

Four French Travelers Converge on Cuba; Testimonials, Authorship and  
Conceptualization of Otherness

by

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian  
Literatures and Languages in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

2004

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Literatures and Languages in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

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The 19<sup>th</sup> century marks the apex of the travel genre and of the travel accounts. Unlike 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century travelogues mainly concerned with expansionism, the 19<sup>th</sup> century travelogues were marked by romanticism and the travelers' zeal to spread knowledge. Cuba, in particular, due to its perceived healthy climate and to the rising interest in the natural sciences, attracts European and North American visitors. The ensuing accounts contributed to some extent to ethnography as well as to formulating a historiography of Cuba.

This dissertation focuses on the representation of Cuba by four French travelers between 1810 and 1866. Diaries and treatises left by Etienne Michel Massé (1778-?) in *L'isle de Cuba et la Havane*; Ernest Duvergier de Hauranne (1798-?) in *Cuba et les*

*Antilles*; Jean-Jacques Ampère (1800-1864), in *Promenade en Amérique* and Adolphe Granier de Cassagnac (1806-1880) in *Voyage aux antilles danoises...*, are analyzed. I argue that politics and science, romanticism and commerce merge in the travelers' representation of Cuban culture and institutions. An anthology reflecting some of the themes analyzed in the dissertation is provided in English translation to offer a more complete picture of the travelers' observations.

The travel writers studied allow us first-hand experience into the mutual gaze involved in cross-cultural encounters. Since travel writing functions within the realm of verisimilitude, topoi such as allusions to prior travels, literary and historical characters serve as devices to convince the reader of the accuracy of the *viajeros*' observations. Therefore, I contend that the travel accounts studied constitute exercises in knowledge spreading and gathering through which the travelers attempt to confirm authorship, entice others to follow and forge identities for the "Others" they encountered. While they claim to be independent agents, these writings reflect the biases of the authors as well as the rivalry between France, Spain and England, particularly in their treatment of slavery. Through the travelogues Cuban institutions, mores and customs are revisited, enriching our perspective of the past by providing cues for a better understanding of cultural and historical trends that have withstood the test of time.

## Acknowledgments

Thanks and praises to God for allowing the completion of this project amidst many hardships. Special thanks also go to Dr. John O'Neill of the Hispanic Society of America, my supervisor, Dra. Raquel Chang-Rodríguez for your vision, your patience and your wisdom. To Professor Eve Sourian, merci beaucoup for smoothing the translation. Professor Llorens, thanks for being so thorough. Special thanks to Prof. Di Camillo for his guidance

Special thanks to my family for supporting and believing and me. Thanks for your patience and endurance. Thanks to the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the SEEK Family at Queens College, especially Dr. Rodway, Dr. Bobb, Dr. Harris, Profesora Romero, Mr. Modeste, Mr. Franklin, Joan Nestle and the Financial Aid staff. To Dra. Judith A. León, thanks for your guidance.

Last but not least, thanks to Dr. Andrés Franco for his guidance and to my friend and mentor Marc Franklin for their encouragement. You were right, "Great minds don't die."

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## Chapter I

### French Travelers' Testimonials: An Overview

It is undoubtedly with an adventurous spirit and probably with Columbus as well as other explorers, prior travel guides and accounts etched in their memory, that the first French travelers penned their recollections of the Americas. A concise overview of the history of printed voyages in the Americas, especially the Luso-Hispanic world, presents the trajectory of French travel writing, which begins with the recollections of seamen, pirates and missionaries.<sup>1</sup> It leads us into 19<sup>th</sup> century Cuba, where politics, science, literature and commerce coalesce to allow the proliferation of more sophisticated travelogues. Unlike previous travelogues mainly concerned with expansionism, these new ones were marked by romanticism and the travelers' zeal to spread knowledge. They contributed to some extent to ethnography as well as a historiography of Cuba: the authors made an effort to document their visit, entice other travelers and future investors, and forge identities for the Others they encountered.

The first account by a French traveler, according to Jean-Pierre Moreau, was that of "Paulmier de Gonneville parti de Honfleur sur le navire <<L'Espoir>>, qui attérit par fortune de mer sur les côtes du Brésil au niveau de l'actuelle ville de São Francisco do Sul, en janvier 1504" [Paulmier de Gonneville left Honfleur on a boat called "Hope," which luckily landed on the coasts of Brazil, around the current city of Sao Francisco do

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<sup>1</sup> Jean-Paul Duviols. *Voyageurs français en Amérique: colonies espagnoles et portugaises*. (1978).

Sul, in January 1504] (260).<sup>2</sup> His depiction of the natives is injected with sentiments of pity, which echo Columbus' eagerness to save the "savage Indians." De Gonneville articulates his perception of the "...pauvres indiens, qui estoient tous ébahis de la grandeur de la navire, atillerie, mirouers" [unfortunate Indians, who were shocked by the size of the boat, artillery] (77).<sup>3</sup> His account also contains a number of episodes, which reveal some of the early efforts to convert the Indians to Christianity. The Natives are generally described as obedient, servile, ripe proselytes and apt to facilitate the transplantation of Catholicism in the New World.

Another French traveler, André Thevet (1502-90), wrote his observations on Brazil during the 16<sup>th</sup> century. With respect to Cuba, an adventurer from Marseilles, Sieur Vincent Leblanc (1554-ca-1640), who is believed to have traveled around the world, commented on the cruelty of the first conquistadors. In a chapter titled "L'Isle [sic] de Cuba et L'Espagnole. Les moeurs des habitants. Ses Rois," [The Island of Cuba and Hispaniola? Customs of the Inhabitants. Its Kings]. Leblanc noted: "On y voit force villes & habitations d'Espagnols, qui commencèrent à le peupler ou plustot dépeupler dès l'an 1511, car ils y exercèrent de telles cruautéz [sic], qu'en peu de temps ils exterminèrent presque tous les habitants, commencans [sic] par le pauvre Roy [sic] ou Cacique Hatuey..." [One sees several cities and Spanish habitations, which began to people or rather depopulate it since 1511, because they demonstrated such cruelties that in a short

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<sup>2</sup> Jean Pierre Moreau. *Un Flibustier français dans la mer des Antilles en 1618-1620/manuscrit inédit du début du XVIIe siècle/publiée par Jean-Pierre Moreau* (1987).

<sup>3</sup> Marie Armand Pascal Avezac. *Campagne du navire l'Espoir de Honfleur, 1503-1505: relation authentique du voyage du capitaine de gonneville ès nouvelles terres des indes publiée intégralement pour la première fois; avec une introduction et des éclaircissements* (1869).

period of time they annihilated almost all the inhabitants, starting with the unfortunate King or Cacique Hatuey]. Sieur Vincent Leblanc's comments highlight the nefarious impact of the early encounters between the Natives and the Europeans. The Natives were commonly described from a sociological standpoint, with an emphasis on their generosity, confirming as well as disproving ideas of the Other the conquistadors had formed prior to their trip. By underscoring the quasi annihilation of all the Natives, Vincent Leblanc is lending a voice to their plot by denouncing the military aspect of the conquest.<sup>4</sup>

**Travelogues in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century:  
In Search of Authenticity and Accuracy- a Call for Reform**

In the New World, travelogues, from the inception of Columbus's letters and ship logs up to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, generally contained the impressions of pirates and seamen, which functioned within the scope of Europe's expansionistic ideas/ideals with respect to their content. Those travel accounts, merely descriptive in nature, filled with banalities, were not necessarily of literary value, although they contained enough material to enthrall the receptor fascinated with adventures from foreign territories. In this sense, Geoffroy Atkinson makes a cogent point when he states that in those accounts, "s'il y a bien des pages à lire qui ne présentent ni de faits intéressants, ni de réflexions dignes d'être notés, il y a nonobstant des plaisirs très réels à retirer de cette lecture. Et ce sont des plaisirs tout

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<sup>4</sup> Francisco de Vitoria (1492-1546), born in Vitoria, Spain, studied in the humanities, theology and philosophy at the College of St. Jacques in Paris. See *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (1967). He is also considered the founder of International Law; he condemns the military aspect of the conquest of America. For more information concerning his perspective towards the military aspect of the Spanish conquest, See *Francisco de Vitoria: Relaciones sobre los indios y el derecho de Guerra/compilados, Guillermo Malavassi* (1988).

à fait analogues à ceux de la vie quotidienne.” [if there are pages that do not present interesting facts nor noteworthy observations, there are however, real pleasures that may be derived from such reading. And they are pleasures analogous to those of everyday life].<sup>5</sup> Atkinson alludes to the text as an instrument of pleasure, which is derived from the receptor’s vicarious experience of those travels. When he states that those pleasures are comparable to those of everyday life, he is emphasizing the importance of verisimilitude in the travel accounts. It is that process of identification, which enables the reader to relate to the travelers’ adventures, the innate feeling to rely on “experts” to fill in the blanks, satisfy our curiosity concerning far away lands and peoples, which maintained the readers’ interest, although they might not have been accurate. That search for accuracy constitutes one of the main objectives of the 19<sup>th</sup> century traveler.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, due to a rising interest in the mores of Others and the pursuits of the tenets of the Enlightenment, travels to the Americas for scientific and economic purposes were frequent. As the travelers become more sophisticated, the focus shifts from political expansionism to major scientific explorations, or in much humble terms, to voyages of study.<sup>6</sup> This results into elaborated texts in which the clash between the colonial views and the culture of discontent caused by the different ethnic groups comes to the forefront. From that vantage point, writers and editors embark on a mission to see farther than the myopic perspective of seamen, pirates and other adventurers, more concerned with tall tales rather than with an accurate representation of the New World.

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<sup>5</sup> Geoffroy Atkinson. *Les nouveaux horizons de la Renaissance française* (1935).

<sup>6</sup> Reference is made to Alexander Von Humboldt (1769-1859) and Bonpland Aimé (1773-1858).



Louis Antoine de Bougainville (1729-1811) alluded to the controversy between writers of the mold of seamen and the so-called philosophers of his time that criticized the deficiencies of true travel writers who “sit in the dark” to theorize about places and people they never observed. Duviols encapsulates Bougainville’s idea in the following quote:

Je suis voyageur et marin, c’est-à-dire un menteur et un imbécile aux yeux de cette classe d’écrivains paresseux et superbes qui, dans l’ombre de leur cabinet philosophent à perte de vue sur le monde et ses habitants, et soumettent impérieusement la Nature à leurs imaginations. Procédé bien singulier, bien inconcevable de la part de gens qui, n’ayant rien observé par eux-mêmes, n’écrivent, ne dogmatisent que d’après des observations empruntées de ces mêmes voyageurs auxquels ils refusent la faculté de voir et de penser

[I am a traveler and a seaman, that is, a liar and an idiot in the eyes of this class of lazy and superb writers who, in the obscurity of their cabinet philosophize highly about the world and its inhabitants and subjugate Nature to their imaginations. A weird process, inconceivable on the part of people who, having not observed anything on their own, write and theorize based on observations borrowed from those travelers whom they deny the ability to see and think] (9).

Louis Antoine de Bougainville is addressing an accusation as well as presenting his own defense. Seeking to earn a certain degree of trust from his readers, he confesses that he is a “traveler and a seaman;” with almost a *captatio benevolentiae* attitude, he confesses his “flaws” as a “liar and an imbecile” as opposed to the “excellent” and “lazy” authors who write from the darkness of their offices. In this sense, Bougainville may be unveiling his limited skills as a writer, and boasting of his privileged position as a traveler, an experience, which the other ‘men of letters’ lack. By calling them “excellent” and “lazy” writers, he is demonstrating his cynicism towards that class of writers. He is subtly accusing them of merely duplicating previous accounts when he states that they “form their dogmas based on observations *borrowed* (my italics) from those same travelers,

whose thinking and seeing faculties they deny.” It was probably from the same line of thinking that Duviols reiterates Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s opinion on the possible cooperative learning that could take place when learned men start undertaking voyages of study. Rousseau proposed:

Supposons un Montesquieu, un Buffon, un Diderot, un Duclos, un d’Alembert, un Condillac, ou des hommes de cette trempe voyageant pur instruire leurs compatriotes, observant et décrivant... le Mexique, le Pérou, le Chili... le Brésil et les Caraïbes... supposons que ces nouveaux Hercules, de retour de ces courses mémorables fissent ensuite à loisir l’histoire naturelle, morale et politique de ce qu’ils auraient vu, nous verrions nous-mêmes sortir un monde nouveau de leur plume, et nous apprendrions ainsi à connaître le nôtre... mais ce serait une grande simplicité de s’en rapporter là-dessus à des voyageurs grossiers...

[Suppose a Montesquieu, a Buffon, a Diderot, Duclos d’Alembert, Condillac or men of that mold traveled to educate their countrymen, observing and describing Mexico, Peru, Chile, Brazil and the Caribbean...suppose these new Hercules, upon returning from such memorable excursions, also studied natural history, moral and political of those they would have seen, we would ourselves witness that a New World would spring up from their pen, and we would also learn to know ours...but that would be very simplistic to learn about that from unsophisticated travelers...] (5).

Rousseau is alluding to the idea that discovering the Other also engenders the discovery of the self when he states that “nous verrions nous-mêmes sortir un monde nouveau de leur plume, *et nous apprendrions ainsi à connaître le nôtre.*” In other words, those travel accounts would contribute to a bilateral spreading of knowledge. Note that De Bougainville refers to two distinct classes of travelers, similarly to how Rousseau differentiates between “voyageurs grossiers,” (unsophisticated/rough/coarse travelers), as well as philosophers and “hommes de lettres.” In the category of men of letters would fit Jean-Baptiste Du Tertre (1610-1687). In *Histoire Générale des Antilles habitées par les Français* (1868-69), he depicts the inhabitants of the isles as savages with social traits

that the conquistadors could not possess. In the chapter entitled “Of the Savages in General,” he observes:

....the savages of these isles are the most sociable, the least artificial and the least tormented by maladies of all the nations on earth. For they are what Nature has made of them; that is to say, they have a great simplicity and naivete....They are all equal, recognizing almost no sort of superiority or of servitude, and one can scarcely even perceive any sort of respect, even between relatives, as of the son to the father. No one is richer and no one is poorer than his companion, and all of them unanimously limit their desires to what is useful and really necessary to them... (80).<sup>7</sup>

Here, Jean-Baptiste Du Tertre is proposing a certain objectification of the people whom he labels “savages.” He focuses on their personality traits as well as their political and economic organizations, reiterating some of the topoi found in Columbus’ writings. By depicting them as “sociable,” “simplistic,” “naïve,” “living according to the way Nature intended,” living communally, Du Tertre was already creating his own “noble savage.”

A century earlier, Michel Bossu (1720-92), “chevalier de l’Ordre royal et militaire de Saint-Louis, ancien capitaine de la marine,” [knight of the Royal and Military Order of Saint Louis, former Navy Captain], went beyond the general nomenclature left by his predecessors. While European travel writers of his time were labeling the inhabitants of the Americas as “sauvages et barbares,” [savages and barbarians], Bossu saw in the Other: “des peuples qui sont susceptibles d’héroïsme, d’humanité et de sentiments vertueux” (VI) [peoples that are susceptible of heroism, humanity and virtue].<sup>8</sup> Bossu’s

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<sup>7</sup> Translation is borrowed from Walter Adolphe Roberts, *The French in the West Indies* (1942).

<sup>8</sup> Michel Bossu’s belonging to the famous “Ordre royal et militaire de Saint-Louis” proves that he was an illustrious man. His account is a rare text. Alexandre Mazas (1791-1856) provides insights on that particular order in *Histoire de l’ordre royal et militaire de Saint-Louis* (1860-1861).

poignant analysis of colonial hegemony in Cuba is crucial for numerous reasons: 1) its scientific approach towards studying the Other, constitutes the foundation of a certain ethnology of the people, according to Valerie Wheeler in “Travelers’ Tales” (54);<sup>9</sup> and 2) using Saint-Domingue as a paradigm, the visionary Bossu predicted the downfall of colonialism in Cuba.

### **History and Science at the Crossroads**

At the crux of revolutionary movements in South America in which Britain and France actively participated monetarily and militarily, at the heels of Alexander Von Humboldt’s scientific expeditions, the New World went through a reinvention process as suggested by Mary Louise Pratt (146). Revolts turned into full-fledged revolutions; cultures labeled “savages” and “barbarians” began asserting themselves.<sup>10</sup> As a result, for travelers, risking life and limb, it was “an almost imperative duty to commit themselves to writing” (Stevenson 152). Those visitors, more enlightened than the cast of pirates and seamen who traveled to the New World in the previous centuries, contributed to the proliferation of travels and travel writings in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Guicharnaud-Tollis 6).

Parallel with this re-discovery of America, the travel account underwent a dramatic metamorphosis. As opposed to the political, expansionistic, evangelistic and propagandistic nature of past travel accounts, travel writers with the expansion of science

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<sup>9</sup> In that article, Wheeler argues that the real difference between the traveler and the ethnographer is the narrator’s perspective, mainly the scientist’s use of the third person and the traveler’s use of the omniscient first person narrator.

<sup>10</sup> Von Humboldt wrote his memoirs in collaboration with Aimé Bonpland. Bonpland also wrote *Description des plantes rares cultivées à Malmaison et à Navarre* (1813) among others. However, his contributions are almost forgotten Humboldt’s popularity.

as their main objective, attempted to present an encyclopedic view of the regions visited. They acted as scientists, financial scouts, and tour guides, exploring all areas of life, transforming the New World into their laboratory. This was a propitious time for voyages to Cuba, the Pearl of the Antilles. The island that marveled Columbus in 1492 began to garner a great deal of interest once again. Writing in the last decade of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Michel Bossu noted that Havana “est une des plus grandes villes de l’Amérique” (336) [One of the greatest cities in America]. Later, an American tourist, John Stevens Cabot Abbott, Esq., (1805-1877), observed that “the island of Cuba is the jewel of the ocean” (52).

To the travelers influenced by Romanticism and its quest for the natural and the exotic, Cuba offered the optimal atmosphere for the enunciation of “spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings” (Furst 55). Its richness in natural history constitutes one of the main elements that lured scientists eager to contribute to the dissemination of knowledge. This stands in sharp contrast with the other Antilles, which were extensively studied in the previous centuries.<sup>11</sup> Besides the scientific expeditions of Alexander Von Humboldt, Aimé Bonpland and Michel Descourtilz (1775Ca-1835), scientific expeditions to Cuba were not prolific. Historians as well as visitors to the island attest to that very fact. Achille Richard (1794-1852), a French botanist collaborating with Ramón de la Sagra (1798-1871) in *L’Histoire Physique, politique et naturelle de l’île de Cuba* (1839), commented: “L’île de Cuba, que sa position géographique, sa grandeur, la richesse de sa

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<sup>11</sup> Allusion is being made here to specific works by the botanist Joseph Nicolas-Joseph Thiéry de Ménonville (1739-1780) in *Traité de la culture du nopal et de l’éducation de la cochenille dans les colonies françaises de l’Amérique*, (1787), 2 vols. See also Nicolas Louis Bourgeois (1710-1776), *Voyages intéressants dans différentes colonies francaises, Anglaises etc.* (1788) and Moreau de Saint-Méry Mederic Louis Elie (1750-1819), *Lois et constitutions des colonies françaises de l’Amérique sous le vent* (1791).

culture et l'étendue de son commerce, placent au premier rang parmi les grandes Antilles, n'a pas été étudiée d'une manière tant soit peu complète, sous le point de vue des productions naturelles qui la caractérisent" [The island of Cuba, ranked number one due to its geographical position, its greatness. The richness of her culture and the breath of her commerce, has not been studied thoroughly from the standpoint of the natural resources which characterize it] (52).<sup>12</sup>

For that reason, in the travel accounts, meticulous descriptions of plants, people as well as weather conditions contribute to a living testimony of the conditions at the time of the travelers' visit. Those travelers enhanced the intellectual formation of an elite class, which was already influenced by European thinking. Politics facilitated this process as Llorens put it, for "a principios del siglo XIX, se registra en Cuba un relajamiento provisional del regimen absolutista, lo que les da a los cubanos una relativa libertad de comercio y también les facilita la importación de elementos de ilustración y de cultura" [In the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Cuba undergoes a provisional relaxation of the absolutist regime, which gives Cubans a relative freedom of trade and which also facilitates the importation of elements of enlightenment and culture] (34). As Cuba looked to Europe for inspiration in the fields of knowledge and fashion, Europe continued to go through "the process of ideological adaptation to the new conditions discovered or created by its own expansionist activities" (Helgerson 27). As Europe was forced to reassess its role in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a result of the events taking place in the New

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<sup>12</sup>The same sentiments are echoed by Robert Jameson (1774-1854), an Englishman visiting Cuba in 1852, in his *Letters from the Havana*. He affirms that "Cuba has not been rummaged by professional travelers" (2), while Granier de Cassagnac advocates more visits so that the world may have a better taste of insular America, in *Voyages aux Antilles*, p. v.

World, the printed voyage, constituted one of the main channels through which that process was carried out.

### **The Scope of My Study**

This study will examine diaries and treatises written by four French travelers who visited Cuba during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. All four authors studied here are quoted sparingly in different studies on 19<sup>th</sup> century Cuba. Their works have not been studied in-depth. Through the study of common topoi in the diaries, (i.e. the depiction of cultural markers identifiable with 19<sup>th</sup> century Cuba, the island's historiography, the enchanting tropical panorama and an attempt to define Otherness), I will analyze the writings as attempts to depict Cuba's reality, to confirm as well as reject some of the opinions that the travelers formed a priori. For this purpose, I will study the following authors: Etienne Michel Massé (1778-?), Ernest Duvergier de Hauranne (1798-?), Jean-Jacques Ampère (1800-1864) and Adolphe Granier de Cassagnac (1806-1880).

- 1) Etienne Michel Massé's *L'isle de Cuba et la Havane, ou Histoire, topographie, statistique, mœurs, usages, commerce et situation politique de cette colonie, d'après un journal écrit sur les lieux* (1825), is a voluminous text containing his observations as well as a summary of information he gathers from textbooks on Cuba. Biographical information concerning Massé's personality and the reasons for his voyage are scant, but can be deduced from the statements he makes in his book. It was probably in search of adventures and pursuing humanitarian goals that he made the trip to Cuba. In the prologue of this work, he confessed that he came to the island "pour chercher de nouvelles destinées" [in search of new

destinies] (iv), a goal that undoubtedly changed during the trip as he focused more on acquiring knowledge about Cuba. He discloses his purpose as a travel writer stating:

Un voyageur qui raconte ce qu'il a vu doit être comme un témoin devant un tribunal [...] Aucune influence de parti n'a dirigé ma plume. Quand on a vu le monde, autre part que dans les salons, on se détache, pour l'ordinaire, des abstractions politiques, quelque couleur qui leur soit donnée; mais on se rallie plus fortement à ces principes d'humanité qui font regarder tous les peuples comme les membres d'une seule et même famille

[A traveler who narrates what he saw must be like a witness in a tribunal [...] No partisan influence has guided my pen. When one has only seen the world in no place other than in private meetings (salons), one is ordinarily detached from political abstractions, whatever color they are given; but one is very much in favor of those principles of humanity, which make one consider all peoples as the members of one and the same family.] (i-v)

Massé's statement corroborates the ideas that De Gonneville and Rousseau alluded to earlier. He further stresses the importance of accuracy and veracity in the travelogue when he refers to the role of the travel writer as that of "a witness in a tribunal." Thus, he sees his printed voyage as a testimonial in the true sense of the word. However, since "nobody is free of preconceived ideas," the receptor must beware of the devices that the narrator employs in order to convince the reader (Clemmen 46).

Unlike his fellow countrymen, Massé traveled without any diplomatic ties that would grant him the privilege to stay with some of the opulent French families in Cuba. Having no one in Cuba to receive him, he struggled to adapt to the new territory, learning the language and managing to survive in spite of the exorbitant cost of living, which he mentions in the chapter entitled "Comment l'étranger vit à Cuba" [How the Foreigner Lives in Cuba]. Massé's book endeavors to present an eclectic view of the political and



natural history of Cuba, with painstaking details, statistics, geographical limits as well as practical advice for future visitors. An avid scholar, as suggested by the numerous historical and literary allusions throughout the diary, his book was not well-received in Cuba, at least by Juan Pérez de la Riva who accused him of “plusieurs inexactitudes,” [several inaccuracies], according to Guicharnaud-Tollis (242). One wonders, however, whether accuracy should be expected from Massé, who is writing as a traveler and not as a social scientist. Considering that in the prologue the traveler promised to be objective, De la Riva might have taken the author literally, forgetting that one of the travelers’ aims is to sound credible in order to convince his readership.

Massé traveled from Marseilles to Havana, recounting his experiences of the sea voyage, focusing on every geographical and literary detail, presenting himself as a narrator versed in those fields. In Cuba, he spent most of his time in Havana, visiting the different towns, the cafes, convents, barracoons, churches and other institutions. There, he met an Italian named B. After what seemed to be a page from a romantic novel, the two became friends following a duel. After B. left Cuba, they exchanged letters, which are incorporated into Massé’s diary. One wonders whether B. is real or just a foil character that reveals some of Massé’s opinions concerning the events taking place in Cuba; their styles, both in the use of rhetoric as well as in narrative techniques, are similar. B.’s letters complement Massé’s perspectives on topics such as interracial love, the slave trade and the abolition of slavery. In their correspondence is revealed their humane side: they both expressed nostalgia after spending a long time away from home, as well as their hopelessness facing the loss of acquaintances made during the trip.

Massé's book, in spite of the writer's focus on details, which make his account dense at times, is a testimony of the writer's thoroughness and his effort to leave a complete depiction of the things seen and read, heard and observed during the trip. Since its 1825 edition circulated in Paris, this book has not been republished. In fact, it is on the brink of becoming a rare text.<sup>13</sup> Massé also has to his credit a novel titled *Ossolinski; Ou Marseille Et St. Domingue, Après 1794 et en 1815. Mémoires contemporains recueillis par E-M Massé* (1830), whose plot revolved around Saint Domingue following the Great Revolution.<sup>14</sup> Massé also wrote *Histoire du Pape Alexandre VI, et de César Borgia*, Paris, (1830).

1) Ernest Duvergier de Hauranne's "Cuba et les Antilles." *Revue des Deux Mondes*.

Ernest Duvergier de Hauranne was the political heir of Prosper de Hauranne (1798-1881), politician and abolitionist. He wrote several pamphlets against Charles X. Ernest spent several months in the United States. He arrived in Havana on February 21, 1855. Eleven years later, his impressions entitled *Cuba et les Antilles* were published in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. This very influential publication, one of the journals set up in France after the suspension of censorship in 1828, was published in Paris in 1829 and from 1831 to 1944. Dedicated mainly to literary criticism and other arts, the *Revue des*

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<sup>13</sup> According to the information I gathered from the Hispanic Society of America, there are only seven known copies of the book available at Yale University, the Hispanic Society of America, the New York Public Library, the Library of Congress, the University of Texas and the University of Chicago.

<sup>14</sup> This fictional account took the reader to several regions of Haiti after the fall of the French régime. The protagonist fell in love with a former slave, and the characters struggled with feelings of hate, love, alienation and a sense of guilt trying to decipher the events that just transpired. That novel has not been studied. It reveals Massé's skills as a colorful storyteller, his sense of humor, his ability to create suspense and his grasp of history. An epitaph, "This, too, is history," found on the cover of the novel, suggests that the author understood the ramifications of this novel as a testimonial.

*Deux Mondes* received contributions from luminaries such as Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve (1804-1869), Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850), Hippolyte Taine (1828-1893) and Victor Hugo (1802-1885). The journal suspended publication in 1944, but it reappeared again in 1948 under the title *La Revue de Littérature, Histoire, Arts et Sciences des Deux Mondes*.

Ernest Duvergier de Hauranne also wrote *Huit Mois en Amérique: Lettres et Notes de Voyage 1864-1865* (1866), a collection of his impressions during the American Civil War, from the perspective of an outsider. However, his ideas reflect the attitude of a traveler with a prejudiced grasp of the complex issues involved, without a visionary stance on the events.

Duvergier de Hauranne came to the New World seeking fortune and contacts that would pave the way for his own diplomatic ambitions. He was an ardent proponent of slavery. His articles present an analysis of the different groups that constituted the Other in Cuba, including the French exiles from Saint Domingue and their positive influence on Cuba's economy. Unlike his other colleagues, De Hauranne, a painter himself, as he revealed in his diary, paid special attention to Cuba's panorama (866). Using his skills as a painter, his best depictions of the manifestations of nature in the tropics are like magic paintbrushes, forcing our imagination to make a retrospective trip with him.

3) Jean-Jacques A. Ampère, (1800-1864). *Promenade en Amérique*. Paris, 1836.

The name Ampère has a special entry in the *Dictionnaire des biographies* that reads, "Ampère, famille de savants français" (Ampère, family of French scientists) (TI, p.47). Born in Rouen, August 12<sup>th</sup> 1800, son of André Marie Ampère, who published memoirs

on the famous Law of Avogadro-Ampère, Jean-Jacques Ampère, professeur at the Sorbonne and at the College de France, wrote books such as *L'Histoire littéraire de la France avant le XIIIe siècle* (1839-40) et *L'Histoire de la littérature française au Moyen Age comparée Aux Littératures étrangères* (1841) among others. He was also a member of the French Academy. An adventurer, Jean-Jacques traveled throughout Europe and North America. He arrived in Cuba on January 30, 1852. An influential but anonymous French doctor as well as the French consul named M. Vergne received Ampère in Matanzas. The influences of his travels can be observed in this work where he constantly compares phenomena of the New World to those experienced in the Old. *Promenade en Amérique*, fascinating due to Ampère's perceptiveness, his ability to correct his own views of the Other, his understanding of the slaves' plight as well as his own wisdom on some of the best ways to enjoy traveling, has not been studied in depth. The book is the product of a one-month trip. While in Cuba, he visited a plantation in Matanzas, in order to compare the conditions of the slaves in Cuba to those in the United States. An interesting aspect of Ampère's *Promenade en Amérique* is a historical analysis of tobacco and smoking, as well as insightful comments on the efforts of the United States to colonize Cuba.<sup>15</sup>

4) Adolphe Granier de Cassagnac. *Voyage aux Antilles françaises, anglaises, danoises, espagnoles à Saint-Domingue et aux États-Unis d'Amérique* (1843-1844).

Adolphe Granier de Cassagnac was a politician, a journalist and a fervent

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<sup>15</sup> Ampère is credited as the founder of comparative literature according to the *Dictionnaire des Biographies* (47).

defender of slavery. He is known to have had a vitriolic temper. He married a Creole woman named Beauvallon. His diary includes a meticulous account of the places he visited, and an evaluation thereof, using his voyages or prior readings as comparisons. He came to Cuba via the United States on March 17, 1831. On the one hand, his work proposes a comparative study of the slavery system in Cuba and in the United States. On the other hand, having visited the other Antilles, De Cassagnac presents his voyage as a memoir, which highlights his “profound” understanding of the situation of the Negro in general, and of the other racial classes which populate the Antilles. Using his voyage as his fieldwork and irrefutable proof of his knowledge, he makes sweeping statements on Blacks, Whites and Mulattoes in the colonies. His famous rubric “règle générale,” which he repeats constantly, serves as a lingo aimed at convincing the reader of the irrefutability of his convoluted arguments. He condones slavery and writes vehemently against emancipation upon the pretext that free Blacks cannot govern themselves. His thesis is that slavery was the best thing that could have happened to the savage Africans. He proposes that emancipation is an erroneous idea due to the fact that Blacks are savages and they would not know how to behave as free men. He uses the term “philanthrope” pejoratively to refer to pro-abolitionists, whom he accuses of being “naïve,” while he argues that his studies constitute undeniable proof to the benefits of slavery to Africans. Granier de Cassagnac is also the author of *Colonies Françaises: De l’esclavage et de l’émancipation* (1836), an essay rationalizing slavery. This work, a republication of the article by the same title that appeared in the *Revue de Paris* in 1834, is a classic study for an understanding of the science of oppression.

## Writing 'Otherness'

I will study these works as forms of textual inscription of Otherness. Otherness, in this sense, includes both identity and difference, so that the Other is dialectically created, and incorporates the values, meanings and interpretations forged by the dominant culture. Abdul JanMohammed terms the dichotomy between colonizer and colonized as "Manichean allegory," the vision of the world into two mutually exclusive opposites.<sup>16</sup> For instance, Europe is perceived as ordered, civilized, rational, masculine and benevolent, while the New World's Other is associated with chaos, dirt, laziness, lasciviousness and anything that is evil.

The texts I will study represent fragmented views of the past through the lenses of four European males: fragmented due to the amount of time they spent in Cuba, their prior knowledge of travel writing, and their ideologies. The diaries are as heterogeneous as the writers themselves who came from diverse political, social and economic backgrounds. For instance, Massé, who had no diplomatic contacts in Cuba, narrates his story from the perspective of an outsider looking in, and struggling to adjust to the Cuban reality. In that sense, he was able to respond empathically to the suffering of the Other. Jean-Jacques Ampère, presented us with accounts of escorted tours of barracoons, which his famous lineage might have afforded him.<sup>17</sup> It was easier for Ampère to adjust to the new country while Massé struggled to fit in. Both writers bemoan the evils of slavery.

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<sup>16</sup> JanMohammed, A.R. *The Economy of Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference in Colonialist Literature* (1985).

<sup>17</sup> José Pérez de la Riva, in *El Barracón: Esclavitud y capitalismo en Cuba* (1978), differs however, making the following comment concerning Ampère's lineage: "Ampère, hijo del célebre físico y matemático lionés, pero que apenas si heredó de su padre algo más que el nombre" (115).

Duvergier de Hauranne and Granier de Cassagnac, presented views that are strictly feudal. In that sense, the multiplicity of voices allows the diaries to complement one another, retracing different facets of Otherness in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The travelers share the same time period, but since no two perspectives are identical, similar themes are treated differently, thus enriching the receptor's experience of the travelers' gaze. Studying Cuba from that standpoint will provide an overview of Europe and the polemic between Spain, France and England during this period of change. This is played out through tactful observations as well as accusations. For instance, Granier de Cassagnac condemns all pro-abolitionists, especially English abolitionists, whom he calls "philanthropes," zealously defending a cause with which they are quite unfamiliar. The use of the term "philanthropist" is pejorative, equivalent to anarchists in some instance, and closer to the term "Negro lover" in others. Massé and Ampère, constitute dissenting voices: they write from a "neutral" perspective. However, the reader should be advised that, while enlightening, in some instances they follow the same paternalistic and Eurocentric stance that Duvergier de Hauranne and Granier de Cassagnac Adolphe adopt in their representation of Otherness.

In the diaries, the travelers use a first-person subject that promises objectivity, an objectivity which often is no more than plain European subjectivity, as Molefe Kete Asante suggests in *Kemet, Afrocentricity and Knowledge* (24). This process is similar to a device called "jeu de cache" through which the narrator, hiding behind the veil of objectivity, establishes a pact with the receptor, which he considers his accomplice (Salazar 90). The constant shift from objectivity to subjectivity, from reality to perception in the text, suggests that there are factors outside of the writers' control that come into

play in the writing process. In this sense, the texts are multifaceted and pluri-vocal, allowing the writers to experiment with a variety of genres. These shifts confirm what Dominique Julien, in *Voyageurs Francophones*, said concerning travelogues, which contain “méditations métaphysiques, rêveries ainsi que les anecdotes du quotidien” [metaphysical meditations, reveries as well as ordinary anecdotes] (19). Philippe-Joseph Salazar, in “Imaginer l’autre au 18e siècle,” makes a similar statement concerning the content of travel texts: “les récits de voyage sont donc à la fois “persuasifs” et “doxologiques” [Travel accounts are both persuasive and doxological] (90). By “persuasifs,” the author explains, “on entend qu’ils présentent des faits (vécus et relatés) comme un discours du réel (à la manière d’un texte scientifique) [it is understood that they deal with facts (lived and narrated) as a discourse of the real (as in a scientific text)]. Et par “doxologiques” on entend qu’ils s’appuient sur l’opinion (du lecteur) et non sur des vérités (universelles)” [they are based on the reader’s opinion and not on truths (universal)] (90). The author really cautions us on how to approach those texts. The problematic with the texts that I will study is as follows: the authors emphasize their intention to be objective in their prologue, and throughout the narratives, with “utterative markings” such as “I saw,” “I heard” or an impersonal “on” in French, they attempt to convince the receptor of the “truth” (De Certeau 85). Those texts, as tools of identity representation, considering the fact that the travelers intended to document their knowledge of the Other, are powerful in that they have created images of Otherness that have been perpetuated through time.



## Methodology

The aforementioned accounts will be analyzed in depth in an attempt to explore the memory of the past. This will allow us to analyze the process that facilitated the expression of this exchange with the other world, which translated experiences into narrative and description. Those travel accounts produce a discourse of alterity. The treatment of alterity, the representation of the Other, labeled as ‘subaltern’ in postcolonial discourse, a group that is spoken for by the dominant voice is of paramount interest in the diaries (Spivak 85). The word “alterity” is derived from the Latin “alteritas” with the connotation of “change” in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. From a philosophical standpoint, it signifies “character of what is Other,” Other being a person, persons or human groups who do not belong to the same community. Alterity, within the confines of this study, will be defined as inscriptions, a system of representation, the construction of a backward identity for another group that is deemed inferior. The dominant voice in the discursive practices that I will analyze, strives to subjugate, to appropriate and transform the Other into mirror images of the dominant “me,” in what Lacan describes as the “mirror stage” (Lacan 130).

Looking through Lacan’s mirror, the French travelers project onto the Other what they are not, using science as a veil to conceal their intentions. From this perspective, Pedro Laín Entralgo’s *Teoría y realidad del otro* (1961), offers an enlightening view of that relationship, when he proposes that the Other is objectified, “se le reduce tácitamente a ser nadie. En el encuentro con él se anuncia como física o moralmente defectivo” [is tacitly reduced to being a nobody. In the encounter, [the Other] is presented as physically or morally defective] (204). Entralgo’s characterization of the Other as physically or

morally defective is very crucial in our discussion of the French travelers' perspective of the Other, considered "un objeto de cuyas propiedades yo me valgo para la realización de mis propios fines" [an object whose properties I utilized to reach my own goals] (205). In the case of the Americas, this is very significant because with the 19<sup>th</sup> century travelers, we re-visit some of the dynamics explored in the Conquistadors' texts, as history repeats itself. The same process continues in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but with a difference in purpose. Instead of trying to convert the New World to Christianity, now the travelers are projecting Europe as the proprietor of science and culture. Alluding to Stephen Greenblatt's analysis of the role of Columbus, Ania Loomba states: "With respect to the Americas, Columbus's arrival functions as an 'originary moment' that diminishes native histories and cultures which precede it and that is endlessly revisited by subsequent encounters" (108).<sup>18</sup> Similarly, "Emmanuel Levinas conceives the Other in terms of alterity, distance: as something radically different, radical in terms of the illimitability of the other/s, which is something we cannot fully comprehend," according to Gisela Brinker-Gabler, in the introduction to *Encountering the Other/s* (2).<sup>19</sup> This quote from Brinker-Gabler stands in sharp contrast with what the French travelers to Cuba in the 19<sup>th</sup> century attempted in their construction of Otherness. The proximity, cohabitation with the Other, even for a short period time, somewhat erases or veils this "illimitability of the Other/s" because using science as a paradigm, they established themselves as knowledgeable of all phenomena that are totally alien to them. This, in turn, amplifies the

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<sup>18</sup> Stephen Greenblatt. *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (1991).

<sup>19</sup>This is based on Levinas' theory of alterity found in *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority* (1969).

role of “*the text as witness of the other*” [italics his], as Michel De Certeau puts it in Montaigne’s “Of Cannibals.”<sup>20</sup> The “utterative markings,” such as “I saw,” “I heard,” alluded to by De Certeau in his analysis of book IV of Herodotus’ *Histories*, exist as common topoi in the narratives, in an attempt to authenticate their testimonials. In addition, the travelers report secondary sources, interviews, and meetings with famous people in Cuba as well as tertiary sources such as books and other publications to buttress their arguments. Although trying to determine the writers’ purpose for recording their visit would be a fitting task for Sisyphus, through certain descriptive markers, allusions to history, literature as well as their own travels, the writers leave certain indices as to some of the ideologies that might have influenced them. Using ‘science’ as a weapon, traveling with some of the ideals of the Romantic Era, the travelers forge colonial identities for the subjects, establishing parameters, which define physiological characteristics as reflections of moral character. Promises of objectivity in their prologue transform their texts into a pseudoscience, perpetuating the ideas of writers in the cadre of Arthur De Gobineau (1816-1882), in his *Essai sur l’inégalité des races humaines* (1853-55), and the theories of Johann Caspar Lavater (1741-1801), in his famous book *L’art de connaître les hommes par la physionomie* (1806-1809).

This study will provide the framework for an understanding of the travelers’ perspective of 19<sup>th</sup> century Cuba. Far from reconstructing that past, which is so fragmented due to the time frame of the visits, the travelers’ own bias, the loss of texts as well as the absence of the subaltern’s voice, this study hopes to shed light on some of the colonial legacies constructed and left by the travelers. I hope that this study will

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<sup>20</sup> Michel de Certeau. *Heterologies Discourse on the Other* (1985).

potentially enrich or correct our own knowledge of what constituted that reality two centuries ago. The divergent lenses of writers with different personalities, ideologies and social status will provide the paradigm. Diversity, the operating leitmotiv in the choice of those writers and accounts, may be the most useful tool towards a more colorful re-discovery of that past.

### **Nineteenth-Century Cuban Society: An Overview**

Visiting Cuba in the 19<sup>th</sup> century offers the travelers the optimal occasion to view the Other. During that time of change, dynamics set in place during the first days of colonization have reached such an apogee that they made Cuba one of the most fascinating and intriguing terrains of investigation for travelers in search of knowledge, economic fortune, adventure and an escape from Europe: a heterogeneous society, with all its complexities, provides the travelers with an investigative field for attempting ethnological as well as anthropological studies. Whites, Blacks, Europeans, European Jews and Chinese brought to Cuba as “coolies,” or indentured slaves, constitute the bulk of that population. The differences between those groups go beyond the boundaries of race. This is evidenced by the great divide in social as well as financial status within the subdivisions of the different ethnic groups. For instance, Whites were divided into a number of economically stratified classes: Whites born in Spain were called ‘*peninsulares*’, ‘*criollos*’, ‘*monteros*’/ ‘*guajiros*’. All Whites benefited from the same political privileges (i.e. the right to own slaves and to amass wealth by any means necessary) regardless of their degree of “whiteness.” On the one hand, ‘*Peninsulares*’ controlled the direction of the economy; they were the dominant groups in the Spanish

parliament, the military, the clergy; they represented the majority of high court presidents and court appointed officials. 'Monteros', on the other hand, were marginalized in spite of their whiteness as indicated by the very root of the word, which suggests that they lived in the mountainous regions, away from civilization. Socially speaking, they were at the bottom of the class system, superior only to Africans, which they could own as slaves.

### **Criollos**

In the case of Cuba, *Criollos* refer to people of Spanish descent born in the colony, a group exceptionally influential in the emergence of Cuban culture in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>21</sup> As opposed to the *peninsulares*, Creoles were prohibited from participating in many political and administrative duties. Considered the Other in their native land, this intellectual elite, led by Domingo del Monte (1804-1853), in his famous 'tertulia' or salon founded in 1835, became the medium for the articulation of a sense of territoriality (Benítez Rojo 19). Challenged politically, that intellectual elite used literature as the galvanizing force that helped forge a voice for the expression of a literary community. The Creole elite serves as the spokespersons for the expression of that bastard position assigned to them by the colonizing forces. That sense of Cubanness later manifests itself in the struggle for sovereignty.

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<sup>21</sup> The travelers also allude to French Creoles exiled in Cuba after the Saint-Domingue Revolution (1791-1803) as well as French Creoles living in the French Antilles. See De Hauranne (886) as well as Massé's fifteenth chapter entitled "Admission de nouveaux habitants [sic].- Accroissement de prospérité.- D'où proviennent les grandes richesses de la Havane"[Admission of new inhabitants.- Growth of prosperity.- The origin of the great riches of Havana]. On the one hand, French Creoles in Cuba are described as model citizens, skilled in farming, trying to adapt to Cuba while invigorating agriculture there through cultivation of sugar cane. On the other hand, the French Creoles in the French Antilles are perceived as enormously lazy and lascivious, like their counterparts, the Spanish Creoles. This is evidenced by the topos "indolence naturelle aux Créoles" [the Creoles' natural inclination towards indolence] alluded to by the travelers, a reflection of the tropical climate that makes them naturally sluggish, lazy and overly sensuous.

That Creole elite found itself at the heart of the complex issues faced by 19<sup>th</sup> century Cuba. The rich landowners and sugar planters maneuvered to maintain a foothold on the island's economy. The creation of the Sociedad Patriótica, or Patriotic Society, a civil society whose mission was to safeguard the interests of that sugar aristocracy stood as a firm reminder of the elaborated plan set in motion to control the country economically and intellectually. The Creole elite, in turn, with the efforts of luminaries such as José Antonio Saco (1797-1879)<sup>22</sup>, Domingo del Monte and José de la Luz y Caballero (1800-1862), counter-reacted through the *Revista Bimestre Cubana*, forming what René Dépestre calls a “marronage culturel,” by petitioning Spain to form an “Academia de Literatura Cubana” (Benítez Rojo 20-21).<sup>23</sup> Although that petition was granted a year later, Captain-General Miguel Tacón quickly put the lid on such an ambitious project that would definitely create a sense of equality between the colony and Spain.<sup>24</sup> It is curious that the intellectuals would pursue the legal route to petition the creation of an autonomous society, enabling them to voice needs that are essentially Cuban, instead of finding other clandestine channels to express their autonomous views. One wonders, in spite of the originality of that enterprise, whether those intellectuals were not subconsciously pledging allegiance to Spain by petitioning for such an academia.

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<sup>22</sup> José Antonio Saco (1797 Cuba-1879 Madrid), famous Cuban publicist, professor of philosophy at the Seminary of San Carlos in Havana, was editor of the *Revista Bimestre Cubana*. He traveled to New York in 1824, where he translated from the Latin to Spanish the celebrated work of Hernecius on Roman Law. He was a strong opponent of slavery.

<sup>23</sup> René Dépestre, *Bonjour et adieu à la négritude* (1980). Miguel Tacón (1777-1885), governed Cuba from June 1834-April 1838.

<sup>24</sup> Miguel Tacón (1777-1885), governed Cuba from June 1834-April 1838.

The freedom of expression that the Creole elite was seeking manifested itself both in the literary as well as the political arena. José Antonio Saco, as the spokesperson for the group of intellectuals, advocated the need for the termination of slavery in his essay on Brazil, recognizing the interconnectedness between the struggle for freedom of expression as well as the abolition of slavery. Tacón, in a quick move to suppress any acts of subversion, exiled the leader who was lucky, as opposed to José Antonio Aponte and his companions in the episode known as the Conspiracy of La Escalera, “The Ladder Conspiracy” (1844), aimed at putting an end to slavery as well as creating upward mobility for people of color in Cuba.<sup>25</sup> The name La Escalera originated from the fact that Aponte and his companions were hung tied to a ladder. Amidst turmoil between the different ruling factions, in spite of General Tacón’s iron-fisted grip on the island, a Creole elite, in literature found the means to articulate a counter-discourse, in which are found the tools for liberation against Spanish rule.

### Coolies

In Cuba, the word “coolie” is used to allude to Chinese indentured servants who were “contracted” towards the end of the nineteenth century to replace African slaves.<sup>26</sup> The “coolie trade” was introduced in Cuba as an alternative to African slavery. Similar to

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<sup>25</sup> See Robert L. Paquette, *Sugar is Made with Blood: The Conspiracy of La Escalera and the Conflict between Empires over Slavery in Cuba* (1988).

<sup>26</sup> The word “coolie,” enters the New World’s vocabulary with the inception of indentured servants from the East in the nineteenth century. In Jamaica, Trinidad and Guyana, a coolie is a person of East Indian descent. Usually pejorative in European usage, the word coolie is also used to refer to an unskilled laborer or porter usually from the Far East hired for low or subsistence wages. It is generally believed that the coolies were brought as cheap labor.

the African slave trade (i.e. transportation on the same ships used previously to transport Africans, mistreatments, diseases and deaths during the trip), a Pacific Middle Passage started in the fourth decade of the nineteenth century to compensate for the labor scarcity resulted from the worldwide movement to eradicate slavery.<sup>27</sup> Slave traders shipped people from China, especially from the southern ports of Amoy and Macao, to developing European colonial areas, such as Hawaii, Ceylon, Malaysia and the Caribbean. Most coolies became so through kidnapping, decoy and fraud. Aided and abated by Chinese representatives, Western merchants conducted the trade. The human cargoes were stored in depots or barracoons where they waited for shipment. Cramped aboard the vessels, sickness and death ensued; the Chinese and Western governments did close to nothing to stop the inhumane trade.<sup>28</sup>

## Blacks

In *La presencia negra en el Nuevo mundo*, José Luciano Franco observes:

Puente natural entre África y Europa, en la Península Ibérica dejaron huellas indelebles a través del tiempo y del espacio sucesivas manifestaciones étnicas y culturales especialmente árabes, moras y bereberes introductoras en España de la esclavitud negra- que prepararon a los futuros colonizadores del Nuevo Mundo para la vida en las islas tropicales del Caribe, mezclándose una vez más con los africanos esclavos que se trajeron a remplazar a los aborígenes extinguidos

[Natural bridge between Europe and Africa, in the Iberian Peninsula were found indelible marks, through time and space, of several ethnic and cultural manifestations, particularly Arab, Moor and Berber, which introduced black slavery in Spain- which prepared the future colonizers of

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<sup>27</sup> See Duvon Clough Corbitt, *A Study of the Chinese in Cuba, 1847-1947* (1971); see also Rebecca J. Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba: The Transition to Free Labor, 1860-1899* (1985).

<sup>28</sup> See Corbitt, p.29.



the New World for life in the tropical islands of the Caribbean, mixing once more with African slaves that were brought to substitute the extinct natives] (7).

Franco is here stressing the point that slavery as an institution was deeply ingrained in the Conquistadors' political and economic constructs prior to the New World's discovery, which facilitated its relocation to the new territories. Therefore, the enslavement of Africans in Cuba, which started one hundred and fifty years prior to its occurrence in the French Antilles, was the transplantation of a system already familiar to the Spaniards. Diego Velázquez founded Baracoa with 300 Spaniards and their African slaves. The number of Africans brought to Cuba as slaves continues to increase in the subsequent centuries due to the slave trade, which experienced its biggest growth between the years 1763-1860, at the apex of the sugar industry. The slaves were mainly from Senegal and the Guinea Coast with diverse Yoruba and Bantu tribal origins. A number of slaves, loyal to their masters, also followed them to Cuba after the Saint-Domingue Revolution.

Based on the colonial legacy, since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Blacks occupied the end of the social stratum in Cuba. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Cuba had blacks as slaves, who lived in barracoons, and thousands of free people of color. The word "barracoon" or 'baracón' in Spanish, is originated from the Portuguese, according to Juan Pérez de la Riva, in *El barracón: esclavitud y capitalismo en Cuba* (1978). This word comes to signify both the slaves' dwelling units as well as a market place for their auction. Life in the barracoons is reminiscent of the slaves' situation in the boats that transported them to various parts of the New World.

In Cuba, the importation of Africans as slaves reached its peak during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as the demand for sugar increased. Cuba imported more than 600,000 Africans, most of them after an Anglo-Spanish agreement to terminate the slave trade in 1820. At that point, the already fragile relationship between the slaves and their masters became explosive. “As the sugar industry grew; and as the numbers of slaves increased, their situation worsened and the colonists became more fearful” (Ortiz 35). The colonists’ fear was substantiated by an increasing number of runaway slaves known as *cimarrones* who fled to the hills to live in *palenques*, alongside other escaped Africans and runaway Indians, beginning the organization of cultural as well as political entities, contrary to the belief that this form of marronage was borne out of the slaves’ innate need for libertinage.<sup>29</sup> The African element as it is known and experienced today in religion and the arts in Cuba, stems from that movement of resistance against colonial rule.

### **Ramifications of the Saint-Domingue Revolution (1791-1803)**

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the New World became a boiling cauldron: change was the order of the day. Black Saint-Domingue’s triumph over Imperial France forced the Old World to reassess its stance. Under the leadership of Toussaint L’ouverture (1743?-1803), Black Saint-Domingue organized a successful Revolution, which changed forever the history of colonial hegemony in the New World. The impact of that victory was felt farther than the towering mountains of Hispaniola. Cyril Lionel Robert James (1901), in *The Black Jacobins*, (1985) makes a provocative statement, declaring that “West Indians

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<sup>29</sup> For more information on the resistance of runaway slaves, see Richard Price’s landmark study, *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in America*, (1973); see also Fernando Ortiz’ *Hampa afro-cubana* (1916) and Frank W. Knight’s *Slave Society in Cuba during the Nineteenth Century* (1970).

first became aware of themselves as a people in the Haitian Revolution” (391). The formation of the First Free Black Republic inspired the remaining bastions of colonialism in the New World to rid themselves of the shackles of foreign occupation. In that sense, the role of the Saint-Domingue Revolution is far-reaching because the underdogs realized that, through strategic planning, the unification of the downtrodden, slaves as well as men of color, even the Napoleonic Army, could be destroyed. The Revolution also generated a sort of brotherhood among future freedom fighters. This is evident in the role that Alexandre Pétion (1770-1818), Haiti’s second president, played in aiding Simón Bolívar (1783-1830), ‘el Libertador’ in freeing the Spanish colonies in South America.<sup>30</sup> In that sense, the Americas as a block became more conscious of the concept of nationhood, as fragmented identities created by colonialism began to assert themselves politically and culturally.

The Saint-Domingue Revolution and its catalyst, the French Revolution, were arguably at the center of the events dominating the political arena in 19<sup>th</sup> century Cuba. From an ideological standpoint, the example of Saint-Domingue’s slaves stood as a clear reminder of the fragility of Spain’s rule over Cuba.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, the Spanish leaders were

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<sup>30</sup> The son of a wealthy French colonist and a mulatto, he served in the French Colonial Army prior to the French Revolution and later joined Toussaint L’ouverture’s troops (the Indigenous Army). After the Indigenous Army had won the war, he fought against Jean-Jacques Dessalines (1758-1806), Haiti’s first Emperor, who was instrumental in the war against the French, and also revered for his brutality towards the colonists. He advocated to cut off the heads and burn down the properties of slave owners. Alexandre Pétion (1770-1818) later became president in the south in 1807; was re-elected in 1811, and made president for life in 1816. A liberal influenced by the ideals of French liberalism, he divided the large plantations among his soldiers. The people, no longer required to produce a surplus for the plantation owners, started producing enough to survive, plunging the country into a deep inflation.

<sup>31</sup> Franco underscores the fact that slavery became harsher in Cuba due to news of successful slave uprisings in Saint-Domingue. He delineates a series of corporal punishments, which resulted from the slave masters’ fear of losing control (3).

more than restless concerning the possibilities of uprisings in the island; in turn, this caused the slavery system to become harsher, in spite of the provision of the slave code of 1789, which geared towards ameliorating the slaves' conditions. According to Sir Harry H. Johnston (1858-1927), in *The Negro in the New World* (1969), the slave code was never read in the colonies.<sup>32</sup> In addition, England's constant denouncing of Spain's refusal to implement the code, France's hostility and jealousy, and the watchful eyes of the United States' democracy further complicated matters for Spain, making it all the more evident that the demise of that colony was imminent. Later, Spain's defeat in the Spanish American War came as the fatal dagger that put an end to Spanish colonial rule in Cuba.

The Saint-Domingue Revolution also affected the growth of Cuba's population by facilitating new economic venues through the development of agriculture. The expansion of agriculture is directly linked to the migration of French exiles to Cuba, subsequent to the Revolution of Saint-Domingue. Cuba's proximity to that island made it a haven for the Saint-Domingue's French who exiled there in addition to an influx of Spaniards from Florida, Mexico and Louisiana. Concentrated in Santiago de Cuba, the French exiles became a contributing factor in Cuba's economic surge. In fact, the French community had such a powerful influence in Santiago de Cuba that during his voyage of study Ernest Duvergier de Hauranne concludes, "c'est presque autant une ville française qu'une ville espagnole. Notre langue est comprise de tout le monde, sauf de quelques nouveaux colons espagnols obstinés à ne pas l'apprendre" [it is almost as much a French town as it

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<sup>32</sup> The slave code of 1789 and the Code Noir instituted in 1685 both require religious instruction for the slaves.

is a Spanish one. Our language is understood by everyone, except a few new Spanish colonists, determined to not learn it] (861).

### **The Role of Sugar**

**“The change from coffee plantations to sugar plantations—from the cafetal to the ingenio, has seriously affected the social, as it has the economic condition of Cuba”**

R. H. Dana, *To Cuba and Back*, 1859.

Sugar, as Dana concludes, intimately links all the different sectors of 19<sup>th</sup> century Cuban society. Manuel Moreno Fraginals described it as the homogenizing force that connected Cuba to the world, transforming cities into the “reflection of a world that made sugar production the yardstick of all ethical and political values” (73). With the sugar-based economy, Cuba’s prosperity was analogous to that of Saint-Domingue during the golden years of the French régime, suggesting the metaphor of the “island that repeated itself”, coined by Antonio Benítez Rojo.<sup>33</sup> Cuba, following the fall of the French regime in Saint-Domingue, with quadruple the land area of Saint-Domingue and more fertile ground, was en route to become one of the greatest producers of sugar. The use of technology in the form of machines to maximize production facilitated the shift from the *ingenio* to the factory, now that mules and slaves were no longer needed in the fabrication phase. The migration of French exiles from Saint-Domingue, who brought with them their skills in sugar growing as well as some of their slaves, and the contribution of other French émigrés from Louisiana, sustained the development of sugar, which cemented Cuba’s economy during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The expansion of the sugar industry occurred

from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century until the decree of freedom of commerce in 1818. Sugar “served as a powerful integrative in the local economy: it concentrated capital, consolidated land, consumed labor” (Pérez 62).

With the booming sugar economy came other advancements such as constructions of roads as well as the advent of the telegraph. As Cuba substituted Saint-Domingue in terms of sugar production, the demand for labor increased. In the meantime, the slave population was low in contrast to the number of arms required to keep up with the demand of sugar from European countries as well as the United States. As the demand for slaves increased, so did the cost for slaves, so did the measures taken to maximize the slaves’ labor.<sup>34</sup> The social and economic inequities caused by the powerful sugar industry, Spain’s insistence on obtaining slaves even after abolition, constituted some of the legacies that united progressive sectors of Creoles, Blacks as well as free men of color, and facilitated the movement towards nationalism. It was this milieu, marked by the fragile alliance between friends and foes, with sugar as the dominating force that provided the impetus for the 19<sup>th</sup> century travelers who visited Cuba.

French printed voyages in the Americas, which began with the pioneering efforts of seamen, pirates and priests, provide the backdrop for an understanding of the mechanisms that led to the flourishing of travelogues in 19<sup>th</sup> century Cuba. Those markers that indicate the metamorphosis of accounts on the New World, shift from mere descriptions of places and people, of adventures lived as well as imagined, to a search for authenticity and accuracy in the representation of people and places, for scientific

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<sup>33</sup> For a deeper understanding of the dynamics that facilitated the transplantation of different systems with the Antilles, see Antonio Benítez Rojo, *The Repeating Island* (1992).

purposes. The four authors that I will study vacillate between subjectivity and objectivity in their accounts. Through discursive devices such as the use of common topoi, exploitation of rhetoric to convince the reader, the writers' personality, and their training, their biases as well as their personal convictions are uncovered, allowing us powerful insights into their purpose for undertaking such trips. It is through an analysis of elements stated as well as omitted in the "original texts" printed under diverse circumstances, through comparisons between the writers' perspectives and actual political, social, cultural and literary events that were taking place at the time of their visit, that we will reach a certain proximity to 19<sup>th</sup> century Cuban life. The travelers' accounts created discursive representations that permeate through time, as forces against which the Other will always struggle. It is my hope that this study will contribute to a better understanding of Cuban history and culture as we examine first-hand accounts of life written two centuries ago.

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<sup>34</sup> See Ortiz (1916).

## Chapter II

### 2.1 Cuba Through the Lenses of French Travelers: Literature, Escape and Financial Scouts

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, after the Romantic movement reached its zenith, European travelers, preoccupied with the exotic as well as self-introspection, flocked to the New World in search of knowledge, adventures and new economic venues. History, literature and the human sciences merged as those travelers began to explore the New World, leaving their impressions of an enchanted climate of lands, filled with complex social, economic and political issues. With respect to Cuba, that wave of travelers and travelogues, which form a certain “Cuban rapture,” did not reach a climax until the first decades of the nineteenth century, when politics as well as signs of an economic rebirth allowed it. According to Michèle Guicharnaud-Tollis, “Toute Perle des Antilles qu’elle soit, Cuba fut jusque dans les premières décennies du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle la moins visitée, la moins explorée et la moins étudiée des îles de l’archipel” [Although considered Pearl of the Antilles, Cuba was, until the first decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the least visited, the least explored and the least studied of the islands of the archipelago] (7).<sup>35</sup>

To the French travelers, besides the opportunity for exploration and studies suggested by Guicharnaud-Tollis, Cuba offered a nostalgic view of the fallen Saint-Domingue colony. This was due to the proliferation of French exiles and their influence on that island’s economic rejuvenation, which echoed Saint-Domingue’s opulence at the

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<sup>35</sup> See also Achille Richard (1794-1852) and Ramón de la Sagra (1798-1871), in *L’Histoire Physique, politique et naturelle de l’île de Cuba* (1838).



height of the French régime.<sup>36</sup> Affinity for adventure, attempt to find an escape, the dissemination of knowledge through the analysis of people and plants, the search of new economic ventures, were some of the reasons that made the travelers risk life and limb by undertaking trips to Cuba.<sup>37</sup> Jean-Jacques Ampère, in *Promenade en Amérique*, alludes to the obstacles that such enterprises posed when he states: "...mais ce voyage, car c'en serait un, offrirait d'assez grandes difficultés. En certains endroits, la population est très rare. On peut, dans le centre de l'île, faire trente lieues sans trouver une goutte d'eau" [...but this trip, for this would constitute one, would pose many a difficulty. Some regions are scarcely populated. One can, in the center of the island, travel thirty leagues without finding a drop of water] (186).

The travelers therefore faced adverse circumstances, natural and otherwise, during their trips. Their writings as testimonials consist of snapshots based on prior readings,

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<sup>36</sup> French exiles contributed to Cuba's population and economic boom. The French exiles, laborious, diligent, trying to make the best out of their misfortune as a result of the ruin of Saint-Domingue, were influential in Cuba's economic boom. Their influence was so pervasive that Granier de Cassagnac, in *Voyage aux Antilles* (1843-1844), notes "c'est principalement dans les mornes de Santiago de Cuba et de Guantanamo, que se sont établies ces familles françaises, aujourd'hui fort nombreuses et fort riches" [it is mainly in the hills of Santiago de Guantánamo that those French families, numerous and rich, are established] (354). As for Saint-Domingue's affluence during the French régime, see C.L.R. James' *The Black Jacobins* (1963); See also Moreau de Saint-Méry (1750-1819), *Description topographique, physique, civile politique et historique de la partie française de l'île Saint-Domingue* (1876).

<sup>37</sup> In addition to the length of the sea voyage under precarious conditions, the travelers faced adverse situations establishing themselves in Cuba. Those who did not have diplomatic ties, as well as influential people to receive them in Cuba, faced economic hardships. Massé refers to the exorbitant cost of living for foreigners (68). Yellow fever and crimes also constitute constant threats to the travelers' life. Allusions to yellow fever are common in all the diaries. Quatrelles Lepine (1826-1893) in *Un Parisien dans les Antilles. Saint Thomas; Puerto Rico; La Havane; La vie de province sous les tropiques; ouvrage illustré de dessins de Riou* (1883), calls it "le spectre immense et invisible" [the immense and invisible specter] (299). Ampère relates to the disease as "la peste du nouveau-monde" [the plague of the new world] (182). He tries to explain its origin, alleging that the Indians from the Massachussets Bay are responsible, stating, "Peut-être provient-elle des Indiens, ceux qui habitaient la baie de Massachussets...avant l'arrivée de Colomb." [Maybe the Indians, those who lived in the bay of Massachussets, are responsible for the existence of the disease. He concludes that the sickness may be due to "l'influence des circonstances locales et de la prédisposition des individus sur l'explosion et le développement du mal" [the influence of local circumstances and the predisposition of people towards the explosion and growth of such a disease] (183).

things heard, believed; things believed to have been heard and read, as well as actual observations on Cuba's "realities." Articulating their experience through a first-person subject, a pact is established between the narrator and the receptor, in a discursive attempt to persuade the receptor. In this optic, I will analyze how, documenting their visit, the four travelers represent Cuba from the standpoints of prior knowledge and individual experience, using the familiar to explain the unknown. I will argue that through topoi that focus on particular facets of 19<sup>th</sup> century life in Cuba, they leave blueprints for a certain understanding of their personality, the aim of their visit, and the depiction of Cuba as a mysterious island offering amusements to visitors of all persuasions.<sup>38</sup>

### 2.2.1 Granier de Cassagnac: Cuba, Queen of the Islands

"There is nothing sublime or transcendent, but enough to justify the assertion that 'one is sure to like Havannah'". A.C.N. Gallenga, *The Pearl of the Antilles*, p.32

This quote from Antonio Carlo Napoleone Gallenga (1810-1895), summarizes 19<sup>th</sup> century travelers' perception of Cuba: the auspicious terrain for travelers seeking an escape from the mundane, both aesthetically and intellectually. Granier de Cassagnac, in his *Voyage aux Antilles*, relates Cuba's attributes as "La reine des îles" [Queen of the islands] and "La Havane la reine des villes" [Havana the queen of the cities] (296). The author states: "De quelque côté qu'on arrive a l'île de Cuba, se sent-on [sic] préoccupé

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<sup>38</sup> This chapter focuses solely on the travelers' quest for flight. To the travelers, adventurous and miniature Romantics, Cuba offers the optimal atmosphere for such experiences in spite of the complex social and political issues that surrounded the island. That aspect of the diaries, which contrasts with the island's reputation as the Pearl of the Antilles, is studied in chapter III.

