Cuban Counterpoint

TOBACCO AND SUGAR

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CENTURIES ago a jovial Spanish archpriest, a famous poet of the Middle Ages, personified Carnival and Lent and made them speak in unforgettable verses, cleverly putting into the affirmations and rebuttals of the satirical contest between them their contrasting ethics and the ills and benefits that each has conferred upon mankind. This allegorical dialogue by the priest Juan Ruíz, *"Pelea que ovo Don Carnal con Doña Quaresma"* in his *Libro de Buen Amor,* redounded to the glory not only of his name but of the parish of Hita, whose fame rests exclusively upon that of the genial composer of rustic love songs and every manner of unabashed, mocking verse.

Perhaps that famous controversy imagined by this great poet of the Middle Ages might serve as a literary precedent to permit me now to personify dark tobacco and "high yellow" sugar, and let them, in the guise of a fable, uphold their vying merits. But lacking, as I do, authority either as poet or as priest to conjure up creatures of fantasy and lend them human passions and superhuman significance, all I can do is to set down, in drab prose, the amazing contrasts I have observed in the two agricultural products on which the economic history of Cuba rests.

These contrasts are neither religious nor moral, as were those rhymed by the poet priest between the sinful dissipations of Carnival and the purifying Lenten-tide abstinences. Tobacco and sugar are opposed to each other in the economic as in the social field, and even strait-laced moralists have taken them under consideration in the course of their history, viewing the one with mistrust and the other with favor. Moreover, the contrasting parallelism between tobacco and sugar is so curious, like that between the two characters in the archpriest's dialogue, that it goes beyond the limits of a merely social problem and touches upon the fringes of poetry. A poet might be able to give us in robust verses a *Pelea de Don Tabaco y Doña Azúcar*—a "Controversy between Don Tobacco and Doña Sugar." This type of

dialogued composition which carries the dramatic dialectic of life into the realm of art has always been a favorite of the ingenuous folk muses in poetry, music, dance, song, and drama. The outstanding examples of this in Cuba are the antiphonal prayers of the liturgies of both whites and blacks, the erotic controversy in dance measures of the rumba, and in the versified counterpoint of the unlettered *guajiros* and the Afro-Cuban *curros.*

A typical folk ballad, or one of those ten-line stanza poems in the vernacular of the *guajiros* or *curros,* whose disputants were the masculine tobacco and the feminine sugar might be of educational value in schools and song festivals, for in the study of economic phenomena and their social effects it would be hard to find more eloquent lessons than those afforded by Cuba in the startling counterpoise between sugar and tobacco.

The contrast between tobacco and sugar dates from the moment the two came together in the minds of the discoverers of Cuba. At the time of its conquest, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, by the Spaniards who brought the civilization of Europe to the New World, the minds of these invaders were strongly impressed by two gigantic plants. The traders arriving from the other side of the ocean had already fixed the greedy eyes of their ambition on one; the other they came to regard as the most amazing prize of the discovery, a powerful snare of the devil, who by means of this unknown weed stimulated the senses as with a new kind of alcohol, the mind with a new mystery, the soul with a new sin.

Out of the agricultural and industrial development of these amazing plants were to come those economic interests which foreign traders would twist and weave for centuries to form the web of our country's history, the motives of its leaders, and, at one and the same time, the shackles and the support of its people. Tobacco and sugar are the two most important figures in the history of Cuba.

Sugar and tobacco are vegetable products of the same country and the same climate, but the biological distinction between them is such that it brings about radical economic differences as regards soil, methods of cultivation, processing, and marketing. And the amazing differences between the two products are reflected in the history of the Cuban nation from its very ethnological formation to its social structure, its political fortunes, and its international relations. (See Part II, Chapter i.)

The outstanding feature of our economic history is in reality this multiform and persistent contrast between the two products that have been and are the most typical of Cuba, aside from that period of brief duration at the beginning of the sixteenth century when the conquistadors' gold-mining activities and the cultivation of yucca fields and stock-raising to supply cassava bread and dried meat for the conquerors' expeditions took preeminence. Thus a study of the history of Cuba, both internal and external, is fundamentally a study of the history of sugar and tobacco as the essential bases of its economy.

And even in the universal history of economic phenomena and their social repercussions, there are few lessons more instructive than that of sugar and tobacco in Cuba. By reason of the clarity with which through them the social effects of economic causes can be seen, and because few other nations besides ours have presented this amazing concatenation of historical vicissitudes and this radical contrast, this unbroken parallelism between two coexisting orders of economic phenomena, which throughout their entire development display highly antithetical characteristics and effects, it is as though some supernatural teacher had purposely selected Cuba as a geographic laboratory in which to give the clearest demonstrations of the supreme importance of the basic economy of a nation in its continuous process of development.

The posing and examination of this deep-seated contrast which exists between sugar and tobacco, from their very nature to their social derivations, may throw some new light upon the study of Cuban economy and its historical peculiarities. In addition it offers certain curious and original instances of *transculturation* of the sort that are of great and current interest in contemporary sociological science. (See Part II, Chapter ii.)

Tobacco and sugar are both products of the vegetable kingdom that are cultivated, processed, and sold for the delectation of the mouth that consumes them.

Moreover, in the tobacco and sugar industry the same four factors are present: land, machinery, labor, and money, whose varying combinations comprise the history of these products.

But from the moment of their germination in the earth to their final human consumption tobacco and sugar behave in ways almost always radically opposed.

Sugar cane and tobacco are all contrast. It would seem that they were moved by a rivalry that separates them from their very origins. One is a gramineous plant, the other a solanaceous; one grows from cuttings of stalk rooted down, the other from tiny seeds that germinate. The value of one is in its stalk, not in its leaves, which are thrown away; that of the other in its foliage, not its stalk, which is discarded. Sugar cane lives for years, the tobacco plant only a few months. The former seeks the light, the latter shade; day and night, sun and moon. The former loves the rain that falls from the heavens; the latter the heat that comes from the earth. The sugar cane is ground for its juice; the tobacco leaves are dried to get rid of the sap. Sugar achieves its destiny through liquid, which melts it, turns it into syrup; tobacco through fire, which volatilizes it, converted into smoke. The one is white, the other dark. Sugar is sweet and odorless; tobacco bitter and aromatic. Always in contrast! Food and poison, waking and drowsing, energy and dream, delight of the flesh and delight of the spirit, sensuality and thought, the satisfaction of an appetite and the contemplation of a moment's illusion, calories of nourishment and puffs of fantasy, undifferentiated and commonplace anonymity from the cradle and aristocratic individuality recognized wherever it goes, medicine and magic, reality and deception, virtue and vice. Sugar is *she;* tobacco is *he*. Sugar cane was the gift of the gods, tobacco of the devils; she is the daughter of Apollo, he is the offspring of Persephone.

In the economy of Cuba there are also striking contrasts in the cultivation, the processing, and the human connotations of the two products. Tobacco requires delicate care, sugar can look after itself; the one requires continual attention, the other involves seasonal work; intensive versus extensive cultivation; steady work on the part of a few, intermittent jobs for many; the immigration of whites on the one hand, the slave trade on the other; liberty and slavery; skilled and unskilled labor; hands versus arms; men versus machines; delicacy versus brute force. The cultivation of tobacco gave rise to the small holding; that of sugar brought about the great land grants. In their industrial aspects tobacco belongs to the city, sugar to the country. Commercially the whole world is the market for our tobacco, while our sugar has only a single market. Centripetence and centrifugence. The native versus the foreigner. National sovereignty as against colonial status. The proud cigar band as against the lowly sack.

Tobacco and sugar cane are two gigantic plants, two members of the vegetable kingdom which both flourish in Cuba and are both perfectly adapted, climatically and ecologically, to the country. The territory of Cuba has in its different zones the best land for the cultivation of both plants. And the same happens in the combinations of the climate with the chemistry of the soil.

Even though all sugar is alike, Cuba possesses certain special conditions for its cultivation. The climate for cane is that determined by the isothermal lines of 68° rather than by mere tropical location. Broadly speaking, the sugar-producing zone of the world lies between latitude 22° North, the position of Havana, and 22° South, that of Rio de Janeiro. The whole of the West Indies lies within this geographical region; but Cuba, because of its proximity to the northern limit, and because of the effects of the adjacent winter cold, has advantages over the other islands. In no other part of the world do sun, rainfall, land, and winds collaborate as they do there to produce sugar in those little natural sugar mills of the cane stalks. The hot rainy season is very favorable for the rapid growth of the cane, and it rains heavily in Cuba. If "the cane prepares its sugar in the sweat of its leaves," to use the phrase of Alvaro Reynoso, we might say that the torrential rains bring to the cane the treasure of calories which is the gift of its father, the sun. If the latter grows angry and withholds the rain, the cane is stunted and impoverished. At the same time the pleasant winter season, without frost but with cold snaps, hastens the crystallization of the saccharose and in Cuba guarantees the vegetation cycle of the cane, its growth and its maturity. Nature in Cuba has given sugar cane a perfect annual cycle of growth and production, which affords it a situation of privilege there.

As for Cuban tobacco, being, as it is, the best in the world, it is unnecessary to analyze the advantages of soil and climate. From

the excellence of the plant one can infer that of its natural conditions of production. A noteworthy poet, Narciso Foxá, said of the tobacco of his country: "A special gift conferred upon Cuba."

Sugar cane and tobacco are typical plants of the tropics, lasciviously hot-blooded, hating the cold, given to prodigious growth in stalk and leaves, with a tendency to "grow rank," as the Cuban countryman puts it.

Cane and tobacco do not concentrate all their strength in spears and ears, like wheat and corn, plumed like conquerors vainglorious of their lineage. Nor like the yucca and the potato, humble inhabitants of the earth, do they hide their wealth in the ground as in a miser's pot. But for the plant of wheat, corn, yucca, or potato, their consumption by man is their complete destruction. Each of these plants as it gives its fruit to mankind gives him its life and its posterity as well. If man wishes the plant he despoils to reproduce itself, to give further fruits, he must forgo part of its yield, must save grains from the ear of wheat or corn, some of the tubercules of the roots, and only in this way can the miracle of creation be repeated for the future. Not so with sugar cane or tobacco, more generous by far; each plant gives to man not only its complete usefulness but at the same time its unbroken continuity.

Cane and tobacco yield their sought-for wealth in such a way that they can make a present of it without depriving themselves of the roots or seeds that are the means by which they perpetuate the possibility of their favors. Sugar cane, after offering up its juicy stem to the very last of its precious joints, will shoot up again from its own fertile roots and reproduce its rich stalks year after year, as long as it has the help of earth and sun. Tobacco, after each plant has given every one of its aromatic leaves to the harvester, offers him its myriad seeds to ensure the repetition of its gifts the following year. The difference between the two plants lies in the fact that the cane comes up again from its own roots whereas tobacco is born anew from its seeds which it flourishes aloft. (See Part II, Chapter iii.)

Tobacco is born, sugar is made. Tobacco is born pure, is processed pure and smoked pure. To secure saccharose, which is pure sugar, a long series of complicated physiochemical operations are required merely to eliminate impurities—bagasse, scum, sediment, and obstacles in the way of crystallization.

Tobacco is dark, ranging from black to mulatto; sugar is light, ranging from mulatto to white. Tobacco does not change its color; it is born dark and dies the color of its race. Sugar changes its coloring; it is born brown and whitens itself; at first it is a syrupy mulatto and in this state pleases the common taste; then it is bleached and refined until it can pass for white, travel all over the world, reach all mouths, and bring a better price, climbing to the top of the social ladder.

"In the same box there are no two cigars alike; each one has a different taste," is a phrase frequent among discerning smokers, whereas all refined sugar tastes the same.

Sugar has no odor; the merit of tobacco lies in its smell and it offers a gamut of perfumes, from the exquisite aroma of the pure Havana cigar, which is intoxicating to the smell, to the reeking stogies of European manufacture, which prove to what levels human taste can sink.

One might even say that tobacco affords satisfaction to the touch and the sight. What smoker has not passed his hand caressingly over the rich *brevas* or *regalías* of a freshly opened box of Havanas? Do not cigar and cigarette act as a catharsis for nervous tension to the smoker who handles them and holds them delicately between lips and fingers? And what about chewing tobacco or snuff? Do they not titillate their users' tactile sense? And, for the sight, is not a cigar in the hands of a youth a symbol, a foretaste of manhood? And is not tobacco at times a mark of class in the ostentation of brand and shape? At times nothing less than a *corona corona,* a crowned crown. Poets who have been smokers have sung of the rapt ecstasy that comes over them as they follow with eyes and imagination the bluish smoke rising upward, as though from the ashes of the cigar, dying in the fire like a victim of the Inquisition, its spirit, purified and free, were ascending to heaven, leaving in the air hieroglyphic signs like ineffable promises of redemption.

Whereas sugar appeals to only one of the senses, that of taste, tobacco appeals not only to the palate, but to the smell, touch, and sight. Except for hearing, there is not one of the five senses that tobacco does not stimulate and please.

Sugar is assimilated in its entirety; much of tobacco is lost in

smoke. Sugar goes gluttonously down the gullet into the intestines, where is is converted into muscle-strengthening vigor. Tobacco, like the rascal it is, goes from the mouth up the turnings and twistings of the cranium, following the trail of thought. *Ex fumo dare lucem.* Not for nothing was tobacco condemned as a snare of the devil, sinful and dangerous.

Tobacco is unnecessary for man and sugar is a requisite of his organism. And yet this superfluous tobacco gives rise to a vice that becomes a torment if it is denied; it is far easier to become resigned to doing without the necessary sugar.

Tobacco contains a poison: nicotine (see Part II, Chapter iv); sugar affords nourishment: carbohydrates. Tobacco poisons, sugar nourishes. Nicotine stimulates the mind, giving it diabolical inspiration; the excess of glucose in the blood benumbs the brain and even causes stupidity. For this reason alone tobacco would be of the liberal reform group and sugar of the reactionary conservatives; fittingly enough, a century ago in England the Whigs were regarded as little less than devils and the Tories as little less than fools.

Tobacco is a medicinal plant; it was so considered by both Indians and Europeans. Tobacco is a narcotic, an emetic, and an antiparasitic. Its active ingredient, nicotine, is used as an antitetanic, in cases of paralysis of the bladder, and as an insecticide. In olden times it was used for the most far-fetched cures; according to Father Cobo, "to cure innumerable ailments, in green or dried leaf form, in powder, in smoke, in infusion, and in other ways." Cuban folklore has preserved some of these practices in home remedies. Snuff was used as a dentifrice. At the beginning of the nineteenth century a very bitter-tasting variety, known as Peñalvar, was manufactured in Havana and exported to England for this purpose; it contained a mixture of powdered tobacco and a kind of red clay. Tobacco has always been highly prized for its sedative qualities, and was regarded as a medicine for the spirit. For this reason, if long ago the savages censed their idols in caves with tobacco to placate their fury with adulation, today one burns the incense of tobacco in the hollows of one's own skull to calm one's worries and breathe new life into one's illusions.

Sugar, too, has its medicinal side and is even a basic element of our physiological make-up, producing psychological disturbances by its deficiency as by its excess. For this reason, and because of their scarcity, sugar and tobacco were sold centuries ago at the apothecary's shop. But in spite of their old association on the druggist's shelves, tobacco and sugar have always been far removed. In the opinion of moralists tobacco was vicious in origin, and was abominated by them and condemned by kings as much as it was exalted by the doctors.

Tobacco is, beyond doubt, malignant; it belongs to that dangerous and widespread family of the Solanaceæ. In the old Eurasian world the Solanaceæ were known to inspire terror, torment, visions, and delirium. Mandragora produced madness and dreams and acted as an aphrodisiac. Atropa gave its name to one of the Fates. Belladonna gave the sinful blackness of hell to the pupils of beautiful women's eyes. Henbane was the narcotic poison of classic literature. The various daturas were the source of alkaloids that the Indians of Asia as well as those of America employed in their rites, spells, and crimes. In our New World this family of cursed plants was regenerated. Even though the Datura, of which the lowly Jimson weed is a species, still works its diabolical will here, inspiring the mystic frenzy of Aztecs, Quechuas, Zuñis, Algonquins, and other native tribes, America has paid its debt of sin with interest, bestowing on mankind other plants of the solanaceous family, but upright, edible members, such as the potato, which today is cultivated more extensively throughout the world than wheat; the tomato, the "love apple" of the French, whose juice is considered a stimulating wine today; and the pepper, that king of spices, which carries to all the globe the burning and vitamin-rich stimulus of the tropical sun of America.

But in addition to these exemplary plants with their nutritious, homely, respectable fruits, the Solanaceæ of America set afoot in the world that scamp of the family, tobacco, neither fruit nor food, sly and conceited, lazy and having no other object than to tempt the spirit. The moralists of Europe were fully aware of the mischief-making properties of that irresistible Indian tempter. Quevedo said in Spain that "more harm had been done by bringing in that powder and smoke than the Catholic King had committed through Columbus and Cortés." But those were rogues' days and nothing could be devised to halt this Indian tobacco which, like the Limping Devil, went roving all

over the world because everywhere it found a longing for dreams and indulgence for rascalities.

In Europe tobacco became utterly degraded, the instrument of crime, the accomplice of criminals. In the eighteenth century there was a general fear of being poisoned by deadly poison mixed with snuff. "Perfumed snuff was at times the vehicle of poison," says the historian of tobacco, Fairholt. "In 1712 the Duke of Noailles presented the Dauphine of France with a box of Spanish snuff, a gift which pleased her mightily. The snuff was saturated with poison, and after inhaling it for five days the Dauphine died, complaining of a severe pain in her temples. This caused great excitement, and there was great fear of accepting a pinch of snuff, and likewise of offering it. It was generally believed that this poisoned snuff was used in Spain and by Spanish emissaries to get rid of political opponents, and also that it was employed by the Jesuits to poison their enemies. For this reason it was given the name of 'Jesuit snuff.' This fear persisted for a long time." In 1851 tobacco was guilty of murder. The Count of Bocarme was put to death in Mons for poisoning his brother-in-law with nicotine that was extracted from tobacco for this purpose.

As though to heighten the malignity of tobacco, there is that special virus, or ultra-virus, which attacks it, and produces the dread disease known as mosaic. Sugar cane, too, suffers from a mosaic; but that which preys upon tobacco is produced by the first of the filtrable viruses, which was not only the first to be discovered, in 1857, but is the most infectious of all. It is stubbornly immune to ether, chloroform, acetone, and other similar countermeasures. There is something diabolical about this virus of tobacco mosaic. Its behavior is almost supernatural. It has not yet been ascertained whether it is a living molecule at the bottom of the life scale, or merely a macromolecule of crystallized protein. As though it had a double personality, the virus is as inert as distilled water, as inoffensive as a cherub, until it comes into contact with tobacco. But as soon as it penetrates the plant it becomes as active and malignant as the worst poison, like a mischievous devil in a vestry room. It almost seems as though it were in the essence of the tobacco that the virus finds the evil power by which it mottles the plant, dressing it up like a devil or a harlequin. The instant the tiniest particle of the infernal

virus establishes contact with the protoplasm of tobacco, all its evil powers come to life, it infects every healthy plant, reproduces by the million, and in a few days a whole crop is stricken and destroyed by the virosis. As though the virulence of tobacco were the most deadly, when the Indians had to sleep in places infested by poisonous animals they were in the habit of spreading tobacco around themselves as a defense, for, as Father Cobo says, "it has a great malevolence against poisonous animals and insects" and drives them away as by magic.

Now to the traditional malignity of tobacco another and more cruel is being attributed: the power to cause cancer by means of the tars extracted from it. An Argentine doctor (Dr. Angel H. Roffo) smeared these tars on the skin of rabbits, and cancer resulted "in every case." This did not occur with the tars distilled from Havana tobacco, but even with these half of the cases experimented with developed cancer.

