Beyond the Black Atlantic: Understanding Race, Gender and Labour in the Global Havana Cigar[1]

Jean Stubbs

RESÜMEE

Aus historischer Perspektive lässt sich die Karibik nicht nur als Teil einer Atlantischen, sondern darüber hinaus einer globalen Welt verstehen. Im Zuge der kolonialen Expansion zirkulierten zwischen den als East und West Indies bezeichneten Regionen, Güter, Menschen und Ideen. Im 19. Jahrhundert war Kuba ein Knotenpunkt innerhalb der so entstandenen Netzwerke, und die kubanische Zigarre etablierte sich als globales Luxusprodukt. In vielen Teilen der Welt begehrt und nachgeahmt, wurde *El Habano* zu einem mythenumgebenen Herzstück transnationaler Produktions- und Handlungsprozesse: industrielles und agrikulturelles Wissen, Saatgut sowie menschliche Arbeitskräfte wanderten zwischen den verschiedenen Regionen umher. Der Artikel verfolgt die grenzüberschreitenden Wege und Mythen von *El Habano* vom 19. bis ins 21. Jahrhundert und nimmt verschiedenen Stätten der Produktion in Kuba, Florida, Connecticut sowie Indonesien in den Blick.

1 An earlier version of this article was given as a paper at the Conference "Being on the Move: Transfers, Emancipation and Formations of The Black Atlantic", held at Erfurt University, in Germany, in July 2010. I thank Patricia Wiegmann and Nora Kreuzenbeck, the organisers of that conference, for hosting me and encouraging me to work on this further. A revised version was subsequently given as a paper at the 36th Annual Conference of the Caribbean Studies Association, in Curacao, in June 2011. My thanks also go to my colleagues involved in the Commodities of Empire British Academy Research Project, jointly hosted by the University of London's Institute for the Study of the Americas and the Open University's Ferguson Centre for African and Asian Studies (www.open.ac.uk/Arts/ferguson-centre/commodities-of-empire), and our sister collaborative projects: Plants, People and Work (International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam) and Global Commodity Chains (University of Konstanz). My research has been facilitated by semesters as a Bacardi Scholar at the University of Florida (2011) and Rockefeller Scholar at Florida International University and the University of Puerto Rico (1998), as well as by funding from the British Academy and the Caribbean Studies Centre, which I directed at London Metropolitan University (2002-2009).

The Caribbean has long been part not only of an Atlantic but also a far more global political, economic, and socio-cultural world. European empires that carved up the region they labeled the West Indies likewise staked their claim to territories in what in similar terms was for them their East Indies. Across networks of territories of the imperial west and east, and also through the interstices of empires, commodities, peoples, and ideas flowed. In the nineteenth century, Cuba was a hub for such networks,[2] and the handmade Havana cigar established itself globally as *the* luxury tobacco product of the century.[3] Coveted and replicated across the world, *El Habano*, lay at the heart of transnational processes of production, commerce, and myth making, as travel facilitated transfers of knowledge and practice, whereby seed, agricultural and industrial know-how, and human capital were all transplanted. This was accentuated by the migratory flows accompanying landmark political upheavals in Cuba, such as the late nineteenth-century struggles for independence from Spain, early twentieth-century U.S. occupations, and the 1959 Revolution.

The result was often-disputed identical brands, produced in Cuba and abroad, by island and émigré Cubans, and distributed through parallel chains, networks and circuits. In turn, this created a complex multi-tiered licit and illicit system that aimed to capitalise on the prestige of the 'authentic' product. Cuban cigar communities and economies were re-created abroad, often contested along class, race and gender lines, from both within and without. Moreover, above and beyond these communities and economies lay a far wider 'Havana cigar universe', which involved competing economies; political, social and cultural worlds; and imaginaries.

What follows first charts the broader Havana cigar universe. It then draws on the late Cuban ethnographer Fernando Ortiz's now classic Cuban counterpoint of tobacco and sugar and British social theorist Paul Gilroy's critique of the moral economies of Black Atlantic cultures, to frame a global commodity and labour history approach. Subsequently, it travels geographical 'pathways' of this one commodity, the luxury handmade Havana cigar, and the leaf that goes into its making, painting four time-sequential vignettes. The focus moves from struggles around more readily understood hierarchies of class, race and gender in cigar manufacturing in Cuba and Florida to those accompanying less readily recognised emasculated hierarchies in leaf growing in Connecticut and Indonesia. A final section highlights how Indonesia's rise to global pre-eminence challenges us to think beyond the racialised and gendered hierarchies of the Western Hemisphere and Black Atlantic to more global configurations.

2 This comes to the fore in the U.S.-Caribbean context in Matthew Pratt Guterl, American Mediterranean: Southern Slaveholders in the Age of Emancipation, Cambridge/London 2008.

3 Many publications highlight this, for example, Eumelio Espino Marrero, Cuban Cigar Tobacco: Why Cuban Cigars Are the World's Best, Neptune City (N.J.) 1996; Charles Del Todesco, The Havana Cigar: Cuba's Finest, New York 1997. See also my early monograph Tobacco on the Periphery: A Case study in Cuban Labour History: 1860–1958, Cambridge 1985. For the broader context, see: Iain Gately, La Diva Nicotiana, New York 2001.

1. The Havana Cigar Universe

Understanding how the 'Havana' became the centre of a whole cigar universe can be documented through agricultural science and technology; management, land tenure, labour, migration, and consumption; and also forms of communication. To give but a recent example, *Cigar Aficionado*, the up-market glossy magazine for 'the discerning male', founded in New York in the early 1990s, was highly successful in engineering an anti-anti-smoking campaign to promote cigar consumption. It did so socially and culturally as well as commercially, nurturing a whole cult of cigar cool whose epitome was the Havana.[4] Written for the connoisseur and punctuated by aggressive marketing, *Cigar Aficionado* reportage and feature articles signalled where and by whom Havana seed leaf is today grown outside Cuba, as also who is manufacturing and marketing the off-island Havana, and where.

The history behind this is what I set out to trace, charting the formation, growth, and decline of post-1868 and post-1959 Cuban cigar emigré communities; exploring economic, social and political processes in receiver territories as well as Cuba; and delving into the politics of historical myth and memory in émigré culture, associated as they are among Cubans in the United States with post-1868 political idealism and post-1959 political conservatism.[5] In the process, broader histories emerged, and these, for analytical purposes, I group into four categories.

First, there are closely interlocking cigar histories of territories with significant migratory flows out of and into Cuba. Most notable is that of Florida, boosted and eventually destroyed by two U.S. trade embargoes on Cuba: one in the 1890s build-up to Cuba's final war of independence from Spain and the other in the 1960s on the heels of the 1959 Revolution. Over and beyond the better-known Cuban émigré southern Florida cigar histories of Key West, Tampa and Ybor City,[6] there are also lesser-known histories

4 Having researched tobacco trade journals in the past, the striking levels of sophistication in Cigar Aficionado feature articles and advertising caused me to re-evaluate the importance of cultural and consumer histories in connection with the highly informative cigar reportage. For my preliminary reflections on this, see: Havana Cigars and the West's Imagination, in: Sander L. Gilman / Zhou Xun (eds.), Smoke: A Global History of Smoking, London 2004. For a broader discussion, see Arjun Appadurai, Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization, Minneapolis 1996.

5 Little work connects the various offshore economies and communities, but this is brought to the fore in the autobiography of tobacco agronomist Napoleón S. Padilla, Memorias de un cubano sin importancia, Hialeah 1998. See also Araceli Tinajero, El lector de tabaquería: Historia de una tradición cubana, Madrid 2007, which links the institution of reading in the cigar factories in Cuba, New York, Tampa, Puerto Rico, Mexico, and Spain; Evan Matthew Daniel, Rolling for the Revolution: A Transnational History of Cuban Cigar Makers in Havana, South Florida and New York City, 1853–1895, PhD dissertation, The New School 2010.