Malgré soi des merveilles de fécondité, de richesse et d'élégance qu'en racontent les voyageurs" [Wherever one is on the island of Cuba, one is overwhelmed, in spite of oneself, of the marvels of fecundity, riches and elegance, which the travels describe] (297). The phrase "qu'en racontent les voyageurs," coincides with other aspects of travel accounts: to confirm the travelers' opinion on certain things, persuade the receptor through the reiteration of topoi, and invent other myths. In this sense, De Cassagnac acts as a Tourism spokesperson, in spite of his reluctance, stating "se sent-on préoccupé *malgré soi*." Depicting the "lighter side" of the colony, the narration has all the attributes of a *folletín*: courtship and a booming bourgeoisie obsessed with carnal pleasure light up the pages. This is done with a voyeuristic<sup>39</sup> attitude in order to entice the receptor and future visitors to visit the island, thus unveiling De Cassagnac's personality as a man and a traveler. As a man, he is versed in literature; a romantic who reminisces of the adventures of Gil Blas de Santillana while circulating through the streets of Havana by night.<sup>40</sup> He is especially captivated by "des bruits de guitare aux portes, et des causeries amoureuses aux fenêtres" [noises of guitars through doors and love chatters through the

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<sup>39</sup> The word 'voyeur' is used here in the strictest sense, to connote the idea that there is something passionate about a person who travels with pen and paper and takes notes about the details, sometimes intimate, of another's culture.

<sup>40</sup> Gil Blas de Santillane- reference to *Histoire de Gil Blas de Santillane* (1781), by Alain René-Lesage (1668-1747), one of the earliest realistic French novels, which follows the trajectory of the picaresque genre. It relates the education and adventures of an adaptable young valet as he progresses from one master to the next, learning to be more astute than the devil himself, as the blind man advises young Lazarillo, in *Lazarillo de Tormes*, ed. José Miguel González (1989). In the service of the quack Dr. Sangrado, Gil Blas trains on the financially challenged patients and soon achieves his master's level of success (i.e. 100% fatalities). In service to Don Mathias, a notorious seducer, he also learns to equal and exceed his master. The adventure ends happily with GB retiring, marrying, and finding peace in a quiet country life.

windows] (302). In this sense, using his pen as a spy camera, De Cassagnac reveals some intimate aspects of nocturnal life in Cuba. He even confesses his voyeuristic tendencies:

en longeant discrètement les murs, on entend à travers une jalousie les sons indécis d'une guitare... c'est une bonne fortune sans égale lorsque un coin de store en toile, se levant tout à coup, laisse passer une tête rieuse de jeune fille coiffée....Mais on a beau attendre tout haletant, pour voir si le corps ne sortira pas avec la tête, et si les épaules ne sortiront pas avec le coup

[passing discretely along the walls, one hears through Venetian blinds, the indecisive sounds of a guitar...one is infinitely lucky when through a corner of a store of linen cloth all of a sudden one sees the head of a young woman...but one waits in vain, almost out of breath, to see whether the body will come out with the head, and whether the shoulders won't come out with the neck] (308).

### 2.2.2 The Familiar to Explain the Unknown

Granier de Cassagnac relies greatly on his prior travels to give the receptor an idea of his experience of Cuba. Putting his initial gaze into perspective, he compares the island to London and New York. He declares: "J'ai eu, trois fois dans ma vie, en entrant dans trois pays étrangers, la révélation subite et complète de la grandeur de trois peuples."<sup>41</sup> La première fois, c'était, lors de mon premier voyage en Angleterre, en entrant à Londres par la Tamise; la seconde fois, c'était en entrant à La Havane; la troisième, ce fût en entrant à New-Yorck [sic]" [I have had, three times in my life, entering in three foreign countries, the sudden and complete revelation of the greatness of three peoples. The first time was during my first trip to England, entering through the Thames; the second time was upon entering Havana; the third time entering New York] (296).

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<sup>41</sup>Here, using the phrase "la révélation subite et complète de la grandeur de trois peuples," De Cassagnac is placing Cuba among the elite, calling the Cuban people a "great people," second only to England. As he became more acquainted with the island, he became rather cynical, calling the island a backward place.

Later, he reiterates Havana's uniqueness, using the known to explain the unknown. De Cassagnac proposes that one has to experience Havana in order to be fully convinced of what one is depicting. Mere comparisons do not suffice to project Havana's singular "color," "noise," and its magic as a vibrant city that is "strange during the day," but "mysterious and poetic" at night: "Aucune ville que je connaisse, ni Paris, ni Londres [sic], ni New-Yorck [sic], ne donneraient [sic] une idée de La Havane: elle a un aspect, une couleur, un bruit qui lui sont propres; vue de jour, elle est d'une étrangeté grandiose; vue de nuit, elle est d'une étrangeté presque mystérieuse et poétique" [No city that I know neither Paris nor London nor New Yorck could give an idea of Havana: it has an aspect, a color, a noise which are unique; seen by day it is very strange; seen by night, its strangeness is almost mysterious and poetic] (300).

### **2.3 Duvergier de Hauranne: Escape Through Art: Cuba's Panorama as Prose Paintings**

Duvergier de Hauranne penned his diary from the standpoint of a traveler seeking a peaceful place to conduct his studies. Therefore, the panorama occupies the foreground, as each scene becomes a landscape that exposes Cuba's beauty. In his diary, descriptions of nature abound. His metaphors, colorful as paintbrushes, allow us to explore some of his skills as painter and poet.<sup>42</sup> I will analyze his impressions of Cuba's panorama in an attempt to suggest that although the traveler had scientific endeavors in mind, Cuba's majestic panorama enthralled him in such a way that the scientific fused with the artistic

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<sup>42</sup> The writer depicts aspects of Cuba, particularly sunrises, sunsets and the heat of the afternoon sun with such precision that we can visualize them. De Hauranne was himself a painter. He lamented the loss of one of his paintings in the diary (853).

as he plunged into a world of reverie. This would give his descriptions of Cuba the texture of abstract paintings.

Cuba's landscape occupies center stage in Duvergier de Hauranne's narration. He lets nature freely guide his imagination, as he describes some of the tropical landscapes. His skills as a painter/writer are evident in that he employs the right metaphors, the fitting adjectives that give his writings a pictorial quality.

De Hauranne's first observations consist of an enumeration of the plants in Matanzas: "une vaste plaine ondulée, un peu monotone, mais partout riante et spacieuse, avec de grands bouquets de palmiers, des quinconces de bananiers en fruits, de larges cultures de cannes, des haies de cactus, d'aloès et de lianes" [a vast undulated plain, a little monotonous, but pleasant and spacious everywhere, with giant bouquets of palms, rows of banana trees, huge sugar cane fields, hedges of cactus, aloes and lianas] (621). He continues articulating his findings, now making statements about the country as a whole, describing its uniqueness and its more than perfect location. "Le pays est donc uniforme et serait triste sous un autre ciel," he declares [The country is therefore uniform and thus would look sad under another sky] (621).

The author emphasizes harmony, the symmetry of forms, depicting an atmosphere of abundance and order. He finally finds something positive in the Other's culture, with no equal in his own country: the vegetation, for which he credits a supernatural power. He describes how nature:

[La nature] conserve une admirable symétrie au milieu même de ses plus étourdissants [sic] caprices. Point de ces broussailles grossières et bourruës, de ces arbres gauches et massifs qu'on voit dans nos climats. Nos forêts semblent pousser au hasard et n'avoir d'autre loi que la difformité. Ici, palmiers, faux

cèdres (ce que du moins on appelle cèdre à Cuba, et qui, je crois, n'est même pas un conifère), cocotiers, bananiers, orangers et citronniers de mille espèces... [(nature) maintains an admirable symmetry in the very middle of its most astounding caprices. None of those grotesque and disorganized foliage, none of those awkward and massive trees that one sees in our climates. Our forests seem to grow haphazardly and have no law other than that of difformity. Here, the palm trees, the cedars (what at least they call cedar in Cuba, and which, I believe, is not even a conifer), coconut trees, banana trees, orange trees and thousands of species of lemon trees] (622).

Those details are not fortuitous. They constitute an inventory of the plants, as De Hauranne realizes a comparative study, pairing the tropical plants with those found in his own country, thereby revealing his erudition in the field of botany. Before broaching a concise study of the plants, he makes a startling revelation. It confirms his belief in a supernatural order of things because such an organization could not have been the result of human error, genius or coincidence. In a somber tone, he declares: "Le plus ingénieux jardinier du monde n'imitera jamais la forme des végétations du midi; vous ne ferez jamais un pin pignon d'un pin d'Église, ni d'un lourd peuplier Suisse un gracier peuplier d'Italie" [The most astute gardener in the world will never emulate the form of vegetation of the meridian; you will never make a pinion pine out of a church pine, nor a heavy Swiss poplar out of a poplar of Italy] (622).

Describing the variety of palm trees, he acknowledges the features that make the palm tree an excellent asset: "Ce ne sont plus les larges feuilles et les végétations majestueuses du peuple innombrables des palmiers" [these are not the huge leaves and majestic vegetations of the numerous palm trees] (622). As if De Hauranne had performed an X-ray of the palm trees, he reveals that they are: "légers, transparents comme celui du saule.... Ce n'est qu'une herbe à la vérité, mais c'est une herbe dont les

cépées épaisses nous enveloppent de leur ombre, et dont la paille soutient le toit des maisons” [light, transparent as that of the willow tree... It is only a grass, in reality, but a grass whose thick branches wrap us with their shadow, and whose straw holds the roof of houses] (623).

In addition to the palm trees, De Hauranne pays special attention to the venerated *ceiba* as a towering presence in the tropical jungle, personifying it, using physiological attributes that make it a stronghold in the middle of the forest. Reading De Hauranne’s description, one cannot stop thinking of the *ceiba* as a fortress, a natural skyscraper with a built-in protection system that defies the elements. Here is an illustration of the *ceiba*’s fortitude:

Celui-ci fortement appuyé sur sa couche conique, épanoui à sa racine en larges contreforts semblables à ceux qui soutiennent les piles d’un pont ou les bastions d’une ville, semble défier tous les ouragans. La nature, qui l’a élevé au-dessus du menu peuple des forêts, l’a en même temps muni contre les dangers de la grandeur. Son vaste dome ne plie pas sous l’orage, sa base est assez forte pour lui résister. Sa tête haute appelle la foudre, mais la nature a mis sur ses branches une plante parasite dont les aiguilles pointues et délicates écartent l’élément destructeur

[That one (a reference to the smaller trees) leaned against her cone-like hotbed, spread around its root in wide counterforts similar to those that sustain the pillars of a bridge or the bastions of a city, seems to defy all the storms. Nature, which has elevated it over the smaller creature of the forests, has protected it against the dangers posed by its height. Its vast dome is not folded by thunder; its base is strong enough to resist it. Its elevated top calls on the thunder, but nature puts upon its head a parasitic plant, whose pointed and delicate needles scatter the destructive element] (623).

After describing such a natural wonder, which confirms the idea alluded to earlier, that there are no accidents in the works of Creation, the author cannot help accusing Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) of plagiarism, for emulating the *ceiba*, in order to realize his masterpiece. De Hauranne alleges that “Franklin n’est pas le premier inventeur du



paratonnerre, puisque les arbres des forêts le connaissaient avant lui” [Franklin is not the inventor of the lightning-conductor, since the trees of the forest knew it first] (623). Then, using the analogy of the feuding family, he describes the ceiba as a giant, a father, the king of the tropical jungle, whose children (the smaller trees), fight over space, shade and protection: “Aux pieds du géant se presse la foule des petits arbres, qui, bien loin de faire place autour du haut personnage et de lui laisser étaler sa grandeur dans une solitude jalouse, semblent se disputer son abri et sa protection [At the feet of the giant, a crowd of small trees press against each other, which, far from making space around the powerful character and to let it spread its greatness in a jealous solitude, seem to fight over its shade and protection] (623).

De Hauranne paints us another masterpiece in which all the beauty of the tropical forest, which he calls “tropical jungle,” is once again undraped. In this tableau, he alludes to a customary nocturnal meeting between the clouds, which “s’amassent tous les jours à l’heure de la chaleur pour se dissiper chaque soir aux rayons du soleil couchant” [which gather every day only to disappear each night of the rays of the setting sun]. Observing the effect of the setting sun on the mountains, De Hauranne immerses himself in a world of fairy tales as images that connote the ethereal become the focal point in the depiction. The forms he describes are “légères, les couleurs tendres et aériennes d’un jardin de fées” [light, the colors are tender and aerial like those of a fairy garden] (623). The mountains continue to be at the heart of De Hauranne’s description of that sunset; light as a motif helps him reproduce that sunset, contrasting different colors, he reproduces that sunset, whose magical hues have aspects of sunrise. De Hauranne articulates his astonishment in

his description of the sunset, a description that buttresses his earlier allusion to a magical garden:

Les douces crêtes des montagnes chevelues s'illuminent d'or où l'horizon couchant se décore de bandes lumineuses et pures comme le reflet pâle d'un feu de Bengale lointain, où les nuées légères ont plutôt une teinte d'aurore que de crépuscule, où l'ombre grandit la taille des arbres et donne au paysage tout entier un air de majesté fantastique, ces derniers momens [sic] sont pleins d'un enchantement inexprimable

[The sweet crests of the wooded mountains light with gold where the setting horizon is decorated with luminous pure and shiny light strips similar to the pale reflection of a of far away fire, where light fogs have rather a shade of dawn than of crepuscule, where the shadow enlarges the size of the trees and gives the entire panorama an air of fantastic majesty, those last moments are filled with an undescribable enchantment] (624).

De Hauranne's "enchantement inexprimable" [undescribable enchantment] should have prolonged with his visit to a plantation called Bellamar. The highlight of this place is a spectacular cave depicted as "la merveille des merveilles, et que nulle grotte encore connue, pas même celle d'Antiparos ou du Mammouth, ne pouvait soutenir la comparaison" [the wonder of wonders, second to none, not even the cave of Antiparos or the Mammoth] (630). The keeper of the cave, according to De Hauranne, would sell you the idea, if you are credulous that is, "que sa caverne n'a pas de fond ni de fin, et qu'elle peut vous conduire sous l'océan jusqu'en Castille..." [his cave has no beginning nor end, and that it could lead you under the ocean, all the way to Castille] (628). However, as traveling confirms as well as disproves ideas, observations concerning places and people, De Hauranne, because of his experiences as a well-traveled gentleman, seems unmoved. That the conditions under which he visited the cave certainly biased him is another issue, although he conceals that fact, focusing on the comparison between that cave and the Mammoth cave. Among the elements that spoil his impressions are the oppressive heat

and the unbearable presence of his companion, “un vieil Américain obèse qui souffle, sue, gémit, et demande à respirer l’air des humains” (629) [an obese and old American, who breathes, sweats, languishes and demands to breathe the air of humans].<sup>43</sup>

His first comments contradict the propaganda surrounding the cave. He reveals that “l’entrée de la grotte n’a pourtant rien de majestueux” [there is nothing sumptuous about the entrance to the cave] (629). He proceeds with his description, criticizing the appearance of a gothic temple,” which “le ridicule appareil de poutres, de planches et de lanternes” [which the ridiculous display of beams, boards and lanterns] was supposed to produce. However, after exploring the cave for thirty minutes, De Hauranne reluctantly reveals some of its wonders that enthrall him, although this is often articulated with indifference or sheer disdain. He describes “un étroit corridor tapissé de cristaux d’albâtre, **les plus beaux que j’aie jamais vus**” [a narrow corridor plastered with alabaster crystals, the most beautiful that I have ever seen] (629). In spite of this confession, however, De Hauranne insists that everything concerning the cave has been exaggerated, because in spite of the existence of the crystals, “les plus beaux [qu’il n’ait jamais vus],” the cave did not reflect “ni majesté ni terreur” [neither majesty nor terror] (629). Because nature is always indulgent towards things in the tropics, endowing them with incredible assets, De Hauranne unveils the calculated work of art, with surgical precision. He sums it up in the following assertion, comparing the cave in Cuba to the Mammoth Cave: “On dirait que la nature, qui a déchiré la grotte du Mammoth à grands coups dans les entrailles de la terre, s’est amusée à façonner à l’écart des milliers de petits

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<sup>43</sup> The implication is that the American enjoys company and does not allow other people enough space to breathe. De Hauranne seems to be more disturbed probably by the man’s odor or his own claustrophobia and discomfort in such a narrow space with another man.

bijoux étincelans [sic]" [One would say that nature, which had torn the cave of Mammoth with heavy blows in the womb of the earth, enjoyed itself by moulding aside thousands of small shiny jewels] (629).<sup>44</sup>

De Hauranne continues to dazzle the reader with his observations of the finest, most precious jewels inside of this cave, which turns out to be fascinating, even when the author strives to downplay the idea of the mysterious associated with that cave. Images describing the delicate and the fragile flourish as De Hauranne explores the cave in its totality:

"...aiguilles blanches et transparentes que distille la voute sont sinues, si délicate," "...des colonnes, des draperies, des masses fantastiques qu'on peut prendre pour des statues ébauchées," "...des masses blanches et moelleuses qui ressemblent a des bancs de neige sans souillure..." "...palais de glaces et de pierres précieuses loge au sein de la terre comme l'habitation brillante de quelque sylphide ou de quelque genie captif ..."  
[...white and transparent needles which exudes the cave are so delicate, columns," "... fantastic masses that one can take for sketches of statues...", "...white and sappy masses that look like banks of snow without dirt...", "...palaces of ice and precious stones, lodge in the womb of the earth like the abode of some sylphide of captive genie..."] (629).

Those images not only represent De Hauranne's observations but also some ideas he formed a priori. As a result, in the middle of the tropics, his mind re-visits gardens of nymphs he has read about. Although he declared that there was nothing mysterious about the cave in the beginning, as he became more acquainted with the site, he finds himself almost in the hereafter as if he were expecting the appearance of some ghost or

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<sup>44</sup> Samuel Hazard, in *Cuba with Pen and Pencil* (1871), also contrasts the Bellamar Cave with the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky. "The Mammoth Cave leaves upon the mind an impression of solemn, gloomy grandeur, and one peoples it with gnomes and demons. This cave (referring to Bellamar) is a dream of fairy-land.... and one almost expects to see shooting from the crystal shadows some lovely Undine or beauteous naiad" (291). De Hauranne was undoubtedly expecting to see "those crystal shadows" during his visit.

supernatural being. He concludes this description with an ironic statement directed to those who might have expected the appearance of a mysterious creature destined to frighten:

On s'attend presque à voir paraître une ombre blanche et fugitive au détour de l'étroit passage, ou à entendre une voix argentine murmurer tout auprès des mots inconnus, mais la blanche fée de la caverne n'est pas de celles qui bravent l'homme et le terrifient. Le premier bruit de la pioche brutale ébranlant sa demeure a dû la faire fuir de ses domaines ou mourir de peur dans sa prison.

[one almost expects to see the appearance of a white and fugitive shadow at the detour of the narrow passage way, or to hear an argentine voice humming close by some unknown words, but the white fairy of the cave is not of those that defy men and terrify them. The first noise of the brutal pickaxe shaking its dwelling must have made it flee from its domains or die of fright in her prison] (629).

De Hauranne is expressing his cynicism as well as his mild frustration because the cave was not as sensational as he was led to believe. He expected to be terrified, carrying in his collective imaginary the idea of white fairies associated with such environments. However, the place looked so different that the opposite effect would be produced: the fairies would experience fear instead of inspiring it.

#### **2.4 Ampère: Sensation of a Tropical 'Winter'**

In Ampère's *Promenade en Amérique*, nature takes preeminence over people and institutions. It is so much at the heart of Ampère's diary that his first observations embrace the climatic differences between Cuba and the United States. Remember that Ampère's trip takes him to the United States and Cuba in order to carry out a comparative study of slavery in both countries. He reveals it himself saying, "J'étais bien aisé de comparer l'organisation de ces établissements, et surtout la condition des esclaves, avec

ce que j'avais vu à la Louisiane" [it was convenient to compare the organization of those establishments, and especially the condition of the slaves, with what I saw in Louisiana] (195). Approaching Cuba, on January 30, 1852, after leaving the United States, Ampère gives us the impression that he is nearing the Mediterranean Sea, "J'ai laissé derrière moi tout ce qui ressemblait à l'hiver et aux frimas. Sur ma tête est le ciel des tropiques. À l'horizon, je vois les montagnes de Cuba au lieu des côtes plates du continent américain. Il me semble que j'ai passé de la Mer du Nord à la Méditerranée" [I left behind me all that looked like winter and hoar-frosts. On my head is the sky of the tropics. On the horizon, I see the mountains of Cuba instead of the flat coasts of the American continent. It seems to me that I had gone from the North Sea to the Mediterranean] (161).

Ampère echoes De Hauranne's sentiments of serenity as he observes "la rade de la Havane, qu'on dit la plus belle du monde....elle s'enfonce au pied des collines qui la dominant...présentant ainsi l'abri le plus parfait qu'on puisse imaginer," on the following day at dawn [the port of Havana, which is said to be the nicest in the world; it is located in the depths of the hills that surround it...presenting that way the most perfect shelter that one can imagine](169). Then, the bountiful panorama that Christopher Columbus painted in his ship logs reverberates in the reader's mind as Ampère affirms that "ces collines sont verdoyantes, tapissées de fleurs jaunes..." [those hills are green, plastered with yellow flowers] (169). The Frenchman's marvel continues, as he admires the sky. The atmosphere, dressed in its fine azure drape, receives a standing ovation from Ampère, who uses the adjective "splendide" to describe it at first. The sky subsequently becomes the background for what may inspire a painting *à la couleur locale*: "Ce ciel est splendide; les hommes portent des pantalons blancs, beaucoup d'entre eux des vestes

blanches et de grands chapeaux de paille” [the sky is splendid; the men wear white pants; many of them white vests and straw hats] (171). He concludes the tableau with a focus on the warm weather, suggesting that his recent trip to the United States was still in his mind. He declares: “Tout a un air de canicule, et nous sommes au 31 janvier” [everything has an air of canicule/dog-days of summer, and it is January 31.] (172)

We follow Ampère’s trails, as he depicts the quotidian routine of a man skilled in the art of blending business with pleasure. Although he is charmed by nature’s beauty, he does not lose track of his thesis: to present a comparative study of the slavery issue in the United States and in Cuba. To this effect, the colonial enterprise remains a recurrent theme in his observations. That is why in spite of the wondrous works of Nature that surround him, he stops to address words of caution to the prospective reader that might be inclined to sink into feelings of utopia found. He advises: “il ne faut pas que cette magnificence de la nature tropicale, cette gaieté d’une ville espagnole, l’élégance des volantes et même les beaux yeux des Havanaises, fassent oublier la condition de la population esclave, dont la présence attriste tout le spectacle” [the magnificence of the tropical nature, the gaiety liveliness of a Spanish city, the elegance of the volantes and the beautiful eyes of Havana women, must not deter one from thinking about the conditions of the slave population, whose presence casts a gloom on the entire spectacle] (175).

Further in the narrative, however, Ampère finds equilibrium once again, although he is afflicted with sadness due to the lamentable situation of the slaves. Nature offers him solace: “Le lever du soleil est admirable” [the sunrise is admirable] he affirms, as he goes through the day’s routine, that includes trips to the different *paseos*, and even a trip to a fish market. Ampère, among other banalities, confesses that the fish market “c’est en

général, un lieu peu attirant” [is in general a not so attractive place] (178). He also reveals “je vais visiter chaque jour le marché aux poissons” [everyday I visit the fish market] (178). This is symbolic of a traveler seeking leisure, a candid traveler who reacts spontaneously to elements of the other culture. He sums up his observations in dazzling terms, fascinated by the variety of fish he observes, in spite of the offensive odor: “Mais ici les poissons, étincèlent des plus vives couleurs, rouges, roses, verts, dorés, donnent aux yeux un éblouissant spectacle,” [but here the fish shine of the brightest colors, red, pink, green, gold and give the eyes a dazzling spectacle], observations useful for those fascinated with Cuba’s natural history (178).

Following his delectable encounter with nature, Ampère literally gets to work by taking Cuba’s political pulse, conducting what we would call a survey in modern parlance. The sample he chooses, includes “des Havonais de conditions diverses, et je recueille partout l’expression d’un mécontentement universel contre l’Espagne” [inhabitants of Havana of diverse conditions, and I collect everywhere the expression of a universal dissatisfaction with Spain] (178). Then, the fortunate Ampère reveals additional information on his acquaintances in Cuba as well as the source of his data: “Je vais souvent terminer la matinée à la chancellerie, où je prends des notes dans les journaux de l’île et les documents que M. d’Hauterive, notre consul général, veut bien m’indiquer, ou, ce qui vaut encore mieux, dans sa conversation instructive animée” [I often finish the morning at the chancellery, where I take notes in the newspapers on the island and the documents that Mr. D’Hauterive, our general Consul, suggests, or better yet, in his animated and enlightening conversations] (178).



The details that Ampère discloses here not only testify of his daily routine, but also reveal his condition as a privileged traveler, as opposed to his countryman Massé.<sup>45</sup> The last comments concerning Mr. d'Hauterive suggest how his perspective was also influenced by his experiences in Cuba, especially his conversations with the latter, which sound more like lectures, especially when he qualifies the general consul's conversation as "instructive et animée" (178). Revealing as many details as possible related to his work on that particular day, Ampère alludes to an excellent dinner at the hotel, subsequent to which, he falls in love with nature once again. His pen, like a painter's brush, captures one of those legendary tropical sunsets, which do justice to the expression "nightfall." As the sun reaches the nadir of its existence, Ampère, wishing it would last longer, states, "Le soleil se couche trop vite, mais magnifique, en coup de foudre" [the sun goes down too fast; but it is wonderful, like lightning] (179). The expression "coup de foudre," although a cliché, is so picturesque, capturing the swift passage of the sun. Then, following the sun's tracks are dream-like colors, which echo illusionist paintings that Ampère aptly describes as "des teintes ineffables que ne connaissent point nos pâles climats" [ineffable hues unknown to our pale climates] (179). The appearance of the sky's diamonds, the stars, he reports as "les premières étoiles apparaissent sur un fond couleur de fleur de pêche ou d'améthyste," [the first stars appear on a background with the color of a peach flower or of an amethyst], which makes the sky a garden.

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<sup>45</sup> Massé traveled as an outsider struggling to fit in; his financial status was questionable as his complaints concerning the exorbitant cost of living in Cuba, expounded in his chapter entitled "Comment l'Étranger Vit à Cuba." He traveled without a portfolio and as such did not have the opportunity to live in any "luxurious" hotels and have "fancy" meals with dignitaries in Cuba.

Nighttime, another period of refuge for the Romantic soul, in quest of the mysterious, constitutes one of the themes explored by Ampère in his yearning to unify with nature. The night is so solemn that he declares, “je ne me lasse point de contempler la nuit brillante, comme a dit Louis Racine d’après Homère: Nuit brillante, qui t’a donné tes voiles?” [I never tire myself of contemplating the luminous night, as Louis Racine, according to Homer, states: shiny night, who gave you your veils?] (180). Ampère wonders even more, as he contemplates the stillness of the night, for the writer had found peace in nature’s beauty. The author’s description of such a transition suggests his attitude as a well-adjusted traveler, who takes advantage of every situation. He affirms that “De ce calme, de ce silence, nous passons au bruit, au joyeux tumulte d’un immense café où l’on se réunit pour prendre là des glaces” [from that calm, that silence, we shift to the noise, the joyous tumult of a huge café where we meet to have ice cream] (179). He quickly reminds us that “L’absence de cafés attriste singulièrement pour un Français les villes anglaises et américaines,” [the absence of cafés in the English and American cities singularly saddens a French native] alluding to what he was deprived of in his last trip through the United States as well as in previous trips to England (179).

The above-remark is all the more telling considering that Ampère has just left a severe winter in the United States. Since he finds himself in a climate that facilitates such luxury as having ice cream in a café in January, as the traveler gives free reins to his lyricism, he uses the metaphor of the night as a beverage, to convey his enthusiasm: “je m’abreuve de la fraîcheur, de la suavité de la nuit” [I quench my thirst with the coolness, the suavity of the night] (178). Then, looking upward, he is incapable of doing otherwise, for he states, “je ne puis détacher mes regards de ce ciel,” [I cannot keep my eyes off the

sky]. He compares it to a blanket, wrapping the earth with love (180). With such a spectacular display, allusions to literature proliferate as Ampère becomes more mesmerized. Lord Byron's (1788-1824) repertoire resonates in his mind as he admires this wonderful sky. "Non, belle nuit, tu n'es pas faite pour le sommeil," [No, beautiful night, you are not made for sleeping] he exclaims, alluding to one of the reasons the moon constitutes an extension of the sun in the tropics (180). He wishes to stay up and commune with the night, but other powerful forces, namely this "beau ciel qui vous attire et fascine, ainsi que l'azur des eaux tranquilles attire et fascine le pêcheur dans la ballade de Goëthe," [this beautiful sky that attracts and fascinates you, like the azure of the tranquil waters pulls and fascinates the fisherman in Goethe's ballad] pull him, inducing him into a state of insomnia (180). The author may be referring to the profundity of the azure sky that reflects in the azure water in the tropics, creating sometimes the illusion that the sky and the ocean intersect, at the point called the horizon, where our vision ends.

The soothing effects of nature play a fascinating role on Ampère's mood. The allusion to the sky in the tropics, is depicted as sometimes stormy, like a poet's life (180). In other words, the sky reflects his personal life, one of turbulence, under the effects of storms. This mirrors his own situation in Cuba, as a traveler. However, he manages to find inner peace through nature, although far away from home, and leading an unusual life, as he becomes a reluctant prisoner living in a voluntary cell, his small room.

Massé was more generous than Ampère in that he called his room "a gîte" (123). Ampère, a little more romantic, maybe, with the allusion to the prison cell and its surroundings that achieve *vraisemblance* in the narration, does not arouse feelings of an unfortunate traveler in the reader's mind. On the contrary, the reader observes a man who

makes a conscious decision to enter his windowless cell, knowing that the seclusion of his body cannot rob him of the memories that he will cherish forever. Nature plays the role of lullabies as the moon tucks him in, in this miniature prison cell: “Je me décide enfin, bien à regret, à rentrer dans ma cellule sans vitres, où la lune me suit encore à travers les barreaux de fer, seule clôture de ma fenêtre, et, plein de ces images et de ces souvenirs d’une journée de la Havane.” [I finally decided, with great regret, to enter my windowless cell, where the moon is still following me through the iron bars, the only lock of my window. I was filled with those images and those remembrances of a day in Havana] (179).

## 2.5 Massé’s Endeavor: A Financial Reporter

Each traveler reacts to the panorama according to his background, his emotions during the observation, and his conditions as a visitor.<sup>46</sup> In Massé Etienne’s *L’isle de Cuba et la Havane*, nature occupies a secondary role. The author delves more into the depiction of people and institutions, enthusiastically reads textbooks on Cuba, exploiting what was readily available to him. Cuba’s enchanted climate is so pervasive that Massé could not help but notice it. However, unlike his countrymen whose gaze leads them to reveries, feelings of ecstasy, a heightened level of sensuality as well as deep sentiments of peace and repose, Massé depicts his experience of the Cuban panorama from the standpoint of its importance as an economic catalyst. Massé’s impressions, in fact, are

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<sup>46</sup> Well-to-do foreigners in Cuba received most of the travelers. This provided them with an escort and other luxuries that an ordinary traveler could not afford. Massé, for instance, falls in the category of visitors “without a portfolio,” according to Guicharnaud-Tollis, in the author’s short biographical sketch. This is different from De Hauranne, who had his own *Sancho noir*, met with M. Vergne, the French Consul, a prominent French doctor as well as British landowners.

included in the chapter entitled “Histoire naturelle de l’île de Cuba.” Massé’s description contains the same topoi: “island of verdure,” “land of perpetual spring,” “unlimited amount of shade,” “harmony in the shapes of the elements,” “des forêts de cèdres” [forests of cedars]. In addition, from a grammatical standpoint, he narrates his gaze in two pages, using only commas and semicolons, suggesting fluidity analogous to nature’s overabundance.

Massé begins the description with a broad statement, so far-reaching in its impact that it would surely arouse the interests of future travelers who wish to visit Cuba in pursuit of gold and other natural resources:

C’est dans la partie orientale que la nature se montre avec toutes ses richesses, avec tous ses contrastes, avec toutes ses beautés. Là se trouvent les mines, là coulent des eaux plus abondantes, là des paysages ravissants de fraîcheur se dessinent à côté des horreurs les plus pittoresques; là se déploient d’immenses forêts de cèdres que la cognée n’atteint jamais: leurs trons [sic] énormes s’élèvent comme autant de colonnes irrégulières soutenant une voute immense de verdure, et l’homme peut se promener dans ces basiliques de la nature, sans avoir à lutter contre ces inextricables lianes qui rendent impossible des forêts secondaires...

[It is in the oriental part that nature shows herself with all her riches, all her contrasts and all her beauty. There one finds mines, there flow more abundant waters, ravishing panorama of coolness figure beside the most picturesque horrors; there abound immense forests of cedars that the axe never reached: their enormous trunks are risen like many irregular columns holding an immense arch of verdure, and man can walk in those basilicas of nature, without having to struggle against those inextricable lianas creepers, which render secondary forests almost impassible] (219).

Unlike the urban areas in which men alter the natural flow of things and transform the streets into oceans of mud when it rains, in the tropical jungle, as De Hauranne would call it later, fertility, signs of overabundance are omnipresent. Massé observes: “les lieux arides sont rares; des pluies fréquentes entretiennent une fraîcheur continuelle; les endroits les plus escarpés rarement sont inaccessibles à la végétation” [arid territories are

scarce; frequent rains maintain a continual freshness; the most bountiful regions are rarely inaccessible to vegetation] (220).

Massé continues with his presentation of the merits of the Eastern part of Cuba, recapitulating its historical role and revealing its economic advantages. “La partie de l’Est fut la première à recevoir des habitans [sic], non parce qu’elle est la plus fertile, la plus variée, et qu’elle jouit en général d’un air plus salubre, mais parce que l’or s’y montrait aux regards des Espagnols avides” [the Eastern part was the first to receive inhabitants, not because it is the most fertile, the most varied, and that it enjoys generally a more salubrious air, but because gold attracted the avid Spaniards] (221). Expounding his knowledge of the natural resources of Cuba, Massé also unveils his extended bibliographical sources, which confirm what other travelers to the island had observed. He quotes Herrera’s *Decades*, which highlights the profusion of fine gold in that area, stating: “Le métal en était plus pur et plus doux que celui du mont Cibao, dans l’île de Saint-Domingue, et il fut si abundant, que le quint réservé au Roi, s’éleva en certaines années, à 6000 piastres” [the metal was more pure and delicate than that of Mount Cibao, in the island of Saint-Domingue, and it was so abundant that the fifth reserved for the king, reached 6000 piastres during certain years].<sup>47</sup>

Massé concludes the chapter delineating resources such as iron, found all over the island, mines of magnet found around Juragua et Dajaguayabo. He even used some technical jargon, alluding to “ferrum attractorium,” in the East near Santiago, as well as

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<sup>47</sup> Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas (1559-1625), *Historia general de los Hechos de los Castellanos en las Islas y Tierra Firme del Mar Océano*, divided in eight periods of ten years, each period ranging from 1472 to 1554. Latin and published at Amsterdam by Gaspar Barleo, in 1622. Reprinted in Madrid in 1601; Description of the West Indies in the first volume of his work, was translated into Latin and published at Amsterdam by Gaspar Barleo, in 1622.

copper mines in the same area (224). Apparently Massé was either so involved taking notes for his present text or he lacked a compass, which prevented him from exploring those areas, and thus finding his own fortune in the New World.

Describing Cuba in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, all these travelers reveal their human side. Although preoccupied with elaborating on the rudiments of science of that time, although concerned with studying slavery and the destiny of the Negro, although preoccupied with their own survival in a foreign territory where the *vómito negro* or yellow fever had reached epidemic proportions, they managed to pause and reflect on the imposing site that nature provided. For Ampère, De Hauranne and De Cassagnac, the tropics allowed them to submerge into feelings of euphoria, and reveries associated with the Romantic era. Massé focused on the practical, describing the Eastern part of Cuba as paradise found. With such depictions, he acted as a financial scout, one of those legendary travelers whose book might have inspired more voyages to the New World: the author, based on prior readings, boasts of several areas in Cuba that are rich in gold and other natural resources. For De Hauranne, nature forms an integral part of the diary, as the writer provides us with his itinerary, boasts of his acquaintances in Cuba, and his excursions to the Valley of Yumurí, his voyages of study on numerous industrialized sugar factories as well as dinners with French and English luminaries in Matanzas. As a painter, De Hauranne's vision surpasses that of the other writers in his depiction of the tropical panorama. He focuses on sunsets and sunrises, using his pen as a soft paintbrush, employing the *mot juste* to capture that fleeting sunset or sunrise. Thus, he transforms the page into a canvas, tempting the reader, inciting him/her to sail with the winds, in an effort to recapture that exact point in time where the observation was made. In that sense,

De Hauranne's description functions to perfection: the receptor is able to visualize those magic sunsets and sunrises, although the writer uses images that connote a fairy tale scenery, through a vivid imagination, the receptor, enamored with nature, is able to commune with her. Duvergier de Hauranne's attitude is indicative of his romantic longings to capture the ethereal, as nature, robed in her finest garment, offered him an escape clause: escape from his fear of yellow fever, fear of the Negro and fear of the unknown. The travelers' depiction of nature attests to the fact that Cuba still encapsulated the mythical and the magical even five centuries after Columbus' first trip.



### Chapter III

#### Travelogues As Reservoirs of Knowledge

In their journals, Etienne Massé, Jean-Jacques Ampère, Duvergier de Hauranne and Adolphe Granier de Cassagnac represent Cuba from the standpoint of knowledge and its relation to power. In “The Travelers’ Gaze,” Monika Shafi places knowledge at the conceptual center of the 19<sup>th</sup> century traveler’s endeavor. She affirms that the desire to acquire knowledge and power characterizes the “nineteenth-century traveler/explorer, for whom the journey was an exercise in knowledge gathering, spreading, patience and endurance” (51).<sup>48</sup> In other words, the 19<sup>th</sup> century was a propitious period for voyages of study, which stimulated interests in both the travelers, as well as the objects of their study. Travel becomes synonymous with travail since the travelers had to brave obstacles such as the imminent danger posed by yellow fever and constant threats to their lives, resulting from a climate of political instability. Reflecting on the precarious conditions of life for foreigners in Cuba, Massé alludes to the striking contrast that the vegetal kingdom provides:

Beaucoup d’arbres étrangers à l’île de Cuba, et dont quelques-uns même appartiennent à l’ancien monde, croissent et prospèrent dans ce lieu.... Ces arbres d’une autre terre sont accueillis par ce même climat qui dévore avec tant de promptitude les hommes nés sous un autre ciel!... le même air que ces végétaux respirent avec tant de bonheur tue cette jeunesse humaine, qui toute n’est pas entraînée vers ces bords homicides par une vile et punissable cupidité  
[Many trees that are foreign to Cuba, which even belong to the Old World in some cases, grow and prosper in this place... Those trees belonging to a foreign land are received by that same climate which devours with such promptness, men who were born under a different sky... the same air that those trees are breathing with

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<sup>48</sup> Shafi analyzes the treatment of India by four German travelers. Describing common topoi, the travelers objectify the landscape as well as the people, emphasizing only the negative. Thus, they create stereotypes that will potentially bias future travelers to India.

so much happiness kills that human youth, who is not altogether attracted to the [New World's] its homicidal coasts by a vile and punishable greed] (190).

Here, the resiliency of the vegetal kingdom, opposed to the fragility of the travelers' life, echoes the idea of "exercise in patience and endurance" which Shafi alluded to. Massé personifies that endurance by his survival of the carnage provoked by yellow fever, which robs him of several of his acquaintances, including his friend B. (392-396).

The accounts, which compose the current study, shift between professional reports and personal letters. As professional reports, the texts contain statistics, topographical information, and descriptions of the fauna and flora, for scientific and economic purposes. On a personal level, the narrators mention their homesickness, and use anecdotes and sub-plots. They provide enough material to compose several works of fiction. Far from being mere reiterations of topoi generally found in travelogues, this combination supplies the necessary equilibrium that keeps the readers' interest. Thus, the scientific often clashes with the subjective as the travelers report their observations on things seen, lived and heard.

In this articulation of their encounter with the New World, the overarching goal remains for the travelers to leave a treatise of their encyclopedic knowledge, a testimonial of their visit, and a replica of the "reality" they observed. The accounts attempt "to answer questions which pre-twentieth century individuals had about the worlds out there with which they only had commercial or colonial dealings" (Brettell 133). The pliant nature of the travel account facilitates a type of discourse that allows the travel writer to experiment with various genres. Dominique Julien, in *Récits du Nouveau-Monde: les voyageurs français en Amérique de Chateaubriand à nos jours* (1992), comments on the

following aspects of travel texts: “Le récit de voyage est plus souple que le roman. On y trouvera aussi bien l’analyse politique que la rêverie, le tableau historique, l’anecdote minuscule, la sociologie du quotidien, la métaphysique...” [The travel account is more malleable than the novel. One will find political analysis as well as reverie, the historical, minuscule anecdote, everyday sociology, and the metaphysical...] (14). In this chapter, I will analyze the travelers’ enunciation of their encounter with Cuba and the New World in the light of Dominique Julien’s assertion. I will argue, that along with the personal nature of the journals, the travelers’ texts may also serve as guidebooks and narrative attempts towards a historiography of Cuba, establishing the travelers as both witnesses and tour guides.

The travelers were undoubtedly mindful of the ramifications of their diaries. As testimonials, the texts “are as ‘natural’ a kind of text, as logical in their composition as in their use, as any book one can think of, precisely because of this human tendency to fall back on a text when the uncertainties of travel in strange parts seem to threaten one’s equanimity” (Said 93). This is why the journals contain more than a collection of itineraries and subjective feelings. They oscillate between official reports filled with hard data, and personal letters. This results in the production of multifaceted texts that captivate the receptor, both from a narrative and an informative standpoint, particularly in Massé’s diary. On the one hand, his dexterity in inserting philosophical reflections in the narration, his sense of humor, allusions to historical, mythological and literary characters, enthralls the reader. On the other hand, from an informative standpoint, all the narrators play the role of ‘well-informed’ tour guides throughout the long and perilous journey. I

will begin this section with Massé's perspective since he is the only one of the writers who began his journal prior to his arrival in Cuba.

### **3.1.1 Massé's Erudition: Recapitulating History, Anticipating Cuba**

Portraying a tour guide, Massé points out all the important historical and geographic sites, affirming that he is an avid reader and scholar, proficient in the fields of history, geography, literature, as well as the rudiments of rhetoric. The narrator re-visits every location, every event deemed important to communicate his erudition, his attitude towards the trip, towards history and humanity. Penning his narrative from aboard the vessel in Marseilles, Massé finds himself in the optimal position to give us a panoramic view of world history and culture, emphasizing the intersection between Europe and Africa and its ramifications in the New World.<sup>49</sup> He praises the inhabitants of Catalonia for their fervor in defending "leur pays contre les usurpations du despotisme et contre les invasions étrangères" [their country against the usurpations of despotism and against foreign invasions] (8). Seeing Mont-Serrat, he quickly alludes to the existence of its namesake in several parts of the New World stating "la piété espagnole a transporté la dénomination à plusieurs lieux du Nouveau-Monde!" [Spanish piety has transported the name to several places in the New World] (9). He then alluded to Pierre de Luna, Benedict XIII, antipope from 1394 to 1423 (9).<sup>50</sup> Massé's fascination with insular regions

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<sup>49</sup> Marseilles was one of the principal points of departure for travelers to America. Duviols (9).

<sup>50</sup> His original name is Pedro de Luna (b.c.1328-1423), born in Illueca, Kingdom of Aragon. He reigned in Avignon, Provence, and was professor of canon law at Montpellier before becoming Cardinal in 1375.

is evident in his mention of an island called Ibiza. He depicts the people as “presque sauvages, mais bons et hospitaliers” [almost savages, but good-natured and hospitable] (11); and Alborán, “île inculte et habitée par des vieux marins; Tetuán, ville maritime, autrefois assez fréquentée, mais les femmes sont, dit-on, si jolies et si sensibles que la jalousie musulmane a dû interdire l’approche de leur séjour aux hardis Européens [Alborán, uncultured island and inhabited by old seamen; Tetuan, maritime village, then frequently visited, but whose women, it is believed, are so pretty and sensible that the muslims, so jealous, have prohibited the haughty Europeans from staying there] (21).<sup>51, 52</sup>

Massé presents an interesting tableau, a rewinding of Ancient History, when he describes his impressions approaching the mountains where the inhabitants of Motril grow sugar cane and cotton fields.<sup>53</sup> He refers to the Atlas as “un immense boulevard derrière toute la côte de Barbarie, et qui a bien l’air de soutenir le ciel” [an immense boulevard behind the Coast, and which seems to be holding the sky] (21).<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Alborán: Small Spanish island of the Mediterranean, located at 56 km of the Cape Tres Forcas, Morocco.

<sup>52</sup> Tetuán, also spelled Tétouan- City, provincial capital and province, North West region, Morocco, on the Oued (river) Martin, 7 miles from the Mediterranean, according to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. It was captured by Spanish troops in 1860 and again in 1913. It is a cultural and commercial center.

<sup>53</sup> Motril: Judicial sector of the Spanish province of Granada; agricultural center with a flourishing commerce, which produces sugar cane, cotton and oranges.

<sup>54</sup> Atlas: In mythology, the son of Zeus (Jupiter) and Climena, outstanding in the study of astronomy and the inventor of the sphere. Geographically speaking, Atlas is a conjunction of mountains located on the north east side of Africa.

Later, he re-plays an entire episode of History upon reaching Estapa.<sup>55</sup> Massé recalls the citizens' magnanimity by highlighting how they "se défendaient contre les Romains jusqu'à la dernière extrémité" [they defended themselves against the Romans to the death] (23). Seeing that it was impossible for them to come out triumphant, Massé copies this page of ancient history: "ils dressent un immense bûcher au milieu de la place publique, y jettent toutes leurs richesses, font asseoir dessus femmes, enfans [sic], vieillards, y mettent le feu, ouvrent les portes de leur ville, fondent sur les Romains, et périssent tous en combattant à la lueur des flammes qui dévoraient leur patrie" [They erect an immense wood house in the middle of the plaza, throw in all their riches, have their women, children and elderlies sit on top of it, set it on fire, open the doors of their city, throw themselves on the Romans, and all of them perish fighting while the blaze devoured their country] (23). Places as well as icons are depicted during the journey, enriching the readers' own cross-cultural experience. With Massé as the tour guide, the receptor visits or re-visits "Avila"<sup>56</sup>, also called Mont-aux-Singes, Gades, nowadays Cadiz, Carteia, colonie grecque... Algésiras<sup>57</sup>, patrie du fameux Almonzar, le plus grand genie

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<sup>55</sup> Astapa: also known as Estepa: Old Spanish city in The Betica, near the Genil River, scene of one of the most heroic battles between the Spaniards and the Romans at the time of the Roman invasion. It was set on fire (208 B.C.) and destroyed because its inhabitants refused to yield to the Romans of Lucius Martius.

<sup>56</sup> Abyla, also spelled as Abila, according to the *Encyclopedia Universal Europeo Americana* TI, p. 432; capital of Lisania; also mentioned by the Jewish historian Josefus, under the name of Abilenos.

<sup>57</sup> Algesiras: Algeciras: Located in the East Coast of the Province of Cadiz; also location of a Spanish port by the same name as well as the English port of Gibraltar.

qu'aient eu les Maures d'Espagne" [Greek colony...Algeciras, home of the famous Almonzar, and the greatest genius that the Moors of Spain have known] (27).<sup>58</sup>

The constant clash between Europe and Africa is a recurrent theme throughout Massé's passage. Approaching Le Salado, Massé underscores its significance as a reminder of Alfonse XI's victory over the King of Africa and the Emperor of Granada (26).<sup>59</sup> He also points out Tanger, whose former name Tangis, gave lieu to "la Mauritanie Tingitane, regardée depuis comme une seconde Mecque pour les Musulmans" [considered since as a second Mecca for the Muslims] (27).<sup>60</sup> Later, a world of friendship, *maurophilia*, a casuistry of love, jealousy and reciprocity flashes in front of our eyes as Massé approaches Granada:

Que de ruines, que de débris se redressent à la fois! Que de palais superbes, de bains magnifiques....Quel mélange intéressant de galanterie et de guerre, de scènes d'amour et de jalousie...et les Abencerrages, et les Gonzalve de Cordoue, et tous ces héros que Florian a fait revivre dans la plus aimable et la plus poétique de ses compositions<sup>61</sup>

[So many ruins, so many debris rise at once! How many superb palaces, famous baths...What an interesting mixture of gallantry and war, scenes of love and jealousy... and the Abencerrages, and the Gonzalve of Cordoue, and all those

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<sup>58</sup> Almonzar: Actual name is Almanzor (Abu 'Amir Muhammad b abi- 'Amir al-Ma 'afiri-al-Mansur)- Prime minister and dictator of Spain during the Muslim reign, known for his assaults against Christians. He was born around 941 in the Northeast of Algeciras.

<sup>59</sup> Salado: Spanish River, located in the Province of Jaén, afflux of Guadalquivir.

<sup>60</sup> Massé did not mention any specific names here.

<sup>61</sup> Jean-Pierre Claris de Florian (1755-1794). He was a prolific writer and translator who excelled in several genres. Massé alludes to him because he translated several Spanish masterpieces into French. Among them are *Don Quichotte De La Manche*, published posthumously in 1799; *Galatée. Estelle* (1789), a pastoral work, an imitation of Cervantes' *Galatea*. Florian also wrote *Gonzalve de Cordoue; ou Grenade reconquise* (1798-99).

heroes that Florian has made come alive in his most sympathetic and poetic compositions] (31).

It is interesting that Massé inserts those details as integral parts of the narrative, not as footnotes. This device helps him avoid the usual boredom associated with travelogues. From the standpoint of thematic unity, those details later help him convince the reader of history's interconnectedness. He achieves this without losing track of his main focus: to relate the uncertainty of the sea voyage and the constant fluctuation of the weather, which echoes his own life. Reflecting on this, he intimates that "*un voyage sur mer est une parfaite image de la vie*" [a sea voyage is a perfect image of life] (27). As he gets closer to Cuba, the colonial situation in his mind's eyes, he promptly re-assesses his initial goals for undertaking the voyage, "*J'ai dû renoncer aux projets d'affaires qui m'ont emmené à Cuba*" [I had to renounce to the business projects that led me to the New World] (62).<sup>62</sup> This is a startling revelation since such intent is concealed in the preface, a warning for the receptor to exercise caution while sifting through the information provided in the texts. It may also be indicative of Massé's growth as a result of the trip, which enables him to adjust his views, as he reflects on the conditions he finds in Cuba.

Massé began providing his impressions before reaching his destination. However, once established in Cuba, he transformed his text not only into the precise instructions of a tour guide, but also into a dialogue with historical, literary and mythological characters, as well as texts on Cuba and ordinary people. Those secondary texts to which he alludes become authoritative foundations that increase his credibility, further evincing the receptor. He quotes or paraphrases these texts stating "*j'ai lu quelque part*," [I read



somewhere], while his acquaintances in Cuba are referred to as an impersonal “*on*” or with the first letter of their last name. One wonders whether those sources do not have the effect of “embellir” [embellishing] the narration, the very rhetoric Massé denounced in his preface. Allusions to historical, mythical and literary characters, understatements and overstatements, help Massé create a multi-faceted work, which captivates the reader. The text becomes a testimonial of his observations and his expectations, a document rich in world culture. As a didactic tool, the informed reader is inclined to appreciate Massé’s intellectual depth; the inquiring mind is urged to seek more knowledge through an active participation in the stories/history behind the places.

### **3.1.2. Foreign Visitors as Tour Guides: De Cassagnac’s Gaze**

Established in Havana, the travelers, armed with the power of knowledge and the absolute confidence of their belonging to a superior culture, continue to escort the reader along numerous sites of interest. Travel writing helped the aliens in their attempt to convey a “savoir” of this territory. In order to be effective, the writers relied on prior travels or their acquired expertise, in the hopes that the aura of wisdom associated with well-traveled/well-read people will convince the reader of the exactness of their observations (Clemmen 35). Although the allusions reflect the writers’ training, they all function within the scope of the ideologies/image of Cuba that the narrators wished to communicate. Thus, the travelers used the known to explain the unknown, in order to present the reader with vivid images of their observations (Duviols 9). For instance, De

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<sup>62</sup> The author never clarified the nature of his “business projects” throughout the entire text.

Cassagnac alludes to his travels to London and New York, relating these experiences to his initial observations of Cuba. Depicting Havana's enchanted nocturnal scene, literature serves as the backdrop as De Cassagnac reminisces the adventures of Gil Blas de Santillane.<sup>63</sup> This ever-changing, always fascinating city, characterized as "strange," enchants De Cassagnac as he gives free reins to his innermost feelings. He describes "des bruits de guitare aux portes, et des causeries amoureuses aux fenêtres" [sounds of guitar at the doors and amorous chats that could be heard through the windows] (301). He focuses on courtship and the customs of the rising bourgeoisie, which undrape the writer's own voyeuristic tendencies, providing insights on Havana as a city that never sleeps, a city that dresses in fine lingerie once night falls. De Cassagnac attempts to spice up the narrative, creating an atmosphere of *folletines*:

En général, à La Havane, les femmes ne paraissent que le soir, à l'heure où les rossignols chantent. C'est l'heure où les maisons endormies s'éveillent, où les jalousies closes se lèvent...il se dit des choses infiniment tendre et tendrement infinies, entre deux bouches dont les haleines se confondent, et deux coeurs dont une grille de bois sépare les battements.

[In general, in Havana, women only come out at night, at the time when the nightingales are singing. It's the time where the houses that are asleep awaken, where the closed window blinds are risen...things infinitely sweet and tender are being said between two mouths whose breaths are joined, and two hearts whose beats are separated by a wooden grill] (308-312)

Through those details, De Cassagnac attempts to teach us a certain casuistry of courtship at the time of his visit. In so doing, nighttime is depicted as a period of renewal, where the women come out; it is the time when the entire city of Havana embraces a whole different

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<sup>63</sup> Allusion to Alain René-Lesage (1668-1747) and his *Histoire de Gil Blas de Santillane* (1781), an example of the first French picaresque novel, based on the Spanish paradigm, which concerns the education and adventures of an adaptable young valet as he progresses from one master to the next.

personality. At that time, lovers from a distance share their most intimate secrets; the writer, observing those scenes, paints them in such a way that prospective visitors to the island may seek them not only as cultural markers, but also as a form of diversion.

### 3.1.3 Jean-Jacques Ampère's Guided Tour of Havana

Jean-Jacques Ampère relies on his travels as well as his readings to guide the reader. In *Promenade en Amérique*, he alludes to Cadiz and Seville to bestow his impressions of the women of Havana: “Il est fâcheux seulement que l’indolence naturelle aux Créoles ne permette pas aux dames de marcher” [it is frustrating that only the indolence natural to the Creoles does not allow women to walk] (174). Here, Ampère is alluding to the custom by which rich women in Havana did not usually walk around during the day; they would circulate in their *volantes*. They would remain in their *volantes* to shop because from that strategic location vendors would offer them their most precious goods. Ignoring that this custom may be due to the climate or dust on the street, he assumes that the women are indolent. By using the term “indolence naturelle aux Créoles,” Ampère is insinuating that laziness is something inherent to the Creoles. Massé, on the contrary, believes that that custom differentiates between rich women and female “rogues” who could not afford such a lifestyle.<sup>64</sup>

Havana’s architecture also captures Ampère’s attention. He depicts it as more original than that of the United States, which has “un art sans originalité et sans caractère” [an art without originality and character] (171). To explain the shapes of the

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<sup>64</sup> See the chapter entitled “Cultural Markers”.

houses in Havana, he directs the reader's attention to their uniformity, describing his tour of a city that seems to be repeating itself, "Mes yeux commençaient à se lasser de cette éternelle ville à larges rues se prolongeant entre des maisons de briques, et que sous différents noms je rencontrais partout" [My eyes began to become weary of this eternal city with large streets, passing along brick houses, and that under different names I found everywhere] (171). Then, he alludes to "des toits plats en terrasse à la manière de l'Orient," [flat roofs in the style of the Orient], reiterating the East as a motif.<sup>65</sup> This is also found in Duvergier de Hauranne as well as in Massé, confirming the reiteration of *lieux communs* in the texts. The use of the "Orient" as a topos to describe scenes found in Cuba, as well as allusions to the Parthenon suggest hints to the known to explain the unknown. In addition, it also references the travelers' experience as they brought models of perfection with them, models they use as criteria to evaluate and belittle the cultures of Spain and Cuba.

### 3.1.4 Duvergier de Hauranne: Art as a Topos

Duvergier de Hauranne, alludes to Louis-Léopold Robert (1794-1835), hoping that familiarity with the neoclassical painter will transmit images of Cuba that his writing and painting utensils are unable to capture. He also uses comparisons to provide the reader with graphic images during the tour. Describing a railroad located in San Felipe,

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<sup>65</sup> Dominique Julien comments on how limited the travelers' itinerary was, "limité aux grandes villes de la côte Est: New York, Boston, Philadelphie, Baltimore, Washington. Quelquefois le voyageur poursuit vers le sud, souvent vers la Louisiane...en tant que province "française" [limited to the major East Coast cities: New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington. Sometimes, the traveler would go South, often towards Louisiana...as a French province] (8). Observe Ampère's generalization: he refers to "Les États-Unis," instead of the specific places he visited. This sweeping statement is bound to condition the reader's attitude towards architecture in the United States, while it establishes Ampère as a knowledgeable observer.

Matanzas, he alludes to Naples. “La station se compose de hangars à jour et d’échoppes à peu près semblables à celles qu’on voit à Naples dans la rue de Tolède” [The station is made up of open-work hangars and covered-stalls, close in similarity to those that one sees in Naples on Toledo Street] (622). Depicting the mountains in Matanzas, he reiterates the use of “the oriental” as a motif: “les montagnes ont les ondulations courtes et brisées des peintures chinoises et des vases japonais, sans la raideur et la gaucherie de ces paysages enfantins” [the mountains have the short and broken waves of Chinese paintings and Japanese vases without the harshness and the awkwardness of those childish panoramas] (624). Here, De Hauranne’s description not only contains a comparison of the two cultures, Cuban and Asian, but also their assessment, which aims at devaluing them. This is common among the travelers who, believing in the “superiority” of the European culture, undermine the cultural elements of the Other, by labeling them as “strange” or even savage.

De Hauranne attempts to depict every aspect of Cuban life; even those with which he is rather unfamiliar. When he cannot describe something with the *mot juste*, he either relies on his prior travels or his expertise in Botany and painting to provide us with similarities. He realizes this as he gives us a tour of the Cuban panorama, depicting what he terms as “la jungle tropicale, la forêt vierge encore, que jamais charrue n’a labourée” [the tropical jungle, the virgin forest, which no plow has not yet toiled through] (623). Nature takes preeminence over mankind, as Duvergier de Hauranne applies elements of human physiology to the vegetal kingdom in order to give us glimpses of nature as wonder. With the sensitivity and perceptiveness of an artist or a poet and the acuity of a scientist, he describes how “les palmes s’entrelacent de lianes; les orchidées s’attaquent

aux troncs des gros arbres; c'est le seul feuillage qui décore en cette saison les branches nues du ceiba..." [the palm trees are enlaced with tropical creepers; orchids attach one another at the trunks of the big trees; that is the only foliage which decorates the ceiba's deciduous branches in that season] (623). This example highlights the narrator's attempt to prove his erudition. By describing the deciduous branches, his skills as a painter, as well as his keen sense of observation come to the surface. This reproduces fascinating aspects of the Cuban flora, which might stimulate scientific studies.

### **3.1.5 Massé's Singular Perspective**

Massé's observations as a tour guide do not follow a chronological trajectory. Unlike the other journals that follow the "Dear Diary" format, with dates and locations during narration time, Massé's chapters deal with specific themes. From the organization of the book, one can deduce that he had taken copious notes and later presented us his descriptions with minor alterations. Documenting his knowledge of Cuba, Massé's tour opens with a grim perspective of the unsanitary conditions that plagued the island. According to him, these conditions were a result of the topography as well as the geography of the area. That particular aspect of the diary also reveals Massé's preoccupations with the fragility of life for Europeans living in Cuba at that time. His initial encounter with Cuba was one characterized by disappointment. This is clearly highlighted in his chapter entitled "Détails plus particuliers sur la Havane et excursion dans les faubourgs" [More specific details concerning Havana and excursions in the villages]. His comments address Havana's deficient infrastructure. Reporting his findings, Massé uses a parallel structure, reiterating the conjunction "but" to show the contrast as

well as his disappointment. He observes: “Les rues de la Havane sont en général bien percées. Elles se coupent presque toutes à angles droits....**Mais** aucune eau constamment courante ne les arrose; **mais** il en est très-peu qui soient pavées; **mais** on entretient fort mal celles qui le sont”[the streets of Havana are generally well-drilled. They intersect one another almost at straight angles....But no water constantly flows through them; but only a few of them are paved; but those that are paved are not well-maintained] (94).

Massé focuses on the deficient infrastructure, judging Cuba from what might be considered the perspective of someone who has visited more modern cities. According to him, the lack of a system of irrigation, a dysfunctioning sewer system and unpaved streets transform Havana into a river. Massé expresses the attempts to resolve the problems with much irony. Nonetheless, he gives us an idea of the “technology” in place to alleviate the obstacles produced by potholes: “Pour combler les cavités ou pour mieux dire les ravins que creusent et les voitures et les averses dans les rues non pavées, on amène des charrettes chargées d’une espèce de poudingue ou grou” [To fill the potholes or better said, the small rivers that heavy rains and cars cause in the unpaved streets, they bring carts filled with a sort of pudding or tar] (94). While this might sound unsophisticated to a contemporary reader, such was life in Havana at the time of Massé’s visit; yet another proof that the travelers’ trip was undertaken amidst many hardships.

Continuing with the similarity among the streets and large bodies of water, Massé specifically points out “entre autres la rue del Texadillo, que je dénonce plus particulièrement, ne sont que des mares, durant plusieurs jours” [among others, Texadillo Street, that I denounce more specifically, are nothing but meadowlands, during several days] (95). In addition, when offering the reader a picture of the sidewalks in Havana,

history serves him as a point of reference. He expresses this with an apt hyperbole as well as the allusion to the Bridge of Mahomet, a reference to the descent in hell after a fall from the Bridge of Mahomet, to convey images of how constricted the sidewalks were. Massé makes the following observation: “Il y a des trottoirs en général, mais fort étroits. Quelques uns de ces trottoirs ne sont que des levées de terre, où l’on a tout juste autant de place que sur le pont aigu de Mahomet. À chaque pas on risque de se noyer dans la boue” [There are sidewalks in general, but they are very narrow. Some of those sidewalks are nothing but embankments of land, where one has as much space as on the narrow Bridge of Mahomet. At every step one risks to drown in mud] (95).

As is the case with several tropical cities, rain as well as draught may cause many obstacles. Massé experienced dust and inundation, during his trip. The fascinating aspect of this occurrence is that Massé did not just describe his brush with dust in Havana. He used a number of qualifiers to ensure that the reader takes its pervasiveness into account. Massé depicts “passing through the dust” as walking “à travers les nuages permanens [sic] d’une poussière très-déliée, très-pénétrante et qui passe pour être fort malsaine” [through the permanent clouds of a very loose dust, very penetrating, and which passes to be very unhealthy] (96). Then, using the known to explain the unknown, Massé states that the dust in Havana surpasses that on the roads of Provence. “Les chemins de Provence, même aux environs de Marseille, sont comme des promenades sablées, arrosées, en comparaison des chemins de fer qui aboutissent à La Havane” [The roads of Provence, even those around Marseilles, as opposed to the railroads that lead to Havana, are like walkways covered with sand that are watered] (96).



Topping this dust, which Massé describes as unsanitary, is the offensive sight and smell of dead birds and animals: “des chiens, des chats, des poules, des coqs morts laissés dans les rues, y offrent à la fois la vue et l’odorat des passans [sic]” [dogs, cats, chickens, dead roosters left in the streets, offer to the eye and the nose of passers by] (96). Massé, however, would not conclude the scene without his usual morbid humor. He states, “J’ai vu, pendant deux jours le cadavre d’un cheval au travers du chemin, à quelques pas de la porte qui mène au fort de la Punta” [I saw the corpse of a horse for two days, across the road, a few steps from the door that leads to the Fort of La Punta] (97). As if writing an epitaph to the horse, which was not resting in peace, Massé wrote in a smaller font: “Que des chiens dévorans se déchiraient entre eux” [So many mad dogs were devouring one another] (96). It is important to note that those snapshots, which remain as lasting impressions of a visitor to Cuba, may potentially constitute enduring images in the minds of future travelers who might be tempted to use such descriptions to characterize Havana. In this sense, the role of the travel writer is magnified since his impressions may be considered building blocks of identity representation. Some readers of Massé’s diary will certainly look for those markers when visiting Cuba. They represent a knowledge of Cuba, conscious or subconscious attempts to define elements that may pass on as typically Cuban.

Massé continues with his tour of Havana, offering us his perspective of a city of opposites. This is characteristic of his style; he focuses on a particular theme in each of the chapters. Thematic unity is evidenced in the depiction of the two dogs devouring a dead horse. Not only this fact is shocking, the stage for the carnage makes it all the more striking. Its backdrop is the *Paseo*, “promenade publique ... et tout près d’une statue

assez belle de Charles III” [a public walkway and close to a nice statue of Charles III] (97). Although this minute scene captures an event deemed important to Massé, the description functions as the template for a number of contrasting elements that the writer observed. This also includes the proximity of the *Paseo* to the barracoons, contrasting two extremes: the slave owners’ opulence and the slaves’ wretched condition.

To reproduce a complete picture of the area, Massé, the tour guide, leads us along the *Paseo*. His lenses convey both a topographical inscription of Havana, as a fortified city, “baignée d’un côté par les eaux du port, est ceinte de l’autre, par un rempart au pied duquel s’étend un large fosse que protège un chemin couvert et le Paseo” [on one side it is bathed by the waters of the port of Havana, on the other side it is surrounded by a rampart on the foot of which stretches a large pit that protects a covered railroad and the *Paseo*] (97). Massé did not mention the barracoons superficially. He paused to comment on the reasons of their existence, stating that they were “déplorables marchés où l’on vend des hommes parce qu’ils sont noirs, et parce qu’il nous faut, à tout prix, du sucre et du café” [deplorable markets where they sell human beings because they are black and because we need sugar and coffee by any means necessary] (97). Later, Massé intimates his feelings, reflecting on the contrast between the *Paseo* and the barracoons:

Cette opposition de l’extrême richesse avec l’extrême misère, cette profusion de biens due aux sueurs et aux larmes de tant de malheureux, toute cette confusion de plaisirs et de douleurs, d’orgueil et d’abjection, de faste et d’injustice, de mollesse et de férocité, avait noirci mon imagination et rempli mon âme d’impressions sinistres

[The contrast between extreme opulence and extreme misery, the profusion of wealth due to the sweat and tears of many unfortunate people, all that confusion of pleasure and pain, arrogance and abjection, pomp and injustice, of slackness and ferocity, had darkened my imagination and filled my soul with sinister impressions] (339).