At the same time scientists are still studying the possibility that cancer may be produced by an ultra-virus, that is to say, one of those protein viruses which, although chemical compounds, behave with lifelike activity, multiplying when in contact with certain living organisms, growing and dying like living cells. A scientist (Dr. W. W. Stanley) who achieved fame by isolating certain viruses in the form of crystals, holds the belief that whether those viruses that are invisible even with the microscope are the cause of cancer or not, they hold the secret of those irritations of the tissues, and in them are to be found the governing factors of the vital process in all cells, whether normal or cancerous. The puzzling feature of this horrible disease, which seems to consist in a wild reproduction of living cells out of harmony with hereditary structural rhythms, and the no less puzzling phenomenon of this ultra-virus of tobacco mosaic, which also manifests itself as the unforeseen coming to life of certain molecules that suddenly lose their inertia on coming into contact with tobacco, and reproduce and proliferate madly, carrying the germs of life, add a new mystery to the nature of tobacco. Can it be that there is something in tobacco that is a powerful stimulant of life, that can make cells proliferate in this wild manner and give to inert molecules the vital power of reproductivity, just as its smoke stimulates the weary, guttering spirit so it may flame up anew and live with renewed vigor?

There is always a mysterious, sacral quality about tobacco. Tobacco is for mature people who are responsible to society and to the gods. The first smoke, even when it is behind one's parents' backs, is in the nature of a *rite de passage*, the tribal rite of initiation into the civic responsibilities of manhood, the test of fortitude and control against the bitterness of life, its burning temptations, and the vapors of its dreams. The Jivaro Indians of South America, as a matter of fact, use tobacco in the celebration of *kusupaní*, the ceremony that marks the coming of age of the youths of the tribe. Among certain Indians of America, like the Jivaros, and some of the Negro peoples of Africa, such as the Bantus, the spirit of tobacco is masculine, and only men may cultivate the plant and prepare it for the rites. Sugar, on the other hand, is not a thing for men, but for children in their tender infancy, something mothers give their little ones as soon as they can taste, like a symbolic omen of the sweetness of life. "With sugar or honey, everything tastes good," goes the old saying.

Tobacco was always a thing of consequence. It was the glory of the conquerors of the Indies, then the mariner's companion on his ocean voyages, and the comrade of old soldiers in distant lands, or settlers returning from America, of self-satisfied magnates, rich business men; and it became the seal and emblem of every man who was able to buy himself a pleasure and display it in defiant opposition to the conventionalisms that would put a check-rein upon pleasure.

In the fabrication, the fire and spiraling smoke of a cigar, there was always something revolutionary, a kind of protest against oppression, the consuming flame and a liberating flight into the blue of dreams. For this reason the reciprocal offering of tobacco is a fraternal rite of peace, like the swearing of blood brotherhood among savages or the firing of salvos between battleships. When Europe met America for the first time, the latter offered tobacco in sign of friendship. When Christopher Columbus stepped on American soil for the first time in Guanahaní on October 12, 1492, the Indians of the island greeted him with an offertory rite, a gift of tobacco: "Some dried leaves, which must be a thing highly esteemed among them, for in San Salvador they made me a present of them." To give leaves of tobacco or a cigarette was a gesture of peace and friendship among the Indians of Guanahaní, among the Tainos, and among others of the continent. Just as it is today among the whites of civilized nations. Smoking the same pipe, taking snuff from the same snuffbox, or exchanging cigarettes is a rite of friendship and communion like sharing a bottle of wine or a loaf of bread. It is the same among the Indians of America, the whites of Europe, and the Negroes of Africa.

Tobacco is a masculine thing. Its leaves are hairy, and as though weathered and tanned by the sun; its color is that of the earth. Twisted and enveloped in its wrapper as a cigar, or shredded and smoked in a pipe, it is always a boastful and swaggering thing, like an oath of defiance springing erect from the lips. In days gone by, the country women of Cuba, who shared with their men the joys and tasks of their rustic existence, smoked their home-made cigars, and not a few in the cities preserved these rural customs in their own homes. All through Europe certain highborn and emancipated ladies of the aristocracy smoked in the seductive intimacy of their boudoirs. Even the daughters of the Grand Monarch smoked, although Louis XIV himself abhorred tobacco. The custom spread, but then gradually disappeared until finally only the peasant women of certain countries continued to smoke a pipe. Among the upper classes some ladies went on smoking Havana cigars, but this was an eccentricity that occasioned much comment. In the present age, which has attenuated the social dimorphism between the sexes, women smoke perhaps more than their hardy mates. But even today they limit themselves to cigarettes, the babies of cigars, of embryonic masculinity, all wrapped in rice paper, and with gold tips, and even perfumed, sweetened, and perverted like effeminate youths. The women who smoke cigarettes today remind one of those exquisite abbés of the eighteenth century who mixed their snuff with musk, ambergris, rose vinegar, and other exotic perfumes. They do not smoke real cigars, *puros*, pure in content and in name, as they were invented by the Indians of Cuba, in their pristine simplicity, naked, unadorned, without the adulterations, mixtures, wrappings, perfume, and refinements of a decadent civilization. A cigar is smoked with "the five senses" and with meditation, which comes as sensation is transformed into thought and ideals; but one smokes a cigarette without thinking or reflecting, as a habit one has fallen

into, which among women is a mark of smartness and frivolous coquetry.

If tobacco is male, sugar is female. The leaves of its stalk are always smooth, and even when burned by the sun are still fair. The whole process of sugar-refining is one continual preparation and embellishment to clean the sugar and give it whiteness. Sugar has always been more of a woman's sweetmeat than a man's need. The latter usually looks down upon sweets as a thing below his masculine dignity. But if where tobacco is concerned women invade man's field smoking cigarettes, which are the children of cigars, men return the compliment in their consumption of sugar, not in the form of sweets, syrups, or candy, but as alcohol, which is the offspring of the sugar residues.

There is no rebellion or challenge in sugar, nor resentment, nor brooding suspicion, but humble pleasure, quiet, calm, and soothing. Tobacco is boldly imaginative and individualistic to the point of anarchy. Sugar is on the side of sensible pragmatism and social integration. Tobacco is as daring as blasphemy; sugar as humble as a prayer. Don Juan, the scoffer and seducer, probably smoked tobacco, while the little novitiate Doña Inés must have munched caramels. Faust, that discontented philosopher, probably puffed at a pipe, while the gentle, devout Marguerite nibbled at sugar wafers.

Character analysts would classify sugar as a *pycnik,* tobacco as a leptosomae type. If sugar was the treat that Sancho, the gluttonous peasant, relished, tobacco might well have answered the purpose for Don Quixote, the visionary hidalgo. Sancho was too poor to get his fill of sugar; tobacco was too dear to reach La Mancha in time to delight the impoverished squire. But it is reasonable to believe that the one would have stuffed himself on cakes and the other would have seen visions and fabulous monsters in the puffs of smoke. And if Don Quixote had ever come upon a smoker puffing out smoke, he would have considered this one of his most fantastic adventures, which is what they tell happened in 1493 to one of the early users of tobacco, who as he was smoking in his home at Ayamonte in Cuba was believed to be possessed of a devil and was denounced by the officials of the Holy Inquisition, who refused to tolerate any smoke that was not that of incense or the faggots heaped about the stake.

Psychologists would say that sugar is an extrovert, with an objective, matter-of-fact soul, and that tobacco is an introvert, subjective and imaginative. Nietzsche might have called sugar Dionysian and tobacco Apollonian. The former is the mother of the alcohol that produces the sacred joy and well-being. In tobacco's spirals of smoke there are fallacious beauties and poetic inspirations. Perhaps old Freud wondered whether sugar was narcissiatic and tobacco erotic. If life is an ellipsis with its two foci in stomach and loins, sugar is food and nourishment while tobacco is love and reproduction.

In their origins sugar and tobacco were equally pagan, and still are by reason of their sensual appeal. In both their pagan beginnings go far back, even though they were unknown to the old gods and peoples of the Mediterranean world, who used bread and wine in their orgies, mysteries, and communions. Jehovah promised his people a land flowing with milk and honey, not with tobacco and sugar. The Hebrew knew neither sugar nor tobacco, nor did Jesus and his apostles, or the Christian faithful. These latter learned the taste of sugar from the Arabs during the crusades to Jerusalem, on the Moslem-held islands of Cyprus and Sicily, from the Moors in the gardens of Valencia or on the plains of Granada. The white peoples of the Middle Ages did not know tobacco, but sugar was familiar to them. The archpriest of Hita could gorge himself on sugared delicacies. In the fourteenth century he was writing (*Libro de Buen Amor,* stanza 1,337):

All kinds of sugar with these nuns are plentiful as dirt,
The powdered, lump, and crystallized, and syrups for dessert;
They've perfumed sweetmeats, heaps of candy—some with spice of wort,
With other kinds which I forget and cannot here insert.[1]

But the roguish clergyman knew nothing of tobacco and its delights.

The Christians discovered tobacco when they discovered the Indians of the New World, first in Cuba, then in the other islands of the West Indies, and then in the countries of the Spanish Main. (See Part II, Chapter v.) This was toward the end of the fifteenth century, at the very beginning of the modern era. And was not this moment marked by the discovery of a New World by the white men of Europe?

[1] Translation by E. K. Kane.

It would seem as though tobacco had lived in hiding, exercising its powers in the jungles of an unknown world, until civilization was ready to receive its stimuli with the arrival of the Renaissance and rationalism. (See Part II, Chapter vi.)

Tobacco is "the gracious plant that gives smoke, man's companion," wrote the Cuban José Martí. And with this steady company for every hour, even those of solitude and vigil, those hours of man's mysterious fecundations, he found in it consolation for his spirit, a spur for thought, and a ladder of inspiration. To Martí tobacco's role in history has been "to comfort the thoughtful and delight the musing architects of the air." America surprised Europe with tobacco, that genie who built castles in the air, and the sixteenth century was the century of Utopias, of the cities of dreams.

Tobacco smoke wafted the breath of a new spirit through the Old World, analytic, critical, and rebellious. In the end the smoke of the Indian tobacco proved itself more powerful by arousing the minds of men than that of the Inquisition's pyres hounding them mercilessly.

Tobacco and sugar were children of the Indies; but the latter was born in the East, the former in the West. One's name is of Sanskrit origin; the other still keeps its native savage nomenclature. In the far-off Indies they believe that sugar came to them as a gift of the gods with the dew from heaven, to nourish and sustain the joys of the flesh, and then goes into the earth and is absorbed by it after the body that consumed it has rotted away. In these Indies of ours it was believed that tobacco sprang from the earth through the action of the spirit of the caverns, and that after being burned in the human mouth and dissipated in trances of delight, its volatile essence rises carrying a message to the heavenly powers.

Despite the fact that both plants originated among heathen peoples, sugar was never frowned upon by the Church and was considered veritable ambrosia. But tobacco was regarded as an invention of the devil and was savagely persecuted to the lengths of excommunication and the gallows for its users. The devils are very astute, and to deceive the unsuspecting they often added to tobacco something to give it a sweet taste and an exotic perfume. Vanilla, mustard, anisette, caraway seed, and even molasses were all used to cover up the rascality of tobacco

with the blessed cape of sweetness. Especially tobaccos of inferior quality, whose power of temptation was slight, and which were generally rejected as being unquestionably "infernal" if they were not disguised by some sweet, sugary flavor and given an odor that might be confused with that of sanctity. This was what the devil used to do with inexperienced and reluctant smokers, in the case of twist for pipes, and snuff; today he does it with ladies' cigarettes. Virtuous perfumes, sanctimonious flavors—perversions fomented by greed or inspired by Satan.

In the smoking of a cigar there is a survival of religion and magic as they were practiced by the *behiques,* the medicinemen, of Cuba. The slow fire with which it burns is like an expiatory rite. The smoke that rises heavenward has a spiritual evocation. The smoke, which is more pleasing than incense, is like a fumigatory purification. The fine, dirty ash to which it turns is a funereal suggestion of belated repentance. Smoking tobacco is raising puffs of smoke to the unknown, in search of a passing consolation or a hope which though fleeting beguiles for a moment. For this reason tobacco has been called "the anodyne of poverty" and the enemy of heartache.

Take a little tobacco
And your anger will pass.

These are the words Lope de Vega puts into the mouth of a Spaniard in the third act of *La mayor desgracia de Carlos V.* "When things go bad, try tobacco," says the old proverb, to express the hope-filled calm that settles over a man as the smoke of his cigar curls upward. Tobacco, according to the Cuban poet Federico Milanés, is:

The fragrant leaf that, turned to gentle smoke,
Drives from man's brow the leaden cares away.

For, as George Sand said, "It assuages grief and peoples solitude with a thousand pleasant images."

Even in the manner of lighting a cigar there is a sort of liturgical foretaste of mystery; whether it is by means of a spark struck from flint by steel, or by a phosphorous match whose scratched head bursts into flame. The devil has caused more wax to be employed in the tiny vestas burned in the rites of tobacco than the gods in the votive candles before their shrines. In this

machine age the century-old liturgical traditions are dying out, and automatic lighters are being introduced for the smoker and electric bulbs for the churches. But in both cases the flickering flame of fire that ignites, illuminates, and burns like the spirit still persists. There is no trace of ritual observed in the consumption of sugar.

Sugar is the product of human toil, but it may be consumed by a beast; tobacco is rough and natural, but it has been set apart by Satan for the exclusive use of the being that calls himself the lord of creation, perhaps because he considers himself the last animal fashioned by the Maker and the only one having the right to sin.

There are those who might think that because of these concomitances between the devil and tobacco, the clergy might have been averse to its delights and cultivation, although, naturally, they did not refuse the tithes on the tobacco fields, which were carefully collected by the diligent tithers. There were probably churchmen who owned tobacco plantations; but, to the best of our knowledge, priests in Cuba did not count tobacconists' shops or cigar factories among their worldly goods, though it would be risky to deny the possibility of their having a share in such businesses, especially in these days of anonymous stockholders in great commercial enterprises which make possible easy and inconspicuous investments in the large tobacco companies. If the churchmen did not have plantations it was not because of fear of the devil, nor yet because of a distaste for the worldly attractions of trade or repugnance to owning slaves and treating them after the custom of the country. It is a well-known fact that from the beginning of the sixteenth century the clergy of these islands had numerous slaves for their service and their business undertakings, at times "more Negroes and plantations than the laity," according to a complaint made to the King in 1530 by the lawyers Espinosa and Zuazo. And there is no question that there were clergymen who raised cane, and were even plantation-owners, openly and aboveboard, for the Jesuits had several sugar refineries here, each with its complement of Negro slaves, obedient to the work bell and the crack of the overseer's whip. In any case, the churchmen quickly came to terms with tobacco, and the factories of Havana even made

the finest-quality cigars especially for the clergy, as well as for the royal family. (See Part II, Chapter vii.)

While it was possible for sugar, no matter where it was grown, always to be equally sweet, it was never possible to produce anywhere else in the world tobacco comparable to that of Cuba or a cigar to rival a pure Havana. This explains that folk song of Andalusia referring to tobacco, in the form of a riddle:

In Havana I was born
And in all the world known.

The manufacture of sugar quickly achieved a uniformity of product as a result of the complete similarity of industrial processes. Almost all plants contain sugar, some in abundance, like sugar cane, beets, and many others; they are cultivated in many lands, and different methods are used to extract their juice and, from this, the more or less refined crystals; but in the end there is only one kind of sugar. All saccharoses are the same. Even in the canefield each variety of cane reproduces itself without variation every year, not only because the same root sends up new shoots each year, but through the canes themselves, which come up from their own cuttings if these are rooted down for new plantings. In this reproduction of sugar cane there can be no breeding, genetic crossings, or variations. But no matter what the initial juice-yielding capacity of the cane, the unity of the final product is always the same.

Uniformity has never been possible, and never will be, where tobacco is concerned. The botanical varieties that contain nicotine are few; but even within each variety, and even in tobacco itself, each field, each crop, each plant, and perhaps each leaf has its own unique quality. And since the reproduction of tobacco is by means of seed, which each plant produces in great abundance, it is not to be wondered at that each crop contains many variations, the result of infinite crossbreedings and mixtures, of the carefully studied selections of the planter and the strange mutations and chromosomic caprices of nature. One of the greatest and most difficult problems of tobacco-planters and manufacturers is to maintain an unchanging standard in the quality of their product, which has an established reputation.

The infinite and constant variety, natural or induced, is the secret of the success or failure of the tobacco industry, depending on the taste of the smoker. The planter and miller of sugar cane has no such problem, for he knows that, in the last analysis, all saccharose is the same, an amorphus mass, of similar granulation, without class or distinction.

The taste, the color, and the aroma of a cigar depend not only on its being of real tobacco, but on its being a Havana (which is the best in the world); on the region where it was grown (Vueltabajo, Semivuelta, Vueltarriba, Partidos, etc., if it is Cuban; or from Virginia, Java, Sumatra, Turkey, Egypt . . . or the devil's little acre); on its year, on the fertilizer that was used on the fields, on the weather conditions, on its fermentation, stripping, selection, stacking, leaf, wrapper, filler, blend, rolling, moisture, shape, packing, ocean shipping, the way it is lighted, the way it is smoked; in a word, each and every one of the steps in its life, from the plant that produces the leaf to the smoker who transforms it into smoke and ashes. For this reason the tobacco industry employs *escogedores* and *rezagadores,* who by touch, sight, smell, and taste can distinguish and select the leaves and tobacco, just as wine-tasters do with the fermented juice of the vine. For each product of the tobacco industry a constant selection of the tobacco used is necessary. From the time tobacco is set out in the field until it goes up in smoke an innumerable series of selections and eliminations are required. In the color field alone the nomenclature of smoking tobacco in Cuba is as finely shaded as that employed by anthropologists to describe the human race. The color of the different types of cigar, like that of women, cannot be simply reduced to blondes and brunettes. Just as a Cuban distinguishes among women every shade from jet-black to golden white, with a long intervening series of intermediary and mixed pigmentations, and classifies them according to color, attractiveness, and social position, so he knows the different types of tobacco: *claros, colorado-claros, colorados, colorado-maduros, maduros, ligeros, secos, medios-tiempos, finos, amarillos, manchados, quebrados, sentidos, broncos, puntillas,* and many others down to *botes y colas,* these last "from the wrong side of the railroad track," used only in the proletarian mass of cut tobacco. There are selectors who can distinguish seventy or eighty different shades of tobacco,

with the technical exactitude of the most painstaking anthropologist. It is not to be wondered at that there are "tobaccologists" as bold and self-seeking as certain proponents of racial theories today who, for the sake of defending the tobacco interests of their own countries, have created varieties, blends, names, and brands as absurd and artificial as the imaginary races invented by the race theorists of the present. And the races of tobacco, as well as its mixtures and adulterations, are so on the increase at present that outside of Cuba there are hybrid cigars, of unconfessable ancestry, some not even of tobacco; and the Havana cigar of good family has always to be on the alert for innumerable and hateful bastards who would usurp the legitimacy of his good name.

As the taste of all refined sugars is the same, they always have to be taken with something that will give them flavor. No one, except a child with a sweet tooth, would think of eating sugar by itself. When people are starving, they will take it dissolved in water: the Cuban revolutionists, the *mambises,* drank *canchánchara* sometimes in the everglades, and the slaves drank cane juice as it ran from the press, just as today poor Cubans buy a glass of cane juice for a penny to fill their bellies and quiet their hunger. When one chews pieces of peeled cane and sucks out the juice, there is a mixture of flavors in it, and the same is true of cane syrup and raw sugar. From the time the Arabs with their alchemy brought *"alçucar,"* as it was still called in the royal decrees having to do with America, into our Western civilization, it has been used in syrups, frosting, icings, cakes, candy, always with other flavors added to it.