6 Among the pioneers were Louis A. Pérez, Jr., Reminiscences of a Lector: Cuban Cigar Makers in Tampa, in: Florida Historical Quarterly, 53 (1975); L. Glenn Westfall, Key West: Cigar City U.S.A., Key West (FL) 1984; and Don Vicente Martínez Ybor, The Man and His Empire: Development of the Clear Havana Industry in Cuba and Florida in the Nineteenth Century, New York 1987; Gerald Eugene Poyo, The Cuban Experience in the United States, 1865–1940: Migration, Community and Identity, in: Cuban Studies, 21 (1991); and Gary Mormino/George E. Pozetta, 'The Reader Lights the Candle': Cuban and Florida Cigar Workers' Oral Tradition, in: Labor's Heritage, Spring (1993). More recently: Robert P. Ingalls and L. A. Pérez, Jr., Tampa Cigar Workers: A Pictorial History, Gainesville 2003.

of the Florida-Georgia Shade tobacco belt, and linked cigar centres such as Amsterdam, Havana, Jacksonville, Quincy, and Thomasville.[7]

Equally in this first category would be nineteenth- and early twentieth-century New York, whose veritable explosion of cigar manufacturing involving many Cubans is only now being studied;[8] and Jamaica, with its little-known late nineteenth-century / early twentieth-century history of tobacco growers, workers and manufacturers who fled Cuba in the war-torn 1870s to found the once-thriving Jamaican tobacco economy.[9] Finally, looking across the Atlantic, the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century mass migratory waves of Canary Islanders into Cuban tobacco - in the context of the Canaries' geo-strategic position on the route between Spain, Africa and the Americas - fuelled subsequent return migration into the Canaries' own tobacco growing and production, using a blend of tobaccos from various parts of the world.[10]

In a second category are the closely intertwined histories of Puerto Rican and Cuban tobacco with no significant tobacco migration but closely monitored trade networks and circuits of knowledge.[11] Puerto Rico's own turbulent tobacco history in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, fostered by U.S. capital with the U.S. invasion of 1898 after the end of Spanish colonial rule, was in turn undercut in the mid-twentieth century in the U.S.-blessed, Puerto Rican strategy of Operation Bootstrap. The early twentieth century saw considerable numbers of Puerto Rican cigar workers heading north to U.S. centres of cigar manufacturing, especially New York, where they joined Cuban émigrés. State-engineered migrant farm labour programmes of the third quarter of the twentieth

7 I explored the history of North Florida with the aid of Kyle Doherty during my 2011 spring semester at the University of Florida. I am indebted to Paul Losch, Assistant Head of the University's excellent Latin American and Caribbean Library, for alerting me to the footnote (p.300) in Gerardo Castellanos, Motivos de Cayo Hueso, Havana 1935, on the existence of Cuban cigar factories and workers in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Gainesville; and to Head Librarian Richard Phillips for referring me to Daniel Bronstein, La Cubana City: A Cuban Cigar Manufacturing Community Near Thomasville, Georgia, During the 1890s, in: Georgia Historical Quarterly, 90 (2006) 3. Our research suggests an unexpectedly significant North Florida history.

8 There is reference to nineteenth- and twentieth-century Cuban cigar makers alongside Puerto Ricans in New York in César Andreu Iglesias (ed.), Memoirs of Bernardo Vega, New York 1984 [1977]. See also Lisandro Pérez, Cubans in Gotham: Immigrants, Exiles, and Revolution in Nineteenth-Century New York, New York forthcoming.

9 I documented the earlier Cuban-Jamaican history in: Political Idealism and Commodity Production: Cuban Tobacco in Jamaica, 1870–1930, in: Cuban Studies, 25 (1995). See also: id., The Machado Story: A Pioneer Industry in Jamaica, 1874–1962, Kingston n.d.

10 I am currently processing my research on the Canaries. The 1990s granting of autonomy to the regions of Spain, which coincided with the revitalisation of links abroad in Cuba's post-Soviet crisis 1990s, produced a spate of work on the Canaries, Cuba and tobacco, including Andrés Arnaldos Martínez/Jorge Arnaldos de Armas, La industria tabaquera canaria, 1852–2002, Gran Canarias 2003; Anelio Rodríguez, Concepción Tradición insular del tabaco, Santa Cruz de Tenerife 2000; Mario Luis López Isla, La aventura del tabaco, Santa Cruz de Tenerifa 1998; C. Legna Verna / J. L. Rivero Cevellos, La industria tabaquera en Canarias: Globalización y reestructuración, Bilbao 1997; Gregorio J. Cabrera Déniz, Canarios en Cuba: Un capítulo en la historia del archipiélago, 1875–1931, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria 1996; and Manuel de Paz, Wanguëmert y Cuba, 2 vols., Santa Cruz de Tenerife 1991.

11 Juan José Baldrich makes this point in his work on Puerto Rican tobacco, see: From the Origins of Industrial Capitalism in Puerto Rico to Its Subordination to the U.S. Tobacco Trust: Rucabado and Company, 1865–1901, in: Revista Mexicana del Caribe, 3 (1998) 5; see also: M. Burgos Malave, El conflicto tabacalero entre Cuba y Puerto Rico, in: Revista de Estudios Generales, 4 (1989–1990) 4.

century then transported displaced farmers and agricultural labourers from what were once Puerto Rican tobacco areas to the Shade tobacco fields of Connecticut.[12]

In the third category are cigar histories that have seen small yet significant catalysts of Cuban cigar migration – those of late nineteenth-century Mexico[13] and late twentieth-century Nicaragua and Honduras, and also Ecuador and Brazil,[14] but most notably the Dominican Republic. Hitherto far behind in the Havana cigar stakes, the Dominican Republic was reinvented in the 1990s as home to the born-again Havana cigar for the U.S. market, where the real Havana was forbidden fruit .[15]

Finally, there are African and Asian interconnections, linked to global and imperial cigar expansion involving the UK, the Netherlands, Germany and France. The French moved into territories such as Cameroon, whose leaf became part of the global cigar blend; while the tobacco history of the Philippines – the third last colony of Spain, along with Cuba and Puerto Rico, and a U.S. colony until 1946 – mirrored that of its erstwhile colonial counterparts.[16] The Shade tobacco of Cuba, Florida-Georgia and Connecticut was itself derived from, and in competition with, that of Sumatra (and Java), in turn originally derived from Cuban and American seed (tobacco being indigenous to the Americas).[17] Developed initially by the Dutch and marketed primarily in the Netherlands and Germany, the cheaper Indonesian leaf and ultimately cigar were destined to flood the global market.

12 Ruth Glasser makes this point in: Aquí me quedo: Puerto Ricans in Connecticut, Hartford 1997. I draw out the Connecticut history in: El Habano and the World it Has Shaped: Cuba, Connecticut and Indonesia, in: Cuban Studies, 41 (2010). Connecticut's links with both Puerto Rico and Cuba find their way into the novel *Parrish*, written by local writer Mildred Savage, New York 1958, and made into a 1961 Hollywood blockbuster tobacco 'soap opera' movie.

13 There is little in the way of comparative study, but for two studies on tobacco in Mexico see: Susan Deans-Smith, Bureaucrats, Planters and Workers: The Making of the Tobacco Monopoly in Bourbon Mexico, Austin 1992, and: José González Sierra, Monopolio del humo: elementos de la historia del tabaco en México y algunos conflictos de tabaqueros veracruzanos, 1915–1930, Xalapa 1987.

14 Little connects Brazil with Cuba, though there are excellent Brazilian tobacco studies, notably Bert Jude Barickman, A Bahian Counterpoint: Sugar, Tobacco, Cassava, and Slavery in the Recôncavo, 1780–1860, Stanford 1998; Catherine Lugar, The Portuguese Tobacco Trade and Tobacco Growers of Bahia in the Late Colonial Period, in: Dauril Alden / Warren Dean (eds.), Essays Concerning the Socioeconomic History of Brazil and Portuguese India, Gainesville 1977; and Jean-Baptiste Nardi, Fumo brasileiro no periodo colonial, Sao Paulo 1996. See also Michiel Baud/Kees Kooning, Germans and Tobacco in Bahia (Brazil), 1870–1940, in: Jahrbuch für Geschichte Lateinamerikas, 37 (2000).

15 See my detailed discussion in: Reinventing Mecca: Tobacco in the Dominican Republic, 1763–2007, in: Commodities of Empire Working Paper, 3 (October 2007), http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/ferguson-centre/commodities-of-empire/working-papers/index.htm (accessed on 16 July 2011). For the most recent in a spate of tobacco studies in the Dominican Republic since the 1970s, see: José Chez Checo/Mu-Kien Adriana Sang, El tabaco: historia general en República Dominicana, Santo Domingo 2007.