Massé's opinions, while highlighting opposite scenery, reveal his understanding that the exploitation and inhumane treatment of the Africans was founded on their "scientifically" based inferiority as well as Europe's greed. Expressing empathy towards the slaves' plight, Massé was inspired to write a letter of protest. The contrast between the *Paseo* and the barracoons made an indelible impression on him. However, he abandoned the project. Later, he rationalized his behavior: "J'allais écrire une déclamation violente contre la société; mais je me retins: c'est une matière épuisée. J'avais à me débarrasser de la bile; je me mis à brocher une macédoine d'observations et de remarques la plupart tant soit peu satiriques, pour en régaler mon ami" [I was going to write a vehement speech against the society, but that topic is totally exhausted. I had to rid myself of some bile; I started to stitch a medley of observations and comments, some of them very satirical, to give my friend as a gift] (339). The real reason that Massé failed to write the letter was not because the slavery question was a totally depleted topic, nor was it due to his eagerness to share his observations with his pen pal. It was probably out of fear for his own security that Massé did not voice his opinion.

Massé might have avoided the letter of protest because foreigners who were inclined towards emancipation were seen as threats to the colony's political and economic stability. A vivid example may be found later in the famous Ladder Conspiracy (1844), which David Turnbull, then British Consul to Cuba, was accused of masterminding.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Evidence supporting Turnbull's guilt in this case is conjectural. However, his own writings suggest that he did more than just objectively report his observations. He often took side. In his *Travels. In the West. Cuba; with Notices of Porto Rico, and The Slave Trade*, (1969 [1840]), and more specifically in the chapter entitled "Treatment of slaves," commenting on the sabotage of the case of a dead slave, Turnbull comments on the fact that Blacks could not get justice in Cuba. "This was to be expected under the circumstances as a matter of course. It could not be thought desirable that a white man in authority should be brought to trouble in consequence of an inquest, the subject of which was a dead Negro" (279).

Turnbull was a dedicated pro-abolitionist who vehemently criticized Cuba's slave traders at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; his activism became a threat to Cuba's prosperity, which relied on slavery. He was forced to leave Cuba because of his alleged involvement in slave revolts, especially his role in the Ladder Conspiracy. Robert L. Paquette quotes this excerpt from the findings of the Military Commission appointed by Lieutenant-General Leopoldo O'Donnell (1848-1850): [Turnbull] was "either by himself or with others of his colleagues, if not the individual who conceived the destructive idea, at least the prime mover and focal point, from where the present plan of conspiracy and several other projects for the desolation of this country emanated" (241).<sup>67</sup> Although Massé's visit preceded Turnbull's case, that incident stands as a reminder that Massé's identification with the "principles of humanity," as he eloquently put it in his preface, has the impact of a disclaimer. His refusal to write the letter suggests that he was concerned about his safety; however, his diary contains some strong anti-slavery remarks. Turnbull's knowledge of England's combative stance against slavery might have been one of the reasons that he supported the cause of freedom, a cause he might have embraced even prior to his role as a British Consul in Cuba.<sup>68</sup> Massé's reluctant activism kept him from

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<sup>67</sup> Paquette's quote is extracted from the *Colección de los fallos*, case 12a.

<sup>68</sup> Robert Paquette, in *Sugar is Made with Blood* (1988), used letters exchanged between Lord Aberdeen and Turnbull in 1846, in which Turnbull claimed to have visited Haiti and conversed with Haiti's then President Jean-Pierre Boyer, on possible help in the event of a war between Britain and the United States. The quote used by Paquette seems to indicate that a desire for revenge was paramount to Turnbull's actions, while freedom of oppressed people might have been secondary. According to the quote taken from the collection of letters found at the British Museum: "If one or two of our West India Regiments, supported by a Haytian [sic] legion of some 10,000 men, and an adequate Steam Squadron...were entrusted with the means of arming the two oppressed classes of the native inhabitants, [the slaves and free-colored of Louisiana] the disaster of the last war at New Orleans [during the War of 1812] would in all probability be redressed" (248).

writing the letter. However, his righteous indignation surely sets him apart from Gagnier de Cassagnac's conservatism, which led the latter to point to the rehabilitating effects of slavery on the African race.

### 3.1.6 Discovery, A Symmetrical Process

We discover a great deal about the four travelers I am studying when they depict the Other.<sup>69</sup> The travelers embrace a pro-active approach, guiding the reader through the different areas of interests as well as providing information and advice to prospective travelers. They use the imperative, suggesting places to visit or avoid. The hortatory command "let us," is sometimes used to invite prospective visitors to come to Cuba. In other instances, the reader is invited to go and experience the places or participate vicariously through the detailed narrative. Through elements stated or omitted, the writers attempted to leave a corpus of knowledge; be it leisurely activities that prospective *flâneurs* may seek, be it the attempt to apply scientific knowledge based on the theoretical paradigms of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, each traveler forces a dialogue with that remote past (Brettell 64). This will potentially enrich and correct our vision of that era.

The reader accompanies Duvergier de Hauranne throughout his excursions in Matanzas. Using a softer command than Massé, he suggests that the traveler stop "un moment à la station de San-Felipe, pour voir la foule qui s'y presse autour des échoppes des marchands de fruits" [one moment at the San Felipe station, to see the crowd pressing

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<sup>69</sup> Massé's tour did not conclude with the depiction of the Paseo, as is the case with numerous travelers who would only visit the most famous sites during their voyage. Relentless in his desire to offer a thorough presentation of the island, he takes us to what is termed "les faubourgs de la Havane" [the small villages of Havana], commonly known as *La Salud*. There, he introduces the reader to what may be considered the slums, as opposed to the other travelers who focus only on the most picturesque sites.

around the booths of merchants of fruits] (622). It is a veritable tropical open-air market as depicted by De Hauranne: “Noix de coco, pyramides d’oranges, de citrons, de grenades, de mangos, de bananes...” [coconuts, pyramids of oranges, lemons, pomegranates, mangos, bananas...] (622). He concludes this section with an evaluation of Creole gastronomy and of the Creoles around the railroads, stating “Il n’y a pas d’autres buffets sur les chemins de fer de l’île, car les Créoles ne sont délicats ni sur la qualité, ni sur la cuisson, ni même sur la propreté de leurs aliments” [There are no other buffets along the railroad of the island, because Creoles are not sophisticated with regards to the quality, the cooking or on the cleanliness of their food] (622). Here, De Hauranne clearly uses a blanket statement to proclaim the superiority of European cuisine. Furthermore, he depicts Creoles as careless, dirty and lazy even in the preparation of their food. This perhaps echoes what Arthur de Gobineau said later concerning the Negro as one who eats for the sake of eating and who is attracted even to rotten food (135).

De Hauranne invites the reader to sightseeing. He begins his observation with a sentence that props his knowledge of the important things that exist in the island: “Il y a dans le voisinage de Matanzas deux choses à voir, deux excursions consacrées et obligatoires que nul étranger ne peut se dispenser de faire. Ce sont les grottes de Bellamar et la vallée de Yumuri” [in the vicinity of Matanzas there are two things to see, two

salient excursions that no foreigner should miss: the cave of Bellamar and the Yumuri Valley] (623).<sup>70</sup>

### 3.1.7 Massé: The Pragmatic Traveler

Massé's journal constitutes a practical guide for prospective travelers to the island. It offers a testimonial of 19<sup>th</sup> century life in which the narrator constantly refers to his own culture as basis for evaluating cultural phenomena in Cuba. Such intent also exists in Ampère's *Promenade en Amérique*. However, due in part to the limited scope of Ampère's trip (he spent one month in Cuba), his vision, although useful, is at times sketchy. Nevertheless, it complements the tableau of knowledge that this group of travelers projects. In this sense, Ampère's description of prison life, the creation of "una escuela de machinas," the lack of scientific and literary movements<sup>71</sup> in Havana, as well as the allocation of funds from visitors' visas to several charitable organizations, give us insights into his numerous concerns (183-186). While emphasizing their knowledge of

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<sup>70</sup> The Bellamar Caves are located in Matanzas. The caves are gems of nature because of the dimness, humidity and beauty of the rocks. The caves still keep the elements of mystery Duvergier de Hauranne express during his visit because in different levels one can watch images similar to human beings, animals as well as flowers. The caves are considered the most ancient tourist resort in the country. For further details on the Caves, as well as the Yumuri Valley, see the chapter on the tropical panorama through the travelers' eyes.

<sup>71</sup> Massé, on the other hand, comments on the establishment of schools, for example a school of drawing, led by M. Vergne, a painter, as well as on the development of science in a school of chemistry. His diary also contains reviews of work by the journalist Bergano Y Villegas Simón (1781-1828). De Cassagnac, on the other hand, wrote a short biography of the poet Juan Francisco Manzano (1797-1854). De Cassagnac was not particularly impressed by Manzano's skills as a poet. Instead, in the few lines he dedicated to the poet's biography, he focused on the writer's licentious life. The differences here not only reflect the travelers' length of time in Cuba, but also the lack of information or a disdainful look towards elements of the other culture. This is Ampère's case, who categorically states that literary and scientific movements are lacking in Cuba.

Cuba, the narrators' personal lives, their biases as well as useful information, form an integral part of the journals. This is indicative of their thought processes; they show cultural dynamics that were in place during their visit, and personal expectations that were either confirmed or disproved as they acquaint themselves with Cuba. As for Massé, his findings are often depicted with an air of disbelief; he would also allude to experts that would have done a better job, had they witnessed the scenes he was privileged to observe. For instance, examining the diversity of races in Cuba, the names of Franz Joseph Gall (1758-1828), and Johann Kaspar (Caspar) Lavater (1741-1801), reverberate in his mind.<sup>72</sup> Franz Joseph Gall, German born scientist who pioneered the concept of localized brain functions, argued that mental functions are confined to specific areas of the brain, and behavior are dependent upon them. Those allusions are crucial considering those thinkers' influence on the pseudoscience called phrenology. Lavater's first book, *Essays of Physiognomy* (1789-1798), laid the foundation for the study of profiles and silhouettes that become useful in criminology.<sup>73</sup> His ideas conflicted with the *tabula rasa* that was popular in the 18th century in that he proposes a study of types, variables that allow 'scientists' to predict certain behavior. This line of thinking influences French naturalists according to Christopher Rivers in *Face Value: Physiognomical Thought and the Legible Body in Marivaux, Lavater, Balzac, Gautier and Zola* (1994).

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<sup>72</sup> Another important name in the development of phrenology is George Combe (1788-1858).

<sup>73</sup> See also F.J.Gall and J.G. Spurzheim, *Anatomie et physiologie du système nerveux en général et du cerveau en particulier (Avec des observations sur la possibilité de reconnaître plusieurs dispositions intellectuelles et morales de l'homme et des animaux, par la configuration de leurs têtes* (1810-1819).



Gall, like Lavater, was ridiculed and even condemned by religious leaders. He is the father of phrenology, the attempt to determine personality based on examination of the brain. He believed that the brain was the center of both psychic and other behaviors. It has to be noted that he never used the term 'phrenology' himself, although he is known as the father of that field, which came under fire in the 20th century. Hippolyte Taine's (1828-1893) positivism, with its emphasis on cause and effect relationship, as well as external factors and their impact on behavior, played an excellent role in debunking the theories of phrenology. It is worth noting that Massé mentions both men for their influence on theories concerning physiognomy and character. In this passage, Massé is alluding to Gall and Lavater to suggest that the African race is not as homogenous as some of the most inept students of Physiognomics want us to believe.

To confirm his findings, Massé describes the different tribes living in Africa. In so doing, he is discrediting the foundations of the "science" called phrenology, while also suggesting that, as a traveler, his experience qualifies him more than Lavater and Gall, who relied on their own opinions and 'laboratory observations.' Allusions to Lavater and Gall give us insights on Massé's intellectual depth, the ideologies that influenced him and his attitude towards the subjects he is depicting. They also suggest that Massé was versed in the early theories of race classification. During his trip, Massé ridiculed some of those theories. Perhaps as a result of his own limited vision on racial matters, his writings nevertheless perpetuate the same line of thinking he vows to depart from. This time, his role is special because his depiction is laced with the good intentions of a so-called objective narrator who identifies with "les principes d'humanité qui font de tous les hommes les membres d'une seule et même famille" [the principles of humanity which

make of mankind the members of one family] (vi). Although those principles may hold true, Massé's attitude implies that he did not fully internalize them because his racist views surfaced sporadically.

Massé proposes a psychosocial analysis of all the groups he encounters. Since "the discovery of the other is also that of oneself" (Todorov 13), the more Massé reveals about the people of Cuba, the more we learn about his attitude as a male and a traveler. Chapter six, entitled "J'ai la permission de débarquer- Comment l'Étranger vit à la Havane," [I have permission to land- How the foreigner lives in Havana], sums up his situation as a traveler who did not know anyone in Cuba. This stands in sharp contrast with Ampère, the son of a famous scientist; with De Hauranne, the son of a famous historian, and with Granier de Cassagnac, the descendant of an opulent family. Those writers frequented other French luminaries in Cuba who provided them with the accoutrement for their excursions. For instance, De Hauranne describes a famous French doctor, and his "tour guide," whom he calls his black Sancho. In Massé's situation, his visit attests of a man who risked life and limb in order to leave us this diary. Maybe it is his unique situation that allowed him to provide us a corpus of practical advice, almost unadulterated by views and opinions of other visitors already settled in Cuba.

In that sixth chapter, Massé, frustrated and a bit melancholically, alludes to the high cost of living in Cuba. The difficulties he met before being granted permission to enter Cuba are fresh in his mind; the offensive smell he described in chapter four still haunts his olfactory nerves. Massé informed us that "J'ai eu la faculté d'entrer dans une ville que j'aurai pu quitter d'ennui" [I had the opportunity of entering a city which I could have left due to boredom] (84). This is a hint that the thought of leaving Cuba had crossed

his mind, even after a long and perilous journey. Although he is not overtly complaining, reading between the lines, the receptor has a hint of Massé's meager means. In this regard, Guicharnaud-Tollis believes that Massé was a visitor trying to fit in instead of a host (347). The author's description appears to corroborate Guicharnaud-Tollis' findings. He depicts his living quarters as "Mon gîte coute assez cher: vingt piastres" [my home/lodging space is rather exorbitant: twenty piastres] (84). The word "gîte" implies a diminutive space not worth the exorbitant "twenty piastres." He also struggled to adjust, trying to learn Spanish, placing himself "sous la protection des dieux Pénates espagnols," [under the protection of the Spanish household gods] as an immersion course to learn Spanish in a short while. Relating his own struggle, Massé learns that "les Espagnols n'aiment pas à ouvrir l'intérieur de leur famille" [Spaniards don't like to let any one into their private life/their family] (85). In addition, "on peut difficilement trouver parmi eux ce qu'on appelle une pension bourgeoise" [one can hardly find among them what one could call a bourgeois boarding home] (84). This last comment not only is suggestive of the customs of the Spanish families living in Cuba, who kept outsiders at bay, it also points to their limited economic means, which did not allow them to have "bourgeois boarding homes," as Massé might have expected. In addition, the comment represents Massé's determination to introduce himself as an astute observer and a traveler with a keen eye for his surroundings. In this sense, his impressions may serve as guidelines that inform future travelers on the prior preparations needed to visit Cuba.

Massé's advice is scattered throughout the journal, making his narrative an unofficial manual on the art of survival in the tropics. He offers vital information on all aspects of life in Cuba. The chapter entitled "Comment l'étranger vit à la Havane" [How

the Foreigner Lives in Havana], imparts great wisdom concerning places to stay, to enjoy a nice meal and agreeable conversation and company. Since “bourgeois boarding houses” are nonexistent among the Spanish families, the French families settled in Cuba offer great help to their countrymen in transit. Massé comments on a certain degree of polarity between the well-established French in the island and the recent immigrants: “Les Français bien établis et jouissant de quelque réputation, se tiennent à l’écart de leurs compatriotes qui arrivent, et n’admettent chez eux que des gens d’un nom connu, ou qui ont à présenter de bonnes lettres de recommandation” [the well-established French that enjoy some reputation, alienate themselves from their newly-arrived compatriots, and only receive those who have good reference letters] (279).<sup>74</sup> By contrast, insisting on the lack of “bourgeois boarding homes,” Massé seems to suggest that the French, especially the well-established ones, mainly exiled from Saint-Domingue, represented an economic force in that Spanish colony. This information is revealing in two ways: first, through identification with the exiled from Saint-Domingue, Massé derives a sense of nationalistic pride. Second, Massé uses the success of the French exiles to point out that the Spaniards were lazy and dense because, instead of emulating the French, they loathed and persecuted them (300).

The places and people mentioned become landmarks, crucial signs that future

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<sup>74</sup> Massé would point out M. Tourtour later. By mentioning those “well-established French with certain reputation,” the author leaves us guessing that he is probably referring to his countrymen who exiled from Saint-Domingue after the Revolutionary War. Those families, praised for their craftiness, invested all their talents and what was left of their good fortune in agriculture, namely in sugar, cocoa and coffee in the Oriente province. From a psychosocial standpoint, those families who were striving to make the best out of adverse circumstances, were well aware of their condition as Creoles, and were skeptical of recently arrived immigrants, sharing Massé’s (277) as well as De Cassagnac’s opinion (153), that unlike the enterprising exiles from Saint-Domingue, some Frenchmen were in the colonies only to parade in fine clothing, drink and chase women around.

travelers will undoubtedly seek when they visit Cuba. Massé commands the hospitality of “M. Tourtour, Provençal, de Brignoles ou des environs, très jovial et très-aimable, dont l’habitation située sur un des chemins les plus fréquentés de la colonie, est considérée par les voyageurs français et même espagnols comme une espèce de caravansérail” [Mr. Tourtour, from Brignoles, very jovial, and very friendly, whose home located on one of the most popular roads in the colony, is considered by French and even Spanish travelers as sort of a regular boarding house for foreigners] (280).

Important wisdom concerning how foreigners should behave in the colonies is also dispensed. Some of the people Massé encountered represent various types of travelers. For example, the permanent dreamers, whose values often clash with those of the working class. In that sense, he reveals his own disdain towards “certains compatriotes qui semblent n’être allés dans le Nouveau-Monde que pour y habiller sans fin” [some compatriots who seem to have come to the New World only to keep dressing up unceasingly] (277). He also alludes to another type: those that were not so bright back home, but who adopt the identity of subversive thinkers in the New World, and thus have suffered from a delusion of grandeur. Massé describes them with impunity:

Des individus qui furent toujours très obscures et très peu pensans prétendent avoir quitté la France parce que le nouvel ordre de choses ne s’accorde point avec leurs idées; et la plupart de ces individus sont des garde-magasins ou des infirmiers d’armée: d’autres veulent intéresser en se donnant pour victimes; et certes ni l’air ni le caractère de ces messieurs ne rappellent ces images de proscrits que l’antiquité nous a transmises...

[Individuals that were always very dense and dimwitted, pretend to have left France because the new order of things did not suit their ideology; and most of those individuals are store-watchmen and Army nurses; others want to draw attention on themselves by pretending to be victims. However, neither the appearance nor the character of these men fit the profile of outlaws that history has passed on to us] (278).

Massé uses his own skepticism of French foreigners in the colonies as a measuring stick; he advises the prospective visitor to do the same.<sup>75</sup> His own attitude is adjusted throughout the diary, as he becomes acquainted with people who do not fit the mold of indolent Frenchmen. The narrator praises the French women who represent the pride of France in Cuba. He also advises prospective travelers against the clique of so-called aristocratic Creoles, addicted to alcohol. This section of his account becomes like a sermon in which the writer accuses, blames and condemns seamen who live a licentious life.

Massé's advice contains suggestions geared toward a certain economic development of Cuba through opportunities for foreigners whom he advises to invest in specific fields. In chapter XXVIII, "Trop grande affluence d'aventuriers.- Quelles professions présentent le plus d'avantages," [Too Many Adventurers- Which Are the Most Rewarding Professions], Massé makes the following appeal:

Si vous êtes maçon, charpentier, menuisier, forgeron etc., partez pour la Havane ou pour tout autre port de l'île de Cuba, vous êtes certain d'avoir de l'emploi. Le meilleur métier est celui de maçon. Tous les bâtimens des habitations avaient été jusqu'à ces dernières années construits en bois ou en terre, ou avec des spathes et des palmes de cocotiers. Un accroissement rapide de prospérité exige qu'ils le soient aujourd'hui à chaux [sic] à sable.

[If you are a bricklayer, a carpenter, furniture maker, plumber etc., go to Havana or any other port of the island of Cuba; you will undoubtedly find employment. The best profession is that of bricklayer. All the buildings that had been built until the last years were built in wood or earth or with spaths and coconut leaves. A rapid growth in prosperity demands that they be built with concrete] (274).

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<sup>75</sup> Massé's criticism in this sense is directed to the Spaniards as well as the Creoles who refuse to work to improve themselves. He commends some of his countrymen for maintaining a higher quality of life, for working so diligently to make the best out of the worse situation. His criticism also includes some of his countrymen that are addicted to alcohol, chase women and have other vices, working so diligently to make the best out of the worse situation. His criticism also includes some of his countrymen that are addicted to alcohol, chase women and have other vices (279).

Massé, from that standpoint, acts like a financial scout, similar to those who, according to Mary Louise Pratt, traveled in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (146). Some of Massé's advice to foreigners concerns their own survival. In the chapter on crimes, he tells them to exercise extreme caution. Massé states that blacks are prohibited to bear arms as a protective measure against potential threats against their masters. Duvergier de Hauranne makes no mention of such things. De Cassagnac, on the same subject, alleges that blacks do not bear arms because the slaves and their masters are in such harmony that there would never be any attempts to harm their owners (258). It is worth noting that De Cassagnac's analysis is global, as it pertains to the Antilles. He makes, as we shall see, some startling revelations concerning the relationship between slave owners and their property in Cuba.<sup>76</sup>

Those guided tours may be considered vital documents for contemporary mapmakers, artists and historians who might want to re-create 19<sup>th</sup> century life throughout the most popular regions in Cuba. The travelers' descriptions also offer elements of comparison and contrast to those who wish to analyze the socioeconomic and cultural elements that have been altered or remained unchanged. Although the travelers' views may reflect a stereotypical representation of the island and its inhabitants; although their views often confirm only what their European minds and eyes might have trained them to see, the journals also contain information, valuable to future travelers. In this sense, the travelogues function as unofficial guidebooks. Let the reader beware, however, since the information provided reflects the travelers' itineraries, their own experiences as

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<sup>76</sup> De Cassagnac generally believes that the slaves live in harmony with their masters, who even let them carry weapons, which, in Europe is inconceivable, according to the author (150).

European males. Therefore, the duration of their trek, their diverse socioeconomic background and the events that took place at that time have a great impact on their perspective. Those factors may allow a multifaceted, yet fragmented vision of that society, which may assist the social scientists in their quest for first-hand accounts of life in that era.

Massé's *L'isle de Cuba et la Havane*, is one of the most extensive narratives; its author spent more time in Cuba than all the other travelers. This is why it allows us an in-depth analysis of that society. As an account of his experience, based on the rhetorical devices used to convince the receptor of the veracity of his observations, this text, as well as all the other texts, should be taken for what it is: an attempt to project a certain knowledge of 19<sup>th</sup> century Cuba.

Massé's singular perspective highlights his ability to synthesize Cuba's economic situation as it pertains to Spain's hegemony competing with the towering presence of the United States; his keen sense of humor, evident in descriptions of people and institutions, materialize his own discovery of Cuba. The 19<sup>th</sup> century, a period in which explorations, including self-introspection, became fashionable, facilitates Massé's articulation of his encounter with the New World. The element of wonderment that has become synonymous with the New World is evident throughout the diary. His knowledge of history and the impact of conquests on nation building foreshadow his fears as well as the inequities he anticipates from aboard the vessel in Marseilles. These, combined with his sense of humor and his versatility in the fields of literature, geography and what constitutes "science" during his days, allows the reader to dialogue with the past, by re-



visiting some of the institutions, historical characters as well as cultural elements that have survived through the years.<sup>77</sup>

The works of Duvergier de Hauranne, and Granier de Cassagnac, complement Massé's representation. Duvergier de Hauranne's contact with a French Consul in Havana as well as an affluent doctor, allows him to provide us with another representation of Cuba, one dominated by amazing sunsets and sunrises; Blacks that are as valuable as mules, but that do not surpass them in intelligence; and a tropical jungle that is second to none. He also compares and disparages elements of the Spanish and Cuban cultures, which are unfamiliar to him. For Ampère, who spent a month in Cuba, nature is secondary: a comparison of the slavery situation in Cuba to that of the United States was his primary objective. Therefore, a different aspect of Cuban life is depicted to us as the writer observed the slaves in their daily dealings with their owners. Empathy and sympathy are expressed as the writer kept us abreast of his own opinions as the liberal side of him, as well as the man seeking leisure, struggle to make some sense out of the chaos in the colony. As Ampère paints us an island with diversions for visitors of all persuasions, he wasted no time telling us about the beauty of the women in Havana, and thereby enticing future *flâneurs*. These aspects are missing both in Massé and Duvergier de Hauranne, who would focus on individuals. Ampère presents a macro vision: he focuses on the habits of the rising bourgeoisie by emphasizing courtship. This gives his work aspects of a *folletín*. Granier de Cassagnac, in my estimation, earns the distinction of the least personable of all the travelers, although he remains the man with an agenda and follows it to the letter. He vowed to defend his name against those who accused him

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<sup>77</sup> See the chapter VI entitled "Towards a Historiography of Cuba."

of a personal vendetta against Africans. He promised no ill-will towards Africans, but his diary testified of the opposite, as he took advantage of every occasion to consciously belittle Africans and people that are sympathetic towards their suffering. If he wanted to present ethnology of the different races that populated the Antilles, his attempt failed because his own biases and conservatism were “scientific” propaganda to maintain slavery.

## Chapter IV

### Representation of Otherness

Representation of Otherness hinges on what Abdul Jan Mohammed calls “the ‘Manichean allegory,’ in which a binary and implacable discursive opposition between the races is produced” (60). Travel writing provides the means for exploring such a “discursive opposition between the races,” as well as the cultures of both “discoverers” and “discovered.” A mutual gaze is involved: the Europeans see Blacks and Indians as the Other, while the latter also consider the Europeans as the Other. However, enunciating the encounter between the diametrically opposed entities, the initiator of the dialogue constitutes the agent that theorizes upon and imposes meaning and interpretation on the reality of the discovered. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Cuba became the auspicious arena for travelers in quest of new economic venues, scientific endeavors, as well as leisure pursuits. In their journals, Etienne Massé, Granier de Cassagnac, Jean-Jacques Ampère and Duvergier de Hauranne endeavored to leave an inexhaustible fountain of information concerning life in that particular time of change throughout the Americas.

The combination of “science” with romanticism further deepened the perceived differences between the races from an ideological standpoint.<sup>78</sup> From a rhetorical perspective, the travelers’ promises to be objective in their prologues further complicate matters as subjective feelings are robed in the disguise of “scientific objectivity,” in the

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<sup>78</sup> Pseudoscience is a more appropriate term to describe the differences in human species that are based solely on ideologies. Allusion is being made specifically to Joseph Arthur de Gobineau’s *Essai sur l’inégalité des races* (1853), and Johann Caspar Lavater (1741-1801), in *L’art de connaître les hommes par la physionomie* (1806-1809).

travelers' attempt to convince the reader of the "wisdom" inserted in those testimonials. That way, the receptor is forced to consider the travel writer as a "narrateur digne de foi," thereby facilitating the latter's aim: to convince the reader of the accuracy of their accounts. To this effect, Dominique Julien comments, "Le récit de voyage tient un discours sur un pays: il s'agit toujours, dans une certaine mesure, pour l'auteur, de convaincre. Le voyageur et l'auteur ne font qu'un; l'identité du nom, l'emploi de la première personne, l'exactitude chronologique, la réalité du pays: autant de signes qui relèvent d'un discours de la vérité" [the travel account holds a discourse on a country: the aim is always, up to a certain point, for the author, to convince. The traveler and the author are made one because of the identity of name, the use of the first person, the chronological exactness; the reality of the country: as many signs which indicate a discourse on the truth] (13). Since the travel text contains "many signs which indicate a discourse on the truth," though not necessarily the truth, it functions within the domain of verisimilitude; it is a valuable tool for reaching a certain approximation to the reality as seen and heard by the writer. In that sense, the travel text may serve as a somewhat unofficial guide, providing a point of reference for the travelers seeking to familiarize themselves with a foreign territory (Said 93).

In the diaries of Etienne Massé, Jean-Jacques Ampère, Duvergier de Hauranne and Granier de Cassagnac, the ridiculous meets the sublime in the travelers' representation of Otherness, as personal opinions are formulated under the veil of scientific evidence. A careful overview of these writings suggests that the promise of objectivity found in the prologues often stands as a mirage to overcome the receptor's view, not only because "no one can see with innocent eyes," but also because prior

readings as preparation for the trip as well as in the field experiences might influence the narrator's perspective (Shafi 146). In this sense, objectivity sometimes “n'est qu'une opération de persuasion fondée sur la supériorité de l'ethnie européenne sur l'africaine” [is nothing but a mechanism of persuasion based on the superiority of the European over the African] (Salazar 91). Promises of objectivity become confounding variables allowing the travelers to express their opinions as hardcore scientific data, forcing the reader to look through their lenses and to accept their fragmented impressions as plain truths. This chapter will analyze such mechanisms as polarization, the act of disparaging elements of the subaltern's culture while elevating the “superior's” culture; differentiation, the analysis of differences within the same ethnic group with the intention of showing moral defects based on physiognomy; and animalization, attributing animal characteristics to human beings in an effort to show how far they are located at the lower end of the evolutionary continuum. Before analyzing those mechanisms, I will offer an overview of some of the ideological trends that might have guided the travelers' attempt to depict the Other.

#### **4.1.2 Guiding Principles**

To European travelers in the New World, the 19<sup>th</sup> century provides the optimal terrain for confirming some of the ideas etched in the Old World's memory since the early days of the New World's conquest. According to Dominique Julien, each journey to the New World constitutes a discovery of its own, since the travelers, although distinct entities, often draw from the same pre-existing topoi as well as ideological principles (9). In general, travels can be motivated by pleasure, pilgrimage, official duty, geographical

exploration, profit, or a sense of curiosity concerning the other culture. This curiosity is often fueled by old myths, so-called scientific theories and ideologies about other cultures and races held by previous “authorities” on the topic.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Cuba, one of the last bastions of colonialism in the New World, constitutes the ultimate *point de rencontre* for travelers fascinated with Blacks, Indians, Coolies, as well as Creoles. Describing those groups, regardless of promises of objectivity, liberal or conservative, subconscious elements filter through the travelers’ representation: prior readings and opinions formed at home become the guiding principles that characterize the enunciation of their encounters. Those ideas that the travelers validate further reinforce the power of the travel text in perpetuating old stereotypes as well as creating new ones.

Which theories and writers directly influenced the travelers is an ambitious question that should be approached with caution, for it is impossible to positively identify these theories or writers. However, since no text originates *ex nihilo*, through the use of common topoi as well as allusions to “mainstream ideologists,” a certain approximation can be reached with. On the one side, those ideologies have come to us through a corpus left by “scientists,” as well as people considered more knowledgeable than others. On the other side, religion, literature, and art contribute to such representations, as the travelers attempted to provide answers to inquiries posed by their European counterparts concerning the New World’s Other.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, philosophers as well as other enlightened thinkers present a distorted view of Blacks: as noble savage or romantic, exotic heroes. Even when the humanity of the Negro was stated, belittling comments concerning his race were also

mentioned to remind the reader of his inferior status. It is worth underscoring that the 19<sup>th</sup> century is marked by racist theories concerning the inequality of the human races. Allusion is made here specifically to the theses advanced by Johann Kaspar Lavater (1747-1801) in *Essays of Physiognomy* (1789-1798); Joseph Arthur A. de Gobineau (1816-1882), *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* (1853), and Adolphe Quételet (1796-1874), in *Études sur l'homme* (1842) and later in *Anthropométrie ou Mesure des différentes facultés de l'homme* (1871).<sup>79</sup> Analyzing the representation of Otherness, specific works by those European authors will be alluded to in an effort to suggest that the travelers might have had those works, as well as centuries of stereotypical representations of Blacks, in mind in their treatment of otherness. Even closer to us, progressive intellectuals such as José Carlos Mariátegui (1894-1930) in *Siete Ensayos de interpretación de la realidad peruana* (1969), make disparaging statements concerning the African race, which he thinks totally inept.

As the travelers left their homeland, the adventurer within them also anticipated fame, resulting from the discovery of new plants or unusual species. As preparation for the trip, the travelers undoubtedly familiarized themselves with the current “scientific” theories concerning the peoples of the world. In America, the diversity of races facilitates the treatment of issues that have long fascinated Europe. The idea of the inequality among the races is deeply rooted in the scientists’ attempt to classify human beings in the same way plants are classified. At the core of such classifications were the attempts to provide the basis for identifying different groups as well as predicting behavior. However, the

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<sup>79</sup> The texts studied here were published prior to Quételet’s text. It is mentioned here because it follows Lavater’s quests in his *Essays of Physiognomy*.

system of classification went further than the boundaries of identification, as the theorists promulgated the superiority of the white race due to differences ranging from bone structure, cranial size, to mating customs. Joseph Arthur de Gobineau's *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* (1853), clearly a discursive attempt to provide a psychosocial paradigm to represent the different races, proves that those theories of classification can be deemed dangerous when they fall into the wrong hands.<sup>80</sup> In spite of those attempts to define the Other based on physical characteristics, human beings prove themselves to be more complex than the formulae that those theorists have advanced. As migration occurs and all sorts of alliances are formed, determinants of culture and race become such confounding variables that advocating superiority or inferiority on the basis of physiognomy verges on the ridiculous. Here lies the danger of classification, the potential threat that "science" might pose when it is employed with evil intent.

#### **4.1.3 Processes of Otherizing: We against Them**

Cuba, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, lured visitors from different parts of the globe due to the heightened sense of interest in the mores of others, as well as the island's economic boom. For the scientifically inclined travelers, the diversity of plants and people transformed Cuba into a laboratory. The possession of knowledge placed the travelers in a singular position: that of reporters and investigators whose primary role was to isolate those elements of the Other different from theirs.

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<sup>80</sup> Gobineau wrote that race is the defining factor in human development. Thus, the strongest races would be those that are kept pure. Therefore, Arthur de Gobineau considered the Aryan race as superior. Houston Stewart Chamberlain (1855-1927), the Anglo-German publicist, playwright, cultural critic and race theorist, took those ideas to another level. Hitler admired Chamberlain so much that he visited him on his deathbed in 1927. For more information, see James Joll, *Europe Since 1870: An International History* (1990).



Massé stresses the travelers' foremost preoccupations upon arriving in a foreign territory: "Les arbres, les plantes de cette nouvelle terre ont-ils quelque rapport avec les arbres et les plantes de la nôtre? Les femmes de cette ville ont-elles autant ou plus d'attraits que les femmes de notre pays?" [The trees, the plants of that new land, are they related to the trees and plants of ours? The women of that city are they as attractive as or more attractive than the women of our country?] (63). Those interrogations are crucial because they reveal Massé's aim: a comparative focus on plants and people. Besides, the reiteration of the possessives "our" [notre] and ours [nôtre] indicate not only a collective, but also emphasizes Massé's sense of belonging to a distinct, superior culture, which leads to the dichotomy "we vs. them," common in the diaries. Massé used the possessive "nos" [our] to differentiate between his culture and what constitutes the Other in Cuba. He mentioned it first during a vision when he described the two women he saw as "différente de *nos* femmes d'Europe" [different from our European women] (35). It is evident that the writer could have said "différente des femmes d'Europe," [different from the women of Europe], but his stressing that particular possessive suggests a patriarchal stance, affirming that he belongs to that group of men to whom all those women belong. In other instances, he uses "nos vins du midi" [our wines from the south of France] (53); "notre volaille" [our poultry] (72); "nos jeunes gens" [our young people] (42) and "à nos femmes" [to our women] to appropriate elements of his own culture that he considers superior to those of Cuba (74).

#### 4.1.4 De Hauranne's Treatment of Polarization

In his description of Matanzas, Duvergier de Hauranne emphasizes the use of the same possessive to differentiate between elements of the Cuban culture that he labels as savage, barbaric or childish. For instance, annoyed by the tolling of bells on that plantation, he observed that they were different from “*nos belles cloches suisses au tintement argentin et joyeux*” [our nice Swiss bells with the silvery and happy tollings] and “*nos harmonieux carillons italiens*” [our harmonious Italian chimes] (619). He alludes to the forests of Europe as “*nos forêts*” [our forests] and later “*nos chênes* [our oaks] (621) and “*nos campagnes*” [our rural areas]) (624), suggesting not only that he and the reader form an integral part of that group, but also that they are distinct and distanced from the culture he is describing.

##### 4.1.4.1 We against Them: Polarization in Music and Dance

The travelers not only use the possessive to express differentiation, they also use a codified language to undermine elements of the other culture while elevating their own. De Hauranne describes Spanish music as “*un tumulte indescriptible, mêlé de tam tam chinois, de bassinoires et de casseroles*” [an indescribable tumult, mixed with the noise of Chinese gongs, warming-pans and saucepans and other pans. This music is also labeled “diabolical” and “savage,” while European music is all harmony] (620). As for dance, De Hauranne observes the “voluptuous” and “awkward” nature of the steps, adjectives that suggest the instinctual/animalistic nature of the dancers. However, European dances are more cerebral, since skills are required in order to perform them, he concludes. The issue,

however, is that De Hauranne was observing a typically African-Cuban dance, while his European mind expected a waltz.<sup>81</sup> Ampère also labels one of the dances he observed “une danse nationale à la fois indécente et monotone” [a National dance both vulgar and monotonous] (181). De Cassagnac qualifies the Negro dance as violent because Negroes sweat and take their vests off when they dance. This is a typical example of a traveler placing value judgment on elements of the Other’s culture that he does not understand. However, he still deems himself knowledgeable enough to scrutinize it: “Je ne crois pas qu’il existe au monde un seul exercice, sans exception, qui soit aussi violent que la danse des nègres. La plupart des danseurs ôtent leur veste et leur chemise; et au bout d’une heure, les vêtements des femmes sont trempés et ruisselants” [I do not believe there is in the world, one exercise, without any exception, that is as violent as the dance of Negroes. Some of the dancers take off their vest and their shirt; and in about an hour, the women’s clothes are dripping wet] (216).<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> De Hauranne undermines cultural elements that are typically Cuban, judging them with European criteria. Music, dance and cooking suffer the bulk of his criticism. On music and dance he wrote the following: “La musique écorchait nos airs à la mode en leur donnant une allure sautillante et sauvage....Cet air singulier, écrit sur une courte gamme, comme pour un instrument barbare, surprend d’abord l’oreille, qui s’abandonne ensuite avec une sorte de charme à ces modulations monotones. C’est un balancement et un piétinement plutôt qu’une valse, et elle ne ressemble guère aux orageux tourbillons de nos salles de bal. Les couples danseurs, au lieu de rouler avec une vélocité étourdissante, se dandinent nonchalamment en se tenant embrassés face à face et sans presque bouger.” [The music adopted some of our tunes that were in style by giving them a hopping and savage beat... That particular tune, written on a short measure, as for a barbaric instrument, shocks the ear first. Then, the ear yields to the charm of those monotonous modulations. It is a rocking and a stamping rather than a waltz, and it does not look anything like the stormy whirlwinds of our ballrooms. The dancing couples, instead of rolling with a dashing speed, swing nonchalantly and remain embraced face to face, hardly moving].

<sup>82</sup> In the same section, De Cassagnac describes the ritualistic dance of a woman in a trance-like state. However, the traveler observing the idea with just the concept of dance in mind uses that snapshot as characteristic of dance of Negroes. He makes other remarks that highlight his shock, as well as the meticulous nature of his observations, describing a wide array of dance moves performed during a ball. Again, he generalizes those moves as characteristic of all individual dances performed by Negroes, stating: “Chacun se cambre, se renverse, se penche, se tord, parle, chante, hurle, pour son compte exclusif et personnel” [each person arches himself, reverses, bends, twists, speaks, sings, hurls on his own] (216).

#### **4.1.5 Cuba's Ethnic Panorama in the Diaries: Expressing Otherness**

The travelers' documented journeys focused on Cuba's Other: Black men/women, Creoles, Chinese, Coolies, Monteros. This encounter is mitigated between elements of fascination and fear: fascination with the mysterious, the beautiful, the uncouth, the "savage;" fear of the unknown. Expressing Otherness, in this sense, the travelers strive to convince the reader by presenting their opinions as facts, by alluding to prior racial theories or by relying on comparisons to buttress their arguments.

##### **4.1.5.1 People of Color: Understanding Racial Dynamics Between Cuba and the United States; De Hauranne's Perspective**

The travelers conceptualize people of color from the standpoint of differentiation. Duvergier de Hauranne, for instance, emphasizes a discourse based on race and class through an overview of the psychosocial components of different ethnic groups. His racial discourse, which appears convoluted at first, gives a new dimension to the phrase "people of color," as well as the term "Creole." De Hauranne's initial comments on race are realized while he was traveling aboard a wagon. Comparing the racial dynamics in Cuba to those in the United States, he quickly reveals his confusion on such matters, stating: "Nous ne sommes plus aux États-Unis, dans le pays de l'égalité forcée, et celui dont la bourse est légère ne se croit pas humilié pour prendre la seconde classe. Les nègres et les gens de couleur y sont d'ailleurs relegués par l'usage" [We are no longer in the United States, in the country of forced equality, and the person with insufficient money does not feel humiliated to take second class. The Negroes and the people of color

are assigned second class based on custom] (620). The reader has to understand here that De Hauranne's observations may be limited spatially and temporally.<sup>83</sup> While calling the United States a country of "forced equality" may be accurate, to state that "celui dont la bourse est légère ne se croit pas humilié pour prendre la seconde classe," [the person with insufficient money does not feel humiliated by traveling second class] is a misrepresentation of the facts, changing the dynamics from race/color constructs to a class issue: in the 19<sup>th</sup> century United States, color was the determinant of social status, while money could purchase status in Cuba (620).

De Hauranne proceeds with an analysis of the traits characteristic of Whites and people of color, transposing the discourse to Cuban soil, questioning whether "le sang blanc tout seule coule dans les veines de mes voisins" [only white blood runs in my neighbor's veins] (621). He underlines the following characteristics of people of color, which emphasize both the effects of the tropical sun as well as the mixture of their blood with that of Africans and natives: "ils ont pour la plupart le teint pâle et noirâtre, d'un brun sans reflets, les yeux sombres pour des blancs, la bouche large et épaisse, les pommettes osseuses, les cheveux droits, noirs et plats" [the majority have a pale and blackish complexion, a dark-complexion without reflection, their eyes are dark for white people, their mouth, large and thick, their cheekbones are bony and their hair straight, black and flat] (621). In De Hauranne's depiction, characteristics of the Negro race are

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<sup>83</sup> This is further explained in his work titled *Huit mois en Amérique-Lettres et notes de voyage* (1864-1865). This diary deals with his visit to the North of the United States. Inscribed in those letters are his impressions concerning Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War, impressions drafted in a hurry, due to the deficiency of the analysis of the political situation, which reveals nothing apparently visionary. His encounter with certain pro-abolitionists in the North, as well as picturesque descriptions of New York and Central Park, are noteworthy.

predominant in the natives, with the focus on cheekbones, shape of lips and hair texture. This leads De Hauranne to question the racial components of the people of Cuba: “Est-ce le sang africain mêlé en dose infinitesimale à la race cubaine? Est-ce, comme on le dit, un ancien mélange de sang indien? [Is it African blood mixed infinitely with the Cuban race? Is it, as they say, an old mixture of Indian blood?] (621).

The author refrains from giving direct answers to those questions. However, his analysis does imply the conflicts that result from such mixtures. He uses the illegitimacy of the Cuban Creole to stress this point. However, once in the colony, legitimate or illegitimate passion and economic interests generate all sorts of unions between:

des familles espagnoles qui ont embrassé les sentimens [sic] et les intérêts de leur patrie nouvelle, des Américains, des Allemands, tout à fait transformés en méridionaux, des Français enfin qui, malgré l'ordre d'exil prononcé contre eux autrefois par les Espagnols, ont déjà fait souche dans l'aristocratie territoriale de la colonie.

[Spanish families who have embraced the sentiments and the interest of their new country, some Americans, Germans, totally transformed into Southern folks, some French, finally, who, in spite of the order of exile pronounced against them by the Spaniards a long time ago, have already planted their stomps in the territorial aristocracy of the colony] (621).

Concluding his observations on the people of color, De Hauranne focuses on a particularly savage looking and nameless woman, identifiable only through her physical traits: “Aux yeux durs et farouches, d'une forte charpente, avec une peau d'un brun fauve, qui me rappelle certaines beautés mexicaines admirées dans le monde parisien” [Harsh and fierce eyes, of a strong frame, with a fawn-colored dark skin, which reminds me of some Mexican beauties admired in Paris] (621). Although that type of woman is admired in some circles in Paris, as the traveler points out, he does not quite accept her because she is associated with the savage, the brutal, the strange, a type totally alien from her

European counterpart. Describing that specific woman, however, De Hauranne goes one step further: he differentiates between that woman and the Negro type. The Negro is also savage; however, there is a difference from the standpoint of the theory of humor: “Il n’y a rien dans son visage de l’enfantine bonne humeur du nègre” [Absent in her countenance is the childish good humor of the Negro] (621).<sup>84</sup> On the contrary, he notices “un je ne sais quoi de sauvage et de brutal.” She is a *strange creature*, “avec ses mouvemens [sic] violens [sic], ses regards fixes, ses gestes impétueux et l’animation étourdissante de son langage, [elle] est aussi éloignée du type européen et moderne de la femme que la louve sauvage est différente de la paresseuse levrette d’appartement” [with her violent movements, her fixed looks, her impetuous gestures and the dizzying animation of her language, [she] is as far away from the modern and European type of woman as the wild wolf is different from the lazy domestic fox].

In this depiction of a “native,” De Hauranne focuses on the characteristics that deepen the gap between that woman and those of European descent. People of color, as is often the case in the diaries, are described with characteristics that emphasize their inferiority. Through their movements, physiognomy and passion, people of color are relegated to the same level as animals. From that perspective, the Other, as Pedro Laín Entralgo puts it, is depicted from the standpoint of pathology; the Other represents an instrument for the advancement of certain ideas (220). In that sense, the term *people of color*, usually employed to identify Mulattos and “Natives” in the diaries, is synonymous with *nègres* because both groups are depicted with similar psychological aspirations:

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<sup>84</sup> Observe here that De Hauranne is not being indulgent towards Blacks. The same phrase “childish good humor of the Negro, is a code word to suggest his character is atrophied (Quatrefages 188), thereby the necessity for him to be shaped, rehabilitated by the White man.

people with the basest of instincts, unruly and uncontrollable in their desires: “Ils ne connaissent pas de milieu entre un lourd sommeil et un dévergondage extravagant de vie animale” [They do not know the difference between heavy sleep and the uncontrolled extravagance of animal life] (De Hauranne 625). Gobineau, in *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines*, echoes De Hauranne's ideas in his depiction of the Negro type:

...dans l'avidité même de ses sensations, se trouve le cachet frappant de son infériorité. Tous les aliments lui sont bons, aucun ne le dégoûte, aucun ne le repousse. Ce qu'il souhaite c'est manger, manger avec excès, avec fureur; il n'y a pas de répugnante charogne indigne de s'engloutir dans son estomac. Il en est de même pour les odeurs, et sa sensualité s'accommode non seulement des plus grossières, mais des plus odieuses.

[...in the very strength of the sensations, is found the dazzling seal of his inferiority. All types of food are pleasing to him, none displeases him; he does not reject anything. His only wish is to eat, eat excessively, furiously; there is no repulsive fetid mess, which does not end up in his stomach. The same goes for smell, and his sensuality not only accommodates the most primitive, but also the most loathsome] (205).

This animalistic nature is manifested in their dance, generally slow and sensuous, and by their overall lascivious and lazy nature. The basest elements of nature are appealing to them: they are enemies of silence, cannot stand meditation, and anything reminiscent of the jungle attracts them.<sup>85</sup> Gobineau continues with more generalizations, alluding to the Negro's criminal instinct, as well as his complete disregard for his own life and that of others: “Enfin il tient également peu à sa vie et à celle d'autrui; il tue volontiers pour tuer, et cette machine humaine, si facile à émouvoir, est, devant la souffrance, ou d'une lâcheté qui se réfugie volontiers dans la mort, ou d'une impossibilité monstrueuse” [In the end, he has little regard for his life as well as those of others; he kills for the sake of killing, and this human machine, so emotive, is, when confronting suffering, either very coward

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<sup>85</sup> For specific references in the diaries see De Cassagnac (172); De Hauranne (620-22) and even Massé (152-178) on the characteristics of people of color.



by voluntarily yielding to death, or of a monstrous impossibility] (206). This would explain why the slaves committed atrocities against their masters or why some of them even committed suicides. Massé and Ampère write that they did not witness suicides among the slaves, although Ampère confesses that such occurrences are plausible. However, in an effort to prove that the slaves were happy in the Antilles, De Cassagnac writes that they did not believe in committing suicide (344).

#### **4.1.6.1 “Otherizing” Blacks**

In the diaries, the travelers attempt to propose a “scientific” perspective of the different categories of blacks. There is also a fascination with their physiognomy, which hinges upon the need to demonstrate their inferiority, and is based on pigmentation or the shape of certain body parts. Negative images associated with their pigmentation had already reached a plateau in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In fact, justification of the representation of Black as an accursed race goes back to the Biblical literature with the myth of Cham/Ham, Noah’s son. From that myth, stereotypes associated with the shade of black, such as the legend of the black devil, King Gaspar, one of the three Magi in the Bible, or the Priest John of Ethiopia, connote collective images of Africa as an obscure continent. Literature feeds on the negative stereotypes, as burlesque descriptions of Blacks abound in the literature of the Golden Age. In Spanish literature, one only has to turn to some of the satirical works of Don Francisco de Quevedo (1580-1645), Lope de Vega (1562-1635), Luis de Góngora (1561-1627), Lope de Rueda (d.1565), and Luis Quiñones de Benavente (1589?-1651) for caricatures of blacks, generally described as hideous, evil

and excessively dense.<sup>86</sup> In the diaries, the travelers follow a similar line of thinking. Those ideas, coupled with the pseudoscientific theories concerning “Blackness” greatly influenced the conceptualization of Blacks in 19<sup>th</sup> century Cuba.

#### 4.1.6.2 Massé’s ‘Scientific’ Conceptualization of Blacks

Massé, in particular, endeavors to deal with the diversity that exists among Blacks. His representation, therefore, revises some of the theories on different traits of the three main racial groups, while he also proposes a divergent perspective based on his own observations. Massé describes twenty different types of Africans based on their countries of origin, physical and emotional traits.<sup>87</sup> One can deduce that the slave traders were well aware of those traits, and they exploited them in order to obtain the maximum success during the triangular trade and throughout the establishment of the slavery machine. This

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<sup>86</sup> Mentioned here are just a few of the writers that contributed to the dissemination of pejorative images of blacks in Spanish literature, see Mónica Mansour, *La poesía negrista* (1973).

<sup>87</sup> Massé describes twenty different ethnic groups, each type with its own physical characteristics, as well as personality traits, information undoubtedly found in earlier scientific/anthropological studies, as well as in travelogues from Africa. He describes, among others, the Foulahs, Lucumis and the Congos that are believed to be among the main tribes representing Africa in Cuba (332).

explains one of the reasons that the slaves were so meticulously separated by tribe and dialect, and scattered throughout different parts of the New World.<sup>88</sup>

#### **4.1.6.3 Massé, Polarizing Black Women: Beauty, Desire and Ostracism**

The Black woman, like her Creole counterpart, occupies a central role in the travelogues. Away from home and the restrictions that their social class may have imposed on them, the travelers reveal a great deal about their personalities, their repressed sexual desires, as well as their preference for certain types of women. Depicting the Black woman, the travelers unveil their biases, their fears as well as their fascination, as they explore a certain casuistry of love, desire and attraction. Through the travelers' representations, one can observe the schizophrenia that results from biases against the Other. The Black woman is either located at the beginning or at the end of the beauty continuum; her appreciation depends on the travelers' attitudes.

Massé describes Black women from the standpoint of polarization, showing preferences and pity towards those he has judged beautiful, while ostracizing those he has judged repugnant. His depiction originates from one of the strangest places, a barracoon, which we will equate to a strip show for voyeurs in this context, due to the ideas that

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<sup>88</sup>De Cassagnac provides examples of "civilizable Negroes;" by civilizable, one has to understand Negroes that are docile, apt at receiving instruction and adopting the way of white folks. In literary types, the hero of Aphra Behn's (1640-1689) *Oroonoko, or the History of the Royal Slave* (1977), edited with notes and glossary by K.A. Sey, prior to adopting the lifestyle of moroons, is a typical example. Granier de Cassagnac comments: "Ainsi le nègre éthiopien, le nègre abyssinien, en général le nègre qui habite le nord de l'Afrique, est plus civilisable que le nègre qui habite le sud, depuis la rive gauche du Sénégal. En outre, il est bien important de ne pas confondre les Maures et les nègres; Othello est un Maure, ou More, comme on l'écrivait au dix-huitième siècle, mais il n'est pas un nègre" [The Ethiopian Negro, the Abyssinian Negro, in general the Negro that lives in the north of Africa, is more civilizable than the Negro that lives in the south, from the left Coast of Senegal. In addition, it is very important to avoid the confusion between Moors and Negroes. Othello is a Moor (English does not allow the orthographic changes De Cassagnac stresses here); he is not a Negro] (150).

place evoked in the minds of Massé and his friend, B.<sup>89</sup> Massé alludes to the major differences between his taste in women and that of his friend. He observes that “nous étions curieux de trouver quelque femme passable” [we were curious to find some acceptable] (176). He goes further to say “passable n’était pourtant plus le mot pour B..., mais il l’était encore pour moi. Je ne pouvais pas m’imaginer qu’une femme put être si noire et pourtant si jolie” [acceptable was, nevertheless, not the word for B..., but it was for me. I couldn’t imagine that a woman could have been so Black yet so beautiful] (176).

Massé continues with opinions that reveal his attitude towards dark skin, which he codifies as “enveloppe repoussante,” [repulsive envelope], as well as revealing an alteration of his ideology as a result of the trip. Surprise is the operative leitmotiv as he describes his initial sentiment, which is one of disgust: “D’ailleurs la surprise qu’on doit éprouver en trouvant quelquefois un coeur très-sensible, sous cette enveloppe d’abord repoussante, une pureté de formes et de contours assez générale, des traits qui ne sont pas aussi communément laids qu’on se le figure en Europe” [First, the surprise that one must feel finding a sensitive heart, under that disgusting cloak, a purity of forms and curves rather general, some attributes that are not commonly as hideous as they are thought of in Europe] (177). Suddenly enlightened as a result of his trip, Massé attempts to demystify the racial stigmas that loom over the African race in the classical treatises of

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<sup>89</sup> Massé describes a beautiful black woman stating: “B me fit remarquer une négresse très petite et très-bien faite qui était infatigable a la danse...une sueur abondante ruisselait de tout son corps, et son ardeur ne se ralentissait point....Ses gardiens blancs ne lui défendaient pas cet excès qui la rendait heureuse; mais de temps en temps ils passaient un mouchoir sur ses membres pour essuyer la sueur” [B. Pointed out a Negro woman, who is petite with a nice physique, who was dancing tirelessly... an abundant sweat ran down her entire body, and her zeal did not let up; her white masters did not forbid her that excess, which made her happy. From time to time, they would apply a handkerchief all over her body to wipe out the sweat] (177). Masse spends more time later graphically describing parts of her anatomy such as cheeks and breasts (180).

anthropology. His allusion to Lavater suggests that he was familiar with the previous efforts made to classify the Negro race. He observes:

On s'est fait en Europe un type banal de la race africaine, et depuis les gens du monde les plus ignorans [sic] jusqu'aux disciples de Lavater les plus subtils, on se représente tout animal noir de notre espèce avec un nez épaté, de grosses lèvres, des jambes grêles et mal tournées, de vilains pieds, et un angle facial très obtus, signe de stupidité native.

[In Europe, there has been a conventional representation of the African race, and from the most ignorant people in the world to the most refined disciples of Lavater, every black animal of our [human] species is represented with a large nose, heavy lips, bow-legged, atrocious-looking feet, and a very obtuse facial angle, a sign of naïve stupidity]. (177)

Massé, based on the different types of women he has found in Cuba, is striving to convince the reader of the limited scope of the characteristics delineated above. He refutes the classification system based on facial angle cited by Quatrefages (178). He comments: "Eh bien, tous les nègres n'ont pas le nez épaté, ni des lèvres si épaisses; presque tous ont la jambe comme nous, quand l'excès de travail et de la misère n'a pas réduit leur corps aux formes d'une squelette" [well, every Black person does not have a huge nose or thick lips; almost all of them have legs like ours, when the excess of work and misery does not reduce their body to the shapes of a skeleton] (177). With those descriptions, Massé endeavors to keep the promise of objectivity and his identification with the human family, especially with the comments on the similarity between both European and Black bodies, when excessive labor as well as misery has had the same impact on them. From a narrative standpoint, however, he is preparing us for a shift in his attitude. Exploring the old topos "black but beautiful," even more intimate details concerning Massé's preferences are revealed.

#### 4.1.6.4 Black but Beautiful

It is through Massé's friend, B., that we have a more complete representation of the Black woman. Massé, displaying his transparency as a narrator, even alludes to an incident in which he was accused as a racist, or as he puts it, "un blanc-malhonnête" [a white man of bad faith] (182). B. reveals his attraction for a woman with a "unified complexion" instead of "ces couleurs indécises, ressemblant à quelque chose de sale qui est sur la figure, et qu'on voudrait enlever" [those in-between colors, resembling something dirty which is on the face, which one would wish to remove] (183). Massé then alludes to the reasons (i.e., moral slackness and sexual avidity) that white men like his friend find such women attractive.

Speaking from personal experience, Massé observes: "D'ailleurs, c'est la connaissance même que j'ai de ces sortes de femmes si chères à quelques blancs, c'est leur caractère moral, leur avidité..." [Furthermore, it is the very knowledge I have of those types of women, so dear to some white men, for their moral character, their avidity...] (183). Massé, like his friend, depicts a type of Black women, "women with small feet," who would even incite the envy of European women: "il est même des femmes qui, par la petitesse de leur pied feraient envie a plus d'une Française" [there even are some of those women, who, because of the small size of their feet, would incite the envy of more than one French woman] (177).

In spite of confessions of natural beauty on the part of the Black woman, the reader must be mindful of instances in which Massé uses a codified language, which

objectifies the women, placing them in a subaltern position, revealing Massé's subtle bigotry and misogyny. The Black woman's hair, for instance, Massé describes as "la laine rebelle," [rebellious wool], which he admonishes his European women never to imitate.<sup>90</sup> However, through Massé's friend, B., we re-visit the old topos "black but beautiful," explored in *Song of Songs*, among other old texts.<sup>91</sup> B. seems to have had strong physical attractions towards a Black woman. In Massé's comments is unveiled a certain casuistry of love, perhaps the rationalization for interracial love. According to Massé, interracial unions are born out of pity by the white man for the colored woman (281). He expands on this idea later during a visit to a baracon with his friend, B. Observing the miserable conditions of the Black men and women, the two travelers leave the realities at hand and propose an interesting study of the problematics of interracial unions. In a poem which may be entitled "Ode to the Black Woman," B. intimates his yearnings, alluding to different ways he would reward the woman, should she surrender herself. The characterization reveals the traveler's fascination towards the woman as well as his vision of what the perfect type should look like. Suggesting how he would adorn her to make her look perfect, Massé implies that with moderate alterations, clad with the appropriate attire, color could be secondary. He portrays the woman as a typical African sculpture:

Je vous donnerais une jolie robe, de jolis pendans [sic] d'oreilles car vous êtes femme. Je ferais garnir en or, pour parer vos cheveux, ce dard d'orc épée qui vous rappellerait toujours la patrie, mais à condition que vos cheveux ne seraient jamais bien longs, car ils ne sont pas beaux les cheveux d'une négresse quand ils sont longs. Je songerais peu à votre couleur...

[I would give you a nice dress, some beautiful earrings because you are a woman. I would have you decked in gold, to decorate your hair, this bit of gold which

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<sup>90</sup> Quatrefages uses the same phrase to depict black hair (198).

<sup>91</sup> *Song of Songs* 1:5

would always remind you of your homeland, as long as your hair would remain short, for long hair does not look good on a Negro woman. I would only care a little bit about your color...]. (184)

Here, Massé never uses the terms “braids” or “locks” to describe the Black woman’s hair. However, if we remember that earlier he described it as “dirty liane” and “savage liane,” it may be safe to deduce that he might have been describing something similar to locks of hair.<sup>92</sup> While the woman’s hair is described as “savage liane,” the typical male model is depicted as “grain de poivre” (grain of pepper), according to Quatrefages (182). The traveler’s attitude goes beyond reporting his observations because biases formed at home have found their way into the narration, confirming the idea that factors beyond the narrator’s control often permeate the text, making it all the more difficult for the narrator to reach the coveted “objectivity” he promises in the prologue.

#### 4.1.6.5 De Hauranne’s Treatment of the Theme “Black but Beautiful”

De Hauranne explores the theme “black but beautiful” when he depicts “Deux jeunes négresses fort élégantes. “Ces jeunes filles ont, ne vous en déplaise, une beauté piquante et naïve que ne gâte en rien cette peau sombre, dont la couleur est si admirable au soleil des tropiques” [Two rather elegant Negro girls. Those young girls obviously have a striking and naïve beauty which their dark skin does not spoil, whose color is so admirable under the tropical sun] (863). Expressing the women’s surprising beauty *in spite* of their dark skin, De Hauranne is subtly inserting his biases towards the Black females, using his comments on their fair skin as a mask to disguise his prejudice. Later,

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<sup>92</sup> This focus on hair may be at the root of stereotypes such as “good hair” vs. “bad hair” still in use.



focusing on one of the women, he states: “Elle est charmante en dépit de sa peau noire, lorsqu’elle se cambre en portant dans ses bras le dernier-né de la maison, un petit blondin aux joues roses dont les petites mains caressantes s’enroulent autour de son cou d’ébène” [She is charming in spite of her black skin, when she bends while carrying in her arms the last born of the house, a little blond boy with rosy cheeks whose small caressing hands are wrapped around her ebony neck] (863).

De Hauranne’s description of the girl is also revelatory of his mental processes, his attitude towards dark-skinned people, and, more specifically, his attitude towards that beautiful young Black girl. Careful attention must be paid to the context of the description, (De Hauranne was dining at L’hôtel Lassus, probably located in the Province of Pinar del Río), as well as the details the author provides, which suggests that those observations are not coincidental. Details concerning the shape of the girl’s leg, the girl carrying the last born of the house, reveal a certain familiarity with the young woman and her owner. In addition, details about the baby she is caring for, “un petit blondin aux joues roses dont les petites mains caressantes s’enroulent autour de son cou d’ébène,” indicate not only the picturesque, the contrast between black and white skin, but also magnify the author’s keen sense of observation and probably his hidden attraction towards the girl.

De Hauranne’s descriptions reveal other attributes that make that girl desirable in spite of her black skin. He emphasizes “ses traits fins et réguliers, ses yeux doux et pénétrants, sa bouche un peu grande, mais souriante un peu dessinée. Des anneaux d’or pendent à ses oreilles et encadrent l’ovale presque italien de sa jolie tête” [her fine and regular features, her sweet and penetrating eyes, her mouth a little wide but smiling and

traced a little; gold earrings hang on her ears and frame the almost Italianate oval of her beautiful head] (863). Emphasizing “l’ovale italien” is almost superfluous, since De Hauranne has already described that young girl as one with an “air de bonne grâce et noblesse que pourrait envier plus d’une belle dame,” [aura of good grace and nobility which more than one beautiful lady could have envied], all of which imply that she is closer to the ideal type, the European type, therefore, the object of De Hauranne’s attraction.

#### **4.1.6.6 Massé and the Black Woman: A Caricature**

Enunciating his initial encounter with the Other in Cuba, and in the middle of the confusion and feelings of alienation associated with the arrival in a foreign place, Massé reflects on the circumventing events and reproduces “snapshots” of women going about their daily routine. His depiction emphasizes the women’s race, their inner feelings and outer anatomy. Massé’s image of the Black woman, which has been formed a priori, is suggested in the allusions he makes, in order to give the reader a clear mental picture of those women: they constitute vestiges of the past. Fittingly, the women he describes in La Plaza Vieja [the Old Square] are older women, those towards whom he would be expected to be sympathetic because their looks are perhaps due to the ravages of age and mistreatment over the years. That he might have stumbled upon them by accident is another issue. However, his description is perhaps characteristic of his chauvinism. Those women are associated with the monstrous: their physical shapes are exaggerated, emphasizing the pathological. Here is a portrait of La Plaza Vieja, as Massé depicts the women amidst the smell of *tasajo*. Massé provides the depiction of a familiar scene,

overshadowed with old stereotypes related to Black women: “De vieilles négresses, marchandes d’oeufs ou de viande m’étonnèrent par leur obésité excessive, par des jambes et des bras tels que de ma vie je n’avais rien vu de pareil” [Some old Negro women, vendors of eggs or meat, surprised me by their excessive obesity, as well as legs and arms, the likes of which I have never seen in my life] (70).

He concludes his portrayal of the women with an allusion to Bernardin de Saint-Pierre’s (1734-1814) *Harmonies de la Nature* (1815), a satire of the physiognomy of Blacks: “...le coco simple, dépouillé de son caire, offert avec ses trois trous une parfaite ressemblance avec une tête de nègre; et que celui des Maldives, qui est double, a une ressemblance encore plus frappante avec les parties antérieures et postérieures d’une négresse à sa bifurcation” [the simple coconut fruit, when rid of its skin, offers, with its three holes, the most perfect resemblance to the head of the Negro; and the coconut of Maldives, which is double, has another striking resemblance with the anterior and posterior parts of a Negro woman when she bifurcates] (71). What a sense of observation! Massé’s mind seems to be wandering in dangerous territories, providing that he has stated his lack of attraction towards Black women. Does his sense of observation stem from mere curiosity or are there other deeper dynamics at hand? Massé’s observations seem to suggest that he is doing more than presenting a caricature of the Black woman. Those details indicate a certain fascination on his part, which has led him to observe different types of women until he finds he is strongly attracted to them. Even when that is achieved, that desire has been repressed, and is channeled by means of satire, filled with the love/hate relationship that is expressed through mixed compliments. That is why the same Massé, who finds humor in Bernardin de Saint-Pierre’s description, also finds

himself appreciating the physical assets of other Black women later during a visit to barracoon # 7 with B. However, those women are much younger, and Massé and his friend, probably blinded by lust, are ignorant of the fact that those women will soon be transformed into the older ones he so disdainfully has described above. Indeed Black bodies, the bodies of men and women, receive particular attention in the diaries.