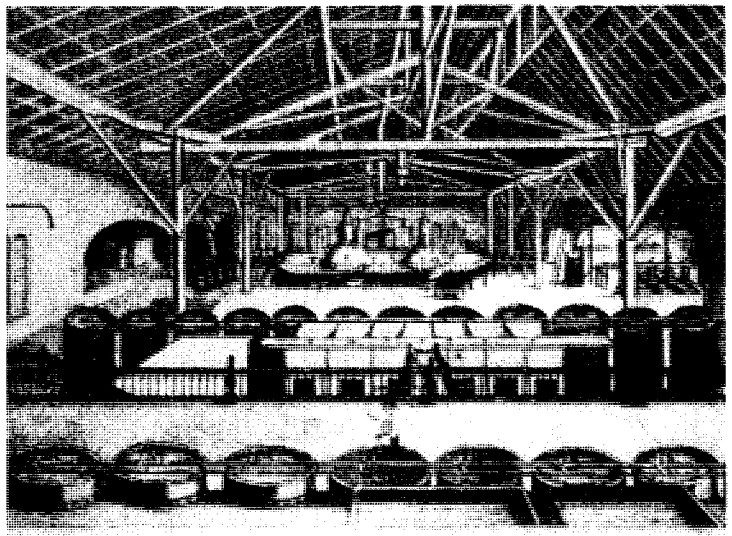
Tobacco is proud; it is taken straight, for its own sake, without company or disguise. Its ambition is to be pure, or to be so considered. Sugar by itself surfeits and cloys, and for this reason it needs company and uses a disguise or a chaperon. It must have some other substance to lend it a seductive flavor. And it, in turn, repays the favor by covering up the flatness, insipidness, or bitterness of other ingredients with its own sweetness. A miscegenation of flavors.

This basic contrast between sugar and tobacco is emphasized even more throughout the whole process of their agricultural, industrial, and commercial development by the amorphism of the one and the polymorphism of the other.

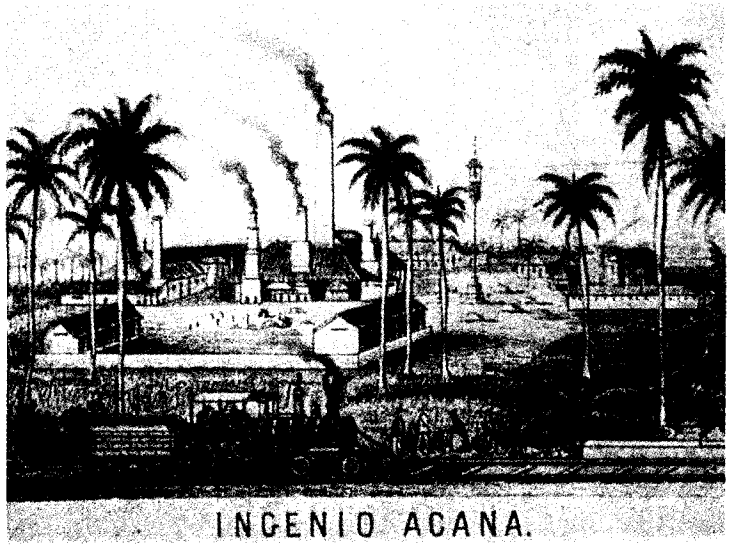
Sugar is common, unpretentious, undifferentiated. Tobacco is always distinguished, all class, form, and dignity. Sugar is always a formless mass whether as cane, juice, or syrup, and then as sugar, whether in loaf, lump, grain, or powder, the same in the sack as in the sugar-bowl, or when it is absorbed in syrup, compote, preserves, candy, ice cream, cake, or other forms of pastry. Tobacco may be good or bad, but it always strives for individuality.

Sometimes, even when an attempt is made to bring about a similarity and even a confusion between different types, the indomitable individualism of tobacco thwarts the effort and turns the tables on the designing manufacturers. When during the past century cigars were manufactured in Seville with Virginia filler and Havana wrapper for the Spanish market, to the detriment of the Cuban product, the critical smokers could detect at a glance the difference between the two by the fact that the wrapper of the Havana cigars was rolled from right to left, and that of the Peninsular article from left to right. It almost amounted to saying that the Cubans were leftists, and the inhabitants of Seville rightists. Perhaps the distinction still holds good.

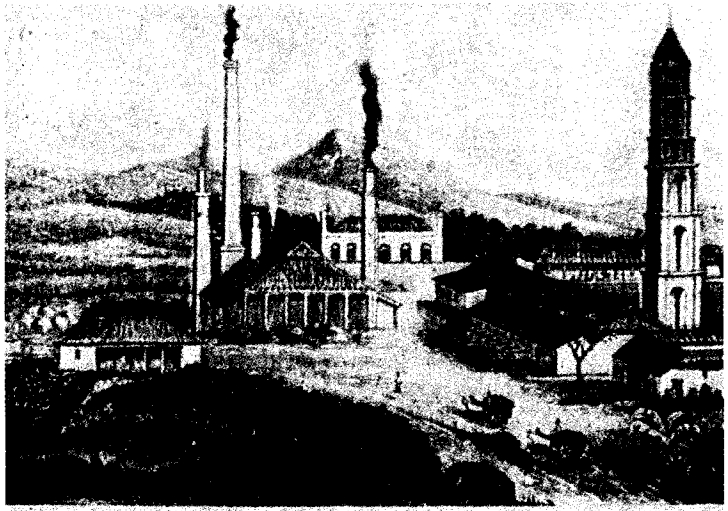
The best smoker looks for the best cigar, the best cigar for the best wrapper, the best wrapper for the best leaf, the best leaf for the best cultivation, the best cultivation for the best seed, the best seed for the best field. This is why tobacco-raising is such a meticulous affair, in contrast to cane, which demands little attention. The tobacco-grower has to tend his tobacco not by fields, not even by plants, but leaf by leaf. The good cultivation of good tobacco does not consist in having the plant give more leaves, but the best possible. In tobacco quality is the goal; in sugar, quantity. The ideal of the tobacco man, grower or manufacturer, is distinction, for his product to be in a class by itself, *the best.* For both sugar-grower and refiner the aim is *the most;* the most cane, the most juice, the most bagasse, the most evaporating-pans, the most centrifugals, the highest crystallization, the most sacks, and the most indifference as to quality for the sake of coming as close as possible in the refineries to a symbolic hundred per cent chemical purity where all difference of class and origin is obliterated, and where the mother beet and the mother cane are forgotten in the equal whiteness of their off-



BOILING-ROOM OF THE ARMONIA SUGAR MILL



ACANA SUGAR MILL



MANACA SUGAR MILL

BUENA VISTA SUGAR MILL

spring because of the equal chemical and economic standing of all the sugars of the world, which, if they are pure, sweeten, nourish, and are worth the same.

The consumer of sugar neither knows nor asks where the product he uses comes from; he neither selects it nor tries it out. The smoker seeks one specific tobacco, this one or the other. The person with a sweet tooth just asks for sugar, without article, pronoun, or adjective to give it a local habitation and a name. When, in the process of refining, sugar has achieved a high degree of saccharose and of chemical purity it is impossible to distinguish one from the other even in the best-equipped laboratory. All sugars are alike; all tobaccos are different.

Sugar is, strictly speaking, a single product. To be sure, cane always yielded, in addition to crystallized saccharose, alcohol, brandy, or rum. But this was a by-product and not sugar, just as the nicotine extracted from tobacco is not tobacco. All through the Antilles alcohol was distilled from molasses, and liquors were made from it: rum in Cuba, eau-de-vie in the French West Indies, rum in Jamaica, bitters in Trinidad, curaçao, and so on. Alcohol was always the cargo for the slaver's return trip, for with it slaves were bought, local chieftains bribed, and the African tribes corrupted and weakened. Out of this strongly flavored, caramel-colored alcohol manufactured in the West Indies for the slave-runners, mixed with the sugar with which they were provisioned along with jerked beef, codfish, and other foods designed to withstand the long crossings, and the lemons that the sailing ships always carried to ward off epidemics of scurvy, a mixed drink indigenous to the slave-trading boats came into being. It is known today as a Daiquirí, its name coming from the place where the United States soldiers first made its acquaintance. But rum was never a prime factor in the social economy of Cuba any more than were the heartwoods, hides, shellfish, and other secondary products. It is also true that the sugar-refiners in olden times manufactured different kinds of sugar, such as muscovado, loaf sugar, brown sugar, white sugar, and so forth. But these sugars were all the same product of the cane, refined to varying degrees, within the same mill, varying only in crystallization or purity.

Tobacco, on the other hand, from its first appearance in history as an article of trade, came in different forms, which were

prepared in different ways. In the industrial field, tobacco has yielded six typical products. The first was that which we Cubans call tobacco by antonomasia and by adhering strictly to history, for this was the name given it by the Cuban Indians. Tobacco, strictly speaking, consists, as in the days of the Indians, of a variable number of dried tobacco leaves, called *tripa,* rolled up and enveloped in another leaf called *capa,* all forming a cylindrical roll about half an inch thick and four to eight inches long, pointed at both ends. It was in this form that the Spaniards first made the acquaintance of tobacco, and they gave it the popular name *cigarro.*

In addition to tobacco, or cigar, there were and are other products of the same plant: namely, *andullo,* or plug tobacco; twist, for chewing or pipe smoking; *picadura,* or fine-cut tobacco to be smoked in a pipe or rolled in husk or paper; *cigarrillos,* which are not little cigars or *tabaquitos,* but leaf or cut tobacco rolled in paper; and snuff, or powdered tobacco. These products of the tobacco industry do not represent successive phases in the same process of manufacture. They are all different products, and in their fabrication the tobacco from the start is handled differently, depending on the article desired. Tobacco is also exported in bulk to be made up abroad, to the detriment of Cuba's commercial standing. In this case tobacco occupies the status of a semi-raw material, like the raw sugar that is bought up by foreign refiners for the benefit of the country where it is processed rather than Cuba. These last years have seen the development of a new industrial tobacco product, the stripped leaf, in the preparation of which cheap Cuban labor is employed, and which is then exported and sold to foreign factories, which save the difference in the salaries they would have to pay and then, as though they were tobacco refineries, utilize this high-grade Cuban product, depriving our country of the profits of its final elaboration.

In any case the cultivation, processing, and manufacture of tobacco is all care, selection, attention to detail, emphasis on variety; this extends from the different botanical varieties to the innumerable commercial forms to satisfy the individual taste of the consumer. In the production of sugar the emphasis is on indifference to selection, lumping all the cane together, milling, grinding, mixing with an eye to uniformity. It passes from the

botanical mass to the chemical product with the sole aim of satisfying the largest and most general tastes of the human palate.

The consumption of tobacco—that is to say, smoking—is a personal, individualized act. The consumption of sugar has no specific name; it is the humdrum satisfaction of an appetite. For this reason there is a word for smoker; there is no such word as "sugarer."

The cultivation of tobacco demands the most delicate attention at every stage; it cannot be allowed, as can sugar cane, to follow its own natural impulses. "The planter who babies his tobacco most is the one who gets the best crop," a grower said to the naturalist Miguel Rodríguez Ferrer. And Martí extolled the unflagging devotion of the tobacco-grower who spends his time caring for each tobacco plant "with his protecting hands, against the excessive heat of the sun, the treacherous cricket, the rough pruner, the rotting dampness." It is as though tobacco demanded the solicitous, pampering care of its cultivator, while cane grows by itself, as it pleases, allowing its raiser months of idleness. Who taught the tobacco-growers of Cuba these painstaking operations? Could it have been the Indian *behiques,* who gradually discovered the mysteries of the plant's cultivation, its medicinal powers, and its charms? Tobacco is one of the most difficult crops in the world to cultivate, and its technique is the most highly developed in the whole field of Cuba's agriculture. The grower has always made it his business to improve the plant with an eye to greater returns in quality, pleasure, and profit.

Tobacco is planted every year. The same cane root will produce several harvests; if the land is new and rich, as many as fifteen. Humboldt said in 1804 that there were fields on a plantation in Matanzas that were still producing forty-five years after they were set out.

The planting of tobacco is a complicated operation; the carefully selected seeds are first sown in a seed-bed, and when the young plants are ready, they are transplanted to the field where they are to be raised and cut. Cane is not planted from seed, but from cuttings of the stalk. For this reason the selection of Cuban tobacco has been an uninterrupted process, facilitated by the great quantity of seed yielded by each plant, and practiced each

smoker smokes two cigarettes at the same time. Even when made up in the big factories, tobacco is put out for the exclusive use of each smoker; in the singular, by portion and form, thinking of the potential consumer. Not so sugar, which is packed and consumed in bulk. And even though now certain refined sugar is made up in cubes, equivalent to the lumps into which the old sugarloaves used to be broken, these are not individual portions, but rather small doses of granulated sugar, like spoonfuls without a spoon, of which the consumer uses one or several, without selection, according to his needs.

Sugar comes into the world without a last name, like a slave. It may take on that of its owner, of the plantation or mill, but in its economic life it never departs from its typical equalitarian lack of caste. Nor does it have a first name, either in the field, where it is merely cane, or in the grinding mill, where it is just juice, or in the evaporating-pan, where it is only syrup. And when in the dizzying whirl of the turbines it begins to be sugar and receives this name, that is as far as it goes. It is like calling it woman, but just woman, without family name, baptismal name, name of hate or of love. Sugar dies as it is born and lives, anonymously; as though it were ashamed of having no name, thrown into a liquid or a dough where it melts and disappears as if predestined to suicide in the waters of a lake or in the maelstrom of society.

From birth tobacco was, and was called, tobacco. This was the name the Spaniards gave it, using the Indian word; so it is called in the world today, and so it will be known always. It is tobacco in the plant, in the leaf, while it is being manufactured, and when it is going up in smoke and ashes. Moreover, tobacco always had a family name, that of its place of origin, which is the vega; that of its epoch, which is the harvest; that of its school, which is the selection; that of its gang, which is the tercio; that of its regiment, which is the factory; that of its distinguished service, which is its commercial label. And it has its citizenship, which, if it is Cuban, it proudly proclaims.

There was a time when tobacco was largely sold in packages of fine-cut. Then a tobacco pouch full of cut tobacco was like a sugar-bowl full of sugar, from which the consumer took what he wanted. But this has fallen almost completely into disuse,

and the smoker prefers his cut tobacco served up to him in individual, specially prepared portions—like sugar in lump—known as cigarettes. Snuff too was kept in bulk, like sugar, in special little receptacles, but this Indian custom has gone out of fashion never to return.

Tobacco is born a gentleman, and in its economic development at each step it acquires titles and honors by reason of its color, its aroma, its taste, its powers of combustion, until it achieves the aristocratic distinction of shape, *"vitola,"*[1] brand, and band. All tobacco strives for elegance of form and figure, blue-blooded lineage, nobility of manners, and pride of birth. And if it is Havana tobacco, it can display crowns, scepters, the emblems of royalty, and even an emperor's title.

Tobacco proudly wears until the moment of its death the band of its brand; only in the sacrificial fire does it burn its individuality and convert it to ashes as it ascends to glory. There

[1] The *vitola* is the figure of the cigar. It is not merely, as the Academy defines it, "the measure of size by which cigars are differentiated." It is not so much an expression of size as of shape.

Originally this word, taken from sailors' lingo, like so many others in the Spanish language of America, meant the model used in shipyards for measuring the different parts required in ship construction by naval architecture. It also meant the templet to calibrate bullets in a munitions plant; but the *vitola* of a cigar is more than all this. It is form, figure, mold, but it is more than just a geometrical arrangement. The *vitola* includes a social attitude. It is the form of the cigar, but in making his selection the smoker looks for the one that goes with his own make-up. It is the shape of the cigar, it is also its advertisement, and becomes that of the person who is smoking it, like a gesture or extension of his personality. There is always something a bit presumptuous about a cigar. The *vitola* of the cigar is its calibrating gauge, but in the smoker it becomes a mark of positive individuality, a manner that is in itself a measure.

The *vitola* of the cigar is an outward manifestation of the *vitola* of the smoker. *Vitola* figuratively is transformed from a matter of shape and size measured in inches to a matter having human connotations; one speaks of *vitola* referring to the gesture, aspect, or appearance of a person. "Tell me what *vitola* you smoke and I will tell you who you are." In the impressive *vitola* of the Havana cigar smoked ostentatiously by Winston Churchill, who has known Havana this many a long year, there is a gesture of empire. If the cigar always demands its *vitola,* which is its appearance, every smoker, even the humblest, takes on a certain air of importance as he smokes a cigar.

And what a variety of them there are! In the collection of *vitolas* of a factory in Havana, which are reproduced in carved wooden models, there are over 996 different types of cigar. What a field for the psychologist attempting to translate them into corresponding traits of human character!

are smokers who smoke their fine cigar to the end without removing the band, which bears witness to the quality of its brand, just as the critical drinker derives greater pleasure from an aged wine if it comes from an old, unopened bottle, coquettishly covered with dust and bearing a gold label indicating the unquestionable aristocracy of its vintage and its origin.

In its desire for individuality, tobacco adorns itself, sometimes with a band bearing the portrait of the consumer for whom it is intended—Napoleon III, Lord Byron, Bismarck, the Prince of Wales, or some fashionable personage or fop who satisfies his desire for smoking and adulation at the same time. The latter aspiration is far the more subtly poisonous and produces more harmful effects.

Tobacco is a seeker after art; sugar avoids it. In Havana the trade in boxed cigars has created a tradition of art in its designs, colors, and embossing that is recognized the world over because of its anachronisms, its style, its pompousness, and its inspiration in folkways. In Cuba boys make collections of cigar bands and boxes just as they do of stamps, postcards, and pictures of celebrities. Here even the makers of matches to light the cigars have sought artistic effects in the adorning of their matchboxes.

At times, to heighten its inborn rank with outward signs of pomp and circumstance, tobacco employs for its setting the beautiful native woods of Cuba and has itself packed in luxury boxes, like a majestic ceremonial carriage, to make a more fitting entrance into the palaces of royalty or of the pleasure-loving aristocracy. And even that tobacco made into shapeless twist or shredded into fine-cut, often seeks the graceful pipe adorned with paintings or set with medallions carved of amber, ebony, and ivory, or molded from the finest clay or porcelain. Even high-quality cigars are often smoked with great show, set in a mouthpiece or a pipe. Not here in Cuba, where this fashion would seem a profanation of the most typical and authocthonus custom left to us, but in European countries when such baroque display was tolerated and the smoking of a Havana cigar was a mark of prosperity, like those canes of tortoise shell with heads and ferrules of embossed gold.

This was not tobacco's only act of display. When, over a century ago, it was the fashion to take pinches of snuff, sniffing it up the nostrils, tobacco had to have recourse to art to atone for

what was undeniably a revolting habit. Snuff-taking was considered a vice, disgusting but fashionable, brought in from foreign parts, like an exotic drug of rare virtues and even with claims to elegance and distinction.

The taking of powdered tobacco was for the çourtiers, high-born gentlemen, and clergy of olden times in Europe a habit of great social distinction, like having little black slaves, monkeys, parrots, and macaws around them. The dandies adorned their snuffboxes with miniatures, cameos, and precious stones, turning them into exquisite jewels, to match the lace handkerchiefs with which they wiped away the sticky traces of that revolting vice. The English statesman Petersham had a different snuffbox for every day of the year. Following the same criterion of aristocracy as the courtiers of the Grand Monarch, the Bantu Negroes of South Africa decorate their tiny snuffboxes that hold only enough for one time by covering them with beads of many colors, a labor of infinite patience. The showcases in the museums of art and customs now display the luxurious snuffboxes of the grandees of Europe and of Africa as the sacramental vessels of this diabolical cult. The same thing happens, too, with the collection of pipes, cigar-holders, cigar cases, tobacco pouches, cigarette tongs, matchboxes, lighters, ash-trays, and other smoking accessories from all the nations of the world. We can recall those old goblets or hand braziers of bronze, copper, or brass, and in America often of silver, that our grandfathers had on their tables and in which, half covered by ash, a few live coals smoldered at which they lighted their cigars.