16 The Philippine connection is one yet to be documented, but see: Edilberto C. de Jesus, The Tobacco Monopoly in the Philippines: Bureaucratic Enterprise and Social Change, 1776–1880, Manila1980. For an excellent snapshot comparative representational study of the Philippines, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Hawaii, and Guam, see: Lanny Thompson, Imperial Archipelago: Representation and Rule in the Insular Territories under U.S. Dominion after 1898, Honolulu 2010.

17 I explore this in: El Habano and the World it Has Shaped (footnote 12).

2. Conceptualising Race, Gender and Labour in the Global Havana Cigar

Cuban ethnographer Fernando Ortiz blazed new ground in the Cuba of 1940 by publishing *Cuban Counterpoint*: *Tobacco and Sugar*, grounded on an analysis of these, Cuba's two major commodities. It was the seminal work in which he developed his concept of transculturation, using tobacco and sugar as metaphorical constructs, highlighting both their fetish power as commodities and a counter-fetish interpretation that challenged "essentialist understandings of Cuban history".[18]

Drawing on myth and culture, Ortiz began his counterpoint with an allegory to the dispute between *Don Carnal* (Carnival) and *Doña Cuaresma* (Lent) in the book *Libro de buen amor* (The Book of Good Love, 1330) by the medieval poet Juan Ruiz, known as the Archpriest of Hita (c. 1283–c. 1350). He thereby set the scene for a drama personifying masculine dark tobacco and feminine white sugar – *Don Tabaco* and *Doña Azúcar*. This was the literary precedent to enacting a long sequence of literal and figurative contrasts: sugar was a centripetal, centralising force reproducing the relationship between the exploitative metropolis and the exploited colonies, while tobacco was a centrifugal, decentralising force signifying autonomy, freedom and independence. Tobacco was quality and distinctiveness, 'the best', as opposed to 'the most' for sugar: the proud cigar band against the lowly sack. Sugar was black and unfree, in its slavery, contrasting with tobacco as white and free in its labour. Ortiz then unpicked these opposites in ways suggestive of new transculturations, akin to Cuba's emblematic culinary *ajiaco* (a stew of indigenous root vegetables), which was not so much *fusión* (a melting pot fusion) but *cocción* (an incessant simmering concoction), conflict and transformation, *mestizaje* (understood as both cultural and biological race mixing).

The 1990s revival of interest in the work of Ortiz[19] saw him as a thinker ahead of his times, writing in moments of international and domestic upheaval, which framed his concerns and help explain his work's allegorical character: a thinker very much in tune with the fluidity of the contemporary world. Ortiz's binary opposites were seen as tropes for events, ideas and interpretations that were in constant flux, and were the attraction of his work over half a century later, in the newly globalising world.[20]

The Ortiz revival coincided with the landmark 1990s work of Paul Gilroy conceptualising the hybridity of the Black Atlantic, and Ortiz's ideas resonate even more closely with the underlying thinking of Gilroy's *Darker than Blue: On the Moral Economies of Black Atlantic Culture* (2010).[21] The title, Gilroy explains, was taken from African American

18 Fernando Coronil, Introduction, in: Fernando Ortiz, Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar, Philadelphia (Pa.) 1995 [1940], p.xxviii.

19 Ibid.; Antonio Benítez Rojo, The Repeating Island: The Carribean and the Postmodern Perspective, Durham/London 1992 [1990]; Gustavo Pérez-Firmat, The Cuban Condition: Translation and Identity in Cuban Literature, Cambridge et al. 1989.

20 I elaborate on this in: Tobacco in the Contrapunteo: Ortiz and the Havana Cigar, in: Mauricio Font/Alfonso Quiroz (eds.), Cuban Counterpoints: The Legacy of Fernando Ortiz, Lanham (Md.) 2004.

21 Paul Gilroy, Darker than Blue: On the Moral Economies of Black Atlantic Culture, Cambridge (Mass.)/London 2010; also: id., The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double-Consciousness, London 1993.

writer Ralph Ellison on Louis Armstrong: "What did I do to be so black and so blue?" (p.149) The subtitle is borrowed from British historian Edward Thompson's work on the moral economy of the English crowd in the eighteenth century;[22] and the book posits the need to interrogate Black Atlantic culture along the lines of morality and political culture, juxtaposing dissent and accommodation, in a society in which consumer citizenship has largely corroded moral citizenship.

Gilroy highlights unsustainable consumer culture, contestations of human rights, and geopolitical conflicts, weaving through the ways in which consumerism of goods has undermined the political and social aspirations of African Americans – his main concern – by individualising what was once a collective spirit. This he demonstrates through a compelling analysis of the lost moral power of commodities such as the automobile (once the symbolic vehicle of freedom in the U.S. civil rights movement), music (by Chuck Berry, Jimi Hendrix and Bob Marley) and writing (by Ralph Ellison and Frantz Fanon).

Gilroy depicts African American Studies as frozen at a critical juncture in its history. He argues that, whereas the colour line was once an overriding social and historical phenomenon, today we are beset by economic and ecological crises, neo-imperial warfare, and a fundamental questioning of broader human rights, all of which challenge established analytical comfort zones. He asserts the need to rethink how "the politics of race and racism, as well as the political and commercial value of blackness, have been altered decisively."[23] He argues:

> *The geo-political order is changing. Old inequalities persist and new varieties of unfreedom emerge. The racialised structuring of our world which was established during the nineteenth century is evolving too… This situation requires new analytical tools and conceptual adjustments… The teleological sequence that made the overdevelopment countries into the future and their formerly colonised territories into the past is being left behind. If the West now represents the past while the rest are to be the future, what does that change do to the assumptions about history and historicity that were required by racial hierarchy?*[24]

What are the implications of this for my work on the global Havana cigar? For Ortiz the cigar, more than any other product of Cuba, symbolised freedom, independence, nationalism and sovereignty. Yet there are equally ways in which it lies at the heart of an on- and off-island history that has embedded within it not only challenges to nationalism and sovereignty but also new forms of unfreedoms, as suggested by Gilroy; and this takes us to the heart of global commodity and labour history.

22 E. P. Thompson, The Moral Economy of the English Crowd during the Eighteenth Century, in: id., Customs in Common, New York 1993.

23 Gilroy, Darker Than Blue (footnote 21), p. 2

24 Ibid., p. 4.

Commodity chain analysis[25] tends to focus on the substitution of a product or parts of a product by other such products that are cheaper to produce, different in quality, or new on the market; and on opportunities for traders to reorganise supply and create consumer alternatives, unbound by former dependencies and monopolies of suppliers. The appearance of new products or varieties does not necessarily entail the collapse of the older chain because frequently parallel structures develop. The emergence of informal and/or illicit economies and their impact on a chain are more difficult to trace, yet these hidden parts of a global commodity chain may be essential to an understanding of its entire functioning. Historians have frequently presented chains as linear connections between producers, traders, and consumers. Extending the analysis to encompass networks and circuits of knowledge challenges us to understand the fragilities and disconnections of their political, social, and cultural dimensions.[26]

There are multifaceted implications of this for understanding global labour history. Historians of the earlier era of the Black Atlantic have demonstrated the relationship between, on the one hand, the emergence of regions of 'freedom' in Western Europe, following the decline of serfdom and feudalism and the rise of market commerce and capitalism, that swelled the consumer markets for commodities previously produced under slave regimes, and, on the other, a commodity history nurturing colonial and post-colonial systems of migrant labour and forms of neo-slavery. Commodification in the Black Atlantic during the period after the formal end of African slavery in the Americas was when the line dividing freedom and unfreedom became even more blurred, and systems of control, often physical, violent and segregated, were put into place.[27]

Moreover, commodity production was not fixed in a single space but rather moved in a continual peripatetic movement of people, production, and the final goods. Marketing and consumption of the commodity (and the meanings attached to advertising and consumption) were ever more divorced from the realities of the labour and production processes and the locales where the product originated. In the process, global labour historians today argue, forms of labour management and discipline practiced under slave

25 A classic is Gary Gereffi / Miguel Korzeniewicz (eds.), Commodity Chains and Global Capitalism, Westport 1994, which includes: Terence Hopkins/Immanuel Wallerstein, Commodity Chains: Construct and Research.