#### **4.1.6.7 Black Bodies: Types**

The travelers express a certain level of fascination towards the body, describing Black bodies in particular from the perspective of stereotypes they brought to Cuba with them. In the chapter entitled “*Les baigneuses*” [The Bathers], Massé observes beauty, symmetry of form, naked or nude bodies that echo images of the *Venus de Medicis* (174). De Hauranne makes similar observations concerning Black women in Martinique. He describes their well-defined musculature, their pleasing looks, in spite of their Black skin and their similarities to beasts: “*Les négresses sont plus fortes et plus grandes: elles ont la poitrine charnue, les bras musculeux, la stature virile. Malgré leur peau noire et leurs figures un peu bestiales, il y en a qui sont superbes à voir dans le désordre de leur accoutrement sauvage et de leur demi-nudité.*” [The Negro women are even bigger and stronger: their chest is busty; they have well-defined muscles in the arms, and manly frame. In spite of their dark skin and their somewhat beastly look, some of them are superb to gaze at due to the disorder of their savage outfits and their semi-nudity] (883).

Black males, curiously, do not escape the travelers’ scrutiny. De Hauranne’s allusion to the “virile” frame of the Negro women may be viewed as a preamble to what Ampère will say later on the Negro males’ athleticism. Whether the statements are made

due to interests in physiognomy or a timid eroticism, the travelers' statements are very suggestive. While Ampère sees ebony statues, De Hauranne focuses on the Negroes' musculature, their naked legs and robust pectoral muscles. He describes them as "grands gaillards athlétiques aux jambes nues, vêtus de caleçons de toile et de chemises débraillées qui laissent voir leurs poitrines musculeuses, se promènent en fumant leurs cigars et m'importunent de leur offres de service" [athletic giants with naked legs, wearing shorts and unbuttoned shirts, which let one see their muscular chests, are walking by smoking their cigars and bothering me by offering their service] (631).

During a visit to one of the barracoons, Massé makes some observations which suggest that, far from being exclusively a scientific mind, he was a man of flesh and blood who traveled with some repressed sexual desires. Observing Black slaves forced to dance in order to appear happy, Massé focuses on their movements, as well as emotional states. Coming from a man who has described those women as just "passable" earlier, his focus on those dancers' "grace, tenderness and 'coquetterie'" seems to suggest a degree of change in Massé's opinion. The sentiment of empathy he expresses may be due to a certain level of familiarity with Blacks or because his true self is coming out, preventing him from further hiding his excitement. However, a different reading of his observations would suggest that Massé is using differentiation to pit Ladinas, closer to the European model of perfection, against other women who have just arrived from Africa.<sup>93</sup> He affirms: "J'ai vu quelquefois avec attendrissement des négresses ladinas prendre part aux danses et aux chants de leurs compatriotes qui arrivaient d'Afrique. La coquetterie des

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<sup>93</sup> The word *ladino* is used to refer to a nearly extinct Romance language, which came from medieval Spanish, widely spoken by Sephardic Jews, especially in the Balkans, Turkey and the Near East. In Central America, it is used to refer to a Spanish-speaking or acculturated Indian or a mestizo.

premières, armée des graces que donne le costume européen, contrastait avec celle des autres, dont les atours n'étaient dus qu'à la simple nature..." [I have sometimes seen with tenderness some 'ladina' women participate in the dances and chants of their compatriots who come from Africa. I have noticed the charm of the first, armed with the gracefulness that the European custom gives, contrasted with that of the others, whose skills have been simply granted by Nature] (350).

Here Massé is combining two of the processes, differentiation between two groups of Africans as well as polarization, elevating the European culture by associating it with grace and charm, while he is suggesting that the skills of the African women are due to the good grace of Nature. In this sense, if black women here charm the author, it is due to projection: he sees in them the European type. Massé goes further as to romanticize, reminiscing about the giant Baobab tree as he observes those women. This suggests that his ideas have been formed a priori and have never escaped him, as he projects sentiments of happiness that those dancing women used to experience in Africa; in turn, this reveals an attempt by Massé to reiterate the topos of the happy slaves. Massé does not take long to realize that his conclusions are premature. He states: "Mais qu'on ne s'y trompe pas; ces danses, le plus souvent, sont forcées; cette joie est ordonnée; et l'un des premiers travaux imposés à l'esclave c'est de paraître gai, pour être plus chèrement vendu" [But let us not delude ourselves: those dances, most of the time, are forced; that joy is mandated, and one of the first tasks imposed on the slave is that of looking happy, in order to be sold for an exorbitant price] (338). This is proving that he understands that the slaves are performing against their will in order to please their masters, whose aim was to increase the slaves' value prior to their sale.

#### 4.1.6.8 Granier de Cassagnac: Polarizing from the Standpoint of Pathology

Among the travelers, Granier de Cassagnac, reluctant or not, was never as “indulgent” towards Blacks as Massé and De Hauranne. In fact, he finds Blacks totally repulsive, physically and morally. The Negro specter, “ne possède pas les conditions qui font la beauté physique ou le charme moral, aux yeux des blancs; il est ridicule ou effrayant; il fait rire ou il fait trembler” [does not meet the prerequisites for what constitutes physical beauty or moral charm through the eyes of the white man; he (the Negro) is either ridiculous or frightening; he either makes one laugh or makes one tremble] (229). Not only are Negroes hideous physically and morally, they have other attributes that make them repulsive. De Cassagnac mentions offensive body odor as generic to Negroes, a trait which brings them close to their Jewish counterpart:

La race juive, qui s’est toujours conservée pure, est physiquement douée, comme on sait, d’un montant assez prononcé; mais ce montant se trouve porté, dans la race nègre, à un degré de développement qui constitue, pour les blancs, une véritable infirmité naturelle. Il n’est pas possible de passer près d’un nègre, même à dix pas, sans être saisi par son odeur, une odeur chaude, musquée et nauséabonde..., à laquelle tous les bains du monde ne font rien [The Jewish race, which has always kept itself pure, (not intermingling with other races), is physically marked, as we know, of a strong amount of smell; but that amount, in the Negro race, has reached such a high degree of development that it represents for white men a veritable natural infirmity. It is not possible for one to pass even ten steps away from a Negro, without being stricken by his smell, a hot musky and nauseating smell...to which not all the baths in the world can eliminate] (228).

De Cassagnac’s statements are compelling here, considering that he uses generalizations to buttress his argument. Unlike the other travelers who differentiate between the various types of Negroes, De Cassagnac alludes to the Negro in general, seen not just by an individual, but through the “eyes of white men.” Such views, which existed

centuries before De Cassagnac spoused them, undoubtedly influence the representation of Blacks in the New World. In American Literature, for instance, one finds this representation in Harriet Beecher Stowe's (1811-1896) *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), as well as Mark Twain's (1835-1910) humorous depiction of Negroes in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885), and *Puddn' Head Wilson* (1893-1894). These stereotypical conceptualizations of buffoon Blacks, such representations were also replicated in Vaudeville acts and minstrel shows, giving a negative view of an entire race, a perspective that many have perpetuated through the years.

#### **4.1.6.9 Animalization of Blacks**

Animalization, or anthropomorphism, is used by all the travelers to describe the Other. This is accomplished in two ways: characteristics of animals are associated with people of color, or they are contextualized in such ways as to be relegated to the status of animals/beasts. This is common in the description of men, children and women. For instance, De Hauranne, describing an old slave, attributes, although unstated, the characteristics of a monkey to the man. The most fascinating part of the description is when he typifies the slave who has turned into an invalid as a result of numerous years of arduous labor. He describes: "Un vieux nègre tout cassé sort d'une étroite ouverture en se trainant sur les genoux et les mains. C'est l'unique habitant de cette étrange demeure, un vieil esclave invalide qui a le goût de la solitude et qui a préféré cette retraite à la compagnie de ses frères" [An old man all broken up comes out of a narrow opening crawling on his knees and hands. He is the unique inhabitant of that strange dwelling, an invalid slave with a penchant for solitude, and one who has preferred that solitary retreat



rather than the company of his brothers] (642). He later alludes to that same old man as a patriarch, one whom the other slaves venerate, and a man with a very strong sense of self-worth, in spite of the crippled condition in which he finds himself (343). This is very suggestive from the standpoint of De Hauranne's perception of the old man, who perhaps symbolizes one of the elders in African folktales. Earlier, without any ambiguities, he describes his *calesero negro* as "Juché comme un singe ou comme un chien savant, retant ma valise des genoux et des coudes, et talonnant sa bête avec ardeur" [hunched over like a monkey or a smart dog, holding my bags with his knees and elbows, leading his horse with great zeal] (632).

De Cassagnac provides a similar representation of a *calesero negro*. He focuses on the man's idiocy and his blackness, and equates him to a mule: "Les postillons de La Havane ne sont pas seulement les plus noirs et les plus galonnés du monde, ils en sont encore les plus modestes. Ces postillons n'ont qu'une seule prétention de plus que leurs mules, c'est d'entendre la parole humaine, assez du moins pour la trature à leurs quadrupèdes, sous forme de coups de caveçon" [The postillons of Havana are not only the darkest and the dumbest in the world, they are also the most modest. They have one more ambition than their mules: it is to hear the voice of a human being telling them where to go] (305). Cows from the South of France are even smarter than the *caleseros negros* in Cuba, according to De Cassagnac. He alludes to the idea that cows in the South of France are able to follow simple directions and to respond to their own names, while the *caleseros* in Cuba can only respond to directions from people telling them where to go. The curious part of De Cassagnac's depiction is that he displays more compassion towards the cows than towards the *caleseros*. One should remember that earlier he has

described the *caleseros* as the darkest and dumbest he has ever seen. Like cows in the South of France, they are trained to respond to their names as well as commands such as “anda, arrima, a la derecha, a la izquierda” lean” [walk, turn right, turn left]. While he is describing the *caleseros* as dumb, he calls the cows “douces et intelligentes bêtes” [sweet and intelligent animals] (306).

The same process of animalization is employed in the representation of children. Children are usually portrayed as walking around naked. This shocks all the travelers, who call it a barbaric practice. De Cassagnac comments that those children, although charming, are as ugly as the devil, another simile that associates evil with the color black (110). De Hauranne, however, observes them in a rather “sophisticated” environment, a nursery, which he compares to a cage. This description not only gives us an idea of the “evolution” of the slavery system at the time of De Hauranne’s visit because the children are “jailed in a nursery,” supposedly cared for while their parents are at work. Subconsciously, De Hauranne’s descriptions suggest more than he may have intended. The nursery is described as a cage “où l’on *enferme* les enfans [sic] nègres pendant que leurs parens [sic] vont à l’ouvrage. Les petits diabolins noirs se roulent tout nus dans la poussière et gambadent autour de nous en nous demandant un sou...” [where the black children are locked up while their parents are at work. The little naked black devils roll themselves in the dust and skip around us begging us for a penny] (638). In describing the nursery as a cage, De Hauranne is implying that the children are animals. Also, calling them “diabolins” [little devils] is not a term of endearment. The children are kept in bondage while their parents are at work, but no formal supervision is underway because they are able to roam around and beg.

#### 4.1.7 Havana Women: The Ravenous Creole Woman

Guicharnaud-Tollis captures the role Creole women play in travelogues as well as in 19<sup>th</sup> century Cuban letters with the following assertion:

La femme Créole a été louée, adulée, adorée, sanctifiée par tous les témoins de l'époque, sensibles à l'exotisme d'un charme tropical. Déjà, elle avait servi d'héroïne à toute une partie de la littérature romantique. De même dans l'article des moeurs, elle est associée à tous les poncifs sur la mode, la coquetterie, l'élégance. Quant au roman sentimental, dans une société à la recherche de ses propres valeurs, c'est sur elle, ses potentialités et ses vertus, qu'il fait reposer une éventuelle régénération morale de l'île.

[The Creole woman has been praised, admired, worshipped, sanctified by all the witnesses of that time who are sensitive to the exotism of tropical charm. Already, she has served as a heroine to an entire part of the romantic literature. In the *costumbrista* articles, she is associated with fashion, coquetry and elegance. In the sentimental novel, in a society in pursuit of its own values, it is upon her, her potential and her virtues that the eventual moral regeneration of the island depends.]

The representation of the Creole woman is as distinct as each of the travelers, although they concur, with the exception of De Hauranne, that nature has endowed those women with incredible beauty, which makes them the objects of the travelers' desires. However, the desire is often negotiated through certain subtleties: the reluctance on the part of the travelers to associate with these women in spite of their attraction towards them. Also, some of the travelers seem to be fixated on the women's physical attributes only, projecting onto them their own repressed sexual desires because they see in those women the paroxysm of voluptuosity. In Ampère's diary, the traveler's role as an outsider looking into an unfamiliar culture is emphasized. Although captivated by the women's beauty, the writer is tactful in his articulation thereof, for the women are represented as unattainable, ornaments that beautify the *volantes*. Ampère, with a certain degree of frustration, reflects

that “il est fâcheux seulement que l’indolence naturelle aux Créoles ne permette pas aux dames havanaises de marcher...elles ne mettent jamais pied à terre” [it is frustrating that the natural indolence of the Creoles does not allow Havana women to walk... they never set foot on the ground] (174). This is probably due to the fact that the streets were dirty. The *volantes* constitute their main means of transportation: “C’est dans ces chars que les dames vont goûter la fraîcheur du soir [It is on those chariots that the women come to taste the coolness of the night] (173). As a result, Ampère admires them from a distance, allowing us to observe his voyeuristic inclinations. His first impressions of the women aboard their *volantes* focus on how: “L’extrémité de leurs robes se rabat un peu des deux côtés de la volante...emportant deux ou trois femmes seules dont le regard vous frappe en passant, et à suivre les plis flottans de leur robe blanche aux derniers rayons du jour, en vue de la mer, à travers une allée de palmiers” [The extremity of their dresses hits on both sides of the volante...carrying two or three women alone whose looks strike one in passing as one follows the creases of their white dresses to the last rays of the sun, with the view of the ocean, through a row of palm trees] (173).

Ampère’s eyes stare and insistently follow the bottom of the unaccompanied women’s white dresses as they go by, blessing him with a stolen look, [le regard vous frappe en passant]. Later, he confesses that “les dames havanaises sont fort belles” [the women of Havana are beautiful] (174); at the heart of that beauty are “les beaux yeux des Havanaises” [the women’s beautiful eyes] (175). Reproducing the portrait of a young woman, Ampère seems to have lingered a while, staring at her, because she faces him. He comments: “une jeune fille qui a de très-beaux yeux, est assise en face de moi, dans une attitude de nonchalance, mangeant des oranges; puis elle se met à peigner ses cheveux

noirs, et finit par prendre une épingle et s'en servir en guise de cure-dent" [a woman who has beautiful eyes sits across from me while nonchalantly eating oranges. Then, she starts combing her black hair and ends up taking out a pin, which she uses as a tooth-pick] (196). This gesture can be interpreted either as the girl's lack of manner or her ingenuity. The way Ampère abruptly moves to a different topic makes one wonder why he even chooses to incorporate this episode in the narrative.

Typical in Ampère is the representation of those women confined within a certain surface, [i.e., on *volantas*, behind a type of grill (181)], while he admires them. In his description of the Tacón theatre, he observes: "*Le coup d'oeil du grand théâtre de la Havane est éblouissant. La salle est vaste.... Les loges ne sont séparées du couloir que par une sorte de grillage qui permet d'admirer les dames havanaises*" [The sight of the great theatre of Havana is dazzling. The room is huge.... The *Lodges* are only separated from the corridor by a sort of grill, *which allows one to admire the Havana women*] (italics mine) (181). "Science" and desire blend as he classifies the women as "le type espagnol, un peu plus fort et un peu moins, mais très-séduisant encore" [the Spanish type, a little stronger, but even more seductive] (181). Massé has also used this idea of "le type espagnolé." He further emphasizes the women's eyes, like his countryman, Ampère. He depicts the hypnotic effect of the Spanish women's eyes, those deep piercing eyes, filled with passion: "Si une Espagnole ouvre sur vous ses grands yeux noirs pleins d'âme et de feu, l'insensibilité, l'apathie la plus stoïque tombent à ses genoux" [If a Spanish woman opens her big dark eyes, full of soul and fire, the insensitive one, the most stoic and apathetic one would kneel in front of her] (115).

Massé diverges a bit from the “type espagnolé,” to depict somewhat a different type. He comments: “Mais toutes les Havanaises n’ont pas le corps *espagnolé* (italics his). Les femmes grandes et belles ne sont point rares; et si les unes ont toute la grace des nymphes les plus agaçantes, tous les attrait qui promettent le plus au désir, les autres étalent une dignité qui rappelle ce petit tableau de Virgile, *et vera incessu patuit Dea*” [But not all Havana women have the Spanish type body. The big and beautiful ones are not rare; and if some have all the grace of the most teasing nymphs, all the assets that make the most attractive, others display a dignity that is reminiscent of Virgil’s little painting, *and she revealed the allure of a true Goddess*] (113). That example of nobility, the graciousness typical of queens and goddesses, is found mainly in a type that Massé labels “négresses espagnoles.” Massé also differentiates between Créoles françaises and Havanaises.

#### **4.1.7.1 Créoles Françaises:**

Beginning his description, Massé reminds the reader that he has already spent a considerable amount of ink describing “les blancs réfugiés de Saint-Domingue,” making laudatory remarks on their positive influence on Cuba’s economic vibrancy. Therefore, he feels that his failure to dedicate a few lines to the women of color would be a sign of his ungratefulness. After making such conciliatory statements, he continues with a number of accusatory remarks that reveal the profession of the French Creoles, and his hatred towards all of them except Marie-Claire S. Massé explains that he is writing a testimonial to the French Creoles:

Non qu'aucune d'elles, pour trois ou quatre piastres par jour, ce qui est un peu cher, ait pris soin de ma santé; non que leur grotesque et détestable jargon ait eu pour moi l'effet de la voix des syrènes; non qu'à leur aspect j'aie senti se placer sur mes yeux ce bandeau mystérieux, admirable et nécessaire précaution de l'amour, mais parce que Marie-Claire S... une amie...

[Not that any of them, for three or four piastres a day, which is a bit excessive, has taken care of my health; not that their grotesque and detestable jargon has had the effect of the sirens on me; not that in their presence that mysterious veil, the admirable and necessary precaution for love has covered my eyes, but because of Marie-Claire S... a friend...] (281)<sup>94</sup>

Massé's depiction reveals that the French Creole work in the health field as caregivers and perform domestic duties such as that of laundry women, providing their services for "trois ou quatre piastres par jour," [three to four piastres per day], which Massé finds exorbitant. Others with economic means "achètent des pacotilles et les détaillent chez elles et les détaillent dans les rues" [purchase articles of clothing which they sell at home or on the streets] (285). His relationship with that Creole woman named Marie-Claire S. is tactfully described, without the flair that his Italian friend, B., displays, in his depiction of the Black woman to whom he was attracted. Massé's attitude towards the Other's language is underscored. As is the case with discoverers who find the native's language childish, Massé also posits the sign of inferiority on the Creole language, calling it "grotesque et detestable jargon... qui ne peut pas être lu," [grotesque and detestable jargon that is unintelligible] (286). He then illustrates its usage in the Creole love songs popular in Cuba at the time of his visit; he also attempts to provide examples through

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<sup>94</sup> See the appendix for a complete translation of that chapter on French Creole women.

explanations of Creole phrases.<sup>95</sup> Duvergier de Hauranne comments on language show more diplomacy than Massé's, although imprinted with the same metropolitan point of view. He praises the colonized who adopt the Creole language (although he classifies it as infantile), while he depicts the patois of the English colonies as a childish language with extremely annoying nasal inflexions (865). The difference may be due to the fact the English patois is unintelligible to Massé.

The Créoles françaises, according to Massé, are femmes fatales, bilingual women, lazy to the extreme, cunning, adroit seducers. Here, Massé contradicts the notion of Creole women that Guicharnaud-Tollis has alluded to earlier:

On leur fait entendre de bonne heure que plaire doit être pour elles une spéculation de l'esprit plutôt qu'un besoin du Coeur. Aussi connaissent-elles prématurément toutes les ruses de la coquetterie, toutes les ressources de la toilette, et l'on ne dirait pas qu'elles tendent leurs filets à deux mille lieues de Paris, tant elles montrent de savoir faire!

[They are taught at an early age that to please must be for them a fascination of the mind rather than a need originated from the heart. So they learn prematurely all the ruses of coquetry, everything about toiletry, and one would say they do not place their nests two thousand leagues from Paris, since so much expertise they demonstrate!]. (285)

Massé saw a web of deception even in the women's names, making one wonder about his status as an excessive Romantic. He believes: "Il n'est pas jusqu'à leurs noms qui ne soient un piège. Ce sont des Zélia, Délia, Zutmé, des Zelmire, des Zéphire, et tout ce qu'on peut imaginer de plus harmonieux en ce genre." [Even their names are traps. They are called Zelia, Delia, Zutme, Zelmire, Zephire; and anything of that harmonious sort which one can imagine] (285).

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<sup>95</sup> Massé is not unique in this sense. Michel Bosu (1786-?), visiting Cuba during the 18th century, reproduces phonetically some Creole words, with the spelling as close to French as possible. Victor Hugo (1802-1825) in *Bug-Jargal* (1896) also attempts to reproduce the language of the slaves of Saint-Domingue in that short novel.



In chapter XXXIV, entitled “Macédoine,” Massé offers other characteristics of the women of Havana. Describing those women, Massé concurs with Guicharnaud Tollis’ idea about the praise that the Creole women receive from the travelers: “...La nature n’a pas été ingrate envers les Havanaises. Elles possèdent tous les charmes des Espagnoles, avec de vivacité peut-être dans l’esprit, et plus de saillies, plus de feu dans le langage mais cette vivacité n’est pas en tout à leur avantage; elle donne à leur voix je ne sais quelles *inflexions criardes, et un ton querelleur* dont l’oreille est d’abord choquée” [...Nature has not been ungrateful towards the women of Havana. They possess all the charms of the Spanish women, with vivacity, maybe, of their spirit, with more fire in their language; but that vivacity is not always to their advantage; it gives their voices a somewhat whiny inflection as well as a quarrelsome tone] (147). Supporting his arguments, the theme is in agreement with Guicharnaud-Tollis’ idea that they are “praised, worshiped, the objects of adulation.” He alludes to other travel texts, as well as to popular music:

Malgré ce défaut, je conçois la renommée dont elles jouissent; je conçois qu’elles aient apparu à des Espagnols passionnés, comme ces nymphes marines amenées par l’imagination voluptueuse du Camoen au devant des compagnons de Gama; et que leur souvenir soit rappelé dans les chansons vulgaires qui trompent l’ennui et les peines du matelot exilé sur les vastes mers....

[In spite of that defect, I acquiesce in the reputation they enjoy; I understand why they have had the appearance of mermaids to the fascinated Spaniards, led by the voluptuous imagination of Camoens to the companions of Vasco de Gama; I understand why their memory is immortalized in those vulgar songs which alleviate the boredom and the anguish of sailors exiled on the vast oceans....] (148).<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> The author appears to be lost himself, referring to Camoens as a Spaniard.

Massé characterized the Havana women in the context of newly arrived Spaniards. The women are described as eager to please those men who constitute prizes of sorts. He characterizes them as excessively indolent, like their “Créoles françaises” counterparts, preoccupied only with their physical appearance and the desire to marry a foreigner who will support them financially (148). This, in turn, engenders, according to Massé, “une jalousie invétérée entre deux classes rivales d’Espagnols, jalousie alimentée en même temps par quelques distinctions politiques” [an inveterate jealousy among two rival classes of Spaniards; jealousy fed by some political differences] (148). As a result, racial epithets abound, as Massé also seizes the occasion to present his knowledge of a similar process in other places in the New World:

Les Havonais donnent le nom de Sicotudos ou Aciguatados<sup>97</sup> aux Espagnols d’Europe; ceux-ci traitent les Havonais de mulâtres. C’est ainsi que, par les mêmes causes, l’Espagnol d’Europe est appelé Gatchupino dans le Mexique, tandis que le Gatchupino appelle à son tour Guachinango<sup>98</sup> le créole du Mexique [The people of Havana give the name Sicotudos or Aciguatados to Peninsular Spaniards, who label the former as mulattos. In a similar fashion, the Peninsular is called Gatchupino in Mexico, while the Gatchupino calls the Mexican Creole Guatchinango] (148).

#### 4.1.8 The Chinese in America

Ampère mentions the exploitation of Chinese laborers alongside that of the African slaves in Cuba. He describes the Chinese as resisting corporal punishment: “ils

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<sup>97</sup> Aciguatado-adjective associated with the yellow complexion of some people from Mexico, who suffer from a disease called ciguatera, related to a disease caught by people who eat fish with the same disease. See *Diccionario de Autoridades*, ed. Facsimil (1964).

<sup>98</sup> Guachinango: adjective, with pejorative connotation, means cunning. As a noun form has the meaning of ruse. See *Diccionario de la lengua española*, decimotava ed. (1956). All those different epithets concern the self-hatred that subaltern conditions impose on people, weakening them, while the divisive forces of the people in power are strengthened.

ont résisté et n'ont pas consenti à recevoir des coups de fouet" [they resisted and refused to get whipped] (202). However, elements of their own culture were employed in order to subjugate them. This is based on a superficial analysis of certain phenomena the traveler probably did not understand, according to Pérez de la Riva (86). Once again, the short duration of his trip and his enthusiasm might have pushed him to reach the wrong conclusions. Ampère observes: "On a nommé un chef parmi eux qui leur donne des coups de baton, et ils acceptent. En effet, le baton est dans leurs moeurs; l'énumération des coups à recevoir remplit tout leur code pénal, et forme l'ensemble de leur législation criminelle" [They nominated a chief/leader among them who hit them with a baton, and this they accepted. In fact, this is a part of their customs; the number of whiplashes one is to receive accords with their entire penal code, and constitutes the extent of their criminal legislation] (203). Based on Ampère's assertion, De la Riva hits the note in his comments on the French traveler's harried conclusion. Ampère seems to have formulated his analysis based on his knowledge of the Chinese culture instead of his own observations. His mention of the "whip" and their penal code testifies to this fact (Corbitt 92).

Coolies are described from the perspective of differentiation, in comparison with the Negro. De Hauranne's depiction focuses on physical characteristics, which also reflect intellectual attributes. He describes them as "des hommes minces, d'une figure intelligente et triste, et dont les formes délicates contrastent avec la robuste carrure des noirs" [slender men, with an intelligent and sad countenance, whose delicate frames contrast with the robust frames of blacks] (638).

De Hauranne differentiates between the Coolies "mélancoliques, concentrés et méditatifs" [melancholic, focused and pensive], and the Negro type who is enamoured of

noise (639). The author reveals the Coolies' self-hatred, as well as projection of their hatred onto another subaltern group, such that Frantz Fanon (1925-1961) has described it in *Black Skin, White Mask* (1967). The two races are divided so that the status quo can be maintained. However, ignorant of that fact, they hate each other passionately: "Les coulies sont employés à l'usine et font meilleure chère que leurs noirs, qui ne travaillent guère que dans les champs; les deux races vivent à part et se détestent de toutes leurs forces" [Coolies work in the factory and are worth more than Blacks who no longer work in the fields. The two races are completely separated, and they hate each other with all their might] (639). However, in spite of, or because of the hatred between them, this does not prevent what De Hauranne detects as clandestine and temporary unions: "Cette mutuelle antipathie n'empêche pas la naissance clandestine de quelques métis d'un type singulier, qui ressemblent beaucoup aux Océaniens; mais il ne se forme jamais d'unions publiques et durables entre les deux races" [That mutual antipathy does not prevent the clandestine birth of some miscegenation, which bears a great deal of resemblance to the Oceanians; but there have never been any public and lasting unions between the two races] (639). That "mutual antipathy" or enmity between two oppressed groups is one of the ways the subaltern is kept divided so that the colonizing force could reign supreme. Thus, studying travel accounts provides insights into the life, material culture and sociology of different ethnic groups. An important element of 19<sup>th</sup> century Cuba emerged in the travel accounts of both North-Americans and European travelers: the Monteros.

#### 4.1.9 Background of the Monteros

Travel accounts constitute the main sources of information on the Monteros' material culture and society since the majority of those peasants were illiterate. They originated from the Canary Islands, and were among the fastest groups of immigrants during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries in Cuba.<sup>99</sup> "The Monteros are not only very numerous," wrote Abiel Abbot in *Letters Written in the Interior of Cuba* (1829). They are "increasing faster than any other species of population on the island. This increase is partly by emigration [sic] from the Canaries; for most of the emigrants [sic] from those islands fall into this class..." (161). Describing the Monteros, the travel accounts often contain disparaging and subjective overtones, which in part reflect period events and travelers' own biases. For example, in 1854, William Henry Hurlbert (1827-1895), alluded to the "indolence" of the people of Cuba: "there they lounge away the mornings, their horses tethered all around the stone-floored piazza, and themselves hanging about the counters within, drinking aguardiente [rum], smoking cigar after cigar, jockeying, betting, and talking scandal" (179). The Monteros did not fare any better. They are clearly perceived as Mr. Hurlbert's inferiors, and their indolence appals the American visitor who affirmed:

Indolent, beyond conception, the Montero certainly is. His rule of action is, 'Never do today what you can possibly put off till tomorrow.' The cabalistic word 'Mañana,' 'Tomorrow,' which comes upon the fiery northman's impatience from every Spanish lip, like the calm rebuke of the Egyptian's patient eyes, is ten times more appalling in the Creole mouth. You feel that to contend with it would be like dashing yourself against the barred doors of destiny.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> See Hernández García Julio, *La emigración canaria contemporánea (siglo XIX)* (1987).

<sup>100</sup> Hurlbert continues in the same fashion, romanticizing the Monteros, in ways which are reminiscent of what Massé realized in his book. See pp. 177-178.

#### 4.2 Massé: Towards an “Anthropology” of the Monteros

Massé pays special attention to the Monteros, another type of Creole, the Spanish Creoles of the countryside. By focusing on the physical characteristics, mores, as well as the psychological attributes of the Monteros, the travelers play the roles of anthropologists and ethnologists. Perspective, as Valerie Wheeler argues, establishes the difference between the anthropologist and the travel writer. The travel writer uses a first-person subject, while an anthropologist hides behind the veil of science, and through a third-person narrator proposes an objective study of the group in question (59).

The context of the encounter with the Monteros is central to our understanding of their representation by Massé. He depicts the Monteros from the perspective of his friend B.; then his friend related the horror of such an encounter to him. B., lost in the countryside, went to a hut in order to ask for directions. The human misery he faced was so atrocious that he had to turn back. What we observe, however, in the depiction of the Monteros, as is also the case in the depiction of Blacks and Others in general, is that “ideologies of racial difference were intensified by their incorporation into the discourse of science. Science claimed to demonstrate that the biological features of each group determined its psychological and social attributes” (Loomba 115). Here, the context of the encounter, the physical characteristics of the Monteros, the depiction of the milieu confirm Loomba’s observation. Massé provides the following account:

B. avance sa tête et recule d’horreur (parceque) jamais plus étrange misère n’avait frappé ses yeux. Une femme d’environ vingt-quatre ans, toute nue, avec les cheveux lons [sic] et pendans [sic], des enfants tout nus aussi et couchés avec elle sur une peau de boeuf; pas plus de meubles que de vêtements; des visages haves et

plombés; une peau sèche et livide, toute dégoûtante de saleté; une odeur qui repoussait au loin....

[B. pushes his head forward and moves back in horror (because) never has never witnessed such strange misery. A woman of about twenty-four years old, all naked, with long hair and necklaces, with totally naked children, also reclines on a skin of a cow; no more furniture nor clothing; some faces haved and plumbed; a dry and livid skin, all covered with disgusting dirt; with an odor that repulses from afar....] (224).

Thus, dirt, misery, offensive odor, nudity, unrelated to innocence/decency, characterizes those peasants. From the perspective of the encounter, B. reacts with fear upon witnessing such misery, while the woman and her children also respond with “surprise, and fright as a result of the intrusion of a foreigner” (224). Massé wastes no time explaining that the Monteros’ wretchedness is a direct result of their laziness (225). Massé puts this into historical perspective by comparing the first conquistadors to their descendants:

On est étonné quand, après avoir vu dans l’histoire du nouveau monde cette extrême agitation des premiers conquérans, ce tumulte extraordinaire de toutes les passions, cette lutte effrayante de haines et de cupidités, on vient à jeter les yeux sur la constante apathie de ceux pour qui tant d’excès et de crimes furent commis. On dirait d’autant de fous qui ont fatigué le monde de leurs fureurs pour mener ou faire mener à leurs decendants une vie d’ermite.

[One is surprised after witnessing in the history of the new world the extreme agitation of the first conquistadors, that extraordinary tumult of all the passions, the frightening struggle of hatred and greed, the constant apathy of those for whom so many excesses and so many crimes were committed. One would say that they were a bunch of crazed folks who have exhausted the world of their furor only so their descendants could inherit the life of hermits]. (225)

Massé’s description of the Monteros is reminiscent of his depiction of the Florida Indians as savages in chapter X. There, he describes them:

...deux ou trois sauvages florindiens, à peu près tels qu’ils étaient sortis du sein de leur mère, avec la peau couleur de cuivre, des cheveux pendans, roides et malpropres des joues barbouillées de rouge, et un ensemble de physionomie et

d'allure qui tenait plus de la brute que de l'homme; tout cela fit sur moi une première impression très déplaisante.

[...two or three savage Florida Indians, close to the way they came out of their mother's womb, with their copper skin, long, straight and dirty hair, cheeks red and a number of physical attributes, more similar to those of beasts than men; all those produced a completely unpleasant first impression]. (70)

The Monteros are also barbaric, devoid of an important faculty: speech. Massé declares that "ces pauvres gens ne comprenaient point ce que leur disait B," [those unfortunate people did not understand what B. was saying to them], ignoring the fact that B.'s Spanish might have been limited, thus hampering communication with them. On the contrary, he continues with the idea of their speech impediment and barbaric nature: "la femme se mit à siffler et bientôt se présenta un homme d'assez grande taille, n'ayant qu'un caleçon tout déchiré pour vêtement, la barbe noire et hideuse avec une hache à la main. Ce fut alors à B.... d'être saisi de peur" [the woman started whistling and soon a man of considerable height, wearing only an underpants all torn, with a black and hideous beard and an axe in his hand. It was then that B... was stricken with fear] (224).

The details inserted in that quotation are very suggestive as to the visual and mental images Massé wants to convey. The Montero, "half naked with a black and hideous beard and an axe in his hand," at first sight, appeared to be a primitive and savage type that eats human flesh, therefore, his terror. However, that "savage man," unlike his wife, was able to understand B. and managed to give him directions, although that episode was negotiated through signs of disdain, and the condescension of someone who has been disturbed by an intruder. Massé comments on the Montero's deportment at the conclusion of the encounter with B.: "Cet homme s'empessa de le remettre sur la voie avec une complaisance que la dureté de sa figure et la sauvagerie de sa personne ne



promettaient guère” [That man rushed to put him back on the road with a complacency which could not be anticipated from the harshness of his face and his savage nature] (224).

Massé proceeds with the account, emphasizing the Monteros’ physiognomy, their way of life, as well as their psychological characteristics. Controlling the action, however, Massé makes a statement aimed at convincing the reader that his objectivity as a narrator and his knowledge of the Monteros are not compromised. Massé, a sudden expert on Monteros, declares: “Tous les habitants [sic] de la campagne ne ressemblent pas à ce portrait; mais c’est un type duquel ils approchent plus ou moins” [All the country folks do not fit that profile; but that is more or less an approximation of that type] (224). The Monteros, according to Massé, lead a simple existence. Four cows, a small piece of land for the cultivation of banana, corn and rice makes them happy (225). The happiest Montero, he continues, lives by a river, has a slave that brings him fish and spends the whole day in his hammock “smoking and watching time go by” (225). This is also characteristic of the women. They do not fulfill the typical roles assigned to women according to Massé: “Les femmes aiment à savourer le temps dans une longue oisiveté: elles ne filent point, ne tricotent point, et passent leur vie à rouler des feuilles de tabac en cigars, ou à fumer couchées dans leur hamac” [The women love to savor their leisure time: they do not embroider, they do not sew, but they spend their life rolling tobacco leaves into cigars, or smoking, stretched in their hammock] (225). As for housework, that is relegated to the class located at the bottom of the scale of wretchedness: the slaves. “Les travaux du ménage ne sont que pour les esclaves,” although necessity sometimes

forces them to work” [household chores are only designed for slaves, although necessity at times forces the Montero women to work] (227).

#### **4.2.1 The Montero’s Sense of Fashion: A Romantic/Costumbrista Representation**

Focusing on every aspect of the Montero’s life, later on, Massé’s intent is to depict details that may interest the armchair anthropologist. The Monteros’ clothing coincides with the image that Massé has already implanted in the reader’s mind: the Montero as “un ermite ...sobre, accoutumé aux abstinences” [a sober hermite...accustomed to privations]” (225). He begins this depiction with another controlling sentence that reinforces the Montero’s compulsive idleness: “La manière de se vêtir bannit les frivolités de luxe” [Their style of clothing banishes the frivolities of luxury] (225). He then depicts the Montero with the combined look of a cowboy and a gaucho. The Montero is usually clothed with:

Un caleçon de toile peinte qui descend jusqu’à la cheville; quelquefois des souliers de cuir cru, sans talon et d’une seule semelle; une chemise très-courte de même étoffe et de même couleur que le pantalon, et dont le bord, qu’on n’enferme point, flotte sur les hanches; un sabre ou machette qu’on ne quitte jamais, et qu’on porte à la ceinture ou sous le bras; un mouchoir qui serre la tête, et par-dessus, un grand chapeau de paille avec un ruban noir....Quand il trouve que le temps est un peu froid, il met sur ses épaules une redingote légère qu’il drappe à l’antique [Underpants of painted fabric which goes down the ankle; sometimes wearing shoes of crude leather, without heels and of only one sole; a very short shirt of the same material and of the same color as the pants, whose sides they never close, floats on the hips; a sabre or a machete that they always carry, either around the waist or under the arm; a handkerchief that ties the head, and over it, a big straw hat with a black ribbon ....When he thinks that the weather is a little cold, he puts a light redingote/sweater upon his shoulders, which he drapes antique style]. (226)

The women, on the other hand, wear:

Une cotte d'indienne ou de toile peinte, une chemise blanche fort échancrée, et dont l'ampleur excédente sert à former de larges plis longitudinaux; un bracelet au-dessus du coude retient les manches, qui sont également plissées.... Quand elles vont à la messe, elles se coiffent en cheveux, mettent la mantilla, et poussent quelquefois le luxe jusqu'à porter des souliers.

[An Indian cot or of painted etoffe, a white shirt deeply open, and whose exceeding size is used to form large longitudinal plaits; a bracelet underneath the elbow shortens the sleeve, which are also plaited.... When they go to mass, they coiffe their hair, wear the *mantilla*, and go as far as wearing shoes sometimes] (226).

If "l'oisiveté est la mère de tous les vices," as La Fontaine used to say, the Monteros, with so much leisure time, constitute the epitome of vices. However, one must be careful with the term "vice," for it is relative, especially when we take into account that Massé emphasizes traits that, based on his own European values, constitute moral defects. Massé's characterization of the Monteros' way of life is typical of cultural encounters in which the agent from the dominant culture sees the pathological in the cultural phenomena found in the Other's culture, especially those things he cannot comprehend. His characterization, in this sense, reveals his judgmental stance towards the Monteros' diversions. He sums it up in one sentence: "Une façon d'exister si indolente couve pourtant de redoutables passions; et le goût pour les exercices violents révèle le secret de ces âmes en apparence inactives" [Such an indolent way of existing arouses so many passions; and the affinity for violent exercises reveals the secret of those souls that are seemingly passive] (227-8).

The Monteros are depicted as vagrants, deviants, dedicated to violent passions; a marginalized group of people with no sense of purpose. The first domain of "violence" Massé depicts is the Monteros' predilection for horse racing, a diversion the author thinks is very dangerous. Even the women are dexterous horse riders, which Massé finds

extremely bizarre. Massé alludes to what seems to be a spectacle that takes place during a holiday. The description underscores the Monteros' bravado, their skills, as well as their death-defying attitudes:

Les cavaliers, quoique le cheval coure ventre à terre, ne touchent point aux rênes, qui sont attachées à l'arçon de la selle, et, les bras croisés sur la poitrine, le cigare à la bouche, ils attaquent de propos piquans [sic] ou badins les personnes qui sont aux fenêtres, ou celles qui courent avec eux dans la rue.

[The horseback riders, although the horse is galloping with its belly close to the ground, do not touch the reins, which are attached to the saddle bow, and, their arms crossed on their chests, the cigars in their mouth, they attack with biting or amusing remarks the people looking through their windows, or those who run with them in the street.] (228)

The women are as skilled as the men in this exercise. Massé observes:

Les femmes, assises de côté sur une selle à la genette, qui n'a qu'un étrier, se tiennent à cheval avec autant et même plus d'aisance que les hommes. Elles font usage ainsi qu'eux de l'éperon et du fouet pour redoubler la vélocité de leurs coursiers, qui souvent tombent morts sans avoir laissé paraître d'affaiblissement durant leur course, et qui pour le moins restent estropiés, et de long-temps ne peuvent rendre aucun service.

[The women, seated on the side of the saddle with only one stirrup like a horseman. They hold themselves on the horse with as much or even more ease than the men. They, as well as the men, use the spur and the whip to double the speed of their steeds, which often fall over without even showing the least bit of fatigue in their race, or which nevertheless remain paralyzed and for a long time cannot be of any use.] (228)

Massé also focuses on the Monteros' affinity for cockfighting, which he describes not only as a diversion, but also as an addiction that deprives families of their already meager resources. He describes how men and women participate in their ruin: "Tel homme travaille toute l'année afin d'amasser quatre ou cinq cens piastres qu'il ira jouer dans une feria de gallos, et chez lui...ses enfans [sic] seront toujours nus, sa femme sera toujours sale et déchirée; son buffet restera toujours vide..." [Such a man works the entire year in order to accumulate four or five dollars which he will play in a *feria de gallos*, and

at home... his children will always be naked, his wife will still remain dirty and raggedy; his food cabinet, empty] (231).<sup>101</sup> The typical function for this group, a function that is also open to Hidalgos, according to Massé, is that of “tabaquero, ou faiseur de cigares” [maker of cigars] (232). Generally, the typical Islegno [sic], according to Massé, is one accustomed to laziness: “Quand un Islegno [sic] a ce qu’il faut pour tuer la faim, comme ils disent, pour jouer quelques parties de billard et ne point paraître le gousset vide devant sa maîtresse, il n’en demande pas davantage, et il cesse de travailler, pourvu toutefois qu’il ne se dispose pas à figurer dans une feria de gallos” [When a Creole has enough to kill hunger, as they say, to play a few games of billard as not to appear with the empty pockets in front of his mistress, he does not desire anything better, and he stops working as long as he does not avail himself of participating in a *feria de gallos*].

Representing the Monteros as negligent and lazy with an obsession for cockfights, Massé is planting the seeds of the stereotypes that will remain characteristic of people in the tropics. Such stereotypes, engrained in people’s minds, give a false representation of the people, especially when, through rhetorical devices, and generalizing about what they have observed, the travelers made blanket statements on an entire group.

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<sup>101</sup> Apparently, Massé is referring to another kind of Isleños engaged in tobacco farming. This group is called “vegueros,” term derived from the word *vega*, which means tobacco farm. See Marcial Morera and Gonzalo Ortega, *Diccionario de Canarismos*, La Laguna: Francisco Lemus, 1995. Fernando Ortiz, in his masterpiece on Cuban tobacco and sugar, wrote: “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 in 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” (65). This is to elucidate the point that this group of peasants did lead a marginalized life. See Fernando Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*, trans. Harriet de Onis, with an introduction by Bronislaw Malinowski, prologue by Herminio Portell Vilá, new introduction by Fernando Coronil, (1995).

Since the Monteros make such irresponsible husbands, their wives prove themselves to be rather enterprising when they have to compensate for their husbands' shortcomings. Massé remarks: "lorsque son époux ne songe point à elle, comme il n'arrive que trop souvent, [elle] tresse des chapeaux de paille, occupation la plus ordinaire des femmes dans les bourgs et dans les campagnes" [when her husband pays her no mind, as is often the case, she makes straw hats, the most common occupation of women in the villages and rural areas] (233). Since those women could barely provide for themselves and their families, their children are obligated to lead lives as beggars. Massé explains how this is realized: "Elles envoient leurs jeunes garçons à la porte des habitants [sic] les plus riches; et les petits malheureux, tout nus, un doigt à la bouche, demandent una cosita, une petite chose, pour la mamita, la petite mère, ou la hermanita, la petite soeur, qui est malade au lit" [They send their young boys to the houses of the richest people; and the unfortunate boys, all naked, fingers in their mouths, beg for a little something for their mothers or sisters sick in bed] (233).

Massé later proposes a thorough psychosocial analysis of that group. The following deals with yet another one of the Monteros' basest instincts: their attachment to dance, an affinity they share with the African race, an idea which echoes what De Gobineau will later incorporate in his essay. According to De Gobineau, although the Negroes are deficient intellectually, they possess certain characteristics that make them dangerous: "...les indices de certaines énergies grossièrement puissantes. Si ces facultés pensantes sont médiocres ou même nulles, il possède dans le désir, et par suite dans la volonté, une intensité souvent terrible" [there are indicators of certain energies that are critically powerful. If his thinking faculties are mediocre or none, he has, in terms of

desire, in addition to his will, an intensity that is often terrible] (205). In other words, De Gobineau is describing Negroes as devoid of intellectual abilities: he reacts to what his senses dictate to him. This perpetuates the representation of the Negro as instinctively prone to crimes and uncontrollable when he is upset.

Massé, reiterating a few commonalities the Monteros share with the African race, provides some picturesque descriptions. They offer an overview of some dance steps, as well as some social customs popular in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. “La danse est un divertissement non moins agréable pour nos campagnards. Celui qui veut donner le bal prévient ses principauz [sic] amis. La nouvelle circule dans tout le canton, et les danseurs viennent par centaines, quoique tous n’aient pas été invités....” [Dancing is not an unpleasant activity for our country folk. Whoever wishes to have a ball informs his special friends. The news circulates throughout the entire region, and the dancers come by the hundreds, although all of them have not been invited...] (229). Massé depicts a typical dance, revealing fascinating details to those interested in the evolution of some contemporary dance moves, as well as some customs that may have disappeared. Massé meticulously describes a system of sisterhood among women, who lend shoes to others in order for them to dance. This section reveals a type of dance reminiscent of tap dancing, as well as a custom called *a gala*, which is the act of receiving gifts after a dance, as a sign of the male dancer’s or the audience’s satisfaction. Massé describes:

Le danseur, ou quelqu’un des assistans [sic], veut-il montrer à la danseuse combien il est satisfait d’elle, il ôte son chapeau et le lui met sur la tête. Quelquefois une danseuse reçoit tant de chapeaux, qu’elle est obligée de les tenir à la main, de les mettre sous le bras; quand elle a fini sa danse, elle rend les chapeaux d’un air gracieux, et on lui donne en retour un demi-real: c’est ce qu’on appelle le gala

[When the dancer or any of his assistants wants to show the female dancer how much he is pleased with her, he takes off his hat and puts it over her head. Sometimes a female dancer may receive so many hats that she is obliged to hold them in her hand, or put them under her arm; when she has finished her dance, she returns all the hats gracefully, and she receives a half *real* in return: this custom is called *gala*.] (230)

Reading the travelogues, one rediscovers the different ethnic and racial groups that populated Cuba in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Using the rudiments of science known to the 19<sup>th</sup> century's enlightened minds, the writers propose a treatment of alterity, which posits signs of inferiority in various ethnic groups. In so doing, cultural elements, representative of the Other, are classified as pathological. This process of "Othering" widens the racial, class, gender, and ethnic divides between the travelers and their subjects, and it opens huge psychological pits within the different ethnic groups. Through the process of differentiation, while the travelers introduce their biases concerning the Other, they also use pseudoscience such as classifications and definitions to buttress their arguments, proving that science and culture may also be used as instruments of conquest, as tools employed to subjugate others. We have seen this in the use of personality traits in the purchase of Africans, as well as with the exploitation of elements of Chinese legislation and culture to subdue Chinese indentured servants, as indicated by Duvergier de Hauranne.

The travelogues also confirm the idea that, although preoccupied with scientific endeavors, once in the New World, the travelers had other concerns: fascination and fear of the Other; the vision of the Other as an object of sexual desire. This is often displayed in the diaries through certain ambiguities, as in the topos "Black but beautiful," or



“beautiful but having traits of animals,” as well as in the attraction towards Creole women for their charms and sexual appetites.

On the other hand, the travelers seem to be pursuing objectivity by using “science” to solidify their arguments. However, since ideologies are often mixed with that “science,” the ridiculous, as well as the sublime merge in one narrative bowl, as the unfounded, the traditional and popular beliefs are offered once again as ‘scientific’ conclusions. Therefore, enunciating their “Othering,” the travelers vacillate between minds that observe only the negative side of the Other, as well as travelers who have managed, although through expressions of surprise, to unmask some of the myths associated with the Other. For others, still, the saying that “the racist is always right” may be applied here since these observers rationalize even the clearest arguments, twist them, until they fall into a tautology. This is the case in De Cassagnac’s diary, where addressing the idea of inferiority and stupidity of Blacks, he alludes to Shakespeare’s Othello, arguing that the character is a Moor, therefore civilizable, while this cannot be done with the Negro, placed lower than mules and cows.

For those writers who believed that Black and beauty were not mutually exclusive, we discover their culture shock, although their startling confessions offer mixed sentiments towards Blacks, Creoles and people of color. The travelers’ attitudes reveal the power of the text to forge identities for groups whose voice becomes silenced as a result of the encounter with a dominant culture. As testimonials with the potential to influence identity formation and representation, those texts create stereotypes that may be perpetuated through time and space, and which require a great deal of psychological strain for the group judged inferior to overcome.

## Chapter V

### Cultural Markers

Insular societies have always captured the imagination of philosophers, poets as well as other writers.<sup>102</sup> This fascination is due in part to the fact that insular regions are associated with the mystical, the magical, and the mythical; they are fertile grounds for the creation of legends. Since the early conquest period in Cuba, the idea of paradise found has played the muse to an entire corpus of European literature. Travelers seeking adventures, riches and the pursuit of knowledge contributed in the dissemination of such an image, which is etched in stone in the Old World's collective imaginary. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, due to a heightened interest in scientific studies, self-introspection and the pursuit of the exotic, Cuba offered the auspicious terrain for travelers in search of knowledge as well as leisure.

As testimonials to their visits, those travelers turned writers attempted to provide us with depictions of the various facets of daily living, with a discourse that varies from the general to the specific as well as the anecdotal and the real. In this chapter, I will emphasize the travelers' depictions of certain Cuban cultural markers such as *volantes*, architecture, churches and ecclesiastic leaders, shopping centers and fashion, the evolution of a budding intelligentsia, the pervasiveness of cigars and lottery, all of which constitute relics of the past, but permeate through time. I aim to prove that the travelogues

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<sup>102</sup> With respect to the New World, Bartlett Giamatti, in *The Earthly Paradise and the Renaissance Epic* (1966), believes that "Pliny, Plutarch and Strabo said they knew where the place was located, so also the Middle Ages and Renaissance flourished with maps and treatises describing its position, now East, now West, now on an island, now behind a mountain, but also remote, always inaccessible. Columbus thought he had found the blessed land across the wide waters, and he was certainly not the last man to search" (4).

are at the center of the conceptualization and representation of those elements that are symbolic of 19<sup>th</sup> century life in the island.

Like movies, travel texts project an entire philosophy and sociology, as well as other cultural markers that are at the core of a specific people. Therefore, the enunciator of the discourse plays the role of a miniature god that shapes the representation according to tenets that govern his/her own culture. The travelers' representations are often biased due to Eurocentrism because as "members of the European community, they drew upon a stock of ideas common to all.... When abroad, their eyes saw no more than their minds, shaped at home, were prepared to accept" (Hodgen 184). While Hodgen is stressing the idea of Eurocentrism, which conditions the travelers' perception, one also has to remember that at the core of the travel account is the tension between the personal and the collective, between ideas received from previous texts, as well as what constitutes formal education received from home, which shapes the travelers' viewpoint of the rest of the world: "The point of reference in the travel account is the readership, members of the traveler's own culture who for varying motives may themselves be contemplating future contact" (Brettell 133). In that sense, in order to appear more fascinating to the reader, the travelers present themselves as connoisseurs in all areas. As a result, objectivity at times is sacrificed in lieu of the artistic, irrespective of the enunciator's intent to be objective.

Representing Cuba, the travelers stress a number of cultural elements in an attempt to duplicate 19<sup>th</sup> century life. Such depictions produce an interchange with that remote past: the travelers' perspective provides us with insights that will potentially enrich our prior experience/knowledge of Cuba. The travel texts reveal as much about the travelers' personality, their prejudices and mental attitude at the time of the narration, as

they reveal about their grasp of the colonial hegemony over Cuba. The travelers depict cultural indicators, which constitute permanent fixtures that have come to be associated with the 19<sup>th</sup> century as well as Cuba in general.<sup>103</sup>

### **Vehicular Transportation: Women and Volantes**

Nineteenth-century travelers to Cuba were captivated and intrigued by the “volantas,” synonymous with opulence, at least in the eyes of the aristocracy. The travelers, on the other hand, depict the volantas from the perspective of cartoonists, attributing values such as “strange, ridiculous, effeminate and bizarre” to them (Massé 115). De Cassagnac begins his description alluding to the English and their ingenuity in making a car out of any shape such “pot au feu, armoire, caisse de harpe, commode, soupière...” [cooking pan, armoire, harp box, commode and soupier] (303). Before presenting a complete description of the volanta, De Cassagnac further evinces the reader to share his evaluation of them “ces volantes ne sont pas précisément ridicules; elles ne sont qu’étranges” [the volantas are not necessarily ridiculous; they are strange]. Later, he states, “la volante fait bien regarder, mais elle ne fait pas rire; elle laisse aux femmes leur grace, et aux hommes leur dignité” [the volante incites one to look, but it does not incite laughter; it leaves women with their grace and men with their dignity] (303). He then proceeds with an object lesson, a visual representation of the volantas. First, there is one type:

demesurément longue, ayant une mule à un bout et deux roues à l’autre; mais deux roues d’un diamètre exorbitant, à atteindre un premier étage. Entre les roues

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<sup>103</sup> Among cultural markers, tobacco- cigars are treated royally in the diaries. De Cassagnac and Massé dedicate full chapters to studying the history of tobacco as well as its economic and cultural impact. See the chapter entitled “Tobacco Growing in Cuba” in the appendix.

et la mule, à l'endroit le plus flexible et le plus élastique, est posé une sorte de nid, tapissé de soie rose ou bleue, avec un ciel pour arrêter les rayons du soleil, et une large fenêtre à l'arrière pour laisser la brise

[indefinitely long, with a mule at one end, and two wheels at the other; but two wheels of an exorbitant diameter, at the most flexible and the most elastic location, is located on a sort of nest, covered with blue or pink silk, with a sky to stop the rays of the sun, and a huge window in the back to let air in.] (303)

Then, there is the turbo, the powerful one with two horses, similar to that of M. le comte de Penalver, Havana's fashion king.<sup>104</sup> In these models, circulate "...jeunes et belles marquises, coiffées d'une rose, et chaussées de satin" [young and beautiful marquises, coiffed with a rose and wearing satin shoes]. The narrator adjusts the account, showing he has full control of the narration, so the reader may have a better idea of the type he is describing saying,

Je disais *tout-à-l'heure* [my emphasis] qu'une jolie volante ressemblait à un nid, tapissé de soie rose ou bleue, en guise de mousse; celles dont je parle *à présent* [my emphasis] ressemblent à un nid de cygne, tant les jeunes femmes qui s'y montrent sont éclatantes de moire blanche, ou à la coquille de Venus Anadyomène, tant les formes divines qu'elles portent semblent sortir d'un flot de dentelles, se détachant sur le fond bleu de la volante comme la mousse d'une vague sur l'azur de l'océan

[I was saying a while ago that a pretty volante looked a nest covered with pink or blue silk instead of mousse. Those of which I am speaking look like the nest of a swan, since the young ladies that ride in them are so shiny with white shimmer, or the coquille of the Venus of Anadyome, so much that the divine shapes that they carry seem to come out of a wave of laces, detaching on the blue background of the volanta like the froth of a wave upon the azure ocean.] (307)<sup>105</sup>

Describing the volantes, the narrator uses the known to explain the unknown and what is different, which he characterizes as strange, striving to give the reader an accurate portrait of the volantas. However, comparing the volante to a "nest" and later, more

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<sup>104</sup> San Fernando de Penalver- Havana's king of fashion, lived at Ignacio 22, Plaza de la Catedral. Today, his 18<sup>th</sup> century style house is home to the Centro Wilfredo Lam, a museum containing more than 1250 works.

specifically to a “nest of swan,” due to the women’s makeup and elegance, suggests a caricature of the vehicle, as well as its passengers, the Creole women, “la plus aristocratique des aristocraties, la plus belle moitié du genre humain” [the most aristocratic of aristocracies, the most beautiful half of mankind] (307). Using the analogy of the “nest of swans,” the author attempts to provide the reader with a visual image of the *volanta*, with a bit of sarcasm, whose purpose is to create stereotypes, which future travelers to Cuba might seek.

### **Architecture**

The architecture of a region is revelatory of its culture, its philosophy, history and the people’s disposition towards life. In the travelers’ representation of Cuba, the depiction of churches and houses plays a major role. Some travelers were able to show appreciation of difference, while others chose to denigrate all the cultural elements they were trained to vilify. Massé dedicated entire chapters to the description of houses as well as churches. Unlike the other travelers that only emphasized the exterior of churches, Massé devoted a great deal of his narration to describing the members, church leaders as well as the worship services themselves. Massé’s lengthy stay in Cuba is instrumental in that regard because it allowed him to observe worship services as well as festivities that take place on special occasions. Not even the most minuscule detail escaped the French visitor who was in Cuba “en vue de chercher des destinées nouvelles,” [in search of new destinies] but whose role changed to that of a mild social critic after witnessing so many inequities.

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<sup>105</sup> Reference to either the Renaissance painter Titian (Tiziane Vecellio 1485-1586), “Venus Emerging from

Depicting the churches, Massé injects every description, every account with his own perspective. At times, one wonders, whether his European eyes did not see just what he had expected/what he was trained to see prior to leaving Marseilles, in spite of his promises to be objective (Brettell 133). In this guided tour of Cuba, the description of churches is so central to the organization of the narrative that it precedes the chapter entitled “J’ai la permission de débarquer.” [I have permission to land].<sup>106</sup> He also includes a brief history of some of the reigning orders in Cuba such as the Jesuits, the Dominicans and the Ursulines. Massé’s depiction of the churches reveals his knowledge of architecture and, particularly, his predilection for ancient architecture. He describes modern architecture as something “plein de bizarreries et d’inconvenances” [filled with strange and inconvenient things] (77). Massé meticulously reveals his attitude towards worship as well as what constitutes proper behavior within the confines of a church. In addition, while getting acquainted with Cuba, the author notices some aspects of life that might have escaped a traveler with a different religious orientation. However, Massé’s religious upbringing was so profound that he took advantage of every situation to remind us of how this trip affected him personally. In so doing, our knowledge of the past is enriched through the author’s emphasis on a number of customs.

The custom called *L’Ave Maria*, or minutes of meditation in the middle of the hustle and bustle of the day comes to Massé’s attention. Away from home, that reverent

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the Sea.” Théodore Chasseriau (1819-1856) realized another painting by the same name around 1838.

<sup>106</sup> According to the order of the chapters, the description of churches (5) and Massé’s impressions upon debarking follow. Whether this is an organizational flaw or an editorial blunder I cannot tell. However, it would be logical that the description of the edifices follows his impressions upon landing in Cuba. This is particularly important when his impressions of the churches are not just a superficial analysis of the buildings, but an in-depth analysis of the decorations inside the church, his community, on how worship services should be conducted, as well as an analysis of the society based on worship patterns.

attitude from the people reminds the author of the common bond that unites us all, of our belonging to the Providence who watches over all humanity. Reflecting on the *Ave María* and how it elevates the soul, bringing it closer to its Maker, the narration takes a solemn tone, as Massé engages his friend B. in some very cogent philosophical inquiries:

N’y a-t-il pas dans cet usage quelque chose de bien touchant, dis-je à B....? Cette réunion de tous les coeurs, ces prières adressées, dans un même instant, par une grande population, au père commun de tous les hommes, cette suspension universelle des travaux, des jeux, des plaisirs, ce recueillement, ce silence absolu, tout cela n’est-il pas auguste et sublime?

[Isn’t there in that custom something very touching, I said to B...? This meeting of all the hearts, those prayers, addressed simultaneously, by a great population, to the common father of all mankind, that universal halt of all chores, games, pleasures, that devotion, that absolute silence, isn’t all that august and sublime?] (123)

As Massé reflects on that solemn moment, the personality of his friend B. brings equilibrium to the narration. A more seasoned traveler than Massé, B., acknowledging his friend’s queries, simply replies: “oui, tout cela est bien bon, et cet usage est vraiment religieux, me dit B....; ajoutat-il en s’approchant davantage de mon oreille, gare aux coups de poignard; après *l’Ave María*” [yes, all that is very good, and that custom is really religious, said B...; he added, getting closer to my ear, watch out for those who stab with a knife after the *Ave María*] (123). Here, B. is using his knowledge of the culture to warn Massé of the superficiality of that exercise of piety. He seems to be whispering to his friend, “Rookie, after this moment of spiritual high, it’s back to business as usual.”

Massé takes us on a grand tour of Havana’s many churches, evaluating their architecture, the religious services as well as the religious leaders, monks, in particular. Monks capture so much of Massé’s attention that he dedicates a number of chapters to



them.<sup>107</sup> First, he focuses on architecture, citing the Church of San Francisco, the Church of Conception, the Cathedral of Havana, and the Church of Saint Theresa. His comments on the architecture of these churches suggest that as a critic, he favors simplicity. For that reason, he was displeased with most of the extravagant decorations inside the edifices.

The San Francisco Church, in particular, he compares to a barbaric temple as opposed to the Church of Conception, which he describes as “a temple grec” [a Greek temple] (76). Although this comment proves that Massé, in his mind, traveled with the Hellenic model as the epitome of perfection, comparing the Cuban temple to a Greek temple does not mean that he was impressed with what he observes. He subsequently explains it saying, “non que cette église cathédrale soit un édifice irréprochable. Il s’en faut de beaucoup; mais la simplicité dans la grandeur...” [not that that church was perfect. Far from it; but simplicity in greatness...] (76). This is a common topos in almost all the travelers. Eurocentrism or maybe a heightened level of sophistication (not mutually exclusive), prevented them from accepting Cuban cultural elements for what they are, without using European criteria to degrade them. In that sense, they confirm the saying that their European eyes allowed them to see what their European minds learned back home.

The Cathedral of Havana, believes Massé, “éale une inconvenience bien prononcée” [displays a very obvious inconvenience] (77). This is due to the architecture, whose purpose is to prolong the appearance of the edifice. An al fresco painting, which

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<sup>107</sup> Massé describes them in chapter X. Later, in chapter VII, he observes them in action during the celebration of Saint Thomas of Aquinas, celebration during which the monks acted worse than ordinary sinners. What Massé offers seems to be a stereotypical representation of the monks as “lazy, lascivious, corrupt,” participating in every mundane activity. His depiction of them is symbolic of his strict religious upbringing, which leads him to question the notions of religion that the monks hold in Cuba.

depicts the ascension of Virgin Mary, further thickens the dilemma, according to Massé, because it is too pretentious (77).

Describing the interior of the churches, Massé reveals some fascinating details, which attest to his belief in certain behaviors that should be displayed in such a holy place. He observes that “il n’ya point de chaises dans les églises. Le recueillement des fidèles n’y est point troublé à chaque instant par la collecte inconvenante de quelques misérables pièces de monnaie” [there are no chairs in the churches. The congregation’s reverence is not disturbed at every instant by the inconvenient collection of some miserable pieces of coin] (81). Instead, everything happens solemnly because two tables were set apart for voluntary collection. The church members would drop the offering in a special container destined for such ends. Next to the tables are two religious leaders who “n’appellent point à eux la générosité des entrans [sic] par leurs supplications d’une voix pieusement éclatante. Ils ne répondent pas par un *Dieu vous le rende*; [his italics] ils donnent une image du saint dont en ce jour on célèbre la fête” [do not attract on them the generosity of the people entering the church by their supplications with a piously shattering voice. They do not respond saying *God shall render it unto you*; they give the air of the saint whose holiday is being celebrated on that particular day] (81). Apparently, the author has observed such customs in other churches where services are continually disrupted due to efforts to collect money. In spite of Massé’s sudden benevolence towards the monks, his last comment is very suggestive. The idea that the monks tend to impersonate the saint whose holiday the people are celebrating is deceptive because in a country where the people are sensitive to religious intricacies, the monks’ saintly look might encourage the people to be quite liberal with their money.

Following Massé's observations, we also discover beggars and monks as the traveler stumbled on a ceremony, which took place the day of the celebration of Saint Thomas of Aquinas. The travelers' observations seem to suggest the monks' familiarity with conducts of Pharisees. In addition, Massé's own attitude towards religion comes into play, as he projects his background into the scene, overanalyzing the monks' every gesture in order to report on their irreverence. He places the monks in a context that brings their carnal nature to the forefront. He begins the description with two groups of women entering the church: "de jeunes dames entrent avec dignité; des femmes de couleur entrent avec prétention" [a few young ladies enter with dignity; some women of color enter with pretention] (82). Here, Massé is subtly alluding to the pomposity of the women of color, which knows no boundary, in contrast to the other young ladies who showed an attitude of reverence in the church. Subsequent to this parade of types, the monks are presented as if they were enjoying the 'show.' Massé reports that "Les moines lorgnent, se parlent à l'oreille, sourient, font des mines; et moi, pauvre chrétien de France, je demeure tout confondu. B..., lui, paraît moins indigné qu'amusé de ce spectacle" [The monks look avidly, talk in each other's ears, smile, make faces; and I, poor Christian from France, remain confused. B., on the other hand, appears less shocked than amused by that spectacle] (161). With those details, Massé points out the monks' licentiousness; he also reminds us of his strict background, which is consistent with the liberal personality he forged for B.

Massé's incisive criticism of the monks is indicative of his own strict religious upbringing and his knowledge of their participation in sordid affairs such as their overt sexual hunger and their addiction to tobacco and gambling. Not only has he described

their daily routine and their behavior in the most holy places, pointing out their blatant sinfulness, the writer lets the monks' actions do the talking. When they really exaggerate, the writer uses exclamations, his sarcasm as well as other devices to communicate his disbelief as he observed some of their "unholy" behaviors.