Tobacco displays its presumptuous individualism not only in its trappings but in the art and luxury with which it enriches them to emphasize its distinction. Sugar seeks no art, either in its presentation or in its consumption. Yesterday it used to be packed into rough hogsheads or wooden boxes without style or character; today it travels about the world in sackcloth, like a hermit's robe. No designs, no colors aside from the simplicity of shape and color of bonbons and caramels. Sugar takes on the form of its container: hogshead, box, sack, or sugar-bowl. With tobacco, on the contrary, it is the holder that adapts itself more and more to its contents, at times to the point of being designed to hold a single cigar. There are boxes made to hold only one cigar, like coffins, which house a single corpse, and tinfoil wrap-

pings for each cigar, which are like the armor of a knight of old. Or those very modern cellophane boxes in which each cigar displays its own particular shape and color and at the same time conceals its shortcomings of quality and workmanship, like a dancer whose gauzy veils reveal her voluptuous curves and luscious cinnamon skin, yet at the same time conceal her less pleasing features.

Sugar is to be found in the cradle, in the kitchen, and on the table; tobacco in the drawing-room, the bedroom, and the study. With tobacco one works and dreams; sugar is repose and satisfaction. Sugar is the capable matron, tobacco the dreaming youth. Sugar is an investment, tobacco an amusement; sugar enters the body as nourishment, tobacco enters the spirit as a cathartic. The former contributes to the good and the useful; the latter seeks beauty and personality.

Tobacco is a magic gift of the savage world; sugar is a scientific gift of civilization.

Tobacco was taken to the rest of the world from America; sugar was brought to America. Tobacco is a native plant, which the Europeans who came with Columbus discovered, in Cuba, to be exact, at the beginning of November of the year 1492. Sugar cane is a foreign plant of remote origin that was brought to Europe from the Orient, thence to the Canary Islands, and it was from there that Columbus brought it to the Antilles in 1493. The discovery of tobacco in Cuba was a surprise, but the introduction of sugar was planned.

It has been said, though I do not know on what authority the statement is based, that when Columbus returned from his second voyage he took tobacco seed with him to Andalusia, as did the Catalonian friar Ramón Pané later, and planted it, but without success. It would seem that it was Dr. Francisco Hernández de Toledo who gave a scientific account of tobacco half a century later in a report to King Philip II, who had sent him to Mexico to study the flora of that country. The cultivation of tobacco was spread less through a desire for gain than through the spontaneous and subversive propaganda of temptation. Tobacco was the delight of the people before it became that of the upper classes. Its appeal was natural and traditional rather than studied and commercial. It was the sailors who spread its use

through the ports of Europe in the forms in which they used it aboard ship, either for chewing or for pipe smoking. The courtiers of Europe made its acquaintance later through travelers returning from America.

Centuries and even millenniums went by before sugar left Asiatic India, passing into Arabia and Egypt, then traveling along the islands and shoreline of the Mediterranean to the Atlantic Ocean and the Indies of America. A few decades after a handful of adventurers discovered it in Cuba, tobacco had already been carried not only through America, where the Indians used it before the arrival of the Spaniards, but through Europe, Africa, and Asia, to the distant confines of Muscovy, the heart of darkest Africa, and Japan. In 1605 the Sultan Murad had to place severe penalties on the cultivation of tobacco in Turkey, and the Japanese Emperor ordered the acreage that had been given over to its cultivation reduced. Even today many nations still lack sugar, but hardly any lack tobacco or some substitute for it, however unworthy. Tobacco is today the most universal plant, more so than either corn or wheat. Today the world lives and dreams in a haze of blue smoke spirals that evoke the old Cuban gods. In the spread of this habit of smoking the island of Cuba has played a large part, not only because tobacco and its rites were native to it, but because of the incomparable excellence of its product, which is universally recognized by all discerning smokers, and because Havana happened to be the port of the West Indies most frequented by sailors in bygone days. Even today to speak of a Havana cigar is to refer to the best cigar in the world. And that is why, as a general thing, in lands remote from the Antilles the geographical name of Havana is better known than that of Cuba.

The economy of sugar was from the start capitalistic in contrast to that of tobacco. From the earliest days of the economic exploitation of these West Indies this was perfectly evident to Columbus and his successors who settled the islands. Aside from the fertility of the land and the favorable climate, the efficient production of sugar always required large acreage for plantations, pastures, timberland, and reserves of land—in a word, extensions that verged upon the latifundium. As the historian Oviedo said, "an ample supply of water" and accessible "forests for the hot and continuous fires" and, in addition, "a

large and well-constructed building for making the sugar and another in which to store it." And, besides, a great number of "wagons for hauling the cane to the mill and to fetch wood, and an uninterrupted supply of workers to wash the sugarloaves and tend and water the cane." Even all this was not enough, for there was the investment in the required number of those automotive machines known as slaves, on which Oviedo commented: "At least from eighty to one hundred Negroes must be on hand all the time, or even a hundred and twenty and more to keep things running smoothly," and, besides, other people, "overseers and skilled workmen to make the sugar." And to feed all this crew still another and larger investment. According to Oviedo, "a good herd of cattle, from one thousand to three thousand head, close by the mill to feed the workers" was necessary. For this reason he concludes logically enough that "the man who owns a plantation free from mortgage and well equipped has a property of great value." Sugar is not made from patches of cane but from plantations of it; cane is not cultivated by the plant but in mass. The industry was not developed for private or domestic consumption, nor even for that of the locality, but for large-scale production and foreign exportation. (See Part II, Chapter viii.)

Tobacco is born complete. It is nature's gift to man, and his work with tobacco is merely that of selection. Sugar does not spring full-fledged; it is a gift man makes to himself through the creative effort of his labor. Sugar is the fruit of man's ingenuity and the mill's engines. Ingenuity where sugar is concerned consists in the human and mechanical power of creation. In the case of tobacco it is rather in the personal selection of that which has been naturally created.

Of the tobacco leaves, the invention and gift of nature, the knowing countryman selects the best, and, with the simple effort of his hands to roll them into shape, he can smoke the best cigar that can be made. Just with the hands, without tools, machinery, or capital, one can enjoy the finest tobacco in the world; but one cannot get sugar that way, not even the poorest grade.

There can be no manufacture of sugar without machinery, without milling apparatus to grind the cane and get out its sweet juice, from which saccharose is obtained. The mill may

be an Indian *cunyaya*—a pump-handle device resting against the branch of a tree, which as it moves up and down presses the cane against the trunk—or a simple two-cylinder roller moved by animal or human power, or a titanic system of mills, wheels, cogs, pumps, evaporating-pans, boilers, and ovens, powered by water, steam, or electricity; but it is always a machine, fundamentally a lever that squeezes. Sugar is made by man and power. Tobacco is the voluntary offering of nature.

It is possible for the *guajiro* living on his small farm to make a little sugar squeezing the juice out of the cane by the pressure of the *cunyaya,* that simple device with its single lever which the Indians used, simpler even than the *cibucán* with which they pressed the yucca. Probably it was with the Indian *cunyaya* that the first juice was squeezed out in America, from the cane planted in Hispaniola by Christopher Columbus. But it was impossible to develop production on a commercial scale with so rudimentary an instrument. The first settlers in Hispaniola devised and set up grinding mills operated by water or horse power.

To be sure, these mills which were known in Europe before the discovery of America were all of wood, including the rollers. The maximum of juice that could be extracted from the cane was thirty-five per cent, and the sugar yield was only six per cent. But in the manufacture of sugar the grinder was always as essential as the evaporating-dishes and the other vessels for the filtration of the settlings and the clarification of the syrup.

For centuries sugar was manufactured in these *cachimbos.* (See Part II, Chapter ix.) In the year 1827 Cuba had over one thousand centrals. The limited capacity of the mills was the cause of the small scale of their operations. At this time the average size of the numerous plantations in Matanzas, for example, was only about 167 acres of cane, and some 750 in wood and pasture land. For a good central 1,000 acres was enough.

In 1820 the steam engine was introduced into Cuba and marked the beginning of an industrial revolution. The steam engine changed everything on the central. The process of the penetration of the steam engine into the sugar industry was slow; half a century went by from the time it was first employed in the grinding mill in 1820 until 1878, when it was ap-

plied to the last step of the process—that is, in the separation centrifugals. By the end of the nineteenth century everything about the central was mechanical, nothing was done by hand. Everything about the organism was new. The framework continued the same, but the organs, the joints, the viscera had been adapted to new functions and new dimensions. For as a result of the introduction of steam not only was completely new machinery installed, but everything grew in size. The increased potential of energy called for enlarged grinding capacity of the mills, and this, in turn, made it necessary for all the other apparatus in the sugar-milling process to expand. But only in the last third of the nineteenth century did the Cuban sugar central begin that intense growth which has brought it to its present-day dimensions.

The Cuban sugar mill, despite the complete transformation of its machinery brought about by the steam engine, grew slowly in productive capacity, both in machinery and in acreage. As late as 1880 the size of the centrals was not extremely large. At that time the centrals of Matanzas Province, for example, averaged some 1,650 acres all together, of which only about 770 were planted to cane. This delay in the growth in size of the centrals, despite the possibilities afforded by the introduction of steam-powered machinery, was not due so much to the revolutions and wars that harassed the colony and laid much of its land waste for years as to the economic difficulties that impeded the development of transportation by steam—that is, the railroads. Railways were first introduced into Cuba in the year 1837, before Spain had them, by a company of wealthy Creoles. But it was after the ten-year revolution that steel rails were invented and that they became cheap enough so they could be used on a large scale on the centrals, not only on lines from the mill yard to the canefields, but to link up the mills and the cane-growing zones with each other and with the ports where sugar was stored and shipped. From this time on, the railway lines reached out steadily toward the sugar cane and wrapped themselves about it like the tentacles of a great iron spider. The centrals began to grow in size, giving way to the great latifundium. By 1890 there was a central in Cuba, the Constancia, that produced a yield as high as 135,000 sacks of sugar, at that time the largest in the world.

The machine won a complete victory in the sugar-manufacturing process. Hand labor has almost completely disappeared. The mechanization has been so thorough that it has brought about a transformation in the industrial, territorial, judicial, political, and social structure of the sugar economy of Cuba through an interlinked chain of phenomena which have not been fully appreciated by Cuban sociologists.

In the twentieth century the sugar production of Cuba reached the peak of its historical process of industrialization, even though it has not yet passed through all the phases necessary for its perfect evolutionary integration. Mechanization, which reached Cuba in the nineteenth century with the steam engine, began to triumph in that century and created the central; but it is in this twentieth century that the machine has given rise to the typical present-day organization, the *supercentral*. This type of mill has been the logical outgrowth of mechanization, and from it have streamed a whole series of derivations that because of their complicated interlocking structure and the relation of cause and effect have not been clearly understood or properly analyzed. It is sufficient to point out here that the principal characteristics typical of the Cuban sugar industry today, and the same holds true in a greater or lesser degree of the other islands of the Antilles, and happens to a certain extent in other similar industries, are the following: mechanization, latifundism, sharecropping, wage-fixing, supercapitalism, absentee landlordism, foreign ownership, corporate control, and imperialism.

Mechanization is the factor that has made possible and necessary the increased size of the centrals. Prior to this the central's radius of activity was the distance suitable for animal-drawn haulage. Now, with railroads, the limits of extension of a central are measured by the cost of transportation. It is a known fact that cane cut in Santo Domingo is milled in Puerto Rico and transported to the mill in ships. The mill and the railroad have developed simultaneously and their growth has made necessary planting on a larger scale, which explains the need for vast areas for cane plantations. This phenomenon also gave rise to the occupation of virgin lands in the provinces of Camagüey and Oriente and the consequent shifting of the agricultural center of Cuba. These Cyclopean machines and those

great tentacles of railways that have turned the centrals into monstrous iron octopuses have created the demand for more and more land to feed the insatiable voracity of the mills with canefields, pasture land, and woodland.

On the heels of the mechanization came the great latifundism—that is, the use of a great extension of land by a single private owner. Latifundism was the economic basis of feudalism, and it has often reproduced this state. The struggle of the modern age has always been, particularly since the eighteenth century, to give man freedom and sever him from his bondage to the land, and for the freedom of the land, liberating it from the monopolistic tyranny of man. Today this process is on the way to being repeated in the Antilles, and one day we shall see agrarian laws enacted to disentail the lands held in the grasp of mortmain. The agrarian latifundism today is a fatal consequence of the present universal system of the concentration of capital. Every day industry needs more and more means of production, and the land is the most important of them all.

The central is now more than a mere plantation; there are no longer any real planters in Cuba. The modern central is not a simple agricultural enterprise, nor even a factory whose production is based on the raw materials at hand. Today it is a complicated "system of land, machinery, transportation, technicians, workers, capital, and people to produce sugar." It is a complete social organism, as live and complex as a city or municipality, or a baronial keep with its surrounding fief of vassals, tenants, and serfs. The latifundium is only the territorial base, the visible expression of this. The central is vertebrated by an economic and legal structure that combines masses of land, masses of machinery, masses of men, and masses of money, all in proportion to the integral scope of the huge organism for sugar production.

Today the sugar latifundium is so constituted that it is not necessary for the tracts of land or farms that constitute it to be contiguous. It is generally made up of a nuclear center around the mill yard, a sort of town, and of outlying lands, adjacent or distant, linked by railroads and under the same general control, all forming a complete empire with subject colonies covered with canefields and forests, with houses and villages. And all this huge feudal territory is practically outside the jurisdiction

of public law; the norms of private property hold sway there. The owner's power is as complete over this immense estate as though it were just a small plantation or farm. Everything there is private—ownership, industry, mill, houses, stores, police, railroad, port. Until the year 1886 the workers, too, were chattels like other property.

The sugar latifundium was the cause of important agro-social developments, such as the monopolizing of land that is not cultivated but lies fallow; the scarcity of garden produce or fruits that would complement the basic crop, which is sugar—the reason for the latifundium's existence—because the effort required for this can be turned to more profitable use from the economic standpoint; the depreciation in value of land that it does not need within the zone monopolized by the central, and so on.

Within the territorial scope of the central, economic liberty suffers serious restrictions. There is not a small holding of land nor a dwelling that does not belong to the owner of the central, nor a fruit orchard or vegetable patch or store or shop that does not form part of the owner's domain. The small Cuban landowner, independent and prosperous, the backbone of a strong rural middle class, is gradually disappearing. The farmer is becoming a member of the proletariat, just another laborer, without roots in the soil, shifted from one district to another. The whole life of the central is permeated by this provisional quality of dependence, which is a characteristic of colonial populations whose members have lost their stake in their country.

The economic organization of the latifundium in Cuba has been blamed for consequences that are not properly attributable to it, such as the importation of cheap labor, especially colored. First Negro slaves were brought into the country, then laborers from Haiti and Jamaica. But this immigration, which lowers the wage level of the whole Cuban proletariat and the living standard of Cuban society and upsets its racial balance, thus retarding the fusion of its component elements into a national whole, is not the result of the latifundium system. The use of colored slaves or laborers has never been nor is it a social phenomenon due to latifundism or to the monopolizing of the land. Both these economic developments are essentially identical: with the concentration of the ownership of land comes the

concentration of laborers, and both depend directly upon the concentration of capital resulting from industry, especially when the process of mechanization demands more land for the plantations upon whose crop it depends, more labor to harvest it, and, in an endless progression, more machines and more and more money. The land and the laborer, like the machine itself, are only means of production, which, as a rule, are simultaneously augmented, but often the increment of one is followed by that of the others. When there was an abundance of land and before the machines had reached their full development, sugar-planting used large numbers of Negro slaves brought in from Africa; at this time the latifundium had not yet come into being. Later, as the machines grew in power, they demanded more and more cane plantations, and these, in turn, more and more labor, which was supplied by white immigration and the natural growth of population. But as the speed of the development of the sugar industry outpaced that of the population, and great centrals were established on vast tracts of virgin land, everything had to be brought in: machines, plantations, and—population. It was the swift occupation of large and new sections of Camagüey and Oriente that, aside from other secondary economic considerations such as the scale of wages, brought about a revival of "traffic in Negroes," who were now hired on terms of miserable peonage instead of being bought outright, as under the earlier system of slavery. In Puerto Rico the latifundium developed after its great demographic expansion, and as it has a dense and poverty-stricken white population, it has not been necessary to bring in cheap labor from the other islands.

In the tobacco industry the process is exactly the reverse. It was an industry without machinery. In the beginning it used very few manual devices, and these of the simplest, to twist the tobacco or grind it to powder or shred it. The largest of these apparatuses was a simple wheel. At the Quinta de los Molinos in Havana one can still see the insignificant stream of water that turned the little mills, from which it derived its name, that were formerly used to make the snuff that was exported. In addition to the preparation of snuff and cut tobacco, it was in the manufacture of cigarettes that the machine began to be used; but for hundreds of years these were made by hand at home.

Machinery did not come into the life of tobacco with the invention of the steam engine, but years after the Jamaica engines had been invented for the sugar mills and were introduced into Cuba.

There is always a stationary quality to sugar. Where the canefields are planted, there they stay and last for years, around the mill installation, which is permanent and immovable. The canefields are vast plantings and the central is a great plant. Tobacco is a volatile thing. The seeds are planted in a seed-bed, then transplanted to another spot; sometimes even from one vega to another, and tobacco's cycle ends with the year's harvest. Nothing is left in the field, and it has to be planted all over again.

The rental arrangements for tobacco lands are usually for a brief period; the crop-sharing may be on an annual basis. In the case of sugar they are of lengthy duration, depending on how long the root stock continues to produce cane before it turns into worthless stubble.

Without a large investment of money in lasting plantations and powerful machinery it is impossible to set up a central or produce any form of sugar, unless one excepts the honey produced by the communistic bees in their hives. Tobacco's economical arrangements could be limited to a small patch of fertile land and a pair of skillful hands to twist the leaf into cigars or shred it for pipe smoking. For the widespread distribution of sugar great advances had to be made first in the secrets of chemistry, in machinery, in maritime shipping capacity, in tropical colonization, in the securing of slave labor, and, above all, in the accumulation of capital and in banking organization. In the case of tobacco all that was required was for a few sailors and traders to scatter about the world a few handfuls of seed, which are so small they will fit anywhere, even in a cabin-boy's duffel-bag.

The social consequences deriving from tobacco and sugar in Cuba and originating in the different conditions under which the two crops are produced can be easily grasped. The contrast between the vegas where tobacco is grown and the sugar plantation, particularly if it is a modern central, is striking. Tobacco gave origin to a special type of agricultural life. There is not the

great human agglomeration in the tobacco region that is to be found around the sugar plants. This is due to the fact that tobacco requires no machinery; it needs no mills, nor elaborate physical and chemical equipment, nor railway transport systems. The vega is a geographical term; the central is a term of mechanics.

In the production of tobacco intelligence is the prime factor; we have already observed that tobacco is liberal, not to say revolutionary. In the production of sugar it is a question of power; sugar is conservative, if not reactionary.

I repeat, the production of sugar was always a capitalistic venture because of its great territorial and industrial scope and the size of its long-term investments. Tobacco, child of the savage Indian and the virgin earth, is a free being, bowing its neck to no mechanical yoke, unlike sugar, which is ground to bits by the mill. This has occasioned profound economic and social consequences.

In the first place, tobacco was raised on the land best suited for the purpose, without being bound to a great indispensable industrial plant that was stationary and remained "planted" even after it had impoverished all the land about it. This gave rise to the central, which even in olden times was at least a village, and today is a city. The vega was never anything but a rural holding, like a garden. The vega was small; it was never the site of latifundia, but belonged to small property-owners. The central required a plantation; in the vega a small farm was enough. The owners of a central are known as *hacendados* and live in the city; those of the vegas remained *monteros, sitieros,* or *guajiros* and never left their rural homes.

The cultivation of tobacco demands a yearly cycle of steady work by persons who are skilled and specialized in this activity. Tobacco is often smoked to kill time, but in the tobacco industry there is no such thing as "dead time," as is the case with sugar. This, together with the circumstance that the vega was a small holding, has developed in the *veguero* a strong attachment to his land, as in the rancher of old, and made it possible for him to carry on his tasks with the help of members of his family. Only when this is not feasible does he hire workers, but in small groups, never in gangs or by the hundred, as happens with sugar cane. The vega, I repeat, is merely a topographical

denomination; the *colonia* is a term having complex political and social connotations.