26 Appadurai's 'regimes of values' and 'concepts of commodification', for example, see: A. Appadurai (ed.), The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective, Cambridge 1986, and: id., Modernity at Large (footnote 4); James Ferguson, Cultural Exchange: New Developments in the Anthropology of Commodities, in: Cultural Anthropology, 3 (1988); Philip Raikes et al., Global Commodity Chain Analysis and the French Filière Approach: Comparison and Critique, in: Economy and Society, 29 (August 2000) 3; Peter Dicken et al., Chains and Networks, Territories and Scales: Towards a Relational Framework for Analysing the Global Economy, in: Global Networks, 1 (2001) 2; Alex Hughes / Suzanne Reimer (eds.), Geographies of Commodity Chains, London/New York 2004.

27 For the earlier period, a classic is Eric Williams, Capitalism and Slavery, Chapel Hill (N.C.) 1994 [1944]; and major work has been produced by, among others: Robin Blackburn, The American Crucible: A Landmark History of the Rise, Abolition and Legacy of Slavery in the New World, London 2011; id., The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the modern, 1492–1800, London 1997; id., The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery, 1776-1848, London 2011 [1988]. For the U.S. post-slavery period, see: Paul Ortiz, Emancipation Betrayed: The Hidden History of Black Organizing and White Violence in Florida from Reconstruction to the Bloody Election of 1920, Berkeley (Ca.) 2005. See also Robin D.G. Kelley, Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination, Boston (Ma.) 2002; and id., Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class, New York 1996 [1994].

regimes of the Americas were replicated in controlled migrant labour camps and the 'coolie' of the East is the slave of today.[28]

My Havana cigar traversed such a history, whereby - alongside island and émigré Cubans – Europeans, African Americans, and Caribbeans in Connecticut as well as Sumatrans, Javanese, Madurese and Chinese in Indonesia all played a part in the production of a *Cuban* cigar. Strikingly, they did so without significantly changing associations of the cigar with an iconography of Hispano-Cuban white skilled masculine labourers and exotic white women in the marketing or the cultural meanings attached to the pleasure, desire, and consumption of the luxury product.

3. Cuba: Those Militant Cigar Workers

Let us turn now to where my cigar story begins in Cuba: where, in Ortiz fashion, cigar making conjures up that elite white male world and cigar makers were those Hispanic Cuban male aristocrats of labour fashioning their quality product from a strong, fragrant leaf. The late nineteenth-century Cuban legend surrounding the prestigious cigar export industry and master cigar maker was one in which Hispanic white male icons symbolised labour, political idealism and militancy, while the single most obvious iconography of women was the seductive embossed Hispanic white lady on the luxury cigar labels. This was, of course, a highly circumscribed view, removed from reality.[29]

Hand cigar rolling is skilled work, but there is little to indicate it was originally considered as such. Nineteenth-century cigar makers were found in barracks, prisons, and homes. African slaves, indentured Chinese and free coloureds were brought into rolling shops alongside white Spanish wage labour, often under appalling conditions. Early wage labourers lived, side by side with slave and indentured labour, in badly ventilated galleries over the rolling shops, receiving only part of their pay in money, having leave of absence only once a week, and having to hold down a cigar maker's *libreta,* or identification card, in which debts were recorded, restricting workers from freely transferring their labour from one factory to another.

Figures for the 1860s signal 60 per cent of the work force in Havana and 55 per cent throughout the island were slaves and free coloureds. By 1899, the figures had fallen to 30 and 37 per cent, respectively. Against the backdrop of 1880s abolition of slavery and 1890s depression and war turmoil, many 'non-whites' were among those who left Cuba;

28 Thought-provoking work in this respect is that of Marcel van der Linden, Workers of the World: Essays toward a Global Labor History, Leiden / Boston 2008; M. v. d. Linden et al. (eds.), Transnational Networks in the Twentieth Century: Ideas and Practices, Individuals and Organizations, Leipzig 2008; and M. v. d. Linden / Rana P. Behal (eds.), Coolies, Capital and Colonialism: Studies in Indian Labour History, Cambridge 2006.

29 I discuss this in: Reflections on Class, Race, Gender and Nation in Cuban Tobacco: 1850–2000, in: Constance Sutton (ed.), Revisiting Caribbean Labor: Essays in Honour of O. Nigel Bolland, Kingston (Jamaica) 2005; id., Gender Constructs of Labour in Prerevolutionary Cuban Tobacco, in: Social and Economic Studies, 37 (1988) 1 and 2; id., Gender Issues in Contemporary Cuban Tobacco Farming, in: World Development, 5 (1987) 1; see also: Andrew Zimbalist, Cuba's Socialist Economy Toward the 1990s, Boulder/London 1987.

and there was an entrenchment of Hispanic white workers, with an influx of Spanish immigrants into the skilled jobs in Havana's premium export factories. With the twentieth-century relative decline of the industry, the quality rolling skill and its national and racial component broke down, and the proportion of black cigar workers in Havana increased to 40 percent in 1943, though stood at only 11 per cent of those in cigar sorting and box labelling, the cream of the trades. There was little reference to women cigar rollers, although the preponderant home and outwork industry suggests the contrary, and women interviewed spoke of being taught by their fathers to roll cigars in the home and working in smaller local rolling shops. Women were excluded from rolling in the premium export factories.[30]

Thus, while in Spain Carmen may have immortalised the women cigar rollers of Seville, Cuba's Carmens were to be the stemmers, taking out the central vein of the cigar tobacco leaf. Even then, in the mid- to late nineteenth century, factory stemmers were Hispanic and male, and their pay and conditions on a par with the cigar makers. By the twentieth century, however, it was women stemmers who formed the majority work force. In addition to the stemming departments in the cigar factories, there were large stemmeries in the tobacco agricultural regions of Havana, Las Villas and Pinar del Río, many belonging to U.S. export companies and each employing on a short seasonal basis hundreds of women, especially black women, who were among the worst paid and least considered sectors.

Through their guilds, late nineteenth-century master cigar makers, sorters or box decorators succeeded in restricting entry along national, race and gender lines, and that was when the skill of premium cigar making most came into its own. The first major challenge to the exclusiveness and control of the trade came in the 1880s, from cigar makers in the less prestigious and less well-paid factories working on inferior-type cigars, who were not unionised, at a time when a large concentration of production and workers coincided with the abolition of slavery and a potential influx of newly freed labour. The challenge came in the form of an explosion of labour militancy and strikes with marked racial and nationalist overtones to class interests, with incipient labour movements divided along reformist, anarchist, anarcho-syndicalist, and nationalist lines.

A second major challenge came in the 1920s, when a semblance of national craft unions had been consolidated, again amidst hard economic times as the 1930s Depression loomed near. The question of mechanisation hovered over the industry, and there was stepped up anti-labour repression. Militancy and strikes went far beyond the confines of existing unions, involving women stemmers for whom unionisation was in its infancy.[31] Cuba's women stemmers – in effect Cuba's majority female labour sector (only domestics

30 Ibid.

31 Interestingly, there is reference to a short-lived *Gremio de Despalilladores* (the original masculine word in Spanish for stemmers) in 1878 and no other recorded attempt until the 1917 Gremio de Despalilladoras (the word by then feminine).

and textile workers compared) – displayed high rates of literacy and organisation, and mounted a strong labour challenge in the form of strikes in the 1920s and 1930s.
Workers across the cigar industry proved to be a force to be reckoned with on issues vital to the very fabric of Cuban economy and society, notably the two attempts to mechanise an industry seen to be cause for national pride. The issue was volatile and ensured solidarity among tobacco and non-tobacco workers alike. This came to a head in 1948, in the context of cold war politics, when manufacturers and government coincided in wanting an end to militant communist-led union opposition to the machine. One stemmery manager angrily declared "the need for a bloody purge, a need to put a stop to these nigger women."[32]
We know relatively little about the 'nigger' women stemmers, but one thing is clear: those women and men who left Cuba did not leave behind them a labour situation uncontested along class, race and gender lines.

