

The homeland in José Martí: Cuba, Our America and the world

La patria en José Martí: Cuba, Nuestra América y el mundo



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Abstract

The conception of homeland in Martí's work is approached from three possible dimensions (Cuba, Our America, and the world). Martí configures an emancipatory subjectivity for Latin America in relation to foreign models. The objective is to assess the constitutive elements of Martí's conception of homeland, through some of his relevant texts. The methodology applied is the reflexive analysis of Martí's texts, articulating his ideas based on the terminological framework of his era, which he masterfully transcends. Formally, this is achieved through the use of metaphorical language of exquisite quality. Essentially, it is achieved through a revolutionary and transgressive reading of the excluded. It is concluded that in his work there are three moments of synthesis and conceptual recomposition regarding the homeland, which materialize in: *La República Española ante la Revolución Cubana (1873)*, *Nuestra América (1891)*, and the *Revista Literaria Dominicense (1895)*.

Keywords: José Martí, Fatherland, Cuba, Our America, Cosmopolitanism.

Resumen

Se aborda la concepción martiana de la Patria desde tres dimensiones posibles (Cuba, Nuestra América y el mundo). Martí configura una subjetividad emancipatoria para Latinoamérica respecto a modelos foráneos. El objetivo es valorar los elementos constitutivos de la concepción martiana de la Patria, a través de algunos de sus textos relevantes. La metodología aplicada es el análisis reflexivo de los textos martianos, con la articulación de sus ideas a partir del instrumental terminológico de su época, que supera de manera magistral. En lo formal por el uso de un lenguaje metafórico de excelsa calidad. En lo esencial, mediante la lectura revolucionaria y transgresora de los excluidos. Se concluye que en su obra existen tres momentos de síntesis y recomposición conceptual acerca de la Patria, que se concretan en: *La República Española ante la Revolución Cubana (1873)*, *Nuestra América (1891)* y la *Revista Literaria Dominicense (1895)*.

Palabras claves: José Martí, Patria, Cuba, Nuestra América, Cosmopolitismo..

How to cite this article (APA): Medina, B. R. M. (2026). The homeland in José Martí: Cuba, Our America and the world. *Revista Digital de Investigación y Postgrado*, 7 (14), 119-132. <https://doi.org/10.59654/jj6brg49>



Introduction

The entire work of José Martí was aimed at social education for the happiness of our peoples of the Americas. Having studied the independence processes of the continent and organizing that of Cuba, he understood very deeply the need to pursue an education for human freedom and the exercise of a democracy based on the participation and inclusion of excluded social sectors. An issue that still remains unresolved in almost all Latin American countries today.

One might affirm that through the term "Patria" (homeland/fatherland), José Martí configures an emancipatory subjectivity for Latin America, with respect to certain foreign models. This article aims to assess the constituent elements of the conception of "Patria" in José Martí, through some of his most representative texts. At the same time, it is approached from three possible dimensions (Cuba, *Our America*, and the world).

The novelty of the result lies in the transversal tracking of the enrichment of the term "Patria" throughout his entire work. From this, it was possible to verify that it is not reduced to Cuba, but rather the evolution of the idea of "Patria" over time and across the three mentioned dimensions is examined. The theoretical-conceptual precision of core writings, where the referenced author manages to synthesize ideas deployed in many articles, chronicles, and speeches, constitutes a relevant finding.

Materials and method

The research is bibliographic, exploratory, and documentary, with a qualitative purpose. Numerous Martí writings are compiled, selected, and reflectively analyzed. It is possible to follow the critical path through which José Martí articulates his ideas based on the terminological instruments of his time, surpassing them from this perspective. Formally, through the use of a metaphorical language of superb quality and very characteristic. Essentially, by carrying out a revolutionary and transgressive reading of the world, from the position of the excluded.

Results and discussion

Cuba took him in her arms and kissed his forehead

From the end of the 18th century to the mid-19th century, a strong struggle for freedom was waged in Cuba—from cultural and pedagogical circles. The battle for the independence of thought would be the prelude to the independence revolution that began in 1868. In Martí, as in his predecessors, reflection on the homeland would occupy an essential place.

Among his early patriotic publications is the dramatic poem *Abdala* (Martí, 1983). Through the apparent and distant Nubia, the conflict of Cuba is settled. The young man is transfigured into the Nubian fighters. It is a veiled participation, given the real impossibility of fighting in the first war of independence (due to his young age and living far from the region of events). He would express that the people are the homeland, as well as the dilemma of his entire existence: homeland versus family, the solution of which he defines in the text with dramatic heartbreak. In this early writing, he offers an ethical model for Cuban mothers, daughters of an elder mother (Cuba).