For these same reasons, while during slavery Negroes were employed as sugar-plantation hands, the cultivation of the vegas was based on free, white labor. Thus tobacco and sugar each have racial connections. Tobacco is an inheritance received from the Indian, which was immediately used and esteemed by the Negro, but cultivated and commercialized by the white man. The Indians at the time of the discovery raised tobacco in their gardens, considering it "a very holy thing," in the words of Oviedo, distinguishing between the mild cultivated variety and the stronger wild species, according to Cobo. The whites were familiar with it, but did not develop a taste for it at once. "It is a thing for savages." The historians of the Indies did not smoke, and some abominated the habit. Benzoni tells that the smell of tobacco was so offensive to him that he would run to get away from it. When Las Casas wrote his *Apologética Historia de las Indias,* in the second quarter of the sixteenth century, he called attention to the unusual fact that he had known "an upright, married Spaniard on this island who was in the habit of using tobacco and the smoke from it, just as the Indians did, and who said that because of the great benefit he derived from it he would not give it up for anything."

It was the Negroes of Hispaniola who quickly came to esteem the qualities of tobacco and not only copied from the Indians the habit of smoking it, but were the first to cultivate it on their owners' plantations. They said it "took away their weariness," to use Oviedo's words. But the Spaniards still looked askance at it. "Negro stuff."

In Cuba the same thing probably happened; tobacco was a thing "for Indians and Negroes," and only later, as it worked its way up from the lower strata of society, did the whites develop a taste for it. But by the middle of the sixteenth century in Havana, where each year the Spanish fleets assembled and set out across the ocean in convoy, tobacco had already become an article of trade, and it was the Negroes who carried on the business. The whites realized that they were missing a good venture, and the authorities issued ordinances forbidding the Negroes to go on selling tobacco to the fleets. The Negro could no longer sell or cultivate tobacco except for his own use; the

Negro could not be a merchant. From then on, the cultivation and trade in tobacco was the economic privilege of the white man.

Sugar was mulatto from the start, for the energies of black men and white always went into its production. Even though it was Columbus who brought the first sugar cane into the Antilles from the Canary Islands, sugar was not a Spanish plant, nor even European. It was native to Asia, and from there it was carried along the Mediterranean by the Arabs and Moors. For the cultivation of the cane and the extraction of its juice the help of stout slaves and serfs was required, and in Portugal, as in Spain and Sicily in Europe, in Mauritania and Egypt in Africa, in Arabia, Mesopotamia, Persia, and India in Asia, these workers were as a rule of Negroid stock, those dark people who from prehistoric times had penetrated into that long strip of supertropical areas and gave them their permanent dark coloring, the same stock that in the Middle Ages invaded it anew with the waves of Moslems, who never felt any hostile racial prejudice toward the Negro. Sugar cane and Negro slaves arrived together in the island of Cuba, and possibly in Hispaniola, from across the sea. And since then Negro labor and sugar cane have been two factors in the same economic binomial of the social equation of our country.

For centuries the workers in the centrals were exclusively Negroes; often even the overseers were colored. This was true of the mill workers as well as of the field workers, with the exception of the technicians and the management. It was not until the abolishment of slavery, the influx of Spanish immigrants after the Ten Years' War, and the introduction of the share-cropping system that white farmers were to be found on the Cuban sugar plantations.

The nineteenth century in Cuba was marked by the change in the labor system brought about by the prohibition of the slave trade and, much later, by the abolition of slavery and the substitution for it of hired workers. The abolition was proclaimed by the Cubans fighting a war of secession against the mother country, and later by Spain in 1880–6. The cessation of the slave trade coincided with the introduction of the steam engine, which increased the productive capacity of the mills, and the abolition of slavery (1886) was simultaneous with the use

of steel rails and the development of the railroads, which increased the radius of activity of the centrals. Cheap labor was an imperative need, so Spain, no longer able to smuggle in slaves or bring in more Chinese coolies or peons from Yucatán, began to export her own white laborers. As a result the proportion of Negroes in the Cuban population began to diminish. In the distribution of colored population in Cuba today the greatest density is to be found in the old sugar-growing sections, not in the tobacco-raising areas, which were settled in the main by white immigrants from the Canary Islands and peasants of old Cuban stock. Tobacco drew upon the free white population, whereas for sugar cane black slaves were imported. This also explains why there are no invasions of migrant seasonal workers in the tobacco industry, and still less of Haitians and Jamaicans, who were brought in to make the harvesting of cane cheaper.

It should be noted that this process which took place in Cuba was not paralleled in other countries, such as Virginia, for example, whose early economy was based on tobacco. In Virginia, at that time an English colony, when the settlers began to raise tobacco they depended wholly on slave labor to cultivate it—white or black slaves, but preferably black.

This was due to the fact that the growing of tobacco there did not follow the same pattern as in Cuba, where, just as the Indians had done, it was treated as a small-scale, garden product, but in Virginia it employed the system of large plantations. The reason for this was that from the start the growing of tobacco in Virginia was a business, and the product was for foreign export, with the largest possible profit. That is to say, from its beginnings it was a capitalistic enterprise. For this reason, in the Anglo-American colonies there were never small growers nor any concern with the distinctive qualities of the leaf. There capitalism was in control of tobacco production from the first moment, and its objective was quantity rather than quality. The organization of the processes of curing and grading followed the same lines. Moreover, tobacco there was never rolled or made into cigars, which were unknown, but only into plugs for chewing, into twist for pipe smoking, and later into snuff for inhaling. For this mass industrial production the fine skill of the cigar worker was not necessary. As a result, in England

and her American colonies tobacco was "a thing for Negroes and Indians," and for centuries the trademark of the tobacco business was a Negro Indian—that is, a figure with Indian features and attire, but with the skin of an African slave.

This also explains why tobacco, instead of encouraging the small farm or holding in Virginia, gave rise to a growing appetite for land, and the planters who cultivated tobacco with slave labor kept pushing westward in search of new lands, thus increasing the territory and pushing back the frontiers. It is evident that the large land grants there were not responsible for slavery; rather it was the existence of slavery and the possibility of securing larger numbers of slaves that determined the creation of latifundia for the cultivation of tobacco. The existence of slavery, which in the last analysis is a form of capitalism, whose ownership of the means of production in this case took the form of large numbers of slaves, was the moving force behind the drive to secure correspondingly large landholdings and made the cultivation of tobacco, which in Cuba was intensive, individual, free, and middle-class, a large-scale capitalistic slave enterprise in Virginia.

It must also be set down that the union between sugar and the Negro had nothing to do with the latter's race or pigmentation; it was due solely to the fact that for centuries Negroes were the most numerous, available, and strongest slaves, and cane was cultivated by them throughout America. When there were no Negroes, or even together with them, slaves of other races were to be found on the plantations—Berbers, Moors, mulattoes. The alliance was not between the canefield and the Negro, but between the canefield and the slave. Sugar spelled slavery; tobacco, liberty. And if on the tobacco plantations of Virginia along with the black slaves there were white ones, purchased in England with bales of tobacco, on the sugar plantations of the British West Indies there were also black and white slaves, Irish condemned to slavery by Cromwell, and even Englishmen who had been sold for 1,550 pounds of sugar a head; or, as we would put it today, the price of an Englishman was five sacks of sugar. This did not happen in Cuba. There may have been an occasional white slave there, more probably a white female slave, in the early days of the colony, but not afterwards; and although it is true that there were near-white mulattoes who were still slaves, the whiteness of the skin was always the sign of emancipation in Cuba.

The seasonal nature of the work involved in sugar, in both the fields and the mill, is likewise very characteristic and of great social consequence. The cutting is not continuous, and whereas it used to last almost half a year, it is now almost never longer than a hundred days, and even less since legal restrictions have been placed upon it. All the rest of the year is "dead time." When it is finished, the workers who came to Cuba for the harvest in swallow-like migrations leave the country, taking their savings with them, and the native proletariat goes through a long stretch of unemployment and constant insecurity. A large part of the working class of Cuba has to live all year on the wages earned during two or three months, and the whole lower class suffers from this seasonal work system, being reduced to a state of poverty, with an inadequate, vitamin-deficient diet consisting principally of rice, beans, and tubers, which leave it undernourished and the ready prey of hook-worm, tuberculosis, anemia, malaria, and other diseases. This does not occur to the same degree with the tobacco workers, for both the agricultural and the industrial activities require steadier work; but even so, unfortunately for the country, they are also coming to suffer from undernourishment.

The unflagging devotion of the tobacco-grower to his field, his constant concern with weather and climatic conditions, the painstaking manual care the plant requires, have prevented the development of the vegas into great plantations, with great capital investments and submission to foreign control. González del Valle writes that "there is not one known case of an American or other foreigner who has grown rich cultivating tobacco in Cuba; as a matter of fact, foreigners who have tried it have lost most if not all of their capital." There are foreign landowners, but they are not the growers, with the exception of a few Spaniards who became quickly naturalized because of their easy adaptability to Cuban ways. Tobacco has always been more Cuban than sugar. It has been pointed out that tobacco is native to the New World, while sugar was brought in from the Old.

Foreign predominance in the sugar industry was always great, and now it is almost exclusive. Tobacco has always been

more Cuban because of its origin, its character, and its economy. The reason is obvious. Sugar has always required a large capital investment; today it amounts to a veritable fortune. A century ago a well-balanced central could be set up with a hundred thousand pesos; today the industrial plant alone is worth a million. Moreover, ever since the centrals were first established in America, all their equipment, with the exception of the land, has had to be brought in from abroad. Machinery, workers, capital, all have to be imported, and this makes necessary an even larger outlay. If the sugar industry was capitalistic in its beginnings, with the improvement in mechanical techniques and the introduction of the steam engine more elaborate mills were required, more canefields, more land, more slaves, greater investments and reserves—in a word, more and more capital. The entire history of sugar in Cuba, from the first day, has been the struggle originated by the introduction of foreign capital and its overwhelming influence on the island's economy. And it was not Spanish capital, but foreign: that of the Genoese, the Germans, the Flemings, the English, the Yankees, from the days of the Emperor Charles V and his bankers, the Fuggers, to our own "good-neighbor" days and the Wall Street financiers.

Even in the palmy days of the Cuban landowning aristocracy, which sometimes unexpectedly acquired fabulous fortunes and titles of nobility through their centrals, the sugar-planters always suffered a certain amount of foreign overlordship. The sugar they produced was not consumed in our country and had to be shipped raw to foreign markets, where it became the booty of the refiners, without whose intervention it could not enter the world market. The sugar-planter needed the underwriter, and he, in turn, the rich banker. As early as the middle of the sixteenth century the sugar-planters were requesting loans of the brokers of Seville and of the kings, not only to continue with their enterprises, but even to set them up. This was another factor that contributed to sugar's foreignness. Its capitalistic character obliged it to seek abroad the creditors and bankers not to be found here or who, when they existed, were merely agents of the brokers of Cádiz or the English refiners, who supplied machinery and financial support but who through their loans at usurious rates could dictate their own

terms and prices from London and Liverpool, and later from New York. When María de las Mercedes, the Countess of Merlin, wrote her *Viaje a la Habana,* well along in the nineteenth century, she was amazed at the fact that the rate of interest charged the Cuban planters by foreign loan-brokers was thirty per cent a year, or two and a half per cent a month.

By the end of the Ten Years' War, when through the progress in metallurgical techniques the great mills and the networks of railways were introduced in the centrals, the capital required for a venture of this sort was enormous, beyond the possibilities of any one person. This brought about three economic-social developments: the revival of the sharecropping system of cultivation, the anonymous stockholders' corporations, and the direct control of foreign capital over the management and ordering of the centrals. And finally, as a result of the financial depression after the first World War, industrial and mercantile capitalism was replaced by the supercapitalism of banks and financial companies, which today constitute the foreign plutocracy that controls the economic life of Cuba. One of the effects of this has been the greater dependence of the tenant farmer, who, according to Maxwell, received his fairest share of returns in Cuba, his gradual disappearance, and, finally, the complete proletarianization of the workers in the central, from the fields to the mill, where an executive proconsul holds sway as the representative of a distant and imperial power. The "foreignness" of the sugar industry in Cuba is even greater than that of Puerto Rico, which is actually under the sovereignty of the United States.

The foreign control of the central is not only external but internal as well. To use the language in vogue today, it has a vertical structure. There are not merely the decisions of policy taken by the sugar companies in the United States, from that radiating center of moneyed power known as Wall Street, but the legal ownership of the central is also foreign. The bank that underwrites the cutting of the cane is foreign, the consumers' market is foreign, the administrative staff set up in Cuba, the machinery that is installed, the capital that is invested, the very land of Cuba held by foreign ownership and enfeoffed to the central, all are foreign, as are, logically enough, the profits that flow out of the country to enrich others. The process does not

end here; in some of the supercentrals even the workers are foreigners, who have been brought into Cuba, under a new form of slavery, from Haiti and Jamaica, or by immigration, from Spanish villages.

This foreignness is further aggravated by absentee landlordism. There were already absentee owners a century ago, who lived at ease in Havana, leaving the mill in the hands of a manager. But since 1882, when a North American, Atkins, bought the Soledad central, becoming the first Yankee planter of Cuba, absentee landlordism has been on the increase and has become more permanent, more distant, more foreign, and, in consequence, more deleterious in its social effects on the country.

Before, this absentee landlordism was periodically attenuated by inheritance, through which, upon the death of the planter, this accumulated wealth returned to society through his children and heirs. This is not so any longer, for the planter, if this name can be given to the organization that in the eyes of the law is the owner of the central, is born outside the country and dies a foreigner, and even has no heirs if it is a corporation. The great wealth of capital needed for these supercentrals could not be raised in Cuba, and the tendency toward productive capitalism could not be held in check from within. And so the sugar industry became increasingly denaturalized and passed into anonymous, corporative, distant, dehumanized, all-powerful hands, with little or no sense of responsibility.

By 1850 the trade of Cuba with the United States was greater than that with the mother country, Spain, and the United States assumed for all time its natural place, given geographical conditions, as the principal consumer of Cuba's production as well as its economic center. In 1851 the Consul General of Cuba in the United States wrote officially that Cuba was an economic colony of the United States, even though politically it was still governed by Spain. From then on sugar for North American consumption was king in Cuba, and its tariffs played a greater part in our political life than all the constitutions, as though the whole country were one huge mill, and Cuba merely the symbolic name of a great central controlled by a foreign stockholders' corporation.

Even today the most pressing problem confronting the Cuban Treasury Department is that of being able to collect its revenues

by levying them directly against the sources of wealth and their earnings, making no exception of foreign holdings, instead of continuing the indirect taxes that fall so burdensomely upon the Cuban people and fleece it. Cuba will never be really independent until it can free itself from the coils of the serpent of colonial economy that fattens on its soil but strangles its inhabitants and winds itself about the palm tree of our republican coat of arms, converting it into the sign of the Yankee dollar.

This has not been so with tobacco, either in the field or in the workroom. The tobacco-grower was a simple countryman who required no machinery beyond a few tools and who could supply his own needs from the limited resources of the local general store. Whereas the sugar-planter acquired wealth, titles of nobility, government posts, refinement, and, at times, a desire for progress, the *veguero* was always a small, rustic, rule-of-thumb farmer. While the planter gave Cuba railroads before they were introduced into Spain, and Havana had its flourishing theater presenting plays and operas as good as those of Madrid, the *veguero* still rode his horse through the woods and found his entertainment in cock-fights, songs, and country dancing.

The personal element always predominated in tobacco-growing, and there was a patriarchal, intimate quality about its work. Sugar was an anonymous industry, the mass labor of slaves or gangs of hired workmen, under the supervision of capital's overseers. Tobacco has created a middle class, a free bourgeoisie; sugar has created two extremes, slaves and masters, the proletariat and the rich. "There is no middle class in Havana, only masters and slaves," the Countess of Merlin wrote about her own country a century ago. Then she goes on to say: "The *guajiro* prefers to live on little for the sake of having his freedom." On the sugar plantations there existed the overlordship and the serfdom of underling and master; on the vegas there was the free industry of the humble peasant. The old colonial aristocracy of Cuba was almost always made up of rich planters on whom a title had been conferred because of their wealth in mills and slaves. Sugar titles rested on black foundations. The sprightly archpriest long ago observed (op. cit., stanza 491):

Suppose a man's an utter fool, a farmer or a boor,
With money he becomes a sage, a knight with prestige sure;
In fact, the greater grows his wealth the greater his allure,
While he not even owns himself who is in money poor.[1]

It is easy to see how the social organization involved in sugar production (mill and plantation) had, in addition to its capitalistic character, certain feudal and baronial features. Another clergyman, Juan de Castellanos, who was also a poet, put it very well in one of the thousands of verses that make up his famous *Elegías*: "A plantation is a great estate." But he also said, referring to the plantations: "Each of these is a domain."

The tenant farmer, who made his appearance in the sugar set-up in the role of an intermediate class, never had anything but a walk-on part, important only for what he stood for and said as he entered and left the stage.

The lack of need for machinery and the limited amount of land cultivated made money in large quantities unnecessary in the tobacco industry years ago. The historian Pezuela, in the second half of the nineteenth century, said of tobacco when the mechanization of the sugar industry was becoming general: "In addition to its recognized superiority over the other products of the island, the future of tobacco is assured because of the fortunate circumstance that it does not demand an accumulated fortune for its exploitation. Without this, nobody can think of starting a central or even a coffee plantation. With a small amount of capital and the will to work, a man can acquire and work a vega." Even though this circumstance did not wholly eliminate the cruel practices of usury by which tobacco-growers were victimized, it did prevent the effects of capitalistic control and concentration at the time and to the extent that this has taken place in the Cuban sugar industry.

It was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that machinery on a large scale penetrated the tobacco industry. The twisting of tobacco into rolls or grinding of it into snuff or cutting it was done by machines as primitive and simple as the spinning-wheel, and all these operations were done by hand, too. It was after this that machines were introduced for cigarette-making, cutting, rolling, and packing. Today the machine for making cigarettes is a perfect precision instrument. As early as 1853 a cigarette factory powered by steam was set up in Havana, by Don Luis Susini, which turned out as many as 2,580,000 cigarettes a day. At the same time the railroad, which is the great machine for overland transportation, brought the vegas closer to Havana, facilitating the sale and purchase of the leaf without the need of agents and middlemen, even though they were not completely eliminated. Today there are machines for rolling cigars, invented and used in the United States; but the Cuban proletariat refuses to accept them.

[1] Translation by E. K. Kane.

The dependence of the Cuban sugar industry on banking and foreign influences has also been a factor in the difference between its relations with the government and its tax programs and those of tobacco.

Cuban tobacco always had a more difficult time than did sugar with the Treasury Department and its burdensome systems of monopolies, government stores, tariffs, and restrictions of every sort. Sugar, once an article of luxury, is today a necessity; tobacco, which was a religious and medicinal necessity, has become, paradoxically speaking, "an everyday luxury." This explains, to a certain extent, the merciless attitude of the Treasury Department toward tobacco, which has taken the form of restrictions on its cultivation, its industry, and its commerce and of a great variety of taxes. During centuries the cultivation of tobacco in Cuba motivated many royal and governmental edicts of a contradictory nature: they were prohibitory, restrictive, permissive, but rarely encouraging.

By the sixteenth century, when the English, French, and Dutch engaged in smuggling came to America in search of tobacco, Philip II began the legal restrictions on its planting and sale. In 1606 the cultivation of tobacco in Cuba and the other islands and lands of the Spanish Main was forbidden for ten years. In 1614 this infamous ban was lifted, but the entire crop had to be sent to Seville, and disobedience of this order was punishable by death.

As the consumption of Cuban tobacco increased, so did the interest of the exchequer, and it became the object of government restrictions and monopolies, from that created by the royal edict of April 11, 1717 to the more sweeping one of 1740, which gave Martín Aróstegui a monopoly not only on the tobacco

trade but on all the island's commerce. Not for nothing were the first armed insurrections of Cuba those of 1717, 1718, and 1723, which were incited by the outraged tobacco-growers against this brutal system of abusive privileges. These trade monopolies lasted for a century, and they were as corrupt as they were corruptive. But even since the establishment of freedom of trade in 1817 the fiscal difficulties originating in domestic and foreign taxes on tobacco have been a constant thorn in the flesh to both growers and dealers.