4. South Florida: Those Radical Emigrés

Cuban emigré workers and their families in Florida in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries found themselves on newly divisive terrain of the reconstruction and Jim Crow U.S. South. The initial wave left Cuba under Spanish rule and with slavery in place, and struggles that were by no means undivided. In Florida, their enclave community was then beset by new dimensions of racial segregation, violence, and lynching, in addition to influxes of Italian and Spanish immigrants.
Florida's early offshore Havana cigar world of Key West had also been home to Cuban nationalist and labour unrest, such that by the 1890s Spanish manufacturers sought to undercut this by relocating to other Florida towns, whose patricians were aggressively attracting industry. Descendants today proudly recall how their worker forebears donated from their wages to the independence cause, and how the communication from New York for the 1895 landing signalling the outbreak of the second war of independence was rolled in Florida into a cigar and smuggled into Cuba. They also speak with sorrow of a community divided.
The big losers in Tampa were 'non-white' Cuban cigar makers and their families, increasingly forced to live their lives separate from Hispano-Cubans and join the African American drift north. The advent of the cigar machine cemented this, with a process of feminisation and de-skilling in mechanised cigar rolling, which had started with the introduction of the bunching moulds in hand rolling. In Florida, labour struggles were undercut by vigilante violence and relocation north, notably to New Jersey.[33]

32 A detailed study of the struggle waged against the cigar machine can be found in: Martín Duarte Hurtado, La máquina torcedora de tabaco y las luchas en torno a su implantación en Cuba, Havana 1973.

33 See Susan D. Greenbaum, More Than Black: Afro-Cubans in Tampa, Gainesville 2002; Nancy A. Hewitt, Southern Discomfort: Women's Activism in Tampa, Florida, 1800s–1920s, Urbana 2001; Evelio Grillo, Black Cuban, Black American: A Memoir, Houston (Tx.) 2000; Winston James, From a Class for Itself to a Race on Its Own: The Strange

Even so, in the 1950s, Tampa's Havana cigar industry was still the city's largest single employer, with thousands working in cigar manufacturing and providing a source of overseas support for Cuban revolutionary organisations. It was after the 1960s embargo that this changed dramatically, as more than 6,000 cigar makers lost their jobs. A United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) report prior to the embargo is illuminating as to why.[34] Cuba was the source of nearly a quarter of leaf tobacco for U.S. cigars. Some two-thirds of the seven billion cigars sold in the U.S. in a typical year contained Cuban tobacco. Around 670 million 'clear Havanas' and 'Havana filler' cigars used 45 % of Cuban tobacco imports; the other 55% was used in 'blended filler' cigars. If imports were to cease, 'clear Havana' manufacturers foresaw their problems as 'insurmountable' unless Cuban leaf was to be replaced by some subtropical tobacco to obtain the aroma and flavour needed. This marked the start of a quest to grow Cuban seed tobacco and move Havana cigar hand-rolling operations to the Caribbean and Central America. As a result, by the 1970s the cigar industry was fast disappearing as a factor in the economic life of Tampa Bay; by the 1980s, mechanised rolling using homogenised leaf[35] was yet another nail in coffin for labour; and Florida's minimum wage policy was often invoked by companies to explain why they 'had' to go offshore.

The post-1959 new wave of Hispanic white migration from Cuba, primarily to Miami but also to Tampa, sealed a silencing of Afro-Cubans' earlier presence and activism in labour, mutual aid, and community movements. The imagery bolstered was again the familiar Hispanic male cigar maker and seductive 'Latin' lady on cigar labels and bands; and a whole iconography of Hispanic Cuban cigar culture accompanied the retelling of the Florida 'clear Havana' story.[36] When Tampa's Ybor City and famed Vicente Martinez Ybor factory were rescued from demolition from developers in the 1980s, they became a tourist attraction complete with cigar museum, heavily Hispanic and male in their recreation of the past. One lowly building, on the outskirts of the renovated centre, remained

Case of Afro-Cuban Radicalism and Afro-Cubans in Florida, 1870–1940, in: id., Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia: Caribbean Radicalism in Early Twentieth-Century America, London 1998; and Nancy Raquel Mirabal, Telling Silences and Making Community: Afro-Cubans in Ybor City and Tampa, 1899–1915, in: Lisa Brock/Digna Castañeda Fuertes (eds.), Between Race and Empire: Afro-Americans and Cubans Before the Cuban Revolution, Philadelphia (Pa.) 1998. Also, R. P. Ingalls, Urban Vigilantes in the New South: Tampa, 1882–1936, Knoxville 1988.

34 A copy of the 1960 70-page USDA Report is housed in the Special Collections Library of the University of Florida and provides statistical and qualitative evidence on the history and juncture at the time of the U.S. cigar industry, as well as the significant impact of the embargo on Cuban leaf imports. President John F. Kennedy famously ensured he had his supply of Havana cigars before signing the embargo into law.

35 Homogenised leaf, also known as reconstituted leaf was introduced in the U.S. in the 1950s. Comprising huge sheets made from tobacco scraps, it was used first as a binder and only later as a wrapper in mechanised production. This was not to characterise Tampa's 'clear Havana' industry, and its use spread later only.

36 See: Kathryn Hall Proby, Mario Sanchez: Painter of Key West Memories, Key West (Fl..) 1981; Joe Davidson, The Art of the Cigar Label, Secaucus (N.J.) 1989; Narciso Menocal, The Tobacco Industry in Cuba and Florida: Its Golden Age in Lithography and Architecture, Coral Gables (Fl..) 1995. Also, the image recreated in the Broadway hit play Anna in the Tropics by Cuban-American Pulitzer-winning playwright Nilo Cruz, New York 2003, and the melancholy for that age in Cuba and Tampa expressed in Pablo Medina, The Cigar Roller, New York 2005, and in the earlier novels of Ybor City-born José Yglesias, The Truth About Them, New York 1971, and: Down There, New York 1971.

as home to the Marti-Maceo Club founded in 1904 by those wishing to hold on to the dream of a united Cuba.[37] It wasn't until the turn of the twenty-first century that the museum was to mount an exhibition that bore testimony to Afro-Cuban families.

Their story is told in Susan Greenbaum's *Afro-Cubans in Tampa: More than Black* (2002), whose opening is particularly striking. In the early 1960s, an Afro-Cuban lawyer was defending, and having to translate for, a Mexican farm worker in the Tampa courthouse. Afterwards, the presiding judge asked the lawyer how he had learned to speak Spanish: "The lawyer replied: 'I always have known how. I was born in Cuba.' The judge's retort: 'Cuban? I didn't know you were a Cuban. I always thought you were a nigger.'" (p.1) For Greenbaum, the casual racism on the judge's part captured how, in the United States, media stereotypes and popular construction of Cuban-American identity, especially the (Hispanic) Cuban-American Miami 'success story' had silenced blackness.

Her ethno-historical study retraced the social and cultural adaptations of black Cuban cigar makers, charting their attempts to negotiate the multiethnic, multicultural industrial enclave of Tampa while also involved in the politics of Cuba, from independence through revolution. Theirs were shifting diasporic identities – Afro-Cuban, Afro-Cuban-American, African-American. Over the generations, there were periods when they identified more as African-American than Cuban-American, but, she argues, there was no linear progression nor can there be said to be an identifiable end-point.

It might be argued that such shifting racial identities were not all that dissimilar from identity politics among Cubans in Cuba, as well as the United States. Over time, the island experience itself uneasily traversed variants of race relations: the more archetypal bipolar U.S.-type system of the black/white divide (especially during and after U.S. occupation); the more three-tiered system of the kind erected for the non-Hispanic Caribbean (distinguishing black, brown – mulato/a – and white); and the fluid racial continuum of the Hispanic Caribbean and Ibero-America. There were historical moments in Cuba when one or other appeared uppermost. There were times that were more inclusionary, when the races came together, such as the late nineteenth-century independence struggles of 1868-1898 and late twentieth-century revolutionary period of 1959–1989, with a primacy of nation over race and class. There were other more exclusionary times, when the races were pushed apart (1899–1958 and 1989 to the present). Throughout, there have been struggles in which there has been a primacy of race over class, and vice versa.[38] Similar observations have been drawn for gender/class primacy, largely, it should

37 The Club was named after Cuba's two great independence leaders: José Martí, the political leader of Hispanic descent, and military General Antonio Maceo, of part African heritage.

38 Pedro Pérez Sarduy and I documented this in the introductions to our edited collections Afro-Cuban Voices: On Race and Identity in Contemporary Cuba, Gainesville (Fl..) 2000; and AFROCUBA: An Anthology of Cuban Writing on Race, Politics and Culture, London et al. 1993. Our work was born of pressing concerns over growing racism in 1990s crisis Cuba and the need to articulate black Cuban experiences and perceptions, in much the same way Greenbaum was motivated in her work.

be noted, in the context of processes of feminisation of labour.[39] However, it is to processes of emasculation of labour that I now wish to turn.