In his future political preaching, it would become a constant to symbolize community relations through filial ties, which was very common for the time. On the other hand, it would be in *Abdala* where Martí first defines his understanding of love for the homeland. He would not consider it merely as attachment

to a geographical entity but based on two pillars: invincible hatred and eternal resentment toward the oppressor, as well as historical memory (an indispensable element in processes of national identity).

His bitter experience in the provincial prison of Havana (Medina, 2023), of profound significance for his personal and political maturation, would lead him to renounce hatred and resentment as concomitant elements of patriotic feeling. His testimony —published during his stay in Spain in 1871— would be marked by a deep humanism that connects (possibly) with the debates taking place at that time in France and Spain about the homeland and patriotism. Until then, the exaltation of national values was based on opposition to a foreign power. Now, aspects related to the inner forging of each people in terms of memories, affections, and the intellectual element would be enhanced.

The aforementioned idea appears explicitly in Martí's writing: *The Spanish Republic before the Cuban Revolution* (Martí, 1991a). He proposes a dialogue between two nations with equal rights, where Cuban independence is founded on the will of the people as the sole source of legitimation. Meanwhile, Spanish national integrity (the ideological foundation of its colonial space) was already unsustainable. He dedicates half of the pamphlet to demonstrating the falsity of this concept.

The historical weakness of the Spanish bourgeoisie —tested in the liberal movements that occurred in the first half of the 19th century, together with the limitations of the Republic of 1873— leads him to dismiss the possibility of a change in the colonial policy of the new government. The Cuban Apostle uses the very postulates of political liberalism upheld by the Spanish republicans to validate the democratic ideals of the Cuban people: *And Cuba rises thus; its plebiscite is its martyrdom, its suffrage is its revolution*. He defines the essential features that configure the Cuban homeland: freedom by its own right is consubstantial to it, and a social life presided over by the confluence of unity of traditions, community of interests and purposes, as well as the affective moment of love and hope.

And it is not the land that which they call integrity of the homeland. Homeland is something more than oppression, something more than land without freedom and without life, something more than the right of possession by force. Homeland is community of interests, unity of traditions, unity of purposes, the sweetest and most consoling fusion of loves and hopes (Martí, 1991a, p. 93). (translation by the journal).

It can be affirmed thus far that the early cycle of Martí's patriotic conception closes and, simultaneously, his creative maturity begins, on the discontinuous frontier of *The Spanish Republic before the Cuban Revolution*. His life experiences in various Latin American countries and the United States will strengthen and broaden his vision of the Cuban homeland. He will never offer an ontological or metaphysical definition of it, but rather places it as the result of the history and struggles of a people for which he himself will exercise leadership, starting in the 1890s.

The Cuban homeland: the discourse that names and, in naming, generates

Throughout his entire work, José Martí exercises social pedagogy since he aims to contribute to the education of Cubans in the "ought to be" of the homeland through the "can be" and the "doing." The most representative of this founding work can be found in his letters, press articles, speeches, and documents of the Cuban Revolutionary Party (PRC). The homeland in Martí (García, 1992) has various denominations, which makes understanding the subject, as well as the components of his idea throughout the vastness of his writing, difficult. Among the most common are: people, country, Cuba, Island,

Land, Republic, and Nation. On the other hand, by associating it with family, nature, buildings, the home, the workshop, or the human being, great effectiveness of the educational and political message is achieved because it admits recipients from a wide range of social, generational, and cultural positions.

In his revolutionary preaching, Martí reviews Cuban history and culture and returns to the figures (poets, thinkers, warriors) who contributed with their work and word to building *cubanía* (Cubanness). The abundant examples of heroism and virtue occupy a special place. Four aspects stand out as elements that define the transcendence of the spiritual creation of the first half of the 19th century in Cuba: a) in literature, the use of satire as a liberating resource and ethical reaffirmation; b) from a cognitive point of view, the love of science and the study of natural laws, the tendency toward polemic and criticism as an exercise of judgment; c) the vocation to sweep away, in the intellectual arts, the philosophy and pure-blooded law, the science of the mummy and scientific snobbery; d) the institution of the Cuban variant of the Spanish language, as a vehicle for the crystallization of a culture with its own roots, not only because it displaced Latin from teaching but also because it included popular and Creole terms in its heritage. These ideas would be accompanied by the recognition of the San Carlos and San Ambrosio Seminary as the main precinct where the first battle for Cuba's independence was fought: the battle for the independence of thought.

