcolonialism’, in *Coloniality at Large: Latin America and the Postcolonial Debate*, ed. by Mabel Moraña, Enrique Dussel, and Carlos Jáuregui (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), pp. 479–505 (p. 496).

³⁵² Quijano, ‘Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism and Social Classification’, p. 183.

³⁵³ Claudio Esteva-Fabregat, *Mestizaje in Ibero-America*, trans. by John Wheat (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1995), pp. 63–64.

state leaders felt threatened by internal and external forces.³⁵⁴

Beyond the framing of centuries of cultural assimilation between Europeans, indigenous, African descendants and other ethnic groups whilst under colonial rule, during the process of independence in the early 1800s, the symbolic meaning of mestizaje shifted and was no longer considered the result of a traumatic colonial process. One of the relevant proposals that aimed to embrace mestizaje as the foundation for a continental identity was conceived of by the notable figure of South American independence, Simón Bolívar (1783-1830). He reflected on mestizaje during the struggle against Spain to point out the differences between Spanish American nations and their coloniser. In his famous speech to the Congress of Angostura on 15 February 1819, he addressed the new legislators, considering the differences among the new republics of Spanish America in these terms: 'No somos Europeos, ni somos indios, sino una especial media entre los Aborígenes y los españoles. Americanos por nacimiento y europeos por derechos'.³⁵⁵ Concerned about the process of nation building to come, Bolívar was aware that the new institutions and new governments would have to adapt to the circumstances that resulted from the historical, social and cultural heritage in the distinct societies of the continent. Bolívar believed that this racial composition was of vital importance to identity in the nation building process for these Spanish American republics, including African heritage: 'Tengamos presente que nuestro pueblo no es el europeo, ni el Americano del Norte, que más bien es un compuesto de África y de América, que una emanación de la Europa'.³⁵⁶ Therefore, Bolívar's perspective, assigning a sense of belonging to the mestizos emerging in Latin America was a difficult matter. Following in the steps of this iconic South American figure over seventy years later, José Martí's *Nuestra América* framed a Pan-American approach to independence, where the racial and cultural hybridity of which mestizaje is comprised, was again seen as a distinct mark and as an essential Latin American dimension to be embraced in the process of national construction. In part, this acceptance of cultural and racial mixture as a product of colonisation is what Arturo Uslar Pietri defined as 'la consciencia por el mestizaje', a

³⁵⁴ Vincent C. Peloso, *Race and Ethnicity in Latin American History* (New York: Routledge, 2014), p. 11.

³⁵⁵ Simón Bolívar, *Obras completas*, ed. by Vicente Lecuna and Esther Barret de Nazariz, III vols. (La Habana: Editorial Lex, 1950), III, pp. 676-677.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p. 682.

concept widely embraced by intellectuals such as Bolívar and Martí.³⁵⁷ With this reinterpretation of earlier discourses of emancipation, the Cuban writer was able to highlight differences in racial composition but this time not only in contrast with the Spaniards. In *Nuestra América*, this conception is also reflected as a cultural resistance against the northern part of the continent.

Martí's mestizo Spanish America

José Martí's *hispanoamericanismo* began to germinate between 1875 and 1878 whilst in exile in Mexico and Guatemala. From an early age the author had been privy to the divisions created by the colonial system that prevailed on the island of Cuba. Nonetheless, it was not until passing through Mexican, Guatemalan and Venezuelan territories, and later, during his longer stay in the United States, that Martí was able to engross and learn more about issues concerning the indigenous, workers' struggles, the situation of the peasants and the reality of immigrants. The convergence of vast ethnic groups throughout the continent afforded him a broader vision of the latent cultural heterogeneity present in Hispanic America. In a letter addressed to Valero Pujól, director of the newspaper *El Progreso* in Guatemala, dated 27 November 1877, the Cuban writer commented on the conflicts of the Central American nation and the sluggishness of the Hispanic American union, evoking Pan American features that he would later consolidate in *Nuestra América*:

Les hablo de lo que hablo siempre: de este gigante desconocido, de estas tierras que balbucean, de nuestra América fabulosa. Yo nací en Cuba, y estaré en tierra de Cuba aun cuando pise los no domados llanos del Arauco. El alma de Bolívar nos alienta; el pensamiento americano me transporta. Me irrita que no se ande pronto. Temo que no se quiera llegar. Rencillas personales, fronteras imposibles, mezquinas divisiones ¿cómo han de resistir, cuando esté bien compacto y enérgico, a un concierto de voces amorosas que proclamen la unidad americana?³⁵⁸

This fragment, written as part of a personal communication in 1877, before the writer

³⁵⁷ Arturo Uslar Pietri, *Nuevo mundo, mundo nuevo* (Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1998), p. 7.

³⁵⁸ José Martí, 'Carta a Valero Pujól, 27 de noviembre de 1877', in *Nuestra América II*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1992), VIII, 109–12 (p. 111).

visited Venezuela and before living in exile in the United States, demonstrates how Martí had already begun to show a sense of *hispanoamericanismo*. His concern for unity, cultural and racial identity and regional progress would be synthesised a decade later when Martí published *Nuestra América* on 10 January 1891 in *La Revista Ilustrada* of New York, and then again on 30 January 1891 in the Mexican daily, *El Partido Liberal*, an official Mexican newspaper for which Martí had been a correspondent in New York since 1886.³⁵⁹ *Nuestra América* begins with a general call to overcome parochialism, or ‘aldeanismo,’ a critique of the blind provincialism that created the propensity to not look beyond the local: ‘Lo que quede de aldea en América ha de despertar’³⁶⁰. This call, or *despertar*, further develops identifying mestizaje as a ‘natural’ and autochthonous condition of Hispanic America. In what can be considered the second part of the essay, Martí expounds on how to overcome the lethargy of the American republics and the new dangers that lurk, making a clear reference to United States’ expansionism. Constructing a detailed reading of the arguments used by Martí, *Nuestra América* can be interpreted as a discourse based on the criticism of oppositions, aimed at the essentialisms of the time: civilization/barbarism, *criollos artificiales*/natural man, our (Hispanic) America/the other (North) America. Through these dichotomies Martí represented his agenda for continental development, where dimensions such as creativity, education, and Pan-Americanism hold a privileged position. In *Nuestra América* Martí he also stressed the importance of self-awareness among Hispanic American nations to achieve regional pride: ‘Los pueblos que no se conocen han de darse prisa para conocerse, como quienes van a pelear juntos’.³⁶¹ With this declaration, the writer emphasised the urgency of reaching a home-grown knowledge, able to generate new values which could help overcome the historical shame colonialism had imposed on the indigenous and mestizo for centuries. Martí criticises the mestizo, who deny their status and past. Martí’s idea was to counteract ethnic shame, which inevitably resulted from centuries of colonial suffering, with feelings of pride. Although the Cuban writer was aware of the breadth of the American races, in *Nuestra América* his conceptualisation of mestizaje favoured fusion of European and indigenous roots over other racial groups, such as

³⁵⁹ Luis Ángel Arguelles, *Martí y México* (México, D.F: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1998), p. 603.

³⁶⁰ Martí, ‘Nuestra América’, VI, p. 15.

³⁶¹ *Ibid*, p. 15.

Blacks.³⁶²

As much as it is a proposal, *Nuestra América* is also a call for the necessary innovation and originality to deal with the mestizo reality of Latin America. Neither the European, nor the American models were suitable to be the paradigm for *América mestiza*. Similar to Bolívar, the idea in Martí's proposal was to promote a regional identity based on the essence of miscegenation present across the region. Martí held the view that nations are born from adversity, so from the creed of early Spanish American independence struggles, he sought to shape governments and institutions based on local circumstances and needs, rather than from models outside of the Hispanic American context. The writer summarises this call in search of originality in these terms:

A lo que es allí donde se gobierna, hay que atender para gobernar bien; y el buen gobernante en América no es que sabe cómo se gobierna en alemán o en francés, sino el que sabe con qué elementos está hecho su país, y cómo puede ir guiándolos en junto, para llegar por métodos e instituciones nacidas del país mismo, a aquel estado apetecible donde cada hombre se conoce y ejerce, y disfrutan todos de la abundancia que la Naturaleza puso para todos en el pueblo que fecundan con su trabajo y defienden con sus vidas.³⁶³

It was essential that the forms of government envisioned by Martí arise from processes that began from within a country, maintaining a balance between the ethnic elements that make up each nation. Martí did not agree with the established Manichean conflict between civilisation and barbarism, instead viewing this type of struggle with suspicion and as being an intellectual construct, rather than reality itself. Martí's response to these old conflicts is raised in what he calls the *hombre natural*. The *hombre natural* is a man who is born on the American continent, resulting from the vast process of miscegenation. He is not only a biological product, but is also an individual who has inherited and assimilated ethnic and cultural heritage from the environment in which he lives.

Martí's conception of Hispanic American man or *hombre natural*, is beyond European

³⁶² Rachel Adams, 'Blackness Goes South. Race and Mestizaje in Our America', in *Imagining our Americas: Toward a Transnational Frame*, ed. by Sandhya Rajendra Shukla and Heidi Tinsman (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), pp. 214–48 (p. 215).

³⁶³ Martí, 'Nuestra América', VI, p. 17.

(civilised) or indigenous or mestizo (barbarian). In general terms, Martí considered mestizaje a natural process that produced what he envisioned as the American natural man, who could be Indian, Black and peasant Creole. His was not only an ethnic or mestizo claim but also a cultural perspective transcending the origins or pigmentation.³⁶⁴ When Martí refers to 'nature,' he is also speaking about the homegrown ideas organic to the Americas and not imported. Thus, he faces the Manichean approach presented in the conflict between a civilised and a barbarian society, propagated decades earlier among intellectual circles and readers by the Argentine writer and politician Domingo Faustino Sarmiento (1811-1888), with his powerful essay *Civilización y barbarie: vida de Juan Facundo Quiroga* (1845) and then later in his unfinished work, *Conflicto y armonía de las razas de América*, (1883). According to Martí, the binary opposition within the civilised world represented merely an intellectual position that did not recognise the historical truth of the continent: 'Los hombres naturales han vencido a los letrados artificiales. El mestizo autóctono ha vencido al criollo exótico no hay batalla entre la civilización y la barbarie, sino entre la falsa erudición y la naturaleza'.³⁶⁵

From Martí's perspective, the answer to solving problems of stagnation in Hispanic America would not come from a European or North American cultural framework for progress, at the expense of local indigenous cultures. Instead, the writer assumed a position moving away from the conflict between civilisation and barbarism in favor of a language that emphasised local origins versus foreign influence. In an historical sense, Martí's criticism also focused on that which Arturo Usler Pietri pointed out as Hispanic American excessive taste in 'formas más elaboradas y difíciles, por las formas de expresión más cultas y artísticas, que no solo se manifiesta en su literatura y en su arte, sino que se refleja en la vida ordinaria y hasta en el arte popular'.³⁶⁶ Nonetheless, the Cuban writer was not rejecting the notion that the indigenous and the coloniser were irreconcilable. Martí also discredited widespread expressions employed by urban elites imposed on the rest of the population, an idea that intellectuals like Sarmiento had been proposing since the mid-century. Conversely,

³⁶⁴ Fernando Ainsa, 'Creencias del aldeano vanidoso. La utopía de Nuestra América de José Martí', in *Trascendencia cultural de la obra de José Martí: Actas del simposio internacional celebrado en Praga, del 21 al 23 de octubre de 2002*, ed. by Anna Housková (Praga: Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Universidad Carolina de Praga, 2003), pp. 9–24 (p. 19).

³⁶⁵ Martí, 'Nuestra América', VI, p. 17.

³⁶⁶ Arturo Usler Pietri, *Nuevo mundo, mundo nuevo* (Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1998), p. 8.

Martí's ideas coincided with Sarmiento, blaming political tyrannies for the malfunctioning of the emancipated nations. However, Martí went further, also blaming them for denying the natural essence of the indigenous peoples.

Placing emphasis on creativity, and especially the role as creators and innovators that rulers of Spanish America needed to play, the writer proclaimed: 'Gobernante, en un pueblo nuevo, quiere decir creador'.³⁶⁷ Nevertheless, with this point of view he actually favoured the intellectuals he would normally criticise, prescribing to the view that education is a key element to the prevention of tyranny. Concerning the process of education that still needed to accommodate the diversity and the growing need for development, Martí pointed out that there was no suitable university on the continent to prepare men to govern based on the recognition of the peculiarities of the Spanish American people. Noting these limitations he personified the image of a *letrado artificial*, as seen in Hispanic college students, who were graduating with 'antiparras yanquis o francesas, y aspiran a dirigir un pueblo que no conocen'.³⁶⁸ Martí cautioned that before soaking up external knowledge, intellectual practice and study should first be based on a deep understanding of the reality of each country, enriching the possibility for the creation of endogenous knowledge:

En el periódico, en la cátedra, en la academia, debe llevarse adelante el estudio de los factores reales del país. Conocerlos basta, sin vendas ni ambages; porque el que pone de lado, por voluntad u olvido, una parte de la verdad, cae a la larga por la verdad que le faltó.³⁶⁹

Despite recognising the importance of books and universal knowledge, Martí suggested that if they are not utilised according to the needs of a country then there is very little to be gained from them. Martí was perceived of as a revolutionary leader for the colonial world, hence his preaching in favour of native art and literature specific to the Hispanic American context, a subject that would become a constant in his commentaries.³⁷⁰ In the same framework as his reflection to achieve a more suitable education catering to local

³⁶⁷ José Martí, 'Nuestra América', VI, p. 17.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid*, p. 17.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid*, p. 18.

³⁷⁰ Roberto Fernández Retamar, *Para una teoría de la literatura hispanoamericana* (La Habana: Editorial Pueblo y Educación, 1984), p. 14.

circumstances, Martí proclaimed that: ‘la universidad europea ha de ceder a la universidad Americana.’³⁷¹ This statement was not made merely to limit the possibility of integrating European or North American knowledge in the American republics, but went beyond that. The idea was to build a university based on locally emerged knowledge, and from there, incorporate universal knowledge, as he summarised: ‘Injértese en nuestras repúblicas el mundo; pero el tronco ha de ser el de nuestras repúblicas.’³⁷² The use of the possessive expression *nuestra* within the essay was done not only to demonstrate a sense of identity, but also to mark the distinction between the two Americas. This can be seen as an allusion of moral superiority in contrast with the segregated racial situation he had observed in the United States. While there had been a famed notion of cataloguing race or racial combinations in Latin America, thus acknowledging the different variations of culture, in the United States there were historically strict boundaries that separated the races without acknowledging the variations.³⁷³ However, European heritage still had a privileged rank in this hierarchy. Martí’s transcendent vision of mestizaje, which erased racial differences, did not seem to recognise the prevailing prejudice that was a persistent reality at the time he published his essay.³⁷⁴ Nonetheless, the denial of racism seems to be the key element Martí promoted for the acceptance of cultural diversity, historical heritage and achieving ethnic pluralism, arguing that the region could not move forward as a group of scattered nations.