In chapter XVII, he describes his astonishment as a "pauvre chrétien de France" [unfortunate French Christian] facing such sacrilegious conduct, conduct, by the way, which was not surprising to Massé's friend, B.: "Quels yeux licencieux! Quelles faces de prospérité! Quel oubli des peines du monde, et probablement des joies du Cie..! Quelle santé florissante! Quel sourire malin!" [What licentious eyes! What faces of prosperity! How oblivious are they of the troubles of the world, and probably of the joys of Heaven! What flourishing health! What malicious smile!] (83). Massé's comments reflect the opposite of what he expects from monks who are supposed to be reverent and display a serene countenance. Instead, the monks in that particular church behave as if they were inside a tavern, which shocks Massé, and urges him to question the very notion of religion in Cuba. "Qu'est-ce que la religion dans ce pays-ci...?" [What is religion in this country...? (84).<sup>108</sup> Massé does not offer any answers; he uses suspension points, which call on the reader to fill in the blanks. He compares the practice of religion in Cuba, the hypocrisy of the monks, to young virgins giving away their virginity little by little because they lack the courage to do so at once (162). That allusion facilitates the reader's grasp of the traveler's surprise, as well as the profound degree of the monks' duplicitous

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<sup>108</sup> The height of Massé's shock came as he observed Monks leaving the church service to go outside and smoke as well as to play poker. The author describes "bourgeois et moines assis autour d'une grande table et se livrant à des jeux de hazard" [rich folks and monks sat around a big gambling table] (163). Massé's emphasis on this commiseration between "bourgeois" and "moines" is indicative of his opinion that the

behavior. Thus, both Massé's rigid religious background as well as the monks' despicable conduct is captioned in the comparison. Massé begs for forgiveness for such an allusion (162).

Massé also describes monks in the same context as some people with severe mental problems. Massé is the only one of the four writers to focus so pointedly on that aspect of Cuban life. Those leaders of the Church are described in conjunction with the mentally ill not only because they reflect the influence of religion on the culture, but also because they reflect the amount of respect monks were bestowed. The "crazy man," as Massé puts it, serves not only as comic relief for both the monks and the congregation; he also plays the role of an accuser who pinpoints the monks' tasteless conduct. The depiction of the crazy man's act during worship services also underscores the disparity that exists among different people with mental problems.

Massé focuses on the case of a Black man without shoes, who accompanies the priests, even as they are going to the altar. His behavior amuses the priests who even encourage him (163). For contrast, Massé alludes to the situation of an unfortunate Marquis of., a Frenchman, whom Massé did not even identify by the first letter of his last name as usual. That man had a considerable amount of wealth in Santo Domingo, which he subsequently lost after being chased from that colony. That unfortunate situation caused him to lose his mind (164). However, he was not received as candidly as the crazy Black man or as Spaniards that are crazy. That Marquis has been in jail for eight months, according to Massé, who confesses that he is unaware of the reason for the man's guilt. However, he still contends that he is punished partly for being French because "il faut

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monks aspired to a mundane lifestyle, which did not reflect any of the abstinences those religious leaders

pourtant que les fous soient Espagnols pour qu'on les tolère" [even the crazy must be Spaniards for them to be tolerated] (164).

Massé carefully describes a number of different religious orders in Cuba. He provides us with a history of the groups, a history containing some unwonted details concerning the excesses of particular orders as well as the irony associated with the foundation of others.<sup>109</sup> Massé begins the chapter entitled "Des moines" [Of Monks] with his surprise after observing a "wall of fame" highlighting all the accomplishments of the seraphic order at the San Francisco Church. He describes it as a sort of "mappe-monde" [world map] whose purpose was not to reveal knowledge of geography, but rather to display an inventory of the famous doctors, bishops, popes and even kings originated from that order. What was more startling to Massé was the number of writers belonging to that order: twenty five thousand, enough to compose a dictionary.<sup>110</sup> Insinuating that the number is exaggerated, Massé points out that the French dictionary "only contained twice as many words" at that time (149). Later, he proceeds on the same rubric, stating that, considering that the inventory was already one hundred years old, and

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claimed to profess.

<sup>109</sup> This specifically concerns a female order called The Ursulines, founded by St. Angela de Merici (?-1540), with the mission of educating young girls. Massé begins with their short stay in Canada in the seventeenth century due to the rigorous winter. In Canada, with the assistance of Madame de la Peltrie, a rich French widow, the Ursulines founded the Hôtel-Dieu as well as the first convent on the Western continent. From Canada they went to New Orleans in 1727 and then to Havana in 1803: "fuyant non le protestantisme des Américains, qui n'étaient pas encore les maîtres de la colonie, mais les nouvelles lois françaises dont elles se virent menacées dans ce peu de temps où la Louisiane parut être enfin retournée sous notre domination" [fleeing not the Protestantism of Americans who did not own the colony yet, but against new French rules that threatened them during the laps of time where there seemed to be a slight possibility of Louisiana returning under our control] (216). Massé here is referring to the Napoleon Bonaparte's secret Treaty of Ildefonso with Spain, which stipulated that France would provide Spain with a kingdom for the son-in-law of Spain's king if Spain would return Louisiana to France. That plan failed subsequent to the disintegration of France in the New World, with the victory of Black Saint-Domingue over Napoleon's army, which made Louisiana unnecessary.

<sup>110</sup> Massé here is questioning the validity of that figure. He is ironically offering it as an example of that religious order's excess, painting all of its members as intellectuals.

that “la démangeaison d’écrire a dû faire quelque ravage parmi nos moines dans ce laps de temps.... Il faudrait maintenant savoir combien de cette foule immense il reste d’hommes connus; il s’agirait en outre de fixer le sens attaché par les bons pères au titre d’écrivain” [the itch to write has ravaged our monks during that period of time.... One would wonder now how many of that immense crowd [of writers] are still known; one would have to definitely settle the meaning our good fathers attached to the title of writer] (149-150).

Here, as is often the case with Massé, irony is utilized to question the validity of statements as well as facts and figures. The author does not deliberately call a lie the preposterous number of writers he encounters in the inventory. Instead, he questions the degree of veracity attached to the figure by questioning the very meaning of the word “writer,” suggesting that the good fathers might have been generous, using the term “writer” too loosely.

Describing the convent of Belén, Massé uses the same rhetorical device to convince us of how funds were misappropriated. First, he begins by eulogizing the convent’s wealth, but later we find out that that wealth originated from slavery. The author affirms that “il possède des sucreries considérables” [it has a considerable amount of sugar factories] (155). Part of the funds received from those transactions is allotted to the maintenance of a small hospital where the convalescent could stay for five additional days after they had been discharged. Considering the disparity between the colossal revenue from the sugar factories and the minimal amount spent on the hospital, Massé uses his friend B’s words, to question where the rest of the money goes. B. applauds the

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efforts of the convent saying, “Cela est bien; mais où va le restant des revenus?” [That is good; but where does the rest of the money go?] (155).

Describing the other convents, Massé shows favoritism towards the convent of Santo Domingo for several reasons. First, there are “des hommes remarquables par leur savoir” [remarkable men due to their knowledge] (155). Also, Massé contrasts their humanism with the cruelty of the Franciscans:

Dans l'émeute qui eut lieu en 1800 contre les français établis à Cuba, les Dominicains arrachèrent plusieurs de nos compatriotes des mains de la populace. La conduite des Franciscains fut bien différente. On prétend même qu'ils demandèrent au Gouverneur le massacre général de ces infortunés, presque tous réfugiés de Saint-Domingue et à qui la colonie, comme nous le verrons par la suite, a dû son plus grand accroissement. Quand cette particularité me fut connue, le couvent des Franciscains comme leur habit me devint odieux  
[In the riot that occurred in 1800 against the French established in Cuba, the Dominicans snatched many of our countrymen from the mob. The Franciscans' conduct was quite the opposite. It is believed that they demanded the Governor the general massacre of those unfortunate folks, all refugees from Saint-Domingue, responsible, as we shall see soon, for the greatest population growth in the colony. When that was revealed to me, the Franciscans' convent as well as their uniform became loathsome to me.] (155)

Massé seems to be in the majority of those who feel apathy towards the Franciscans. Their blunder includes not only their lack of humanity towards the French exiles, but also the excesses they are known for. Massé provides a few instances that incite the general public to be lukewarm towards them: “...des excessives et scandaleuses dépenses ou les entraîna le désir de signaler leur joie en 1814: leurs fêtes parurent trop éclatantes pour un ordre mendiant. On parle surtout d'un feu d'artifice extraordinaire ou, entre autres bizarreries, des anges p.....du feu” [scandalous and excessive expenditures that aroused their desire to signal their joy in 1814: their festivities seemed too flashy for an order of beggars. People talk especially of a spectacular display of fireworks, in which, among



other strange things, angels were farting fire] (156). The last comment proves that those monks were really out of control, by showing total disregard even towards what is considered sacrosanct.

Massé ends the tour of the convents with singular details concerning the representation of those “wretched races” in the ecclesiastical order in Cuba: Indians and Blacks. Concerning the Indians, he uses irony to describe their condition as well as that of Blacks as the most unfortunate in the Americas. Their representation in the Church is reminiscent of their tragic extermination. Indians are characterized “soit en bois, soit sur toile, aux pieds de saint François Xavier, qu’ils évoquent” [either in wood, either on a cloth at the feet of saint Francis Xavier] (159).<sup>111</sup> Depicting the patron saint’s impotence in protecting the Indians, Massé quips: “Il paraît pourtant que la protection de l’apôtre des Indes ne leur a été utile ni à Santo-Domingo, ni dans l’île de Cuba” [It appears that the protection of the apostle of the Indies was not proven useful for them neither in Santo Domingo nor in Cuba] (159). As for Blacks, unaware of their religious practices, or discounting the religious syncretism that takes place, Massé declares that they do not have a patron saint, “à moins qu’ils n’aient choisi le Saint-Esprit, dont leur milice célèbre la fête dans l’église de ce nom” [unless they have chosen the Holy Spirit, whose troops celebrate its festival in the church by the same name] (159).<sup>112</sup> Massé ends this chapter on

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<sup>111</sup> Massé here is alluding to the role of Saint Francis Xavier (b. Navarre, Spain 1506- d. 1552). Saint Francis Xavier is known as the Patron and Model of Mission. He studied at the College of Sainte-Barbe, in Paris, where he met Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556). After being ordained priest in Rome in 1537, Ignatius of Loyola assigned him to work in India. He worked among the poor in South India, Malacca, and the Moluccas Islands (Indonesia). He also established the first Christian Community in Kagoshima, Japan, in 1549. He died in Sancian Island, on his way to China, in 1552.

<sup>112</sup> Contrary to Massé’s assertion, the African slaves in Cuba were baptized into Catholicism, which forbade them from practicing their African religions. The slaves knew how to preserve elements of their religions by

a note that suggests his curiosity in matters of hagiography of saints, saying he saw “à San-Agustín una Nuestra Señora [sic] de la Candelaría toute noire. Cela doit flatter un peu les négresses. Notre-Dame d’Atocha de Madrid, ainsi que plusieurs autres Madones en Espagne et en Italie, sont aussi toutes noires” [at San Agustin, a Black Our Lady of Candlemas, which must flatter the Negro women. Our Lady of Atocha of Madrid, as well as many other Madonnas in Spain and Italy are also all black] (159).<sup>113</sup>

### **The Overarching Influence of French Thought and Fashion**

Relating their observations, the travelers concur that France influenced 19<sup>th</sup> century Cuba both ideologically and in the area of fashion. Massé underlines the underground channel which brought “forbidden books” to Cuba: “Aussi le peu de livres français que peuvent atteindre ceux des Havanais à qui notre langue n’est point étrangère, est avidement dévoré. Londres, les États-Unis, Bordeaux leur envoient clandestinement les traductions des livres français les plus audacieux du dix-huitième siècle ainsi que des réimpressions d’ouvrages espagnols” [Thus, the very few French texts, which manage to reach those in Havana to whom our language is no longer a foreign tongue, are devoured

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identifying their gods, known as *orishas*, with Roman Catholic saints. This allowed them to clandestinely worship the *orishas* while externally acknowledging the Catholic saints.

<sup>113</sup> Massé is alluding to a long-standing hagiography of Black saints in the Catholic Church. Among such saints is St. Monica Widow born in Tagaste, North Africa, 333; dead at Ostia, near Rome in 387. Among fascinating biographical details is her marriage to a pagan named Patritius. She had three children: Augustine, Navigius and Perpetua. Augustine was a rebel. As a result, his mother, after kicking him out, had a vision which urged her to pray for him. He eventually repented. In 1850, at Notre Dame de Sion at Paris, an Association of Christian mothers under the patronage of Saint Monica was established. Its object was mutual prayer for sons and husbands who had gone astray. For more information on the life of Saint Monica, see *The Catholic Encyclopedia* Vol XVI. Our Lady of Candlemas is a patroness of the Canary Islands. Our Lady of Candlemas is syncretized with Oya, the Orisha of the Winds and Lightning.

avidly. London, the United States and Bordeaux clandestinely send them translations of the most audacious French books of the 18<sup>th</sup> century as well as reprints of Spanish books] (391). In this statement, Massé points to London, the United States and Bordeaux as the channels through which “subversive” texts enter Cuba to counteract Spanish government’s zeal to keep those “sacrilegious” texts from poisoning the minds. It goes without saying that only a select few, which has the ability to understand French, took advantage of those texts, undoubtedly influential in paving the way for nation building and self-governance.

What Massé is referring to follows a long-standing tradition of French texts that have influenced the Spanish colonies. Roberts, in *The French in the West Indies* (1929), sums up France’s role in the following assertion: “The France of liberal eighteenth-century thought, of the great Revolution and the Napoleonic Era, shone as a fierce white light to the Spanish colonies of the New World” (233). Then, quoting F. García Calderón (1832-1905), the Peruvian historian, Roberts specifies how those French texts were instrumental in laying the ideological foundation for the First Spanish-American republics:

In the *Encyclopedia* we find the intellectual origin of the South American upheavals. The patricians in the archaic colonial cities smiled upon Voltaire; they adopted the essential ideals of Rousseau, the social contract, the sovereignty of the people, and the optimism which conceded supreme rights to the human spirit untainted by culture. Bolívar had read the *Contrat Social* in a volume that had formed part of the library of Napoleon; by will, he left this book to an intimate friend.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> *Encyclopédie* (1761-1765); Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Du Contrat Social* (1762).

Other books that were widely read in the Spanish colonies include Abbé G. T. Raynal's *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements des Européens dans les deux Indes* [*Philosophical and Political History of the Establishments and Commerce of the Europeans in the Two Indies*] (1770), as well as Charles de Secondat Montesquieu (1689-1755), *De L'Esprit des Lois* (1778). Those books, as well as the other texts which were clandestinely introduced to Cuba through London, Bordeaux and the United States, were smuggled in the other Spanish colonies.<sup>115</sup> The Peruvian friar Diego Cisneros (1737-1812), Librarian and confessor of Princess Maria Luisa, was influential in the dissemination of forbidden texts.<sup>116</sup>

From the standpoint of fashion, Havana aspired to the ideals of Europe. Massé reveals to us the names of some popular stores, suggesting how the sugar aristocrats spent the profit earned from slave labor. Massé describes the most popular street, Ricla, as Havana's commercial mecca: "C'est la rue la plus commerçante, la plus animée, elle correspond à la porte principale de la ville...Des deux côtés se présentent des boutiques ou tiendas de ropas. Elles sont petites, mais élégantes et propres." [It is the most commercial street, the most animated. It corresponds to the main entrance to the city....

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<sup>115</sup> Abbé Raynal's book contains the famous passage, which was influential in Toussaint L'Ouverture's formation as the mastermind of the Revolution of Saint-Domingue. C.L.R James, in his analysis of L'Ouverture's rise as a leader, quotes Abbé Raynal's astute commentaries on Saint-Domingue prior to the Great Revolution, "...A courageous chief only is wanted. Where is he, that great man whom Nature owes to her vexed, oppressed and tormented children? Where is he? He will appear, doubt it not; he will come forth and raise the sacred standard of liberty. This venerable signal will gather around him the companions of his misfortune. More impetuous than the torrents, they will everywhere liable the indelible traces of their just resentment. Everywhere people will bless the name of the hero who shall have reestablished the rights of the human race; everywhere will they raise trophies in his honour" (25). Toussaint L'ouverture found his calling in Abbé Raynal's work.

<sup>116</sup> See the *Enciclopedia Ilustrada del Perú*, ed. Alberto Tauro, Vol. 2.

From both sides are boutiques or clothing stores. They are small, but elegant and clean] (200).<sup>117</sup> Here, Massé not only is reporting his observations; also included are details that may interest future travelers who wish to acquire information concerning some of the accoutrement that was in fashion in Cuba at that time. When the author states that the “shops are small but elegant,” it is to be understood that those evaluations confirm what his eyes are accustomed to in Europe.

One only has to focus on the names of the *tiendas* to realize that haute couture has always had a foreign accent. Some of the signs of the boutiques read: “*LE BON AMI, LE NAVIRE, LA TOUR D’ARGENT, LE GÉNÉRAL BALESTEROS* [sic], *LE GÉNÉRAL CUESTA, LE SIÈGE DE SARAGOSSE*” (111).<sup>118</sup> Massé ends this paragraph reaffirming his patriotism by criticizing a painting he saw in a boutique called *París cerrado*, on which the painter tried to re-enact the siege of Paris by a Spanish Army. He simply concludes: “le peintre rêvait” [the painter was dreaming], alluding to the impossibility of life imitating art, since Spain’s days of conquest were over.

Describing the *tiendas*, giving us an idea of the bourgeoisie’s affinity for foreign goods, Massé re-plays several scenes that take us back to the time of his actual visit. In so doing, he reiterates some of the themes he developed in the chapter entitled

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<sup>117</sup> The author also comments on the name of the street. Ricla Street is called “Calle de la Muralla.” The street is named after Conde de la Ricla, Ambrosio Funes de Villapando (b. Zaragoza 1720-d. Madrid 1780). A career soldier, he was named Capitán General of Cuba in 1763. His military prowess helped him reorganize the Cuban Army and fortify Havana. Upon his return to Spain, he was named Capitán General of Catalonia and Secretary of War by Carlos III. Massé, referring to the name of the street in Cuba, quips: “Ce nom de Ricla était celui du gouverneur à qui on doit la muralla actuelle, ou rempart. Une espèce d’ingratitude populaire a fait conserver le nom de l’oeuvre et déapprendre celui de l’auteur” [That name Ricla was that of the governor responsible for the present muralla or rampart. Due to a sort of popular ungratefulness, the name of the work is kept while that of its author has been unlearned (111).

<sup>118</sup> Massé uses all capital letters to indicate the names of the shops.

“Excursions dans les faubourgs” [Excursions in the small villages], especially how narrow the pedestrians’ walkways are in Cuba. In this episode, the issue is compounded with the presence of horses whose owners are shopping. Massé, out of quality of life concerns, blames the local authorities for allowing such a commotion. However, the business owners, people only concerned with profit, undoubtedly welcomed such animation.

Massé does not stop at simply listing the stores. He also includes a sociological analysis of the shoppers and the shopkeepers. His pen, like a camera, describes in great details the rich women buying goods from their *volantas*. Massé uses the description to differentiate between the rich women who were not treated like “*petites fripponnes*” [vile rogues] (113). Merchandises were brought to them in their *volantas*. The author then revisits the theme of Havana nights, where everything suddenly undergoes a rebirth. At night, once again, along la *Muralla*, weather permitting, one may observe “un spectacle très agréable dans cette foule de beautés qui viennent y faire leurs emplettes” [a very pleasant spectacle in that crowd of beauties that come shopping] (113). Those details are very important in that they reveal a flourishing economy as well as a certain level of opulence that permits the acquisition of luxurious goods.

Massé seizes this opportunity to teach us a lesson concerning the ways of the rich in Havana: “Il n’est pas permis aux femmes blanches, qui ne sont pas tout-à-fait misérables, de se montrrer à pied durant le jour, si ce n’est à la messe” [It is not permitted to white women that are not so poor, to go on foot during the day, unless they are going to

mass] (113).<sup>119</sup> In this sense, night symbolizes freedom for those women, freedom from societal restraints, according to Massé. Therefore, “que la soirée promette du calme, de la sérénité, et l’on verra sortir de leur prison mille joyeux essaims, tout impatiens [sic] de respirer un air plus libre” [when the night promises calm, serenity, one will see coming out of their prison, thousands of happy legions, eager to breathe a freer air] (113). Massé is communicating more than scenes of merry women: his attitude towards them is also suggested here. Similar to the author who uses the analogy of birds describing the *volantas*, he is now depicting the women as “les écoliers en vacances” [school children on vacation] (113), a phrase that connotes emancipation, as well as the women’s pristine behavior. He makes similar remarks later in the narrative, describing the tone of voice of Creole women as generally infantine. Finally, to complete his view of the women, he compares them to “les papillons verts” [green butterflies] (176). This is significant considering that butterflies were once caterpillars. Massé’s allusion may be reminiscent of the amount of makeup those women had to use as well as their colorful outfits.

With Massé as our escort, we re-visit stores, the basic elements of style as well as beauty tips practiced by 19<sup>th</sup> century women of the Cuban elite. Massé, alludes, in particular, to an anonymous ablution, which he believes, is the reason that the faces of the Spanish Creole women are more luminous than those of the French Creoles. That elixir, taken orally, is also used to cure certain illnesses (344). Massé also gives us another beauty tip practiced by the women in Cuba: the use of *cascarilla* or “coquilles d’oeufs

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<sup>119</sup> Massé’s explanation here allows us to understand Ampère’s statement: “il est fâcheux que l’indolence naturelle aux Créoles ne permette pas aux dames Havanaises de marcher” [it is frustrating that the indolence that is natural to Creole women do not allow the women of Havana to walk] (182). The understanding, according to Massé, is that they walk only to go to mass in the daytime. Ampère’s statement seems to suggest an expedient conclusion reached by a traveler whose trip to Cuba lasted one month.

réduites en poudre très fine” [egg shells reduced into a fine powder] (345). Women will then spray the shell with water and then rub it against their face as talcum powder.

As for clothing, “l’habillement national des femmes se compose de la *basquina* ou jupe, et de la mantilla ou voile; le corset fait une seule pièce avec la *basquina*; le tout est de couleur noire” [the national outfit of women is the *basquina* or skirt, and the *mantilla* or veil, the corset made of one piece with the *basquina*, the whole thing is black] (115). Massé, envisioning that the *basquina* constitutes a uniform, believes that the *basquina* creates harmony among all the different classes and races because they wear that same outfit. Massé then proceeds with a sociological study of the rich women of Havana who are forced to give their clothes to their slaves due to a lack of furniture to store them (367). As a result, female slaves would parade in the streets, clad in fine clothing, but barefoot. Another element of style, worthy of Massé’s attention is the use of the *cocuyos*, a type of fireflies, which women use as ornaments to decorate their hair at night when they go for walks. The author also observes that the *cocuyos* are sometimes strategically placed around the women’s breasts “when they feel that their breast should draw attention” (331). He ends this depiction with a slight attack against the women as heavy spenders, stating that the *cocuyo* is one decoration that does not cost husbands an arm and a leg (331).

### **Of Education**

In travelogues, the inclination to criticize the Other often assumes supremacy over objectivity, which is the task of the social scientist (Wheeler 51). In Massé’s diary, however, the effort to be as thorough as possible in his representation permeates through



all the chapters. Although there may be a lack of originality, although he may have filled up the pages with information gathered while in Cuba, his constant effort to leave a complete testimony of his visit should not be totally undermined. Maybe in Massé's mind he was doing history in writing the diary. This urged him to make his text as viable a reference text as the texts he consulted to provide facts and figures on Cuba, suggesting that he was not writing for the sake of it, for showcasing his knowledge. At any rate, his diary allows us powerful insights into the goings on of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Massé focuses both on the intellectual elite on the rise, the creation of schools to spread knowledge as well as some of the literary trends in vogue during the time of his visit. The efforts of French/European educators and professionals are highlighted in the foundation of the first schools. Massé underscores the willingness of Dr. Chiappi, a distinguished Italian Doctor, to invigorate the medical sciences in Cuba.<sup>120</sup> However, he was caught in a bureaucratic quagmire, which caused the science of anatomy to regress even more in Cuba. He also mentions M. Vergne, a French artist, who was influential in creating a school of drawing. In addition, Massé points out the existence of free masonry; he relies on hearsay to describe this group as an intellectual clique, with eleven lodges in Havana. He is also informed that members of the clergy belong to this group. This comes as a shock because being a priest and a freemason is oxymoronic at best, especially when one reflects on the fact that freemasonry is deeply rooted in positivism.

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<sup>120</sup> Dr. José Chiappi (?-1834) founded the first private Academy of Medicine in Havana. He started teaching from his house located on Calle San Iganacio, 31, in Havana. Dr. Chiappi's area of concentration was anatomy. Noteworthy is his use of wax figures in his course, figures which were acquired by the Patriotic Society of Havana and were incorporated in the School of Anatomy at the Military Hospital of San Ambrosio. For ampler information concerning the history of the medical sciences in Havana, see Martínez-Fortún Foyo, J.A., *Cronología Médica Cubana* (1949).

The situation of the sciences, still in the dark ages, according to Massé, comes to the forefront. To buttress his argument, he alludes to Humboldt's theory on the reasons that the sciences as well as the arts were not progressing in Cuba. Humboldt, according to Massé, believes that the "production mentality," the great emphasis placed on economy, subsequently atrophies the arts: "les sciences et les arts, malgré la protection de la Société Patriotique de l'île de Cuba, n'avancent qu'avec beaucoup de lenteur, dans un pays où la production et le commerce des denrées coloniales occupent exclusivement la pensée des citoyens" [the sciences and the arts, in spite of the protection of the Patriotic Society of the island of Cuba, advance slowly, in a country where production and the commerce of colonial goods exclusively occupy the thought of the citizens] (385). Massé sums up the scarcity of knowledge, the total ignorance of anatomy, the lack of a laboratory to perform dissections, and the use of obsolete practices that have not changed since the Arabs brought them to Spain: "La médecine, qui, dans plusieurs de ses parties, est aujourd'hui si vivement éclairée, se trouve telle encore que les Arabes l'ont léguée aux Espagnols" [Medical science, which, in many of its branches is very advanced, is still today, in the same condition that the Arabs passed it on to the Spaniards] (383).<sup>121</sup>

### Literary Trends

Massé dedicates some space to the development of an intelligentsia in Cuba. Ampère differs from that standpoint in that he stresses the inexistence of a movement of

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<sup>121</sup> It must be noted that the Patriotic Society, formed by the rising bourgeoisie and landowners, had among other objectives, the intent to promote public education. Among its numerous achievements, the Patriotic Society was instrumental in the creation of the first laboratory of Anatomy in the Military Hospital of San Ambrosio in Havana, inaugurated in April of 1797. The backward condition of the science of anatomy the

intellectuals on the island. Massé, on the other hand, gives an overview of the different publications he was able to peruse. His initial comments concern Cuba's situation as a colony and the efforts that were made to maintain the status quo, to keep the motherland in good standing. Massé makes the following comments concerning the censorship that hovers over the island: "pendant la guerre de la Péninsule, les journaux donnaient peu de nouvelles; mais ils renfermaient beaucoup de diatribes et de chansons. Ceux qui se font annoncer dans les journaux y prennent toutes les qualités, et y reçoivent toutes les épithètes qui chatouillent le plus doucement les oreilles" [during the war of the Peninsula, the newspapers did not give much news; but they contained many diatribes and songs. Those that make it to the newspapers take all sorts of qualities and receive all the epithets that caress the ears] (387).

That freedom to write anything except that which was considered dangerous to Spain created a profusion of so-called men of letters. With much irony, Massé alludes to an overabundance of so-called *hommes de lettres* in Havana, and their propensity for plagiarizing:

Aussi la ville de la Havane abonde-t-elle en hommes célèbres dans tous les genres, ainsi que son port en bergantins y fragatas famosos, hermosos y muy veleros. Tous les usurpateurs étrangers de réputation et de titres sont certains de faire dans les journaux havanais un acte de prise de possession qui ne sera pas contredit. Les Français n'ont pas été les derniers à profiter de cet avantage [Thus in the city of Havana abound men of letters in all the genres, just like its port contains several bergantins and famous frigates, beautiful and watchful. All the renowned foreign usurps will sure appropriate works that will not be contradicted. The French were not the last ones to take advantage of that situation] (388).

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author is referring to may be just a comparison to the advancement in that branch that was known in Europe at that time.

Massé then proceeds with a few details concerning Simón Bergagno y Villegas (1781-1828). Before providing us with the details, Massé re-evaluates the state of the press in Havana, once again: “La presse a gémi davantage dans le peu de temps qu’elle a été libre, ou si l’on veut licencieuse; car elle n’était pas autre chose avec le fameux Simon Bergagno y Villegas...” The press languished more in the short time that it was free, or if you want licentious; because it wasn’t otherwise with the famous Simon Bergagno y Villegas] (389). However, with Simón Bergagno y Villegas’s efforts the press knew some success.

Massé attributes its success to the scarcity of profound works as well as demanding receptors in Havana, ignoring Bergano’s pioneering efforts in establishing parameters that would later give *couleur locale* to Cuban letters. He writes the following review:

C’était une espèce de Scarron pour la configuration du corps et pour les bouffonneries. La plupart de ses faceties ne sont que des caricatures écrites; des expressions bouffonnes qui n’ont pas leurs analogues dans notre langue en font souvent tout le sel, et il serait difficile de citer quelques morceaux de ce hargneux et mordant folliculaire qui ne perdissent pas, dans une traduction, le mérite qu’on a pu trouver à l’original  
[It was sort of a Scarron for the configuration of the body and all sorts of buffooneries. The majority of its farces are but written caricatures; they are buffoon expressions, which do not have their equivalent in our language; it would be impossible to quote some of that incisive follicular, which would not lose in a translation the merit of the original.] (389)

Massé also evaluates Antonio J. Valdés’ *El Patriota Americano*. He makes the following observations: “Ici comme ailleurs des bouffonneries malignes sont plus heureuses que des productions graves, quel que soit leur mérite” [here and there malicious buffooneries are happier than grave productions, whatever their merit] (390).

De Cassagnac also recognizes the poet Juan Francisco Manzano (1797-1854). He was a mestizo, the son of a mulatto and a black slave. He bought his freedom at the age of thirty. Manzano wrote his *Autobiografía* (1835), as well as two collections of poems: *Cantos a Lesbia* (1821) and *Flores pasajeras* (1830). De Cassagnac, however, minimizes Manzano's achievements as a literate slave. Instead, he emphasizes the flaws of his character, mainly his promiscuity. De Cassagnac's short-sightedness might have deprived us of valuable information concerning the poet's life and works.

### **Equestrian**

Massé also describes horseback riding first as a practical means of transportation, which he advises foreigners, especially those who intend to work in Cuba, to consider as a valuable investment. Horse riding as a diversion, on the other hand, is considered as the Monteros' passion. Massé labels it as a violent activity in which men and women participate. Related to this sport is bullfighting, characteristic of the Spaniards. The author labels it as barbaric.

### **Cigars**

Any treatment of Cuba would be incomplete without a mention of cigars. Massé believes that such an omission would have been unpardonable since tobacco is a vital product, one that is consumed everywhere, and indiscriminately: "Prêtres, moines, religieuses, jolies femmes, petits garçons, petites filles, noirs et blancs, tout fume" [Priests, monks, religious folks, pretty women, little boys, little girls, everyone smokes] (328). Massé describes tobacco not only as a fashion statement, but also as a strange

element that unifies all the socioeconomic classes in Cuba. He provides the following illustration: “Un cigare entre vos doigts, arrêtez le premier individu que vous rencontrerez dans la rue fumant, et dites-lui *Candela*; fût-ce un grand d’Espagne et de première classe, il ôtera son cigare de la bouche, et vous le présentera; vous allumerez le vôtre, et vous en serez quitte pour une légère salutation” [A cigar between your fingers, stop the first person that you meet on the street who is smoking and say *Light*; whether it be a first class Spanish potentate, he will take his cigar out of his mouth and present it to you so that you may light yours, and he will more likely greet you] (330). With such a pervasive use of tobacco, it is understandable how Massé reaches the conclusion that in Cuba, “on y supporterait plus patiemment la famine qu’une disette de tabac” [famine would be tolerated more patiently than a shortage of tobacco] (327).

Ampère also gives us powerful insights as to the existence of the phenomenon called tobacco in the New World. Amazingly, he reserves more space to cigars than any other topic. His well-researched text contains a historical perspective of tobacco as well as a sociological and spiritual analysis, replete with anecdotes concerning how certain luminaries became addicted to smoking. Ampère also includes the attitude of the Catholic Church towards tobacco, a vice, as other venial sins, but one towards which the Church leaders demonstrate a great deal of passion.<sup>122</sup>

## Lottery

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<sup>122</sup> Guillermo Cabrera Infante (1929-), in *Holy Smoke*, presents an interesting perspective of tobacco, and its pervasiveness among the difference strata of the Cuban society. Also see Ampère’s history of tobacco in my translation section.

The chapter on lottery offers a historical perspective, an interesting view of how Lady Fortune operates during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Massé is the only one of the travelers to find lottery noteworthy. He meticulously describes the birth of the lottery system as well as the elaborate rituals that accompany each drawing:

La loterie royale de l'île de Cuba fut érigée en l'année 1812. Il y a par an quatorze tirages dont un est extraordinaire. Le nombre des numéros est de vingt mille; celui des lots est de cent. Les deux numéros les plus voisins de ceux auxquels il est échu des lots considérables ont droit a une somme proportionnée. La cérémonie du tirage se fait avec beaucoup de pompe et de solennité. Les vingt mille numéros, inscrits sur autant de boules, sont roulés dans un grand globe creux; cent boules portant la somme des lots divers, sont roulées dans un autre globe; et deux petits garçons tirent simultanément, celui-ci un numéro, celui-là un des cent boules sur lesquelles sont marqués les lots

[Cuba's Royal Lottery was founded in 1812. It consists of fourteen draws a year, with one major draw. The number of numbers is twenty thousand; that of winning numbers is one hundred. The two numbers that are the closest to the winning numbers have the right to a proportionate sum of money. The drawing ceremony is done with a lot of pomp and solemnity. The twenty thousand numbers, written on as many balls, are rolled up in a big hollow globe and two little boys draw simultaneously; this one a number; that one one of the hundred balls upon which the winning numbers are written.] (120)

Massé provides another description of a lottery drawing in the café El Comercio in Havana. One wonders whether the differences in presentation are also reflected in the outcomes of the drawings. This particular description deals with a drawing, not as pompous as the above-mentioned one, but as a reunion of all the underdogs: "les figures les plus dégoûtantes, de physiognomies toutes plus sinistres, d'habillemens [sic] tous plus sales ou plus déchirés" [the most disgusting faces, of the most sinister physiognomies, of dirty and torn clothes] (120). The most interesting feature is the presence of a little boy crying out the winning numbers. Massé observes: "un petit garçon crie les numéros sortans [sic], et met dans sa voix une espèce de psalmodie qui tient du Moresque. On

dirait d'un marabout appelant les fidèles à la prière..." [a little boy shouts out the winning numbers and his voice has sort of psalmody which has a Moorish tone. One would say he is a priest calling his congregation to prayer] (120).

### Theater Life

Massé, in that aspect of life in Cuba, begins with a description of what in modern parlance would be considered activities related to a circus. He underscores the preeminence of the French in such diversions, in places called *caballitos* or carousels.

Massé describes the following:

Là, des écuyers et des sauteurs, la plupart Français, montrent leur savoir faire aux Espagnols, qui aiment beaucoup et les sauts périlleux, et les tours de force, et les jeux équestres. Pour exciter davantage leur curiosité, on exécute quelquefois des pantomimes tragiques où les têtes volent, où le sang jaillit avec un art dont l'escamotage fait tous les frais, mais qui n'en est pas moins déplorable  
[There, riding masters, leapers, most of them French, display their dexterity to the Spaniards, who are fond of somersaults and equestrian exercises. To arouse their curiosity even more, they sometimes perform tragic pantomimes, where heads fly, where blood gushes with art] (169).

As for theatrical representations at the Tacón theatre, founded in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Massé underlines the preponderance of one-act farces called *sainetes*, and of "traductions ou imitations de nos meilleurs opéras comiques modernes. Les Espagnols, comme tous les peuples méridionaux, sont très-sensibles aux impressions de la musique" [translations or imitations of our best modern comic operas. Spaniards, like all southern people, are very perceptive to musical expressions] (169). Massé ends this section with an evaluation of the theater of Havana: "Beaucoup supérieur à tous ceux des États-Unis, tant pour l'édifice, dont l'intérieur est assez bien distribué, que pour les acteurs et la musique"



[Much superior to that of the United States, from the standpoint of the building as well as for its interior which is evenly distributed for the actors as well as for the music] (171).

By leaving us their diaries, the travelers allow us to witness different aspects of life in 19<sup>th</sup> century Cuba. Although our perspective is as limited as the fragmented view that the travelers present, we find ourselves in the privileged position of re-visiting that fascinating past. Recounting their cross-cultural experiences, the travelers' lives intersect with what constituted realities that were essentially Cuban. Those realities, in turn, were expressed from the perspective of European men who traveled with their own agenda. Along those vertices, through the diaries came alive streets filled with elegant *volantas* as well as Black *caleseros* living in infamy. This permits us to witness the contrast between the opulence of the women aboard those vehicles to the wretched condition of the slaves who drive them, as the travelers delineate cultural elements characteristic of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, characteristic of Cuba. Depending on the traveler's length of visit, mood, and general attitude towards the Other, we observe some topoi in the narration, confirming the idea that, although the voyages did not take place at the same time, some cultural elements associated with the Hispanic world as well as elements that are typically Cuban, such as Cuban cigars, famous among aficionados, have survived through time.

## Chapter VI

### The Diaries: Towards a Historiography of Cuba

“If one wants to learn about the past or about historical context, delving into travelers’ accounts of foreign peoples and foreign places becomes a necessity” (Brettell 125). This statement sums up the influential role of travelogues in the formation of the cultural and historical identity of a people. In an effort to leave their impressions on all aspects of life, for the purpose of disseminating their knowledge of history and culture, Etienne Massé, Jean-Jacques Ampère, Granier de Cassagnac and Duvergier de Hauranne attempted to present a historical perspective of 19<sup>th</sup> century Cuba. In their testimonials, as the narrators sift through the complex issues of the period, various facets of Cuban life are revealed. In *L’isle de Cuba et La Havane*, Massé stresses the importance of travelogues in the chapter entitled “Histoire naturelle de l’île”:

C’est en effet par la considération des avantages que peut offrir la nature des lieux, et par la connaissance non moins essentielle des mœurs et du caractère des peuplades naissantes, que l’esprit philosophique peut s’élever jusqu’à leur promettre un avenir plus ou moins prospère, une destinée plus ou moins glorieuse [It is in fact through the consideration of the advantages which nature can offer of the places, and through the no less necessary essential knowledge of the customs and character of the new peoples, that the philosophical spirit can elevate itself to promise them a future that is more or less prosperous, and somewhat a glorious destiny.] (217)

Massé thus underscores the influence of travelogues in the construction of a certain ethnography and an anthropology of the areas visited. He particularly emphasizes the traveler's mission as a propagator of civilization because through his efforts “l’esprit philosophique peut s’élever jusqu’à leur promettre un avenir plus ou moins prospère” [the philosophical mind can elevate itself...to promise a more glorious future to developing

nations] (217). Granier de Cassagnac proposes something similar in the preface to his

*Voyage aux Antilles:*

C'est donc pour les hommes appliqués à l'étude des lois, à la pratique des affaires politiques, et que leur condition entraîne à se faire et à porter un jugement sur les sociétés en général, et sur la société coloniale en particulier, que l'auteur a décrit patiemment la vie, les tendances, la condition matérielle et morale du nègre importé sur le sol américain...il a mis les hommes intelligents et sérieux sur la voie de celle que la science sociale peut lui préparer pour l'avenir.

[It is therefore to men dedicated to the study of laws, to the practice of politics, and whose condition leads them to pass judgments on societies in general, and on the colonial society in particular, that the author patiently describes the life, the tendencies, the material and moral condition of the Negro brought to America...intelligent and serious men, in the name of the social sciences can prepare a better future for the Negro.] (vi)

De Cassagnac's intent in his preface is obvious. He is dedicating his book to a group of learned and powerful men who hold the destiny of the Other, particularly the Negro in the New World. In that sense, he shares Massé's views. Both men see their roles as Europe's agents, spreading civilization/science in the land of the "barbarians," similarly to the way religion was imposed during the early conquests.

Massé was more astute than his countrymen. He was also mindful of the other assets that made Cuba a vital case study. He delineated those reasons: Cuba's strategic location as a fortified city, its cultural/ethnic diversity; and the exchange of ideas engendered by foreign travelers. From the "Détails historiques sur la Havane," the author indicates Cuba's strategic location: "entre la démocratie ambitieuse des États-Unis et les insurrections de l'Amérique méridionale" [between the ambitious democracy of the United States and the insurrections of South America] (141). Massé also comments on the impact of foreign influences that are constantly affecting Cuba's culture, which results into a "population singulièrement mêlée, où d'anciens usages, d'anciens dogmes,

d'anciennes maximes de religion et de politique se trouvent en présence de principes nouveaux" [a population singularly mixed, or of old mores, of old dogmas, maxims of religion and politics in the presence of new principles] (141). Thus, Cuba's society is not stagnant because of that influx of foreign influences since "l'esprit, les moeurs, les habitudes antiques sont heurtées chaque jour par un esprit, par des moeurs, par des habitudes étrangères" [each day, the intellect, the mores, the old customs are faced by mores and foreign customs] (141).

Massé is highlighting the strategic location of Cuba, which, among other factors, earns it the title Pearl of the Antilles. As a social scientist, Massé draws attention to the continuous shock between old customs and new customs, old ideas as well as new ones, which tend to alter the very fabric of that society. As a visionary, he mentions Cuba within the context of the United States' ambitious democracy, a democracy which had to grapple with its own slavery issues. Massé's keen interest in socioeconomic issues clearly influences his vision of Cuba. He is the only one amongst the travelers to dedicate five chapters to different topics related to Cuban history. Those different chapters follow the trajectory of Massé's apprenticeship of sort. This apprenticeship performs a dual function: as he is learning about Cuba, he is also speaking directly to the reader, inviting him/her to participate in the experience. This experience also reveals Massé's own erudition in matters of history. He does not just provide his observations and findings from textbooks; he comments on them, compromising his objectivity. He begins with preliminary observations, but as his knowledge/acquaintance with the region increased, he provided more details, stronger/harsher comments. When Massé rests, his friend B. continues to provide us with details about Havana. This is done through the inclusion of

fragments of letters, which the two friends shared. Granier de Cassaganac's comments are scattered throughout the diaries, as he presents accounts based on secondary texts on Cuba he has read. Duvergier de Hauranne did not dedicate specific chapters to the history of Cuba. Their

Massé's outlook includes factual data borrowed from secondary sources, current events and anecdotes that are spiced up with the author's peculiar interpretation of historical characters and historical events. He offers, in this sense, a re-writing of history, as historical, mythological, literary characters as well as news stories during the time of his visit are neatly weaved together to form one narrative web. In this chapter, I propose a comparative analysis of the travelers' treatment of Cuba's political history. I will argue that those texts, while not considered historical essays *per se*, provide powerful insights on Cuba's history, as historical characters and events are scrutinized.

### **Cuba in the Beginning**

In the chapter entitled "Détails historiques sur la Havane," Massé provides us with historical details that are not mentioned in the other diaries. This suggests that he was more thorough in his attempt to leave a comprehensive text on Cuba. For instance, he mentioned the old name of the port of Havana, Puerto de Carenas. Then, he alludes to the fact that "un autre établissement avait été fait le 15 juillet 1515, à la côte du Sud, sous le nom de San-Cristoval [sic] de la Habana" [another edifice was built on July 15, 1515 on the South Coast, under the name Saint Christopher of Havana] (136). This place, according to Massé, combines both the mythical and the historical. The "ignorant" of the country, states the Frenchman, "assurent aux étrangers qu'une jeune Indienne engagea

Colomb à débarquer, en lui criant: Habana” [a young Indian woman invited Columbus to land, while shouting: Habana] (130).<sup>123</sup> Massé then dedicated the rest of the narration to the famous Mapou tree underneath where the first mass was celebrated. The author reveals his fascination for that plant known in the French colony as Mapou.<sup>124</sup> The tree becomes a character in the narrative as Massé calls it a living monument: “Ne parle-t-il pas au Coeur du vrai philosophe un monument semblable? Ce végétal encore debout n’est-il pas pour un historien la plus respectable comme la plus touchante des antiquités? [Doesn’t a similar monument speak to the Heart of a true philosopher? This tree that is still standing, isn’t it for an historian the most respectable as the most touching of antiquities?] (131). After posing those questions, Massé invites the prospective traveler to venerate the tree:

Saluez cet arbre vénérable, saluez-le par le souvenir des principes religieux dont votre enfance fut sans doute nourrie; vous penserez au Dieu qui jusqu’ici vous a protégé; vous penserez à vos parens [sic] qui vous ont fait connaître sa puissance: vos premiers pas sur cette terre lointaine seront ainsi consacrés par un hommage religieux et par l’attendrissement de l’amour filial  
[Salute that venerable tree; salute it by the memory of the religious principles which you undoubtedly learned during your childhood; you will think about God,

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<sup>123</sup> This is just one version concerning Columbus’ errors as he arrived in Cuba. Massé also treated the more popular version of Columbus’s belief that he heard the name of El gran Khan, as he was obstinate in his theory that he was in the East. Later in the diary, Massé proposes another well-known version as to the origin of the name Havana. This is a suggestion that as the traveler visited more places, read more texts and became a seasoned traveler, he continued to spread knowledge. In this process, he augmented his own knowledge. In chapter XXI, entitled “Tombeau de Colomb.- Histoire de l’île de Cuba” [Christopher Columbus’ Tomb.- History of the Island of Cuba], Massé writes more extensively on the history of Cuba. After his friend B. left Cuba, he found more time to hone his knowledge of the history of the island. Here, he alludes to Cuba’s original name, Juana, as well as Columbus’ tomb, which he believes is to be found in Cuba. Massé quips that even Columbus’ corpse did not know any repose since it had to navigate the continents in order to find a place to finally rest in peace.

<sup>124</sup> The *ceiba*, called Mapou tree in the French colonies, is almost as notorious as the baobab. It is legendary and is known for being a shrine where people offer sacrifices to the gods. Huge and awe-inspiring, its presence calls to a sort of animism, as alluded to by Massé. The author is clearly deifying the tree, amplifying the idea of religious syncretism that already exists in the colony as a result of the clash between Europe, Africa and the New World.

who, up to this moment, has protected you; you will think about your parents who taught you of his power: your first steps on that far away land will be consecrated by a religious homage and the tenderness of filial love.] (132)

With that invitation, Massé reminds the reader of God as the creator and affirms his faith as a devout catholic. He also advises the future traveler to venerate nature. Massé's didactic appeal urges the reader to meditate on God, family and country. In this sense, Massé uses his diary as a memorial to the Providence who has protected him throughout the perilous journey. Thus, the triangular paradigm of 'God-homeland-family' is utilized to keep the reader focused by reminding him that he is not alone. That is why, subsequent to this invitation to pay homage to this venerable tree, Massé, in spite of this noble and uplifting experience, never loses touch with reality. He quickly advises the traveler to be resilient: "Mais gardez-vous néanmoins de trop vous attendrir; votre âme aura besoin de fermeté contre les perfidies d'un climat qui n'est point le votre" [Nevertheless, refrain yourself from being too soft; your soul will need to be resilient against the vicissitudes of a climate which is not yours] (133).

As Massé focused on the importance of the tree, it appears that he had lost track of the aim of the chapter to provide historical details on Cuba. However, this is typical of his style; he often leaves the topic at hand to indulge in the deepest of philosophical reflections or to make suggestions on a different subject. This functions like a brief pause from the main theme, distracting the reader and also providing information on Massé's mental processes and beliefs. He then informs us of the central role of the port of Havana, as a meeting place for vessels in route to Europe, subsequent to "la découverte du nouveau canal de Bahama par le pilote Alaminos," [the discovery of the new canal of

Bahama by the pilot Alaminos] (132).<sup>125</sup> Continuing with the history lesson, Massé paints us a picture of the houses in 16<sup>th</sup> century Cuba, stating that in “1536, les maisons de la Havana n’étaient construites qu’en bois, lorsque, se présentant tout-à-coup, un corsaire français menaça d’y mettre le feu, si on ne lui comptait sept cents ducats sur-le champ” [there were only wooden houses in Cuba, when suddenly came a French corsair which threatened to set the city on fire if they did not give him seven hundred ducats on the spot] (133). The pirate was given the demanded amount, and then three Spanish vessels were sent chasing him in order to recover the cowardly acquired loot. However, the Spanish vessels were also seized. Massé, quoting an anonymous historian, blames “la cobardia [sic] de los oficiales[sic]” [the cowardice of the officials] for such a loss (133). To add insult to injury, the same pirate later returned and demanded seven hundred more. In order to avoid such untimely and costly visits by the enemy in the future, “les Havanais construisirent leurs maisons en pierre et commencèrent à élever quelques fortifications” [the people of Havana built their houses in stone and started erecting a number of forts] (133). Massé mentions, in particular, the construction of the fort El Morro by J.B. Antonelli as well as that of San-Salvador de la Punta.<sup>126</sup>

In his description of the early days of the establishment of Spanish colonial rule in Cuba, Massé summarizes the role of both known and obscure actors in the establishment

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<sup>125</sup> Antón de Alaminos (1482-1520), one of the pilots who traveled with Columbus during his third and fourth expeditions. After those voyages, he stayed in Hispaniola, and then moved to Cuba. As a pilot, he played an instrumental role in the expeditions that led to the conquest of Mexico.

<sup>126</sup> Juan Bautista Antonelli (1550-1616), military engineer, started to work for Philip II as foreman of military constructions. To his credit is El Morro, which was built between 1589-1600. Its construction culminated under the reign of Governor Don Pedro Valdés, who governed from 1600-1607.



of the colonial regime. He calls attention to the role of Diego Velázquez in the foundation of the first cities in Cuba, namely Baracoa, (which he named Nuestra señora de la Asunción de Baracoa), Santiago and Trinidad in the south, Bayamo, Santa-María del Puerto Príncipe and San-Juan de los Remedios and Espíritu Santo.<sup>127</sup> However, Massé also mentioned Velázquez' role in the political assassination of Hatuey, and concluded that Velázquez found it justified, since that act of terror served as a motivating factor that suppressed future attempts to resist against the Spaniards. According to Massé, it was Velázquez, who prepared Hernán Cortés' expedition to Mexico and commissioned Bartolomé de Las Casas and Pánfilo de Narváez to visit Cuba.<sup>128</sup>

### **Massé's Account of the British Siege of Cuba (1762)**

In another chapter dedicated to another historical episode, "Siège et prise de la Havane par les Anglais," [Siege and Occupation of Havana by the British], Massé chronicles the events with the skills of a war historian. Recounting the siege, Massé depicts the events with such poignancy that one would think he had witnessed them. In addition, he analyzes every detail and puts the siege into perspective. Surprising to the reader is Spain's failure to present any type of resistance against the invading forces.

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<sup>127</sup> Diego de Velázquez (c.1460-1524?) Spanish conquistador and first governor of Cuba, was born in Cuéllar, Spain. He sailed with Columbus on his second voyage to Cuba in 1493, and later commander an expedition by Diego Columbus to Cuba. He completed the occupation of Cuba by 1514. Velázquez founded many of Cuba's main towns with the aid of Pánfilo de Narváez.

<sup>128</sup> Pánfilo de Narváez (1470?-1528), Spanish explorer and soldier who helped conquer Cuba in 1511 and led a Spanish royal expedition to North America. He died on his expedition to Florida.

Massé attributes Spain's ineptitude to a lack of leadership among the officials in Cuba.<sup>129</sup> Recapitulating the events, the people's magnanimity occupies center stage. Massé points this out in eloquent terms, suggesting the people's role as communal heroes against England's colonial quests. Massé observes: "Le courage des habitants [sic] ne fût point abattu. Ils se montrèrent dignes d'appartenir à cette nation espagnole qui ne paraît jamais plus grande qu'au moment où elle se trouve abandonnée à elle-même. Des milices furent organisées..." [the people's courage never let down. They proved themselves worthy of belonging to that island nation, which appeared greater at the time where it seemed like she was forsaken. Militia groups were organized...] (134).

In this war account, heroes, cowards and miscalculating leaders abound as Massé retraced the events. Massé points his accusatory fingers to leaders while saluting the heroes. Among the miscalculating leaders, Massé mentions D. Juan de Prado Porto-Correro [Prado Portocarrero], who downplayed previous warnings that "les Anglais préparaient à la Jamaïque un armement considérable" [the English were preparing in Jamaica a considerable amount of weaponry] (134).<sup>130</sup> Don Juan Prado's entourage, composed of the lieutenant general and the marechal-of-camp D. Diego Tabares, also known for his bravery in defending El Morro Fort, followed him blindly so that no offensive provisions were made over about a period of three months until "le 6 juin au

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<sup>129</sup> While Massé alludes to the organizational blunders committed by the Spanish officials, another historian suggests that British officials acted as scouts, obtaining the plan of the Morro Fort from Spanish officials who naively presented them with the information they needed. See Rafael Esténger, *Sincera historia de Cuba (1492-1973)* (1974). Esténger also points out that the Spaniards did not offer resistance because "las fuerzas regulares de España eran muy escasas, unos dos mil ochocientos hombres, entre marineros y soldados" (96).

<sup>130</sup> Juan de Prado Porto-Correro (1720-?). His legendary resistance to the "superior" British force earned him a medal of honor.

matin, fut signalée au vent du Morro une flotte d'environ deux cent cinquante voiles que tout le monde, excepté le Gouverneur, ne put s'empêcher de prendre pour l'armement annoncé" [in the morning of June 6, the arrival of a troop of one hundred and fifty sails was announced, which everyone, except the Governor, could not help taking as the enemy troop they had been warned about] (134-5). However, the Governor, according to Massé, persisted in believing that things were fine. He went against public opinion. He remained blind to the whole situation in spite of the ominous signs he was himself observing because he was at El Morro that fateful morning. Under lieutenant to the King D. Dionisio Soler the Cuban troop was ready to defend the country. The Governor ordered his troop to return to their barracks, attributing their readiness to overzealousness. This aroused suspicions of treason on the part of the Governor (135).

Massé recapitulates the entire episode, emphasizing the people's bravado against the swift English offensive. He reveals that Cuba was almost helpless because "ni la citadelle de la Cabagna [sic], ni le Fuerte Principe, ni le fort d'Atares, ni quelques autres forts moins considérables, qui se lient à ceux-là, n'étaient batis" [neither The Citadel of Cabagna, the Fort of Principe nor the Fort of Atares had been built] (136). On June 7, Cuba had already suffered considerable damages in terms of human lives as well as infrastructure since the small fortresses of Bacuranao and Coximar had been destroyed. The narrator underscores Cuba's concern towards its religious leaders. Following the capture of Guanabacoa, they were ordered out of Havana, as the war vessels, the *Neptune*, *Europe* and *Asia* were "placés comme trois citadelles et dans la position que leurs carcasses occupent encore aujourd'hui sous l'eau" [placed as three citadels and in the position that their carcasses still occupy even today upon the waters] (136). All three

vessels sank and soon the English managed to establish themselves at Aróstegui, where they tried to cut all communications with the interior of the island. However, praising the valor of the militia, Massé comments: “telle fut la valeur, l’audace, l’activité des milices formées en troupes légères, que cette communication ne put être tout-à-fait interrompue” [such was the valor, the boldness, the activity of the militias formed in small troops, that the communication could not entirely be interrupted] (138).

### **Heroes and Cowards**

Massé seizes the opportunity to decorate several heroes, in a monument that may be useful to those who wish a further understanding of the history of the armed forces in Cuba. We have already witnessed the decoration of the collectivity, the people of Havana. Here, Massé is handing individual honors to soldiers that epitomize courage: individuals who will serve as sources of inspiration to soldiers involved in future conflicts against colonial forces. Massé commends the efforts of Pepe Antonio.<sup>131</sup> Pepe Antonio was so valiant that “trois cents braves des plus audacieux le reconnaissaient pour leur chef;

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<sup>131</sup> Massé wrote about the legend of José Antonio Gómez, Mayor of Guanabacoa, known as Pepe Antonio, who made a name for himself in the war because of his bravery. He was “demoted” by Colonel Caro. As a result, weakened, unable to fight with the reckless abandon that he used to, Massé wrote the following,: “l’impuissance où on le mettait de combattre pour sa patrie avec autant de zèle et d’ardeur qu’il l’avait fait jusqu’alors: au bout de cinq jours, ce bon patriote mourut de chagrin. Cent quatre nègres esclaves, plus heureux que Pepe Antonio, furent affranchis au nom du Roi, et purent désormais combattre en hommes libres; ce fut la récompense d’un courage éprouvé dès les premiers jours, par D. Luis de Aguiar et par D. Laureano Chacón, plus capables sans doute que le colonel Caro d’apprécier des hommes valeureux” [the powerlessness he was subjected to made him unable to fight for his country with the same amount of zeal and ardour he had deployed since: in about five days, that patriot died of depression. One hundred and four Negroes, more fortunate than Pepe Antonio, were freed in the name of the King, and were able to keep fighting as free men; such was the reward of a courage tested since the first days by D. Luis Aguiar and D. Laureano Chacón, undoubtedly more suited than Colonel Caro to appreciate brave men] (139). Esténger does not confirm Massé’s account of Pepe Antonio’s death. While he applauds Pepe Antonio’s bravery, he also alludes to the irony in his death. Pepe Antonio, the intrepid, did not die on the battlefield: he rather died of natural causes, specifically of apoplexy (96).

presque tous s'étaient armés aux dépens de l'ennemi" [three hundred of the boldest men considered him as their leader; almost all of them armed themselves at the enemy's expense] (138).

In addition to the lack of fortification, Massé underlines strategic blunders by the leaders of that time. For instance, "on mit des officiers de marine à la tête des troupes de terre," [they placed marine officers as ground troop leaders], which resulted in considerable amounts of losses. The English, however, in spite of having possession of "la Loma d'Arostegui, de Guanabacoa et des hauteurs de Regla, ne faisaient pas de progrès considérables" [...and the mountains of La Regla, did not make considerable progress] due to the valiant resiliency of the opposing forces, which completely decimated the foes composed of North-American soldiers. Massé relates the number of casualties with journalistic precision, ensuring that the reader relives every minute of the action. This, however, is one of the dangerous aspects of the narration. Since Massé did not witness the actual siege, it is evident that his accounts are based on secondary sources. Unfortunately, he did not provide any bibliographical information.

Continuing with the Heroes' Hall of Fame, Massé also points out Don Luis Vicente de Velasco, "dont la mémoire sera toujours chère aux patriotes havanais" [whose memory will forever be dear to the patriots of Havana] (140). His bravery in defending El Morro was such that he fought the English until the bitter end, when he received a mortal wound: "À peine l'eut-on transporté dans la ville, que les couleurs anglaises flottèrent sur les ruines qu'il avait si vaillamment défendues. Peu de jours après il mourut" [Soon after he was taken to the city, the colors of the English flag were floating on the ruins that he had so valiantly defended] (140). He died a few days later. Subsequent to the siege, the

English unleashed a reign of terror: “Ils avaient pillé les églises et pris aux particuliers tout ce qui avait pu être emporté à bord des vaisseaux” [they ransacked the churches and took off with everything they could carry aboard their vessels] (141).

These acts of vandalism angered the populace. Left to fend for themselves, the people retaliated with as much cruelty as the occupying forces: “plusieurs Anglais furent assassinés à coups de poignard. Le général fit publier que tout Espagnol qui serait rencontré dans les rues après le soleil couché serait pendu. La première soirée il y eut, dit-on, près de 150 bourgeois qui osèrent mépriser cet ordre, et qui portèrent la peine de leur imprudence” [several English were stabbed. The general declared that any Spaniard found in the street after sunset would be hung. The first night, it is said, one hundred and fifty bourgeois dared to disobey that order, and lost their lives as a result of their imprudence] (143). On July 6, after numerous negotiations, Spain regained possession of Cuba. The jubilant population attributed their deliverance to “l’intercession de la Vierge du Rosaire...Tous les ans, le 6 juillet, on célèbre dans l’Église de Santo-Domingo, la commémoration de cette heureuse délivrance” [the intercession of the Virgin of Rosary...Every year, on July 6, in the Church of Santo-Domingo, that joyous deliverance is commemorated] (144).

## **Columbus Meets the New World**

### **1. Massé’s Perspective**

Myths and legends provide a great framework for an understanding of the history and culture of the Caribbean people. Christopher Columbus’s so-called discovery of America is so dramatic an event that it almost negates the existence of the Natives prior

to his arrival. The travelers' diaries, in this sense, do not deviate from the norm; they choose Columbus' arrival as the starting point of Cuba's political history. In this section, I will emphasize the works of Jean-Jacques Ampère and Etienne Massé because they discuss known facts about Christopher Columbus's life. This constitutes the travelers' evaluation of Columbus's role in the New World's political arena.

Massé's depiction reflects his political inclinations, which led him to scrutinize Spain's role in the New World's colonialist enterprise, particularly the pioneering missions of Christopher Columbus and Bartolomé de las Casas. Massé's knowledge of the history of colonialism in the Americas conditions his experience and his observations. From the outset, he scrutinizes the whole idea of colonization, historical truths, as well as his own belonging to a group of men responsible for the misfortune of Africa and the Americas. If dreams are the roads to the unconscious, as Freud used to say, Massé's expectations are foreshadowed in a dramatic vision he had while he was approaching Cuba. This vision sums up his attitude towards history and his understanding of the colonial hegemony in the New World. It suggests that Massé was a budding liberal and a free thinker, involved in the "reinvention of America" (Pratt 146). An analysis of the vision is crucial because of its imagery.

The vision is pregnant with metaphors that convey Massé's grasp of history, his attitude towards the Other and the ramifications of the encounter between Europe, Africa and the Americas. The vision, filled with topoi that were common in drawings of the period, takes place simultaneously as Massé was expressing feelings of elation upon reaching dry land. He saw two women "of color" who had reached the pinnacle of infamy. One of the women has "*la tête ornée de plumes éclatantes*" [her head adorned

with shiny feathers], while the other was adorned with “quelques ornements d’or et de corail” [some ornaments of gold and coral] (37). These two women of color represent Africa and America. This dramatic vision grants us powerful insights into Massé’s stance towards conquests in general as well as his perspective of Cuba. Massé begins a discourse of alterity in his intimation of the women’s condition. He depicts the women as distinct entities from the women of Europe, for “elles ne ressemblaient pas à *nos* [my italics] femmes d’Europe. C’étaient deux filles du soleil; mais le teint de l’une était beaucoup plus foncé que le teint de l’autre, et que les traits de leur visage étaient différents [sic]” [they did not look like our European women. They were two daughters of the sun; but the complexion of one of the women was a lot darker than that of the other, and their facial traits were different] (38).

Massé sees in these women the image of the Other. Although the women’s complexions were different, they were identical in their suffering. This is suggested in the beginning of the vision, when Massé describes “deux femmes également éplorées faisaient comme un échange de leurs profondes douleurs” [two women that are equally affected, exchanged their profound pain] (37). The two continents are represented here as two women bruised and battered after years of subjugation. The author responded empathetically to the women’s suffering, saying that he was stricken by “l’extrême affliction de ces deux femmes, belles encore de jeunesse” [the extreme affliction of the two women, still basking in youth and beauty] (38). Their affliction reminded him of “Rachel de l’écriture qui ne pouvait être consolée parce qu’ils (ses fils) ne sont plus” [Rachel of the biblical literature who could not be comforted because of the loss of her



sons] (38). This parallels the way Africa and America cried the loss of their beloved children due to slavery and colonization (38).<sup>132</sup>

Massé's emotions as well as his role shift as the vision progresses. The vision turns into a full-fledged nightmare that foreshadows some of his experiences during his stay in Cuba: "Mon émotion se convertit en terreur lorsque j'entendis les airs retentir au loin de coups de fouet, de gémissements affreux, et que je vis en même temps le sang ruisseler sur les membres des deux infortunées" [My emotion turned into terror when from the distance I could hear the sounds of the whip, languishing sighs, and when at the same time I saw blood flowing from the bodies of the two unfortunate women] (38). Frightened by this horrific scene, a flashback as well as an anticipation of some of the cruelest treatments of the slave population, the narrator relinquishes his role as an observer to fulfill that of an active participant. In an almost Quevedesque scene, the roles are reversed as Massé, formerly a victim of his fear, now plays the dual roles of judge and sympathizer, listening to the women's grievances, and questioning Christopher Columbus and Bartolomé de las Casas. In that sense, he plays the role of history itself, which judges and condemns Europe's rapacity. Affected by the women's sadness, Massé inquired about their suffering: "Elles ne répondirent point" [they did not respond], retorted the author (38). The women's silence signifies the language of protest because, as the dream progresses, their accusatory eyes became mirrors of their suffering: "Je les vis tourner

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<sup>132</sup> The biblical narrative tells of a sibling rivalry involving two sisters: Rachel and Leah. Jacob was in love with Rachel, but he was tricked into marrying Leah, the older sister, according to the customs as stated in the biblical narrative. The story is filled with intrigue, testimony of a mother's love, shrewdness and effort to maintain what is hers (Genesis 29:32). The allusion here is to Rachel's sadness when her sons went to Egypt to find food. The allusion to Rachel is all the more poignant considering that Joseph, one of her sons was sold as a slave. In the case of the two continents, the allusion to Rachel echoes the lament of African mothers as their sons and husbands were taken away during the triangular slave trade.

leurs regards, l'une sur un guerrier dont le costume n'était pas de ce siècle, l'autre sur un religieux qui portait l'habit de Saint-Domingue" [I saw them turn their eyes, one towards a warrior whose costume was not of this century, and the other towards a religious man who was wearing the outfit of Santo Domingo] (38). The narrator, avoiding ambiguous interpretations, quickly identifies the "warrior" as Columbus, and the "religious" as Las Casas. According to Massé's interpretation of historical events, these two characters are described in the vision with "leur nom d'ailleurs était écrit sur leur poitrine en lettres de feu. C'était une punition infligée par la Gloire" [their name was inscribed on their chest in letters of fire, which was a punishment inflicted by Glory] (38). In the context of Massé's vision, the name written on the conquistadors' chest epitomizes the vanity which results from the ill-gotten gains accumulated in the New World. The name written with "letters of fire" is symbolic of some of the treatments received by slaves.<sup>133</sup>

Massé lingers in his role as an active participant via his emotions. He experiences "stupor," as the two women were grieving, but he still managed to interrogate Columbus and Las Casas, asking "ces deux hommes célèbres si la découverte de l'Amérique avait été utile au bonheur du monde" [those two famous men whether the discovery of America had been useful to the happiness of the world] (39). Subsequently, the women's silence is transformed into a horrific scream: "Elles poussèrent un cri d'horreur" [They shouted in horror]. Las Casas, without responding, replied: "Voilà la réponse à ta question" [Here is the answer to your question]. However, Massé, acting with much zeal, aggressively proceeds with his interrogation: "Mais l'Europe, lui dis-je après quelques momens [sic]

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<sup>133</sup> It was a common practice to inscribe the slave masters' name (initials) on their bodies with burning iron. This is still in practice today to identify farm animals.

d'hésitation et de trouble, a du moins profité de cette découverte" [But Europe, said I after some hesitation and confusion, has nevertheless profited from that discovery] (39). Columbus pretended to ignore Massé during this exchange. Then, he "secoua ses chaines" [shook his chains], which symbolize slavery, his allegiance to Spain and his obsession with material wealth. He gave Massé a *leçon de choses* by drawing a canvas on which are etched all the horrors of conquests in general: "Une immense toile sur laquelle étaient peints des combats sans nombre, des vaisseaux, des flottes, des ports incendiés, des mers ensanglantées et couvertes de cadavres...et dans un petit coin du tableau, quelques misérables tas d'or et d'argent" [A huge piece of cloth upon which were painted countless battles, battleships and corsairs, burnt ports, bloodied oceans covered with cadavers... and in a little corner of the canvas, a few miserable piles of gold and silver] (38).