He would also frequently write or discourse about the independence epic of 1868 (or the Ten Years' War), highlighting its role in the fraternization of masters and slaves, blacks and whites, rich and poor; and the idea of sacrifice as a purification of the National Being. From 1878, when he was still unknown, he began to gather information about the Ten Years' War, with the aim of studying the practical results of that first revolutionary experience and the constitution of its human factors, in order to know what could be expected or feared from the future. In his first letter to General Máximo Gómez, he confessed:

I am writing a book and I need to know what main charges can be brought against Céspedes, what reasons can be given in his defense... glories should not be buried but brought to light... Perhaps no one will account for me, Rafael María de Mendive was my father: from school I went to prison and to a penal colony, and to one exile and another—here I live dead with shame because I do not fight. I will be a chronicler since I cannot be a soldier (Martí, 1991b, p. 263). (translation by the journal)

The assessment of the missteps of the first attempt to give democratic institutions to Cuba is of special interest in Martí's future projection of politics, war, and the republic:

That magnificent decade, full of epic impulses and necessary wanderings, is reborn with its heroes, with its naked men, with its cunning peasants... now the weapons have been tested, and the useless is discarded, and the usable is utilized. Time will no longer be wasted on trials; it will be used to conquer..." (Martí, 1991c, p. 184). (translation by the journal)

With the "*Reading at Steck Hall*" Martí began to cement the importance of historical past for the future of Cuba as an independent and democratic nation. This guiding thread is reiterated in successive speeches before the emigrant communities, in documents of the Cuban Revolutionary Party (PRC), and in the newspaper *Patria*. During the political and moral preparation for the Necessary War (or the 1895 war), the argument of tradition was not sufficient. It was unavoidable to strengthen the capacity of the people as a social agent for the forging of the community of interests and the unity of purposes.

Beginning in 1892, in a letter sent to Máximo Gómez ([Martí, 1991d, p. 169](#)), he expressed the need for a political instrument to achieve unity of action, based on the conjunction of objectives and social motives that would allow giving a true and lasting character to the new Cuban society: "...I only aspire that once a visible and compact body is formed, they may appear united by the same serious and judicious desire to give Cuba true and lasting freedom..." (translation by the journal). To this end, he uses timely and tireless propaganda and, through apostolic work, gradually achieves what seemed most difficult: the integration of all patriotic forces, a process he described as the agony of edification ([Martí, 1991e](#)).

In that unifying work, he clarifies that the Cuban was not rebelling against the Spanish father but against the oppressor. There is, therefore, a recognition of the Hispanic root of Cuban culture, which would not be denied in the new republic but rather would have its place for the honorable Spaniard: "...we will never cast out from our side, rather we will call with honest voice and wide-open arms, the son of Spain who helps us to rebuild the town that his compatriots destroy..." ([Martí, 1991f, p. 231](#)).

The role and place of Afro-descendants in Cuban society (their real incorporation or exclusion) were essential points of the ideopolitical debate of the time. In some way, the issue was interwoven with the confrontation that arose in academic and political circles in Europe and America regarding the positioning of "races" in nations. The year 1882 seems to have been one of the moments of greatest intensity and controversy. As a trend, two positions were observed: one that considered the necessity of racial purity and homogeneity of nations, and another that dismissed the ethnographic consideration in the constitution of modern nations, considering "racial" and cultural mixing as necessary and legitimate.

On March 11, 1882, the French philosopher Ernest Renán gave a speech at the University of the Sorbonne, the central theme of which was the term "nation" and its link with the racial component ([Renán, 1947](#)). The importance that the Apostle attributes to it for the analysis of the Cuban problem is evidenced in his comments published in a journalistic chronicle:

Human history," Renán said, "is not a chapter of Zoology. Man is a rational and moral being. Free will is above the base suggestions of the spirit of race... Oh! The times are dawning when nationalities will no longer stand up, either as threats or as barriers, and when all men on earth, given to loving one another, will feel in their robust chest the beneficial fruition and the marvelous ennoblement that come from virile human love..." ([Martí, 1991g, p. 449-450](#)) (translation by the journal).

