

José Martí, “periodista neoyorquino,” and His Newspaper Chronicles on Native Americans

While José Martí’s significance as the father of Cuban independence and his influence in political, social, cultural, and literary discourses is intrinsically tied to Cuba, the Caribbean, and Latin America, Martí lived almost uninterruptedly in the United States during the last fifteen years of his life from 1880 to 1895. Considerable number of studies have focused on the literary legacy of Martí in Spanish letters; however, until the last couple of decades, an increasing number of studies have focused on Martí as a “Latino” author writing for Spanish language newspapers in New York City and for newspapers in Latin America on various topics related to U.S. society, economy, and culture. In this presentation, I discuss Martí’s newspaper chronicles related to episodes of land displacement and mistreatment of North American indigenous populations during the 1880s that were printed and debated in mainstream U.S. newspapers and weeklies. I pay particular attention to the influence of Helen Hunt Jackson, and her nonfiction writings, in the development of Martí’s views on Native Americans. While critics such as Susan Gillman, Laura Lomas, and Catherine Vallejo, among others, have discussed the influence of Jackson’s novel, *Ramona* (1884) and Martí’s translation of this novel, less attention has been given to the influence of Jackson’s newspaper writings and *A Century of Dishonor* (1881). The emphasis on Martí’s writings on Native Americans shows the extent of his multi-ethnic attitudes as a proto-Latinx writer in contrast to some of his contemporary writers such as Walt Whitman and Mark Twain.

Short bio: I’m an Assistant Professor in the Latina/o/x Studies Program at the University of Iowa. My fields of study are American, Black, & Latinx literatures.