This panorama encapsulates the means through which all the kingdoms of this world are built upon. Massé points out that "Christophe Colomb et Las Casas étaient en outre condamnés à être les témoins éternels des maux de l'Afrique et de l'Amérique" [Christopher Columbus and Las Casas were condemned to be eternal witnesses to the ills of Europe and Africa] (38-39). By contrasting the enormity of the suffering caused by Europe's avarice to the "trivial" profit gained (52), Massé is using his diary as a testimonial; he is re-writing and re-reading history by reassessing the role of characters once considered almost like deities. With the phrase "quelques misérables tas d'or et d'argent," he is implying that the human tragedy brought on by the extermination of the Indians and African slavery outweighs the amount of wealth accumulated by Europe. Is one to think that the conquest would have been judged favorable had the gains been

greater? Columbus's quest, however, ended abruptly as Massé woke up at the sound "Terre! Terre!" Massé regretted the fact that he did not have the opportunity to inquire about the future of the colonies. This leaves the reader wondering what Las Casas and Columbus's predictions would have been. This aspect of the dream as well as recurrent characters throughout the diary, the use of an impersonal "on" and the insertion of letters exchanged between Massé and his friend B., give the diary the appearance of a work of fiction.<sup>134</sup>

While Massé may have used devices that give his work a fictional quality, the author also re-visits the same topic with a fervent zeal that does not conceal his scholarly intent. This is exemplified in his treatment of the history of Cuba, which begins with the chapter entitled "Détails historiques sur la Havane" [Historical Details on Havana]. In chapter XXI, "Tombeau de Colomb.- Histoire de l'île de Cuba" [Columbus's Tomb.- History of the Island of Cuba], Massé elaborates on some of the themes he sketchily treated earlier. He provides us with a synopsis of almost three centuries of Cuban history; the French traveler also keeps the present abreast by alluding to the political climate in the Americas and its repercussions on the people of Cuba. Massé accomplishes this diplomatically and with economy of words quite atypical of him. This style effectively conveys the sense of urgency associated with the impending political storm that threatened to hit Cuba.

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<sup>134</sup> Massé's diary is plurivocal. The writer uses recurrent characters, and some of the accounts revolve around themes that are current in the romantic era such as duels to settle litigations. Massé became acquainted with B., his Italian friend, as a result of a duel. He vaguely reveals the reasons for such a duel. The outcome, however, suggests that Massé felt sorry for not trusting B. from the start. That grueling experience obviously cemented their friendship. Parts of Massé's letters to B., as well as B.'s responses, are included in the narrative.

Massé mentions a group of people with whom he and B. were acquainted. However, he does not offer any details concerning the nature of their dealings. After B.'s departure, feeling lonely, he continued to frequent those people. However, Massé seems to have been perturbed by their constant worries, which he terms as "les agitations du siècle" [the agitations of the century] (199). Reflecting on how explosive the situation appeared, because the people seem to be ready to have the tables turned, Massé sums up his own preoccupations: "Puissent les ennemis d'une sage liberté n'être pas ici comme ailleurs les plus habiles, ou pour mieux dire, les moins délicats sur les moyens! Puissent-ils ne pas détourner à leur profit l'élan des âmes généreuses!" [Let the enemies of a wise freedom not be here as elsewhere the craftiest, or better said, the least delicate about the means! Let them not use the zeal of generous souls for their own profit] (199). On the one hand, those exclamations suggest that Massé has understood the frailty of the situation and is cautious of its possible detrimental ramifications on the colony. On the other hand, by being so cautious, by using an ambivalent phrase such as "les ennemis d'une sage liberté" [enemies of a wise liberty], Massé appears to be preoccupied with the people's concerns that might make them susceptible to accept any type of change. Also, since it is not clear what the term "wise freedom" means, this may be suggestive of his subconscious yearning to see the *status quo* maintained as long as there is peace.

## **2. Ampère's Perspective**

Treating Cuba's political history, Ampère reveals to us his bibliographical sources, which place French ideology at the heart of the intellectual current that influenced 19<sup>th</sup> century Cuba. He praises the location of the University library in Havana,

founded in 1793, with depictions that are reminiscent of a garden, bursting with novelties that captivate the French visitor. He calls on the reader's imagination to form a mental image of that place. He states: "Imaginez un cloître entourant une cour remplie, on pourrait dire encombrée d'une végétation admirable, d'arbres à formes pour moi nouvelles, au sommet desquels s'enroulent des lianes et pendent de belles fleurs rouges parmi la verdure. La bibliothèque est placée entre cette cour et une autre cour au milieu de laquelle jaillit en murmurant une fontaine" [Imagine a cloister that surrounds a full court, one could say surrounded by an admirable vegetation, with novel shapes, for me, on top of which there are lianes and nice red flowers to complement the greenery. The library is located between that court and another one, in the middle of which springs a lulling fountain] (183).

Ampère sees this location as a delightful vestige of the past, where he can feast upon the best books found in that library. However, there is a major inconvenience caused in great part by "l'indolence naturelle aux Créoles" (173), which in this chapter, Ampère labels as "sans-gêne indolent" [a shameful indolent attitude] (184). However, although [it] "a bien ses inconvenients," [has its inconveniences], Ampère is not complaining, since he finds harmony in nature in the tropics, which he attributes to the rather leisurely pace of life in Cuba. He reveals that this trip to Cuba constitutes a vacation for him, a relief from the automated way of life in the United States. That comment also teaches us something about Ampère's personality as a man and a traveler. He seems to have been of good humor all throughout the trip; he appears to have been a flexible person, able to adapt to every situation, a chameleon, excited about the pace of life in Cuba, and intrigued by the mechanized lifestyle in the United States. Ampère

declares: “il (sans-gêne indolent) me repose de l’ardente et incessante activité des États-Unis, activité que j’admirais fort, mais qui avait fini par m’étourdir comme le ferait le spectacle d’une roue toujours en mouvement” [it helps me to relax from the ardent and incessant activity of the United States; activity which I admired, but which made me dizzy just like watching a wheel that is constantly turning would make one dizzy] (184). In that sense, he is more than equipped to handle the change of place and pace. He is not stressed by the fact that the library is closed because that will allow him more leisure time, especially when the vicinity of the library offers the prospect for closeness with nature.

One can observe how Ampère describes his disappointment without the common frustration associated with people who have deadlines. A sense of humor alleviates his frustration, as he describes with sarcasm the librarian’s poor sense of organization: “J’aurais eu grand plaisir à lire dans ce lieu de délices, entre la verdure et l’eau. Malheureusement le bibliothécaire était à la campagne et avait prudemment emporté la clef, comme faisaient, dit-on, jadis les gardiens de notre cabinet de médailles quand ils allaient à Rome” [I would have been pleased to read in that delightful place between the greenery and the water. Unfortunately, the librarian had gone to the countryside and had taken the key with him, just like the guardians of our cabinet of medals did when they went to Rome] (184). The example provided here corroborates what Ampère called “l’indolence naturelle aux Créoles,” which for other cultures he might have classified as a *laisser aller*. It also reveals the value that the librarian attached to those books, as well as his authoritarian rule over them, since he holds the keys to that hall of knowledge.

The University library is famous for its location, as well as the volume of books it contains. Ampère, after several attempts, finally succeeds in entering the library. The volumes he finds there impress him. Ampère, living up to the reputation of his lineage, mentions: “nos traités scientifiques récents et les oeuvres de M. Cousin” [our most recent scientific treatises and the M. Cousin’s works]. He vaguely alludes to “some Spanish books.” He advises the prospective traveler to Cuba to “aller lire des ouvrages espagnols sur Cuba à la bibliothèque de l’université” [go read Spanish books on Cuba at the University library] (184).

It is not without reason that Ampère cautiously depicts the library and its surroundings. The descriptions are two-fold: first, they encapsulate his observations, as well as his mental process; second, they reveal to an extent the “methodology” for his findings, which he will disclose in the ensuing chapters. Clearly, some of these, he has brought to Cuba with him. The resulting effect is a calculated work produced by Ampère, the social scientist who systematically engages the reader in a dialogue with Cuba’s past and current history. Through this historical journey, he encounters Fernandina, present day Cienfuegos, “une villa tropicale” [a tropical villa], which leads Ampère to conclude that “un tel jardin a tout le charme de l’invraisemblable, il semble qu’on se promène dans un rêve” [Such a garden has all the charm of the surreal; it seems as if one is walking in a dream] (187).

This fitting description of Fernandina supplies an excellent transition that leads to a detailed presentation of Cuban history, beginning with a description of Christopher Columbus. Unlike De Cassagnac, whose biographical sketch of Columbus only contains known, stale facts concerning the Admiral, Ampère’s descriptions, as is the case for



Massé's, contain known facts, as well as the writer's analyses of the controversial traveler. Ampère begins by explaining the reasons for Columbus' erroneous conclusions. He blames the description of the shape of Cuba "comme la langue d'un oiseau" [similar to the tongue of a bird], for Columbus' miscalculations (187). Having not reached the extremity of the island, Ampère continues, he "crut qu'il avait vu la côte orientale de l'Asie."<sup>135</sup> Il fit même signer asiatique; car Colomb a découvert l'Amérique et ne l'a point connue" [believed he had reached the eastern coast of Asia. He even made his crew sign a declaration stating that he had reached Asia because Columbus discovered America and was not aware of it] (188). Ampère then begins to deconstruct the aura of myth that still hovers over Columbus, stating: "On a dit de très-belles choses sur le genie de Colomb, qui lui avait fait deviner l'existence d'un monde; mais rien n'est plus contraire à la vérité" [Many wonderful things have been said concerning Columbus's intelligence, which made him guess the existence of another world; but nothing is more contrary to the truth] (188). Ampère then reiterates the scientific errors that led to Columbus's erroneous belief and fortuitous discovery:

Ce n'est pas la première fois qu'on a dû une découverte aux illusions du genie. Peut-être même Colomb n'eut-il pas tenté d'aller à travers une mer inconnue

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<sup>135</sup> Ampère also pinpoints the fact that the English Antilles, still called the West Indies, continued to perpetuate Columbus' error. As a footnote to Ampère's adroit remark, the term West Indies is still in usage today. Historians are caught between using "West Indies" or the Caribbean, with the Caribbean being the postcolonially "correct" terminology.

chercher la pointe orientale de l'Asie, si une autre erreur, celle des géographes alexandrins et des premiers géographes modernes,<sup>136</sup> ne lui avait fait croire que le but de ses efforts était moins éloigné de l'Espagne qu'il ne l'était réellement [It is not the first time that the illusions of a genius are directly responsible for a discovery. Maybe Columbus would not have attempted to go to an unknown ocean in the pursuit of the eastern part of Asia, if another error, that of the Alexandrian Geographers and the first modern Geographers, had not made him believe that the purpose of his efforts was less far from Spain than it was in reality.] (188)

Ampère concludes that Columbus was no more enlightened than his predecessors, and believes that he deserves "eternal glory" because of "la persévérance, le courage qu'il déploya dans son entreprise, c'est par l'humanité dont il fait preuve envers les Indiens, par son désintéressement, sa grandeur d'âme et ses malheurs" [the perseverance, the courage that he displayed in his enterprise, it is because of the humanity that he shows towards the Indians, because of his unselfishness, his magnanimity and his misfortune] (188). Ampère's assertions concerning Columbus's benevolence are questionable. One wonders what his motives are for attempting to absolve Columbus's sins for his role in the establishment of Spanish colonial rule in the Americas. Nevertheless, Columbus's skills as a navigator did not startle Ampère. However, Ampère contradicts himself by suggesting that Columbus's role was philanthropic. Therefore, he inculcates the

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<sup>136</sup> Ampère uses a quote which underscores a chain of geographical errors that undoubtedly led to Columbus' discovery. The following is footnoted in his diary and is useful for an understanding of Columbus' error, as well as his preparations, his readings prior to the trip. "Ptolémée prolongeait beaucoup trop à l'est l'extrémité de l'Asie. Sur le globe de Behaim, termine l'année même du départ de Colomb, Cipango, que celui-ci allait chercher et qu'il croyait seulement à sept cent cinquante lieues des Canaries, était placé au 280 degré de longitude orientale, tout juste où Colomb devait trouver l'Amérique. Un reste de cette erreur s'est propagé jusqu'au dix-septième siècle. [Ptolemy went farther East at the extremity of Asia. On the globe of Behaim, ends the very year of Columbus' point of departure, Cipango, that the former went to look for and which he believed was only located at 750 miles of the Canary Islands, was placed at 280 degrees of oriental longitude, right where Columbus was supposed to find America. A remainder of that same error was spread until the seventeenth-century] (Walcknaer, *Biographie universelle*, t.II, p.2, art. Delisle)

Admiral's crew, describing them as rogues who committed crimes against the Natives, while establishing Columbus as a majestic hero. He alluded to Columbus's humanity towards the Indians, suggesting that Columbus did not directly participate in the violence against the Indians. In conclusion, Ampère ends his analysis of Columbus's character celebrating his magnanimity, but not without the usual irony commonly associated with the Spanish Admiral. Ampère, even when alluding to the flawed suppositions, remains constant in adding a mythical aura to Columbus's persona. He states: "Bien que Colomb ait trouvé l'Amérique comme M. Jourdain faisait de la prose, sans le savoir, je n'en aurais pas été moins curieux de voir le tombeau des hommes célèbres dont l'âme a été la plus noble et le caractère le plus pur. Ce tombeau est dans la cathédrale de la Havane" [Although Columbus had found America the same way Mr. Jourdain had been using prose all of his life without knowing it, I was nevertheless curious to see the tomb of famous men, whose soul was the noblest; whose character was the purest. This tomb is located in the Cathedral of Havana] (187).<sup>137</sup>

Ampère's perspective in describing the legend of Columbus has a far-reaching impact: his depiction constitutes a eulogy as well as a criticism of Columbus. Commending Columbus's heroism, the French traveler sees fit to address all those who will engage in daring ventures: "La gloire est la récompense de ceux qui osent et réussissent dans une entreprise hardie et utile, même quand ils se trompent" [Glory is the reward of those who dare and succeed in a bold and useful exercise, even when they are mistaken] (188). As to Columbus, he offers an argument to end all arguments on the

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<sup>137</sup> M. Jourdain, protagonist of Molière (1622-1673) *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* (1732). Massé also believed that Columbus' tomb was located in the Cathedral of Havana. He inserted a Latin epitaph he said he found in the Cathedral. See attached.

D. O. M.  
 claris. heros Ligustin.  
 CHRISTOPHORUS COLOMBUS  
 à se rei nautic. scient. insign.  
 nov. orb. detect.  
 atque castell. et legion. regib. subject.  
 Vallisol. occub.  
 XIII Kal. Jun. a. MDVI.  
 Cartusianor. Hispal. cadav. cust. tradidit  
 transfer. nam ipse præscrips.  
 in Hispaniolæ metrop. ecclesi.  
 hinc pace sancit. Galliæ Reipub. cess.  
 (in hanc V. Mar. Concept. Imm. Cath.  
 ossa transl.)  
 maxima omn. ord. frequent. sepult.  
 XIV Kal. Feb. a. MDCCXCVI mand.  
 Hav. civit.  
 tant. vir. meritor. in se non immem.  
 Prætios. exuv. in optat. diem tuitur  
 hocc. Monum. erex.  
 Præsul. ill. DD Philipo Joseph  
 Tres Palacios  
 civic. ac milit. rei gen. Præf.  
 DD Ludovico de Las - Casas.

This is Massé's proof that Columbus' remains were buried in the Cathedral of Havana.

Admiral's merit, declaring that "Colomb est assez grand pour n'avoir pas besoin qu'on fasse à sa renommée l'aumône insultante d'un mérite qui n'a pas été le sien" [Columbus is big enough; that way his reputation does not need the insulting charity of a merit that did not belong to him] (189-90).

The travelers' representation of Cuba contains more than their observations of things heard and seen during their trip: they endeavored to leave us with testimonials that are arguably another version of history. Focusing on the past, coming from a "superior" culture, they provided a dialogue based on their own findings and on "secondary sources" which they fail to document. This suggests an attempt to showcase their own sophistication, as well as authorship of a particular knowledge of the Other. This aspect of the travelogues must be approached with caution: rushed conclusions and unfounded evaluations often clouded the travelers' reports; often they are presented as plain truths. Each traveler provided a particular view of history which conforms with the objective of their trip. De Cassagnac's presentation of Cuba's history is curious in that the author painstakingly copies dense data on Cuba's commerce, as well as other details extracted from textbooks on the island. Such hard data gives his book the aspect of an official report, and reinforces the traveler's role as an authority on Cuban affairs. Those numbers represent undeniable proofs that De Cassagnac did do his homework. They also serve to convince the reader of the exactness of his observations, which give more power to his text as a testimonial.

When treating the history of Cuba, Ampère gives us a textual account of Columbus' biography. His commentaries contain the blueprints for the polemics that will later surround Columbus, and the impact of the "Discovery." In his biography of the

author, he tries to settle the argument over Columbus' intelligence, and the merits of his efforts. Applauding the Admiral's courage, Ampère presents him as the ultimate example for anyone who will be involved in future endeavors and expeditions.

Massé, having spent an entire year in Cuba, had the privilege to consult secondary sources, which he incorporated in his narrative. In this sense, his text allows us to re-visit the early days of colonial conquests following certain trends of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Because the travel account operates within the realm of verisimilitude, Massé achieves his goal without providing biographical accounts for the government officials as well as scientists and men of letters he alludes to in his book. More important than facts and figures, those characters are known by their actions. The benefit of hindsight allowed Massé to criticize them. In this sense, the past and the present come to the forefront as Massé's peculiar interpretation of events provides powerful insights which enrich our own understanding of colonial hegemonies. This hindsight elucidates Massé's historical perspective and establishes him as judge and jury, thus compromising his promise of objectivity. This is illustrated in his vision while approaching Cuba: it foreshadows his view on colonialism, as well as the role Christopher Columbus and Bartolomé de las Casas played in the New World's political and religious arenas. His ability to insert his own analysis, as well as to reach conclusions that clearly reflect his ideology, conditions the reader to accept his observations as plain truths. This is often achieved through the use of irony as a device to suggest his stance on a particular topic, and at the same time allows him to inject his feelings into the narrative.

Massé's intent, although not stated in the book, was to leave a reference text for future travelers, social scientists, and historians. Therefore, the text aims at representing

Massé as an authority on Cuba's past. This has its own pitfalls because of the author's conceptualization of history and his own prejudices. Massé's vision constitutes a recapitulation of history because his prior knowledge of the New World's history guided his subconscious as he foresaw some of the events that he would later witness in Cuba. When depicting historical events, often times the author sounds pedantic in his attempt to prove his erudition as he alludes to historical as well as literary characters. Far from just dropping names, those allusions help to buttress Massé's arguments. In the case of the British invasion of Cuba, for instance, Massé renders the siege of Havana (1762), with such passion that one would say those events had taken place during his visit. Finally, Massé's treatment of history would have been incomplete without predictions on the future of the island. This was rendered in an appendix written probably not long before the book's publication. There, he adroitly reminds the reader of his humanitarian goal, pleading the slaves' case, underscoring the evil of slavery, reminding those who profit from it that Cuba would soon follow the example of Saint-Domingue, a prophecy that fulfilled itself differently.

## Chapter VII

### Slavery: “La Question Palpitante”

According to Julio Le Riverend Brusone, “Colón traía negros en sus naves, pero habían de pasar algunos años antes que los africanos fueran introducidos en cantidades estimables y que se organizara su empleo en el desarrollo de las economías coloniales” [Columbus brought slaves on his vessels, but a number of years had to elapse before Africans were introduced in great numbers and were used in the organization and the development of the colonial economies] (24). The slaves’ distribution throughout the Americas and the Antilles varies according to each country and its colonial hegemony. In 1503, Hispaniola received its first installment of Black slaves. Since these were more vigorous than the native Indians for working in the mine fields, Bartolomé de las Casas, protector of the Indians, who were perishing by the thousands, proposed to then Regent-Cardinal Ximénes (Francisco Jiménes (Ximénes) (1436-1517) that a black population be more fitting to do work in the mines. The Cardinal did not acquiesce, however. After 1517, Charles the Fifth agreed to allow 4000 African slaves into the islands of Puerto Rico, Hispaniola, Cuba and Jamaica, and thus originated the Negro slave trade in the New World, carrying with it “spasmodic cries of warning, anxiety and racial repugnance” (Davis 41).

An overview of the history of European hegemonies in the New World exposes the role of major powers such as Portugal, England, France, Holland and Spain in the establishment and maintenance of the colonial regime in the New World, from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Cuba, as one of the last bastions of slavery in the New World, presents



an interesting case study, as slavery was the rousing force behind the island's economic exuberance. To the travelers, especially those undertaking voyages of study, slavery remains a fascinating topic because on it depend both the economic and the political stability of the colonial regime. The travelers' arguments reflect the polemics that existed between the nations. On the one hand, England proclaimed itself as the beacon of light, the only hope for the salvation of Africans; France, on the other hand, jealous of Spain's fortune, was also championing the Negroes' cause, while Spain was striving to cling to whatever was left of a vast colonial stronghold.

In Cuba, "el más alto grado de explotación del esclavo coincidió con el esplendor azucarero del siglo XIX" [the apex of the slaves' exploitation coincided with the expansion of the sugar industry in the 19<sup>th</sup> century] (Brusone 27). To the travelers undertaking voyages of study, slavery remains a fascinating topic because of its cruelty, the economic success it brings to those practicing it, and its instability as an institution. However, on slavery depended both the economic and the political stability of the colonial regime in Cuba, which created a tense situation, considering that Denmark had already abolished the slave trade in 1802 and that the slave trade to the British colonies was abolished in 1807, which strengthened the arguments against slavery that were becoming more convincing. Also, closer to home, the victory of the Saint-Domingue's slaves, resulting in the establishment of the First Free Black republic, stood as a firm reminder that the days of colonial hegemonies in the New World were numbered. The travelers' treatment of slavery in Cuba reflects the controversy provoked by that institution in the Age of Enlightenment up to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This chapter will focus on the treatment of slavery by Etienne Massé, Jean-Jacques Ampère and

Granier de Cassagnac. The argument is that Massé and Ampère's moral opposition to slavery follows the paradigm spearheaded by the Quakers and Evangelical sects, while Granier de Cassagnac's defense of slavery is based on the argument of slavery as an economic force and a powerful mechanism for the moral uplifting of an "inferior" Negro race. Those ideas garnered from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century enlightenment and shifting economic and religious trends, as well as toils from Africans and abolitionists of all persuasions, contributed to the strong anti-slavery sentiments noted in Massé's *L'isle de Cuba et La Havane* and Ampère's *Promenade en Amérique*. De Cassagnac's feudalistic and pro-slavery views enrich the debate in that they allow the reader insights into both sides of the conflict.

### **A Moral Labyrinth**

Proponents of slavery rationalized it, using the argument of the curse of Ham, Noah's son, as a justification for the enslavement of Blacks.<sup>138</sup> In this sense, they argued, if God Himself saw slavery as a fitting punishment for those wretched people, those who enslaved them were merely participants in a higher plan. Ironically, the main opponents of slavery and of the slave trade consisted of moralists and people with deep religious convictions, who did not buy the arguments of those who wanted to maintain power and

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<sup>138</sup> Genesis 9:25. Massé, in his own ironic way, elucidates the meaning of the name Cham or Ham, while explaining why the curse against Ham was lifted. He affirms: "Ce nom signifie en hébreu ou la couleur foncée de ces peuples, ou l'extrême chaleur du climat sous lequel ils vivent. C'est déjà une chose à remarquer que les descendants [sic] de Cham, lequel était un des fils de Noë, peuvent, d'après nos écritures, se regarder comme provenant de la même souche que nous" [This name in Hebrew designates either the darkened skin of these people, or the extreme heat of the climate under which they live. It is already a remarkable thing that the children of Ham, who was one of Noah's sons, can, according to our scriptures, claim the same ancestral link as we can] (254). He proceeds to state that Ham was cursed by Noah, but that curse was lifted the moment that the Jews became accursed, because there cannot be too many proscriptions against the members of the same family.

riches through the subjugation of Africans.

The slave trade flourished in the last decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in the British colonies. A “triangular” trade involving expeditions financed by the British to the African Gold Coast allowed the transplant of the human cargo that furnished the plantations in the British colonies of the West Indies, as well as in South America. Although the British continued to profit from that illicit trade in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the agitations provoked by the opponents of slavery aroused feelings of uneasiness among the slave traders. However, with such a well-established system, with “noble” folks reaping the fruits of the slaves’ labor, it was easier to come up with justifications to maintain slavery instead of abolishing it. In the British colonies the economic stakes were so high that it was almost impossible to bring about change in spite of British intellectuals’ efforts to eliminate slavery and the slave trade.<sup>139</sup> David Turnbull believes that the United States hampered the British attempts to abolish slavery and the slave trade. However, as early as 1864, England’s motives were questionable. An astute observer made the following comments concerning England’s involvement in the fight against slavery:

...Inglaterra habiendo consumado la ruina de sus colonias de Occidente, y puesto los ojos en el engrandecimiento de los orientales, para aniquilar toda competencia en los productos se propuso llegar la consumacion [sic] del pensamiento abolicionista, haciendo todos los esfuerzos imaginables para matar la esclavitud de los negros donde quiera que existiese...

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<sup>139</sup> David Turnbull wrote that the United States, in the name of profit, hampered all efforts to abolish slavery and the slave trade. He focuses on the fact that boats with the American flags were not subjected to search. In *Travels in the West* (1840), he states the following: “The stars and stripes of the United States are probably destined to serve as a cover to these dark transactions, until the president of the Union, with the concurrence of the senate, shall be shamed into a reluctant recognition of the philanthropic principles by which the government of England, prompted and pushed on by the unanimous voice of the people, has so long been actuated. The refusal of the Americans to sanction a mutual right of search, will make it safer for a slaver to sail under their flag, than that of any governments—Spain, Portugal, or the Brazils—most deeply implicated in the crime” (158).

[England, having exhausted all its colonies in the West, envious of the expansion of the orientals, in order to eliminate all competition in the products, proposed even the consumption of abolitionist thinking, doing all in its power to uproot the enslavement of Africans wherever it exists.] (De Couto 135)

According to De Couto, the British proclaimed themselves as the redeemers of the African race as a reaction to their losses in the colonies and because of further plans of colonial hegemonies in the East. Philanthropism and Christianity, in other words, were excuses because the British's main goal was to eliminate competition. However, although the British may have had ulterior motives, their advocacy cannot be belittled.

The year 1772 marked a turning point in the battle against slavery. Lord Manfield's (William Murray, 1705-1793) ruling declaring that there was no legal basis for slavery in England added fuel to the fire started by the Quakers and Evangelical Christian sects. In the decade of the 1770's, the anti-slavery movement continued to gain momentum, as bills were introduced in Parliament to regulate the trade. The French Revolution in 1789 gave further impetus to the anti-slavery movement, as it increased the fear of slave revolts (James 67). Two years later that dread concretized with popularized reports of the uprising of the Saint-Domingue's slaves, which coincided with Wilberforce's defeated bill for abolition. William Wilberforce's (1759-1833) defeat did not deter the pro-abolitionists. Edmond Burke's (1729-1797) *Sketch of a Negro Code* (1792), similar in purpose to Louis XIV's *Negro Code*, which aimed at humanizing slavery, proposed a gradual plan for abolition and emancipation. Then, William Wilberforce introduced a second bill, which won in the House of Commons in 1793. The abolition movement scored a major victory in 1807, with the abolition of slave trading by the Parliament. However, slavery remained legal in the colonies.

## A Turn to Cuba and the Burning Question

What was going on in Cuba? Superficially, it appears that only the British and the Quakers actively participated in the movement to end slavery. Robert Jameson, writing on endemic clandestine slave trade, which followed the abolition proclamation of 1807, proud of the British leading role in such a vital accomplishment, exclaims:

*We* cannot do every thing in the world that requires spirited exertion, disinterested feeling and enlightened notions. *We* were the last to begin a slave trade and the first to abolish it. *We*, the possessors of the major part of the colonies- with a greater interest at stake than any other, than *all* other, nations-*we* have set the example, completely abolished the traffic, watch with all the jealousy of honour against every infringement *amongst ourselves*-have besought- have *bought*, the concurrence of other powers in the work of humanity, and continue supporting agents in various parts to watch over and protect its progress. [All italics are his.] (34)<sup>140</sup>

In this statement, speaking in the name of nationalistic pride, Jameson takes the position that the British led the abolition movement because of moral principles, a position which is vehemently refuted by scholars such as Eric Williams (1911-1981) in *Capitalism and Slavery*, as well as C.L.R. James (1901-1989) in *The Black Jacobins* (1963). Jameson presents England as the sacrificial lamb, which yielded all of its New World colonies so the African slaves might be redeemed. However, moral concerns enough do not suffice for the elimination of such an evil. Several factors contributed to the British position, including political turmoil in the British colonies, which weakened the British economy, and made it virtually impossible for them to maintain their colonies in the New World. Although, according to Jameson, the English “spirited exertion,” their “disinterested

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<sup>140</sup> Robert Jameson is aware that Denmark was the first European country to abolish the slave trade in 1802. However, with much British nerve, in *Letters from the Havana* (1821) Robert Francis Jameson footnotes this statement stating, “From our great sacrifices as well as exertions *Denmark* [his italics] will yield us this station” (21).

feeling and enlightened notions” cannot be denied, the political agitations and the ensuing economic chaos they caused may have been more of a factor in the abolition of slavery in the colonies than humanitarian concerns *per se*.

With respect to the abolition of slavery in Cuba, the first crucial Spanish reaction against slavery was the effort made by Isidoro de Antillón (1778-1814) in 1802, the year of the Danish abolition of slavery. He presented a project for the abolition of slavery to the Academia Matritense de Derecho Español y Público. Nine years later, Antillón would repeat the same motion in the Courts of Cádiz. This time, he found the support of Liberals such as Miguel Guridi Alcocer (1763-1823) and Agustín de Argüelles (1775-1844) (Saco 84).

England came to play another central role in the Congress of Vienna in 1815, twisting Spain’s arms to force an end to the trade.<sup>141</sup> In 1817, Spain and England reached a pact according to which Spain would end the trade three years later. Spain received 400,000 pounds sterling as indemnity. In 1837, the Courts of Cádiz, under a progressive administration, promulgated a law whose aim was to end slavery in the Peninsula, as well as in the African territories. However, similar to England’s position in 1807, the economic stakes were too high in the Spanish colonies. Thus, proposing an abrupt end to slavery would dismantle the colonial economy. The negotiations continued, but the economic bonds that tied England, Spain and Cuba were much stronger than any

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<sup>141</sup> The Congress of Vienna was an international conference that was called in order to remake Europe after the demise of Napoleon I. Its main objective was to create a balance of power that would preserve the peace. France was deprived of all territory conquered by Napoleon; Britain received several strategic colonial territories, and they also gained control of the seas; France was restored under the rule of Louis XVIII and Spain was restored under Ferdinand VII, among the important decisions that were reached.

humanitarian ideals. The slave traders found other clever ways to continue the trade, using Puerto Rico as a delivery point to collect their human merchandise. Slave traders transported slaves from Cádiz to Puerto Rico and then to Havana. This violated the Constitution of 1845, which called for severe punishment of those involved in the trade.

### **Spanish Abolitionists**

From a leadership standpoint, the Spanish abolitionist movement followed a different path than Britain's. Neither the Church, nor the liberals expressed moral opposition to slavery. This is not surprising considering the role of the Church in impressing catechism and other rudiments of theology upon the slaves, enough to keep them subjected. The Sociedad Abolicionista Española (1865), led by Salustiano de Olózaga (1805-1873), among others, was formed to voice moral opposition to slavery. However, prior to the formation of that influential Society, public opinion was already being molded since 1861. In Madrid, the daily paper *La América* heralded anti-slavery sentiments. In addition, the *Sociedad Libre de Economía política y La Academia de Jurisprudencia y Legislación*, a group of economists and college professors preoccupied with slavery, worked diligently towards its demise. The Puerto Rican Julio Vizcarrondo (1829-1889) joined this group in 1864, and subsequently invigorated the *Sociedad*. In its initial meeting, the group resolved to raise the consciousness of the Spanish society against the evils of slavery. To this end, the daily *El Abolicionista Español* was created. Through lectures, literary *tertulias*, and colloquia, those intellectuals planted the seeds for the abolition of slavery in the Spanish colonies of the New World. However, it would take years for those seeds to germinate and bear fruit, not only because, in politics, light

years often separate words and actions, but also because the proponents of abolition themselves approached it very timidly. This was particularly true with the Spanish Abolitionists who approached abolition with the speed of a turtle. However, if the Roman Empire could crumble at the height of its prosperity, if Saint-Domingue could fall as a result of the strategic planning, the sheer stubbornness and will to freedom of the slaves, the abolition movement in Cuba was destined to succeed. Time alone did not suffice, although to repeat Aimé Césaire's words in *Discours sur le colonialisme* (1955), any system based on inequity will surely crumble (7).

A number of historical events unleashed the abolition movement in Cuba in the latter years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The *Ley de Represión y Castigo de Tráfico Negrero* (1867) served as a catalyst for the abolition of slavery in the Spanish colonies. This was an important blow to the proponents of slavery since the end of the trade dealt a serious strike to the sugar industry, which still relied on ebony manpower.<sup>142</sup> The success of the Revolution of September 1868 in Spain facilitated the restoration of the *Sociedad Abolicionista Española*. Following the Revolution of September, in the Courts of 1869, the Puerto Rican *diputados*, led by Luis Padial y Vizcarrondo (1832-1879), proposed a law for the abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico and Cuba. Puerto Rico would free itself of the shackles of slavery first, while the *Sociedad Abolicionista Española* would keep making strides towards freeing Cuba. The abolitionist group met on February 17, 1881, to petition the formation of an Abolitionist Society in Havana, which would have the same

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<sup>142</sup> To put an end to the reliance on Africans to work in sugar plantations, the Cuban government encouraged the immigration of Spaniards to Cuba. This is also tied to the use of Chinese indentured servants in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. For ampler information, see chapter I, "Cuban Ethnic Panorama in the 19<sup>th</sup> century."



goals as its Spanish counterpart. The *Sociedad Abolicionista Española* continued its abolitionist advocacy until slavery was finally abolished in Cuba five years later.<sup>143</sup>

### **Laboring Ink: Writers against the Slavery Machine**

The proliferation of antislavery literature towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century provided impetus to the voice of abolitionists denouncing the horrors of slavery. Literature and politics band together, as a corpus of poems, treatises, memoirs and testimonials abound, bringing the horrors of slavery and the trade closer to the forefront, thereby forcing legislations that would ultimately end the illegal commerce. Literature and politics provided the framework for an understanding of the debate over the anti-slavery/anti-trade movement. An overview of the ideological principles guiding those arguments is useful for a better grasp of the 19<sup>th</sup> century travelers' perspectives.

Although England and the United States are credited as being in the vanguard of those ensuring the abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade in all European and New World territories, one must not forget the decisive role that Montesquieu's *De L'Esprit des Lois* (1758) played in shaping public opinion against the validity of slavery.<sup>144</sup> He affirms:

...Il [l'esclavage] n'est pas bon par sa nature: il n'est utile ni au maître ni à l'esclave: à celui-ci, parce qu'il ne peut rien faire par vertu; à celui-là, parce qu'il contracte avec ses esclaves toutes sortes de mauvaises habitudes, qu'il

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<sup>143</sup> See Raúl Cepero Bonilla, *Azúcar y abolición* (1948).

<sup>144</sup> Thirty years later, the Société des Amis des Noirs, inspired by and modeled after the Anti-Slavery Society of London, with Jacques Pierre Brissot de Warville at its head, endorsed the ideal of freedom from slavery. See Ana Julia Cooper, *Slavery and the French Revolutionists (1788-1805)* (1988).

s'accoutume insensiblement à manquer à toutes les vertus morales, qu'il devient fier, prompt, dur, colère, voluptueux et cruel.

[...It [slavery] is not good by its nature. It is useful neither to the master nor to the slave; to the latter because he does nothing virtuously; to the former because he contracts with his slaves all sorts of bad habits which accustom him imperceptibly to become wanting in all the moral virtues so that he becomes proud, hasty, hard, angry, sensual, cruel.] (85)

In this statement, Montesquieu provides an outline for some of the arguments, which the opponents of slavery will use later. He views slavery as “l'établissement d'un droit qui rend un homme tellement propre à un autre homme, qu'il est le maître absolu de sa vie et de ses biens” [the establishment of a law which makes of a man so much the property of another, that he has absolute power over him and his assets] (85). While some consider slavery a barter system, in which the Africans are fed, clothed, sheltered, and receive civilization on top of it all (De Cassagnac 232), Montesquieu, writing a century prior to De Cassagnac, sees nothing good in such a system: “It is no good by its nature” (232). Montesquieu, like Frederic Douglass (1818-1895) in his *The Narrative of the Life of an American Slave* (1845), believes that slavery is an inhumane and malevolent system from which no one can benefit. While rationalizing the practice of slavery, some “moralists” believe that the slaves would gain from enslavement because they would naturally develop their masters' goodness and civilized nature; early on, Montesquieu, however, viewed the exact opposite as the effect of slavery. Like Pitt's saying, “Slavery is a collection of vices and crimes,” which Massé reiterates often, Montesquieu also thinks that slavery is a negative state. In other words, he does not believe in a subconscious passing of virtues or in an apprenticeship of sorts through religion. Montesquieu goes even further, pointing out the evil nature of the slave, which the master would end up infected by as a result of cohabitation with the slaves. Montesquieu comments that the

master “contracts with his slaves all sorts of bad habits which accustom him imperceptibly to become wanting in all the moral virtues so that he becomes proud, hasty, hard, angry, sensual, cruel” (85). It is important to note that Montesquieu here is not alluding to the masters’ proclivity towards the slaves’ bad habits. He is stating, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that this will definitely happen.

### **Cuba and the Anti-Slavery Movement**

I have chosen Montesquieu’s *De L’esprit des Lois* as a paradigm to elucidate the use of literature as an instrument of power in shaping public opinion against slavery.<sup>145</sup> The British Romantics’ contribution in this sense cannot be denied.<sup>146</sup> In Cuba, no Wilberforces, Pitts or Louvertures emerged. However, those men’s ideas and ideals, as well as the ideological currents of the Enlightenment era, reverberated through the island in the fight against political and domestic slavery. The struggle to end Spain’s grip over Cuba and the anti-slavery movement are neatly interwoven. This explains in part why Cuba was the last place in the Americas to put an end to African slavery. The institution of slavery created contradictions not only among masters and slaves, but also among the different slave owning factions: the margins of profit were so huge that slave owners and

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<sup>145</sup> Olaudah Equiano (c.1745-1797), *Interesting Narrative* (1793) provided evidence to the horrors of slavery and the slave trade in the British courts.

<sup>146</sup> See William Cowper (1731-1800) “Sweet Man Sour Sauce” or “The Slave-Trader in the Dumps,” as well as his “The Negro’s Complaint”; Hannah More and Eaglesfield Smith (1745-1833), in “The Sorrows of Yamba, or, The Negro Woman’s Lamentation;” Robert Southey (1774-1843), “Poems Concerning the Slave-Trade,” and William Wordsworth (1770-1850) among some of the most influential writers. I also must note in passing, that the *Edinburg Review*, cofounded by Francis Jeffrey (1773-1850); Henry Brougham (1778-1868) and Sydney Smith (1771-1845), was an influential organ, molding public opinion on the evil spectre which slavery represented. For bibliographical information, see *The Longman Anthology of British Literature - The Romantics and Their Contemporaries*. Volume 2A (2002).

planters were divided among themselves: "What Cuban whites thought about slavery in 1840 proves difficult because there was no single, undivided mind" (Paquette 82). Although there were differences of opinion, survival as well as ways of augmenting their profits were the only ties that bonded the slave owners. Instead of learning from Saint-Domingue's experience, the rich Cuban planters "profited at the expense of sugar-planters-made-victims by Saint-Domingue's slave revolution and so continued to import thousands of Africans annually to work their plantations" (Paquette 82). This increase in African slaves posed a threat to the establishment considering that officials such as Francisco Arango y Parreño (1769-1839) warned the people about possible slave rebellions should the slave population exceed the white population in Cuba.<sup>147</sup> This explains why Arango, according to Paquette, would rather favor white labor: "His liberalism disposed him more toward free White labor than Black slaves" (85).

In spite of Arango's racial fears, his ideas in promoting education and his vision for Cuba's economy made him an important historical figure. With education, more Cubans would become literate, and literacy would facilitate political as well economic freedom. Thus the role of the group Irma Llorens calls *letrados cubanos* (132-40). Not only did they protest against Spain's political shackles; they also fought to stabilize their own profession. In other words, they fulfilled their civic duties by presenting themselves "como los servidores de los cubanos, cuyos corazones pretenden templar, cuya inteligencia aspiran a encender, y cuyos valores han de conservar y propagar" (Llorens 215). I have already mentioned Domingo del Monte's role as a member of that Creole

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<sup>147</sup> For a better understanding of the racial tension posed by an increase in the slave population, see Tomás Romay, *Obras Completas* (1965), as well as chapters 1 and 4 of this dissertation for bibliographical data.

intelligentsia, who dedicated his life and writing towards creating that sense of cubanness which was vital in obtaining political and economic freedom. Del Monte's contributions, as well as those of luminaries such as José Antonio Saco, among others, not only reflect the slave masters' inhumanity: they also attest to the slaves' resiliency. They provide insights to a better understanding of the slaves' complex shifting journey of resistance that culminated in a re-inheritance of the cultural self.

### **Massé's Account of Slavery: A Case of Moral Indignation**

To travelers in 19<sup>th</sup> century Cuba, slavery was as omnipresent as Cuban cigars. Massé's experience of the slavery situation began before he had actually witnessed it in Cuba.<sup>148</sup> His vivid descriptions of the slaves' wretched condition exemplify his moral repulsion towards slavery. Thus, sympathizing with the African slaves, Massé strives to maintain his promise to be "*fidèle comme un témoin devant un tribunal*" [faithful to the truth as a witness in a tribunal], by appealing to the principles of humanity, which make us members of one family (iv). In this sense, his travelogue constitutes yet another voice that helped sustain the movement for the abolition of slavery.

Massé's position on slavery must be considered independently from his attitude towards Blacks. In other words, while he expresses moral opposition through his tirades, denouncing the slave traders, blaming Church leaders for using religion to maintain the slaves in bondage, and criticizing European arrogance and avarice, his outlook at times reflects some of the very colonial views he is writing against. For instance, he still contends that the Africans are savages and hideous with no sense of right and wrong,

even while he is condemning the so-called sense of superiority of his European brothers. Europe, with the slave trade, according to him, only exacerbates Africa's savage nature, because, if "les notions de morale y étaient grossières; elles sont devenues tout-à-fait nulles" [the notions of morality were raw in Africa, they have become totally inexistent" (258). Here, Massé is reiterating the idea that the notions of right and wrong were rudimentary in Africa as opposed to Europe. However, unlike De Cassagnac, who believes that slavery would enlighten the slaves, Massé is stating quite the contrary. The slave trade created a circle of vices: "On y vole les hommes comme on volerait des pièces de bétail. Les enfans [sic] sont enlevés à leur mère par force ou par ruse. Le père lui-même porte ses enfans [sic] au marché, et quelquefois le fils vend son père" [People are stolen the way one would steal cattle. Children are snatched from their parents through force or ruse. The father himself takes his children to the slave market, and sometimes the son would sell his father] (258). In spite of his belittling Africa's peculiar sense of right and wrong, Massé is describing some of the horrors of the slave trade which his countryman De Cassagnac labels as "fantasmagorie ridicule" (158).

Massé's treatment of slavery is scattered over numerous chapters. The author succinctly describes the horrors of the slave trade in the chapter entitled "La traite des noirs.- Leurs différentes races.- Leurs caractères particuliers" [The Slave Trade.- Their Different Races.- Their Distinctive Traits]. This chapter is useful not only because it provides a meticulous account of the slave trade, but also because it constitutes "ethnology" of the variety of Africans that populate the different regions of the African

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<sup>148</sup> See chapter VI, "The Diaries: Towards a Historiography of Cuba," for an analysis of Massé's dream while he was approaching Cuba.

continent as well as Cuba. First, Massé recapitulates the history of the slave trade in the New World. He begins with 1516, when King Ferdinand of Spain gave a man named Chevrís, the exclusive right to bring Africans to the Americas. Chevrís, according to Massé, “pour une somme de 23,000 ducats, rétrocéda son privilège à une compagnie de négocians [sic] génois, qui en 1517, firent un premier transport d’esclaves à l’île de Saint-Domingue” [For a sum of 23,000 ducats, Chevrís yielded his privilege to a company of Genoan businessmen, which made a first transportation of slaves to the island of Saint-Domingue in 1517] (257).

Then, as is often the case, Massé questions Las Casas’ role as the Protector of the Indians: “Las Casas avait-il conseillé de remplacer ainsi par d’infortunés Africains, les malheureux sauvages d’Amérique dont il s’était fait l’ardent défenseur?” [Did Las Casas advise that unfortunate Africans should substitute for the miserable savages of America, whom he was zealously defending?] (256). Massé’s answer allows the reader to re-visit the role of the Catholic king, as well as Genoan businessmen, played in the transportation of slaves to the New World. He seems to wish to close the chapter on the scrutiny of Las Casas’ role in the enslavement of Africans. In an effort to absolve Las Casas of his sins, Massé proposes that “unchained passions” were the moving forces behind Las Casas’ role in the enslavement of Africans. He affirms : “de nombreuses inconséquences pénètrent dans l’esprit de l’homme dès l’instant qu’il donne à ses opinions, à ses sentimens [sic] même les plus désintéressés, le caractère des passions” [numerous inconsistencies penetrate the human mind the minute that his opinions and his most altruistic feelings become his passions] (256). Does this mean that Las Casas’ only blunder was his excessive passion in his defense of the Indians? Massé seems to propose that Las Casas

had good intentions, although the consequences of his advocacy turned out to be fatal for the African slaves. After this brief history lesson, Massé analyzes the status of the Africans before their being violently uprooted from their homeland. He relies on the reports of unspecified travelers to those regions of the African continent to reveal to us that most African communities were constituted of slaves and masters, and that the masters could dispose of their slaves in any way they saw fit (260). De Cassagnac uses the same argument later to suggest that the enslavement of Africans was justified, since slavery was as natural to the continent of Africa as Africans were naturally lazy and stupid (138). Massé concludes the chapter with graphic details of the horrors committed aboard the ships during the trans-Atlantic trip. This shameful commerce, concludes Massé, served one purpose: to satisfy the cupidity of those benefiting from it.

Following the history lesson, Massé proposes an “anthropological” study of the various types of Africans that were brought to Cuba. Depicting that rich panorama, which seems to have been extracted from other travelogues, as well as anecdotes from other Europeans, Massé rehashes some of the “knowledge” about the Africans, “knowledge” which might also have guided the slave traders. Massé emphasizes their physiognomy, as well as their psychosocial attributes.<sup>149</sup> That type of information, which constitutes a collective “knowledge” of the Africans gathered prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, provides hints as to why certain tribes were more common in the Caribbean than others. For instance,

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<sup>149</sup> Massé, in the chapter entitled “La traite des noirs.- Leurs différentes races.- Leurs caractères particuliers” [The Slave Trade.- Their Different Races.- Their Specific Traits], describes the Senegalese, among which are found “les Jalofs, les Foulahs, et les Mandingos.” He also depicts the specific traits of the Minas, the Aradas, the Nagos, as well as the characteristics of the Lucumis, the Fanties, the Congos, the Carabalis, the Brichis, the Loangos, the Macquois and the Monjaves. The different groups are depicted according to their region of origin, and their distinctive physical and psychosocial features.



Massé depicts the Mandingos as “instruits, hospitaliers et pacifiques, pleins d’activité, de grace et de finesse. Leurs femmes sont vives et bonnes, ardentes et agréables” [are educated, hospitable and peaceful, very active, full of grace and finesse. Their women are lively and good-natured, ardent and pleasing] (261). As for the Foulahs, he continues, they are “peu noirs,” [not very dark-skinned]; they are “intelligents et industrieux, mais trop accoutumés à mener une vie errante. Cependant ils sont encore plus pasteurs que nomades” [intelligent and hardworking, but they are too accustomed to an errant life. They are, however, more of a pastoral than a nomadic group] (261).

These two different ethnic groups obviously possess all the positive traits that would make them great assets as domestic slaves. This is particularly true of the Mandingos, who would serve as entertainers, while the women, depicted as ‘lively’ and pleasant, would serve their masters as concubines. The Foulahs, although intelligent, have an unfavorable trait: their propensity towards an errant life. This might be threatening to slave buyers because the Foulahs might be inclined to a fugitive lifestyle. Depicting some sort of hierarchy, the psychosocial traits become more and more negative as Massé continues with the description. For example, he depicts the Carabalis as generally more “robustes et laborieux; mais leurs manières sont moins polies et leurs mœurs beaucoup moins douces que celles des Sénégalais” [strong and laborious; but their manners are less polite and their customs less refined than those of the Senegalese] (262). A subdivision of the Carabalis, the Ibos, “sont encore plus taciturnes; ils sont enclins au suicide” [are even more stubborn; they have an inclination towards suicide] (262). It is evident that a slave buyer seeking prosperity would seek to acquire the most intelligent and the most docile slaves, instead of those with volatile traits. In other words, a slave buyer who is aware of

the physiological and psychosocial traits characteristics of the Mandingos would prefer them over the Carabalis, especially the Brichis, a subclass of Carabalis, who are prone to cannibalism, according to Massé.

The chapter entitled “Une vente d’esclaves” [Slaves’ Auction] is central to an understanding of Massé’s stance towards slavery. Massé’s perspective reveals the concerted effort made by the slave traders to establish slavery as a mundane activity. This chapter provides insights into the understanding of the slaves as commodities, and the extent to which the slave owners went to make that commerce appear as legal and ordinary an activity as possible. The reader senses Massé’s pro-abolitionist stance, as every detail contributes to emphasizing the slave owners’ savagery, in contrast to the slaves’ humanity in the face of hopelessness.

Congruent with his narrative style, Massé begins the chapter with a controlling sentence, which underscores the chapter’s aim. That sentence also contains the narrator’s ironic tone, as well as the position he conditions his readers to take. Like coupons or general advertisements one might receive in the daily newspapers, Massé asserts, “Les ventes de nègres sont annoncées par un petit billet imprimé qu’on reçoit avec le *diario*” [Slave auctions are announced through a small printed insert that one receives with the daily newspaper] (162). Then, before dawn, the interested buyers would crowd the doorstep of the designated auction sites in order to acquire the human merchandise. Massé describes the buyers’ rage, as they crowded the doorstep in order to get the best possible spot, which would facilitate a closer examination of the slaves prior to purchase. The energy spent jockeying for position is translated into perspiration. He describes the

scene as “un spectacle singulier” [a singular spectacle] to see a man in short sleeves drenched in sweat (350). Then, he uses current events, alluding to the long lines during the recent food shortage (350). Massé states that the number of people gathered to purchase slaves exceeds what he has seen during the last shortage of bread. This offers an idea of the *gusto* with which the slave buyers feverishly participated in such an event, literally to obtain their “ration” of slaves. Describing the slave buyers’ vehement anticipation, Massé not only reveals their blindness and their avarice; he also conveys their lack of humanity in purchasing human beings. The allusion to the food shortage strengthens the idea of the slave shoppers’ hunger for riches, as the acquisition of slaves becomes analogous to the daily bread that they request in the Lord’s Prayer.

Massé continues the narrative, underlining the shoppers’ animalistic nature. The roles are reversed as the author expresses the horrors he has witnessed at the slave market. The slaves’ humanity is contrasted with the shoppers’ inhumanity and hunger to purchase humans, at a market where so-called civilized men haggle over the price of other men, where people are classified, purchased, or rejected like spoiled goods. In other words, the shoppers act as hunters while the slaves fall as prey to the slavers’ thirst for economic gain. The slaves, usually labeled savages, now inspire pity due to the level of hopelessness they express. Massé depicts their terror, exclaiming, “Quels cris! Quels gémissements épouvantables! Surtout parmi les femmes, qui, par la position de la pièce qu’elles occupent, se trouvent exposées les premières à l’irruption des barbares” [What screams! What frightening sighs! This is especially evident among the women, who, due to the location of the room they occupy, are the first ones exposed to the uprising of the barbarians] (351). Massé achieves this with great dexterity. However, to grasp fully his

intent, this chapter must be read in conjunction with the author's description of the *Paseo* and the barracoons because they are connected thematically. In the same way that Massé contrasts the opulence of the Creoles parading in the *Paseo* with the slaves' misery in the nearby barracoons, here he depicts two extremes: the slave buyers' eagerness to acquire wealth and the slaves' hopelessness. That is why it would have been more logical for Massé's chapter on the slaves' auction to have followed that on the barracoons.

Massé proceeds with the slave buyers' rage while emphasizing the uproar they cause in their effort to glean the ebony harvest. He believes that "La fureur avec laquelle on se précipite sur elles ne leur laisse aucun doute" [the furor with which those buyers hurl themselves upon those unfortunate women does not leave them with any doubt] (351). This violent furor is contrasted to the women's despair because "Elles se tiennent toute embrassées, et donnent les signes du plus violent désespoir" [They all stand cornered and show signs of the most violent hopelessness] (351). Massé, dealing with the theme of the women's despair, focuses particularly on one visually impaired woman. This woman typifies the "spoiled merchandise" discarded because of her physical condition. She becomes a recurrent character in the chapter. Massé relays her pain with images that echo the desperation of the two women he has described in the dreams he has had while approaching Cuba (37-40). This woman's clothing is reminiscent of a widow or a mother in mourning for the loss of a beloved husband or son. Her face is covered with a veil. She is depicted as crying bitterly because her companions have been sold. The uproar that Massé has described earlier has ironically helped her because it serves as an indicator that her companions are still alive. However, when she is no longer able to hear them because they have been taken away by their purchasers, Massé affirms: "elle était impatiente de ne

pas voir; elle prêtait avidement l'oreille, et elle pleurait; elle brûlait de savoir ce que ses compagnes étaient devenues, et ce qu'elle allait devenir elle-même" [she was impatient because she was unable to see; she was listening attentively, and she was crying; she was burning with the desire to know what had become of her companions, and what her own fate was going to be] (355).

After emphasizing that individual slave's suffering, Massé goes back to the main topic. He alludes to the idea that from such violence on the part of the slave buyers stems the belief by the slaves that they are going to be eaten (351). With vivid details, Massé exposes the other inhumane aspects of the slave market such as the meticulous separation of family members and the inspection of the slaves' private parts in search of illness. Then, those with physical defects such as blindness or hernias are tossed like spoiled goods. Massé then eulogizes Voltaire, painting him as a miniature god for being a friend to the Negro: "on le comptera parmi les défenseurs de l'humanité outragée" [you will be counted among the defenders of an outraged humanity] (356). Then, he names William Wilberforce, Thomas Clarkson, and Anthony Benezet, equating them with the sons of Africa, stating: "Puissent un jour vos noms vénérables être prononcés par les mères Africaines avec autant de tendresse et de plaisir que le nom de leur époux, du père de leurs enfants!" [Let their virtuous names... be solemnly pronounced by African mothers with as much tenderness and pleasure as the names of their own father, their husbands or their sons] (357).

Massé concludes the chapter with an accusatory tone, denouncing the arrogance of Europeans for enslaving Africans under the pretext that they are uncivilized and devoid of

virtues. Massé reminds all haughty white men of the bonds that link us all as members of the human race, “Ce n’est point par leurs dispositions à la vertu, aux sciences, aux travaux du genie que les enfants de l’Afrique sont nos frères; c’est bien surtout parce qu’ils ont les mêmes défauts, les mêmes vices” [It is not due to their aptitude to virtue, science, to the workings of the mind that the children of Africa are our brothers. It is because they have the same defects, the same vices, the same troubles as we do]” (359). As if the message were not clear enough, Massé makes the cogent point that the White men need not boast themselves since neither their Christianity nor their philosophy has prevented them from “stooping to the yoke of despotism” (359). Therefore, if they can stoop to such a level, according to Massé, they have no right to “regarder les fils du Zaïre et du Kalabar comme des animaux stupides, comme des êtres inférieurs à notre nature [consider the sons of Zaire and of Calabar as stupid animals and beings that are inferior to our nature] (168).

In “Les Baraques ou Nègreries,” Massé continues to highlight the slaves’ condition as human chattel. However, that description reveals the complexities of colonial issues because even as Massé is sympathizing with the African slaves, some of his own prejudices come to the surface, confirming that he only partially opposes slavery on the basis of equality between blacks and whites. In this sense, his pro-abolitionist stance is prompted by moral repulsion against an unjust system rather than by a genuine belief in the human brotherhood he has alluded to at the end of the chapter titled “Slaves’ Auction.”

Consistent with his narrative style, before expanding on the topic, Massé uses the transitional phrase, “J’ai déjà indiqué leur position” [I have already mentioned the barracoons’ location] which serves to keep the reader focused. Massé starts describing the barracoons as prisons, “Ainsi des espèces de casernes destinées d’abord à loger des soldats, sont devenues des prisons où l’on renferme les troupes de nègres, à mesure qu’on les débarque, en attendant qu’ils soient vendus” [Thus, models of barracks, originally intended as lodgings for soldiers, became prisons, where flocks of Blacks are incarcerated as soon as they get off the boat, as they wait to be sold] (172). After describing the barracoons as prison cells, after stating that the Africans are considered goods during the middle passage, and as unfortunate beings in the barracoons prior to their sale, Massé seems to be completely lost. First, he defines a few concepts to enlighten his reader. A “*nègre bosale*” he describes as one who has recently arrived from Africa and who does not yet speak the language of his master. He also defines the term *ladino*, as a slave born in Africa, who already speaks Spanish and has a profession. A *ladino*, according to Massé, is less noble than a “*criollo*,” “dont les Français ont fait leur mot de créole, et qui se donnent aux enfans [sic] d’origine européenne ou africaine, nés en Amérique” [which the French derive from their word Créole, a title given to children of European or African descent born in America] (175). Then, following those definitions, the author appears to have other preoccupations. They suggest that even the enlightened is, at least, spatially deceived by the artifices concocted to keep the slaves happy. That is why he lingers on his description of the slaves taking baths in the ocean, spectacles he depicts as pleasing. Even the Venus of Medici comes to his mind as he observes the naked slaves. In the remainder of the description, Massé deals with his own

interracial conflicts, as his friend B. serves as a foil character to reveal his own prejudices.<sup>150</sup>

### **Massé and the Field Slaves**

Massé uses his correspondence with his friend B. to communicate the execrable condition of the field slaves. To such end, he carefully inserts fragments of his friend's letters into the book, which gives the narrative a plurality of voices. This exchange of letters between the two ordinary friends also indicates a new orientation in the 19<sup>th</sup> century travelogue. Unlike the sponsored 15<sup>th</sup> century travelogue, dedicated to the noble man/woman who has sponsored the trip, the 19<sup>th</sup> century traveler is an independent adventurer/researcher. Thus, the inclusion of the correspondence between Massé and B. serves as a reminder that the 19<sup>th</sup> century traveler remains an inveterate romantic, as well as a pseudoscientist at heart. That is why in those fragments of letters, the writers vacillate between being scientists, struggling to present historical details with accuracy, to being tourists trying to get the best out of a foreign territory.

In these excerpts, B. provides additional historical details on Cuba, which complement Massé's presentation. These excerpts are also important in that they reveal the degree of friendship between the two men joined by destiny in a foreign journey. In this sense, they share their worries while living in a territory where the foreigners' lives are constantly threatened by diseases. They also share intimate details concerning possible love interests in Cuba, as well as the fluctuating political climate. Most of all, in ideology, Massé and B. are so similar that many times I wonder whether B. is Massé's shadow, that

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<sup>150</sup> For further details, see chapter IV, "Representation of Otherness."



is the *dedoublement* of the author, whom I suspect maybe hiding behind the name B. to convey some of his views. This is especially true in the depiction of the lamentable situation of the field slaves. The information, furnished as a response to Massé's inquiry in a previous letter, serves as a point of reference to the reader, as well as a monument to Massé's determination to offer as comprehensive a picture of Cuba as possible.

Through B.'s viewpoint, the reader is allowed to have a deeper understanding of the differences between the plight of the domestic slaves and the field slaves. The chapter entitled "Fragments des lettres de B." [Fragments of Letters from B.] is a continuation of Massé's anti-slavery crusade. Playing the role of an editor, using ellipses to indicate his favorite selections, Massé exploits the chapter to help convince the reader that the domestic slaves are treated better than the plantation slaves. The author reiterates every known fact about the slaves' lives, such as the long hours, their harsh labor, and the slave master's impatient whip. B. reminds the reader of Massé's philanthropic bent by placing him alongside the British abolitionists.<sup>151</sup>

### **Ampère's Treatment of Slavery**

At the center of Ampère's conceptual approach to the slavery question is a comparison between the slaves' condition in Cuba and the slaves in the United States. In the chapter entitled "Une villa sous les tropiques-Colomb à Cuba" [A Tropical Villa-Columbus in Cuba], Ampère thus expresses his shock while his eyes are admiring the magnificent Yumurí Valley located in Matanzas. Although Ampère is submerged in Cuba's panorama, in front of him are parading hoards of slaves. Slavery is so embedded

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<sup>151</sup> See the appendix for a translation of that chapter.

in the culture that his tour guide judges it necessary to provide information on the cost of each slave. The author, therefore, reacts to the scene he is witnessing, affirming: “L’esclavage seul gâte un peu l’impression d’enchantement qui m’arrive de partout” [Only slavery spoils the impression of enchantment that surrounds me a little] (193).

With the beauty of the tropical panorama as overwhelming as the experience of slavery itself, Ampère has found himself obliged to indulge his eyes, in spite of the omnipresence of slavery, which spoils the scene “a little.” Reading the remainder of Ampère’s descriptions, one gets a better grasp of the phrase “only slavery spoils the impression of enchantment.” The uniqueness of the Yumurí Valley seems to have captured Ampère’s attention so much that his description of the slaves’ condition becomes secondary. This explains the long hiatus in the narration, as he focuses intently on describing his feelings of elation at observing nature at its peak. The traveler is so enthralled by the surrounding beauty that, after describing all sorts of tropical gems, he pauses and exclaims: “J’ai donc maintenant contemplé les principaux aspects de la nature et parcouru toute la gamme des harmonies divines ici-bas” [I have now contemplated all the major characteristics of nature and explored the entire ensemble of divine harmonies here on earth] (193). He does not return to the issue of slavery until almost three pages later to offer an analysis that is as brief as the duration of his trip to Cuba. However, one must not look to the brevity of his description to totally thrust aside his contribution to a better understanding of slavery in 19<sup>th</sup> century Cuba.

With succinct and well-thought out sentences, Ampère expresses his abhorrence of slavery with as much passion as his counterpart Massé. Because of his constant

comparison between Cuba and the United States, his view is singular: it allows us insights into Ampère's thought processes. Having recently visited the United States, especially Louisiana, not only do his descriptions enlighten our understanding of the slavery system in both territories; they also shed light on Ampère's understanding of the people of each country. Like an anthropologist, he sees a certain degree of relativism, which is due to two distinct reasons: the natural, "type A personality" of the Anglo, contrasted with the "natural indolence" of the Creole. He observes these differences in the ways the people go about their daily routine. For instance, depicting how both peoples live with reckless abandon, the author concludes: "Les précautions n'abondent pas à Cuba plus qu'aux États-Unis. L'indolence créole produit le même effet que l'activité fiévreuse de la race anglo-saxonne" [Precautionary measures are not taken any more here than they are in the United States. The Creole indolence produces the same effect as the feverish activity of the Anglo race] (195).

When returning to the issue of slavery, as a financial reporter, Ampère provides details he has gathered from interviews on the elaborate cost of maintaining sugar plantations. This leads him to two realizations. First, he expresses empathy towards the slaves, suggesting that his heart has not been ossified, as Jameson put it in his *Letters from the Havana* (19). By ossification, Jameson means the condition that causes Europeans to be so desensitized: they do not see anything wrong with the inhumane treatment of the slaves. Ampère expresses his repulsion: "Je ne puis m'accoutumer à ces évaluations de capitaux et de bénéfices dans lesquelles le travail de l'homme est compris et compté comme une force brute dont on dispose sans la participation de celui qui la fournit" [I cannot get accustomed to those evaluations of capitals and benefits in which

the work of a man is understood and counted as a brute force which one disposes of without the participation of the person that provides it] (197). However, after making such a convincing declaration, Ampère's tour guide quickly soothes him by relating a story that "humanizes" slavery a bit. This story deals with the benevolence of a family towards an old domestic slave who has saved the life of a certain Mr. M... during the massacre of Saint-Domingue. This old slave, categorized as a *bon nègre* [a good Negro], shares the same table and living quarters with that family. Ampère then concludes that similar things are unheard of in the United States. After this brief respite, reality then settles in as Ampère, for the first time, has the opportunity of observing the other side of slavery; the arduous labor of the field slaves. That visit to a sugar cane plantation arises sentiments of pity in Ampère.