5. Connecticut: Those Seasonal Farm Hands

While Cubans in Cuba and Cuban émigrés in Florida were fighting their battles, a related story of Shade tobacco leaf, developed from Cuban seed for Havana cigar binder and wrapper, was unfolding in what was once known as Connecticut Tobacco Valley. Today comprising only small expanses of tent-covered Shade tobacco land, alongside disused tobacco barns and derelict farm worker camps, tobacco acreage was at its height in 1921. An ephemeral 1960s revival was not on a scale to stem the decline that began with the 1950s introduction of homogenised binder and wrapper, was compounded by the 1964 US Surgeon General's report on the hazards of smoking, and was sealed with offshore relocation.

What is often recounted in its heyday as a proud New England story of twentieth-century tobacco-growing dynasties was also laced with cutthroat tobacco business and labour practices. Growers met their high seasonal labour requirements in various ways, including child and high school summer labour[40] but especially immigrant and migrant labour.

From the mid to late nineteenth century, waves of Irish and Eastern and Southern Europeans were met off the boats by middlemen and 'sold' to farmers, a practice described in 1911 as "a little nearer the slave trade than anything I had experienced."[41] Shortly thereafter, Southern planters, concerned about the lure of better pay in the North and with the aid of the Ku Klux Klan, went to great lengths to prevent black workers and their families from boarding trains and buses to head north.[42] Some did succeed in leaving, however, and, starting in 1916, African American students were recruited from black colleges in Georgia, Florida and Virginia for summer work.[43] Referred to in Connecticut as 'plantation darkies' or 'plantation negroes', Southern blacks, it was reported, 'streamed into Hartford' hoping for a better life, safe from violence, and worked in tobacco warehouses after the harvest or in better-paid non-agricultural jobs. As a result, the black

39 This comes to the fore in N. A. Hewitt, Southern Discomfort (footnote 31) and my Gender Constructs of Labour (footnote 27).

40 There were press reports on child labour – see, for example: John J. Egan, Tobacco Child Labor Under Fire by Labor Commissioner, in: Hartford Times, 31 December 1946 – that contrast with the gentle nostalgia of 1990s personal testimonies of local people, see: Windsor Storyteller: A chronicle of 20th century life in Windsor, 2 vols., Windsor 1999.

41 This is recounted in James F. O'Gorman, Connecticut Valley Vernacular: The Vanishing Landscape and Architecture of the New England Tobacco Fields, Philadelphia (Pa.) 2002, p. 37.

42 This is a point made forcefully by P. Ortiz in Emancipation Betrayed (footnote 25). For a graphic recounting of that history, see: Stetson Kennedy, Jim Crow Guide: The Way it Was, Boca Raton 1990 [1959]; id., The Klan Unmasked, Boca Raton 1990 [1954]; id., Palmetto Country, Tallahassee (Fl..) 1989 [1942].

43 Stacey Close, The Ties That Bind: Southwest Georgians, Black College Students, and Migration to Hartford, in: The Journal of South Georgia History, 15 (2000), p. 19.

population of Hartford more than doubled from 1910 to 1920, occasioning a 1922 special report on "The Negro in the Industries and Other Work of the State."[44]

During World War II, the USDA and War Manpower Commission declared tobacco a crop essential to the war effort (smokes for the boys), and in 1943 the Farm Security Administration turned to the British West Indies, Jamaica in particular, for farm labour. Jamaican-born Fay Clarke Johnson documented oral histories of this all-but-forgotten interlude in *Soldiers of the Soil* (1995), its title borrowed from the Allied war effort.[45] Conditions were basic, and men tended to keep to camp, as they often met with hostility. In the words of George Christie, from Manchester, Jamaica, in a telegram sent to President Franklin D. Roosevelt: "Jamaicans dissatisfied of conditions… driven as dumb cattle, work under intimidation. United Nations fight for freedom, justice and fair play. We should have same. Please investigate."[46]

After the war, growers turned to employ displaced Europeans, before bringing in waves of Puerto Rican migrant labour to the camps under agreements signed with the Puerto Rican Department of Labour Migration Division (DTDM). During the 1960s and early 1970s, Puerto Ricans accounted for most Connecticut farm labour.

The Puerto Rican agricultural migration to Connecticut paralleled the earlier Cuban manufacturing out-migration to Florida in being integrally linked to upheavals on the island. These ranged from the U.S. occupation of Puerto Rico in 1898 and its subsequent incorporation into the United States, accompanied by the rise and decline of U.S. investment in Puerto Rican tobacco and many struggles associated with it,[47] to the post-World War II Operation Bootstrap, which resulting in an estimated 78% decline in the agricultural labour force in the years 1940–1979.[48] The migrants were male and

44 Quoted in Margaret Buker Jay, Historical Perspective, in: Anadel Schnip / Katya Williamson (eds.), Changing Landscape through People: Connecticut Valley Tobacco, a Documentary of Photographs and Writing for the 1980s, n.p. n.d.

45 Fay Clarke Johnson, Soldiers of the Soil, New York 1995. The rallying cry was "Keep the Boys in Smokes". Thousands of Jamaican men signed up to contribute to the war effort, also seeking adventure and economic betterment.

46 Ibid, p.80, quoted from The Hartford Courant, 29 July 1944, p.8.

47 During the first half of the twentieth century, tobacco was not only second in economic importance in Puerto Rico but also a scenario of struggle, on which there have been some excellent studies. A 1950s classic is: Robert A. Manners, Tabara: Subcultures of a tobacco and mixed crops municipality, in: Julian H. Steward et al., The People of Puerto Rico, Urbana 1956. More recently, see: Teresita A. Levy, The History of Tobacco Cultivation in Puerto Rico, 1899–1940, Ph.D. dissertation, City University of New York 2007. The new historians of the 1970s and 1980s produced pioneering labour studies, notably Angel G. Quintero Rivera, Socialist and Cigarmaker: Artisans' Proletarianization in the Making of the Puerto Rican Working Class, in: Latin American Perspectives, 10 (1983 [1978]), 2 and 3; and J. J. Baldrich, Sembraron la no siembra: Los cosecheros de tabaco puertorriquenos frente a las corporaciones tabacaleras, 1920–1934, Río Piedras (P.R.) 1988. More recently, see: Erick J. Pérez Velasco/David Baronov, Bibliografía sobre el movimiento obrero de Puerto Rico, 1873–1996, San Juan (P.R.) 1996; and Arturo Bird Carmona, Parejeros y desafiantes: la comunidad tabaquera de Puerta de Tierra a principios del siglo XX, San Juan (P.R.) 2008. Fictional representation of 1920s and 1930s struggles can be found in Enrique Laguerre, Los dedos de la mano, Río Piedras (P.R.) 1978 [1951].

48 After becoming U.S. citizens in 1917, many Puerto Ricans went to the mainland in search of work. The Hawaii Sugar Planters Association recruited them to cut sugar alongside Japanese, Filipinos, Chinese and Portuguese. By 1926, hundreds of Puerto Rican families were picking cotton in Alabama, and by the 1940s thousands of Puerto Ricans were to be found in poorly paid agricultural work. For the 1950s and 1960s Great Migration to the U.S. mainland, see: Jorge Duany, A Transnational Colonial Migration: Puerto Rico's Farm Labor Program, in: New

many came to Connecticut from Puerto Rico's own tobacco valley to work for the very same employers.[49]

Contracts stipulated they must be strong in physical stature, in good health, free from communicable diseases, accustomed to hard work, and with no police records or reputation as troublemakers. However, documents of the Shade Tobacco Growers Association and the DTDM Hartford Office from the mid-1950s to the mid-1970s, and Connecticut local press and other holdings from the 1950s,[50] detail many complaints lodged by migrant workers and battles fought by them and organisations active on their behalf, including the Young Lords, the Puerto Rican Socialist Party, and the Episcopal Church in Puerto Rico subsequently replaced by the Ecumenical Ministry of Agricultural Workers. The more growers tried to curb the work of organisations such as these, as well as access to farms and camps, the greater the protests; and the insults meted out to workers, as in 1973, were highly racialised: 'cerdos que se venden por unos centavos' (pigs bought for a few cents), 'negros sucios' (dirty niggers), 'esclavos de la colonia' (slaves from the colony).[51]

West Indian Guide, 84 (2010) 3 and 4; and, for a comparative study of Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, see: id., Blurred Borders: Transnational Migration between the Hispanic Caribbean and the United States, Chapel Hill (N.C.) 2011. Also, Ismael García-Colón, Claiming Equality in Western New York, in: Latino Studies, 6 (2008); Carmen Teresa Whalen, From Puerto Rico to Philadelphia: Puerto Rican Workers and Postwar Economies, Philadelphia 2001; Cindy Hahamovitch, The Fruits of their Labor: Atlantic Coast Farmworkers and the Making of Migrant Poverty, 1879–1945, Chapel Hill (N.C.) / London 1997; Frank Bonilla, Manos que Sobran: Work, Migration, and the Puerto Rican in the 1990s, in: Carlos Alberto Torre et al. (eds.), The Commuter Nation: Perspectives on Puerto Rican Migration, Río Piedras 1994; and Gloria Bonilla-Santiago, Organizing Puerto Rican Migrant Farmworkers: The Experience of Puerto Ricans in New Jersey, New York 1988.