With sugar, on the contrary, everything was favor and privilege. The sixteenth century was not yet half run and Cuba was already receiving money from the royal coffers to assist in the establishment of cane plantations, without any strings attached and with free grants of land, which then abounded and which the crown wished to see settled. In 1517, barely five years after the conquest of the island, the planters of Cuba obtained from the King the first moratorium for their debts. In 1518, under a royal edict of December 9, the royal exchequer undertook to act as land bank for all who wanted to start a sugar plantation in Hispaniola, offering them "aid from the royal treasury" and canceling their debts. And the privileges did not end here. (See Part II, Chapter x.)

All the colonial governments favored the sugar-planters. They received loans of money, grants of land; the forests were cleared for them, experts in the manufacture of sugar brought in, duties were suspended, sales tax forgotten, smuggling winked at, a moratorium declared on debts, railroads built, loans made, treaties drawn up, monopolies ignored, religion weakened, heretics tolerated, civil liberties curtailed, the people tyrannized, and independence delayed. And to work the mills and plantations thousands and thousands of miserable wretches were killed or enslaved: Negroes from Africa, Indians from Yucatán, Mongolians from China. For the profit of the sugar plantation whole communities were dragged from their homes, blood flowed like the syrup from the cane, and all races suffered the lash, the stocks, and the prison cell.

Even today Cuba's national economy is governed by the sugar industry, which enjoys constant protection, even though the centrals are no longer Cuban, in exchange for special tariffs on imports, which are not Cuban either.

By the end of the nineteenth century capitalism was beginning to invade the tobacco industry to an ever greater degree, introducing changes in all branches of its cultivation, manufacture, and trade. Even in the ownership of the land, for capitalism has been getting control of the vegas. In the last fifteen years the number of landowning tobacco-growers has dropped from 11,200 to some 3,000. The landowner is disappearing from the vegas, and the *guajiro* is joining the ranks of the proletariat, becoming undernourished, poverty-stricken, preyed upon by intestinal and social parasites. The economic system of tobacco is gradually approaching that typical of the sugar industry, and both are being strangled by heartless foreign and native tentacles.

Tobacco goes out and comes in; sugar comes in and goes out —and stays out. The whole process of tobacco's development in Cuba, by reason of its native origin, its superior quality, and other collateral factors, is one of economic centripetalism. This is a product for foreign consumption, and its production is carried on with a view to its exportation to markets in other countries, but the profits return here and are spent here. The sugar industry, on the other hand, because of its exotic origin, its European antecedents, and the foreign capital invested in it, is economically centrifugal. It came to the country from abroad; it is the trader in it for foreign consumption who attempts to establish himself in Cuba and encourage its cheap production here; but those in control are not Cubans and the profits are reaped far from here. And for this sugar has exercised an almost tyrannical pressure throughout our history, introducing a constant note of oppression and force, without contributing toward the creation of robust institutions such as education, government, and civic responsibility. It was sugar that gave us slavery, that was responsible for the conquest of Havana by the English in 1762, that dictated their leaving in 1763, that caused the slave trade to flourish, that evaded the restrictions laid upon it, that robbed Cuba of its liberties throughout the nineteenth century, that brought about and maintains its colonial status and economic backwardness. As far as its primary dirigents are concerned, sugar in Cuba has always been an exogenous force, from without to within, to get what it could from the country, an oppressive, weakening force, whereas tobacco has been an en-

dogenous force, from the country outward, bringing back returns, an expansive, integrating force. The economic parabola of sugar is a curve that cuts through Cuba, but has its beginning and end outside it; the parabolic curve of tobacco begins in Cuba, cuts across other countries, and returns to the place of its origin. For this reason the economy of tobacco has always been more Cuban, and, more specifically, of Havana, with its principal control in the capital of the island, while that of sugar has never been controlled by Cubans, but by absentee and almost always unknown foreigners.

Tobacco has always been under the control of home government, economically and politically; whatever party has been in power in Cuba has been in control, for better or for worse, of tobacco. Sugar, on the contrary, has been under foreign control superimposed on the island's government. The history of Cuba, from the days of the conquest to the present moment, has been essentially dominated by foreign controls over sugar, and the greater the value of our production, the greater the domination. During the centuries of the colonial period this power which was and is the controlling force in the economy of the Antilles was not, properly speaking, located in Madrid, inasmuch as ever since the sixteenth century the Spanish crown was only the legal machinery that, in exchange for the comfortable, well-paid, parasitical upkeep of its dynastic, aristocratic, military, clerical, and administrative bureaucracies maintained order among the peoples of the Peninsula and America and exploited their inhabitants under systems of feudal absolutism, leaving the economic initiative and control in the hands of the commercial, industrial, and financial capitalism of the more astute centers of Europe—Genoa, Augsburg, Flanders, London, and, in the nineteenth century, New York. By the same token we sons of free Cuba have sometimes asked ourselves whether our officials and politicians are serving the interests of our people or those of some anonymous sugar corporation, playing the part of deputized guards of the great Cuban sugar mill at the orders of foreign owners.

It is apparent from the foregoing that since the beginning of the sugar industry in the sixteenth century the whole history of Cuba has developed around this foreign domination which has always placed its own interests above those of the country.

For this reason Cuban tobacco has had to bear the weight of export taxes levied against it for the benefit of the island's exchequer, whereas foreign-controlled sugar has always successfully evaded, until the present moment, which is exceptional, the payment of export duties to the Cuban Treasury Department even in those times, which today seem fabulous, when the returns on the capital invested in land, mill, and plantations was better than one hundred per cent. In the history of Cuba sugar represents Spanish absolutism; tobacco, the native liberators. Tobacco was more strongly on the side of national independence. Sugar has always stood for foreign intervention. But today, unfortunately, this capitalism, which is not Cuban by birth or by inclination, is reducing everything to the same common denominator.

It throws light on these serious political contrasts to observe those that exist in the commercial field.

The trade in tobacco and sugar came about and developed in very different fashion.

Tobacco is characterized by its individuality, sugar by its amorphousness. Five factors had a decisive influence on the history and commercial vicissitudes of tobacco: namely, (1) the fact that tobacco is an article of pleasure and vice, a luxury article, like sparkling wines; (2) that Havana cigars, like champagne, are something unique, that cannot be surpassed or substituted; (3) that, notwithstanding, the use of tobacco is subject to the influences of caprice, fashion, and the degeneration of taste; (4) that, in spite of its nonessential and frivolous character, its use is as widespread as though it were an article of primary importance; and (5) that it is a product against which taxes can be readily assessed. On the basis of these special conditions, which do not apply to sugar, a whole structure of appetites, fables, vices, anathemas, profits, enterprises, restrictions, duties, taxes, frauds, fashions, dreams, and invectives has grown up about it.

From the beginning sugar represented a planned economy, tobacco free enterprise. Sugar came about through the application of scientific alchemy; tobacco's origins are to be found in folklore.

When Christopher Columbus brought to these cisatlantic In-

dies the first cuttings of sugar cane, it was in keeping with a carefully thought-out economic plan. The object was to plant them, grind the cane, and extract the sugar to sell at a handsome profit. When the Admiral discovered tobacco and took it to the Catholic kings he had no idea of profiting by it, or planting it, or manufacturing it, or selling it on the other side of the ocean. Columbus had been dead a long time when people began to consider the possibility of trading in tobacco and making a business of it. Sugar was an enterprise that had always received serious thought as a means of acquiring wealth, and a lifetime undertaking; tobacco-growing was a casual, venturesome undertaking, like a whimscial device to while away an hour.

It was Columbus who exported the first tobacco and imported the first sugar cane. Tobacco left Cuba with him on his return from his first voyage; sugar cane came in with the Admiral on his second voyage. But tobacco was only an exotic novelty, like the Indians and their gold trinkets, their native skirts, the seats used in their ceremonies, their shell belts and breastplates, the totems and masks of their mysteries, pineapples, cassavas, corn, sweet potatoes, prickly pears, parrots, macaws and hammocks; whereas sugar cane was brought in as a tried and established source of wealth, along with wheat, vegetables, fruit trees, horses, cattle, swine, and barnyard fowl.

Tobacco was unknown in Europe before the early part of the sixteenth century; there was no taste for it, there was no economic interest in developing such a taste, and it never occurred to anyone that factories could be set up to turn out cigars by the thousand or shops where they could be profitably sold. Sugar, on the other hand, was already a prized delicacy, in a class with pepper, cinnamon, and other spices, and the demand for it was very great. The European market had already experienced crises and fluctuations in the output of sugar and its price, and the difficulty lay not in stimulating its consumption, but in finding fertile lands where it could be grown in quantities that would make it more accessible in price. The taste for tobacco developed after Columbus's time; sugar antedated him.

As soon as the Spaniards began building up the colonial economy of the West Indies, on their return voyages to Europe the ships carried sugar as well as gold, pearls, lignum-vitæ, hides, and cassia pods. But there is no record of cargoes of tobacco.

Sugar was shipped by the boatload, tobacco in an occasional bale. From the beginning of the sixteenth century the demand for sugar in Europe far exceeded the supply America could offer. (See Part II, Chapter xi.)

But if there was a scarcity of sugar here, there was a plentiful supply of tobacco growing around the Indians' huts and in the Negroes' garden patches, where they raised it for their own use. There was as yet, however, no thought of organizing its cultivation. Sugar was the great business for dealers and shippers; tobacco was a little side line for sailors, who carried it in pigs' bladders.

There are those who have believed that the evolution in the use of tobacco was from snuff to the pipe, from the pipe to the cigar, and from the cigar to the cigarette. But even though this morphologic scale is very interesting and this pattern may have been followed in certain countries of Europe, I hardly feel that it can be accepted as universal. Spain, for example, must have first made the acquaintance of the cigar, which was discovered in 1492, and perhaps chewing tobacco and snuff. The pipe must have crossed the Atlantic several lustrums later, when its use was learned on the mainland. It is impossible to know whether snuff or smoking tobacco was first used by the American Indians, or whether the pipe, representing a technical step forward, was preceded by the cigar, either that made of tobacco leaves rolled in a leaf of the same plant or that made of tobacco filler wrapped in the leaf of some other plant.

It seems likely that the typical cigar, consisting of tobacco twisted and wrapped in a tobacco leaf, to be lighted at one end and the smoke inhaled at the other, was carried back to Spain by the caravels in which Columbus discovered America. But this manner of using tobacco spread more slowly than the plug or powdered form for medicinal purposes. The Spaniards chewed this stimulating leaf of the natives of Cuba just as they did later the coca of the Indians of the continent. Smoking tobacco was more complicated. It required a pipe or special skill in twisting the leaves into *mosquetes,* as Father Bartolomé de las Casas called them. Besides, fire to light the tobacco in this form was needed, and the paraphernalia to start it.

The use of tobacco gradually spread among the sailors making the American run, who carried it in powder to snuff it and,

especially, in plug for chewing and twist for smoking it in a pipe, which was the way it could best be smoked on a sea voyage. And these seafaring men introduced the custom in their native lands. By the middle of the sixteenth century the magic plant of the Taino medicine-men had made its way into the habits of the better-class Spaniards, who took it in the form of "powder" and "smoke."

The invention of snuff is still generally attributed to the Grand Prior of France, who happened to inhale the powder and liked its effects; for this reason, it is said, tobacco was also known as the *herbe du Grand Prieur*. But it is an established fact that powdered tobacco, by itself or mixed with other more toxic plants, was used by the Indian priests of America in their ceremonies before it was taken by the Catholic priests of Europe, without rites and for the pleasure it gave them. It may be that this dignitary of the French Church encouraged its use in France without inventing it, for in those days the use of snuff was a clerical vice, perhaps because they considered it less ostensible than smoking. Not for nothing did Father Bernabé Cobo, a Jesuit well versed in such matters, say that snuffing tobacco through the nose was a hypocritical invention of the Spaniards for the purpose of "taking it with dissimulation and less offense to bystanders." Brunet states that it was the priests who used snuff in Spain when it was introduced there. The clergy was so given to "taking tobacco and drinking chocolate," both products of America, that *El Diablo Cojuelo,* after all a minor devil, boasted of having triumphed over them by means of these temptations of the Indian deities. Quevedo mocks at all smokers and calls them *tabacanos* and slaves of the devil.

Although the smoking habit acquired by the discoverers of America and the seamen who followed in their wake probably introduced the use of tobacco into Europe, the spreading of the habit was due primarily to the medicinal virtues attributed to the plant, regarded as a magic panacea, rather than to its gustatory or stimulating properties. In the year 1560 a page of Catherine de Médicis was suffering from ulcers, and the French Ambassador to Portugal, Jean Nicot, sent for some tobacco plants, and when the leaves were placed over the page's ulcers the sores healed as by magic in no time at all, and thus the fame of tobacco's medicinal qualities spread beyond Portugal and Spain.

It is said that it was Sir Walter Ralegh who introduced it at the court in London. There were teachers of the art of smoking there, just as there were dancing masters, and the ability to blow rings and spirals of smoke was an accomplishment as esteemed as knowing the steps and figures of the latest dance. In 1599 a pound of good Cuban tobacco cost over a hundred and twenty dollars in England. In 1612 John Rolfe, the husband of Pocahontas, took some seeds of West Indian tobacco to Virginia, and the settlers there began to export their crop to Europe, thus competing with Spain and breaking her monopoly.

The Casa de Contratación de Indias of Seville attempted to organize the cultivation of tobacco in the colonies. The first royal edict dealing with Cuban tobacco is dated October 20, 1614. The first shipments of tobacco registered in Havana were made in 1626. (See Part II, Chapter xii.) But these were not the first cargoes of Cuban tobacco to cross the Atlantic, nor does the record state whether it was in twist, fine-cut, roll, powder, or leaf to be made up in cigarettes by the tobacco girls of Seville, or for the use of the Lutheran heretics.

By the seventeenth century the use of tobacco was a firmly established custom in Europe. Teniers in his realistic paintings has many scenes of Dutch smokers enjoying their pipes.

Tobacco seed was planted in every country, and plants bearing leaves with strange flavors and aromas sprang up in alien lands. And with these leaves it was possible to prepare tobacco for smoking everywhere.

In Cuba tobacco was cured at home for the domestic use of the settlers, who had developed a great liking for the stimulating qualities of this native contribution. But the real cigar, the *tabaco* of the Cuban Indians, in the form in which the discoverers found it and which we still have in mind when we speak of a "Havana," was exported and known abroad much later. It was not so well adapted for use by sailors on their sea voyages. And outside Cuba there were no workers who knew how to prepare it properly, twisting it, rolling it, fitting it into the wrapper with that precision and sureness of touch as characteristic of the Cuban cigar-maker as of the Savile Row tailor.

After many amusing and contradictory ups and downs, tobacco finally came to be smoked everywhere. Few people smoked cigars; most of them used pipes, chewed it, or took it

in the form of snuff. In Europe, outside of Spain, the cigar was almost unknown, and its use did not become general until the middle of the nineteenth century. But even then the cigar was not popular, and in England a little book was published in the year 1840 showing the trade-mark of a tobacconist which consisted of three hands joined to a single arm, the first holding between its thumb and forefinger a pinch of snuff, the second a pipe, and the third a plug of chewing tobacco, with these lines underneath:

We three are engaged in one cause:
I snuff, I smoke, and I chaws.

For centuries it was only in Spain that the typical *tabaco* of the Indians of Cuba was used to a considerable extent. An attempt was made on the part of the educated classes to introduce the name *tubano,* referring to its tubular shape, but this cultivated term made little headway; people preferred the popular name of *cigarro,* which had been given it because of its resemblance in shape, size, and color to certain cicadas found in Andalusia. Then later it came to be known as *puro,* to distinguish it from the cigarette, that wasted, poor, little cigar, without filler or wrapper, that mixture of scraps of tobacco wrapped in paper. It was never considered common to smoke Havana cigars, even in Spain. They were always expensive, and Spain was poor for centuries, even under the pomp and circumstance of the Habsburgs, which was the period in which the literature of roguery flourished.

It must have been in these very rogues' circles that the use of the cigarette won its popularity. It was not a product of the house of Monipodio nor was it the invention of Rinconete, or Miguel de Cervantes would have told us about it. Neither was it in Turkey, as some have maintained, that the cigarette was invented. It is a known fact that in Spain in the seventeenth century it had become a practice to make cigarettes of shredded tobacco wrapped in paper, which were known as *papeletas, papeletes, papelotes,* and *papelillos.* Some poverty-stricken emigrant back from the Antilles who recalled the cigars the Indians smoked wrapped in cornhusk or banana leaf probably hit upon the idea of using the wrapper he could most easily come by in

everyday city life: a sheet of paper. Its paper coat identifies the cigarette as a city product.

The paper-covered cigarette seems to have originated in Seville, thanks to the ingeniousness of some guttersnipe, who, like the sage of the fable, was happy to "gather up the leaves another threw away." The cigarette was the invention of the stub-collector. Thus a symbiosis developed between rich tobacco and the poverty of the lower depths. Every cigarette seems to smack a little of fraud and contraband. And outside Spain the cigarette grew even more knavish, and took on an effeminate quality that enabled it to worm itself into the companionship of the ladies. In Turkey it was flavored and seasoned until it lost its masculine Indian vigor and sallied forth, like a eunuch, to find its fortune in the harems of the world. It was there in the Moslem lands that those adulterate mixtures known among tobacconists by the name of *harman,* a word taken from the Turkish, were developed. But the returning Spanish emigrant, the priest, the soldier, and the civil servant, who had made his fortune in America, clung to the expensive and aristocratic vice of smoking Havana cigars, which they had sent them from Cuba to their Peninsular retreat.

It was well on in the second half of the eighteenth century, after the conquest of Havana by the English in 1762, that Havana cigars in turn set out to conquer the world. It was then that Havana cigars traveled to England in the red coats of the British officials, and to North America with the Yankee officers who had been in charge of the colonial regiments that helped occupy Havana and not long afterwards, in 1776, were to win the independence of their own country. After this momentous episode in Cuba's history the taste for cigars began to spread beyond Spain. In 1788 the first factory manufacturing cigars was set up in Hamburg by H. H. Schlottmann, and by 1793 they were in wide use in all Germany. The philosopher Kant in 1798 still used the German version of the Spanish word *zigarro* in his *Anthropologie.*

In the nineteenth century it was the invasion of Spain by Napoleon's armies and Lord Wellington's troops, and later by the Hundred Thousand Sons of St. Louis, that spread the use of Cuban tobacco through the countries from which the troops proceeded. Just as it was in the snowy trenches of the Crimean

War that the use of cigarettes became generalized among the soldiers, who preserved the habit on their return from the campaign. The cigarette was sponsored by the beggar, the soldier, and later the workingman; the pipe was for the use of sailors, farmers, and shepherds. The cigar has borne the seal of the clergy, the Indian chief, the man of power, and the wealthy middle class.

In our own day, when capitalism dominates, speeds up, transforms, and puts a money value on everything, the cigarette is winning ground because of economic factors. It has won over the women, the proletariat, and a large part of the middle class. Even the mighty have taken a liking to its unpretentiousness, leaving the fine makes of cigars for special occasions of display. A good cigar is expensive, it is big, and it lasts a long time. Today there is no time to smoke it with the relaxation it demands; in the feverish haste of everyday life it would often have to be thrown away almost as soon as it was lighted, and this would be an unpardonable waste. The cigarette is small and burns fast and, when necessary, can be tossed aside without loss or regret, for it costs very little and the loss is insignificant. People prefer the cigarette for reasons of economy, because of the increasing money valuation put upon time and because of the generalization of the luxury of smoking. Even in Havana the production of cigarettes now exceeds that of cigars.