Observing the devilish pace of work in that infernal environment, observing men and women together working like beasts of burden, producing riches to which they will have no share, Ampère once again experiences shock, as well as indignation. He reiterates the theme of the slaves' working as automatons, as the slave driver, armed with the whip, is ready to strike upon the least signs of fatigue. He reflects on the invisible alien will that forces the slaves to work as machines: "la pensée que ces êtres humains agissaient par une volonté étrangère, comme une meule tourne parce qu'on la fait tourner, me serraient [sic] le coeur" [the thought that these human beings were operating under the influence of a foreign will, similarly to the way a grind turns because someone makes it turn, tightens my heart] (198). On the plantations, Ampère notes that the slaves seem minute in comparison to the immensity of the cane field, which echoes descriptions of cane fields in later Antillan novels such as *La Rue Cases-Nègres* by Joseph Zobel, a novelist from

Martinique, born in 1915, in (1955), *Over* (1974), by Ramón Marrero Aristy's (Dominican Republic 1919-1959) and *Cañas y bueyes* (1935), by Francisco Eugenio y Puello, a Dominican historian and novelist (1886-1959), as well as the vivid descriptions recorded in Maurice Lemoine's *Sucre amer* (1985).

It is doubtful that Ampère successfully disguised the anguish he experienced. This is evident both in his vacillations, reporting on the slaves' mistreatment in some instances while convincing himself that things are not that bad. The efforts of his tour guide to convince him that the slave owners do have a heart also bear witness to the latter's ruse because he was probably aware of Ampère's discomfort. This is typical of any system that involves a web of deception, which suggests that no matter how much sympathy the travelers express towards the slaves; their descriptions can only scratch the surface of the slaves' wretched condition. Later, Ampère's tour guide attempts to alleviate his concerns. This time, the guide uses humor and irony to convince the Frenchman that what he has heard concerning the slaves' mistreatment is an exaggeration of the facts. The guide declares: "On prétend que les esclaves sont malheureux; vous pouvez en juger. Je suis sûr que vous n'avez pas entendu un coup de fouet retentir" [It is alleged that the slaves are unhappy, but you can judge for yourself. I am sure that you have not heard one crack of the whip] (198). Ampère then assures us that this is an overstatement: "Il y avait un quart d'heure que nous étions dans la plantation!" [We had only been on the plantation for half an hour!] (198). Ampère, however, feels that he has witnessed enough to conclude, "Je crois en effet que les cruautés sont rares, bien qu'on nous avoue que les suicides sont fréquents. J'entends dire: <<Ils se pendent assez souvent; *on ne sait vraiment pas pourquoi* [his italics]>>" [I believe that instances of cruelties are rare, although we have

been told that suicides are frequent. I have heard that ‘they often hang themselves; but we *do not really know why*’(his italics)] (198).

Ampère continues to describe his empathy towards the slaves’ plight, confessing that it is a very difficult job, especially at the height of the sugar cane season when they work eighteen hours a day. However, as a good European Christian, not only is Ampère afflicted by the incessant labor and other inhumane treatments that the field slaves endure, but he also has other concerns. It seems, as Ampère suggests, that the degree of suffering the slaves experience can be minimized when they have been instructed that their earthly suffering is transient. Thus, Ampère shows concern about the slaves’ moral instruction: “Ce labeur, tout violent et excessif qu’on peut le trouver, n’est pas ce qui a soulevé en moi le plus d’indignation contre l’esclavage tel qu’il existe dans l’île de Cuba” [Although this type of labor may be considered violent and excessive, that is not what has aroused most of my indignation against slavery such as it is practiced on the island of Cuba] (198). Ampère is gravitating here towards the current view of slavery as violence against the body as well as the soul. That is why he inquires about the type of moral instruction the plantation slaves are receiving. He indicates he is surprised to hear that they have been baptized and that the priest has confessed them on their deathbed. Sometimes, he is informed, the slaves have nightly prayer meetings, but during the sugar cane season, these do not occur because of a lack of time (199).

Ampère’s moral repulsion towards slavery is to be taken with a grain of salt because, although his intentions may be altruistic, his protest contains some of the ideological tenets of the proponents of slavery. For instance, he still firmly believes that

the knowledge of good and evil is not innate among Africans. That is why he advocates that the tenets of Christianity be taught to them. He laments the slaves' primitive condition: "Mais ni catéchisme, ni prédication pour les noirs; nul moyen que la notion du bien et du mal parvienne à leur intelligence: ils sont exclus de toute idée morale" [No catechism nor predication for the Negroes; no means for teaching them the rudiments of good and evil. The idea of moral is foreign to them] (199). In other words, Ampère alludes to the pristine, savage state of the Negroes in need of moral instruction, in need of guidance in the path of good and evil. In lamenting the slave owners' neglect of their property's souls, Ampère ironically evokes some of the same reasons why the slaves find themselves in bondage in the first place: the slaves are lazy and have no idea of morals as the Europeans do. What is missing in Ampère's advocacy is the lucidity to reach the conclusion that it would be impossible for the slaves to learn about virtues from their masters because slavery is a vicious cycle corrupting both the slaves and their owners (Montesquieu 65).

Observing that slavery is the destruction of the body as well as the soul, and with his visit to Louisiana still fresh in his mind, Ampère cannot help concluding that what he has learned about the slave owners in Cuba is false. Here, the traveler is being flexible, adjusting his views according to the observations he has made during his visit. Earlier he has referred to the indolence of the Creoles. This indolence results in a certain "humane" treatment of the slaves and a sense of equality among the different classes (178). This has been Ampère's hasty conclusion, reached while traveling aboard a wagon. Now, the arduous labor of the field slaves forces him to adjust his narrative stance.

Objectivity, as well as experience, helps him to realize that slavery is much harsher in Cuba than in Louisiana, contrary to what he has been led to believe. This is only based on the comparison between plantations in Matanzas with plantations in the South of the United States. He witnesses that a plantation owner from Louisiana named Mr. Roman is so benevolent towards his slaves that he even allows Catholic priests as well as Methodists to bring them religious instruction. To explain what takes place in Cuba, Ampère simply concludes that, for the slaves, as well as for pigs, nothing is done in the way of moral instruction (200). Although he admits later that the slaves are generally well fed, that they are cared for when they become ill, and that they are engaged in forced labor; that they are deprived of moral instruction angers Ampère. For those reasons, among others, he advocates the abolition of slavery, as well as the abolition of the slave trade, which he views as interconnected. Massé ends the chapter by reiterating the intricacies of the whole slavery system, as a circle of vices. The trade, “interdite par la loi, se fait notoirement à Cuba. La plupart des gouverneurs qui ont précédé le général Concha la toléraient” [forbidden by law is done openly in Cuba. Most of the governors who preceded General Concha condoned it], he affirms (200).<sup>152</sup> As he applauds General Concha’s anti-slavery stance, he also accuses the United States, as well as England, for profiting clandestinely from the slave trade. As for the British, although they claim to be the leaders of the abolition movement, Ampère points out their hypocrisy because as soon

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<sup>152</sup> José Gutiérrez de la Concha (1809-1895), Marquis of Havana, Spanish soldier, who was first appointed as Governor General of Cuba in 1850. He served for two years, and was then reappointed for five more years in 1854. The highlight of his career consists of an invasion that sailed from the United States under the command of General Narciso López, who was captured and executed in September 1851. Concha was appointed as Governor General again in 1874.



as the ebony commerce became bankrupt, they resorted to Chinese indentured servants in the British colonies (201).

Dealing with the issue of slavery, Ampère not only documents his impressions, but he also endeavors to leave his mark on the history of the island of Cuba. Although this might not have been his aim, his anti-slavery arguments offer the views of a visionary. Since sugar and slavery are interwoven, Ampère believes that the abolition of slavery will not only benefit the slaves, guaranteeing them their natural rights to live free, but it will also serve as a catalyst for the country's agriculture. Therefore, playing the role of a financial forecaster, Ampère affirms: "L'abolition de l'esclavage pourrait, à quelques égards, être favorable à la culture générale de cette île" [The abolition of slavery could, to some extent, be favorable to farming in general in this country] (203). Ampère elucidates this point by stressing that the sugar plantations use up all the funds and that the coffee plantations are abandoned as a result of competition with Brazil and Java. Ampère further observes that other crops such as cocoa, wheat and corn, which do not require slave labor, may be beneficial to the country's economy. Finally, he urges pro-abolitionists to stop using sugar cane and proposes the use of beet sugar as a healthier and wiser alternative because it is less expensive to cultivate and does not require substantial slave labor (203).

### **De Cassagnac's Pro-Slavery Manifesto**

De Cassagnac is the only one of the travelers to blatantly oppose the abolition of slavery. In fact, his book constitutes a testimonial to the "benefits" of slavery to the African continent and the New World. According to the prologue, the book has been written after much soul searching as the author's memoir, as well as his attempt to defend

himself against those who allege that he abhors Africans. His pro-slavery argument is twofold. First, relying on his observations and on-site interviews, De Cassagnac attempts to prove that socially, and based on the tenets of Christianity, the African race is far removed from the European type (vii). The author goes on further to use the rubric “c’est là un premier fait” [that’s a first fact] (vii), in an effort to convince the reader that his statements are based on hard evidence. Second, he also believes that the “régime colonial a élevé moralement la race africaine, et lui a fait faire beaucoup de chemin vers la religion, vers la famille et vers la prospérité” [the colonial system has morally uplifted the African race, and has facilitated the path towards religion, the family and prosperity] (vii).

De Cassagnac, convinced of his own opinions and also in an effort to convince his readers, now claims that “c’est un second fait” [this is a second fact], although he is just rationalizing slavery. He ends the “preamble” to his “pro-slavery manifesto” saying: “Les Africains des Antilles, livrés prématurément à eux-mêmes, selon les principes des philanthropes, rétrograderaient vers la barbarie et perdraient tout l’avantage des progrès déjà opérés” [The Africans in the Antilles, left to fend for themselves prematurely, according to the philanthropists’ principles, would regress to a state of barbarism and would lose all the advantage of the progress that has already been accomplished] (vii). Thus, he advocates maintaining the *status quo* out of concern for the Africans who would lose the benefit of civilization should they become free from the shackles of slavery. This, De Cassagnac concludes, is a conviction that is based on experience.

It is against such ideologies presented as facts, and against those who condone their ancestors’ behavior, that C.L.R James writes: “There are and always will be some

who, ashamed of the behaviour of their ancestors, try to prove that slavery was not so bad after all, that its evils and its cruelty were the exaggerations of propagandists and not the habitual lot of the slaves. Men will say (and accept) anything in order to foster national pride or soothe a troubled conscience" (13). It is this sort of shameless national pride that De Cassagnac advocates *ad nauseam* in his defense of slavery, praising its benefits to the African continent, promoting the "superiority" of the white race, while condemning those who sympathize with the slaves. As promised in his preface, De Cassagnac defends his thesis by outlining some of the arguments he will later expand on in his *Colonies Françaises; De L'esclavage et l'émancipation* (1836). The most interesting aspect of his argument is the labyrinthine rhetoric that he uses while trying to convince the reader that his travels to the Antilles qualify him more than all the philanthropists who have so eloquently expounded on the execrable condition of the African slaves. This is typical of the myopic vision engendered by such a traveler who, in an endeavor to maintain colonial views, dissimulates and unites fact and fiction to convince his reader that only his perspective is noteworthy.

Such is the goal De Cassagnac sets out to accomplish in his *Voyage aux Antilles*. His pro-slavery arguments are scattered throughout the different chapters, as he proposes a socio-anthropological study of the various races that populate the Antilles. With each ethnic group, he meticulously describes physical and psychological attributes; he also characterizes them based on similarities and differences with the dominant White race. He uses as his standard the so-called "perfection" or "superiority" of the White race to state that Whites are apt for socialization/civilization while Blacks are mere brutes. Describing the three major races in the Antilles, Blacks, Mulattoes, and Whites, De

Cassagnac emphasizes the profound divide between them and maintains that they should remain separate and unequal. Within this racial discourse, which contains an analysis of individuals, as well as groups, De Cassagnac inserts his pro-slavery arguments. The following is an overview of De Cassagnac's moral and economic justifications for slavery.

To better comprehend De Cassagnac's pro-slavery arguments, perhaps it helps to consider his attitude towards the African continent as well as Blacks/Africans as a whole. De Cassagnac depicts the African continent as a desert where dirty, disease stricken, uneducated, lazy and promiscuous savage Negroes wander (134).<sup>153</sup> Europe, on the other hand, is represented as the center of civilization, peopled by active men who live according to the tenets of the Bible (134). For that reason, De Cassagnac comes up with the equation "1 blanc = 3 nègres" [1 white man=3 black men] (135). He does not state the meaning of that equation. His concern is to convince the reader of the superiority of Whites over Blacks. Since he depicts Blacks as lazy, the author also is insinuating a "superiority" from the standpoint of intelligence and production. To convince the reader of his familiarity with the mores of Africans, De Cassagnac uses the rubric "Règle générale" to wrap up his blanket statements.

With this established, it is no secret that De Cassagnac can then argue that the cross-cultural encounter from which slavery is ensued, can only be profitable to the "inferior" group in several ways. Morally, the Africans will learn how to behave decently. "Decency" here ranges from the way they dress to their sexual behavior. According to De

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<sup>153</sup> For further details on De Cassagnac's representation of blacks, as well as the ideological currents behind such representation, see chapter 4, "Representation of Otherness."

Cassagnac : “le costume des nègres, c’est la plus complète nudité. C’est ainsi qu’ils arrivent d’Afrique, et l’on a la plus grande peine du monde à les assujétir à porter des vêtements” [the costume of the Negroes, is the most complete nudity. They come from Africa that way, and it is extremely difficult to convince them to put clothes on] (151). De Cassagnac proceeds by enumerating some of the benefits of slavery to the slaves, saying: “Cependant, les progrès très sensibles de l’éducation religieuse introduisent chaque jour des améliorations dans la tenue des nègres, et surtout dans celle des négresses, et il s’en trouve beaucoup qui sont parfaitement convenables et modestes” [However, the significant progress of religious instruction brings about daily changes in the way the Negroes dress. Among the women, especially, many are perfectly modest and decent] (155). In this instance, De Cassagnac’s statements echo the sentiments of the first friars who saw the need to dress the Natives and make them adopt other “Christian” virtues (Dirks 27). However, what De Cassagnac ignores is that the notion of indecency or sin that the Europeans associate with the Africans’ nudity stems from the Europeans’ own obsession with the idea of sin, as well as their repressed sexual desires, which in part encouraged the violence against Natives and Africans.

Related to the slaves’ lack of clothing is their promiscuity. Therefore, by having European masters, the slave learns the true meaning of the concept of family (335). By this, De Cassagnac means that the slaves would emulate their masters’ monogamous lifestyle. Assuming that the European family is the prototypical family, De Cassagnac goes through a lengthy tirade to explain that sexual permissiveness is the law in Africa, that African males pick sexual partners that live far from their home, and that they do not recognize marriage as Europeans do. He even cites priests in the French Antilles who

have offered incentives to the Africans so that they may contract marriages. The Africans flatly refuse, according to De Cassagnac, because they prefer having concubines. However, unlike Ampère, who has criticized the neglect of the slaves' souls due to lack of moral instruction, the slaves' souls do not really matter to De Cassagnac. Nevertheless, one has to read between the lines to realize that he is mentioning the slaves' lasciviousness to emphasize that they are morally defective (Entralgo 206).

Carefully inserted in his description, are the economic losses associated with the slaves' lifestyle. For instance, since slaves have multiple sex partners, they have to travel several miles to see their partners. Such lifestyle leads to fatigue, which adversely impacts on production. In this sense, De Cassagnac's emphasis on the slaves' loose morals does not stem from a genuine concern about their moral welfare: it is presented in the form of the judgment formed by the colonizer on his subjects. For instance, De Cassagnac states that some of the slaves, due to exhaustion from excessive sexual activity, fall asleep while working in the sugar factory. He reports that there are accidents in which slaves have been dismembered and died. He claims that physical tiredness due to sexual overexertion, as well as the long distances the slaves have to travel to meet their partners, is the main cause of such accidents (200). However, what De Cassagnac is consciously omitting is that working long hours is enough to cause both serious mental and physical deterioration. By pointing out the slaves' lack of discipline, he is insinuating that slavery is necessary to rehabilitate the Africans, to teach them a regimented lifestyle, making them ripe for civilizing. The moral repulsion expressed by both Ampère and Massé, while witnessing the same scenes, is not present in De Cassagnac. On the contrary, he believes

that, economically, slavery is benefiting Africa by providing discipline for the Negroes who are accustomed to wandering in the desert.

De Cassagnac's criticism of the slaves' moral ineptitude affects both male and female slaves. The female slaves, like their male counterparts, are also viewed as prone to promiscuity. Again, denying the violence perpetrated against women during slavery, De Cassagnac equivocates, and tries to absolve the slave owners' own sexual behavior. Therefore, he denies that rape is a common practice, stating that the slave owners do not have to submit themselves to such debasing acts for numerous reasons (195). First, since the African males are so ugly and in such depraved physical conditions, the African women do not find them sexually attractive. In this sense, any attack or any special attention from the slave's owner constitutes a favor because there was not an attractive pool of eligible Black males in the first place. Second, the female slaves, according to De Cassagnac, do not know the difference between a concubine and a wife. Therefore, she is more than willing to give herself to anyone who wishes to have her, especially if that person is providing her with room and board (197). In this sense, De Cassagnac seems to suggest that, culturally and psychologically, the female slaves accept their conditions. For them, since they are being cared for, satisfying their masters' sexually is part of their duty. With this assumed, the idea of rape, according to De Cassagnac, the female slaves who have no notion of rape. Thus, the philanthropists are at fault for introducing such an idea among the slaves in order to convince people that the slaves are not benefiting morally from slavery.

### De Cassagnac: Debunking the Philanthropists' Arguments

De Cassagnac's aim is to refute every argument that has been presented against slavery and the slave trade. In this sense, his writing appears to be a rebuttal of all the pro-abolitionist arguments, as he strives to establish himself as judge and jury, confident of the providential knowledge that his experience as a traveler has afforded him. In order to present his case, De Cassagnac introduces a number of *schemata* aimed at deconstructing our collective memory of slavery and the slave trade. Methodically, he presents a counter argument, denouncing the philanthropists' blindness and lack of lucidity, thereby concealing and revealing his own near-sightedness. Thus, at times, De Cassagnac's writing has the harsh tone of a speaker who is angry at the world, presenting his arguments as a cold-blooded demagogue. In other instances, he sounds like an arrogant scholar dismantling his detractors' arguments, using their words against them, and ostracizing them by mocking their atrophied intellects. For instance, he dismisses the argument that the slave ships were overcrowded saying: "J'ai vu des émigrants de l'Allemagne débarquer à New-York, et j'affirme qu'ils étaient beaucoup plus entassés sur leur navire que les Africains à bord des négriers" [I have seen German immigrants disembark in New York, and I contend that they were more piled up on their ship than the Africans aboard the slave ship] (201). De Cassagnac is comparing two phenomena that are both similar and distinct. Although he might have seen boats crowded with German immigrants, the issue at hand here is not cargo space. The inhumanity alluded to by the philanthropists who argued against the slave trade had everything to do with the fact that the Africans were snatched by force and loaded up against their will aboard the slave ships *en route* to an infernal odyssey. There certainly has not been a German slave trade.



However, De Cassagnac, in the hopes of presenting a strong case, makes tautological and contradictory arguments a strong part of his rhetorical repertoire. This suggests how obstinate he was in maintaining that slaves should be kept in bondage.

De Cassagnac uses history, as well as the correlation between supply and demand, to justify the enslavement of Africans. He begins by stating that the institution of slavery is at the bedrock of all nations, trying to convince both his readers and his detractors that the current state of affairs is quite normal (138). Furthermore, he sees slavery as a deeply rooted African institution. Thus, he believes that the slave trader provides an economic venue for the savage African kings, in that he helps them rid themselves of an excessive labor force. Therefore, according to De Cassagnac, the idea that free Africans have been snatched away from their homeland to come and work in the New World as slaves is another myth put forth by the British philanthropists in order to put an end to commerce no longer profitable to their country. He asserts that slavery ensures Africa's survival in that it helps control the population. This is important, according to De Cassagnac, because Africa is limited in terms of agricultural production. Africa's means of subsistence is very restricted because the continent depends on hunting, which has led its people to follow a nomadic life, a prerequisite for an undisciplined life, according to De Cassagnac. Thus, De Cassagnac states that the philanthropists should have based their arguments on experience instead of sentimentalism. They should have undertaken voyages of study similar to his in order to realize that slavery is just a business transaction (245). The slave trade has provided mutual help to Africa and Europe, the Frenchman concludes. Slavery, according to De Cassagnac, represents a source of "bien-être matériel

et de garanties morales” [material welfare and moral guarantees] for Africans because the slaves are fed, converted into Christianity, and had a chance to become civilized (247).

Etienne Massé, Jean-Jacques Ampère and Granier de Cassagnac have left diverse impressions of one of the most glaring problems in 19<sup>th</sup> century Cuba: slavery. The travelers brought with them ideas that were at their embryonic stage. The French Revolution was pivotal in providing the ideological backdrop for all oppressed people seeking freedom from colonial rule. The travelers’ treatment of slavery and the slave trade reflects some of the ideological and political changes that had already taken place in the Americas, as well as the winds of change that were blowing through the plantations in Cuba. To say that the travelers’ perspectives were influenced by their political convictions is an understatement. Their attitude towards slavery reflects the polemics that pitted England against all pro-slavery advocates. Therefore, both Etienne Massé and Jean-Jacques Ampère reiterate some of the arguments advanced by the British philanthropists against slavery and the slave trade. Their first-hand experience of slavery in Cuba places them as eye-witnesses. Thus, their experience makes their arguments more convincing because they bring to the fore every act of violence, the slaves’ laments, as well as the cruelty of their masters. Although Massé and Ampère clearly take sides blaming Europe for Africa’s misfortunes, they endeavor to leave a faithful testimony of their observations. Massé, whose visit only involves the plantations in Cuba, adopts a historical approach, providing us with detailed descriptions of the slaves’ quarters. He also provides insights into the minds of the slaves; his descriptions arouse our pity towards them when contrasting their misery with the slave owners’ cruelty. Furthermore, the insertion of fragments of letters from Massé’s friend B. elucidates the harsher treatment of field

slaves, as opposed to the domestic slaves, who were treated more favorably, if such a thing can be said about anyone in bondage. Using a style that is very similar to Massé's, B.'s words complete Massé's descriptions of the wretched condition of the slaves; they reflect how the British abolitionists influenced the travelers.

Ampère's recent visit to the United States provides a basis for comparing slavery in Cuba with its practice in the southern United States. However, his views are a bit sketchy due to his short stay in Cuba. His perspective is similar to Massé's, in that they both express empathy towards the slaves' suffering. Ampère, nonetheless, seems confused at times, which may be attributed to his zeal to provide solutions as well as explanations. For instance, observing that domestic slaves are "better" treated in Cuba than they are in the United States, he attributes the "better" treatment of the Cuban slaves to the indolence of the Creoles. Ampère also observes that slavery is the destruction of the body as well as that of the soul. While this is revealing, Ampère's next statement suggests that he does not have a full grasp of the complexity of the institution of slavery. He advocates religious education for the slaves, so they can be taught to discern between right and wrong. What Ampère is ignoring here is that even in the United States, even when the slaves were receiving the rudiments of religion, there was no interest in their salvation. From the viewpoint of the masters, the real role of religion was to maintain them in a docile state.

De Cassagnac strongly believes in maintaining the separation of the races. Thus, he belittles Blacks, pointing out that they are lazy, uncivilized and ugly; he further indicates that there is no attraction at all between White women and Black males. When interracial

unions take place, De Cassagnac quickly points out that they usually occur in Europe where anyone who is Black falls under the generic term “American.” Through anecdotes, he suggests that even priests discourage marriages between Black men and White women. He also uses the anecdotal approach to underscore the degree of ostracism that White women subject themselves to when they marry Black males.

De Cassagnac utilizes the same train of thought throughout his account to advocate the idea of maintaining the White race as “pure.” In other words, his pro-slavery discourse is based on the principle that Africans are inferior, that they turned Africa into a desert, and that they need to serve Europeans so that they can be guided in the paths of civilization. Therefore, according to him, slavery makes sense morally and economically. That is why De Cassagnac presents his travels as the ultimate laboratory where his thesis on the inferiority of Africans has been proven. However, De Cassagnac could not predict that his arguments, centuries later, would be taken for what they are: another perspective on a controversial institution, which eventually disappeared even in Cuba.

## Conclusion

Writing does not originate *ex nihilo*. This is especially true of travel writing, which is mimetic for it relies on a number of conventions to produce texts that make the travelers credible by re-creating “realities.” From the vantage point of Etienne Michel Massé, Duvergier de Hauranne, Granier de Cassagnac and Jean-Jacques Ampère, we have gained powerful insights into what constituted life in 19<sup>th</sup> century Cuba. Their visits, as described in their diaries, have allowed us to witness the evolution of certain cultural, social, economic and historical trends. These French travelers’ diaries are thus established as reference texts that may be studied in order to have a first-hand familiarity with 19<sup>th</sup> century Cuba.

As is common with travelogues, the texts constitute a collage of *topoi*. The *lieux communs* in the narration reflect the authors’ diverse training, the length of their visits, their ideology, as well as their socioeconomic backgrounds. This is evidenced through the themes they develop in each chapter, the details they opt to incorporate or omit, and their attitudes enunciating their encounter with the Other. In this sense, each author leaves us with a testimonial of things seen, heard, read about, along with tall tales they have invented in an effort to convince the reader of the accuracy of their claims. In the texts studied, the poetical, the philosophical, and the sociological, as well as the psychological, coalesce providing accounts that are as colorful as the personalities of the travelers. Thus, the travelers experiment with different genres. This experimentation enriches the texts by allowing different levels of interpretation; it is then all the more complex to separate facts from fiction.

For the travelers studied, the border between objectivity and subjectivity is only imaginary, as pseudoscientific theories are employed to represent the Other from the standpoint of pathology. Those theories, however, are merely insinuated, as in the case of Massé and Ampère and De Hauranne. This reveals the writers' prior readings, as well as their biases, which subconsciously become a part of the discourse. In De Cassagnac's situation, pseudoscientific theories, mixed with his own eccentric observations, are presented as irrefutable proofs of the inferior status of the subjects he depicted. The travelers rely on prior travels, prior readings, as well as the belief in their "superiority," to theorize on the Other. This establishes them as connoisseurs of plants, people, history, geography, and literature. Their aim is to convince the receptor of the accuracy of their claims. Within those parameters, it must be observed that the colonial hegemony over Cuba is either implied or proactively advocated. For that reason, the narrators glean information from undocumented secondary texts; rely on myths and ideas brought from home, as well as on interviews conducted during the trip, to prove their knowledge of the Other. In this sense, the texts become a narrative stew, which enchants the reader, providing information that may be useful to prospective travelers and scholars interested in Cuban matters. They also contain blueprints for identity formation by implanting ideas in the collective memory, usually through stereotypical conceptualizations of the culture in question. In so doing, they show the powerful forces against which the subaltern culture must struggle in order to completely extricate itself from the cocoon of colonialism.

The idea of spreading knowledge is at the heart of the 19<sup>th</sup> century travelers' quest. Each traveler seems to have followed that pathway. For instance, in an effort to

remind the reader that empires are built upon bloody conquests, Etienne Massé, in *L'isle de Cuba et la Havane*, disseminates his knowledge of world history and geography by recapitulating a number of ancient cities and past conflicts. Then, as he reaches Cuba, he proceeds with the same zeal, as the account could be viewed as an official report, an anthropological treatise, a political essay or a novel. As an official report, Massé's text contains background information on geographical boundaries and historical and economic details that earn Cuba the title "Pearl of the Antilles." Documenting his knowledge of Cuba, Massé also plays the role of a tour guide by providing insights into Cuba's abundant natural resources and into the most lucrative professions in the island. In addition, he indicates the specific locations for visitors to enjoy a good meal and decent conversations.

As an anthropological treatise, Massé, through a first person narrator, pays specific attention to Cuba's rich ethnic panorama, depicting the characteristics of individuals as well as groups. Far from reiterating the coordinates used by prior visitors or racial theorists, Massé proposes a somewhat different perspective. For instance, when describing Blacks, he first alludes to the disciples of Franz Lavater who believed in a pre-ordained set of psychophysiological attributes for Africans. Then, Massé debunks such generalizations, describing thirteen different African tribes with their physiological and psychosocial characteristics. Furthermore, Massé does not only emphasize other ethnic groups, he also describes both the French and the Spaniards as the "Others" in Cuba. With regard to the French, he focuses on two different groups: the exiles from Santo Domingo, who give him a sense of nationalistic pride due to their work ethic; and, the second group, consisting of dreamers: the French travelers who make the cross-

continental trip only to parade in fine clothing and chase women in the New World, while pretending that they have been persecuted for their political convictions back home. Massé denies that they are “political exiles” because he thinks those so-called luminaries do not fit into the mold of people with strong intellects. As for the Spaniards, Massé differentiates between the *peninsulares* and the *criollos*. The first occupy all the administrative positions, thus controlling the country’s economy. The latter, aspiring to the wealth of the *peninsulares*, are like bastard children, living like strangers in their own homes. Finally, Massé dedicates a great number of pages to another class of Spaniards, the *monteros*, a marginalized group, who would have been totally forgotten, had it not been for the descriptions of travel writers. Although Massé depicts them as the epitome of evil, his diary leaves us with lasting images of a group judged insignificant by historians. However, their daily routines come to life as a result of the travelers’ fascination with the exotic. In this sense, the travel text enriches our understanding of the different ethnic groups that populated 19<sup>th</sup> century Cuba.

In addition to using a first-person narrator, the perspective of Massé’s friend, B., brings about a somewhat dissenting voice to the discourse. Through the dialogues, as well as the anecdotes that Massé incorporates in the narration, the traveler and his friend constitute an odd couple, bonded only by their destiny in a foreign territory. B.’s personality unmasks Massé’s fear of and fascination with the Other, as well as his racial prejudices. On the other hand, B. comes across as the ultimate philanthropist, playing the role of the voice of reason, which calms Massé’s fear, while enlightening him on the Cuban racial and social dynamics. It is in this capacity that B.’s role in the diary becomes intriguing. B.’s personality is unraveled through Massé’s anecdotes about their friendship



and the exchange of letters between the two. In the fragments of letters that Massé inserts in the diary, B.'s personality grows more complex because from a rhetorical and ideological standpoint B. and Massé are so similar. B.'s role, plus the use of recurrent characters, gives sections of the diary the aspects of a work of fiction.

From a political standpoint, Massé's *L'isle de Cuba et La Havane* constitutes a well-organized anti-slavery/trade essay. Beginning with a detailed description of the slaves' living quarters, Massé seizes the opportunity to describe Havana as a city of opposites by comparing the affluence of the *Paseo* to the extreme misery of the slaves living in the barracoons. Then, the author points out Europe's arrogance and greed, which are at the foundation of the institution of slavery. He points out the inhumanity of the trade, denounces Christianity's hypocrisy for supporting such an evil commerce, and calls on the enlightened minds of the world to adhere to the tenets of the British philanthropists in order to put an end to slavery. Finally, Massé, in his appendix, presents comprehensive and visionary ideas concerning the future of Cuba; he predicts a prosperous and stable political climate after the specter of slavery is totally banished from the island.

In contrast to Massé, Duvergier de Hauranne's diary, *Cuba et les Antilles*, is narrated from the perspective of a traveler strictly pursuing pleasure. The tropical panorama occupies the foreground as the narrator, using his skills as a painter, reproduces every manifestation of nature. In so doing, what the author calls the "tropical jungle" parades in front of the reader's eyes, and ultimately the diary acquires the air of an encyclopedic text, revealing the author's expertise in Botany. In this sense, his perspective is different from that of his other counterparts who are interested in Cuban politics. De Hauranne's observations constitute the memoirs of a traveler seeking leisure.

This does not mean, however, he is completely oblivious to the cultural and social phenomena different from his own. In fact, De Hauranne's work bears witness to a strong eurocentrism, displayed in the dichotomy that pits his culture against that of the Other. Thus, Cuban and Spanish music, food and dance, are belittled while everything French is depicted as the synthesis of perfection. On the other hand, when describing Europeans as the "Other" in Cuba, Italians as well as Irish become the victims of his disparaging remarks.

Jean-Jacques Ampère's *Promenade en Amérique* complements Massé's travelogue, although finished more than two decades later. They are both conscientious writers preoccupied with the Other's realities. However, having only visited Havana and Matanzas over a period of thirty days, Ampère's perspective is somewhat limited. This does not mean that his analysis is of lesser value. In fact, his spontaneity is to be treasured because, in spite of time constraints, Ampère's diary is indicative of a perceptive writer able to function at different levels. This was further aided by a recent trip to the United States, which honed his skills and allowed him to focus on similarities between the two regions. Therefore, although his impressions are sketchy and scattered throughout the diary, taken in their totality, they represent a serious attempt at understanding Cuba. This allows the reader to observe both sides of Ampère's personality. On the one hand, he is the romantic traveler, enthralled by Cuba's panorama, captivated by the wonder of the Yumurí Valley and the beautiful eyes of the women of Havana. On the other hand, although his visit is relatively short, the serious scholar takes advantage of his diary to devour the instructive textbooks, as well as to conduct fieldwork on the plantations of Matanzas. Ampère concludes with a description of tobacco growing in Cuba; he analyzes

its social, economical, and political ramifications on a territory feverishly coveted by the United States. Ampère displays his skills as a historian, showing how his travel intersects with history.

Granier de Cassagnac's *Voyage aux Antilles* contains the observations of a traveler who uses his trip as irrefutable proof of his conviction that Africa has gained a great deal from the institution of slavery. This is outlined in his prologue and discussed throughout the diary. It offers a racist discourse, rooted in the economic basis for the justification of slavery. This is to be gleaned throughout the chapters dedicated to the races that populate the Antilles. With respect to Cuba, the author adopts the attitude of a poet. This, in turn, helps him engage in a dialogue with the past as he re-creates a universe of gallantry: guitars are played at night and lovers murmur sweet nothings through windows. De Cassagnac depicts Havana as a place with a vibrant nocturnal life, a place that offers many diversions to its visitors.

De Cassagnac's description of Havana offers elements that are symbolic of a traveler fascinated by the exotic. This aspect of the narrative serves as an interlude to the dense rhetoric that the author later advances in his diary in an attempt to convince the reader that he is an expert on racial matters. Thus, De Cassagnac's discourse is a comparative social analysis of life in the Antilles. He accomplishes this by writing copiously about the different racial groups that populate the Antilles. By providing some historical background on the races, he uses anecdotes, and the rubric "règle générale" to convince the reader of the truth inserted in his claims. Also, through markers such as "I have seen in Guadeloupe;" or "in Cuba I heard," De Cassagnac makes the reader an accomplice to his scheme: his aim is to use his "familiarity" with those places to

showcase his knowledge. However, De Cassagnac ends up revealing his own biases towards colonial subjects. They blind him and force him to engage in tautological reasoning. In this sense, his perspective is different from the views of Etienne Massé and Jean-Jacques Ampère.

Unlike De Cassagnac, Massé and Ampère, although biased, wrestle at times with their prejudices. In the name of objectivity, they digress and correct hurried observations, either after they have received more information or after their own observations have led them to different conclusions. De Cassagnac, on the other hand, stretches the truth, becomes arrogant, insults the intelligence of his detractors, and calls them dreamers, romantics, or philanthropists. He implies they are demagogues and traitors who cannot realize how Europe, through slavery, has civilized Africans. This constitutes the bulk of De Cassagnac's moral and economic justification for slavery, which further distances him ideologically from Massé, Ampère, and even Duvergier de Hauranne. Even with their subtle prejudices, Massé and Ampère are able to be reasonably objective in their descriptions of Cuba. Dealing with the pervasive problem of slavery, they display their "humane" side by identifying with the suffering of the Other. De Hauranne, showcasing his talent as painter, juxtaposes the slaves and the panorama, while making scattered remarks on the slaves' conditions. These comments suggest the changes the institution of slavery went through in the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. For instance, he alludes to the children of slaves placed in a *nursery* [his terminology], while their parents are working on the plantations.

The diaries constitute fragmented views of the travelers' experience. An overview of the common topoi treated in the texts gives insights into phenomena associated with

that fascinating historical period. It permits a dialogue with the past through the lenses of individuals preoccupied with their own biases and those of their countries. It also elucidates the relationship between history, memory and text, variables that the writer cannot always control. The diverse and divergent perspectives complement one another. For a deeper understanding and appreciation of the travelers' contributions, the diaries deserve to be read in their entirety. Since those texts are only available in the original French, an anthology, consisting of full-length articles containing the different themes treated in the dissertation, is provided in English. The anthology further illustrates the travelers' articulation of this memory of the past, particularly their perception of the Other. In this sense, the texts may play a significant role in the development of other fields such as ethnology and anthropology. This is especially true in their depictions of the Monteros. Were it not for travelogues, the Monteros would have been forgotten. Although the travelers' descriptions are often biased, although they romanticized the Monteros, their depictions offer an idea of the Monteros' material culture.

The four travelers have provided approximations to the "realities" of life in Cuba in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a period which gave rise to the unique blend of cultures that exists today. The constant struggle between objectivity and subjectivity in the narration further emphasizes the process of self-discovery and of the discovery of the Other that is involved in traveling. By writing their observations of things seen, read, and heard, the travelers enrich and correct our vision thereof. Their perspectives bring forth a new dimension to our understanding of Cuban history and culture as we discover a shifting society on the brink of explosion. Travel writing, and the multiplicity of genres it permits within the discourse, facilitates the intercourse with that remote past. In the corpus, the

travelers reiterate both descriptive and ideological *topoi* inherent in the travel genre. Also, differences in personality, writing style, trajectory and duration of visits, offer insights into multiple aspects of Cuba's history, culture, and economy, revealing attitudes that most travelers might have tried to conceal. Thus, the travelogues not only constitute testimonials to the travelers' visits, they connect us with that past, as they confirm the intricacies of colonial hegemonies and the enunciation of cross-cultural encounters. As the interest in heterogeneities and hybrid cultures keep rising, travelogues will continue to offer fascinating pathways of approaching the mutual gaze which results from cross-cultural encounters.

## **Appendix**

### **Introduction to the Anthology**

In the testimonials to their trip, Etienne Michel Massé, Duvergier de Hauranne, Jean-Jacques Ampère, and Granier de Cassagnac claim to give accounts of the details and patterns of life in 19<sup>th</sup> century Cuba. Those snapshots of the past provide a pattern for an understanding of the events that transpired in that part of the globe from the early days of colonial conquests to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as well as providing the writers' vision of the future. Those travelers contributed to a deeper understanding of that past, adding to the mythical aura associated with the territories of the New World, while also providing venues for scientific investigations. Nowadays, with the heightened interest in travel writing, a retrospective look at those texts supplies a first-hand encounter with that decisive historical period, thus enriching our perspectives thereof.

What was the travelers' intent in writing their recollections? Was it just to document their trip, write tall tales about strange people from strange places with strange customs? Was it just an exercise in knowledge spreading and gathering? While those accounts fulfilled some of those roles, trying to pinpoint the specific reasons for the production of those texts may be a fitting task for Sisyphus. The travelers, in their prologues, did leave us with a number of indices that suggest their aim in documenting their experiences.

In the prologues, a pact is established between the writers and the receptors. The travelers attempt to persuade the readers to adopt a particular attitude towards a place and

its people and they also condition the readers to view them as credible narrators who promise to be objective, “as faithful to the truth as a witness in a tribunal” (Massé v). However, in their accounts, reality and fiction often intertwine in one big narrative stew; prior readings, harried conclusions, hearsay, false testimonies from the Other, as well as the travelers’ own biases often cloud their gaze. This, in turn, conditions the readers to view the Other from the standpoint of the European traveler, which is dangerous, especially when the latter claims to be omniscient, and purportedly reports his accounts with the supposed objectivity of historians.

De Cassagnac’s prologue is similar to Massé’s. Like his countryman who visited Cuba two decades prior, he promises to be objective. In his prologue, he echoes what Massé would say later concerning the potential of such trips to contribute to the moral development of the Other (vi). De Cassagnac, complementing his fellow’s thoughts, concludes that the destiny of the Negro in the New World is in the hands of philosophers who are equipped to provide him with a better future because without such enlightenment, Negroes would regress to their initial conditions as savages (vii). In addition to his promises of objectivity, De Cassagnac’s prologue fulfills another role, that of serving as irrefutable proof against his detractors who had accused him of ill will toward the Negro race, stating that such sentiments are beneath him (vii). However, his condescending attitude towards Africans, as well as towards those sympathetic to their cause, suggests the contrary. Yet, he achieves this tactfully. Relying on anecdotes, accounts from sources he deems dependable using his travels and his observations as undeniable proofs, he accuses those who do not share his ideologies as “philanthropes,” and hardened romantics.



The multifaceted aspect of the travel accounts allows the travelers to experiment with various genres. Dominique Julien, in *Voyageurs Européens*, agrees with this idea, affirming that in the travel account one finds anecdotes, traces of the pastoral genre, meditation, philosophical reflection, and poetry (9). However, while the use of various genres diminishes boredom and increases readership, the receptor is left with the arduous task of deciphering between truths, fibs, false perceptions, as well as overt lies. This is especially crucial when rhetorical devices are used to convince the receptor of the truth inserted in the travelers' depiction. For instance, De Cassagnac's assertions concerning Blacks are often accompanied by the rubric "Règle générale" [Rule of thumb/General rule]. Such a device is very deceptive because, to the untrained reader, that phrase further increases De Cassagnac's credibility. However, as Edward Said would argue in *Orientalism*, this is just another example of the colonist's tunnel vision (93).

In an effort to present an overview of the different themes treated in the travelogues, the travelers' attempts to convince the readers, as well as to present the travel text as blueprints of identity formation, a number of articles have been translated directly from the original versions. The reader should be advised of the following. I have used the first and only edition of Massé's *L'isle de Cuba et La Havane*, published in 1825; Granier de Cassagnac's *Voyages aux Antilles* (1842); and Ampère's *Promenade en Amérique* (1866). Duvergier de Hauranne's text is still in its original version, published as a series of articles.<sup>154</sup> Those texts have been quoted in previous works, as mentioned in the opening

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<sup>154</sup> Massé and De Cassagnac were the only two travelers to provide prologues. Ampère followed the "Dear Diary" format, giving us summaries of his observations in chronological order. As for Duvergier de Hauranne, his observations are presented as articles published in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. For more information, see chapter I. The texts are available at the Hispanic Society of America.

chapter of this dissertation. To my knowledge, this is the first attempt to disseminate those writings in a language other than French.

### **Regarding the Selection of Passages**

The chapters that are translated here reflect the numerous topics the travelers have recorded as testimonials of their visits to Cuba. They are carefully selected based on their thematic organization, which is consistent with the aim of my dissertation: the travelers' representation of alterity in 19<sup>th</sup> century Cuba. Most of the chapters are extracted from Massé's *L'Isle de Cuba et La Havane*, not only because his book is the most detailed of all the texts, but also because he spent the most time in Cuba. This affects his narrative in several ways. First, his familiarity with the different regions allows him to present an exceedingly cogent analysis on a variety of topics. Second, in spite of anecdotes, banalities, and copious allusions to prove his erudition, there is a concerted effort on Massé's part to leave as viable a "reference" text on Cuba as possible. This is evidenced through the details he provides on ways of life in Cuba, such as areas to find good restaurants, a list of shops, notes on licentious priests and Creole women, the idiosyncrasies of politics in Cuba, the putrid condition of the slaves, as well as some philosophical reflections dealing with his own life as a foreigner in Cuba. In addition, in Massé's book, the enthusiasm of a traveler, enamored with providing details on the sublime, as well as the ridiculous, and his ability to correct his own perspective of the island and its people make him a more credible narrator than the other travelers.

### **De Cassagnac's "The Mulattoes"**

That chapter presents an overview of De Cassagnac's perspective of the colonial hegemonies in the New World as a whole. This passage is chosen for several reasons. First, De Cassagnac begins with a definition of the word 'mulatto.' He then continues with an entire discourse on the different races that populate the Antilles. De Cassagnac's stance on the separation of the races reveals more than his prejudice towards Africans. He is against all sorts of interracial unions, and proposes that such unions would contaminate the purity of the white race. His commentaries are literally translated to preserve his views on the European family as the epitome of perfection. According to him, Africans have no notion of nobility; they know nothing of family ties. It goes without saying that he denies that slavery has contributed to dismantling the families by meticulously separating siblings, as well as members of the same tribes. To buttress such arguments, he uses anecdotes that are carefully omitted in the current translation, especially when they deal with the French Antilles. Specific comments on the colonial situation in Cuba are maintained since they correspond thematically with the topic of this dissertation. However, pages 247-59 are omitted because they contained anecdotes that are not congruent with the theme at hand.

This passage is also selected because it deals with De Cassagnac's desperate efforts to cling on colonialism. His main objective is to defend slavery as a galvanizing force in the rehabilitation of the Negro. He argues that all descriptions of the horrors of slavery are lies because Africans are better off serving educated White men than as subjects of ugly and savage African kings. He also proposes that slavery is an economic

necessity, which benefits both Africa and the New World. According to him, Africa had been a continent on the brink of extinction, while Europe needed people to work on the sugar plantations. Therefore, the law of supply and demand came into effect: Europe received the slaves' labor, and Africa's extinction was avoided. As a result, they cohabitated with civilized White men, which increased their chances of receiving the benefits of civilization themselves. In addition, the slaves learned how to save their souls through the moral instruction that their masters bestowed upon them.

De Cassagnac's description of the Negro's situation in the New World is also important because he provides a deeper sociological study of the Negro as he relates to the other races. He relies on observations that appear to be purely imaginative. However, to convince the reader, he uses anecdotes or points to case scenarios with verisimilitude to provide an understanding of certain racial dynamics. For instance, his allusion to the relative freedom that Creoles living in Europe enjoyed because they were just called "Americans" reminds us of the colonized subaltern position. He uses that example as a fact to buttress the idea that interracial unions were strictly forbidden in the Antilles. Later, however, he offers an explanation as to the proliferation of people of color, the offspring of Whites and Africans/Creoles in the Antilles. He blames the White man's failure to do his moral duty, which caused him to deviate, by sleeping with people that are clearly his moral inferior. De Cassagnac's hypocrisy later becomes evident as he blames those who accuse the White man of sexual improprieties against Black women. He claims that the slave women do not differentiate between "wife" or "concubine," and that they belong to the person who provides them with food and shelter. Thus, the idea of violence

is alien to them. In addition, since the slave women are not sexually pure, since they are the property of their masters, the latter have the right to impose their carnal will on them.

### **Ampère in Cuba**

In his description of Cuba, Ampère endeavors to leave us a testimonial of the island based on his readings as well as his observations. His details are rather sketchy because he spent one month in Cuba. His account contains mainly a comparative analysis between the slavery situation in Cuba and in the United States. The legend of Columbus fascinates Ampère, who gives us a commentary on the life of the Spanish explorer. His account is similar to Massé's in that both writers relate their fascination towards Columbus' remains, which are found in the Cathedral of Havana. There is also an effort to dispel the myth associated with Columbus' genius. Although both writers agree that the so-called discovery had been rather fortuitous, they also conclude that Columbus' exploits should be commended because of the explorer's determination, as the "Don Quijote of the Sea," which facilitated the encounter between the Old and New Worlds.

Ampère's observations have the texture of spontaneous reactions, summaries of his excursions on the island. The foreigner's fascination with Cuba's vegetation is evident, as the Frenchman gives us a vivid account of his own encounter with paradise found. In other words, Ampère re-discovered a new world, just like "Colomb créait un nouveau monde," according to Chateaubriand's *Les Mémoires d'outre tombe* (3). Ampère's encounter, four centuries after Columbus' initial findings is spoiled due to the damages caused by slavery. Then, he proceeds with his own postcolonial sentiments

depicting slavery as the destruction of the body, as well as that of the soul. To stop that system which relies heavily on sugar, Ampère advised that sugar cane be replaced by the sugar found in beets.

Ampère's diary is unique in another way: his analysis of Cuba in the light of the policies and politics of the United States. The time frame of his visit allows him to eloquently describe the sentiments felt on both sides of the political continuum. His views are included in the chapter on "Tobacco Growing in Cuba." He accuses the United States of encouraging the slave trade in Cuba, as well as advocating policies that geared towards depleting the Cuban economy, while he accuses those Americans who favor the annexation of Cuba in order to garner another territory where slavery is practiced. Ampère's cogent analysis testifies to his thorough approach; his keen sense of perceptivity in doing a comparative analysis produces an enlightening text, a fascinating tool for an understanding of U.S.-Cuba relations in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century, while also providing insights to an understanding of U.S.-Cuba relations in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **A Word on the Translation**

Translating those original writings was not without its difficulties. As Professor Gregory Rabassa always says, it is important to familiarize oneself with the text, with the historical period one writes about, and not assuming anything, but paying close attention, especially to those words and phrases with which one is familiar. One must accomplish all that and maintain the integrity and accuracy of the target language without it sounding like a translation.

I followed the original French texts very closely, paying special attention to each writer's style. The challenge was to remain true to the writers' style and still make sense in English. This was particularly difficult to achieve with Massé, an inveterate romantic, giving free rein to his lyricism, using exclamations and parallel structures, while inventing what seems like his own rules of punctuation. In several instances, he writes several pages, using only one full stop. It is challenging to make sense of those epic sentences in French in the first place. The challenge intensifies when it comes to giving a rendition in English. I have avoided giving interpretations of those sentences. Instead, the punctuation has been adjusted to give an English speaker an original flavor of those writings. The reader will also observe verb tense inconsistencies in numerous passages, which are inherent to the original texts. While those translations are not perfect by any stretch of the imagination, I hope they contribute to a better understanding of what those men saw and selectively recorded as testimonials of their visits to Cuba. It is my hope that these translations will encourage dialogue among the different fields in the humanities.

*L'isle de Cuba et la Havane*

**Appendix**

Havana's prosperity has increased year by year. Its population growth is at least ten thousand per year. The number of houses in the outskirts of *La Salud* has almost doubled. That increase is due to the agitation in and the misfortunes of Mexico and the Côte Ferme. In several locations on the island of Cuba, new communities are born everyday. The city of Matanzas and its territory have received several American colonists. Its port receives ships from Europe, and boats depart directly to Europe from the Port of Matanzas. The coasts of the Camarioca River are covered with plantations. The neighboring mountains of Santiago are filled with coffee plantations. The long dreaded banks of the immense Guantanamo Bay seem to have become more hospitable to population growth; but the great projects planned for the more advantageously located Bay of Nuevitas have totally vanished.

Once again, the Constitution of the Cortes that has been promulgated on the island of Cuba has been withdrawn.<sup>155</sup> During its brief duration, great conflicts of interest have been shown. The black population inspired a great deal of fear.

When we see that in Europe, men and women are totally divided in terms of opinions and wishes, and are equally vouching for the cause of freedom, we can believe, somehow, if we do not want only to focus on the superficial, that the word 'freedom' for most people, is all the more resonant even as it is hollow. However, from the lips of a

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<sup>155</sup> Constitution of the Cortes- allusion to the Constitution of 1822, which laid down the principles upheld by liberal ideals of the time: the principle of representative democracy, the separation of powers, equality before the law and respect for the rights of persons.



black slave, it has a singular meaning. Whites in Cuba were well aware of it; thus, the primary aim of the Civic Guard, instituted in the name of freedom, is to maintain the slaves under the most rigorous oppression.

One remarkable thing is the wealthy colonists from Catalonia were the first victims of the partial insurrections on the Firm Coast fifteen to twenty years before they had established themselves in Havana as the first and most ardent propagators of progressive ideas.

For some time, there were suspicions about what was happening in Spain, but the interim Governor, Juan Manuel Cagigal prevented the news from spreading.<sup>156</sup> However, a ship from Corogne came. Some Catalonians went on board, as the custom is, to inquire about what was aboard; they asked for newspapers from Europe. The port officers had already visited the ship and forbade the crew both to discuss current affairs or to hand out any newspapers whatsoever. A Catalanian obtained, nevertheless, a page of newspaper for the cost of one ounce of gold. The restoration of the constitution was announced on that page. As soon as the Catalanian alighted from the ship, he read the interesting article aloud. People ran to him, surrounded him and the cry "*Long Live to the Constitution*" rose and spread all over. The soldiers of the Catalonia regiment joined their business countrymen. They went to the Governor and forced him to proclaim the constitution. The following day, he protested against that act of intimidation and said that they must wait for the King's order. No one paid attention to him and he resigned from his post.

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<sup>156</sup> Juan Manuel de Cagigal, Marshall of the Spanish army, Captain General of Cuba (1781-1782) and Captain General of Venezuela, was born in Cuba. He took part in the siege and capture of Pensacola with an army of 8,000 Spanish and Cuban soldiers, from Mexico, Venezuela, and Saint-Domingue.

Under the constitutional reign, a few changes occurred. The renewed customs became much more rigid, which, according to some people, could have passed for one of the abuses of freedom.

What will become of that colony? It is evident that the island of Cuba and the port of Havana would be suitable for the United States. Havana, as a commercial port and a naval station, would very much be also to the English liking. The South American republics perhaps would see with great pleasure the birth of a new sister republic that, confederating with them, could serve them as an outpost. However, none of this will occur if the inhabitants, are always going to fear their slaves, although secretly, because of the haunting memory. The people of Saint Domingue cried for the emancipation of the colony, and it was their Negroes who freed themselves. Let us remind ourselves of those words of Pitt, that the principle of slavery in the colonies contains an enormous throng of vices and crimes.

Slavery is such an impure source of all sorts of evil, that even its cessation may engender the most terrible of all evils. It should be abolished gradually; which will never be done. That measure would require not only more prudence, but also more virtue, which is nonexistent in colonies, where greed is almost the only code of conduct (402-407).

THE END

*L'isle de Cuba et La Havane*

## CHAPTER XXXI

**B.'s Letter.- Details on the Interior Cities.- Condition of the Slaves.- Laws Concerning Them**

I could, my friend, immediately satisfy your curiosity concerning the two mysterious women, but I will not do so yet.<sup>157</sup> There is something a little mischievous about my intent, I confess; this mischief, I hope, will not, however, affect our friendship. Let us talk about something else for now. The notes that I have left you are sketchy; I have found in my recollections some other observations that may be useful to you.

“The Commerce in Santiago is not as active as that of Havana; however, right now it is perhaps more advantageous than Havana for foreigners. In 1814, seven hundred sixty ships came into Santiago; in 1817, one thousand three hundred and nineteen ships arrived, the majority of which did not belong to Spain. The number of ships that entered Santiago of Cuba is not even close to those that arrived at Havana.

“If the port of Havana is favorably located for commerce with the Gulf of Mexico, that of Santiago is not as well located when it comes to dealing with the other countries which visit the Antilles. Santiago’s population seems not as cruel as that of Havana; at least, murder is not as common in Santiago as in Havana. However, the rabble of Santiago is perhaps more inclined towards thievery. The rural areas surrounding the city are as much more pleasant than those which are close to you, and, although the air in Santiago is not any more or less healthy than that of Havana, fewer foreigners die here

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<sup>157</sup> B. refers to the women mentioned in chapter XX during the visit to the Campo Santo. Massé appeared to have a romantic interest in them.

because numerous scattered *quintas* offer the Europeans several refuges where, in a more wholesome environment, they can brave the rigors of the rainy season.

“The port of Baracoa is also very busy. Farming has made some progress in the neighboring rural areas. From Baracoa, a great quantity of wax is gathered in all the regions of the East, where no big sugar factories yet exist.

“The city of Santa María del Puerto-Príncipe is the most significant city besides Havana. It is well built; but its population does not correspond to its size. Housing is not very expensive. Money circulates only a little bit, which does not mean that there is not much money, but there is no luxury, no industry, which might facilitate the circulation of money. In this respect, Puerto-Príncipe is two centuries behind. The income of its inhabitants comes from the big raising of cattle, which serves as the livestock supply for Havana, located at about fifty leagues away.

“In all those immense plains in the midst of which is Puerto-Príncipe, one rarely finds some *trapiches*, or small sugar plantations of twenty slaves. All the remainder of the land is in *hatos*. A few Negro herdsmen are sufficient to care for the larger herds. The owners have no other preoccupation than to bury the money that their overseers bring them in safes, or to spend it in gambling or lawsuits. This is the only circulation of money that exists.

“There are lawsuits that last or that are fed, as they say, over several generations. A father, through his will, commands his son to vigorously continue all the lawsuits he may have left. It is reported that the costs of quibbling over a mule have amounted to close to forty-two thousand three hundred piastres. Since legal disputes are argued in writing, forty carts would not be enough to carry all the paper that has been generated in

some of these legal disputes. Therefore, the office of *escribano* or lawyer is the best of all the professions. The clerics can often perform such functions.

“In 1773, when the colony was still weak, the legal costs of justice reached fourteen thousand piastres, minus the small expenses brought about by the verbal judgments of ordinary public officials. In 1792, the island of Cuba had one hundred six lawyers; Havana had seventy-two, yet the total population was no more than two hundred fifty four thousand and twenty-one people, and exports were no more than five million piastres. Today, the population reached six hundred thousand souls, while the number of lawyers is about one hundred and fifty, and seventy-five of them are in Havana. There are as many bachelors who write memoirs without having the right to sign. However, when the officers of justice are included, a rousing eight hundred fifty individuals live and profit from such litigation expenses.

“If we consider, however, that the court that was in Santo Domingo was transferred to Puerto-Príncipe, and that that court of appeals had jurisdiction over all of the Spanish Antilles and Florida, we would realize that the number of lawyers has not increased proportionately over what it was in 1792, due either to the migration of the royal audience or to population growth. However, we must observe that the population growth is due for the most part to the new slave population, while the number of Whites to a certain extent is no higher than what it used to be.

“The need to stop the proliferation of clerics has made itself felt, and some wise measures have finally been taken in that regard. This spirit of reform as well as an Academy of Practical Jurisprudence erected in Puerto Príncipe are due to Joaquín Bernardo Campuzano, the current regent of the royal court. That honest magistrate

thought that if there were fewer lawyers, if the lawyers were more enlightened, litigants would be in a better position.

“Moreover, the spirit of quibbling is disturbing the entire American continent. The United States are not behind Spanish America in that respect. It is believed that Louisiana, on one side, and the island of Cuba on the other, are the two territories in the New World most suitable for the reproduction of lawsuits.

“The establishment of the royal court generated some signs of life in Puerto Príncipe, while at the same time increasing in the corruption of customs and practices. That city, equally distant both from the North and the South of the island, has no marine communication and was once reknowned for its attachment to the ancient virtues. That cluster of lawyers and people of justice that came to settle there brought the seed of vices with them. Today, everything goes on here just like elsewhere; the difference is that because the circulation of currency is a little slow here, especially among the lower classes, debauchery has perhaps become all the more prevalent since it costs less here than in Havana. In the markets, the lack of money has reached such a low that many goods are exchanged through barter. Candles are a customary means of exchange. Moreover, the little pleasures of eating are not as appreciated here as in the seaports; often, for example, one is prevented from having some salad, due to a lack of lettuce, not of oil. Intensive cultivation being almost nonexistent, one must not be stunned that gardening is not a well-known art here.

“The district of Puerto-Príncipe has a population of fifty thousand people. That number could be increased considerably, if a project, planned several years ago, and whose implementation has been started several times, would finally come to fruition....

“Several sources have offered to cede territory to new colonists, on condition of a simple canon, or tax of 5%, on which they would have to start paying after six years. Right now there are about two hundred and fifty *caballerías*, which can be distributed under this condition. Any Spanish or foreign vessel will be exonerated from cooerage taxes for two years. Any person who, from different parts of the island, would like to settle in that place, will have his costs defrayed by the government, and a substantial sum of money will be allocated to him and his family so that they can have food for two months. The first constructions of huts and stores, as well as the first clearings of land, will start on subscription. In Puerto-Príncipe, six to seven thousand piastres have already been collected. The king has put the Regent of the court in charge of such a useful establishment.

“Unfortunately, two circumstances tend to jeopardize that good favor of public opinion which must surround the cradle of any colony. The Bay of Nuevitas is rightfully feared for the multitude of mosquitoes, which attack you. In one minute they cover someone’s face and hands. With time, land clearings and cultivation will rid the area of this inconvenience. Secondly, when Don Joaquin left Havana to take possession of his charge, he took with him a commission whose function was to visit the different areas and guide the first steps of the colony... Two or three French nationals, old inhabitants of Saint-Domingue, were a part of that commission. They had exaggerated, beforehand, the advantages of Nuevitas to some of their compatriots who intended to go there. However, the latter were quite astonished to learn that the French commissaries had found it fit for them to settle elsewhere. Undoubtedly, one is free to choose whatever is most convenient;

but such a preference, coming after the exploration of a region where they were in advance calling for settlers can only dissuade them to come and prejudice them.

“Here is one of those prejudices. A ship, contracted by the government, taking colonists from Louisiana, from the old dominion of Spain to Nuevitas, is forced, because of rebel pirates in full view, to enter the port of Matanzas. The passengers are barely ashore when they hear about Nuevitas and become disgusted as a result of the reports that they are receiving, and almost all of them decide to establish their homes in Matanzas.”<sup>158</sup>

Moreover, you are aware of the Royal Notification of October 21 1817, and the notable favors that it provides for foreigners who will settle on the island of Cuba. Those benevolent measures follow other measures that have been taken to populate the islands of Porto Rico and Santo-Domingo. Those among the inhabitants from Louisiana of Spanish origin are not the only ones to come and take advantage of those incentives. The Anglo-Americans start to come. Once the reputation of the richness of the land increases and is even exaggerated among them, their migration will overflow.

“Anglo-Americans are a peculiar people in this respect. In the area of agriculture, they display all the instability and the mobility, which distinguish nomad populations. A family man will have settled in a territory that he has watered with his sweat for a long time. He will have enlarged and embellished it; the ashes of a father, of a spouse, and beloved children will rest there; however, if he learns that one hundred, two hundred leagues away, there are more fertile lands, he will not hesitate, believing a report that is

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<sup>158</sup> Translation of Massé’s footnote: I have since learned that the establishment of Nuevitas did not succeed. Some of the colonists, who were attracted to Nuevitas due to exaggerated promises of wealth, have suffered horrendously, and have finally left. Those among them were captured and hung, which I have trouble believing.



often false, to leave the trees that he has planted, the house he has built, the seed drills that he has fertilized, the ashes of his ancestors, dear to him, and will sell sometimes at a ridiculously low price, anything that he can't carry, and dragging behind him his cows, his plowing tools, some furniture and his family, he will settle one hundred to two hundred leagues away from his original land and be ready to go even farther away, according to new rumors which awaken his greed. That character of the Anglo-American is worth noting.

... "In one of your previous letters, you had asked me about the condition of the field slaves. I would not like to disguise to a friend of humanity their truly deplorable condition. It has been said that they are naturally lazy, and to correct that inclination to indolence, which they inherit from the climate and to fit the simplicity of their taste, as well as the modesty of their needs, they are overworked; they are driven to death by toil; they are naturally sober; excellent reason to starve them to death; it is believed that they are Nature's children, and therefore they walk around naked, even in the mountainous regions, where the air is very crisp, depending on the hours of the day and the season of the year. Some have observed that they sleep little, and some slave masters do not want them to sleep at all; those who are familiar with their sensibility, know how impetuous their desires are, and the small numbers of women brought from Guinea serve to satisfy their masters and overseers, unless those women are old or ugly, in such a case they are thrown into the middle of their fellow compatriots; one knows that these slaves are vindictive, that they get together to foment projects of vengeance, and they are irritated almost at will with undeserved punishments; one knows that they are people inclined to thievery; it is even said that one must pay attention to their feet, as well as their hands,

and since one seeks to benefit fully from the purchase of an object, some slave owners rely on such vices to rid themselves of their obligation to feed the slaves. Other owners, wary of the stealing of the crops of their land, can only preserve them from pillage if they threaten to shoot their neighbors' Negroes, when they catch them on their domain.

"The sugar refineries are the most atrocious theatre of the abuses of which I am speaking. On those plantations, labor is excessive and incessant; pain has no alleviation, and suffering no remedy. Thus, sugar plantations are like places of punishment for city slaves, and even for slaves who work on the coffee plantations. However, as to the unfortunate ones, who, without committing any offense, are suddenly brought there...ah...! Human language is inadequate to express the horror of their plight.

"That is not saying that the Spanish colonies are devoid of good laws. On the contrary, the laws regulating the slaves in particular are more humane than the laws of other Christian nations. I say "Christian" because the Moors, and especially the Arabs, treat their Black slaves with a gentleness that is unfamiliar to us; they treat them like unfortunate brothers, and usually free them after ten years of service.

"According to Spanish laws, the least allegation is enough for the master to decide to sell the slave who no longer wants to serve him; thus, only the purchase price can be asked; and if any infirmities exist, which would reduce the slave's price, the judge orders that an estimation be made, and that becomes the asking price. If a master inflicts on his slave any punishment that causes a considerable amount of bleeding, he is subject to charges from the magistrate. The law has placed a lawyer for the poor at the service of every governor; the lawyer's charge is to ensure that justice is rendered to any slave who may seek it.

“A royal decree, which made even greater concessions to humanity, was signed on May 31, 1789, but it was not executed because there are evils inherent in slavery, and the monarch’s goodness would not have been able to stop them without completely wiping out their evil origin.”

“However, what is the use of having laws that protect men who do not know these laws or who have no means to invoke them! Protective laws! And the white man who would denounce the abuses would pass for a dishonest and rude white man! A barbarian master would shed his slave’s blood for a plate that the slave has broken or for any other petty crime; refrain from teaching that unfortunate victim that laws have been established to defend him against such inhuman practices. If you do not refrain from doing such, you will be forever dishonored among the slave owners. The same goes for contraband. It is not he who practices it that public opinion blames, but those who denounce, reprimand, and fight against it. If any master, tyrant of his slaves, is denounced to the tribunals, it is not the result of a spontaneous cry of human indignation but the result of the deaf and disdainful voice of vengeance and envy.

“They told me about a man who saw fire destroy a considerable coffee plantation he owned: he had mistreated a slave who, a few days later, either accidentally or due to intentional beatings died. Some neighbors, jealous of his growing prosperity, denounced him. He was a Frenchman. In general, your countrymen are not happy in their relations with Negroes. If some small revolts have taken place, it is generally on the French plantations. If a mayoral officer or manager is assassinated, almost always that victim is French.

“Several causes may explain these forms of vengeance; without mentioning the secret irritations that the Spaniard’s jealousy may incite against rivals who are generally more active and more industrious than the natives of the country, there is something about the personality of the French who live in the colonies: a mixture of familiarity and presumption, of facility and sufficiency, of gentleness and harshness, of weakness and haughtiness that endangers them all too often. The warlike customs contracted by most of them, gives more ruggedness to the expression of their will, and exasperate spirits, which sometimes harden during moments of thoughtless complacency.