Within the island, conservative circles echoed the aforementioned speech. The idea that Cuba should consolidate itself as a nationality was suggested by the Autonomist movement through the autonomist newspaper *El Triunfo*. Following Renán's authority, they understood the nation as a cultural and political factor. In that order of things, the future formation of the Island had to be based on the fusion of its different components under the leadership of the most "apt" sectors, as exclusive heirs of the country's political and cultural legacy. As bearers of a positivist conception of education, the autonomists sought to prepare the "inferior races" for modern Cuban society, whose paradigm rested on Europe. A racist ideology that sought to whiten Cuba through European immigration and the prohibition of entry into the country of "backward cultures" such as Asian or African ones.

The aforementioned political vision intertwines with the ideas of the North American sociologist Guerrit Lausing, which appeared in that same month of April 1882 in the New York magazine *The Popular*

Science Monthly and were reproduced by the autonomist organ, considering it "...a notable sociological study on Chinese immigration, in which we find exposed and developed with extraordinary lucidity and solid erudition the same ideas that *El Triunfo* has always upheld on this serious matter, and which consist fundamentally of cataloging the necessity of racial and cultural homogeneity..." (*El Triunfo*, 1882).

It can be affirmed that the autonomist discourse was contradictory and exclusionary, dismissing popular protagonism. It responded to the nascent Creole bourgeoisie, which considered itself the critical conscience of the national process. Nevertheless, its political shrewdness led it to recognize Afro-descendants as part of Cuban reality and, to counteract that "accident," they proposed cultural whitening.

In Martí, modernization emanates from a radical and progressive political conception, based on the recognition of the existence of a mestizo culture where all ethno-social factors should exercise co-protagonism. Therefore, he points out that one of the core problems to be solved in Cuba was the accommodation of the races. The Martí writings that address this issue are numerous, and a good part of them appear during the preparation stage of the new war, with the aim of eliminating such prejudices.

According to [Poey's](#) criterion ([1994](#)), it is in *Mi Raza* (My Race) ([Martí, 1991h](#)) where the themes addressed by Martí in previous works are synthesized, considered the most complete of his texts dedicated to interracial relations.

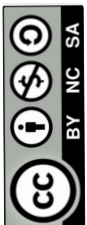
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Martí's project regarding the homeland-nation contains the revolutionary solution to the Cuban ethnocultural problem and rests on the following arguments: (a) The rights of man do not derive from belonging to one or another "race." (b) The word "man" inherently encompasses all rights. (c) There is no superiority of "races." (d) The insistence in Cuba on "racial" differences hinders public and individual fulfillment in a people immersed in a process of rapprochement and the search for a common life. (e) The category of "man" is superior to that of white, black, and mulatto. (f) The category of "Cuban" (man of Cuba) is superior to that of white, black, and mulatto.

In confronting the well-known racial fear, the Apostle uses a harsh epithet: "They lie!" those who do not recognize in the "black race" the qualities inherent to the human species: generosity, virtue, and the capacity to burst through the barriers of habits and customs instilled by those he calls "handlers of men" ([Martí, 1991i](#)).

Martí elaborates, in the Cuban economic and social context of the late 19th century, an autochthonous and radical conception of the rights of human beings, rejecting all types of racism. He considers the most accurate path to be the proclamation of the spiritual identity of all of them, above the values that supposedly might provide superiority. Although he uses the term "race" because it was common in his time, he empties the concept of content by explaining the non-existence of differences among human beings due to ethnic origin. As we have explained, that was very revolutionary in the debates taking place at that time.

Nor was he in favor of paternalistic or charitable treatment that in many cases sought to alleviate the status of inferiority. Cuba should not enter modernity with a country stagnant and divided by racial criteria. Massive access to education and culture, exercised from a democratic and just spirit, should contribute to the fullness of the human condition. Therefore, he declares as a principle of future re-



publican politics: "There will never be a war of races in Cuba. The Republic cannot turn back" (Martí, 1991h).

On the ethical plane, he endorses the aspiration that true men (regardless of the color of their skin) should treat one another with loyalty and tenderness out of pride for the common land where they were born. The process of mestizaje and crystallization of the living elements of the homeland, more than a spontaneous process, had to be erected as a natural option, but at the same time a voluntary and unstoppable one; characterized by its complexity and conditioned by socioeconomic, psychological, and historical factors.