As was to be expected, from 1762 and 1776, but especially after 1825 and 1826, when tobacco could be exported without government restrictions, a great wave of trade in tobacco, both leaf and manufactured, sprang up between Cuba and the United States, England, and Germany. In 1849 the export of leaf tobacco had tripled. It has been said that from the middle of the past century the increase in exports influenced the growers in their methods of cultivation, to aim at size and number of leaves rather than fragrance and color—that is to say, quantity rather than quality. The prostituting effects of trade! One can note the effects of capitalism which tends to convert the tobacco industry into an amorphous mass production, maintaining the traditional appearances of quality and selection. The magic of money! The miracle-working powers of capitalism! There comes to mind the observations and experiences of Juan Ruiz, the minstrel priest of Hita (op. cit., verses 493 and 494): "I saw there in

Rome, the seat of Sanctity," that "money not only can buy heaven and win a man salvation," but also "makes truth of lies, and lies truth." In Rome, "the seat of Sanctity," and in Cuba, where sanctity is less abundant, these miracles and transmutations of facts and merchandise are the natural consequence of "the power that in money lies," to use the words of this same sagacious archpriest in one of his versified psychosocial analyses.

Also on account of the growing concentration of capitalism, with its imperialistic tentacles and its deals with the treasury officials and the government leaders who control them, tobacco like sugar now finds itself involved in the same network of treaties, monopolies, reciprocal trade agreements, tariffs, quotas, agricultural restrictions, price-fixing, cartels, trusts, and other legal snares that for many years in this part of the world have been choking liberalism to death, substituting for it the intervention of the state in the economic life of the country, setting up a kind of one-legged socialism, unilateral and halfway, without equitable intention or benefit for the people as a whole.

Capitalism is also establishing a parallelism between the industrial aspects of tobacco and sugar, subjecting them both to increasing foreign domination, with devastating results for Cuba. Sugar has always been under foreign economic control, and Cuba's share in its returns has always been held at a minimum, to what it made from producing the raw material; and the same thing is now being attempted with tobacco.

During the Ten Years' War the tobacco production of Cuba suffered severely. A large share of the vegas at this time were in the province of Oriente, the center of the War of Secession. Yara tobacco, which was grown in the vegas of Cauto, was famous, as was that of Mayarí. As a result of the Ten Years' War many of these tobacco fields were wiped out. It was during this period of upheaval also that a foreign operating center for our tobacco industry was set up on the neighboring islet of Cayo Hueso, known in English as Key West.

Gerardo Castellanos G. in his book *Motivos de Cayo Hueso* tells how a group of Cuban cigar-makers had established themselves in Key West around 1831—about fifty of them. Over a century ago the brothers Arnao set up a little hole-in-the-wall factory with sixteen Cuban workmen. But it was at the outbreak of the Ten Years' War that many Cuban tobacco workers

fled from Havana and its surrounding districts to the rocky neighboring island, a traditional refuge for Cuban exiles. Because of political passions, then at fever pitch, two cigar-manufacturers of Havana, one a Spaniard from Valencia, Don Vicente Martínez Ibor, and the other a Cuban, Don Eduardo Hidalgo Gato, decided it would be wise to leave Cuba and set themselves up in cities of Florida where they could establish themselves in their business, employing raw materials and workmen from Cuba. Tampa, Ibor City, Key West, and even New York were havens for Cuban and Spanish tobacco workers seeking political freedom and better salaries. The continual crises in Cuban affairs increased the emigration of workers to the Florida factories, and they were the principal actors in the struggle for independence outside of Cuba. In this way capitalism set up its factories abroad and took away from Cuba its tobacco, its skilled workers, and their wages. This has been the process of de-Cubanization of tobacco in its industrial aspects.

The contrast with sugar in this respect is striking. In Cuba's economy sugar has always been a raw material. We have never been able to refine it here freely for exportation and put it on the market as a finished product for foreign consumption. There was a time when Cuba did not even refine sugar for home consumption, and our sugar, which was shipped out raw, was sent back to us refined, with an increase in price that represented the foreign refiners' profit.

Tobacco, on the other hand, was always grown and prepared in Cuban factories and shipped to the foreign markets as a manifest product of the country, with its place of origin clearly marked, a fact that added to the market value of the genuine Havana. This is not always so today. Cigars which often contain little or no Cuban tobacco are sold abroad as Havanas, and an effort is being made to reduce the industry here to its purely agricultural phase—that is to say, to the growing of the leaf and possibly stripping it. This is further complicated by the increasing importation into Cuba of cigarettes manufactured outside the country, with foreign tobacco and with flavors that are foreign, too. And this process of foreign domination has not come to a close. Mechanization and capitalism are exerting more and more pressure in the direction of keeping Cuba in the economic status of a colony, a state of affairs that has been typical of its

history ever since the Genoese, Christopher Columbus, hit upon his economic plan for the Spanish West Indies down to our own times, when foreigners are intent on working out plans for us to follow. Once more the pertinent satire of that greatest poet of the Spanish Middle Ages comes to mind (op. cit., stanza 510):

> *Above all, let me tell you this, do with it what you can:*
> *Throughout the world Sir Money is a most seditious man*
> *Who makes a courtesan a slave, a slave a courtesan,*
> *And for his love all crimes are done since this old earth began.*[1]

The relations of tobacco and sugar with their workers have been very different.

Sugar has always preferred slave labor; tobacco, free men. Sugar brought in Negroes by force; tobacco encouraged the voluntary immigration of white men.

In the production of sugar, agriculture and industry are concentrated at the same spot, and the result is the creation of that complicated social-economic institution which is the *ingenio* or central, consisting of a vast cane plantation, a huge factory with all its apparatus for grinding, evaporating, crystallizing, separating, and shipping the sugar, and the urban center, village or city, which is the *batey* with its sheds, dwellings, machine-shops, stores, stables, and other services. With tobacco, on the other hand, there is a separation between its cultivation and its manufacture. The former has remained strictly rural, whereas the latter has always been urban, and mainly of Havana. For this reason the best leaf tobacco is known as *vueltabajo,* taking its name from the region where it is grown, whereas the best finished cigar in all the world is known as a Havana, the name of a great city. A cigar factory is a simple, movable street location; a central is a complicated and permanent geographical accident.

As a result of the unavoidable combination and concentration of agriculture and industry in the production of sugar, the central has always needed large masses of laborers. In olden times this was possible only by bringing in Negro slaves from Africa, for in a short time there were no natives left to be enslaved in Cuba. It took a ten years' war (1868–78) to eliminate slave labor completely from the sugar industry. The growing of tobacco, on the contrary, was on a garden scale, on small patches in the

[1] Translation by E. K. Kane.

bottom lands, where the soil was extremely fertile and the workers were, as a rule, members of the family. For this reason the Cuban tobacco-grower was, in the majority, white and free, aside from an occasional Negro slave, especially in the nineteenth century, for certain heavy work.

The manufacture of tobacco was organized in the city, and was promoted by merchants and exporters. It may be said that in tobacco's economy there were dealers before there were manufacturers; whereas in the case of the sugar of the West Indies, even though its economy was established by the commercial interests of the settlers, the first step was the setting up of the agricultural-industrial plant and then organizing the business of exportation.

In the beginning cigars were rolled by the workers in their own homes, individually, as a supplementary task to their regular work, or in little *chinchales* or workrooms, as can still be seen in the manufacture for local consumption in Havana and even in New York. The bundles of finished cigars were delivered by these individuals or small groups of cigar-makers to the export traders, who bought them, classified them according to size or shape, packed them for shipment, and sold them all under the guarantee of their own special trade-mark. Some of these trade-marks are over a hundred years old, and the manufacturers or mere exporters of labeled brands have always had several brands to suit the interests of the factory as well as the varying tastes of their foreign customers. As has been pointed out, capitalism got a hold upon tobacco's economy, as on that of many other products, through trade. At first production was limited, subject to the will of the worker, who sold his output to the dealer. It was only later, with the growth of the proletariat, that the cigar factory came into existence, with its shifts of workmen and capitalism's control of the industry.

Cigar and cigarette factories, with numbers of steady workers, and workrooms did not spring up until the nineteenth century was well advanced. For this reason the tobacco workers, like the growers, were mainly free men, even though some skilled slaves were hired out by their owners to help in harvesting the crop. The exporters or manufacturers would have liked to be able to depend on slave workers, as cheaper and easier to hold down, but inasmuch as the individual specialized, painstaking, and delicate work demanded for tobacco was incompatible with slavery, it was hoped that prison inmates could be made into tobacco workers, the "slaves of punishment," for whom the work involved in tobacco manufacture was ideally suited to their confined state. As the workshops of the penitentiaries are still known as galleys, in memory of the ships where those who had run afoul of the law were forced to work as galley slaves, so the workrooms of the tobacco factories are also known as galleys, recalling the original tobacco workrooms of the prisons. But the prisoners could not provide an adequate supply of skilled cigar workers, and the employers had to resort to the free, salaried labor market. In the manufacture of cigarettes, however, much less delicate and specialized work, the use of prison labor lasted much longer, up to our own times. It is curious to note that at the same time prison labor was employed, soldiers were made use of, too, in their enforced idleness in barracks. In 1863 in Havana cigarettes were being made for its 36 cigarette factories by 700 soldiers and 350 prisoners.

In the beginning the heavy work around the cigar and cigarette factories was done by Negroes, freed slaves, and Chinese. This is natural enough if one bears in mind that these rude tasks were not to the liking of the whites owing to medieval prejudices, which were then very deep-rooted and have not even yet been wholly extirpated. The tobacco-growers were predominantly white; the tobacco workers mostly colored. But the manufacturers of cigars were as a rule Spaniards who had settled in Cuba, mainly Catalonians, Asturians, and Galicians.

As time went on and the white population grew, as the slave trade disappeared and the proletariat of whites and native half-breeds increased, the tobacco factories employed workmen of every race and origin.

There were few foreigners in the tobacco business; nearly all were Cubans and Spaniards. This was not so with sugar, which brought in hordes of Negroes and Chinese to work in the fields, French chemists and Anglo-Saxon engineers, not to mention the Spaniards who were formerly the masters of the country. Gaspar Manuel Jorge is of the belief that "in proportion to the volume of production, more Cubans live off tobacco than off sugar" (*"El Tabaquero Cubano," Lyceum,* Vol. I, p. 76).

Whereas sensual sugar requires the rude strength of men for

its preparation, which is hard work, virile tobacco calls for delicate hands, those of women or those having a woman's soft touch, for its gentle handling. In olden times the cigars smoked by the Cuban tobacco-grower were rolled "by his wife, his daughter or his sweetheart," to quote the Countess of Merlin. And on the farms, in the selecting-rooms, stripping-rooms, and factories, women workers are employed. The woman stripper is a popular figure in Cuba, and in Spain Carmen was a cigarette-maker. It was at the end of the Ten Years' War, in 1877, that a woman went to work in a Havana factory for the first time; it was in the cigarette factory La Africana. Before that women had wrapped and packed cigarettes by hand at home. From then on, women came to form part of the factory proletariat. This chronological coincidence is very significant. As slavery, which was abolished in 1880, was giving its last gasps, industrial greed, unable to depend on slave labor any longer, but unwilling to pay the salaries of free men, created the feminine proletariat, which is cheaper.

Women never worked in sugar, with the exception of a few Negress slaves who were strong enough to plant and cut cane, or some who were forced to it by hunger or the higher wages it offered. In certain regions of Africa that supplied slaves to the dealers in this merchandise it was an age-old custom for the women to plant and cultivate the crops with a *coa,* or sharp-pointed stick; anthropologists, moreover, have noted certain traces of sexual dimorphism in some Negro races.

The workers in both tobacco and sugar have had their conflicts and difficulties with owners and employers. Contrary to the general idea, strikes sprang up in these West Indies almost as soon as the whites of Europe began to take possession of them. In 1503, before Cuba had been colonized, Governor Ovando of Hispaniola complained of the insurrections of Indians and Negroes who refused to do forced labor for the white man's exclusive benefit. There was an uprising of the workers on the plantation of Columbus's son, Diego, in 1522. And in Cuba, which was conquered in 1512, there were outbreaks of protest against the system of slavery from the moment it was established. In 1538 the slaves sacked Havana, aiding and abetting the French pirates who had descended on the city.

As may be easily deduced, there has always been a conflict of interests between the sugar and tobacco workers and their owners and employers. In these last decades, since the process of mechanization and the growing power and concentration of capital have tended to synthesize and unify labor problems in all fields of production, the demands of the workers in these two industries have approached each other more closely than in past epochs, when their industrial set-ups differed.

In both industries the problem of contracts, wages, hours, accident compensation, vacations, retirement, working and sanitary conditions has been discussed. But, nevertheless, the differences in the history of the labor conflicts of sugar and tobacco are striking, owing to the different systems under which the two industries are carried on.

Sugar was the product of latifundium and fief, which created serfs; tobacco, of the small farm and town, which were the abode of free men.

Alvaro Reynoso tells how on the early Cuban plantations the slaves lived in *bohíos,* those rustic huts which the Taino Indians used as dwellings; but as uprisings became more frequent, and more Negroes ran off to the hills, the slaves were housed in barrack-like quarters that resembled a jail. Some of these huge sugar-plantation prisons are still standing, with their single door and high, barred windows, into which the slaves, men, women, and children, black overseers, and even the semi-slave Chinese and their foremen were shut up when the day's work was done. There were centrals that had watchtowers and blockhouses in the mill yard, and private hired troops to defend them against workers' uprisings. In the vegas it was the government troops who occasionally burned the defenseless cabin of the poor tobacco-grower in the name of law and order.

The rural tobacco-raiser fought against the taxes, monopolies, and unjust restrictions placed upon his product. Not so the sugar-grower. As for the sugar worker, he had to fight in the centrals and warehouses and on the docks to have a limit set upon the load he had to carry, the maximum now being the 325-pound sack. The tobacco worker never was confronted by this problem.

Because of the individual nature of his work and his product, the cigar-maker always was entitled to his own "smokes"—that

is, a certain number of the cigars he made for his personal use. This privilege came to acquire a tangible economic value. The cigar-maker could sell his smokes to a passing customer, and the manufacturer came to regard this as a part of the worker's wages, paid in kind. The attempt to treat this privilege as a part of the worker's wages gave rise at times to acrimonious disputes and strikes. Nothing of the sort happens in the case of sugar, aside from the stalk of cane the cutters or carters occasionally chew. There is no privilege of cane-sucking on the centrals analogous to the cigar factories' smokes. And if the mill worker wants sugar to sweeten his coffee, he has to buy it in the store just like anything else he needs.

The history of labor in Cuba until the last third of the nineteenth century was, with few exceptions, a record of rural slavery. Contrary to the general opinion that the Negro accepted his state of subjection passively, there are the frequently recurring episodes of uprisings and flight to the hills by runaway Negroes, and even of the collective suicide of bands of desperate slaves. The Mandingas were known for their tendency toward group suicide; in this way they freed themselves from their labors and had the last laugh on the master with a strike for which there was no settlement, and their successful escape to the other world. Despite the heap of alien earth that covered their bodies, the poor creatures believed that they would be resurrected in body and soul back in their native African villages. And the masters, aware of this belief, mutilated their bodies, even after death, cutting off vital organs so that when they came back to life, it would be without head or limbs, and through fear of this, as terrifying and as mythical as the torments of hell, they discouraged the living from following the others' example.

The strikes on the plantations and in the coffee groves were the Negro slaves' rebellions. Some of the great slave revolts were presented by the authorities as real social revolutions planned to secure liberation from the work of the sugar plantations. When slavery was abolished, the proletariat of the country, which took the slaves' place, was, as a rule, quiet both before and after the last war of independence, which had a different social significance from that of 1868, which brought about the abolition of slavery. Not only the *guajiro* on the plantations and the cane-cutters, but the men who operated the machinery came from

the same essentially rustic background as the proletarian sugar workers; they were more disunited, having read less and being less prepared for permanent, directed collective organization. Only now, in the twentieth century, when the centrals are cities with hundreds of workers living around the plant, does the mass of the mill operatives, less rustic than they used to be, begin to show signs of class consciousness, attempts at organization, and the determination to have its rights.

The tobacco-grower, who was white, free, and as a rule attached to the land he owned or rented, even though he stayed in the hills, was not an outlaw, nor did he set up rebel colonies, but he did take part in uprisings, such as those which took place in the vegas near Havana during the eighteenth century, which were ruthlessly put down by the military forces. But these fierce revolts were not protests against slavery nor complaints about salary on the part of the worker in the productive phase of the industry, but the result of abuses committed during the most advanced phase, the commercial. And if they caused repercussions among the growers, it was because the agricultural labors, as they were carried on, received their compensation at the moment of the sale of the harvested crop. Nothing corresponding took place in the case of sugar; there were no strikes on the part of the tenant farmers when they began to appear in the middle of the nineteenth century; they sold on the open market when they could, or else accepted the centrals' terms.

In the city, the cigar worker, who formerly did not work by the hour but did piece work, discussed the price of his wares by units, layers, or thousands, and not by days, hours, and shifts as did the sugar worker.

The nineteenth century did not go by without struggles and reverses for the tobacco industry. The fact that tobacco is a so-called luxury article, which is at the same time comparable to a necessity because of the scope of the demand for it, makes it extremely vulnerable to heavy excise, export, and import taxes in all countries. These last often far exceed the original value of the tobacco, especially on the manufactured article. This increasing scale of customs duties has had its repercussions in Cuba, on more than one occasion unexpectedly, giving rise to difficult situations and always affecting the market and upsetting the industry. One domestic result of these barriers to expor-

tation has been frequent unemployment among the Cuban cigar workers, not to mention sharp struggles between them and their employers over wage rates. For instance, in 1856 there were a number of cigar workers idle in Havana, owing to the fact that in 1855, in addition to a large amount of leaf tobacco, 356,582,500 cigars were exported, the greatest volume of export trade Cuba had ever known. This happened because the United States market wanted to stock up before the sharp increase in customs duties effective March 3, 1857. The emigration of Cuban cigar workers to Key West during the second half of the last century may be considered in large part a defensive measure taken to protect themselves against persecution in Havana because of their liberal, antislavery, or secessionist ideas, which were frowned upon by the factory-owner, who, besides his economic resources, had the backing of the rifles of the Spanish volunteers. Key West and Tampa were "civilian camps" of the national revolution, to use the phrase of Castellanos. Martí called Key West "a Creole stronghold, where from all the sufferings and anxieties of life arose all the sublimities of hope." There "Martí visited the factories, presided at the meetings, and by his eloquence infused the tobacco workers with his own fire" (G. M. Jorge). And the emigrant cigar workers "openly contributed ten per cent of their weekly earnings toward the revolution." It was a holy tithe laid upon the altar of country. For this reason, according to Tesifonte Gallego, Captain General Salamanca plotted to "destroy the tobacco workers' centers of Key West and Tampa to wipe out the rebels' organization."

In the nineteenth century, too, there were great strikes of tobacco workers. Even today it may be said that the relation between employer and worker in the tobacco industry is one of the most controversial in the whole field of Cuban labor. This is undoubtedly due to the fact that there was little infiltration of slave labor in the industry; that it involved hand work, at which the Cubans were adept; that the constant fluctuation of prices on the diverse and distant foreign markets fell outside the market quotations and the workers' knowledge. Above all, it was due to a proletarian class consciousness that developed among the tobacco workers earlier than in other groups.

In all this one highly influential factor was a custom that is typical of the Cuban tobacco workrooms, where the work is

hand labor in contrast to the highly industrialized nature of other occupations, such as sugar. All the operations connected with sugar, from the conveyor belt to the mill, through the filters and evaporating-pans, the centrifugals and the packing, are done standing and moving from one place to another in the midst of an infernal racket. The mill workers find it almost impossible to talk to one another or to hear.

Reading is impossible in the sugar mill, for the noise in the boiling-vat rooms is so great that it drowns out the sound of the human voice. One no longer hears the rhythmic work songs with which in olden days the slaves accompanied their tasks in the grinding-rooms, the furnaces, the packing-house, and the refuse dumps. Today the mill is a mechanical monster that produces as it moves a deafening symphony of wheels, presses, piston rods, cogwheels, plungers, pistons, valves, hydroextractors, dumpcarts, with safety valves that give off a noise like the roar of a wild animal and ear-piercing whistles like enraged sirens.