49 There has been no study as such of gender and migration in tobacco, in contrast with the many studies on women and migration in the garment industry and on women in the Puerto Rican tobacco industry: Fernando Pico, Las trabajadoras del tabaco en Utuado según el censo de 1910, in: id., Al filo del poder: subalternos y dominantes en Puerto Rico, 1739–1910, Río Piedras 1993 [1985]; Amilcar Tirado Avilés, Sobre el desarollo de la industria del tabaco en Puerto Rico y su impacto en la mujer puertorriqueña, 1898–1920, in: CENTRO: Journal of the Center for Puerto Rican Studies, Winter (1989–1990); and J. J. Baldrich, Gender and the Decomposition of the Cigar-making Craft, 1899–1931, in: Félix Matos Rodríguez/Linda Delgado (eds.), 'Según tu punto de vista': New Perspectives on Puerto Rican Women's History, Boston 1998. See also two studies of the anarchist, feminist writer and activist Luisa Capetillo, who, exceptional for her times, was a cigar factory reader and not only in Puerto Rico but also in New York, Tampa and Havana, see: Norma Valle Ferrer, Luisa Capetillo: Historia de una mujer proscrita, San Juan (P.R.) 1975; and Julio Ramos (ed.), Amor y anarquía: Los escritos de Luisa Capetillo San Juan 1992.

50 Records housed in the Library of CENTRO, the Centre for Puerto Rican Studies, Hunter College, City University of New York, include the archives of the Farm Labor Program (1848–1993), Connecticut Shade Tobacco Growers' Agricultural Association Files (STGAA, 1955-76), Regional and Field Offices (1948–1993), Hartford Regional Office (1961–1984), and Regional Field Office Farm Labourer Files (1958–1983). Rich press collections for the same period are housed at the Hartford State Library; the Hartford Project, Trinity College, Hartford; University of Connecticut, Storrs; Windsor Tobacco Museum; and Windsor Historical Society, among others.

51 STGAA, CEPR, Windsor: File 30, Box 2526. There is no study of racialisation as such in the Connecticut case, but see: Ramón Grosfoguel/Ramon and Chloe S. Georas, The Racialization of Latino Caribbean migrants in the New York Metropolitan Area, in: CENTRO: Journal of the Center for Puerto Rican Studies, 7 (1995) 1. Suggestive of work that needs to be done, raising the issue of race/class primacy in struggle, is: W. James, Afro-Puerto Rican Radicalism in the United Status: Reflections on the Political Trajectories of Arturo Schomburg and Jesús Colón, in: CENTRO: Journal of the Center for Puerto Rican Studies, 7 (1995) 1. Schomburg and Colón were cigar makers who left Puerto Rico for New York in the early twentieth century and opted for different trajectories of struggle: for Schomburg, race was uppermost and for Colón, class.

In 1974, the attempt to have a farm workers bill passed in the Connecticut General Assembly was frustrated, and it was reported that farmer groups "insisted that an anti-strike clause must be included in the bill, or else their livelihoods would be in danger. The tobacco growers also threatened to move their operations to Latin America, where they hoped to find both good growing conditions and a docile labor force."[52] After failing to sign a further agreement with the Puerto Rican government and bussing in Mexican-American day labourers on a much smaller scale, companies and growers did, in effect, move their operations abroad.

6. Indonesia: That Coolie Slave Labour

The other side of the globe, Indonesia was fast cementing an advantage over competitors with enormous profits derived in no small part from what was decried as 'coolie slave labour'. Renowned among cigar smokers from the late nineteenth century for growing and curing the world's most prized wrapper leaf, Dutch Indonesia was also reviled for making other colonial ventures look benevolent. Its labour and living conditions were infamously compared to those of slavery, and unrest became a constant source of concern. It was what Ann Laura Stoler, in *Capitalism and Confrontation in Sumatra's plantation belt, 1870–1979* (1995) referred to as one of 'brutalities alternatively whispered and shouted': ever present in peasant-labourer discontent and in the post-colonial state's 'maneuvers and menaces', open to foreign business and ruthless in stamping out oppositional political and labour organising.[53]

It is not known for certain when tobacco, which is indigenous to the Americas, was taken across the world to Asia, but the first tobacco to be taken to Holland from Sumatra is reported to have been in 1860. Soon after, large-scale Dutch colonial investment followed in Indonesian tobacco, developed from Cuban seed and with the aid of Cuban agronomists. Sumatra leaf was favoured on the world market as cigar wrapper, since its thin central vein and thin flexible texture meant it could be used to wrap up to four times as many cigars as other leaf.[54]

While Sumatra first attained pre-eminence, lending its name to the quality cigar wrapper leaf, it was early overtaken in volume by Java. Estates emerged according to different lo-

52 STGAA, CEPR, Windsor: File 30, Box 2526.

53 Ann Laura Stoler, Capitalism and Confrontation in Sumatra's Plantation Belt, 1870–1979, 2nd Ed., Ann Arbor 1995; Stoler refers to contemporary silences as the quiet menace of a colonial past casting its shadow over the present. See also Karl L. Pelzer, Planters against Peasants: The Agrarian Struggle in East Sumatra, 1947–1958, Gravenhage 1982; and id., Planter and Peasant: Colonial Policy and the Agrarian Struggle in East Sumatra, 1863–1947, Gravenhage 1978; and Jan Breman, Taming the Coolie Beast, New York 1989.

54 The late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century experiments with nets in territories of the Americas (Florida-Georgia, Connecticut and Cuba) were to simulate the natural cloud coverage of Sumatra in the hopes of producing a cigar wrapper leaf that was similarly thin and elastic. Growing tobacco under cloth was what was to become Shade, as opposed to sun-grown, tobacco, see: Randall R. Kincaid, Shade Tobacco Growing in Florida, in: Quincy North Florida Experimental Station Bulletin, 136 (May 1960 [1956]). I discuss this in more detail in: El Habano and the World it has Shaped (footnote12).

cal land tenure and labour arrangements. The *apanage* system, which was unique to the Central Principalities, gave benefits to companies through local village heads, but was never applied by the Dutch to the directly ruled parts. There, the 1856 Landrental Law enabled investors to hire land in *erfpacht,* initially for 20 years, subsequently replaced for up to 70 years, later reduced to 50 years, but otherwise unchanged until nationalisation in 1958.

In Besuki, in central Java, *erfpacht* was granted on extensive uncultivated areas around Jember, where tobacco became the primary crop. Estates required labour, and planters set up their Immigration Bureau, bringing in Madurese and later Javanese, from densely populated areas of Central and East Java, as a result of which Besuki had the highest migrant population. Dutch companies also purchased cigar tobacco grown by local peasants, under conditions that conceded peasants weak rights over the land they cultivated and exacted heavy labour obligations. In 1917, peasant rights were increased and company rental rights reduced, but the strong influence of companies over local rulers and the Dutch authorities enabled production with very low costs and very high profits, especially up until the 1920s, when Besuki supplied 25% of Java's exports, exceeding any other region of Java.

This is highlighted in the work of Soegijanto Padmo, S. Nayiwanto, and Ratna Saptari,[55] which traces the transition from small-scale development in the 1860s-90s, with a number of individually owned estates producing tobacco and other cash crops, to corporatisation in the 1880s and more specialised production by fewer and larger companies over 1890–1920. During the final years of Dutch rule, the degree of consolidation was such that whole regions came under the control of one major corporation, and, after 1958, under one state enterprise.