***Nuestra América* and Positivism**

When *Nuestra América* went to press at the beginning of the 1890s, theories of social Darwinism reworked by British sociologist and philosopher Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) were widely accepted among the ruling elites in both the United States and in Spanish America. The political climate at the end of the century in region, as Charles Hale suggests, had become impregnated by a group of philosophical and social ideas proclaiming the success of science in the region. These core ideas, which began maturing in Spanish America in the mid eighteenth century, were, according to Hale, commonly recognised as

³⁷¹ Martí, ‘Nuestra América’, p. 18.

³⁷² Martí, ‘Nuestra América’, p. 18.

³⁷³ John Francis Burke, ‘The Three Paradigms of Mestizaje: Realizing Democracy in a Transnational World of Crossing Borders’, *Portularia*, VIII (2008), 33–47 (pp. 35–36).

³⁷⁴ Adams, p. 214.

positivism. Although there is no accepted definition of the term, from a philosophical perspective it was understood as a theory of knowledge in which scientific methods represented the only means by which men could access it.³⁷⁵

In countries such as Mexico and Argentina, modern values of scientific rationality based on the theories of Spencer, and at an earlier stage, in the philosophical system of French thinker Auguste Comte (1798-1857), had an impactful reception among the intellectual and political circles that assumed positivism as an ideology able to give concrete answers to cultural, social, economic and other issues of national concern. In Mexico, positivism became the official philosophy of Dictator Porfirio Díaz. The institutionalisation of scientific values offered by this ideology reached the point where the intellectual elite who supported Díaz became known as the *científicos*.³⁷⁶ In the Southern Cone, especially in Argentina, there were intellectuals known as the *generation of 1880*. Paul Groussac (1848-1829), Miguel Cané (1851-1905) and Eugenio Cambaceres (1843-1888) among others, all disseminated the state-centred, modernised belief in science and progress embraced by President Julio Roca (1843-1914).³⁷⁷ This group of intellectuals also established a body of ideas following Sarmiento's thesis concerning the opposition between civilisation and barbarism.

A scientific authority already enjoyed by the social sciences in the region accompanied the popularity these positivist ideas managed to reach on the continent. However, assumptions made by positivism were interpreted differently in the context of the particularities of each country. For example, Leopoldo Zea indicated that in Mexico positivism was adopted because it was seen as a tool for social cohesion, or a means to tackle the disorder that independence had generated. It was initially introduced as a doctrine

³⁷⁵ Charles Hale, 'Political Ideas and Ideologies in Latin America, 1870-1930', in *Ideas and Ideologies in Twentieth Century Latin America*, ed. by Leslie Bethell (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 133–205 (p. 148).

³⁷⁶ Claudio Lomnitz, 'Los intelectuales y el poder político: la representación de los científicos en México del porfiritao a la revolución', in *Historia de los intelectuales en América Latina*, ed. by Carlos Altamirano and Jorge Myers, (Buenos Aires: Katz, 2008), pp. 441–64.

³⁷⁷ Michael Goebel, *Argentina's Partisan Past: Nationalism and the Politics of History*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011), p. 24.

to engender social and political arrangements.³⁷⁸ For the elites who introduced positivism, education would be the ideal instrument for the promotion and construction of modernity, which could be conceived through two central urgings: order and progress. Created in Mexico through *La Ley de Instrucción Pública*, an education reform decree, and signed by President Benito Juárez (1806-1872), La Escuela Nacional Preparatoria was led by Gabino Barreda (1818-1881) and opened its doors to students in February of 1868.³⁷⁹ Barreda, a Mexican physician and educator, had been a student and disciple of Comte in Paris from 1848 to 1851. Additionally, he was editor of the scientific and positivist-based *Ley de Instrucción Pública*, also been shaped by Juárez.³⁸⁰ In Argentina, positivist ideology was promoted through the Escuela Normal de Paraná, which was founded by Sarmiento during his presidency (1868-1874). Dedicated to the perceived need to civilise Argentina, Sarmiento crafted this doctrine focusing on the education of the individual. Interpretation of positivist theory in the southern country held North American individualism as a model to follow by making citizens responsible for their own greatness. La Escuela de Paraná was responsible for encouraging individualism and eventually included American female teachers brought to Argentina by Sarmiento himself.³⁸¹

Martí had a strong connection with both countries. For instance, he lived in Mexico for over a year beginning in 1875 and thrived there, participating in a wide range of intellectual activity linked to liberal circles until he was forced to leave the country when Porfirio Díaz overthrew Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada (1827-1889) in 1876. Equally important was the fact that *Nuestra América* was published in the newspaper *El Partido Liberal*, founded in Mexico City in 1885, where writer Manuel Gutiérrez Nájera (1859-1895), recognised as one of the pioneers of Modernism in Latin America, acted as the publication's editor. The Cuban author had been sending his writings to the newspaper since 1886. It is important to point out that the newspaper received funding from the government of Porfirio Díaz and

³⁷⁸ Leopoldo Zea, *El pensamiento latinoamericano, 2 tomos* his reputation (México, D. F.: Editorial Pormaca 1965), II, p. 88.

³⁷⁹ Ernesto Lemoine, *La Escuela Nacional Preparatoria en el período de Gabino Barreda. 1867-1878* (México, D. F.: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1970), p. 15.

³⁸⁰ Alfonso Noriega, *Vida y obra del doctor Gabino Barreda* (México, D. F.: Instituto Mexicano de Cultura, 1969), pp. 22–23.

³⁸¹ Zea, *El pensamiento latinoamericano*, II, p. 92.

was the tribune of influential positivist thinkers like Justo Sierra (1848-1912), the successor of the School founded by Barredas.³⁸² Despite having never visited nor lived in Argentina, Martí still achieved a significant connection with the southern country through his column in the newspaper *La Nación*, where he was recognised by influential Argentine intellectuals of the time, including Sarmiento, who publicly declared admiration for Martí's prose.³⁸³ His reputation as a well-known intellectual would also lead to his appointment as consul of Argentina and Uruguay in the United States between 1890 and 1891.

By the end of the nineteenth century, positivist values were in place as the dominant ideology to navigate through post emancipation problems and anarchy in Mexico and Argentina. Mean whilst, in Cuba, the interpretation of thinkers like Enrique José Varona (1848-1933) also gave rise to positivist theories, though circumscribed by historical conditions distinct from those in Mexico and Argentina. Varona, a contemporary of Martí, saw positivist theories as instruments of the mental preparation he believed Cubans needed to acquire prior to their political emancipation from Spain. Like Martí, Varona knew that it was not enough to gain freedom from the political domination of Spain, but that it would also be necessary to prepare society for the major changes that would accompany breaking with colonial rule. Varona assumed Spencer's evolutionism, but stepped away from the idea of adopting a totalitarian system that could provide the necessary order, which other free republics of Latin America were seeking at that juncture.³⁸⁴ Leopoldo Zea suggests that Spencer's dogmatism, unlike Comte's positivism, was not full of metaphysics or idealisms, but instead, was presented with explanations that could be tested through experience and

³⁸² Adela Pineda, 'Positivism and decadentism: the double discourse in Manuel Gutiérrez Nájera and his magazine *Azul*, 1894-1896', in *Modernidad, tradición y alteridad: la ciudad de México en el cambio de siglo (XIX-XX)*, ed. by Claudia Agostoni and Elisa Speckman (México, D.F.: IIH-UNAM, 2001), pp. 195–219 (pp. 195–196).

³⁸³ Sarmiento wrote an open letter to writer Paul Groussac published in *La Nación*, on January 4, 1887, asking him to translate into French an article on the celebrations of the Statue of Liberty that Martí published in the same newspaper few days before on January 1. This article made a great impression on the Argentine intellectual. Sarmiento will refer in his letter to Groussac with great praise for Martí's prose: 'y aquí viene el objeto de esta carta, y es pedirle que traduzca al francés el artículo de Martí, para que el teléfono de las letras lo lleve a Europa, y haga conocer esa elocuencia sudamericana áspera, capisosa, relampagueadora [...] En español nada hay que parezca a la salida de bramidos de Martí, y después de Víctor Hugo nada presenta la Francia de esta resonancia de metal. [...] Deseo que le llegue a Martí este homenaje de mi admiración por su talento descriptivo y su estilo de Goya, el pintor español de los grandes borrones con que habría descrito el caos.' See Raúl Rodríguez La O, *La Argentina en Martí* (La Habana: Casa Editora Abril, 2007), p. 219.

³⁸⁴ Zea, *El pensamiento latinoamericano*, II, p. 146.

scientific methods.³⁸⁵ In short, they represented a body of ideas that were more suited to the specific problems that a free Cuba might face.

Whilst in his essay Martí's ideas coincided with positivist ideologues on points such as the use of science and centralisation of changes through education, the Cuban writer's diagnosis of the post-colonial era was not just a matter of repairing its social or mental ills. He also focused on recognising a reality far beyond what he perceived as abstract conceptions derived from the scientific discourse of the *letrados artificiales*. On 3 August 1888, in another of his many chronicles sent to the Buenos Aires paper, *La Nación*, Martí presented his reflexions on the First International Anthropological Congress, which was held in the United States and discussed the status of anthropology worldwide.³⁸⁶ In this document, Martí makes brief comments regarding various papers presented at the conference, acknowledging a rise in the established practice of the sciences, specifically those defined as the social sciences. Although he recognised the influence of a science established, 'en los umbrales de un mundo singular que empieza a ser científico,'³⁸⁷ the writer also questioned the blind faith that people could put in what had been declared 'scientific' knowledge. Thus, in accordance with the ideas presented by physician Edward C. Mann (1850-1908), who chaired the conference, he questioned a science that was based more on doubting propositions than on testing cases, or as Martí commented, a science that goes 'como carro atado tras de caballo ciego'.³⁸⁸ The writer's reflections advocated a science that went beyond leaving 'a un lado hipótesis mancas y metafísicas científicas.'³⁸⁹ The intellectual manifestations justifying the inferiority of race or spirit began to be a point of criticism for the Cuban author, as demonstrated in a speech at the artistic-literary evening of the Sociedad Literaria Hispanoamericana on 19 December 1889. There, he pondered the prejudice generated by interpretations of the miscegenation of the continent:

³⁸⁵ Zea, *El pensamiento latinoamericano*, II, p. 147.

³⁸⁶ The congress was held on the first week of June of that year, at the facilities of Columbia College in New York City. The issues of June 6, 1888, in newspapers like *The Sun* and *The New York Times*, gave extensive coverage of the event, given the participation and presence of the French Prince Roland Bonaparte (1858-1924), who later became president of the French Geographical Society.

³⁸⁷ José Martí, 'La Nación. Buenos Aires, 2 de agosto de 1888', in *En Los Estados Unidos. Escenas norteamericanas III*, 1886-1888, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), XI, 473-81 (p. 477).

³⁸⁸ *Ibid*, p. 479.

³⁸⁹ Martí, 'La Nación. Buenos Aires, 2 de agosto de 1888', p. 479.

¿Qué importa que, por llevar el libro delante de los ojos, no viéramos, al nacer como pueblos libres, que el gobierno de una tierra híbrida y original, amasada con españoles retaceros y aborígenes torvos y aterrados, más su salpicadura de africanos y menceyes, debía comprender, para ser natural y fecundo, los elementos todos que, en maravilloso tropel y por la política superior escrita en la Naturaleza se levantaron a fundarla? ¿Qué importan las luchas entre la ciudad universitaria y los campos feudales?³⁹⁰

These issues centred on the old conflict between the civilised and the uncivilised, which according to Martí, was no longer relevant. He felt, instead, that it was more important to begin dealing with vast heterogeneity, not as a forced condition of colonialism but as a natural state present in Hispanic American nations. With this complex view, Martí recognised a continental hybridity of ideological broadness where Spencer's ideas sat alongside those of Bolívar:

De aquella América enconada y turbia, que brotó con las espinas en la frente y las palabras como lava, saliendo junto con la sangre del pecho, por la mordaza mal rota, hemos venido a pujo del brazo, a nuestra América de hoy, heroica y trabajadora a la vez, y franca y vigilante, con Bolívar de un brazo y Herbert Spencer de otro; una América sin suspicacias pueriles, ni confianzas cándidas que convida sin miedo a la fortuna de su hogar a las razas todas.³⁹¹

The Cuban author depicts an America where both dominant European models, as well as indigenous ideas, have a place. His proposition offered a new reality where seemingly irreconcilable ideals served to create new contexts. In a wide sense, the idea of mestizaje presented by Martí attempts to contain racial diversity through homogeneity whilst simultaneously recognising racial differences.

Old and new conflicts in *Nuestra América*

Through *Nuestra América*, José Martí aimed to respond to and provide a contrasting

³⁹⁰ José Martí, 'Discurso pronunciado en La velada artístico-literaria de La Sociedad Literaria Hispanoamérica, 19 de diciembre de 1889', in *Nuestra América I*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), VI, 131–40 (p. 138).

³⁹¹ *Ibid*, p. 139.

perspective on the discourse of conflict of civilisation established decades prior by Sarmiento, as well as on rising negative views with respect to race and mestizaje debated in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. Sarmiento never read Martí's essay, as he died a couple of years before it was published. However, the polemic Argentinian writer did comment on the transcendent sense of regional identity that Martí manifested through his prose. Even though he had declared a great admiration for the Cuban author's language and style, in another unedited text, Sarmiento questioned Martí's propensity to position and exalt his Hispanic American legacy:

Una cosa le falta a José Martí para ser un publicista, ya que se está formando en el estilo más desembarazado de ataduras y formas, precisamente porque hace uso y formas de todo el arsenal de modismos y vocablos de la lengua, castellanos y americanizados, según lo requiere el movimiento más brusco de las ideas, en el campo más vasto, más abierto, más sujeto al embate y nuevas corrientes atmosféricas. Pero fáltale, regenerarse, educarse, si es posible decirlo, como se recibe el alimento para convertirlo en sangre que vivifica, en trabajos que condensan calor y transforma la materia. Quisiera que Martí nos diera menos Martí, menos latino, menos español de raza y menos americano del Sur, por un poco más del yanquee, el nuevo tipo del hombre moderno, hijo de aquella libertad cuya colosal estatua nos ha hecho admirar al lado de aquel puente colgado de Brooklyn, que parece corresponder a la cascada del Niagara por los tamaños.³⁹²

Sarmiento's words for Martí reveal the type of man that he wanted to meld in South America. Although through very different methods and styles, both intellectuals sought to bring about the compulsory changes Hispanic America needed to enter a state of progress. Recognised for being one of the most important essayists of that period, an occupation that he shared with his political activity (he was plenipotentiary minister, or ambassador, in the United States and eventually the president of his native Argentina), Sarmiento was undeniably a major intellectual figure. Amid the Argentine's copious body of work, *Civilización y barbarie: vida de Juan Facundo Quiroga* (1845), first published in Santiago de Chile whilst in exile, is considered by some critics and academics to be one of the most important essays written in nineteenth century Hispanic America.³⁹³ This document narrated the life of

³⁹² Ezequiel Martínez Estrada, *Sarmiento, meditaciones sarmientinas. Los invariantes históricos en el Facundo*. (Rosario: Beatriz Viterbo Editora, 2001), p. 368.