Martí's political strategy starts from the conjunction of all sectors affected by Spanish colonialism, where class or other contradictions occupied a secondary place. The idea of social equilibrium had by then a first trial: the process of life in the emigrant communities, the commitment of the majority of its members to independence, the capacity to place national interest above sectoral or class interests. The community of interests, an essential factor for the urgencies of Cuba at that time, took shape in the Cuban Revolutionary Party (PRC).

Martí does not dismiss the existence of social forces opposed to social equilibrium that emanated from conflicts between employers and workers in the Cuban emigrant community (only that delving into them and strengthening them endangered unity for achieving independence). The complexity of political change demanded that: "...much must be set aside, much must be tied down... one must plant one's feet on the ground with the homeland in turmoil, seizing sinners by the neck..." (Martí, 1991j, p. 140). Yet it was not impossible "...to found, through the frank and cordial exercise of the legitimate capacities of man, a new people and a sincere democracy capable of overcoming... the dangers of sudden freedom in a society composed for slavery..." (Martí, 1978, p. 3) (translation by the journal).

The speech *With All and for the Good of All* (Martí, 1991e), delivered at a crucial moment of the revolutionary movement, is all-encompassing and at the same time exclusionary for those who could not overcome in a short time the fear of the tribulations of war, of the Afro-descendant, of the honorable Spaniard; as well as for those who sympathized with foreign snow (annexationists). The embrace was for those who knew how to love Cuba. In the speech, there is a constant defining of what is ours: our heads, our country, our enthusiasm, our faith and hope; as well as the passion for equity, for right, for the habit of work, and for the strength of idea and action.

The Cuban people —described by the author as a mixed people, the very substance of the political work— were more advanced due to their heterogeneous composition and peculiar formation than the Spanish nation, burdened by feudal remnants. Their constitution from dissimilar individualities made them a mass of hopes and sorrows, where the human heartbeat never ceased:

All the defects and all the emulations that could compromise the most energetic virtues and the most grandiose conquests exist among us... Being Cuban does not free a man from the weaknesses of humanity, nor does being Cuban aggravate them. (Martí, 1991k, p. 255) (translation by the journal).

Patriotism as a voluntary attitude, which places individual interest at the service of the public interest, was a consubstantial part of the modern conception of the State (contributed by the Enlightenment and the political and philosophical thought of the first half of the 19th century in Europe). The deep Cuban root that opened the path to national consciousness from an emancipatory paradigm (which grafted the world

based on the needs of its own culture) inaugurates a more open reading by interpreting patriotism as the general interest in the prosperity of the country and all its children. For Martí, patriotism is an essential virtue from which all virtues are possible. It embodies responsibilities such as simple and natural service that expects no material gratification and is based on the frank and free exercise of opinion.

The text by Ramón Elices Montes (1885), *Spanish Patriotism. Notes for a Book. Remembering the Glories of the Fatherland*, as its title indicates, systematized the Spanish vision of the term: "...to the eloquent voice of patriotism there is no Spanish heart that does not beat with joy, emotion, or feeling... there is no Spanish breast that fails to respond, whether to the immolation of the purest affections..." (p. 232) (translation by the journal). The coincidence of terms between the Cuban independence leader and the Spanish intellectual is evident. However, the significance for two politically exclusive identities determines that, for the Cuban, the exercise of patriotic duty entailed the breaking of Spanish national integrity, for which the Spanish citizen would be willing to give his life.

Regarding the Cuban homeland, the bases of the PRC express the objective of: "...founding in Cuba, through a war of republican spirit and methods, a nation capable of ensuring the lasting happiness of its children and of fulfilling, in the historical life of the continent, the difficult duties that its geographical situation points out to it..." (Martí, 1991l, p. 280). In other documents of the aforementioned party, it is defined as a complicated and risky building, whose first act was the 1868 war. *Meanwhile, in the Manifesto of Montecristi* or program of the revolution, the analysis revolves around the Cuban nation (Martí, 1991m).

In summary, it can be affirmed that during the 1870s and 1880s, the guiding terms of Martí's preaching were "homeland" and "patriotism." It is significant that between 1892 and 1895, in the PRC documents and in press articles, the term "nation" appears frequently alongside the use of "homeland." On the other hand, the word "nationalism" is almost nonexistent in his preaching. Without disregarding the rationality contained in the conception of the homeland, Cuba's National Hero configures it as an expression of daily psychology, as a system of values and aspirations of the popular sectors. Meanwhile, the Cuban nation would endorse the homeland through its republican institutions.