In the case of tobacco, on the contrary, there is silence in the workroom if the chatter of conversation stops. The preparation of tobacco is carried on by workers, each seated at his own table, side by side, like students at their desks in school. This has made it possible to introduce into the tobacco workrooms a custom adopted from the refectories of convents and prison dining-halls: that of reading aloud so all the workers can listen while performing their tasks.

Sugar is produced to the orchestration of noisy machines; tobacco is worked up in silence or to the accompaniment of the spoken word. Sugar calls for choral harmony; tobacco for a solo melody. The sugar worker's tasks are active, heavy, deafening, and monotonous; the cigar worker sits down to his labors and can enjoy the pleasure and advantages of talking and listening.

It is said that the custom of reading to the cigar workers was introduced in the latter half of the nineteenth century in the two galleys of prison cigar-makers that had been set up in the Arsenal of Havana, and from there it spread to the other tobacco workrooms. The Reverend Manuel Deulofeu says that the custom was first permanently established, on the initiative of the workers, in the factory that existed in the town of Bejucal in the year 1864. And he recalls the name of the first reader,

Antonio Leal, in the workroom of the Viñas factory. It seems that it was in Bejucal, too, in the factory of Facundo Acosta, that the reader first read to the workers from a platform. It is difficult to know exactly where the custom originated and was instituted, but it is certain that it was not by accident or imitation, but done with a definite plan of social propaganda. A campaign was carried on to establish the custom, presenting it as an imitation of the instructive and democratic "public reading-rooms" then in vogue in the United States. These tobacco workroom readings were championed by the workers' weekly, *La Aurora* of Havana, in 1865, almost from its founding; and it was defended by the liberals in an editorial in *El Siglo* (January 25, 1866) of Havana, entitled "Readings in the Tobacco Workrooms," in which it was recalled that public readings were a common thing in other countries and that the public paid to hear them. It was thus that the eminent novelist Charles Dickens had toured the United States, reading from his own works, and there were many readers who had no literary gift of their own who read from the works of others. "Imagine paying to hear someone talk, to hear someone read," observed the writer of *El Siglo* pessimistically. But his lack of faith was ungrounded, and there were readings in the factories every day, and the workers paid to hear them. In Havana the custom was introduced in the factories in 1865, sponsored by Nicolás Azcárate, the Cuban liberal. The El Figaro factory was the first to allow reading in its workrooms, and was followed the next year by the factory of Don Jaime Partagás. But there is no doubt that it had been recommended many years before by the Spanish traveler Salas y Quiroga in his observations on the coffee groves of Cuba; he had suggested its introduction during the coffee grading, but it had never been put into effect.

This reading aloud in the tobacco workrooms became an instrument of local propaganda. The first reading in one of the factories of Havana was from a book entitled *The Struggles of the Century*. It was symbolic. The reading-table of each tobacco workroom became, according to Martí, "an advanced pulpit of liberty." When in 1896 Cuba rose in revolt against the Bourbon despotism and fought for its independence, an official order was issued silencing the pulpits of the tobacco factories. A number of these readers became leaders of the people's party, even

though some wound up as deserters to the cause, and even paid traitors.

As a result of this advanced political consciousness on the part of the Cuban cigar workers, in conjunction with other causes, a strange phenomenon took place: two contradictory and parallel migrations, the emigration of Cuban tobacco workers abroad, coinciding with the immigration of foreign laborers to work in the sugar industry of the country. At the same time that Cuban workmen had to leave their country to be able to work, foreigners were coming into it to work and make a living.

The custom of reading also explains the fact that the tobacco workers in Cuba were the first Cuban workmen to form associations to protect class interests. In 1865 a cigar worker, Saturnino Martínez, founded the weekly *La Aurora*. That same year cigar workers founded the Workmen's Mutual Aid Society of Havana, the Brotherhood of Santiago de las Vegas, and the Workmen's Society of San Antonio de los Baños. In 1878 and '79 the Workers' Guild and the Workers' Center were established in Havana, and in 1885 the Workers' Circle. In 1878 the tobacco selectors former their association, whose statutes were drawn up by the aforementioned politician Nicolás Azcárate. In 1892 the cigar workers organized and held the first workers' convention, not without arousing opposition. It was the Cuban cigar workers who most courageously and unflaggingly supported José Martí's revolutionary efforts on behalf of Cuban independence. From Key West, rolled in a cigar made by Fernando Figueredo, a great citizen, general, and cigar worker, the order for the revolution for national independence reached Havana in 1895. To the poet's mind the single star of the Cuban flag evokes the tobacco flower; it is a five-pointed star, with a white corolla whose petals are pink-edged.

Even today the Society of Selectors is one of the oldest and most firmly established among the Cuban workers' organizations. In our own day education has become much more general among Cuban workingmen; there was a time when the cigar workers were the "brain trust" of the Cuban proletariat. The workroom readers were "graduates of the factory," in the words of Martí. As he told the cigar workers of Tampa in his famous revolutionary speech of November 26, 1891, they worked "with the table at which they studied alongside that at which they

earned their bread." And he spoke of "those factories which are like academies where reading and thinking are continuous, and those lyceums where the hand that folds the tobacco leaf by day picks up the textbook by night." They worked with tobacco leaves and book leaves. This was the cigar worker. In Cuba he is still the "enlightened" workman whose "intellectual veneer makes him feel superior in this respect to the other workers. This, he feels, entitles him to talk about everything and pass opinion on everything" (G. M. Jorge). He is given to argument and controversy. There are those who believe that because of his intellectual tendencies and his romantic tradition "he does not completely grasp the new theories of class struggle," or if he understands them he is unwilling to submit to the discipline necessary to put them into effect. But there is no doubt that the tobacco worker is a nonconformist who thinks and insists upon a new design for living.

At the present time mechanization, which years ago took possession of cigarette-manufacturing and is now trying to eliminate the cigar-maker, has had an influence on the typical custom of reading aloud. In 1923 a radio loudspeaker was installed in the Cabañas y Carvajal factory. The reader used earphones and rebroadcast to the workroom the radio news. In 1936 the reader and the radio still existed side by side; now the machine is triumphing over the reader by means of the radio, which transmits readings to the workers over the air. But this is no longer the typical reading of news and selections chosen by the workers of each galley, like one more selection of their art. Now the reader's platform is deserted, and is occupied only on rare occasions; new books and controversial material are no longer read there. The fellow workman is silent and is replaced by anonymous speakers. And over the air there comes into the workroom a deplorable mixture of the lowest-grade mental vulgarities, interlarded with music, like the poorest-grade cigars, which are wrapped in showy tinfoil because of its resemblance to silver.

Cuba had two parallel sources of pride, the synthesis of this strange contrast I have outlined, that of being the country that produced sugar in the greatest quantity and tobacco of the finest quality. The first is disappearing; nobody can take away the second.

We have seen the fundamental differences that existed between them from the beginning until machines and capitalism gradually ironed out these differences, dehumanized their economy, and made their problems more and more similar.

But it should be observed at the same time that although there are differences between sugar and tobacco, there have never been any conflicts between them. Cane sugar has had and has a bitter struggle with beet sugar; a world-wide war has been going on between them for over a century, the "War of the Sugars," like the Wars of the Roses. The authentic tobacco of Cuba has had and has its fierce struggle with foreign tobacco, especially with that which usurps its name, the fight between the Havana and the *mabinga*. There has been a global conflict going on between tobaccos for centuries, just as there has been and will be between men. But there was never any enmity between sugar and tobacco.

Therefore it would be impossible for the rhymesters of Cuba to write a "Controversy between Don Tobacco and Doña Sugar," as the roguish archpriest would have liked. Just a bit of friendly bickering, which should end, like the fairy tales, in marrying and living happy ever after. The marriage of tobacco and sugar, and the birth of alcohol, conceived of the Unholy Ghost, the devil, who is the father of tobacco, in the sweet womb of wanton sugar. The Cuban Trinity: tobacco, sugar, and alcohol.

It may be that one day the bards of Cuba will sing of how alcohol inherited its virtues from sugar and its mischievous qualities from tobacco; how from sugar, which is mass, it received its force, and from tobacco, which is distinction, its power of inspiration; and how alcohol, the offspring of such parents, is fire, force, spirit, intoxication, thought, and action.

And with this laud of alcohol the counterpoint comes to an end.

I

On Cuban Counterpoint

THE preceding essay is of a schematic nature. It makes no attempt to exhaust the subject, nor does it claim that the economic, social, and historical contrasts pointed out between the two great products of Cuban industry are all as absolute and clear-cut as they would sometimes appear. The historic evolution of economic-social phenomena is extremely complex, and the variety of factors that determine them cause them to vary greatly in the course of their development; at times there are similarities that make them appear identical; at times the differences make them seem completely opposed. Nevertheless, fundamentally the contrasts I have pointed out do exist.

The ideas outlined in this work and the facts upon which they are based could be substantiated by full and systematic documentation in the form of notes; but in view of the nature of the work I have preferred to add some supplementary chapters. They deal with a basic theme of their own, but bear upon certain fundamental aspects of "Cuban Counterpoint" and will be of interest to readers who care to go deeper into the subject.

2

On the Social Phenomenon of "Transculturation" and Its Importance in Cuba

With the reader's permission, especially if he happens to be interested in ethnographic and sociological questions, I am going to take the liberty of employing for the first time the term *transculturation,* fully aware of the fact that it is a neologism. And I venture to suggest that it might be adopted in sociological terminology, to a great extent at least, as a substitute for the term *acculturation,* whose use is now spreading.

Acculturation is used to describe the process of transition from one culture to another, and its manifold social repercussions. But *transculturation* is a more fitting term.

I have chosen the word *transculturation* to express the highly varied phenomena that have come about in Cuba as a result of the extremely complex transmutations of culture that have taken place here, and without a knowledge of which it is impossible to understand the evolution of the Cuban folk, either in the economic or in the institutional, legal, ethical, religious, artistic, linguistic, psychological, sexual, or other aspects of its life.

The real history of Cuba is the history of its intermeshed transculturations. First came the transculturation of the paleolithic Indian to the neolithic, and the disappearance of the latter because of his inability to adjust himself to the culture brought in by the Spaniards. Then the transculturation of an unbroken stream of white immigrants. They were Spaniards, but representatives of different cultures and themselves torn loose, to use the phrase of the time, from the Iberian Peninsula groups and transplanted to a New World, where everything was new to them, nature and people, and where they had to readjust themselves to a new syncretism of cultures. At the same time there was going on the transculturation of a steady human stream of African Negroes coming from all the coastal regions of Africa along the Atlantic, from Senegal, Guinea, the Congo, and Angola and as far away as Mozambique on the opposite shore of that continent. All of them snatched from their original social groups, their own cultures destroyed and crushed under the weight of the cultures in existence here, like sugar cane ground in the rollers of the mill. And still other immigrant cultures of the most varying origins arrived, either in sporadic waves or a continuous flow, always exerting an influence and being influenced in turn: Indians from the mainland, Jews, Portuguese, Anglo-Saxons, French, North Americans, even yellow Mongoloids from Macao, Canton, and other regions of the sometime Celestial Kingdom. And each of them torn from his native moorings, faced with the problem of disadjustment and readjustment, of deculturation and acculturation—in a word, of transculturation.

Among all peoples historical evolution has always meant a

vital change from one culture to another at tempos varying from gradual to sudden. But in Cuba the cultures that have influenced the formation of its folk have been so many and so diverse in their spatial position and their structural composition that this vast blend of races and cultures overshadows in importance every other historical phenomenon. Even economic phenomena, the most basic factors of social existence, in Cuba are almost always conditioned by the different cultures. In Cuba the terms Ciboney, Taino, Spaniard, Jew, English, French, Anglo-American, Negro, Yucatec, Chinese, and Creole do not mean merely the different elements that go into the make-up of the Cuban nation, as expressed by their different indications of origin. Each of these has come to mean in addition the synthetic and historic appellation of one of the various economies and cultures that have existed in Cuba successively and even simultaneously, at times giving rise to the most terrible clashes. We have only to recall that described by Bartolomé de las Casas as the "destruction of the Indies."

The whole gamut of culture run by Europe in a span of more than four millenniums took place in Cuba in less than four centuries. In Europe the change was step by step; here it was by leaps and bounds. First there was the culture of the Ciboneys and the Guanajabibes, the paleolithic culture, our stone age. Or, to be more exact, our age of stone and wood, of unpolished stone and rough wood, and of sea shells and fish bones, which were like stones and thorns of the sea.

After this came the culture of the Taino Indians, which was neolithic. This was the age of polished stone and carved wood. With the Tainos came agriculture, a sedentary as opposed to a nomadic existence, abundance, tribal chieftains, or caciques, and priests. They entered as conquerers and imposed the first transculturation. The Ciboneys became serfs, *naborías,* or fled to the hills and jungles, to the *cibaos* and *caonaos.* Then came a hurricane of culture: Europe. There arrived together, and in mass, iron, gunpowder, the horse, the wheel, the sail, the compass, money, wages, writing, the printing-press, books, the master, the King, the Church, the banker. . . . A revolutionary upheaval shook the Indian peoples of Cuba, tearing up their institutions by the roots and destroying their lives. At one bound the bridge between the drowsing stone ages and the

wide-awake Renaissance was spanned. In a single day various of the intervening ages were crossed in Cuba; one might say thousands of "culture-years," if such measurement were admissible in the chronology of peoples. If the Indies of America were a New World for the Europeans, Europe was a far newer world for the people of America. They were two worlds that discovered each other and collided head-on. The impact of the two on each other was terrible. One of them perished, as though struck by lightning. It was a transculturation that failed as far as the natives were concerned, and was profound and cruel for the new arrivals. The aboriginal human basis of society was destroyed in Cuba, and it was necessary to bring in a complete new population, both masters and servants. This is one of the strange social features of Cuba, that since the sixteenth century all its classes, races, and cultures, coming in by will or by force, have all been exogenous and have all been torn from their places of origin, suffering the shock of this first uprooting and a harsh transplanting.

With the white men came the culture of Spain, and together with the Castilians, Andalusians, Portuguese, Galicians, Basques, and Catalonians. It could be called a crosscut of the Iberian culture of the white Pyrenean subrace. And in the first waves of immigration came Genoese, Florentines, Jews, Levantines, and Berbers—that is to say, representatives of the Mediterranean culture, an age-old mixture of peoples, cultures, and pigmentation, from the ruddy Normans to the sub-Sahara Negroes. Some of the white men brought with them a feudal economy, conquerors in search of loot and peoples to subjugate and make serfs of; while others, white too, were urged on by mercantile and even industrial capitalism, which was already in its early stages of development. And so various types of economy came in, confused with each other and in a state of transition, to set themselves up over other types, different and intermingled too, but primitive and impossible of adaptation to the needs of the white men at that close of the Middle Ages. The mere fact of having crossed the sea had changed their outlook; they left their native lands ragged and penniless and arrived as lords and masters; from the lowly in their own country they became converted into the mighty in that of others. And all of them, warriors, friars, merchants, peasants, came in search of

adventure, cutting their links with an old society to graft themselves on another, new in climate, in people, in food, customs, and hazards. All came with their ambitions fixed on the goal of riches and power to be achieved here, and with the idea of returning to their native land to enjoy the fruits of their labors in their declining years. That is to say, the undertaking was to be bold, swift, and temporary, a parabolic curve whose beginning and end lay in a foreign land, and whose intersection through this country was only for the purpose of betterment.

There was no more important human factor in the evolution of Cuba than these continuous, radical, contrasting geographic transmigrations, economic and social, of the first settlers, this perennial transitory nature of their objectives, and their unstable life in the land where they were living, in perpetual disharmony with the society from which they drew their living. Men, economies, cultures, ambitions were all foreigners here, provisional, changing, "birds of passage" over the country, at its cost, against its wishes, and without its approval.

With the whites came the Negroes, first from Spain, at that time full of slaves from Guinea and the Congo, and then directly from all the Dark Continent. They brought with them their diverse cultures, some as primitive as that of the Ciboneys, others in a state of advanced barbarism like that of the Tainos, and others more economically and socially developed, like the Mandingas, Yolofes (Wolofs), Hausas, Dahomeyans, and Yorubas, with agriculture, slaves, money, markets, trade, and centralized governments ruling territories and populations as large as Cuba; intermediate cultures between the Taino and the Aztec, with metals, but as yet without writing.

The Negroes brought with their bodies their souls, but not their institutions nor their implements. They were of different regions, races, languages, cultures, classes, ages, sexes, thrown promiscuously into the slave ships, and socially equalized by the same system of slavery. They arrived deracinated, wounded, shattered, like the cane of the fields, and like it they were ground and crushed to extract the juice of their labor. No other human element has had to suffer such a profound and repeated change of surroundings, cultures, class, and conscience. They were transferred from their own to another more advanced cul-

ture, like that of the Indians; but the Indians suffered their fate in their native land, believing that when they died they passed over to the invisible regions of their own Cuban world. The fate of the Negroes was far more cruel; they crossed the ocean in agony, believing that even after death they would have to recross it to be resurrected in Africa with their lost ancestors. The Negroes were torn from another continent, as were the whites; but not of their own will or choice, and forced to leave their free and easy tribal ways to eat the bitter bread of slavery, whereas the white man, who may have set out from his native land in despair, arrived in the Indies in a frenzy of hope, converted into master and authority. The Indians and the Spaniards had the support and comfort of their families, their kinfolk, their leaders, and their places of worship in their sufferings; the Negroes found none of this. They, the most uprooted of all, were herded together like animals in a pen, always in a state of impotent rage, always filled with a longing for flight, freedom, change, and always having to adopt a defensive attitude of submission, pretense, and acculturation to a new world. Under these conditions of mutilation and social amputation, thousands and thousands of human beings were brought to Cuba year after year and century after century from continents beyond the sea. To a greater or lesser degree whites and Negroes were in the same state of dissociation in Cuba. All, those above and those below, living together in the same atmosphere of terror and oppression, the oppressed in terror of punishment, the oppressor in terror of reprisals, all beside justice, beside adjustment, beside themselves. And all in the painful process of transculturation.

After the Negroes began the influx of Jews, French, Anglo-Saxons, Chinese, and peoples from the four quarters of the globe. They were all coming to a new world, all on the way to a more or less rapid process of transculturation.

I am of the opinion that the word *transculturation* better expresses the different phases of the process of transition from one culture to another because this does not consist merely in acquiring another culture, which is what the English word *acculturation* really implies, but the process also necessarily involves the loss or uprooting of a previous culture, which could be defined as a deculturation. In addition it carries the idea of

Hegha = acculturation + deculturation = transculturation

the consequent creation of new cultural phenomena, which could be called neoculturation. In the end, as the school of Malinowski's followers maintains, the result of every union of cultures is similar to that of the reproductive process between individuals: the offspring always has something of both parents but is always different from each of them.

These questions of sociological nomenclature are not to be disregarded in the interests of a better understanding of social phenomena, especially in Cuba, whose history, more than that of any other country of America, is an intense, complex, unbroken process of transculturation of human groups, all in a state of transition. The concept of transculturation is fundamental and indispensable for an understanding of the history of Cuba, and, for analogous reasons, of that of America in general. But this is not the moment to go into this theme at length, which will be considered in another work in progress dealing with the effects on Cuba of the transculturations of Indians, whites, Negroes, and Mongols.

When the proposed neologism, *transculturation,* was submitted to the unimpeachable authority of Bronislaw Malinowski, the great figure in contemporary ethnography and sociology, it met with his instant approbation. Under his eminent sponsorship, I have no qualms about putting the term into circulation.

3

Concerning Tobacco Seed

There is something marvelous even about the unusual number of seeds produced by tobacco. This was one of the reasons for its rapid spread in all lands, once the Spaniards found the plant in America and succumbed to its temptation.

The seeds of tobacco are incredibly numerous and very tiny. There are from 300,000 to 400,000 to an ounce. One ounce of seed could theoretically produce 300,000 plants. Each tobacco plant can yield as many as a million seeds, according to William George Freeman. Each of these little seeds in turn could pro-