³⁹³ See Nicholas Shumway, 'The Essay in Spanish America: 1800 to Modernism', in *The Cambridge History of*

the *caudillo* Juan Facundo Quiroga and simultaneously functioned as a political pamphlet in opposition to Argentine dictator Juan Manuel de Rosas.³⁹⁴ At age seventy-two, and after a lifetime of celebrated intellectual publications, Sarmiento published *Conflicto y armonías de las razas en América* (1883), a book he considered to be a ‘*Facundo* llegado a la vejez’,³⁹⁵ a continuation of his central text almost forty years later.

Despite *Conflicto* not being his most highly regarded manuscript, it can be seen as a summarisation of many of the pondered ideas delivered by Sarmiento throughout his life. In *Conflicto* Sarmiento did employ historical analysis, in this case mixed that analysis with theories such as positivism and social Darwinism. His examination varies from the sociological and historical standpoint, attempting a more biological explanation of cultural conditions and social problems on the American continent. The sociological perspective expressed by Sarmiento in *Conflicto* reveals how the trend of positivistic ideas was being established and would influence important segments of Latin American thought. According to Leopoldo Zea, Sarmiento, Juan Bautista Alberdi, José Victorino Lastarria and other Latin American intellectuals of their generation, easily assimilated Positivism to the point of ‘[reconocerla] como la filosofía cuyos principios habían sostenido sin tener noticias de la misma directamente’.³⁹⁶ For instance, Allison Williams Bunkley suggests that the period when Sarmiento wrote this book was a popular time for the use of ‘a pseudo-science of hereditary influences [...] As a result of the stimulus given to the biological sciences by Darwinism, an attempt was being made to find the cause of more and more elements of life in heredity’.³⁹⁷

Latin American Literature, ed. by Roberto González Echevarría and Enrique Pupo-Walker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 556–89 (p. 584); Roberto González Echevarría, ‘Introduction’, in *Facundo*, trans. by Kathleen Ross (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), pp. 1–15 (p. 1).

³⁹⁴ Pedro Henríquez Ureña has expressed that *Facundo* is a ‘sort of essay in human geography in which he tried to ascertain the cause of the social disease of the country, tyranny engendered by anarchy, at the end there was a study of the political situation, proving the inevitability of the fall of Rosas and the whole caudillo system’. See Pedro Henríquez Ureña, *Literary Currents in Latin America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1945), p. 132.

³⁹⁵ In a letter written to Mary Tyler Peabody Mann in December 6 of 1882, Sarmiento makes the following comments about *Conflicto*: ‘Para Vd., que está tan versada en nuestra historia, le diré que tiene la pretensión este libro de ser el *Facundo* llegado a la vejez’. José Ingenieros, ‘Las ideas sociológicas de Sarmiento (Introduction)’, in *Conflicto y armonías de las razas de América*, by Domingo Faustino Sarmiento (Buenos Aires: La Cultura Argentina, 1915), pp. 9–40 (p. 9).

³⁹⁶ Leopoldo Zea, *El pensamiento latinoamericano, II Tomos* (México, D. F.: Editorial Pormaca, 1965), I, p. 181.

³⁹⁷ Allison Williams Bunkley, *The Life of Sarmiento* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952), p. 503.

In *Conflicto* Sarmiento did not provide a concrete definition of race. Instead, he assumed race to be a condition that could define social, cultural and economic circumstances. One of the initial arguments in the book is made using an enquiry, where Sarmiento attempts to establish a correlation between race and the limited development of post-independent Hispanic American republics. In a letter he wrote to reformer, educator and widow of Horace Mann, Mary Tyler Peabody Mann, Sarmiento appeared to justify himself for writing *Conflicto*. The author could not have been more eloquent when stating that the root of the problems existing in Argentina and Hispanic America was beyond land or geography, and that the core of these malfunctions lay in racial composition:

En Civilización y Barbarie limitaba mis observaciones a mi propio país; pero la persistencia con que reaparecen los males que creímos conjurados al adoptar la Constitución Federal, y la generalidad y semejanza de los hechos que' ocurren en toda la América española, me hizo sospechar que la raíz del mal estaba a mayor profundidad que lo que accidentes exteriores del suelo dejaban creer.³⁹⁸

Given this diagnosis, Sarmiento could not avoid writing a book with scientific pretention, such as *Conflicto*, which allowed him the opportunity to address evolutionary theories being debated in Argentinian intellectual circles at the time. In 1882, the year of Charles Darwin's death, and a year before the publication of *Conflicto*, Sarmiento was asked to give a lecture discussing the ideas of the British naturalist in a public homage organised by El Circulo Médico Argentino.³⁹⁹ Alex Levine and Adriana Novoa argue that in *Conflicto*, similar to his lecture on Darwin, 'Sarmiento weaves Darwinism into a grand totalising theory, something Darwin himself would never have attempted'.⁴⁰⁰ However, in a letter written to Francisco P. Moreno dated 9 April 1883, Sarmiento acknowledged that he identified more closely with the evolutionist positivistic thought of Hebert Spencer. Responding to Moreno's analysis of *Conflicto*, Sarmiento commented on his own book, 'Bien rastrea usted las ideas evolucionistas de Spencer, que he proclamado abiertamente en materia social, dejando a

³⁹⁸ Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, *Conflicto Y Armonías de Las Razas de América* (Buenos Aires: La Cultura Argentina, 1915), p. 17.

³⁹⁹ Alex Levine and Adriana Novoa, *¡Darwinistas! The Construction of Evolutionary Thought in Nineteenth Century Argentina* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), p. 125.

⁴⁰⁰ Levine and Novoa, p. 128.

usted y a Ameghino las darwinistas, si de ello los convence el andar tras de su ilustre huella.’ Sarmiento shared that he was on the same path as the English philosopher and biologist, and as stated in his own words: ‘Con Spencer me entiendo, porque andamos el mismo camino’.⁴⁰¹

Unlike Sarmiento, who had already faced the difficulties of the nation-building process through exercise of power, Martí’s political agenda was still undergoing development. That said, it was not at all strange that Martí, at thirty-nine years of age, was still in the process of organising a multiracial insurgent movement against colonial Spain and was trying to avoid the old dichotomies and proto-scientific racism that prevailed at the end of the nineteenth century. Martí took the position that this was a struggle between the past and present, where the first step in avoiding the mistakes made by other free nations in Hispanic America consisted of imagining nations able to be inclusive of all racial and social groups. That being said, the concluding observation in Martí’s *Nuestra América* aims to define the difficulties and obstacles that must be overcome to achieve the desired progress for the republics of the region. As he noted, achieving true independence a ‘cambio de formas, sino de espíritu,’⁴⁰² was necessary. Accordingly, Martí’s diagnosis regarding the evils and errors committed by already emancipated nations did not begin with inculcating specific racial groups, peasants or miscegenation, but instead with the statement that the old institutions of the colony continued to live in the republics he observed. From this perspective, his assessment revealed an emerging optimistic conviction. Hispanic America was beginning to live another form of independence, one where old mistakes were beginning to be identified: ‘...la soberbia de las ciudades capitales, del triunfo ciego de los campesinos desdeñados, de la importación excesiva de las ideas y formulas ajenas, del desdén inicuo e impolítico de la raza aborigen...’⁴⁰³

The aforementioned errors listed by Martí resulted because that real change had not been achieved with emancipation. Despite independence, Hispanic American nations were still excluding the Indian, Black, mestizo and peasant segments of the population. It was

⁴⁰¹ Sarmiento, *Conflicto*, p. 407.

⁴⁰² Martí, ‘Nuestra América’, VI, p. 19.

⁴⁰³ *Ibid*, p. 19.

Martí's perspective that limited recognition of heterogeneity could not be solved with the adaptation of foreign models: 'ni el libro europeo, ni el libro yanqui, daban la clave del enigma hispanoamericano'.⁴⁰⁴ Martí placed his trust in the creative condition of *los pueblos naturales* and the Hispanic young masses: 'Los jóvenes de América se ponen la camisa al codo, hunden las manos en la masa, y la levantan con la levadura de su sudor. Entienden que se imita demasiado, y que la salvación está en crear.'⁴⁰⁵ Along with the inherited racial discrimination still taking place within Hispanic American republics, Martí warned of and envisioned an even greater danger to these nations: the rise of imperial North America. The author's indication of the dangers the United States posed to the region was nothing new. As Juan Marinello points out, Martí had also voiced his concerns at the American Conference of 1889 and during the American International Monetary Conference of 1891, both held in Washington D.C., where Martí attended as a delegate and voiced strong opposition to the United States' economic invasion of the nations of the Hispanic American continent.⁴⁰⁶ In part, this message cautioned the Hispanic world to hold a more careful position in regard to the United States, allowing *Nuestra América* to also be viewed as a dialogue Martí wished to establish with the delegates of the Conference.

Martí's critique was not comfortable as it was based on his first-hand knowledge of the effects U.S. interests had on Cuba. The author had participated in a public debate on the possible annexation of the island as recounted in the article *Vindicación de Cuba* (1889).⁴⁰⁷ The text was a response to an editorial article *¿Queremos a Cuba?* (1889), which appeared in Philadelphia's *The Manufacturer* on 16 March 1889, and was republished four days later by *The Evening Post* in New York. The essay examines the advantages and disadvantages of a possible annexation of the island, based on racist allegations against Cubans and Spaniards. Recognising the potential dangers inevitable to the coming expansion of power by the United States, Martí suggested that it was a consequence of the lack of knowledge between both Americas:

⁴⁰⁴ Martí, 'Nuestra América', VI, p. 20.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid, p. 20.

⁴⁰⁶ Juan Marinello, *Once ensayos martianos*, (La Habana: Comisión Nacional Cubana de la Unesco, 1964), pp. 95-96.

⁴⁰⁷ José Martí, 'Vindicación de Cuba', in *Cuba, política y revolución I, 1869-1892*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), 236-41.

‘El desdén del vecino formidable, que no la conoce, es el peligro mayor de nuestra América; y urge, porque el día de la visita está próximo, que el vecino la conozca pronto, para que no la desdeñe. Por ignorancia llegaría, tal vez, a poner en ella la codicia. Por respeto luego que la conociese, sacaría de ella las manos’.⁴⁰⁸

It does not seem coincidental that on the eve of dedicating himself to organising the war for independence against Spain’s decadent colonialism and against rising North American expansionism, Martí published his manifesto, *Nuestra América*. To conclude strategically, the final idea of the program presented by Martí in *Nuestra América* is condensed into a sentence also repeated later as a political slogan: ‘no hay odio de razas, porque no hay razas’.⁴⁰⁹ This statement was aimed to address the eagerness of intellectuals dedicated to exalting racial conflict:

Los pensadores canijos, los pensadores de lámparas, enhebran y recalientan las razas de librería, que el viajero justo y el observador cordial buscan en vano en la justicia de la Naturaleza, donde se resalta en el amor victorioso y el apetito turbulento, la identidad universal del hombre. El alma emana, igual y eterna, de los cuerpos diversos en forma y color. Peca contra la humanidad el que fomente y propague la oposición y el odio de las razas.⁴¹⁰

In summation, Martí’s ideas culminate with his examination of the evils plaguing Spanish America by analysing these causal factors and pinpointing their remedies. He begins with emphasising that the first requirement to govern the young republics is to understanding the different social and cultural elements at play in each country. The second requirement had to do with avoiding governments based on laws, constitutions and systems totally different than those of Hispanic America. Martí evokes the urgent need to recognise the endogenous component of each nation and address the conflict between races exalted by ‘pensadores canijos’. The writer believed that colonialism had not disappeared and that even with the region achieving independence, it still suffered from tyranny, despotism and dictatorship. With its well-summarised historical assessment, Martí presents a necessary program to move forward, including what he considers the great regional danger posed by

⁴⁰⁸ Martí, ‘Nuestra América’, VI, p. 22.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid, p. 22.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid, p. 22.

the other America, which he also knew well, from an insider's perspective.

Martí's *Nuestra América* represents one of the most important nineteenth century Hispanic American essays used as a political instrument making an urgent call to action whilst also proposing social reforms. It is a text marked by the possibilities of practical application, especially in the quest to transform education. As in any narrative about mestizaje in the nineteenth century, Martí responded to his political agenda, assuming a civilising project based on the universalisation of *hispanicamericanismo* and consisting primarily of education and creativity. The goal was to boost the changes that should occur not only in the attitude of indigenous people, Blacks and mestizos to overcome old structures of discrimination but also in the conflict of identity presented by the *criollos*.

Chapter V

Race, Politics and Revolution, 1892-1895

Martí's most elaborated discussions regarding race were presented during the period he spent in preparation for the liberation of Cuba, specifically between 1892 and 1895, with the production of numerous documents delineating the details of his position on the subject. Not coincidentally, this is also the period when his political activities in pursuit of an independent Cuba took on a sense of urgency. In October of 1891, through a communication to the Argentine ambassador in Washington, D.C., Martí informed him of the decision to leave his post as Consul of Argentina in New York, after having occupied the position for over a year.⁴¹¹ Whilst the purpose for his resignation was to prepare and devote himself exclusively to the war against Spain, Martí's letter also mentioned his concerns regarding the diplomatic pressure the monarchy was exerting on the Argentine government in an effort to suppress Martí's activities to free Cuba.⁴¹² After years of waiting and preparation, it was time to secure Cuba and Puerto Rico's independence from Spain; avert any annexation attempt from the government of the United States; and secure democracy for both liberated republics. In addition to securing Cuban independence, it was at this juncture that the author also became vehemently dedicated to advocacy in support of social equality and establishing a strong democratic foundation for the republic.

This chapter, which focuses on Martí's final years in the United States, before his return to Cuba in 1895, examines what can be labelled as one of Martí's most fecund intellectual periods with respect to issues of race. Martí penned various articles on the subject during this time, whilst his activism for the liberation of Cuba gathered decisive momentum. The principle purpose of this section is to illustrate how Martí's position evolved, in the face of the years of colonialism that dominated Hispanic America and his native Cuba, into the realisation of concrete actions, including the founding of the Partido

⁴¹¹ Martí became the consul of Argentina in New York the 20 of May of 1890 until his resignation on the 25 of October 1891. See Raúl Rodríguez La O, *La Argentina en Martí* (La Habana: Casa Editora Abril, 2007), p. 22.

⁴¹² José Martí, 'Carta al ministro de La Argentina, 17 de octubre de 1891', in *Cuba, política y revolución I, 1869-1892*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1992), I, 265–66.

Revolucionario Cubano (PRC), which promoted racial inclusion for all Cubans. Analysis is drawn mainly from a series of texts published in what became the ideological organ of the PRC, the newspaper *Patria*. Between 1892 and 1894, the periodical was the tribune used by Martí to prepare and promote the ideas he envisioned for the construction of a race-less, post-colonial society. In order to better comprehend the development of Martí's antiracial position over time and to understand how the politics of race began to germinate in his later writings, other texts cited here predate this period, including three letters written between 1882 and 1888 to Cuban revolutionary leaders, as well as the article *Cuba y los Estados Unidos* (1889) and the essay *Nuestra América* (1891).