Our America: the peoples who do not know each other must hurry to know each other

The dimension of the homeland, expressed in the qualities of the Cuban from the Island and the emigrant as a judicious commitment to national independence, includes the continental and universal link in the solution of the Cuban problem. In his writings, a marvelous interweaving is manifested among these three scenarios in which it unfolds.

Martí's pilgrimage through different countries of the Latin American continent would bring him into contact with realities unknown to him. From *The Political Prison in Cuba* we find the first reference to Latin America, where he recreates with literary sense the brutal methods of colonization and the independence process (Medina, 2023).

It would be during his stay in Mexico (1875-1877) that his first encounter with continental reality occurs. There he appreciates how the majority indigenous population was excluded from national life, noting that from that bloody absorption something would remain of the conquered "race": the spirit that always resists steel, iron, and fire (Martí, 1991n). He takes the opportunity to learn about the Mayan cultural centers of Yucatán, developing an interest in archaeology. From his Mexican stay onward, he would feel passionate about the continent's original cultures, a passion captured in various writings.

The Cuban learns the history of the Aztec nation, feels the disorders and pains of its reality, and has the privilege of witnessing liberal politics, as well as border conflicts with the United States of America (USA), all of which he reflects in his intense intellectual and journalistic work. In the *Revista Universal* he uses for the first time in his work the term "Our America." After the Porfirian coup, being subject to censorship, he declares a maxim of his life: conscience is the citizenship of the universe (Martí, 2016).

His experiences in [Guatemala \(1877\)](#) constitute a crucial moment for his advanced understanding of what would later be known as Latin American identity. He would express it this way:

Interrupted by the conquest the natural and majestic work of American civilization, with the advent of the Europeans a strange people was created —not Spanish, because the new sap rejects the old body; not indigenous, because it has suffered the interference of a devastating civilization— two words which, being antagonistic, constitute a process; a mestizo people was created in the way that, with the reconquest of freedom, it develops and restores its own soul. It is an extraordinary truth: the great universal spirit has a particular face on each continent (Martí, 1991o, p. 99) (translation by the journal).

In the above idea, two elements stand out that would be cornerstones in identity studies of the 20th century: conceiving the existence of acculturation/transculturation processes that, in their development, would generate — in a loop — new peoples, bearers — in resistance — of original cultural elements mixed with those of the dominant European cultures.

During his Venezuelan sojourn (1881), he had the opportunity to acquire experiences that would nourish his articulation of the Cuban issue with the continental one. He intended to bring together, through the creation of the *Revista Venezolana* (Venezuelan Review), all those willing to join forces to erect a new and solid America. The journal's main objectives included: recounting the glories of our peoples, celebrating the merit of their most illustrious men, dusting off history, becoming a project for studying and assimilating what is ours, as opposed to the Europeanization suffered by Venezuela during the era of Guzmán Blanco. Only two issues were published.

In Mexico, he had argued that once colonial ties were broken, proper forms of expression were lacking. In Venezuela, he would specify that this process of liberation would be through the patriotic path. Thus, for the first time in his writings, the place of Cuba's independence appears within the Latin American concert; seen as a community of destinies where the unresolved issue of America would knock at the door of Cuban problems, upon whose solution the fate of the continent would depend.

The young revolutionary's stay in the United States for 15 years (until 1895) — especially in the cosmopolitan city of New York — would bring him very close to a society experiencing the splendor of an unprecedented industrial boom. The capitalist mecca of the era was beginning to reveal itself, in the eyes of his judicious critique, with all its inhuman and alienating nature, acquiring definite forms in his American chronicles. At the same time, he was capable of recognizing the positive aspects of that country. The Cuban not only wrote about U.S. politics, but also produced numerous chronicles exalting popular customs, writers, and American philosophers. He also reported, for various newspapers of the time, on the astonishing scientific and technological advances of the era.

In 1889, he demonstrated in his writings that the first Pan-American conference called by the USA was not a coincidence, but rather the articulation of a predatory tradition that had been with it since its origins as a nation. They were educated in the ideology that their privileged position on the Ame-

rican continent was given to them as destiny. However, sympathy for free nations —Martí would point out— lasts until they betray freedom or put that of *Our America* at risk (Martí, 1991p).

