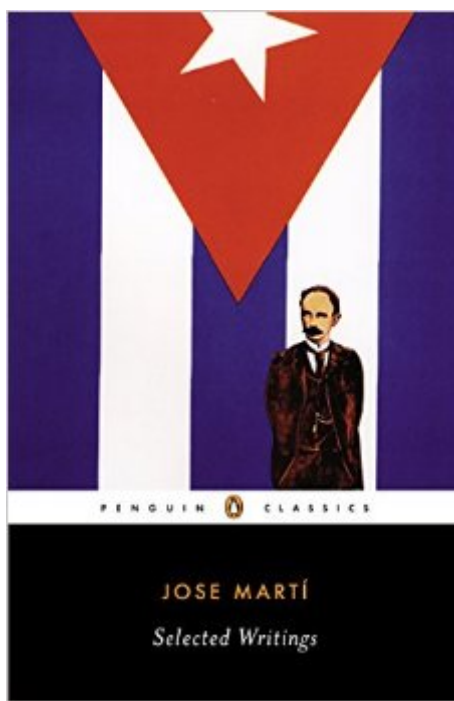


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Selected Writings (Penguin Classics)



Synopsis

José Martí (1853-1895) is the most renowned political and literary figure in the history of Cuba. A poet, essayist, orator, statesman, abolitionist, and the martyred revolutionary leader of Cuba's fight for independence from Spain, Martí lived in exile in New York for most of his adult life, earning his living as a foreign correspondent. Throughout the 1880s and early 1890s, Martí's were the eyes through which much of Latin America saw the United States. His impassioned, kaleidoscopic evocations of that period in U.S. history, the assassination of James Garfield, the opening of the Brooklyn Bridge, the execution of the Chicago anarchists, the lynching of the Italians in New Orleans, and much more, bring it rushing back to life. Organized chronologically, this collection begins with his early writings, including a thundering account of his political imprisonment in Cuba at age sixteen. The middle section focuses on his journalism, which offers an image of the United States in the nineteenth century, its way of life and system of government, that rivals anything written by de Tocqueville, Dickens, Trollope, or any other European commentator. Including generous selections of his poetry and private notebooks, the book concludes with his astonishing, hallucinatory final masterpiece, "War Diaries", never before translated into English. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

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Customer Reviews

Martí was a prodigy, a genius, yet he is little known in the U.S. either for his prose or poetry. Those who have heard of him may associate him with Radio Martí or know him as a Cuban revolutionary. While this beautifully rendered translation includes a broad spectrum of Martí's works, some not previously translated, his descriptions of America in the latter half of the nineteenth century are by themselves sufficient reason to buy this book. Martí, coming from a different culture, sees things about America that we do not, and he describes them with a passion lacking in the reportage of his North American contemporaries.

The Cuban character, as it turns out, is not so much a development of the post-Castro trauma in which so many Cuban-Americans live but rather the expression of a deep and inescapable sense of exile. In this gorgeous, captivating translation of Martí's writings--some appearing in English for the first time--this 19th century journalist and poet is truly the epic voice of the Cuban people, articulating their pathos and homesickness in his dispatches from New York, putting his finger into the wounds of their suffered humanity in his poetry and travelogues. An elegant, profound picture of the Cuban soul, long before the Ilan Gonzalez events cast such an unfriendly light upon it.

Here at last--in English--is a comprehensive selection of Martí's writing, translated by a masterful hand. It leaves all other attempts at this task far behind. Esther Allen meets the challenges of Martí's exuberant and complex style with extraordinary success. This book will be a landmark text for college courses on Martí as a Latin American and Latino writer, and is an excellent introduction for the general public. Bravo to all involved in this effort to bring Martí to American readers!

I was referred to Martí through other literary sources. What I found far surpassed my expectations. Whether it is his writing style, his first hand accounts of important moments in US and Cuban history as a reporter or the insight into US and Cuban relations and the inevitable attempts at a Cuban revolution that followed, this is important reading to any serious or even curious student of Cuba, US History or Latin American literature and literary figures. The writings evolve over a lifetime and combine the life experiences of Jose Martí with the evolution of US social and political upheaval during this period, the growing discontent of Spanish rule over Cuba and reveal much about the US

and Cuba through the eyes of an activist observer who ultimately became part of the story. His final writings and accounts of the War and his role in an ill fated revolution are some of the most intimate and foreboding accounts of a person's life mission that I can recall ever having read and seem to be a turning point in modern Latin American writing and literature. The final document of the poet warrior's chronicle of his and his country's pending demise.

This collection of Marti's essays and letters are excellent reading for Marti scholars and beginners alike. The works are in chronological order and cover the most pivotal periods of Marti's life. Both of Marti's strongest qualities, the poet and the freedom fighter, are represented with conviction. This book is a definite must read for anyone looking to explore the mind of one of the greatest literary figures of all time.

I found this text very approachable and with a good mix of Marti's writings both thematically and in terms of his progression as a poet and a political thinker. You can not understand contemporary Cuba, especially Cuban nationalism without reading Marti. This reader is a great start.

Jose Marti's writings were really my first entry into Latin American political thought. I was greatly impressed by his writing style and his ability to project how the Western hemisphere's development would unfold over the 20th Century. This is an important book for understanding the region, and also modern day Cuba and Venezuela.

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