Race as a social problem and political organisation in pre-revolutionary Cuba

During the 1880s, Martí wrote several letters directed at the leadership of the Cuban independence movement, demonstrating a reflexive analysis of the situation on the island. This correspondence can be seen as an antecedent demonstrating how the political activity carried out by the Cuban writer was bolstered by the need for integrative processes to achieve not only Cuban liberation but also a favourable scenario for national construction. In a letter written by an impatient Martí on 20 July 1882, to Antonio Maceo, a general and a key leader of the independence movement,⁴¹³ Martí expressed his concerns about the impending war. An enthusiastic Martí made it clear that he saw the main difficulty for Cuba as being social, rather than political. He expressed the opinion that without confronting existing racial problems on the island, any attempt to establish an independent republic would fail: 'a mis ojos no está el problema cubano en la solución política, sino en la social, y cómo ésta no puede lograrse sino con aquel amor y perdón mutuos de una y otra raza'.⁴¹⁴ Martí also articulated his conviction that those who promoted hate or took advantage of others were criminal and that Cuba's black and mulatto populations had a legitimate right to

⁴¹³ Mulatto general Antonio Maceo (1848-1896) was the second in command during the Ten Years War (1868-1878) and the Cuban War for Independence (1895-1898), after Máximo Gómez. Maceo died in battle in 1896. See *The Encyclopedia of the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars: A Political, Social, and Military History*, 3 vols, ed. by Spencer Tucker (Santa Barbara, Calif: ABC-CLIO, 2009), I, p. 356. Like Martí, Antonio Maceo, as Philip S. Foner has indicated, 'was also the symbol of free Cuba- equally free from the domination of Spain and of the United States.' See Philip S Foner, *Antonio Maceo: The 'Bronze Titan' of Cuba's Struggle for Independence* (New York; London: Monthly Review Press, 1977), p. 258.

⁴¹⁴ José Martí, 'Carta a Antonio Maceo', in *Cuba política y revolución I, 1869-1892*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), I, 171-73 (p. 172).

aspire to a better situation. His claim was not only directed at the colonial regime but was also an ethical stance that he hoped the leaders of the revolution would share. Aline Helg suggest that both leaders were convinced that a victory against the Spanish was not possible without the union of white and black Cubans.⁴¹⁵ It can also be contended that this was a pragmatic position, given the fact that sectarian, racial and class exclusion would jeopardise the struggle for Cuba's liberation from Spain.

The matter was further addressed in a letter written to another principal chief and general of the Cuban revolution, Máximo Gómez,⁴¹⁶ date 16 December 1887, where the writer proposed five points to which the insurgency should be directed. These points, established by Martí, were drafted in a resolution by a group of Cuban emigrants in the U.S, who were part of an executive commission of Cuban Revolutionaries in New York.⁴¹⁷ The five points included:

- (1) Acreditar en el país, disipando temores y procediendo en virtud de un fin democrático conocido, la solución revolucionaria.
- (2) Proceder sin demora a organizar, con la unión de los Jefes afuera y trabajos de extensión, y no de una mera opinión, adentro, la parte militar de la revolución.
- (3) Unir con espíritu democrático y en relaciones de igualdad todas las emigraciones.
- (4) Impedir que las simpatías revolucionarias en Cuba se tuerzan y esclavicen por ningún interés de grupo, para la preponderancia de una clase social, o la autoridad desmedida de una agrupación militar o civil, ni de una comarca determinada, ni de una raza sobre otra.
- (5) Impedir que con la propaganda de las ideas anexionistas se debilite la fuerza que vaya adquiriendo la solución revolucionaria⁴¹⁸

These objectives represented the revolutionaries' expectations from the process of nation building; neither sectarian rule nor racial imposition would be accepted. The goal was to

⁴¹⁵ Aline Helg, 'La mejorana y la independencia cubana: un choque de ideas y liderazgo entre José Martí y Antonio Maceo', *Cuadernos de Historia Contemporánea*, 21 (1999), 227–57 (p. 243).

⁴¹⁶ Máximo Gómez, known as el Generalísimo (1836-1905) was a general born in Dominican Republic, and became the commander in chief of the War of Independence of Cuba. See 'Máximo Gómez: notas biográficas', in *Diario de campaña (1868-1899)*, by Máximo Gómez, ed. by Carmen Almodóvar (Oviedo: Universidad de Oviedo, 1998), pp. XV – LIX (pp. XV–LIX).

⁴¹⁷ José Martí, 'Carta a Máximo Gómez', in *Cuba política y revolución I, 1869-1892*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), I, 216–22 (p. 222).

⁴¹⁸ Martí, 'Carta a Máximo Gómez', I, p. 219.

unite all social and racial groups democratically. Martí remained outspoken regarding democracy and equality, targeting racial discrimination as an important issue during the preparatory process of the revolution. In a subsequent letter, dated 26 September 1888, written to Emilio Núñez, a general of the revolutionary war and future vice-president of Cuba (1917-1921), Martí decried the manner in which the black population was treated: ‘Ya ve cómo asoman también por aquí las malas pasiones, y se le dice a los negros poco menos que bestias’.⁴¹⁹ The authoritarian manner in which Cuba had been ruled was sufficient cause to begin the struggle for independence.

The aforementioned points discussed in Martí’s letters to Maceo, Gómez and Núñez, can be perceived as an antecedent to the bylaws of the Partido Revolucionario Cubano, established by Martí in the U.S. in January of 1892. The bylaws were approved of on 10 April 1892 by Cuban and Puerto Rican exiles, giving birth to the political organisation.⁴²⁰ The statutes consisted of nine articles promoting, amongst other guarantees, ‘un pueblo nuevo y de sincera democracia, capaz de vencer, por el orden del trabajo real y el equilibrio de las fuerzas sociales, los peligros de la libertad repentina en una sociedad compuesta para la esclavitud.’⁴²¹ On 10 April 1892, the inauguration of the PRC took place in several U.S. cities, including Cayo Hueso, Tampa and New York.⁴²²

The PRC thus became the third political party in Cuba, after the signing of El Pacto de Zanjón in 1878, which ended the Ten Years War. Once the conflict was over, El Partido Liberal, later renamed Autonomista, a political organization associated with plantation owners, was instituted. El Partido Autonomista was the first political association in Cuba structured to pursue the transformation of colonial rule.⁴²³ The *autonomistas* sought the equality of Cubans in relation to the metropolis, as well as the separation of military power from political power on the island. They demanded freedom of the press, of assembly and

⁴¹⁹ José Martí, ‘Carta a Emilio Núñez’, in *Cuba, política y revolución I, 1869-1892*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), I, 227 (p. 227).

⁴²⁰ José Martí, ‘Bases del Partido Revolucionario Cubano’, in *Cuba, política y revolución I, 1869-1892*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), I, 227–84 (p. 277).

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 279.

⁴²² Aurea Matilde Fernández, ‘Estudio preliminar’, p. XXV.

⁴²³ Louis A. Pérez, *Cuba between Empires, 1878-1902*, Pitt Latin American Series (Pittsburgh, Pa: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1983), p. 7.

association, as well as immunity of the individual, home, property and correspondence.⁴²⁴ This organization, which was directly related to the Cuban Creole aristocracy, was to provide the means to put into play reforms - promised by Spain after the war and with the truce of Zanjón - that would give Cubans greater autonomy. In the beginning, the party maintained an ambiguous position on the abolition of slavery, which was demanded under a scheme of compensation whilst promoting essentially white immigration for the island.

Also in 1878, in response to the *autonomistas*, a conservative solution to progressive reformations at the time, the Spanish colonial government founded Cuba's second political party in post-Zanjón Cuba. The Partido Unión Constitucional, blatantly sympathetic to the metropolis and prodigiously *peninsular* in alignment, appealed to the most fervent supporters of a "Cuba Española". Dispersed throughout Havana and the largest inland regions, this traditionalist party was deeply rooted in the interests of the peninsula. Its members included merchants, businessmen and traders, as well as colonial government members and employees from both the provincial and municipal ranks.⁴²⁵ The Partido Autonomista, and the Partido de la Unión Constitucional, shared at least one common cause: both opposed a separatist military uprising, similar to what had led the insurgents of previous wars.

The new party launched by Martí was the political apparatus to conduct the emancipation of Cuba and had been assembled to unite the different groups of revolutionaries, both in exile and at home, as well as to help promote the emancipation of Puerto Rico, as stated in the first article of its statutes: 'El Partido Revolucionario Cubano se constituye para lograr con los esfuerzos reunidos de todos los hombres de buena voluntad, la independencia absoluta de la Isla de Cuba, y fomentar y auxiliar la de Puerto Rico'.⁴²⁶ Consequently, the principal goal of the PRC was to institute a 'sincera democracia,' able to handle the abrupt freedom that would be gained after prolonged exposure to the colonial system Spain represented. Of equal importance to the PRC was avoiding following in the footsteps of other Spanish American emancipated nations that had ostensibly succeeded only in reproducing the colonial schemes from which they had gained their

⁴²⁴ Enrique Pérez-Cisneros, *El reformismo español en Cuba*, (Madrid: Editorial Verbum, 2002), p. 57.

⁴²⁵ Pérez, *Cuba between Empires, 1878-1902*, p. 10.

⁴²⁶ Martí, 'Bases del Partido Revolucionario Cubano', I, p. 279.

freedom.

Martí used his experience observing other Spanish American republics to recognise that ‘la colonia continuó viviendo en la república’.⁴²⁷ This famous statement connotes the struggles that the Cuban writer observed taking place in emancipated republics and the resulting consequences: ‘La soberbia de las ciudades capitales, del triunfo ciego de los campesinos desdeñados, de la importación excesiva de las ideas y fórmulas ajenas, del desdén inicuo e impolítico de la raza aborigen’.⁴²⁸ Through the establishment of the new political organisation, the idea was to avoid the deportment of the old institutions for colonial ruling: ‘no se propone perpetuar en la Republica Cubana, con formas nuevas o con alteraciones más aparentes que esenciales, el espíritu autoritario y la composición burocrática de la colonia’.⁴²⁹ Moreover, as has been proposed by Sergio Aguirre, the idea of the creation of the political party also emerged as a safeguard against the emergence of a dictatorship in Cuba.⁴³⁰

The relationship between Martí, military leaders and veterans of the Ten Years War, including Gómez and Maceo, was, at first, one of suspicion and discord. Martí had not directly participated in the failed Cuban wars and Gómez felt that Martí was a better poet than a man of war, believing that Martí was not prepared for armed struggle. Maceo, in his first meeting with Martí, found him arrogant and unreliable. Conversely, Martí feared that the leadership of the revolution relied solely on military decisions, thus excluding the rest of society.⁴³¹ After meeting in 1884 with Maceo and Gómez in New York, Martí warned against and protested the type of authoritarian leadership used by Gómez, who he accused of managing the insurgent movement like a campaign with no participation from civil society. The break between Martí and Gómez during that period caused friction between Martí and the hierarchy of the separatist movement in exile.⁴³² Martí later sought to merge

⁴²⁷ José Martí, ‘Nuestra América’, VI, p. 19.

⁴²⁸ Ibid, p. 19.

⁴²⁹ Martí, ‘Bases del Partido Revolucionario Cubano’, I, p. 279.

⁴³⁰ Sergio Aguirre, ‘El partido revolucionario cubano: génesis y análisis’, in *El partido revolucionario cubano y patria, trincheras de ideas* (La Habana: Editorial Política, 1983), pp. 5–15 (p. 11).

⁴³¹ John Lawrence Tone, *War and Genocide in Cuba, 1895-1898*, Envisioning Cuba (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), p. 34.

⁴³² Pérez, *Cuba between Empires, 1878-1902*, p. 15.

separatist hankerings shared by military leaders and new civil generations, all of whom were discontented with Cuban colonial rule. The full reconciliation between Martí and the generals would come years later in the early 1890s.

Martí's cautiousness concerning the authoritarian nature of martial governance was based on his experiences in Hispanic America. The writer was aware that the possibility existed for military leadership to transform into tyrannical governance. In Mexico, the first Hispanic American country where he lived after departing Cuba, the popular Porfirio Díaz, who defeated the invading troops of Maximilian of Austria and who had become the restorer of religious fanaticism in the country, also became its dictator and was still in power when Martí died in 1895. In 1878, Martí had to leave Guatemala to avoid bowing to the dictatorship of General Juan Rufino Barrios, and in 1881, General Antonio Guzmán Blanco expelled Martí from Venezuela for his liberal ideas.⁴³³ These instances lead Martí to suggest that revolutions and nation-building projects should be driven by civil principles as a defense against the emergence of military tyranny.⁴³⁴ From its inception, Martí tried to organise the Partido Revolucionario Cubano independent from affiliation with particular creeds, classes, genders or races, launching it instead with a common purpose applicable to all of civil society.

The periodical *Patria*, national identity and racial mobilisation

The creation of an informative periodical that would deliver the ideas promoting Cuba's liberation was essential to the success and effectiveness of the PRC. The newspaper *Patria*, founded by Martí on 14 March 1892, was the main revolutionary periodical of the Cuban exile.⁴³⁵ Several important essays and articles, such as *Nuestras ideas* (1892), *Mi raza* (1893), *El plato de lentejas* (1894), were published within its pages until the final issue was printed on 31 December 1898.⁴³⁶ The name *Patria* was a symbolic name that implied the

⁴³³ Aguirre, p. 11.

⁴³⁴ Aguirre, p. 13.

⁴³⁵ Susana Rotker, 'The (Political) Exile Gaze in Martí's Writing on the United States', in *In José Martí 'Our America': From National to Hemispheric Cultural Studies*, ed. by Jeffrey Belnap and Raúl Fernández (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), pp. 58–76 (p. 69).