Since the mid-19th century, a conceptual rethinking had been taking place in Latin America about the survival of the colony within the republics. The most prominent representatives of Latin American liberalism expressed that independence would only be true when accompanied by political and spiritual sovereignty. However, these approaches were based on the conviction that, since Spanish America was a natural part of Europe, it should join its modernization process, as well as the dizzying economic takeoff of the USA.

The overcoming of these conceptions appears in the systematization of Martí's ideas about the Latin American homeland, synthesized in his essay *Our America* (Martí, 1991q), where the notion of the Latin American homeland is enunciated in the community of interests and the unity of traditions — an aspiration that had not taken place in the consubstantiality of human beings in this part of the world. Man and his alienated universe will take shape in the following figurations of life:

(a) *The vain villager*. Described as the false patriot. Lacking public utility. Sick with political and financial ambitions. Sustainer of fictitious modes of self-recognition. (b) *The seven-month-olds (premature ones)*. A kind of culturally colonized people who have no faith in their land and deny it to others. Those who feel ashamed of their humble origin and pretend to deny the seedbed of the original peoples. (c) *The arrogant ones*. For whom the earth was made to serve as a pedestal for them, not as an altar. A kind of verbose people who aspire to transplant forms of government alien to our realities and govern the country with imported laws. (d) *The defeated pedants*, the artificial men of letters, and the puny thinkers or lamplighters, together with the exotic creole, complete the picture of the social subjects who carry the disintegrating factors of *our American* homeland. Incapable of perceiving the danger derived from the geopolitical pretensions of the other America.

Martí's vision of the stunted modernity of Latin America was reshaped by his perception of excluded social sectors, to which he metaphorically refers as: the mute Indian, the dark-skinned black, the creative peasant. For him, salvation rested on the protagonism of these excluded sectors, unfolding into: (a) *Natural man*. This is not the human being in a state of nature, but rather the one who, after recognizing his authentic needs, positively assumes and values the heterogeneity of his cultural origins. Regardless of the color of his skin, he is a bearer of a sense of belonging to his world and his time. (b) *National politicians*. Those who have learned to govern by knowing the elements that make up their country, aided by methods and institutions born from those needs. (c) *The autochthonous mestizo*. He has rediscovered the magnitude and richness of his identities and otherness in order to dismantle the accumulated injustice of books. He represents the "ought to be" of national modernizing projects.

The aforementioned categories had to be embodied in statesmen, workers, economists, orators, playwrights; in short, in the new inhabitants of Latin America. He also makes special mention of the original peoples, with the need to preserve their cultures and traditions as the wise protagonism of the new Latin America. They would integrate naturally into true emancipation.

Autochthony and universality are deployed by the author in all spheres of Latin American life: in forms of government, politics, culture, and education. *Our America* has a defined content: from the Rio Grande to Patagonia. The geographical boundaries in this case allow naming a cultural and political reality. The other one — the one that is not ours — was the result of the geostrategic interests of the U.S. elites.

Martí's reflections on American continentality had been preceded by the projects of Bolívar and San

Martín, which emerged from the heat of the emancipatory struggles of the first half of the 19th century. Inspired by encyclopedism and with a popular base, they had not managed to materialize in a reality Balkanized by the pre-national burdens of the colonial era (incompatible with the dream of achieving a single institutional and political structure). For the writer of *Our America*, the goal was to unite the continental soul in political coordination, cultural ties, and economic communion. A kind of continental internationalism that would lead to respect for each sister homeland.

Martí's writing *Our America*, in addition to constituting a political program for the second independence of America, is one of the most beautiful literary pieces ever written on this side of the world, for its exquisite language and colorfulness, as well as for its use of symbols and metaphors.

Homeland is humanity

Modern thought underpins the new realities of the capitalist economy through universal humanism or cosmopolitanism, which in the Romance languages developed from the Renaissance onwards. Initially, the term "cosmopolitan" (citizen of the universe) was not perceived as an antonym of patriot. This progressive strand can be found in the 16th-century French thinker Guillaume Postel, as well as in the political philosophy of Montesquieu and Rousseau (Aramayo et al., 1996).

Subsequently, cosmopolitanism would acquire a comfortable and pragmatic meaning (Cattafi, 2014). The homeland, not as the place where one was born, but as the place where one is well off — an idea that would become widespread in the 19th century. On the other hand, European thought — as a tendency — only saw human rights in the old continent, disregarding colonial realities. A humanist like Ernest Renán believed that the regeneration of the inferior races (inhabitants of colonized countries) should be undertaken by the superior races (European metropolises) in order to give a providential order to humanity.

