Abstract

This module provides a lesson plan for using José Martí’s poems "Dos patrias" and "Yo soy un hombre sincero" along with a letter he wrote, Carta de José Martí a los presidentes de las organizaciones de cubanos exiliados en Florida (18 de marzo 1893) in the AP Spanish language or college-level Spanish class. Themes include: patriotism, independence, hope, etc.

1 Introduction

Primary texts or authentic materials can be combined with standard texts to locate literature and poetry in a historical or political context. This example uses poems by the Cuban revolutionary poet, José Martí ("Dos patrias" and "Yo soy un hombre sincero") together with a letter (Carta de José Martí a los presidentes de las organizaciones de cubanos exiliados en Florida, 18 de marzo 1893) to show how the Cuban War of Independence—and his strong patriotism—affected the poet’s writings. Other types of historical material (such as newspapers, historical currency, speeches, journals, decrees, etc.) can also be combined with literature. Other types of primary sources can be found (in English and in Spanish) in the free digital archive, Our Americas Archive Partnership.

An English translation of Martí’s letter, Letter from Jose Marti to the Council Presidents on the Board of Advisors for Key West, March 18, 1893 is also available at: http://hdl.handle.net/1911/20701

For a Spanish version of this module please see:"Plan para la clase de español: Poemas y carta de José Martí" http://cnx.org/content/m38223/latest/.
"The delegado, José Martí"

Figure 1: José Martí’s signature in Carta de José Martí a los presidentes de las organizaciones de cubanos exiliados en Florida, 18 de marzo 1893

2 Objectives

- Read and understand José Martí's poems, "Dos patrias" and "Yo soy un hombre sincero."
- Combine Martí’s poems with a primary document, Carta de José Martí a los presidentes de las organizaciones de cubanos exiliados en Florida, 18 de marzo 1893.
- Understand José Martí’s poems and letter in the historical context of the Cuban War of Independence.
- Identify common themes.
- Analyze the figure of Martí, according to his poems and letter.
- Write an essay or conduct a class discussion analyzing Martí’s texts.

3 Concepts

Literary-poetic and historical themes:

- Patriotism
- Cuba
- Freedom, independence
- War
- Colonialism, imperialism
- Peace and stability
- José Martí as a revolutionary and poet
- Cosmopolitan figures
- Darkness and problems
- Desperation, sadness
- Cuban history, Cuban War of Independence

4 Resources

- "Dos patrias" 
- "Yo soy un hombre sincero"
- Carta de Jose Marti a los presidentes de las organizaciones de cubanos exiliados en Florida, 18 de marzo 1893. http://hdl.handle.net/1911/9242

8See the file at http://cnx.org/content/m38225/1.5/
9http://oldpoetry.com/opoem/66214-Jose-Marti-Dos-Patrias>
10See the file at http://jose-marti.org/jose_marti/obras/poesia/versoescillos/03yooyunhombresincero.htm>
11See the file at http://cnx.org/content/m38225/1.5/
12http://hdl.handle.net/1911/9242>
• Optional: Texts on the history of Cuba, for example, History of Cuba’s page on the Struggle for Cuban Independence and Identity \(^{13}\) (includes information on José Martí’s role).

5 Activity

• Read "Dos patrias" and "Yo soy un hombre sincero". Identify the most important themes in each poem. Analyze the meaning of each poem.
• Read Carta de José Martí a los presidentes de las organizaciones de cubanos exiliados en Florida, 18 de marzo 1893. Identify any themes that are similar to the poems.
• Conduct a class discussion on themes and political history (Cuban War of Independence) that influenced the poetry and letter.
• Write an essay analyzing Martí’s work (common themes, symbolism, history/politics expressed in texts).

6 Study questions

Students can discuss aloud or write an essay about the common themes and try to locate the texts in a historical contexts. Some key questions include:

• What themes do these 3 texts have in common?
• What words or phrases indicate the persona’s/author’s goals and hopes?
• How do you think Martí would feel about the US annexing Cuba, that is, making it a part of the US?
• Do you think that Martí tries to make his readers feel hope and patriotism in his poems and letter? What words or phrases gave you this impression?
• Why did Martí write this letter?
• Research Martí’s life and Cuba’s history and place the poems and letter in context. What is happening at this point in Cuban history? What role does Martí play? Do you think something inspired Martí to write these poems?

7 Further evaluation

How does José Martí compare to other historical liberators, patriots, and revolutionaries in the Americas? Choose one of the following historical figures and research their contributions to their country. What country are they from? What did they do? Why are they famous? Compare and contrast them to José Martí. Can you find any similarities between the figure you chose, José Martí, and George Washington?

• Simón Bolívar
• Miguel Hidalgo
• Bernardo O’Higgins
• Francisco de Miranda
• José Miguel Carrera
• José de San Martín
• José Gervasio Artigas
• Manuel Belgrano
• Antonio José de Sucre
• etc.

\(^{13}\)See the file at <http://cnx.org/content/m38225/latest/http://www.historyofcuba.com/history/havana/struggle.htm>
For more on Martí, see the module "José Martí: A Letter to the Board of Advisors for Key West." http://cnx.org/content/m23122/latest/\(^\text{14}\)

A Spanish translation is also available: "José Martí: Carta al Cuerpo de consejo de Key West." http://cnx.org/content/m34621/latest/\(^\text{15}\)

\(^{14}\text{See the file at } <\text{http://cnx.org/content/m38225/latest} /\text{http://cnx.org/content/m23122/latest}/>

\(^{15}\text{See the file at } <\text{http://cnx.org/content/m38225/latest} /\text{http://cnx.org/content/m34621/latest}/>