⁴³⁶ Cuban historian Ibrahím Hidalgo Paz has explained that Martí was not alone in the realisation of the periodical, helping him 'se hallaban, redactores y operarios que, en las noches del viernes de cada semana,

ultimate goal of the revolution - the idea of a nation where everyone's rights were recognised - as was fervently expressed in *Nuestras ideas*, the opening article of the first edition of the paper: 'Se habrá de defender, en la patria redimida, la política popular en que se acomoden por el mutuo reconocimiento, [...] un pueblo real y de métodos nuevos, donde la vida emancipada, sin amenazar derecho alguno, goce en paz de todos'.⁴³⁷ The name chosen for the periodical also followed ideas from a discontinued project when Martí, as an eager youth in 1869, founded a small paper called *Patria libre*.⁴³⁸ The concept of *patria* promoted by Martí, which had been similarly presented in one of his early works, *El presidio político en Cuba* (1871), was essentially a convergence of identities where the national ideal was signified as 'comunidad de intereses, unidad de tradiciones, unidad de fines, fusión dulcísima y consoladora de amores y esperanzas'.⁴³⁹

The ideology endorsed in the revolutionary newspaper *Patria* were framed on raceless nationalism, positioning citizen integration in opposition with the colonial homogeneous view identifying the territory of Cuba as an insular colonial extension of the metropolis. Accordingly, *Cuba libre* was symbolised through the paradigm in which all members of society would not only achieve the condition of free men, but would also be treated as equals, or at least more favourably, in all social spheres. Unquestionably, the war in opposition to Spain's colonial rule represented a means by which singular and collective interests could be realised by different segments of the population. Aline Helg describes the scenario as one where the black population rebelled against racism and inequality, whilst simultaneously, dispossessed farmers, regardless of their racial backgrounds, were also involved in the struggle to gain access to land. Popular leaders sought out political power and communities anticipated gaining the right to determine the future of their region. Black

ponían sus fuerzas en tensión para hacer posible la salida de Patria. Los más decididos auxiliares de Martí fueron Sotero Figueroa y Gonzalo de Quesada, quienes se alternaban en la dirección en la ausencia de este; colaboradores cercanos eran Benjamín Guerra, Abelardo Agramonte, Ramón Luis Miranda, Rafael Serra, Antonio Vélez Alvarado, Francisco Gonzalo Marín, Juan Fraga, Emilio Leal y Federico Leal'. See Ibrahim Hidalgo Paz, 'Patria: órgano del patriotismo virtuoso y creador', in *El partido revolucionario cubano y patria, trinchera de ideas* (La Habana: Editorial Política, 1983), pp. 17–34 (p. 17).

⁴³⁷ José Martí, 'Nuestras ideas', in *Cuba, política y revolución I, 1869-1892*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), I, 315–22 (p. 321).

⁴³⁸ Richard Butler Gray, *José Martí, Cuban Patriot* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1962), p. 4.

⁴³⁹ José Martí, 'El presidio político en Cuba', in *Cuba, política y revolución I, 1869-1892*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), I, 45–60 (p. 53).

and White, wealthy and poor, banded together to free Cuba.⁴⁴⁰ Even though the fight for a *Cuba Libre* was a struggle that would affect, on distinct levels, all races and classes, the common ground shared by the different groups fighting for the island's freedom was the belief that independence could set the path to improve all of their conditions within society.

The inclination to merge the heterogeneous interests of the social groups that were seeking better conditions through a break from Spain created, in part, the social and political background to give impetus to an inclusive national identity. Martí's long exile abroad helped shape the conception of national identity that he imagined for a free Cuba. Through his experiences in free countries like Mexico, Guatemala, Venezuela and the United States, Martí had confirmed that liberated republics could not guarantee inclusion or the harmony of complex national pluralities. For an exile, as Edward Said explains, habits of life, expression or activities of the new environment are assumed facing the memory of other habits from different environments.⁴⁴¹ Thus, for the exile it is essential to overcome the nativist identity to avoid 'remaining trapped in the emotional self-indulgences of celebrating one's own identity'.⁴⁴² Said's reflections serve to explain how Martí transformed his own experiences through his banishment, prompting the envisioning of a national identity seen not as a cultural union but as a result of a revolutionary, multi-race coalition.⁴⁴³ *Patria* launched whilst Martí was still living in New York and was intended to be the ideological instrument that would construct the multiracial identity needed for the new republic.

It would be necessary for the revolution to emphasise the adverse situation of *la raza de color* or *gente de color*,⁴⁴⁴ a group who represented a third of the population of the island

⁴⁴⁰ Aline Helg, 'Sentido e impacto de la partición negra en la guerra de Cuba', *Revista de Indias*, LVIII (1998), 47–63 (p. 50).

⁴⁴¹ Edward W Said, *Reflexiones sobre el exilio* (Caracas: Random House Mondadori, 2005), p. 194.

⁴⁴² Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), p. 229.

⁴⁴³ Jean Stubbs, 'Race, Gender, and National Identity in Nineteenth-Century Cuba. Mariana Grajales and the Revolutionary Free Browns of Cuba', p. 103.

⁴⁴⁴ *Raza de color* or *gente de color* was a term used at the time to encompass blacks, mulattos and African descendants of all classes and backgrounds. The term was promoted during the early 1890s in periodicals such as *La Igualdad*, which was directed by black intellectual Juan Gualberto Gómez. See Aline Helg, *Our Rightful Share: The Afro-Cuban Struggle for Equality, 1886-1912* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), p. 40.

and who were the most marginalised social group in Cuba.⁴⁴⁵ By the end of the Ten Years War, Cuba was beginning to show signs of change in the dynamics of race relations. It was a process of gradual transformation, but in 1868, when Carlos Manuel de Céspedes freed his slaves, asking them to join him in his fight against Spain, a path was paved for what had been unimaginable up to that point - an armed independence movement with black soldiers fighting as free men. On the other hand, if one looks at the social and historical context from 1868 to 1878, when young Blacks and mulattos ascended from privates to senior military figures, among them Antonio Maceo, his brother José Maceo, Flor Crombet and Agustín Sánchez Cebreco, contradictions existing at the time become obvious. For example, when Antonio Maceo reached the rank of Major General of the *mambí* army in 1878, it would still be eight years before Spain decreed the abolition of slavery. The power obtained by black soldiers through their efforts in battle preceding the war of 1895 had a profound impact on Cuba's population of colour, but also increased fear and racism within the community of white elites.

The fear that prevailed among the white *criollos* in the shadow of Haiti's violent slave rebellion led Spain to stigmatise the separatist insurgency as a race war. By equating the insurrection of 1895 with a racial conflict, as they had in previous wars, Spain managed to deflect potential support from some *criollos* on the island. However, propaganda generated by Spain to classify the *Guerra Necesaria* as a racial conflict did not have the same response as in previous wars.⁴⁴⁶ By 1895, Cuban society had changed on various social and political levels. For example, reforms led by Spain after the truce of Zanjón allowed political parties to operate and awarded more freedom of the press. A tendency toward nationalism had increased among the population and, demographically, Cuba had experienced a 'whitening' through immigration policies. Between 1882 and 1894, an estimated 224,000 immigrants, mostly farmers and workers from the Spanish peninsula, were able to reach the island, bringing with them the germs of anarchist and Marxist labour ideologies.⁴⁴⁷ Finally, and no

⁴⁴⁵ By 1895 Afro Cuban descendants represented, 32 percent of the total Cuban population, estimated at the time in 1,650,000 inhabitants. See Aline Helg, 'Sentido e impacto de la participación negra en la guerra de Cuba', *Revista de Indias*, LVIII (1998), 47–63 p. 48).

⁴⁴⁶ Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868-1898*, p. 143.

⁴⁴⁷ Benedict Anderson, *Bajo tres banderas: anarquismo e imaginación anticolonial*, trans. by Cristina Piña Aldao (Madrid: Akal Ediciones, 2008), p. 150.

less important to the changes taking place in Cuban society at the time, was the fact that it had been nearly a decade since slavery had been abolished.

The overwhelming participation of *la raza de color* in the war against Spain demonstrated that the situation of the Afro-descendant population had not radically improved after abolition.⁴⁴⁸ The commitment of Blacks and mulattos to the freedom of Cuba, knowing that it could cost them their lives, reflected the level of hope deposited in the revolution, and as Aline Helg points out, 'los negros mambises abrigaban sueños de una mejor posición para ellos en una Cuba independiente, basándose en parte en su experiencia en la guerra'.⁴⁴⁹ Indeed, the structure of the war allowed them to achieve positions of importance. It is estimated that between 1895 and 1898, forty percent of the commanders in the liberation army were Black and Mulatto commissioned officers.⁴⁵⁰

The idea of including Blacks as a political force in the uprising against Spain was not only a question of revolutionary rhetoric. Thinking about the role that different social groups should have in a free and democratic Cuba, the participation of *la raza de color* also became a priority in Martí's political vision. Before the founding of the PRC in 1890, Martí and tobacco maker and black intellectual, Rafael Serra Montalvo (1858-1909), founded an educational society in New York known as *La Liga*. This society, which was also a school for the propaganda of the revolution, aimed to guide and prepare Puerto Rican and Cuban exiles, especially immigrants of African descent, for independence from Spain.⁴⁵¹ Martí's participation was fundamental to the point of organising classes, confirming teachers and venues for tutoring, as well as promoting the society to increase membership. Courses were held at night, with Martí himself teaching a class every Thursday evening. It was here that he talked about the necessity of winning total independence for Cuba and of rejecting all fractional reform measures.

He instilled in his students a pride of being Cuban and emphasised the important

⁴⁴⁸ Aline Helg indicates that in late August 1895, six months after the war began, the insurgent forces had about 20,500 men. An estimated 18,500 were people of colour, mulattoes and blacks, whilst only about 2,000 were white. See Aline Helg, 'Sentido e impacto de la participación negra en la guerra de Cuba', p. 48.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 50.

⁴⁵⁰ Stubbs, p. 103.

⁴⁵¹ Helg, *Our Rightful Share*, p. 42.

place that civil society, both Black and White, would occupy in the liberation movement and in the future republic. Martí conveyed his belief that Cuba's impending struggle should not be one between the landless classes, as was the case in 1868, but that it should be a people's war. In a war of the people, the Negro would be treated "according to his qualities as a man" and labourers as brothers, given the respect and privileges that would support peace and contentment for the nation. Martí's Black, labouring class students, exited the course believing in the viability of the revolution and possessing an informed understanding of their role in it.⁴⁵²

In December of 1892, a few months after the printing of the first issue of *Patria*, the intellectual mulatto lawyer and founder of the *Directorio de las Sociedades de Color en Cuba*, Juan Gualberto Gómez, established the newspaper *La Igualdad*.⁴⁵³ The *Directorio* sought to promote civil rights for Blacks and unite the political forces of all Cubans. *La Igualdad*, the information arm of *El Directorio*, had the support of Serra Montalvo, writing from New York. The newspaper, run by Gómez, worked in alliance with *Patria*, whereby both publications promoted the content and circulation of the other.⁴⁵⁴

After the foundation of the PRC, Martí appointed Gómez as the coordinator of the independence movement and as his delegate in Cuba. Gómez had excellent organisational capacity, was persuasive and had connections with hundreds of mulatto and black associations who could support the revolutionary cause.⁴⁵⁵ Gómez acted with Manuel García as the only non-veterans of previous wars within the central committee on the island, which pointed to another key strategy of the PRC: the incorporation of civil leaders of every class and race.⁴⁵⁶ Similarly, with the allocation of Gómez as coordinator and chief of the party in Cuba, Martí ensured the participation of black civil leaders in important positions. Advancement in the military sphere for merits in battle was not enough; Martí

⁴⁵² Philips S. Foner, 'Introduction', in *Our America* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1977), pp. 11–68 (pp. 17–18).

⁴⁵³ Leopoldo Fornés Bonavía, *Cuba, cronología: cinco siglos de historia, política Y cultura* (Madrid: Editorial Verbum, 2003), p. 95.

⁴⁵⁴ Lillian Guerra, *The Myth of José Martí: Conflicting Nationalisms in Early Twentieth-Century Cuba*, Envisioning Cuba (Chapel Hill, N.C: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), p. 28.

⁴⁵⁵ Gillian McGillivray, *Blazing Cane: Sugar Communities, Class, and State Formation in Cuba, 1868-1959* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), p. 42.

⁴⁵⁶ McGillivray, p. 41.

endorsed the idea that Blacks and mulattos should reach spaces and positions of importance in all political and social levels.

The depiction of race relations Martí created in the article *El plato de lentejas*, published in 1894, employs the idea of black participation in the revolution based on a filial attachment, where the Cuban nation is portrayed as a mother: ¡Y cuando se levante en Cuba de nuevo la bandera de la revolución el cubano Negro estará abrazado a la bandera, como a una madre!⁴⁵⁷ Perhaps Martí knew that *la raza de color* was fighting more for equality in Cuba than for a national patriotism. The idealistic approach to racial union he envisioned would only be validated by the idea that Blacks should perceive of themselves as sons of Cuba. This promoted the notion that nationality was beyond racial stigmas and that Blacks and mulattos, being Cubans, would be able to obtain the same rights gained by white citizens in a free society.

This romantic image of racial union and equality was raised from a political and historical vision, but in the praxis, strengthening the leadership of black officers in the army and black political participation in the civil sphere, demonstrated the exceptional manner in which the last war in the Americas for liberation from Spain was to be waged. Much of the ideological prose promoted in the initial years of the newspaper *Patria* emerged challenging the racism that prevailed as the dominant ideology during the period and focussed on constructing a new Cuban national identity. Although Martí and the insurgent movement promoted a conception of race-less nationality, Afro Cuban descendants were fighting for racial vindication. By the end of the nineteenth century, every nation in Hispanic America, with the exception of Cuba and Puerto Rico, had gained independence from Spanish colonial rule. Cuba's delay resulted in the island being an exceptional case, where Blacks and mulattos, both excluded minorities, played a prominent role in the country's process of nation building.

***Patria*, the politics of race and the defence of Cuba**

The inaugural text in *Patria* was called *Nuestras ideas* and began with a declaration

⁴⁵⁷ José Martí, 'El plato de lentejas', III, p. 30.

justifying the coming revolutionary war: ‘La guerra es un procedimiento político’⁴⁵⁸, and as such was convenient for Cuba. Patriotism would be a ‘deber santo’,⁴⁵⁹ because the fight was to achieve a *patria* where all men would live happily within it. Accordingly, Martí spoke in the text of the search for Cuban vindication through a critique of social inequality:

Si por igualdad social hubiera de entenderse, en el sistema democrático de igualdades, la desigualdad, injusta a todas luces, de forzar a una parte de la población, por ser de un color diferente de la otra, a prescindir en el trato de la población de otro color de los derechos de simpatía y conveniencia que ella misma ejercita, con aspereza a veces, entre sus propios miembros, la “igualdad social” sería injusta para quien la hubiese de sufrir, e indecorosa para los que quisiesen imponerla.⁴⁶⁰

This excerpt acknowledges that social equality within a democratic system cannot accept impositions of one race over another. The relevance of this first article, *Nuestras ideas*, which appeared in *Patria* on 14 March 1892, rested in its function of proposing racial integration whilst simultaneously justifying the launch of a revolutionary war as the solution to Cuba’s problems. Cintio Vitier has suggested that the vision of equality proposed by Martí, ‘consiste simplemente en no hacer intervenir en las relaciones humanas el color de piel.’⁴⁶¹ Martí knew that hatred between races in Cuba had to be avoided, so from this standpoint, he reiterated in *Nuestras ideas* that ‘la guerra no es contra el español, sino contra la codicia e incapacidad de España,’⁴⁶² where the Spaniards were reassured that they: ‘vivirán seguros en la republica que ayuden a fomentar’.⁴⁶³

Beginning with *Nuestras ideas* and continuing with various other articles penned by Martí between 1892 and 1894, egalitarian race relations, in discussion and reflection, became a political objective. In the brief article, *Basta*, dated 14 March 1892, Martí criticised Havana newspaper *La Unión Constitucional*, the informative organ of the political party of the

⁴⁵⁸ Martí, ‘Nuestras Ideas’, I, p. 317.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 320.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid, pp. 320–321.

⁴⁶¹ Cintio Vitier and Fina García Marruz, *Temas martianos* (La Habana: Centro de Estudios Martianos, 2011), p. 52.