According to Salomón (1986), it was the generous and altruistic meaning of the term cosmopolitanism that passed into Spanish and Spanish-American Enlightenment. In Cuba, it takes on a connotation mediated by the search for a homeland independent from Spain. This is how José de la Luz y Caballero felt when he stated: "...the philosopher, being tolerant, will be cosmopolitan; but above all he must be a patriot..." (de la Luz, 1981, p. 72) (translation by the journal). "What is needed more for the country, for humanity? Is not the interest of humanity better served by beginning with that of the homeland, without selfishness reigning in it, but rather universal love?" (de la Luz, 1981, p. 108) (translation by the journal).

The synthesis of Martí's idea of the homeland would take shape in three converging projects: the independence of Cuba and the Antilles, the second independence of America, and the balance of the world. The latter is resolved in the solution to the Cuban problem, in which homeland and humanity take concrete form, thus the Cuban patriot would affirm: "...Cubans recognize the urgent duty imposed upon them towards the world by their geographical position and the present hour of universal gestation... Cubans ask nothing from the world except recognition and respect for their sacrifices, and they give their blood to the universe..." (Martí, 1991r, p. 153) (translation by the journal).

The modern era was heading towards a new stage, and Martí perceives the clash between European powers and the USA for control of the Western Hemisphere. According to his criteria, achieving multiple influences without the predominance of any of the conflicting factors constituted an unavoidable service. Martí's doctrine —according to Lamore (1990)— falls within the coexistence of national prides

and cosmopolitan utopias.

In the view of the author of this article, Martí manages to explain the nascent antagonism that, as the 20th century progressed, would become abyssal.

Each one must set himself to the work of the world, to that which is closest to him, not because what is his own is, by being his own, superior to that of others... but because man's influence is exerted better and more naturally in that which he knows... and that distribution of human work, and nothing more, is the true and impregnable concept of homeland... homeland is humanity, it is that portion of humanity that we see closest, and in which it fell to us to be born... (Martí, 1991s, p. 468). (translation by the journal)

Final reflections

In Martí's vision of the homeland, two essential levels coexist: the popular sensibility that magnifies the heroic (the sense of belonging to a community) and the fruitful, reflective creation that unfolds as judicious apprehension or an ideological form that seals a social commitment. These ideas take shape over the course of his life experience and are aimed at changing Cuba's dependent status. Not only politically, but he also produced a work of social pedagogy (which includes cultural and educational aspects for the birth of new peoples and sincere democracy).

In his work, there are three fundamental moments of synthesis and conceptual recomposition concerning the Homeland, which materialize in the following works: *The Spanish Republic before the Cuban Revolution (1873)*, *Our America (1891)*, and *the Dominican Literary Review (1895)*, but which are substantiated and expanded in dissimilar texts (letters, chronicles, speeches, essays, among other literary forms).

Martí's work recomposes existing reality based on the understanding of continental events and the imperatives of the late 19th century, conceiving the Homeland as a community of objectives and social motives, formed with and for the oppressed, thus being indissolubly linked to the term "people."

José Martí's universal conception reaches its maximum humanist and solidarity expression when he defines Homeland as Humanity, the opposite of narrow nationalism that declares the ethnic and cultural superiority of certain groups or nations over others. His idea did not seek to divide Cubans from the rest of the world; rather, it carries the emancipatory ideal of the human being, which for other thinkers such as Ernest Renán was only valid for the inhabitants of the old continent.

The Apostle of Cuba is a representative of a cosmopolitan vocation: practical and revolutionary, far from unnecessary abstractions and alien molds because it is rooted in autochthony. At the same time, he subverts the terminological apparatus of Spanish and French thought regarding homeland, patriotism, and nation, from a decolonized stance that gives it a peculiar content, bearer of a deep and progressive radicalism that transcends his era and reaches the present day.

In the essay *Our America*, he leaves open the possibility of transformation, through the creative and creating attitudes of the sons and daughters of Latin American lands, convinced of the complex nature of social changes.

Privacy: Not applicable.

Funding: This work has not received any type of funding.

Statement on the use of artificial intelligence: The authors of this article declare that we have not used Artificial Intelligence in its preparation.

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Article received date: March 2, 2025

Article acceptance date: March 27, 2025

Date approved for layout: March 30, 2026

Publication date: June 30, 2026

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