Japanese occupation during World War II had a devastating effect on tobacco, as export cash crop plantations were turned over to food production, to feed the troops and for wartime self-sufficiency. Producers lost their Dutch and other international markets as tobacco fields were converted to meet the quota of rice to be delivered; tobacco buying was concentrated in six store houses; and farmers were only allowed to produce tobacco

55 Soegijanto Padmo, The Cultivation of Vorstenlands Tobacco and Besuki Tobacco in Besuki Residency and its Impact on the Peasant Economy and Society, 1860–1960, Yogyakarta 1994; S. Nayiwanto, The Rising Sun in a Javanese Rice Granary: Change and the Impact of Japanese Occupation on the Agricultural Economy of Besuki Residency, 1942–1945, Yogyakarta 2005; Ratna Saptari, The Politics of Land, Labour and Leaf: Tobacco Regimes in Colonial Java and Sumatra (Late 19th-Early 20th Century), paper presented at the workshop on Plants, People, and Work, Yogyakarta, Java (Indonesia), August 2009. Saptari highlights early twentieth-century debates regarding working conditions coming to a head with a 1902 report and 1903 government-commissioned investigation of conditions in East Coast Sumatra plantations and the Labour Inspectorate established in 1908. Yet Deli expansion continued unabated, and by 1912, more than two hundred plantations had 150,000 workers and 35,000 to 50,000 new recruits arriving each year. See also S. Nawiyanto, Growing 'Golden Leaf': Tobacco Production in Besuki Residency, 1860–1970, in: Historia, 4 (July-December 2009) 2; and: id., The Economy of Besuki in the 1930s Depression, in: Ian Brown/Peter Boomgard (eds.), Weathering the Storm: The Economies of Southeast Asia in the 1930s Depression, Singapore 2000.

for domestic consumption and some export to the other Indonesian islands as part of mutual exchange for non-military commodities.[56]

Jember was one area where parts of estate lands were redistributed to peasants to produce food. This was a 'time bomb' when plantation owners returned to reclaim their *erfpacht* rights and came into conflict with 'squatters', who were strongly supported among Indonesian nationalist circles.[57] In Indonesia's subsequent bitter armed and diplomatic struggle against the Dutch for sovereignty, attained in 1949, there were squatters' illegal land occupations, strikes and labour organising, and the 'Indonesianising' of estate personnel. In early 1958, all Dutch economic interests were nationalised, and Dutch personnel left soon thereafter, operations transferring to Indonesian nationals.[58]

Developments since fast undermined any hopes of a fairer deal for labour. An attempted coup in 1965 led to a violent army-led anti-communist purge in which over half a million people were killed. The 'New Order' administration courted Western investment, which was a major factor in the subsequent three decades of substantial economic growth. Then, in the late 1990s, Indonesia was the country hardest hit by the East Asian financial crisis, and reforms since then have not stemmed instability, unrest, corruption, and violence, not least in the central Jember tobacco area.[59]

Thus, while over recent decades tobacco from Indonesia has been again celebrated the world over for its high quality and low price, the backdrop is dramatic. "We forbid our workers to speak while they work. Otherwise, they may make a mistake… They must work meticulously. The tobacco must be handled with respect," it was reported in *Cigar Aficionado* in 2009. However, tobacco barns continue to be burned in protest, and, as one tobacco hand confessed, it is "so difficult for us to survive" and "amazing that more people do not riot considering their situation."[60]

7. New Geo-political Hierarchies

Where is this leading? Gilroy invites us to consider new analytical tools and make conceptual adjustments in face of the persistence of old inequalities alongside new varieties

56 See: S. Nayiwanto, The Rising Sun (footnote 53).

57 The Dutch disputed Indonesian nationalisation in a landmark case over Indonesian tobacco, better known as The Bremen Tobacco Case, of 21 August 1959, in the Bremen Court of Appeal. The Court ruled the expropriation/ nationalisation of Dutch companies legal and gave the green light to Indonesia's decision to trade on the Bremen market in place of Amsterdam, see: The Bremen Tobacco Case, Special Issue 60, Department of Information, Republic of Indonesia 1960.

58 S. Nayiwanto argues this convincingly in: id., The Rising Sun (footnote 53).

59 See J. A. C. Mackie, The Changing Political Economy of an Export Crop: The Case of Jember's Tobacco Industry, in: Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies, 21 (1985); see also: J. Breman, Good Times and Bad Times in Rural Java: A Study of Socio-Economic Dynamics towards the End of the Twentieth Century, Leiden 2002; and: Margo L. Lyons, Bases of Conflict in Rural Java, Berkeley (Calif.) 1970.

60 James Suckling, Tobacco Mecca: Indonesia's East Java Continues To Produce Fine Tobacco Despite its Troubled Economy, in: Cigar Aficionado January/February (1999), http://www.cigaraficionado.com/Cigar/CA_Archives/CA_Show_Article/0,2322,381,00.html (accessed on 16 July 2011).

of unfreedom, questioning our assumptions about history, historicity and hierarchy. My Havana cigar journey is suggestive of ways in which we might do that.

London and Amsterdam had early become European twin pillars of the international circulation of tobacco, as the British and Dutch expanded their empires. Tobacco was big business, with crown and state playing a central role. European states such as Spain, Portugal and France all established monopolies purchasing and processing tobacco, while German states enforced all-important taxation. There were no such monopolies in Britain, the Netherlands or the U.S., but, whether via monopoly or market, the state was heavily involved.[61]

After 1800, the U.S. rose to pre-eminence, partly because its competitors were few – only Brazil and Cuba in the Western Hemisphere and Holland and Germany in Europe – and partly because the colonial system ensured global segmentation. The Dutch Cultivation System was designed to foster export crops: sugar, coffee, and indigo first, then others including tobacco, and by the outbreak of World War I, the Dutch East Indies was the world's second largest exporter of leaf grown on a concentration of plantations. Sumatra and Java supplied the international market via Amsterdam and Rotterdam in the Netherlands and Bremen in Germany, competing with the Philippines, the U.S. and Cuba. The outcome was that, whereas in 1840 the US exported 87% of the world's leaf, the U.S. share of world output dropped to 30% by 1884, and 13% by 1984, a century later, with the break-up of the colonial system and the opening of new regions to the international market, especially Brazil, Cuba, and the Dutch East Indies.[62]

World War II and Japanese occupation brought Indonesia's tobacco exports to a virtual standstill, and the end of the war saw a dramatically changed Dutch East Indies with Indonesia's struggle for sovereignty. The subsequent suppression of political and labour mobilising, however, in the drive to control labour and push down costs, must be seen as a prime determinant in the contemporary global rise of Indonesian tobacco.

Cuba's 1959 Revolution fought for the opposite, but those who worked before and since to make Ortiz's proud export product, *El Habano*, still had to navigate these international waters – whether as émigrés in Florida or in the face of competition from Connecticut's migrant field hands and Indonesia's coolies, arguably the new emasculated slave labour of today.

In my analysis here, I have limited myself to the context of labour, but there is a racialised and gendered literary nostalgia associated with the Havana cigar and a far broader context of how the Havana cigar story fits into the body of work on white manhood and imperialism – the era of hyper-masculine imperial adventuring personified by Theodore Roosevelt in the U.S. War with Spain over Cuba at the end of the nineteenth century or

61 A good discussion of this can be found in Jordan Goodman, Tobacco in History: The Culture of Dependence, London 1993.

62 Ibid.

U.S. presidents from 1959 to this day.[63] These are beyond my scope for now, but they are challenges that lie ahead.

63 I owe a debt to Bruce Dorsey and Ralph Poole as readers of my work who have encouraged me along these lines. I am currently writing a transnational study provisionally titled: Romancing the Cigar, on fictional representations referred to here – see: E. Laguerre, Los dedos de la mano (footnote 45), M. Savage, Parrish (footnote 12), N. Cruz, Anna in the Tropics (footnote 34), and P. Medina, The Cigar Roller (footnote 34). I also hope to explore the cigar in the context of works such as those by Kristin L. Hoganson, Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars, New Haven (Conn.) / London 1998; and Gail Bederman, Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880–1917, Chicago / London 1995.