⁴⁶² Martí, ‘Nuestras Ideas’, p. 321.

⁴⁶³ Martí, Ibid, p. 321.

same name, which was created by the Spaniards. In the article, Martí faced the sarcasm of the ruling party, which had declared that through universal suffrage, ‘even Blacks would be entitled to vote’. His response in *Basta* included an allusion to stop the Manichean conception related to the colour of men: ‘Debería cesar esa alusión al color de los hombres’, and that ‘el bueno es blanco y el malo es negro’.⁴⁶⁴

Mi raza, an essay written by José Martí, which first appeared in *Patria* in April of 1893⁴⁶⁵ and represents a mixture of his declared antiracist ideas, prevalent throughout his extensive body of written work. The assessment Martí offered in *Mi raza* is presented with such depth that the piece can be considered his most developed work regarding racial interrelation.⁴⁶⁶ The ideas penned in *Mi raza* developed from the socio-political struggles present in Cuba at the time, but were also aimed at addressing the broader regional reality. The antiracist dialogue delivered by Martí was utilised to address the vague precepts of the concept of ‘race’ and the extent of social division in Cuba during the final decade of the nineteenth century. On the other hand, Martí also argued that his text was not a direct critique against the colonial racist white man, but instead, a portrayal of racism as being a condition present in all races: ‘Esa de racista está siendo una palabra confusa, y hay que ponerla en claro. El hombre no tiene ningún derecho especial porque pertenezca a una raza u otra: dígame hombre, y ya se dicen todos los derechos’.⁴⁶⁷ The main idea was that race was not something that could be appropriated by either Black or White because there was no race other than the ‘raza humana’. In concordance with Thomas Ward, Martí was aware of ethnic diversity. Therefore, tolerance and acceptance were important to his message. Ward proposed that ‘from his model of dignity, we can conclude that indigenous peoples, Blacks, rural folk, and all others have value, and consequently deserve the authority to exert their liberty in the ideal colour-blind community which he puts forth for our consideration’.⁴⁶⁸ However, *Mi raza* did not consider the situation of the indigenous like earlier works, such as

⁴⁶⁴ José Martí, ‘Basta’, in *Cuba, política y revolución I, 1869-1892*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), I, 338–39 (p. 338).

⁴⁶⁵ Carlos Ripoll, *Índice universal de la obra de José Martí* (New York: Eliseo Torres, 1971), p. 151.

⁴⁶⁶ Dionisio Poey Baró, ‘Race and Anti-Racism in Jose Martí’s “Mi Raza”’, *Journal Contributions in Black Studies*, 12 (1994), 55–61 (p. 55).

⁴⁶⁷ José Martí, ‘Mi raza’, II, p. 298.

⁴⁶⁸ Ward, p. 94..

Nuestra América had. Instead, the text confronted the conflictive relation between Whites and Blacks and the racist tendencies expressed by both groups. Throughout the document, Martí uses a series of expressions, highlighting binary oppositions, with the aim of explaining the conduct and aptitudes of men:

Racista blanco/negro
Ventura pública/individual
Carácter tímido/valeroso, abnegado/egoísta
Hombres interesados/desinteresados

These dichotomies were employed by Martí to emphasise the importance of ‘men’ within society, inferring that what matters are his actions and merits, whether in public or private life; his moral conduct and altruism; as well as his commitment to a cause, which essentially, according to Martí, could serve to reveal his true value, rather than just the colour of his skin. It can be said the Martí synthesised this moral statement with the following axiom: ‘La afinidad de los caracteres es más poderosa entre los hombres que la afinidad del color.’⁴⁶⁹

Martí had also endorsed these precepts a few years earlier, when countering the racism demonstrated by the American press toward Cuba. In 1889, Martí responded to two editorial articles that appeared in U.S. newspapers discussing the annexation of Cuba. The first, dated 16 March 1889, was called *Do We Want Cuba?* and was published in *The Manufacturer of Philadelphia*. The second, *A Protectionist View on Cuban Annexation*, appeared in *The New York Evening Post*, on 21 March 1889.⁴⁷⁰ Both articles discussed the disadvantages the possible annexation of Cuba by the United States presented. In both, the races that inhabited the island were presented as the main problem of a possible accession. In the first, the people of Cuba were described through a taxonomy divided in three groups: ‘españoles, cubanos de ascendencia española y negros’.⁴⁷¹ From this taxonomy, the disadvantages presented by each of the three “races” observed in the editorial were noted

⁴⁶⁹ José Martí, ‘Mi raza’, II, p. 299.

⁴⁷⁰ In this document, both items are translated along with the letter Martí writes to editor of *The Evening Post*, entitled *La vindicación de Cuba*. The letter would later be published in a booklet called *Cuba y los Estados Unidos* in *El Avisador Hispano-Americano*, in New York and dated March 21, 1889.. See José Martí, ‘Cuba Y Los Estados Unidos’, in *Cuba, política y revolución I, 1869-1892*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), I, 229–41.

⁴⁷¹ *Ibid*, p. 233.

with epithets such as: “inferior”, “effeminate”, “lazy” and “barbarians”, concluding that there was little Cuba had to offer the United States.

The argument was that the only option for annexation would be the complete “Americanisation” of the island. For many, Cuban Creole annexation by the United States was attractive because it alleviated fears of the growth of the black population, whilst also providing the means to keep white Cuba in control of black culture.⁴⁷² Outside of the country, many exiled Cubans promoted annexation to abolish racial conflict as an eventual slave rebellion was feared if the conflict persisted. Many believed that such a race war could be avoided by intervention from the United States.⁴⁷³ Similarly, *A Protectionist View on Cuban Annexation* conveyed analogous opinions to those appearing in *The Manufacturer of Philadelphia*, with the added view that the annexation of a million blacks, ‘muy inferiores a los nuestros en punto de civilización’,⁴⁷⁴ could further complicate the situation of conflict in the southern United States. Martí’s response to the onslaught of negative sentiment toward Cuba and its people came in the form of a letter addressed to the editors of both newspapers, dated 25 March 1889, and entitled *Vindication of Cuba*.

In his concise response, Martí first criticised the propensity to annex Cuba, followed by the condemnation of the outrageous manner in which both articles slandered all Cubans, especially those who were Black. However, Martí did not stop there. His retort also mitigated the criticism that the articles placed on Spaniards, where in *Do we Want Cuba?* for example, it was stated that: ‘Los españoles están probablemente menos preparados que los hombres de ninguna otra raza blanca para ser ciudadanos americanos’.⁴⁷⁵ Martí’s response focused on enhancing the capabilities and greatness of the Cuban people, who were also descendants of the Spanish:

Estamos “incapacitados por la naturaleza y la experiencia para cumplir con las obligaciones de la ciudadanía de un país grande y libre”. Esto no puede decirse en justicia de un pueblo que posee junto con la energía que

⁴⁷² Gerald Eugene Poyo, *With All, and for the Good of All: The Emergence of Popular Nationalism in the Cuban Communities of the United States, 1848-1898* (Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 1989), p. 7.

⁴⁷³ *Ibid*, p. 26.

⁴⁷⁴ Martí, ‘Cuba Y Los Estados Unidos’, I, p. 235.

⁴⁷⁵ *Ibid*, p. 233.

construyó el primer ferrocarril en los dominios españoles y estableció contra un gobierno tiránico todos los recursos de la civilización un conocimiento realmente notable del cuerpo político, una aptitud demostrada para adaptarse a sus formas superiores, y el poder, raro en las tierras del trópico, de robustecer su pensamiento y podar su lenguaje.⁴⁷⁶

Martí's response not only questioned the racist position exhibited toward the Cuban people by the American newspapers, it also defended the Spanish legacy in Cuba. He later acknowledged that the war for independence was not being waged against the Spanish people as indicated in the opening article of *Patria, Nuestras ideas*, nor in the *Manifiesto de Montecristi*, a document cosigned by General Máximo Gómez on 25 March 1895. Instead, the war for independence was directed at the Spain's colonial rule over Cuba. *Manifiesto* expressed the precepts on which the war against Spain was based: 'la guerra no es contra el español, que, en el seguro de sus hijos y el acatamiento a la patria que se ganen podrá gozar respetado'.⁴⁷⁷ Martí was the son of Spanish parents⁴⁷⁸ and beyond this, understood that the Spanish legacy in Cuba could not be erased with a revolutionary war. The war would have to be proposed as, 'digna del respeto de sus enemigos'⁴⁷⁹ and sustained on 'el rígido concepto del derecho del hombre'.⁴⁸⁰

Antiracism as an agenda for social progress

A fundamental argument during the preparation for the war was that of respect for human beings in all instances. Martí held this position in *Mi raza*, where he brought into question the rights of races in general, arguing that the proclamation of superior rights by one particular group over another, whether originated by Whites or Blacks, was a principal reason for social and national malfunctions:

⁴⁷⁶ Martí, 'Cuba Y Los Estados Unidos', I, p. 239.

⁴⁷⁷ José Martí, 'Manifiesto de Montecristi', in *Cuba, política y revolución IV, 1895*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1991), IV, 93–101 (p. 94).

⁴⁷⁸ Fernández and Hidalgo explain that Martí's parents were Mariano Martí y Navarro, from Valencia and Leonor Pérez y Cabrera, from Santa Cruz de Tenerife. They were described by Martí himself as, 'pobres, muy pobres'. See Roberto Fernández Retamar and Ibrahim Hidalgo Paz, *Semblanza Biográfica Y Cronología Mínima*, p. 101.

⁴⁷⁹ Martí, 'Manifiesto de Montecristi', IV, p. 101.

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid*, p. 101.

El hombre blanco que, por razón de su raza, se cree superior al hombre negro, admite la idea de la raza, y autoriza y provoca al racista negro. El hombre negro que proclama su raza, cuando lo que acaso proclama únicamente en esta forma errónea es la identidad espiritual de todas las razas, autoriza y provoca al racista blanco.⁴⁸¹

From a moral perspective, Martí recognised race as a ‘spiritual identity’, based on common rights. Martí revisited these principles in his text, *El plato de lentejas*, published in *Patria* in January of 1894, where he adhered to the idea that the common rights of man were a constituent scenario for peace, ineludibly based on recognising the rights of all humans:

Todo hombre negro ha de saludar con gozo, y todo blanco que sea de veras hombre, el reconocimiento de los derechos humanos en una sociedad que no puede vivir en paz sino sobre la base de la sanción y práctica de esos derechos.⁴⁸²

Beyond appreciation of the “other” as equal, Martí also acknowledged in *Mi raza* that the misuse of what he described as *identidad espiritual* could facilitate racism. This was defined by the argument that the assumption of a racial condition could be reflected in the other: ‘El blanco que se aísla, aísla al negro. El negro que se aísla, provoca a aislarse al blanco’.⁴⁸³ The exacerbated affinity people have with their own racial status thus represents a form of social segregation. In Martí’s opinion, the propensity to situate the notion of race in the centre of all social relations should be avoided because it enables social division.

Despite the short length of the essay *Mi raza*, Martí was able to display a rich mix of eclectic literary forms, demonstrating an interest in presenting his antiracist thoughts. Using this passage as an example, ‘En los campos de batalla, muriendo por Cuba, han subido juntas por los aires las almas de los blancos y los negros’,⁴⁸⁴ the Cuban author demonstrated the use of a lyrical and poetic style. The prose in the essay is also comprised of philosophical statements: ‘Los negros están demasiados cansados de la esclavitud para entrar voluntariamente en la esclavitud del color’.⁴⁸⁵ These aphoristic expressions are

⁴⁸¹ José Martí, ‘Mi raza’, II, p. 298.

⁴⁸² José Martí, ‘El plato de lentejas’, III, p. 29.

⁴⁸³ Martí, ‘Mi raza’, II, p. 299.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid, p. 299.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 299.

juxtaposed with the aforementioned textual dichotomies, serving to assemble a moral argument regarding the roles of men within society, regardless of racial status. This became a principal guideline of the insurgent national discourse: making reference to all people searching for independence, not as Blacks or as Whites, but as Cubans, glorifying their multiracial alliance against Spain. *Mi raza* also includes Martí's perception of how differences are articulated in a political organisation, as reflected in the intricate comments he offered concerning the role of political parties and suggesting that differences are measured in ideas and not in the nature of colour:

Los partidos políticos son agregados de preocupaciones, de aspiraciones, de intereses y de caracteres. Lo semejante esencial se busca y se halla, por sobre las diferencias de detalle; y lo fundamental de los caracteres análogos se funde en los partidos, aunque en lo incidental, o en lo postergable al móvil común, difieran. Pero en suma, la semejanza de los caracteres, superior como factor de unión de las relaciones internas de un color de hombres graduados, y en sus grados a veces opuesto, decide e impera en la formación de los partidos.⁴⁸⁶

Given the circumstances, Martí viewed political parties as social instruments capable of uniting different interests without discrimination based on colour, an ideology strongly promoted by the PRC. Accordingly, José Miguel Oviedo has specified that much of Martí's prose was *prosa ocasional*, created by circumstances derived from his political activities.⁴⁸⁷ Considering the political milieu in Cuba, Martí's argument was that political parties could provide effective channels of inclusion. The idea was also for political parties to promote social channels of organisation, as much for a more united society as for the coming battle for Cuba's independence.

The optimism practised by Martí helped him envision, throughout *Mi raza*, a Cuba without racial conflict: 'Muchos blancos se han olvidado ya de su color; y muchos negros. Juntos trabajan blancos y negros, por el cultivo de la mente, por la propagación de la virtud,

⁴⁸⁶ Martí, 'Mi raza', II, p. 299.

⁴⁸⁷ José Miguel Oviedo, *Historia de la literatura hispanoamericana, tomo II: del romanticismo al modernismo*, III vols. (Madrid: Alianza Ed., 1997), II, p. 249.

por el triunfo del trabajo creador y de la caridad sublime'.⁴⁸⁸ Nonetheless, Martí knew that fear of a race war still existed and could not be entirely swept under the rug by his efforts, as the colonial regime perceived the insurgence movement as a proponent of racial conflict. In Cuba, the growth of the sugar plantation system, founded on the use of slave labour, was sustained through the spread of 'fear of the Black' and the possibility of a slave revolution on Cuban soil.

The precarious circumstance of the slave workforce was always a latent problem in the Cuban sugar economy and from the mid-nineteenth century, the Spanish government attempted to whiten Cuban society, due to a fear of the black population uprising. In 1834, Francisco de Arango y Parreño, who had been the principal theorist of the slavery sugar industry, proposed discontinuing black slave trafficking and encouraged white immigration as a mechanism to avoid *la preocupacion del color*.⁴⁸⁹ Jorge Camacho explains that after the violent revolution in Haiti, prominent Cuban intellectuals began to express concern about the black population on the island and the native white population's fear of Cuba's people of colour. Major politicians and intellectuals of the island, such as Padre Félix Varela, José Antonio Saco and Francisco de Arango y Perreño, proposed 'medidas para acabar con la trata, abolir la esclavitud o introducir la mano de obra blanca para reemplazar la negra'.⁴⁹⁰ Creoles unwilling to give up slave labour and the lifestyle that was a product of the wealth generated from the sugar industry designed a set of surveillance measures, as well as punishment and repression methods, to minimise the risk of a racial revolt.⁴⁹¹

⁴⁸⁸ Martí, 'Mi raza', p. 300.

⁴⁸⁹ J. G. Cantero, 'Introduction', in *Los ingenios: colección de vistas de los principales ingenios de azúcar de la isla de Cuba*, ed. by Luis Miguel García Mora and Antonio Santamaría García (Madrid: Centro Estudios y Experimentación de Obras Públicas, 2005), p. 51.

⁴⁹⁰ Jorge Camacho, 'Los fantasmas del miedo (al negro) en la literatura cubana de la primera mitad del siglo XIX', *The Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 86 (2009), 675–88 (p. 678).

⁴⁹¹ Camacho points out that these measure consisted among other on: 'la importación a la isla de determinada cantidad de esclavos de ambos sexos, hasta la mutilación de alguno de sus miembros para hacerles creer que cuando resucitaran en otra vida, iban a ser deformes.' Camacho also explains that this "fear" was reflected in the literature of the island: 'al menos tres de los escritores más importantes de Cuba en esta época: la Condesa de Merlín, la Avellaneda, y el poeta Plácido. De ellos, sin embargo, el único que sufrió en carne propia las consecuencias de tal terror fue Plácido, quien al ser mulatto sus poemas despertaron las sospechas de una posible sublevación de esclavos en la isla, lo cual le dio la excusa al gobierno para apresarlo y luego fusilarlo. Su misma condición de hombre libre de color, lo hacía un elemento subversivo en una sociedad amenazada continuamente con desaparecer.' See Camacho, p. 687.

From 1895, acts of banditry committed by gangs of black delinquents caused a social phenomenon that heightened Cubans' fear of Blacks, an attitude that had already prevailed for years.⁴⁹² The news generated about and the resulting fame achieved by groups of black assailants was highlighted by the press and used by the authorities to accentuate the conflict between races, as well as discredit the independence struggle.⁴⁹³ The black banditry phenomenon appeared to be a product of the conditions the black population encountered after the abolition of slavery in Cuba in 1886, coupled with the generally difficult conditions that existed on the island at the beginning of the war of independence.⁴⁹⁴

Regardless of *la preocupacion del color* that had haunted Cuba for decades, Martí imagined a republic where neither Black, nor White Cubans would be negated. It can be said that he assumed this optimistic position as a result of the need for political pragmatism. The multiracial union praised in *Mi raza* clearly suggests that it was a manifesto, a plan for the social integration of what Martí visualised for a free and united Cuba. Martin Stabb intimates that the Cuban writer assumed 'the only way in which Cuba could free herself from Spanish domination would be through the united efforts of White, Negro and Mulatto'.⁴⁹⁵ Stabb connected the Cuban author's critical attitude toward the racist scientism of his time with the cause of Cuban independence, which he felt could be jeopardised by the acceptance of racist theories.

Martí began to assume a radical position concerning race whilst organising the insurgency against Spain during the early eighteen nineties. This is seen in his famous statement from the renowned essay *Nuestra América*: 'No hay odio de razas, porque no hay razas'. Martí's declaration was followed by a vibrant critique of the principles promoted by racial thinkers of the period: 'Los pensadores canijos, los pensadores de lámparas, enhebran y recalientan las razas de librerías' and he adds 'Peca contra la humanidad el que fomente y propague la oposición y el odio de las razas'.⁴⁹⁶ Through this judgment, Martí presented the

⁴⁹² Imilcy Balboa Navarro, *La protesta rural en Cuba: resistencia cotidiana, bandolerismo y revolución 1878-1902*, (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2003), p. 161.

⁴⁹³ *Ibid*, p. 162.

⁴⁹⁴ Pérez, *Cuba between Empires, 1878-1902*, p. 35.

⁴⁹⁵ Martin Stabb, 'Martí and the Racist', p. 438.

⁴⁹⁶ José Martí, 'Nuestra América', VI, p. 22.

notion that men have an *identidad universal*, which in *Mi raza* was described as an *identidad espiritual*; accordingly, Martí proposed that all men share a universal identity and that race is nothing more than an artificial conception. *Las razas de librería*, mentioned by Martí in *Nuestra América*, can be used to identify the ideologies of positivistic racist theorists at the turn of the nineteenth century, perceived of as constructed formulae found only in books but negated by nature. This handling of the question of race was intertwined, as Cintio Vitier summarises, with Martí's argument that colonialism had promoted racial and cultural inferiority sustained on: 'el desajuste entre la originalidad histórica de todos estos pueblos, (surgidos de la violencia ejercida por la cultura europea sobre la americana) y la aplicación mecánica y artificial de concepciones políticas forjadas en pueblos de orígenes, historia y cultura muy distintos'.⁴⁹⁷

Fernando Ortiz has commented that Martí was very familiar with books 'donde aparecían esas razas fantasmales de la alquimia antropológica'.⁴⁹⁸ Certainly, Martí knew about the scientific approach to race, as demonstrated in 1884, when he published comments and reviews of books about anthropology and biology. Some of the books revised by Martí were *The Law of Heredity* (1883) by Williams K. Brooks,⁴⁹⁹ *The Natural Genesis* (1883) by Gerald Masesy,⁵⁰⁰ *Indian Myths* (1884) by Ellen Russel Emerson⁵⁰¹ in the journal *La América* of New York. Similarly, during 1887, in *El economista americano*, he reviewed the book *A Review of the Data for the Study of the Prehistoric Chronology of America* (1887) by Daniel Garrison Brinton.⁵⁰² However, in researching his comments from that period, it does not appear that Martí negated the idea of race. On the contrary, he embraced it as a fundamental human condition. Early in 1884, the Cuban writer published an article named, *La biblioteca americana*, in which he not only recognised the question of race as essential but also vindicated its use:

⁴⁹⁷ Cintio Vitier, *Temas martianos. Segunda serie*, (La Habana: Centro de Estudios Martianos, 2011), p. 63.

⁴⁹⁸ Fernando Ortiz, 'Martí y las razas de librería', p. 120.

⁴⁹⁹ José Martí, 'Las leyes de la herencia', in *En los Estados Unidos Norteamericanos. Letras, pintura y artículos varios*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1992), XIII, 425–27.

⁵⁰⁰ José Martí, 'Libros nuevos', in *En los Estados Unidos Norteamericanos. Letras, pintura y artículos varios*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1992), XIII, 440–45.

⁵⁰¹ José Martí, 'Un libro sobre los indígenas de América', XIII, pp. 445–46.

⁵⁰² José Martí, 'La cronología prehistórica de América', in *En los Estados Unidos Norteamericanos. Letras, pintura y artículos varios*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1992), XIII, 455–56.

La raza es una patria mayor, a la que deben pagar tributo, como hijos a madres las patrias pequeñas que de la raza madre se derivan. La raza es un altar de comunión: y quien la niega, o la desconoce, o la vicia, o se quiere salir de ella,-desertor es,-traidor como el que pliega la bandera y huye ante el enemigo en hora de batalla, o se pasa a sus huestes.⁵⁰³

The impressions presented in this 1884 text are far removed from the stance regarding the precepts of race that the Cuban author would develop and promote in the following decade. This early representation of racial affinity is comparable to the conceptualisation of the matriarchal sense of *la patria cubana*. It is not being suggested that this was a systematic line of thought on the subject of race, later demonstrated by Martí whilst preparing for the war of independence. In this broad definition from 1884, Martí observed race as a geographic and cultural identity, entrenched in the cultivation of autochthonous knowledge. He perceived of race at that point as an intangible identity to be carried with pride and to be used as a reference. However, those lines were written in a generalised sense, to express the pride he felt about books produced by other Hispanic American writers. A book published in Hispanic America, according to Martí, was a source of pride: ‘de libros honestos, piadosos y fortalecedores hablamos, que con espíritu americano, estudian problemas de América,’⁵⁰⁴ especially those books that had emerged from the region which worked to collect ‘nuestras memorias, estudian nuestra composición, aconsejan el cuerdo empleo de nuestras fuerzas, fían en el definitivo establecimiento de un formidable y luciente país espiritual americano’.⁵⁰⁵ Though it can be observed that his earlier presumptions regarding race were manifested in figurative terms, the radical semantic changes in Martí’s racial stance are notable when compared to his discussion of the subject during the 1890’s.

As shown in *Nuestra América* and *Mi raza*, Martí was not convinced by the ‘scientific’ explanations of the time concerning the subject of race. Moving from seeing race as an element of pride to identifying it as an obstacle to national development was, more than likely, based on the framework of the political agenda undertaken by Martí beginning in

⁵⁰³ José Martí, ‘La biblioteca americana’, in *Nuestra América III*, 26 vols. (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1992), VIII, 313–14 (p. 313).

⁵⁰⁴ Martí, ‘La biblioteca americana’, VIII, p. 314.

⁵⁰⁵ *Ibid*, p. 314.

1892. His change in attitude and approach toward the issue of race came about after realising the very idea of race had been the centre of social division in Cuba and the rest of the Americas. Paradoxically, when Martí rejected the concept of race and its implications as a way of neutralising racism, he did so in acknowledgement of Blacks and Mulatto identities within Cuban society. Correspondingly, denial of the races, on the grounds that race was an idea that had been used to justify colonial rule, would be accompanied by the promotion of an integration project based on the *autoctonía*, formed by a melting pot effect and a hybridity of factors, which communed biologically and culturally on the continent.

In summary, during the period from 1892 to 1895, it was necessary for José Martí to plan a cohesive strategy that would assure that all political factors, social groups, races and individuals would work together toward the liberation of a unified Cuba. Ideologically, the writer reiterated that the common interests of man depended on recognising the merits of the “other” and from acknowledging that what distinguishes men are their virtues or viciousness; that merit overcomes race. The Cuban writer’s notion of a *patria libre* was not only constructed to promote the liberty of man but was also used to hold together a united republic, as it was necessary in Martí’s view, to establish the socio-political mechanisms that would help ensure a more inclusive post-colonial society. In the frame of his political struggle, there was a radicalisation of his anti-racist thought during this period, including the negation of the concept of race itself. Martí assumed that racism enabled social division, a major obstacle to development and harmony of national unity, and something other Hispanic American republics were still suffering the residual effects of decades after gaining their independence from Spain. In contrast to the slanted racial analysis provided by positivist thinkers and ‘raciologists’ that justified social and economic conditions on the continent in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Martí took the position that racism was the prominent factor undermining social integration; that denying the rights of one race signified demeaning the rights of all races. Martí’s stance classifying racial exclusion as a serious obstacle for social progress came about not only as a result of maturity but also emerged as a result of his deepening political activism.

Conclusion

This study has focused on the examination of José Martí's writings between the age of fifteen and his death at age forty-two. His adolescent years in Cuba reflect a young man concerned with the detriments of colonialism and whose writings centred on the political. In 1875, after nearly five years in exile in Spain, Martí returned to the Americas where he encountered the indigenous for the first time in Mexico, marking the point when his writings extended to include observations on race. Martí's insight on the subject was not static, nor a set issue but rather a dynamic process influenced by various factors and circumstances. By revisiting José Martí's racial thinking we are able to comprehend how his racially driven observations were reformulated through a general process of maturity, as well as through the intellectual experiences provided by the political and intellectual roles assumed at various points in José Martí's life. His experiences as an exile, his readings, observations, works performed, friendships established and, to some extent, his participation in the politics of the countries where he resided, all contributed to the formation and reconfiguration of his racial thinking. In Martí's case, the main issue concerning race was not what it was, but rather, how it was used.

As defined in this study, the Cuban author's most complete racial reflections came to fruition in early 1890, during preparation for and the beginning of *La Guerra necesaria* conflict, the organisation of which he dedicated himself to entirely. In the political context of turn of the twentieth century Cuba, Martí articulated a radical stance against the racial paradigm that prevented inclusion and progress, thinking not only of the possible liberation of the island but also of its post-revolutionary stability. The proposals Martí established to promote racial integration in *Nuestra América*, and in later texts such as *Mi raza*, *El plato de lentejas*, *Basta* and *Nuestras Ideas*, were notorious for denying the root of the problem: the idea of race. Hence, one of the central points of this study has focused on how the author constructed the anti-racial formulations that would characterise the thinking of his later years.

The first chapter of this thesis made the distinction that Martí articulated his commitment to achieving social justice for black people not from a commitment made in childhood, as has been expressed by critics and biographers, but as part of an ideology reformulated during his adulthood. Although Martí stated that he returned to his youth through memory, swearing to aide with the black struggle, I argue that the author's declaration to vindicate the black race actually took shape as a process connected to developing his own notions of freedom and equality, the result of life experiences and personal growth. At an early stage in life, the author was affected by the historical events that marked Cuban society during the nineteenth century. For example, events such as the Haitian Revolution, the Ten Years War and even the final war for independence, all promoted fear of Blacks among the peninsular and creole populations. These collective 'fears' toward Blacks subsisted among Cuban generations during colonial rule prior to and throughout the nineteenth century, including other conceived modes of fear that affected social experiences, such as white fear of black mysticism and sexuality.

The war launched by the independence movement offered an opportunity to achieve a better situation for Creoles and Blacks in a society that, just a decade before had displaced slavery as a model of economic production. Martí was a part of the social group who saw themselves as being discriminated against in Cuba - Creoles born on the island. This was especially the case with the intellectual creole elites, who began to conceive of the *patria libre* as a solution to the conflict between Creoles and Spaniards. The anticolonial position Martí assumed during his youth was precisely that of a young rebel influenced by the patriotism of intellectuals, such as the ideas teacher and poet Rafael de Mendive promoted among his students. Through his first political texts, Martí expressed his enthusiasm for a *patria libre*, which led to his imprisonment and subsequent exile, marking a significant turning point in the young author's life. Thus, I have suggested that his position in defiance of colonial rule was reconfigured through the experiences he lived as an exile in Hispanic America and the U.S., where he discovered that many of the serious problems posed by colonialism, such as racial exclusion, would often persist even once nations were free from their colonisers.

Likewise, his early writings revealed how his idea of *patria* was subject to a national vision where the interests of all the groups that comprise society are accepted. Yet, as I have also suggested, his was a position that was not defined completely from a perspective of race relations but also from the standpoint of class conflict.

Exploring Martí's position regarding the indigenous reality, to which he was introduced during exile in Mexico and Guatemala, chapter two of this investigation defined the views the writer manifested after his stint in Europe. At that point, his position was one of a young intellectual who identified national progress through social and cultural homogenisation, undertaken through assimilation of the non-white peoples. Martí's proposal to displace old identities with new ones resulted in his utilising a paternalistic discourse commonly employed by Hispanic American political elites at the turn of century. As Jorge Camacho has remarked, Martí's proposal was aligned with policies driven by the Liberal governments of Lerdo de Tejada in Mexico and Justo Rufino Barrios in Guatemala.⁵⁰⁶ Unfortunately, in the first views Martí offered regarding the indigenous, he assumed their state of stagnation as a condition inherent to their status as a social group, taking an ethnocentric position. Certainly, this did not represent a racist position in biological terms since Martí considered that *indios* could improve and progress if they committed to leave their traditions and customs behind. However, his perception of the indigenous condition at this point exhibited a lack of regard for a rich cultural heritage, which he would later re-evaluate.

At this stage, certain ambivalence can be seen in Martí's perspective concerning cultural legacy and changes that could achieve national policies. For example, Martí believed, as did liberal ideologues, in private property, individual skills, education and work, but remained wary of the lazy 'nature' he considered inherent in indigenous Mexicans. Displaying this point of view one can only assume that Martí was an ideologue influenced by the same positivist theories that impregnated the minds of Latin American political elites. The analysis in this section of the thesis permits us to see that

⁵⁰⁶ Jorge Camacho, *Etnografía, política y poder a finales del siglo XIX: José Martí y la cuestión indígena* (Chapel Hill, N.C: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), p. 39.

whilst maintaining a paternalistic viewpoint to discuss indigenous problems in Guatemala, Martí also assumed a more optimistic position in regard to their future. This is not only because he understood that indigenous problems were the result of years of colonial rule, but also because Martí had begun to write official documents commissioned by the Guatemalan government. These writings became a means to build an identity based on Indian empowerment through a 'glorious past', which aimed to promote changes in the present. Although his position was not exempt from criticising the Indians' current status, the stance he assumed in these pieces was ultimately optimistic, due to their being contained within an official government document.

Using the arguments posed by Martí on race relations in the United States, chapter three explained how he moulded his racial discourse around the problems experienced by minorities in free and democratic societies, such as the U.S. Martí took the opportunity to focus his review of these problems in a comprehensive manner, rather than referring simply to any particular racial group, such as Blacks or Indians. Whilst in the United States, the author discerned between both racial minorities and a multi-ethnic group represented in the vast amount of immigrants arriving from Europe and Asia at the time. In this part of the thesis, in particular, I attempted to articulate the position Martí held in his first few years of exile in New York, demonstrating the influence of the critical climate surrounding European immigration, which was composed mainly of poor families arriving in large numbers to the cities of the East Coast. Martí focused on both the positive qualities and capabilities seen in European immigrants, as well as on the problems surfacing when ethnic groups failed to assimilate, both socially and culturally, in their country of destination.

Through his discussion of the immigrant situation in the U.S., José Martí also addressed some of the issues dominating the political sphere at the beginning of the 1880s, including the U.S. government's refusal to allow entry to Chinese immigrants. The writer provides a critique of this proposal from a moral point of view, considering it an injustice to veto the possibility of immigration to an entire racial group. Martí questioned the persecution of Chinese immigrants, responding that they were victims of

an undesirable economic reality and pointing out that Chinese workers were viewed as a threat by white miners in the west of the country because they were cheaper labour. Martí speaks out against the impunity of the government and the ineffectiveness of the State when it came to providing a just reality for racial groups who did not have the same rights as their Anglo counterparts.

Whilst delving into the indigenous subject in the United States, Martí also focused his attention on critiquing the policies relegating North American Indians to the status of second-class citizens by denying them the opportunity to be a part of the nation. In contrast to his comments concerning the indigenous peoples he observed in Mexico and Guatemala, his approach to the Native Americans of the North American nation was less critical. The Cuban writer observed them in a different context, as the Indians found in United States were living in marginalised conditions within a State that was ripe with great educational breakthroughs and economic prosperity. It was from this perspective that Martí's view diverged from its previous focus questioning the attitude of the *indio*, to one depicting these groups as victims of government policies that promoted exclusionary laws.

Chapter three also reflected on Martí's commentaries regarding the status of American blacks living as freemen in a post-Civil War U.S. As I have maintained throughout my research, this was one of the issues of greatest importance to the author due to his personal experiences with slavery in Cuba; historical circumstances in Hispanic America; and the weight that Blacks had in American society, representing more than 13% of the total population of the country at the time. Through social commentary, the chronicles and articles that Martí wrote from 1885 onward reflected a complex view of the status of free Blacks living in the southern states. The approach distinguishing these texts from others written on the subject is his criticism of the violent situation and coercion faced by freemen in the U.S., seventeen years after that freedom was granted them in the form of the right to vote, ratified with the Fifteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. As I pointed out, the author recognised that the political struggle between the north and south continued to persist and that Blacks were

still at the centre of the conflict.

Analysing the proposal José Martí sketched in his 1891 essay *Nuestra América*, chapter four explained how the writer reformulated his ideas in response to the positivist theories dominating the continental political arena at the time, including his call for regional identity, innovation and ethnic reconciliation. The set of ideas presented by Martí in *Nuestra América* was a proposal that began germinating with his first stint in exile in Hispanic America, which began in Mexico in 1875. From there, he began a physical and philosophical journey translating the issues he found in the realities of the Hispanic American nations he had journeyed through. However, Martí's proposal, based on a form of pan-Americanism where mestizaje was perceived of as privileged, was not exempt from contradictions. Certainly, when Martí challenged the mainstream paradigm framing the concept of race, he replaced it with another equally challenging endeavour: overruling old colonial identities with a more 'homogeneous' inclusive representation, which was embodied in his concept of mestizaje. Whilst the melting pot that had already begun to take place in the region did not challenge the plurality of many races, to some extent Martí's proposal for mestizaje did.

On the other hand, however, the Spanish American ruling class viewed the mixing of races as an obstacle to achieving progress. The whitening of society through immigration was a more acceptable practice in their eyes, resulting in the implementation of discriminatory immigration policies by governments such as those of Argentina and Cuba, where there was a misconceived belief that such policies would push development forward.⁵⁰⁷ Martí also opposed the dichotomised discourse between civilisation and barbarism that was popularised by Domingo F. Sarmiento during the middle of the eighteenth century. Although the Cuban author did maintain some elements of Sarmiento's civilisation project in his own constructions, such as the importance of education, knowledge and the role of intellectuals.

⁵⁰⁷ To expand on the subject see Aline Helg, 'Race in Argentina and Cuba, 1880-1930: Theory, Policies, and Popular Reaction', in *The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870-1940*, ed. by Richard Graham (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), pp. 37–69.

José Martí believed his concept of *mestizaje* would generate a new rationality based on racial and cultural fusion on the continent and create an element of leverage, especially in relation to the struggle for Hispanic America's independence from Spain. My analysis is that Martí responded to the historical moment with an alternative to the political elite's tendency toward positivist theories influenced by biology, where race became a determining factor for understanding the conditions within society. Similarly, for purposes related to his political proposals, Martí needed to build a discourse toward a viable future for the island of Cuba, one that refused a colonial conception of race and pointed to a state where miscegenation overruled the colonial model of racial superiority and inferiority. His proposal for *mestizaje* was an answer, as expressed by Lilian Guerra, in the sense that it was more at the core of the popular-classes' notion of nation and its common meaning as a racial and cultural mixture, 'was more egalitarian than racial and cultural homogeneity conservatives preferred or the meritocratic heterogeneity that liberals offered.'⁵⁰⁸ In this sense, I have suggested that it was necessary for Martí to dismantle the pessimism of thinkers like Sarmiento, who viewed racial mixture as a conflict limiting the social and economic progress of the continent. Correspondingly, Martí promoted a Latin American reality he called *nuestra*, as opposed to what he observed in the United States, which was a nation of great material progress but serious conflicts in race relations.

The final chapter of this thesis closed the mapping of the formation of José Martí's racial thinking by suggesting that the apogee of his ideas took on a sense of urgency as his political activism increased, leading up to the final war for Cuban independence, *La Guerra Necesaria*. By devoting himself to organising the war against Spanish colonial rule in Cuba, Martí focused his energies on his proposal for *cubanidad* as an inclusive identity that would unite social groups in conflict and outweigh the colonial framework imposing racial identities on the island. The formula to push his model of *cubanidad* rejected the very concept of race and fostered the idea of a *Cuba libre*.

⁵⁰⁸ Lilian Guerra, 'From Revolution to Involution in the Early Cuban Republic. Conflict over Race, Class and Nation, 1902-1906', in *Race and nation in modern Latin America*, ed. by Nancy P Appelbaum, Anne S Macpherson, and Karin Alejandra Rosemblatt (University of North Carolina Press, 2003), pp. 132–62. (pp. 135–136).

However, through this collective national representation opposed to racial affinity, Martí was also denying white, creole, mestizo, mulatto and black pluralities. El Partido Revolucionario Cubano, the political organization founded by the Cuban revolutionary in 1892, was one of the conduits Martí envisioned would implement his proposed inclusion and integration efforts. The PRC was established as an organisation that would put these ideals into practice. Martí's political pragmatism led him to manage the war in strategic terms, acknowledging that there was fear among the population, not just from the Spaniards, but also from a significant sector of the creole population, who were wary of accepting Blacks as equal citizens. The author related the conflict as a social problem, understanding that freedom would not necessarily guarantee equality. Therefore, Martí's political strategy was carried forward both from an idealistic position and a pragmatic one. For example, by directly involving black civil groups organised by Juan Gualberto Gómez, who played an important role in the conflict, Martí guaranteed both military and civilian participation from the black population. Martí had not only reached this point of radicalisation and achieved his anti-racial position toward race with maturity, but his political pragmatism had also pushed the different sectors of Cuban society toward a goal that represented freedom for them all.

Martí's statement, 'en los campos de batalla, muriendo por Cuba, han subido juntas por los aires las almas de los blancos y los negros', referred to the coalition held by Afro-Cubans and Creoles in the fight for independence from Spain. The role that mulattos and Blacks played together in the struggle for independence made it possible to envision the prospect of a successful process of nation building on the island that included non-white groups. Sadly, Martí did not live to see the outcome of the conflict as he was fatally shot on 19 May 1895, after charging a Spanish unit on horseback in a sector known as *Dos Ríos*, just a month after the final war for independence began. When independence was eventually won in 1902, first from Spanish colonialism and then from the U.S. occupation, which began in 1898, Cuban elites decided to follow the path of racial division forged by other previously emancipated nations. As Aline Helg points out, it was the deaths of the most prominent and influential spokesmen for antiracism, José Martí and the mulatto general and *caudillo*, Antonio Maceo, who died a year after the

Cuban writer, which ultimately ended Martí's vision for his country. Cuban elites ultimately decided that Afro-Cuban intellectuals 'were not sufficiently strong to warrant the recognition of the Creole elite'.⁵⁰⁹ Hence, following the influential racial ideology disseminating throughout the continent, Cuba's creole ruling class decided to promote a 'whitening' of society, which was based, in part, on the belief that this would guarantee further economic, cultural and social progress. This whitening also meant the symbolic erasing of any trace of black leadership representative of figures such as mulatto insurgent General Antonio Maceo. For example, four years after Maceo's death, the outcome of an 'anthropological study' conducted by José Rafael Montalvo, Luis Montané and Carlos de la Torre y Huerta was published. The report, which included the measurements of his skull, suggested that Maceo's 'intelligence' was more comparable to that of a white man than a black. The review appeared in the February 1900 issue of the prestigious scientific journal *The Lancet*, and presented the following data: "The cranium approximates to that of the white race and indicates a man of remarkable capacity. The rest of the skeleton inclines more to the Negro type and shows that he must have been a man of Herculean strength".⁵¹⁰

By the spring of 1906, the administration achieved wide congressional support for a plan to re-racialise Cuba through the immigration of European, 'naturally' hardworking, agricultural labourers. The purpose was to neutralise conflicts over a past shaped through slavery and revolutionary struggle by inoculating society with new blood and new cultures that augured a prosperous united future.⁵¹¹ The Cuban ruling class 'chose to reinforce the Hispanic component of the population through immigration rather than to unify the new nation'.⁵¹² This was in stark contrast to claims of an inclusive and equal nation in a united and independent Cuba, which had been promoted by the coalition of all of Cuba's races during the fight for emancipation from Spain.

The outcome presented in this study indicates that José Martí's racial thinking was a

⁵⁰⁹ Helg, 'Race in Argentina and Cuba, 1880-1930: Theory, Policies, and Popular Reaction', p. 47.

⁵¹⁰ 'Antonio Maceo's Skull', *The Lancet*, Vol. 155, N° 3988 (Feb, 3 1900), 326.

⁵¹¹ Lilian Guerra, 'From Revolution to Involution in the Early Cuban Republic. Conflict over Race, Class and Nation, 1902-1906', p. 152.

⁵¹² Helg, 'Race in Argentina and Cuba, 1880-1930: Theory, Policies, and Popular Reaction', p. 47.

reflection of his intellectual growth, through which he understood important ideas regarding race relations and the connection between class, nation and ethnic groups. Indeed, race and racism in their modern definitions are described through this connection. George Fredrickson uses the example of a private club, 'in which the membership conceives of itself in a certain way and excludes those who do not fit in'.⁵¹³ Accordingly, the negation of the rights of others is perceived as one cultural group's declaration or continuance of a privileged and protected 'status vis à vis members of another group or groups who are thought, because of defective ancestry, to possess a set of socially relevant characteristics that disqualify them from full membership in a community or citizenship in a nation-state'.⁵¹⁴ Similar to positivist intellectuals of the time, Martí found in the question of race an obstacle to national progress. However, in the Cuban author's later years, he perceived of the issue not as the reason for problems but rather, of race itself being the problem. By the beginning of the 1890s, Martí's proposal was to reinforce Hispanic American identity through the inclusive notion of *mestizaje* and, in the case of Cuba, to promote racial inclusion through a more egalitarian national identity as summarised in the concept of *cubanidad*.

This investigation demonstrates the depth and complexity the Cuban author's work offered on the theme of race. Largely, the legacy of this study is based on establishing how Martí managed to reformulate his racial ideas throughout the different stages of his life to achieve a strong and radical anti-racism, which represented an exceptional position for a white and Creole Latin American intellectual to take during late nineteenth century. To that effect, this thesis provides the possibility for further work to be developed regarding points historically understudied, such Martí's vision of Whites during the same period; Martí's own condition as an individual of Creole and European heritage; or the profound influence Cuban black intellectuals, such as Rafael Serra Montalvo and Juan Gualberto Gómez, had on Martí. The contribution made by this thesis is in understanding how the historical path José Martí followed ultimately contributed to his separation from the limited paradigm of homogenisation he once promoted as a young intellectual. The various processes of exile,

⁵¹³ George M. Fredrickson, *The Comparative Imagination: On the History of Racism, Nationalism, and Social Movements* (Berkeley, Calif.: Univ. of California Press, 2000), p. 85.

⁵¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 85.

political activism and experiences lived by Martí enabled him to conceive of advanced democratic formulations meant to overcome racially driven conflict through political praxis and social inclusion. It is also important to note that the course of this investigation goes beyond the traditional focus on Martí and race as it presents Martí not only as an intellectual, but also as a man who matured to the extent of having a marked ability to adapt and critique the place and historical moment in which he lived. In this way, the mapping and exploration of the changes Martí developed is a significant contribution not only to the study of racial thought, but also to deepening the understanding of Martí work in general.

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