“Moreover, one must not forget that the French, in their colonies, did not always prove themselves to be very humane. The *code noir* existed more as a cause of derisive laughter for the masters than as a guarantee for the slaves. Maybe they have introduced you in Havana to M. de.... Here is something about him I heard mentioned in France, which was confirmed in America; this noble trait provides an idea of the respect that Saint-Domingue had for humanity.

“There was in the mountains, at a little distance from Port-au-Prince, a plantation owned by a good woman who, not having the need to rapidly augment her wealth, forbade people from tormenting her slaves. She died and the plantation was sold. The new owner judged that the slaves were too lazy, which would delay satisfaction of the thirst of riches, which was devouring him. He wanted to force them to work, which only made them more recalcitrant. The plantation was again put up for sale, and its value, as one can imagine, decreased. A second buyer came. He hoped to fare better than his predecessor; however, he failed also: the slaves became even more hostile. The plantation was put up for sale a third time. No one came to buy it because it had been discredited

until M. de... obtained it for a cheap price. That seemed to have been a lousy deal according to the friends of M. de...; however, that deal was well calculated. He settled in the area, sent the slaves to work, and accompanied them himself, armed to the teeth. Their inclination towards laziness and their spirit of mutiny manifested themselves very soon. Monsieur de ... beheaded the one who seemed to have been the instigator of the resistance. That is not all. He beheaded another. That example of ferocity did not suffice. He had them dig a deep pit, and he buried two or three slaves up to their necks. In that predicament they were given enough food so that their punishment could be prolonged and that they may be devoured alive by maggots. After that, the plantation became prosperous, and when the revolution came, M. de... was one of the wealthiest landowners in the area.

“One must confess that the Spaniards did nothing of that sort. The situation of the slaves on the island of Cuba is less left to the mercy of cruel and greedy white men than it was in Saint-Domingue. It is not even comparable to Louisiana, where there is many a man as cruel as M. de... and again, he is a Frenchman. I would be sorry for you, my friend, if the wrongs were not personal and if your nation were not one presenting the most contrasts...

“Considering the diverse behavior of Europeans in the New World, I think I have observed among the Spaniards something quite singular: it is that their injustice towards the slaves stems more from their own laziness and negligence than from cruelty. I find proof of that innate negligence in an old law according to which the officials have to visit the slave living quarters once a year to see whether there is a need for kitchen utensils as well as necessary tools for agriculture and whether there is a cat, a dog, a rooster and a

few hens. Those visitors have the right to an honorarium of four *reales* or a hen, and their visit is called *visita de la gallina* [the hen visit]. Today, they have a more important mission: they must determine whether or not slaves are mistreated, whether they are cared for properly in their illness; these officials must ensure that the slaves' living quarters have a doctor and a pharmacy, and they must examine whether the slaves are taught the rudiments of religion. Oh! If all the paternal rules were applied!...

"However, I realize your impatience, my dear friend; I see that you are skimming through the letter, seeking to find where I deal with your inquiries concerning the two mysterious women. I even think that you will not read the preceding lines until after you have read those lines promised in the beginning, which have been pushed back to the conclusion of this letter. Dona Dolores, the *creatura bella bianca vestita* [the beautiful creature dressed in white], was born in Naples just like I was. Both the mother and daughter were mourning. If I still have the same job, I owe it to those women. Like you, I met them at the Campo Santo, but I did not so abruptly end my first meeting with them.

The Campo Santo became a place of excursion for me. I brought my preoccupations and dark feelings there, the only food that had been satisfying my soul for a while. Those women, seeing that I was rather sad, thought that I was mourning a beloved one like they were. I soon realized their concern, and I was deeply touched. I dared speak to them; after a few words, they understood that I was Italian. That discovery seemed to have moved them. "What is your homeland?"- they asked me.- "The happy city of Naples," I answered. And their emotion redoubled. "Would you happen to be my country folks, beloved ladies?"- "No," they replied, "but the man whom we are mourning was from Naples." They wanted to inquire about what had brought me to Havana. I

explained my position to them, telling them about the hopes I had been given.- “The house where they have promised to place this gentleman, isn’t it close to ours, said Dona Dolores to her mother?”.- “Yes,” said the other, “I already thought about seeing don Esteban.” A few days later, the place that had only vaguely been promised to me was given to me definitively. Dona Dolores had seen you in the city with me. She asked me who you were. Besides, I do not know why I have kept my relationship with those women secret to you: was it because of my discretion or very minor Italian mistrust? Whatever it may be, Dona Dolores and her mother came to spend the rainy season at the countryside, and I had the privilege to take them out socially sometimes (299-323).

*L'isle de Cuba et La Havane***CHAPTER XXIX****French Creole Women.- Their Customs and their Jargon.- Marie-Claire S...**

Having spoken in several occasions about white men exiled from Saint-Domingue, it would be unbecoming not to dedicate a few lines to the memory of the women of color of that island, exiled as well on the island of Cuba. Unseemly! More than that, it would be ungrateful for me to do otherwise. Not that any of them, for three or four piastres per day, which would be a bit expensive, had taken care of me; not that their grotesque and detestable jargon had for me the effect of the voice of mermaids; not that looking at their faces I felt on my eyes that mysterious veil, admirable and necessary precursor of love, but because of Marie-Claire S...., a friend from one of those parties. Thus, their parties are never without a motive. During carnival, their houses breathe happiness, but as soon as the strong heatwaves arrive, those houses that are so lively are transformed into sad infirmaries where sometimes the ill, the comatose and the dead lie together. There in that heat an infinite number of unfortunates see the denouement of the drama of their lives; this is where the last dimes that one has brought from France disappear. It is a true collection period for those women who no longer look like the grey nuns, and who pass for people who are very calculating. Some of them, however, are an exception, and more than one unfortunate who has owed to them his life can only offer them attachment, and sometimes they are led to expect nothing at all.

They are home nurses as well as laundry women and sewing maids. Those that can dispose of some funds buy some shoddy goods and sell them in their house, or have



them sold on the streets: that is for the mothers or at least for those who have abjured all sorts of pretensions.

As for the young people, they are raised with all the luxury that the year's revenues will allow. They are taught at an early age that pleasing must be for them a speculation of the mind rather than a need of the heart. Thus, prematurely, they are acquainted with all the ruses of coquettishness, all the resources of attire, and one would not say that they set their nets at two thousand leagues from Paris, since they show so much *savoir-faire*! Even their names constitute traps: Zélia, Délia, Zutmé, Zelmire, Zéphire, and many other melodious names of that sort that one can imagine.

More cunning than their mothers, they have two languages, French and Creole, at their disposal. One is right to think that a spirit of conquest so general gives rise to rivalries, quarrels, victories, and permanent wars, where young people reign supreme, and their mothers serve as ministers. Gossip has never proved itself to be so odious to me. These are not the pricks of a pin; the needle is shot forth; it is driven in; the sword is twisted.

You will never confuse sweet and good Marie-Claire with those women! In your first youth, you never thought to renounce your modest names; never, without any doubt, have ideas of splendor troubled your mind; never have the foolish apprehensions of an envious soul poisoned your happiness; for I never heard from your lips any words that prudence, goodness, and even Christian charity could have disavowed. The religious practices to which women of color are generally so faithful are not vain pretenses. One feels that they originate from your heart, those comforting words of religion, that you address with so much charm to the unfortunates that come to ask you for advice or

confide in you their suffering. How many times has some poor slave woman left your house more submissive to her condition! How many times has some impatient mistress or some less moderate one learned from you the important secret of joining sweetness to firmness, prudence with strength!

The Creole jargon, uttered by Marie-Claire's lips, never displeased me. Love accepts well that childish language. Would friendship be more difficult? It is nevertheless important to get foreigners acquainted with certain particularities of that language. If a Creole woman says, for example, that she loves you too much, do not see in that adverb "too" the intention to express an excess of sentiment; too much here only means a great deal and for some men coming from certain women, that *beaucoup* [much] is not *enough* [assez]. When she asks you to tie her dress, she will say *amarrez-moi*, [tie me up] or better, *marrez-moi*. If she wants to get away from an eager follower, she will say *larguez-moi* [let go of me]. One must confess that those expressions and several others that I could not mention are very strange. However, what language is so rebellious that sentiment cannot soften it; what terminology is so baroque that the heart cannot make a touching expression out of? That magical effect of sentiment can be seen in some Creole songs that I would cite, if Creole could be written (281-287).

*L'isle de Cuba et La Havane*

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

**The Ravages of Yellow fever.- B's death.- Back to Paris**

However, the terrifying disease known in Spanish America as the *vomito negro*, and elsewhere as yellow fever, was creating havoc. Last August, five hundred foreigners, all Catholics, were buried in the Campo Santo. The Hospital San Juan de Dios [Hospital Saint John of God], the inn of death, was crowded with unfortunate travelers who, for the most part, were occupying their last room. The ship captains send almost all of their sick passengers to that hospital. The *San Ambrosio* hospital is rather less murderous, however, only a few people go there.

The phrase *principiis obsta* is fitting for yellow fever. With the initial signs of pounding headaches, followed by pain in the kidneys, quickly call a doctor. If there is a potent medication, as Dr. Don Manuel Franc is believed to have, its efficiency depends on the promptness of the response to the call for help and to the severity of the regimen.

People were startled by the impunity with which I had been confronting such a treacherous climate. In that sense, I was like one of the natives of Cuba, to whom the devastation of the *vomito negro* is no longer foreign; they are just news items which they discuss with much indifference. Some of that news, however, never ceased to intimidate people. An English doctor, who had already spent several years on the island, and who was thought to have been accustomed to the climate, arrived in Havana from Matanzas. He caught the *vomito negro*; he died after a few days. Also, one of my male

acquaintances from Marseilles, who had been on the island for two years, recently died. It was then that I saw my friend B coming...

I do not know by which spontaneous movement my imagination pushed back someone I was seeing again with so much joy. "I am marrying *dona Dolores*. We must get it over with," said he. I congratulated him, but deep inside, I resented him for having left the countryside at the height of the epidemic. "I would have paid you a visit at home but I am about to depart and I cannot leave town. If the wedding were to take place a little sooner, I could still bear witness to your happiness," I said. "In fifteen days. Tomorrow we are going to the *Regla* festivities, and you will accompany us. During the week, we will start with the preparations," he said.

The next day, which was the eighth of September, the customary festivities of *La Regla* did not take place because the person in charge of the games could not get along with Mayor M....a, and considerable numbers of soldiers were sent to prevent people from playing. However, the tenant of the games and the Mayor were getting along fine two days later, and the festivities, which must last eight days, had started. What shall I say about those festivities? A horrible game is played there; people dance; people get killed. One can see there soldiers, young girls and monks; the heat is stifling; one is devoured by dust; one is bored to death; but it is fashionable to go there.

B., Dona Dolores, one of her cousins, and I went there the following Sunday. We went all the way to *Guanabacoa*, and from there, to the mineral baths of *Barreto*. As we were returning, B. told me in Spanish "Amigo, tengo dolor de cabeza" [My friend, I have a headache]. "Well, let us call Dr. Don Manuel," I replied.

Throughout the day, during the night, in the interval of sea which separates *La Regla* from Havana, thousands of boats are carrying passengers back and forth. There, like at the bullfights, one can appreciate the richness of the Spanish language in obscene and debasing expressions. The most intrepid language of our market halls, the most sordid expressions of our days of feast are modest and bashful in comparison. It is to those people who are returning from the games that the insults are directed. They are accused of leaving the games because they do not have any money.

I became tired of those shouts that were criss-crossing, as well as of the assaults of insults thrown without any real reason. At the same time, I was also worried about B's appearance. He seemed sad, and his appearance was not reassuring. After taking leave from Dona Fiores and her cousin, I took B. to his place, and I begged his innkeepers to quickly call doctor don Manuel Franc, should B. become ill. I gave them the doctor's address.

B. became ill that night. They went to the doctor's house twice. He had gone to see other sick folks because the number of people who contracted yellow fever had become monstrous from one moment to the next. Early in the morning, I went to see my friend. The presence of a doctor whom I did not trust seemed like a bad omen to me. B. had already become delirious. I went next to him; I spoke to him, but he did not recognize me. But why would I relate such painful scenes? He is no longer that generous friend, and the moment that I lost him, I could not see anything anymore; I could not hear anything! I was only looking forward to the time of my departure. Dona Dolores and her mother, as well as Mrs. S.... were very moved by his loss.

On the 26th of September, I said goodbye. The following day, a Sunday, after the morning mass, at daybreak, I went to the port where I was to board the Marie Antoinette of Caen. As I was going to board the ship, I gave a few *reales* to the Negro who had accompanied me. With a great deal of affection he said, “El segnor [sic] va en [sic] su tierra] [Sir, you are going back to your homeland?]. I was only able to reply with a sign because I was touched. The unfortunate man will never see his homeland.

However, I was not feeling that joy which the idea of setting foot on one’s native soil should have inspired. I was feeling an indescribable oppression. Waiting for the ship to ready to sail, my eyes were wandering all over the main buildings of the city that I was about to leave, while everything was reminding me of my friend. At the Tower of the San-Francisco Church, the flags of several nations were floating. There was a jubilee at the chapel of the *Tiers-ordre*. The house where B. died was not too far from that place. Those images of festivities and the remembrance of death were tearing my soul apart. On the point of enjoying calm, after the storms of a very troubled life, the unfortunate man had finally found eternal peace! In this world, he did not get a chance to reap the fruit of his courage, his virtues, his enlightenments, his lively and brilliant mind, and of his lovable qualities. Fortune, agreeing with the philosophical indolence, which he always professed, did not judge it necessary to grant him any favors other than a sudden and premature death!

Finally we are sailing and already we were near the Morro. But, who are these two women that are getting off a *volante* near the Punta Fort? Ah! I recognize them. Dona Dolores and her mother come to bid their last adieu to the man whose sweet friendship linked them to the countryman of a father, of a husband. The scarves of those women are

floating in the air. I respond to their gestures with my hat. However, all the sails had been deployed, and the boat had already taken off on the ocean.

Soon we pass the Morro; the Punta Fort slowly disappears in front of me, but I can still see the white quarry which is next to the Fort of Principe. I catch sight of the *casa de Beneficentia*. The *Campo Santo* is between those two buildings. May those who dwell therein rest in peace! Rest in peace, unfortunate mariner, who will never get to write an account of your last voyage! Rest in peace, young child of Italy, generous friend, whom the world never knew when you were alive. That beauty who had learned how to get to know you, will undoubtedly return more than once to this field of sorrow. Undoubtedly, accompanied by her mother, she will visit this land where two sons of the beautiful Parthenope are forever asleep. More than once my imagination will see those sensible and pious women pour a holy water on the soil which covers those beloved ashes! Rest in peace, generous friend! As for me, I will return to the bosom of that troubled Europe. That ocean whose waves are rocking the boat is the too faithful reflection of the jolts that are still waiting for me.

For three days we have had the coasts of the island of Cuba in sight. I confess that my heart was not feeling any less heavy at their sight, than it felt like when I was leaving Marseille, when for the last time my eyes looked at the mountains over there, location of my birth place. That feeling of sadness hovered over me especially at night, at the time when some vapors with the hue of roses floated above the island. Contemplating that color, the sweetest that can entrance the sight and decorate the skies, my soul was being inundated, so to say, with melancholy, because darkness was approaching and the dissipation of the day was reminiscent of absence and death.

The passage was successful. The considerations of Captain Thomasy du Croisie, that brave and excellent Breton, made the passage as sweet as possible. We reached Cherbourg after forty days.

I do not have to show to the curious neither stone, plant, coquille nor mug containing water extracted from some famous river. However, I have memories which will follow me for a lifetime. Have I not brought anything back from the products of that country? The other day, skimming through my *Plutarque*, I was surprised to find one of those little golden butterflies, which flutter about the mango trees. I remember that I had taken it the day we went to Guanabacoa, the day we went there; that is, the day before the eve of my friend's death. Isn't a butterfly the epitome of a traveler? Therefore, I will keep it (392-401).



*L'isle de Cuba et La Havane***CHAPTER XIX****The Barracoons or Slave-compounds**

I have already said a word concerning the barracoons; at least, I have already indicated their location. They occupy a vast amount of land. They were built for the troops that were intended to re-take Pensacola, forty years ago. They cost the King four millions; today, a similar construction would cost five hundred thousand francs. I was told that some of the entrepreneurs were still in prison in the Morro fort. In France, they would shine at least among the electors of their department.

Thus, models of barracks, originally intended as lodgings for soldiers, became prisons, where flocks of Blacks are incarcerated as soon as they get off the boat, as they wait to be sold.

Those jails contain a large room covered with thatch, which is divided into several compartments. In the first are settled the employees or prison guards; the next adjacent room is intended for the female slaves: the male slaves are in the last compartment. A large yard paved in cement links up through several outlets with the covered room. In a corner of that room, one can see several apprentices intended either to work in the kitchen or for other means. Some camp beds, elevated at one foot from the ground, occupy the two sides of the covered room, which functions as the slaves' dormitory. During the day, weather permitting, they have the slaves go through the backyard. Some tents protect them against the sun; some wooden or stone

benches are placed along the walls, and the glacis is like the bottom of a boiler, with a grunting to facilitate the absorption of rain water.

While loading the unfortunate Negroes, even if they were received more or less as cargoes of cotton or pepper, if during the passage they were treated as a cargo of apples or oranges that are thrown into the ocean when they are spoiled, and whose more or less considerable waste constitutes the hazard of the speculative investment during the time that lapses between the disembarkation and the sale, they are considered, nonetheless, as unfortunate beings.

It must be said, in praise to the Spanish government that under its eyes, up to a certain point, one would not dare violate the sentiments of humanity in the treatment of the slaves. Such could not be said regarding the other European administrations in America.

There are thirteen barracoons. They may be visited at any time, except during the hours of rest. The food that they give to the slaves appears healthy and rather abundant. They take care to have them sing, dance, or walk in cadence. In the morning, both sexes bathe in the nearby ocean. Although both sexes are naked, nothing indecent occurs. Whoever has seen the Venus of Medici, only has to be reminded of the pose of that beautiful statue, whose nudity does not offend decency. I thought that in the past I had seen some research both in that pose and in the placement of the hand. I was wrong. Most of the naked slave women strike that pose and hold their hands in the same manner, I almost said with as much grace.

Coming out of the water, each person takes a loincloth or a handkerchief, the only pieces of clothing required, until the slave is sold. Some owe to the generosity, either

of some seaman, or the seller, or the captain, another handkerchief that is made into a turban, or worn as a scarf. Yet some more generous merchants give all the slaves of their cargo a woolen blanket.

A *nègre bosale* is one recently arrived from Africa, and who does not speak his master's language. An African-born Negro, who does speak the tongue of his new country, if the slave has a homeland, and who knows how to perform the profession assigned to him, gets the title of *ladino*, which is more noble than the title *bosale*, but it is much less noble than the title of *criollo* from which the French made their word Creole, a name given to children of European or African descent born in America.

A colonist who visits a barracoon first examines if the men are robust, if they are young, and of good race. B. and I who did not have any plantation to have exploited for ourselves, were curious to find some tolerable women; "tolerable" was not the word for B. anymore... but it was still for me. I could not imagine that a woman could be so dark and yet so beautiful. What transition led me to arrive since at a more correct opinion? It is not very easy for me to explain that; I will only say that those strong passions that Black women, unfortunate slaves, arouse in white men, are born out of much pity. Moreover, the surprise that one must feel, in sometimes finding a sensible heart, under that repulsive envelope at first, a purity of form and curves rather general, features that are not quite as ugly as imagined in Europe, all that and to the noble desire to avenge for a victim of Fortune, and can serve as an excuse given to European women who would find the indulgence of some white men towards the Black skin inconceivable, bizarre, and even offensive. I specifically said in the eyes of

European women because those who are living in America are inflexible on that topic.

In Europe, there is the trivial perception of the African race, and, from the world's most ignorant people to Lavater's most subtle disciples, every Black person is depicted as having a big nose, heavy lips, bow-legged, with big ugly feet and a very obtuse facial angle, the sign of an inborn stupidity. Well, all Blacks do not have a huge nose, nor do they have such heavy lips; almost all of them have legs similar to ours when excessive labor and misery did not reduce their bodies to the shapes of skeletons. There are even a few women, who, because of their small feet, would incite the envy of a great number of French women. Well, evidently, only Mother Nature is responsible because it is not the wearing of tight shoes that make their feet so small! So, the pejorative phrase "flat footed" which must have applied to self-made people of both sexes, who, because their feet were a little big, were supposed to have walked a long time without shoes. Concerning the facial angle, I do not understand how it so happened that in the nation among which the angle is the most obtuse, the Congo Nation, one finds the most individuals able to refute the arguments of the most ingenious detectors of facial angles.

Unless a slave intended for sale is too sick, he has to sing and dance with his companions of misfortune. It is necessary that the buyers be deceived a little, if it is possible, on the quality of the merchandise. Would a slave vendor be more scrupulous than a vendor of sheets? Both sexes sing and dance separately. The dances of the male slaves are insignificant; some of them are mere strutting walks. Other dances appear to have either a warlike or a religious aspect. Away from the women, those

unfortunate male slaves seem uninspired. Their female partners, on the other hand, only breathe voluptuousness in their eyes, in the sound of their voice, in their gestures and their steps, and in their varied routines. They seem to know no other cult than the Cult of Love. In the absence of men, they take their roles, and it is through them that one may have an idea of what dances are like in their country.

The Negro is generally lascivious. The small amount of obstacles to impetuous sexual desires could explain the remarkable difference of strength and stature that exists among *bosales* and Creole Negroes. That difference is especially visible among the women. Almost all those that one sees in the slave markets are of a small frame. B. pointed out to me a very exquisite petite slave woman who was dancing feverishly. An abundant sweat was flowing all over her body, and her fervor never relinquished; she continued to lead her fellow dancers, guiding them by the hand, forcing them to accompany her in the dance. Her white overseers did not forbid her that excess which made her happy, but from time to time, they wiped away her sweat with a handkerchief. Generally a good dancer must drop dead. The one that I am describing renewed her strength throughout her efforts.

Why would *bosales* Negro women be exempt from flirtatiousness? Since they are capable of feeling preferences in love, why would they not want to provoke love? Thus, I admired how a number of women, although almost naked, had enough resources left to gain distinction. There was especially a young *mandiga* woman whose allure, gestures, looks and her various attitudes allowed her to display as much pretentiousness as the most elegant little concubine of a civilized country. The inventive genie of our fashion trendsetters did not send any tribute for her attire. She

was not wearing anything except her indispensable loincloth and a grotesque scarf that she had fixed ten thousand ways one more carefully applied than the other, not to cover herself, but to reveal her charms.

A number of scars, which we shall later discuss in depth, serve to differentiate most African nations. However, the cheeks, the arms, breast, and shoulders sometimes receive some special stigmata, which make up some pleasant designs, and are the ornament of individuals, whereas the others represent the stamp of a nation....

I would not advise our ladies to want to have their hair braided like those of a slave waiting for her owner; it would be exposing the patience and maybe the art of our hairdressers to too many strong tests. One cannot imagine the effort that some half savage women take in fixing the wild wool that covers their heads. Entire days must not be enough to carry out such coiffures, about which only antique statues of women and medals or coins featuring the head of an empress can give us but the slightest idea. It is certain that such a coiffure takes a considerable amount of time, because once under the power of their masters, and even after acquiring their freedom, Negro women, for whom time henceforth is very precious, sacrifice entirely this ornament which would lend a great deal of grace to their head.

Moreover, even before they are sold, slave women are taught that every second of their future existence will be rigorously metered. All the napes of the neck, with no exception to those which have recently been so artistically decorated, are soon shaved without pity in the same way our male chins are shaved.

"Isn't it true," B told me, "that a young Negro woman with a loincloth, that is somehow distinguished by its colors and by some beautiful border, with a necklace,

which mimics the coral, with earrings and hair braided like those ones, isn't it true that such a Negro woman is attractive?" I looked at B., and shrugged my shoulders, as he made such a speech.

A few days after, and prior to the eve of B's departure for the countryside, we went to Barracoon # 7. My friend's indulgence towards dark skin became between us a topic for jokes. He said, "You can make fun of me, but a very dark complexion, much closer to jet black, is more appealing to me than those obscure complexions of mulatto women, and of those quadroons that are more and more vain the closer their complexion is to ours. "Be careful," I said to him. "Do not let anyone hear you, or else you will be considered a very rude white man, as was the case for me, a few days ago because I made such a comment in a house where there was a woman of a certain suspicious complexion." "Whether they hear me or not," he replied, "I could not love those of indecisive color, which gives the appearance that something dirty is on their faces, and which one would like to remove. Furthermore, it is the very knowledge that I have of such types of women, so dear to some white men, of their moral character, their avidity...-However, there should be some exceptions, I said.- A small number.- "Ms. S...., for instance?"- "Yes, that one, good! "In any case, at least, if I had to choose a mistress, I would choose one here myself." -"You would imitate in that sense our old inhabitants of Saint-Domingue, who, for the most part, would go pick a companion aboard a slave ship." - "Yes, and for reasons similar to theirs. Take, for instance, that young woman with very well-shaped arms, with flexible limbs and a svelte waist, that young woman who is eyeing us a little on the side? Well, if I could, I would be her master...Her master! No. Nothing of that sort. You would not be

completely my mistress, young lady, who is looking at us, and who is smiling at this moment. They say that you are a slave. However, if you did not obey all my whims, I would sometimes pretend to ignore your disobedience, your minor unruliness. I would give you a pretty dress, some beautiful earrings, because you are a woman. I would adorn that porcupine dart in gold to decorate your hair and that would remind you of your homeland. I would, however, impose one condition: let not your hair ever be long because a Negro woman's hair is not pretty when it is long. I would not be mindful of your color; aren't there in the beautiful palaces of Europe some Venuses in bronze that are of a darker color than yours, and yet one's eyes follow nevertheless their shapes with pleasure? But, you, you are not made of bronze; I know that you have a heart because your eyes have said it to me; your smile, your sweet voice, your taste for dance have said it to me also. Ah! If you have a heart, be careful, young woman who gives me your hand with so much trust; that heart of course could cause the misery of my own heart!"

When my friend had finished that small speech accompanied by a pantomime that is typically Italian, the young African woman said to him: *tobacco!* And he gave her a pack of cigars. What a celebration! What transports of joy! She shared the cigars with her mates who were all young and pretty. In one instant, they surrounded us, taking us by the hand and saying to us: *tobacco*. Alas! we did not have any other cigars to give them.

The first Spanish word that a bosal is taught is the word "Havana," in honor of the city where he must be sold; the second word, that is self-taught, is "tobacco."



Thousands of observations can be collected during a visit to a barracoon. First of all, there is a great variety of nuances in the color of individuals belonging to the same nation, variety that already exists notably in the general color of different nations themselves. One sees, especially among the *carabalis*, some people that look red; other Africans are rather yellow than black; I am not talking about white Blacks; they are objects of curiosity: for that reason they would not be considered here. In several occasions I have met Blacks, who had strong spots of a dull white, especially in the arms, hands and feet. The palm of the hands and the soles of the feet of Negroes have the same color as ours. Some Negroes are blond, or better stated, they have red wool on their heads: they do exist, but they look quite strange, those types!

I have seen sometimes with a certain amount of tenderness *ladina* women who participated in the dances and songs of their countrywomen who had just arrived from Africa. In the first group of women, their flirtatiousness, combined with the grace inherited from the European dresses contrasted with the gracefulness of the others, whose assets were provided by Mother Nature. Only some of them, sometimes were elegantly clad, but with their heart profoundly stricken by the anguishes of servitude; undoubtedly they were missing the time of their youth when they used to perform the same dances and sing the same tunes under the green and large canopy of the immense Baobab tree, that king of the vegetal kingdom, that dominator of the shadowy valleys of Senegambia and Guinea; the others, just before passing under the inhuman yoke, being molded into new mores, being taught in a new language under the whip perhaps and other cruel treatments, were for a moment reassured by the presence of those African women who have come to

this place before them, women whose clothing they envied and it made them forget about their condition.

Sometimes the overseers allow Negroes from the outside to mingle with the new victims of Europe's greed; on other occasions, they chase them out of the establishment. It is because those outsiders do not always make it their jobs to reassure their unfortunate compatriots, and in their own interest the vendors of slaves make sure that their cargo always remains gay, so that they do not spoil, but sell well (172-187).

*L'isle de Cuba et La Havane*

## CHAPTER XXX

## FRAGMENTS OF MY LETTTERS TO B.

**Strolls at the Campo Santo.- Two Pretty Women in Mourning.- The Death of a Good Captain**

I sometimes received letters from my friend to which I would reply. A conductor of mules from Guanajay, who often came to Havana, carried our correspondence. In one of my letters, I told him about my excursions at the Campo Santo. Since my friend's departure, and before I formed a more sustained friendship with the good Ms. S..., I felt attracted to the Campo Santo by a somewhat melancholic charm mixed with painful memories and worries. I told my friends about the effect that the ravages of a fatal climate and the eternal daily goodbyes from friends had on me. Then I said:

And you, capital of my nation and of the enlightened world, must I renounce the taste of pleasure that the *beaux arts* provide! I will no longer see French people, my compatriots, who make one forget, through the gracefulness of their taste and the amenity of their customs, that they know how to be the terror of the worlds through their arms when provoked. I will no longer see those friends preoccupied with amiable studies...! But why must I indulge myself in so many distressing thoughts? I passed over the funerary fence; that frame of bamboo trees, weeping willows of the Tropic, those obelisks of death have disappeared. All those lugubrious emblems, those piles of bones, those open tombs, which soon will receive their new guests, that fatal spectacle no longer afflicts my eyes. Here I am in the old garden of the bishop, among small rose-bushes. Blossoming orange trees border the long alley that I travel through; the most suave

perfumes are exhaled from everywhere; the air that I breathe refreshes my senses; the most perfect calm surrounds me; a light breeze barely shakes the palms of those beautiful coconut trees: aren't the palms at the gate of a cemetery a reminder of the triumph of death?..."

Here are other fragments of my letters to B...

"I went back several times to the Campo Santo. For some time, it has become my regular walkway. I saw some good folks praying for the dead whose memory was dear to them. Two women, whom I always see there, have had a special impact on me. One is advanced in age; she is dressed in black. The other one is rather young; she is dressed in white and appears to be the older woman's daughter. They pray together either at the grill of a chapel or in front of a tomb which has not yet been covered with new grass. Once I saw the young woman bring a small bottle of holy water, and since the tomb is somewhat far away from the wooden trellis which fences the diverse compartments of the Campo Santo, a big man who also comes there sometimes leaped over the fence and spread holy water on the grave while saying a short prayer. He said then a few words to the women, comforting them, and the older one took out her snuff-box and handed it to him. That snuff of tobacco, offered while praying, shocked me a little, and, as a result, the interest I had in the old woman weakened.

The dead are brought in a carriage. When the deceased is a rich or a distinguished person not only black slaves as well as domestic slaves who work for the undertaker in great livery escort the carriage. Parents, friends and clients follow the procession in *volantes*. The march of the convoy is rather solemn; however, the first shovels of dust are

barely thrown upon a body when parents, friends and clients return with an impatient speed to their business or their leisure.

“I went to the Campo Santo one day when they had a lottery drawing. A *bosale Negro*, employed in the establishment, begged me to examine his tickets because he believed that he had won the first prize. That man, who is used everyday and so often in a day to seeing where greatness and riches lead, likes fortune like anybody else...!

I returned to the Campo Santo by going through *La Salud*. The palms of coconut trees had been cut; only the main shoots were left. Those trees currently look like candelabras: the sad ornaments that decorate coffins. The panorama became sad and melancholic. That wonderful garden that I am crossing, and whose alley leads to the chapel of the Campo Santo, is similar to the most wonderful life whose only project is death! Beyond the Campo Santo, the immense ocean is unrolling. Some vessels are sailing, and so are we, upon the ocean of the world, with all sails crowded on, but with the least bit of wind... Happy, happy are those who have already reached the port! A few young women are frolicking in the rose bushes. Hurry, hurry, young ladies, treasure those quiet days which you still have left; storms will soon enough come, maybe death, the ruthless death, will treat you as you are treating those flowers that look like you. Ah! Do not strip those flowers of their petals. They only have one day to live, and you are furthermore abbreviating that short existence! Farther away, a few old folks are sitting on a bench; at their feet, runs a murmuring small stream. Oh! They must be satiated with life, but I would not dare speak to them on the subject... But I already see the two women. They have left the chapel, and they are advancing towards the tomb that contains the object of their sorrows. Their sight has somewhat comforted my soul; my sadness has

become a little sweeter; the aspect of that affliction, caused by a recent loss, has dissipated partly my vague sorrows.

“I do not know how this time, even before I got closer to them, I envisioned the young woman as more beautiful and captivating than she had seemed before. While she was approaching, I remembered Dante’s verses:

*A noi venia la creatura bella  
Bianco vestita, e nella faccia quale  
Par tremolando mattutina stella*<sup>159</sup>

“Passing by her, I believe that I read in her eyes that she was expecting a greeting: she answered as graciously as possible, with a “*bonjour, Monsieur,*” pronounced with a Spanish accent. How does she know that I am a Frenchman? That question quickly reverberated in my mind. You must have realized, my friend, that I am not famous for my wits. Thus, seeking an answer to the question, as well as two or three words, which would conveniently match the “*bonjour Monsieur,*” I let a few seconds go by. During that lap of time, the procession of a convoy, which was entering, got near us. A young Frenchman whom I knew, who was a part of the procession, L..., grabbed me: I barely had enough time to say certainly foolishly to the young lady, “*adios, Segnorita*” [sic], and I went towards the chapel, where moments after, they placed the body of a young lady who was almost as young and as beautiful as my unknown woman, since the disease had not had enough time to alter her beauty. I was contemplating that blossoming flower reaped too soon with a great deal of emotion. What sweet expression I read in her eyes! How

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<sup>159</sup> That beautiful creature moved towards us, dressed in white, and similar to a star, which seemed to tremble in the vapors of the morning.

beautiful her eyes seem to me! And her complexion, what little resemblance it bears to the one that the climate gives!

After a little bit of earth had been dropped on the body of the young girl, I stayed alone: I was going to approach the two women when I saw them getting away, the mother, passing near a rose bush, plucked a flower, which she gave to her daughter. Here they are outside the funeral fence. They got on their *volanta*, and my novel is finished.

The religious ceremonies which take place in the Campo Santo are like most other religious ceremonies in this country. There is never any solemnity or I would say decency. In the chapel, I have seen some subordinate employees laughing, singing, using obscenities while disposing of the catafalque where the bodies will be placed for one moment. Our nation has been reproached for its frivolity, but that nation which pretends to be serious...! I cannot truly understand the religion of the Spaniards.

I said that one of the special tombs is reserved for those who were deserving of it according to the State, *para benes meritos del Estado*. Some older Spaniards had accompanied the young woman whom I have just described to her ultimate abode. By their clothing, they appeared to have been among Havana's finest. They were all gathered in front of the tomb. One of them asked his neighbor: *Quienes son esos?*[sic] "Who are these people?" One of them, who had vision problems, put on his spectacles. After reading the inscription he said that what is virtue at the Court is sometimes a crime and what is punished as a crime is often a virtue. The same *quienes son esos* was put to subsequent Spaniards, and the meaning of the *bene meritos del Estado*, remained problematic for all.

“And I also accompanied the corpse of a friend; I also said some sad and last goodbyes. Yes, old man Jordan was my friend. The difference in our age, condition and education did not pose any obstacles to our friendship. Death soon broke this friendship. His honesty attracted me. A farmer, as well as a seaman, he did not have any of the coarseness associated with those two professions. After his long retirement in the countryside, he made that fatal trip in a state of kindness for his nephew, the ship’s owner. Like the old pilot Menoetes, he had forgotten a lot and for that reason the younger seamen would make fun of him. *Littus ama*, hold on to the shore, we could have said to him. However, it was too late: the sweet shores of his homeland were forever far away from him.

“He would often talk to me about my country; I would talk about his. Our countries were only three leagues apart. I had promised myself to visit him when I would return to France. If you stay in the colonies, he said, you won’t find me any longer in this world. Alas! A wife and daughter are waiting for him. At this present moment they could be dreaming and calculating the date of his probable return. However, that reception that they are preparing, and the tenderness they are blissfully anticipating are intended for someone who is already dead. When the news of his death will start to be known, both mother and daughter will be avoided. People will not dare speak to them or look at them; then, they will be filled with secret terror; the gut wrenching feelings they had prior to the trip, the sinister dreams they have had for so long, will haunt them again. Sometimes a ray of hope will come to dissipate those clouds of sadness, and maybe while they still have the illusion of his return, someone will give them the news of his death... I used to like to hear him talk about the naval combats and the generals who had led those battles.



The Antilles had been the arena of his campaigns. He had streaked over those oceans, which he believed he would not see again. He had also come to Havana, but only for a couple of hours. It was in Havana that destiny marked his tomb.

After having been at the Campo Santo to fulfill a pious duty, I went back again out of curiosity, but I did not see the two women. Would they have already followed the old man's advice? Would they have been comforted already? (288-298)

*L'isle de Cuba et La Havane*

## CHAPTER XXXII

**Cigars.- *The Cucuyos* [Fireflies]**

I have already said a great deal about Havana, and I was going to omit her famous cigars. Such an omission would have been unpardonable. Here, tobacco is a product of first necessity; one would endure famine more patiently than a lack of tobacco. This production, one of the island's main products, had been subjected to the same monopoly as in Spain, which had been for the people of Havana the object of many a complaint. The newspapers, brochures that appeared on the island, when the press was free, were reflected the continual echoes of such public rumors. Finally, the people of Cuba obtained permission to plant, prepare, and smoke as much tobacco as they could, on condition they pay a tax of thirty piastres per *tabaquero*, and six piastres per thousand of cigars intended for export. They liberally are using the permission that they had obtained.

The consumption of tobacco that takes place here is enormous. Priests, monks, nuns, pretty women, little boys, little girls, blacks or whites, everyone smokes. People smoke in the streets, in ballrooms, in the cloisters, in the sacristies. A little mistress smokes as much as a hussar, but with much more grace: for, where can't women add an air of grace! I was told that on the Côte-Ferme, that passion for tobacco is even stronger, more impetuous than in Havana. At Merida, in the Yucatan, the theatre is uncovered; all the spectators smoke there. Such is the case in most of the theatres in the Côte-Ferme. It would be probably against the rules of decency to show up in the theatres without a cigar. The old Creoles of our islands, the immediate heirs of our old buccaneers, also had an intense attachment to tobacco. Many of them spent their days smoking. One Negro

woman alone could not roll all the cigar butts that her mistress smoked. The customs were very coarse then; but it was the golden age in our colonies. Women smoked too much; it is true that tobacco use was very disgusting; but they did not have any other luxury; they were still wearing big white cloaks and clearly had not been raised in France with the daughters of the great Lords.

Negroes who did not have any other thing to give would give cigars as gifts to their mistresses. A small favor, done to by a Negro who does not belong to you, is paid for with a cigar. A Negro woman does not go out without a cigar in her mouth or behind her ear or sometimes tucked in her hair. What is she going to pull out of her bosom, that young lady with ebony complexion, with braided hair and coral earrings, and white teeth? Flowers? A sweet note? A portrait, of which she should take care for her mistress? No, she only offers cigars to her comrades.

The passion for tobacco, like the gentlest passion of the human heart, has the privilege of joining all conditions and states of life. With a cigar between your fingers, you may stop the first individual who is smoking and that you meet in the street and say to him *Candela*; even if he is a noble from Spain, he will take his cigar out of his mouth, and hand it to you; you will light up yours, and you will get off with a slight bow. I only saw a Creole Negro or maybe a *ladino* refuse a smoke to a *bosale* Negro. This is evidence that the social distance between them is so great! Just like a fan, a cigar, used with well-coordinated signs, facilitates the language of the eyes. Rendez-vous are sometimes proposed and accepted by means of a cigar. This is realized with a charming dexterity.

If a Havana bard writes a song, an elegy, an idyll, and there is no mention of tobacco, no image associated with its smoke, its smell, its color, say haughtily that the piece is worthless, that is not natural, local.

Another source of comparisons and images presents itself naturally to the poets of this country. They are the *cucuyos* or fireflies, a kind of glossy scarabs, more common in the island of Cuba than in all the other islands of the archipelago. That insect is particularly present during the sugar cane season because of its attraction to sugar. The *cocuyo* has four luminous points on its body: on both sides of its belly and on the eyes. When it proliferates in the fields, which occurs after the first rains, one thinks at night that the air and earth are strewn with diamonds. Little boys and little girls have a great time collecting them. At night, women make collars out of them, which they wear to the promenade; they put them in their hair; and, when they think that their breasts deserve to commend attention, they know how to adorn them with two *cocuyos* placed in the most flirtatious way and in the least ambiguous intention in the world. Finally, they have a decoration that does not cost their husbands a fortune! (327-331)

*L'isle de Cuba et La Havane***CHAPTER XXV****The French Refugees of Saint-Domingue**

As Cuba's Spanish colony was languishing in a less agricultural than a pastoral existence, the French colony of Saint-Domingue was enjoying a prosperity that seemed to be endless. However, if the river of wealth was not flowing in all its profusion, in all its splendor, the torrent of corruption, injustice, bad faith and bad customs was already overflowing. That colony, more than the others, carried the blueprint of an original vice, and it had already been observed that its population had been gathered from the mud of the metropolis. A great deal of haughtiness and arrogance was required from the descendants of the buccaneers and of the prostitutes who were brought there throughout different epochs, in order for them to disguise the vileness of their origin. It would have been nicer to make people forget about this vile origin through cultivating virtues; but most ordinary people do not think that way.

Around that nucleus, a flock of avid adventurers came striving feverishly, driven to the New World by misery, hopelessness, and sometimes crime; they were envious of their predecessors who already had property; they were prompt to make a profit from the indolence created by wealth, through unfaithful management, commercial frauds, and through lucky gains that stemmed from gambling. The inclemency of the weather provided another resource to those "birds of prey;" and the art of pillaging cadavers was neither the least, nor the last in force in the colonies.

Some honest men came also, but those men, when they were not victims of the climate or of bad faith, rushed to return to their homeland with the fruits of their honorable labor. Generally, there are no honest men in the political circles: they are considered pivots on which the ambitious and schemers of all sorts and colors. Constantly offended, they no longer impart movement; they no longer relay it; they facilitate it all the more necessarily and in spite of themselves. Therefore, in our quick glance at the island of Saint-Domingue, we will consider these honest ones non existent, and if our eyes should find them somewhere, it will be only among the victims.

A succession of cargoes of men, which the law vainly wanted to pass for unfortunate people but which were considered as property that a wise economy manages, and that a misunderstood avarice allows to deteriorate, were left to perish as a result of carelessness or breaks in an excess of wrath, came to serve as instruments to ambition, games, and caprices, and as entourage to pride.

Nevertheless, it was among that class scorned without any motives that some men, justly despicable because of their pride, sought the impetus for their often-wild passions; the young female slaves, by inspiring upon her own follies, vindicated sometimes, through the ridicule in which she covered him, the shame unjustly attached to the color that she had received from Nature.

That white color, so proud, when it was mixed with the opposite color, should have softened the rigor of its proscriptions for the nuances which resulted from such a mixture. That is not the case, however. The white man, already guilty towards nature for having purchased his neighbor, further alienated himself from humanity by placing a price tag on his own blood.

Pitt said that the principle of slavery in the colonies comprises an enormous mass of vices and crimes. Well, in that enormous mass of vices and crimes the revolution threw its first seeds. They were received and fecundated like in France by disappointed ambitions, by impatient cupidity and by pride which had been wounded for a long time.

The colonist who was as proud of his barrels of sugar as an elder aristocrat would be of his sixteen quarters, was not only the object of envy, but also the object of aversion and enmity from the dweller who only had a few barrels of coffee. They both found themselves pitted against the merchant of the neighboring port to whom they struggled to pay the supply, and who had the insolence of demanding more accuracy and memory in their statement of account.

Several circumstances would lead one to believe that England was not a stranger in the first upheavals in Saint-Domingue: the project to emancipate that colony led the main inhabitants to many wrong proceedings, and could have been suggested by a spirit of vengeance.

The first signs of anger began to manifest themselves amongst the white population, followed by the men of color, who pretended to be their fathers' equals. That claim, which appeared justified in France, did not seem so to those who not long ago were among the most ardent partisans of equality among whites. However, the men of color constituted a formidable league. They became the more brazen the more they found out about the weaknesses of the privileged class, and they became the more vicious the more they were humiliated. By a strange fatality, they had always been rejected by the two extreme casts. The hatred between blacks and mulattoes was brought into play and in that second quarrel, those who soon would start a third one intervened as auxiliaries. The

third one would be longer, more terrible and whites, mulattoes, and the armies of the mother country would crumble.

We will not discuss the mistakes of the *assemblée constituante*,<sup>160</sup> which was not well aware of the state of things, and whose contradictory measures spread the plague rather than healing it. The Machiavellian measures of some of the agents who were sent by the subsequent assemblies, the blunders that some of them committed, and the horrors that they authorized will not be a part of our account.

The moment that slavery had become truly abolished, blacks, in general, proved themselves worthy of freedom. Some of them urged their former masters to return and presented themselves to them, no longer as slaves, but as workers and partners. A colonial regime matched with the circumstances, and which was susceptible to amelioration, was introduced with success, and did not displease the reasonable colonists. They felt happy to find themselves once more on their property and to be able to gather a considerable amount of wealth.

The new order of things promised many advantages to commerce, and the colony was going, maybe under a different form, to follow another course of prosperity, when the person to whom it was given the power to regenerate European politics, but who only knew how to drag and sullen its glory in the ruts of despotism, planned to once again induce into slavery men who had been emancipated.

His expedition was badly contrived because his neglect had too much contempt for those he wanted to subjugate. The Black population, at first astonished, soon became

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<sup>160</sup> Assemblée constituante- Legal body formed prior to the Revolution of Saint-Domingue. It called for the participation of more people of color in the colony's affairs. The debacle of that assembly led to Toussaint's capture and death in Fort de Joux on April 7, 1803.



accustomed to those soldiers, conquerors of Europe, and when Toussaint had said to them: "Comrades, the sun is ours," they believed themselves to be invincible at their turn, and in fact they became invincible.

Their acts of retaliation were horrible, but their enemies were not so humane! And whites should not have expected these many false measures, many treacheries, many cold atrocities, many barbaric acts, which they committed or witnessed daily, to sow for them anything else than death!

The bravery of the Negroes and the danger of yellow fever were not the only causes of the disaster of the whites: some French officers even sold weapons of war to Negroes and thus sold the blood of their own soldiers.

The colonists who managed to escape that frightening explosion of so long deferred vengeance sought asylum either in the United States, in Jamaica, or in the island of Cuba. Other colonists, during the duration of the revolt, had already preceded them in those areas, and some of them had brought enough capital to establish some profitable businesses.

The first migrations of the French colonists had given impetus to the industry in the Spanish colony whose history we are tracing. The subsequent migrations developed the marvels. The plains located in the South East of Havana, the regions of Matanzas, the hills of Santiago, and the territories of Baracoa saw their fertile womb stirred by an active race of men who were trying to mend their misfortunes. The progress in agriculture that was made in such a short period of time was incredible.

Some of those who came in the second migration brought with them some Negroes who either did not know or did not want to take advantage of their freedom;

others also came empty-handed. The French colonists themselves opened up roads in the mountains of Santiago, as well as in other areas where they were permitted to establish themselves.

The increasing prosperity of those industrious foreigners did not displease those Spaniards with good sense; however, those that were lazy, far from seeing in that example the sweet results of hard work as something to emulate, only found it a cause for envy. That envy, alas! was soon to taste the shameful enjoyments that fate had in reserve for it; through new political attacks the man who presided over the destinies of France provoked a violent crisis that made the unfortunate refugees of Saint-Domingue, already victims of the whims of this ambitious man, responsible for his wrongs towards the Spanish nation.

A general uprising took place in the island against the French. They had to suffer a great deal everywhere they found themselves in small number. Almost all of them were robbed, many were assassinated; women and children perished. The Marques of Someruelos was then governor. Everyone agrees on the zeal he employed to send soldiers in all the neighboring areas and expedite orders to protect our unfortunate compatriots.

The Spanish men of color became notable among that populace avid for blood and pillage. The honest people of Havana formed civilian patrols, composed of people from the same regions in Spain, to form a united front, but they could not prevent some terrible atrocities from being committed. While standing next to the governor himself, an old man was assassinated. He was a jeweler, settled in Havana for more than forty years. They wanted him to leave with the other French exiles; he could not be persuaded. The screams, the threats of the enraged mob, frightened him less than the injunction to forsake

his house, and in some way his new homeland. "Over my dead body," he screamed. A cadet, aide de camp of the governor, shamelessly took him literally, and plunged his sword into the old man's abdomen.

The act of that young man was looked upon with horror, and the bourgeois class vigorously struggled for such action not to be imitated in Havana, where that death was, I believe, unique.

However, the French were ordered to leave the island. They were given forty days to sell their properties and leave. That delay was prolonged in some places. Some of them were even given permission to remain if they had received favorable testimony from the junta intended for this end, concerning their good behavior and their opinions at that point.

On that occasion, many Frenchmen bore the pain of that fatal inconsiderateness with which more often we do not wisely fear to jeer at the mores and customs of the nations among which our interests lead us to live.

The harm that the absence of our compatriots caused to the culture was soon appreciated. In 1813, that is, before the end of the war, a writer, D. Antonio J. Valdes, had the courage to note, in his history of the island of Cuba, the important contributions to the colony of the French during their stay. When peace came, they were seen with pleasure resuming their duties, and they sought to repair their misfortunes. The return of those unfortunates is directly linked to the progress in the culture of those last years (241-252).

*Promenade en Amérique*

## CHAPITRE XI

**A tropical villa.- Columbus in Cuba.- The Yumurí Valley.- A first view of Matanzas.- Antipathy of the Creoles towards Spain.- Sugar Factory.- Condition of the Slaves.- Sugar Cane and Beets**

Before leaving, we had wanted to see the Fernandida Villa. A tropical villa is quite different from Italian villas. It looks like a green house. All those exotic trees, with their strange and gracious leaves, which seem like rarities in green houses, and which one imagines as impenetrable forests, are planted in rows or groups in small groves. Such a garden has all the charm of the improbable: it seems like one is walking in a dream.

The island of Cuba is 150 leagues in length; it is compared to the tongue of a bird. During his first trip, Columbus, having not reached the extremity of the island, took it for a continent and believed that he had seen the East Coast of Asia. He even made his crew and his pilot sign a declaration certifying that this land was the Asian continent, yet Columbus had discovered America, and he did not know it. After four trips to the New World, he died, convinced that he had been through Europe and Asia, without realizing the existence of a new continent. Many wonderful things have been said concerning Columbus' genius, which made him guess the existence of a world, but nothing is more contrary to the truth. Columbus wanted to reach India via the West, as the Portuguese had gone there through the East. He believed he had found Cipango, the city with the golden roofs, of which the travelers of the Middle Ages spoke, and which was thought to be located at the extremity of Asia. Having arrived at the mouth of the Oreonoko, he wondered whether it was not the delta of one of the four rivers found in the earthly

paradise. The name West Indies given to the Spanish possessions in the New World, and which the English Antilles still keep, is a testimonial to that great man's error. This is not the first time that a discovery has come as a result of the illusions of a genius. Maybe Columbus would not have attempted to go through an unknown ocean while seeking the oriental point of Asia, if another error, that of the Alexandrian geographers and of the first modern geographers, had not led him to believe that his effort would be rewarded. Therefore, his geographic perspective was not superior to the ideas of his time. If Columbus deserves an immortal glory, it is by the perseverance, the courage that he deployed in his enterprise, by the humanity that he displayed towards the Indians, his altruism, his magnanimity and his experiencing and overcoming of misfortunes. Columbus was, after all, a great character, and le Tasse fittingly depicted him when he called him "this magnanimous heart." Besides, his name is attached to the discovery, which mankind owes him, but it was not bestowed upon him here on earth to know what he has discovered. Glory is the reward of those who dare and succeed in a daring and useful enterprise, even when they are mistaken. Columbus is great enough; his reputation does not necessitate the insulting charity of a merit that does not belong to him. The erroneous and vulgar declamations concerning his divination of a continent about which he never believed, even after he encountered it, must be forgotten. However, isn't that chimera, that dream which gives birth to a world, that illusion from which stems an enormous discovery a more shocking fact, most fitting to inspire profound meditations?

Although Columbus had found America like Mr. Jourdain found prose without knowing it, I wasn't the least curious to see the tomb of the famous man whose soul was the noblest and character the purest. This tomb is located in the Cathedral of Havana.

Unfortunately it is undergoing repairs right now. It is not open, and I am obliged to be satisfied with a souvenir of the Cathedral of Sevilla, where I read on the tomb of Columbus' son, that magnificent homage paid to the memory of his father, which made travelers believe that Columbus' bones were resting there:

*A Castilla y a Leon [sic]*  
*Nuovo mundo dio Colon [sic]*

Matanzas, February 5<sup>th</sup>

This morning we reached the beautiful city of Matanzas. The balcony of our hotel faces a bay on which there are several American vessels and a French vessel. From either side, some gracious hills incline towards the sea. For a few moments, we amuse ourselves by looking at the pelicans standing still, as if they are sleeping, until the moment when they drop in the water in their pursuit of their prey. Then we went to visit our consul, Mr. Vergne, who, with a magnificent sense of duty, promptly came to our door with two volantes, and drove us to the most beautiful site around Matanzas, where the whole Yumurí Valley can be seen. There, for the first time, I had the complete picture of tropical nature. We started to follow a very mountainous road. While we were going up the area of Matanzas would be unfolding itself. On the opposite side, we discovered in a glimpse the Yumurí Valley, with its palm trees and its coconut trees irregularly thrown on its inclined and verdant walls. That sight has no equal; it is as if the curtain of a theatre has been suddenly lifted to let us sneak a look at a fugitive decoration. When we kept climbing, we saw the palm trees and the coconut trees bordering the road; the fences are made of huge tapers and other cactus in the shape of candelabras. The valley started to

reappear underneath the road, and the eye never tires to gaze at that extraordinary vegetation. That led us to a plantation, which was abandoned by its owners, and that is now occupied by slaves. In general, in Cuba, people do not live in the rural areas for their own pleasure. One is held there only because of the exploitation of sugar factories, and thus living there is similar to living in a factory, or a manufacture. That place, although the most astounding in the universe, was abandoned, which probably added to its charm; a shade of melancholy is reflected on the most wonderful panorama ever to exist. The ocean, the valley, the mountains, and the unaccustomed vegetation of the tropics throw you into an ecstasy filled with wonderment. It is impossible not to be reminded of the descriptions of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre in *Paul et Virginie*, I think till the hut made of banana leaves. There I found an old black man who looked like Domingo, but does he have an owner who is as generous as Mrs. de la Tour or Marguerite? A little black boy is climbing a coconut tree and brings back a fruit, which we open up. I find the liquid inside of it quite good; it is sweetened water that is slightly acid but very refreshing. Negroes of both sexes and of all ages surround us. I was told about their price as they pass by us: that varies between 600 piastres, the average cost for a black man, up to 80 piastres, for a little black boy. I was informed that the mother has the right to redeem her child in advance by giving a down payment of 20 piastres prior to her/his birth and 50 piastres a month later. Slavery is the only thing that spoils the impression of enchantment that surrounds me. I say to myself with a bit of excitement: "I have seen tropical nature in all its splendor." At this time, all sorts of vegetation have paraded in front of my eyes, from the fir trees and the dwarfish birches, which were dying in the swamps of Lapland, up to these palm trees, these banana trees, these coconut trees, yuccas, and cactus of the equinox flora, which is

the same on each side of the equator. I have now contemplated the main characteristics of nature and have now perused the entire gamut of divine harmonies here on earth.

That night was the première of a tragedy. I wanted to go to Matanzas for such a special occasion. The theme of the tragedy was Pelage<sup>161</sup>; the audience showed a certain Spanish patriotism during almost every verse. Everyone applauded every time the word Spain was uttered. Due to the disposition of the minds at that time, that level of enthusiasm stunned me. However, I learned that it was the Spaniards not the Creoles who were applauding. There is an irreconcilable enmity between those two sectors of the population. Cubans do not want to be considered Spaniards and do not see themselves as such. I was told about two babies, one born of a Spanish mother, and another of a Creole mother: they were already enemies at birth.

At the end of the play, they called on the author. As he came forth, a cloud descended behind him. A little genius came out of the cloud holding a crown. Two actresses accompanying the playwright placed the crown upon his head. Instead of greeting the audience, he smiled instead. Crowned with the cloud, and with the little genius next to him, he played the most bizarre winner that one could ever imagine.

Before leaving Matanzas, we traveled some distance to see some sugar plantations. It was convenient for me to compare the organization of those establishments, especially the condition of the slaves, to what I had observed in Louisiana. We took a train whose departure time was not quite exact. People are not more cautious in Cuba than they are in the United States. The Creoles' indolence produces the same effect as the feverish activity of the Anglo race. Over there, there is no time to think



about danger, here no one cares about preventing it. It is curious to look through the two portals of a wagon and see big banana leaves hang in the wind. What we see are real banana fields, similarly to our fields of wheat, the banana is, among all, the only one of the edible vegetables while grown on the same surface of land that can feed the greatest number of people. From time to time we pass by a magnificent mass of foliage of primitive vegetation, almost as impenetrable to the eyes of the traveler as it must be for his feet. In other places, the coconut leaves and the choux-palms disappear behind us with the rails of the railroad, on which they incline their light trunk and their elegant crowns. A young girl, with very beautiful eyes, sits across from me with such a nonchalant attitude, eating oranges; then she starts combing her black hair, and ends up using a safety pin as a tooth-pick.

We first saw a small sugar plantation, whose owner is the typical gay, cordial, active, and hospitable French colonist from Saint-Domingue. His establishment is the prototype of the smallest sugar factory, which functions with profits. M,... owns 200 Negroes, of which 40 constitute what are called good Negroes, and they produce 500 cases of sugar. On the island, there is a factory of 800 slaves that produces 10,000 cases. That factory is too big to maintain because of exorbitant expenses due to the cost of the slaves' surveillance, as well as their healthcare. A death among the slaves, a fire in one of the cane fields, can cause immense damage; but, in general, it is profitable to have an average size factory, because maintenance fees are about the same in a big factory as in a small one. One must also pay a *majoral* and a *master of sugar*. The latter receives up to 5,000 francs, just like a professor in the College of France. The cost of the land is the

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<sup>161</sup> Guiraud, Pierre Marie There Alexandre, baron de Pélage (1788-1847).

least expense. Overall, a sugar factory, which produces three to 5,000 cases of sugar, is the most profitable.

I gather those data with a bit of curiosity and displeasure: I cannot get used to those evaluations of capital and benefits in which a man's work is included and counted as a brute force that is used without his consent and participation. One story that I was told is quite fitting to refresh my soul; it deals with a slave who had saved M..., a child, during the massacre of Saint-Domingue. He reached old age in M.'s home; M. treated him as his own father, and the slave ate with him. It was an honor for everyone to touch the hand of that good Negro. I do not know whether such cases exist in the United States.

That land has been in cultivation for sixty years, and, as a result, has been abused by those years of cultivation. It needs to be manured to great expense- a great deal of funds is required. M...is attached to his property and remains there, but his son, who had been raised in the United States, and whose American customs show the greatest contrast to the French customs of his father, would, like a true Yankee, to abandon that old property, in order to explore a new one.

We then visited another considerable plantation, considered one of the better maintained on the island. There, for the first time, I saw men and women cutting sugar cane. It was a sad spectacle. The forced rush of the workers who hurriedly cut the cane which was falling around them, the presence of overseers armed with whips, and especially the thought that those people were acting under the motivation of an exterior force, just like a grindstone turns because it is being turned, burdened my soul. A few moments afterwards, the administrator made me smile by saying: "they claim that slaves

are unhappy; you can judge for yourself. I am sure that you did not hear the sound of the whip." I had only been on that plantation for fifteen minutes!

In fact, I believe that cruelties are rare, although they have confessed to the frequency of suicides to us: "they hang themselves very often, but no one really knows why;" but that type of labor that I have just witnessed is really harsh. Then one must place the cane on rolling pins, remove the sweetened liquid, and put it in another vase, and so on. Again, that is a very strenuous task, and during the active season, the slaves work sixteen to eighteen hours a day. As violent and excessive as that type of labor is, that is not what aroused in me a great deal of indignation against slavery as it is practiced on the island of Cuba. I inquired about the moral and religious instruction that the plantation slaves received, and I learned that such instruction did not exist: "they are baptized, I was told they get married, if they so wish. Upon their deathbed, the priest comes to give them the last rites; but he lives far away and we do not like to disturb him. At night, they pray, except during the sugar cane season, because they do not have time." But there is neither religious instruction or catechism, nor preaching to the slaves. They are in no way instructed about good and evil; all moral ideas are excluded from them. It is generally believed that the Spanish colonists are less harsh towards their slaves than the inhabitants of the United States. If I compare that plantation, which passes for one of the better administered, with those I saw in Louisiana, I am not struck by the gentleness of the masters here. On the Spanish island, the maximum amount of whiplashes is more considerable. The overseer can give up to twenty; in Louisiana, on Mr. Roman's plantation, it was only five. Mr. Roman opened the doors of his plantation to Catholic priests, and even to the Methodists, who could bring some religious instruction to the

slaves. Here, there is no such thing, and nothing is done either to cultivate the moral sense of the slaves than is done to develop that of the pig, which the slave is allowed to raise and sell for profit.

I will admit that, in general, slaves are well lodged, sufficiently fed, and they receive medical care when they are sick. I will admit that during lunch, Mrs... L., the wife of the sugar factory's owner, told us smilingly that we would not have enough milk for our coffee because it was kept for the sick ones. Even with such "care," a life of forced activity without hope, without personal desire, is still similar to the life of an animal or of a machine; even if there were no cruelty in the treatment of the slaves, which is impossible, the total absence of moral development *per se* would be enough. To condemn slavery because it is both barbarity against the body and the murder of the soul.

The slave trade, forbidden by law, is conducted openly in Cuba. Most of the governors who preceded General Concha allowed it, in exchange for one or two ounces of gold per slave brought to the island. As a matter of fact, other officials have received as much. General Concha (José Gutiérrez de la Concha (1809-1895) rejected such an odious market. He warned the traders that they would be punished if the trade continued. In spite of that warning, it was not difficult for the traders to carry on their shameful commerce. Sometimes they would even do it overtly. Recently, a cargo of slaves was openly disembarked in Matanzas. As a result, the town was almost famished for one day because so much food was purchased to feed those slaves. Such boldness forced the authorities to confiscate the human shoddy goods. As long as slavery is maintained, the slave trade shall exist everywhere there is an insufficient number of slaves, like in the United States, which is another source of immorality; because the absence of the trade encourages the

breeding-stud of humans that exist in Virginia, and which present another difficulty for emancipation because of the ever increasing number of slaves to emancipate. Whatever happens, an evil principle always produces evil results.

The introduction of specialized equipment for sugar production is much more difficult here than in Louisiana. I have said that a great deal of previous expenditures must be made for the acquisition and the installation of such equipment, which is costly before being economical. Furthermore, very often, those that start the exploitation of a sugar factory lack the necessary funding: they borrow and pay with the products. However, it is a rather harsh affair to borrow in a country where the legal rate of borrowing is 12%. In general, things happen that way: the vendor of slaves, who is called the importer of blacks, gives a certain number of slaves to the planter, with the promise of being reimbursed. The vendors even provide food for the slaves. A fire on the plantation is enough to cause the borrower a great embarrassment. Therefore, a great number of landowners are cornered in such a way that they cannot increase production with a new equipment and they need slave labor.

It is known that England tried to substitute the slaves that they emancipated in the English colonies with indentured servants from Malaysia and China. In Cuba, there is a considerable amount of Chinese, and they function because they hold up to the rigor of the sugar cane season like black slaves. When they were going to be whipped, they resisted, and they did not consent to receiving whiplashes. However, a chief was nominated among them and he hits them with the cane, which they accept. In fact, the cane is in their customs: the number of whiplashes to receive fulfills their penal code, and constitutes the sum of their criminal legislation. The Chinese have started to flock towards America. One

knows to what point they have started to invade California. They have already occupied a district in San Francisco, where they have built a pagoda. During the celebration of Independence Day in America, they paraded with their flags on which were painted dragons, in the civic procession in honor of the Congress and of Washington.

An argument was put forth against the use of slaves on the island of Cuba, and I am reproducing it here without commenting on its merit, hoping it is a solid argument. The abolition of slavery, could, in some regards, be favorable to the general culture of that island. The sugar plantations absorb all the funds because coffee plantations are being abandoned more and more, as a result of the competition with Brazil and Java. Maybe the island would benefit more from a varied culture of products, such as corn, wheat, and cocoa, which, like tobacco, do not require slave labor.

Finally, there is a mighty adversary of slavery, perhaps the most powerful of all, beets. The first thing that abolitionists should do would be to never put a piece of sugar in their tea, or, if they don't possess that virtue, always to use any other sugar but sugar cane. In the United States, every year a great quantity of maple sugar is consumed, but although sufficient for consumption, maple sugar is no match for sugar cane, while the sugar from beets is identical to sugar cane and could serve as a substitute without any inconvenience for the consumers.

*The Diario*, organ of the government, after relating, according to the *Economist*, all the progress that had been made in Europe in the production of beet sugar, is striving to conceal to itself and to others the preoccupations brought on by the rivalry between colonial sugar and European sugar. It endeavors to convince itself by saying that in the very-populated countries, they will not give up land intended for the production of cereal

for the sake of beets, that government officials wish to maintain the existence of colonial sugar, and that the area dedicated for growing beets is limited. One could also oppose to the chances of the invasion of beet sugar the necessity to have on hand combustibles and fertilizers. In spite of all that, France, Belgium, Germany, still offer a battlefield. *The Diario* ends with that conclusion where one can detect a certain level of fright through a language which affects confidence: “Without denying that beet is a terrible rival for the production of sugar in the tropics in many markets of the old world, and in the most important among them, there are no tangible reasons to prophesy with assurance that it will soon control the market and take over the monopoly.

We have seen that the stability of sugar cane is quite uncertain; I confess that I am not much sympathetic towards its future and not much touched by its worries. Let sugar cane be replaced by beets, or if it wishes to escape that end, let it manage like its enemy, let its production become more economical by simplifying and perfecting itself. In both cases, slavery will take a blow and millions of human beings will no longer be debased in order for us to have jelly jams and drink sweet water (187-204).

*Promenade en Amérique*

## CHAPTER XII

**Tobacco Growing, Its History.- Dissatisfaction of the Population of Cuba.**

No one should come to Havana and keep silent about tobacco, for which this city is famous. On this topic, I am as eager as the next person, and I hastily collect as many documents as possible on the growing and preparation of tobacco, as well as its history.

Small landowners are generally engaged in that meticulous work with their families. This is the best way for that plant to reach all the perfection that its development and cultivation requires. Then, brokers who go around the island purchase the tobacco and subsequently sell it to merchants from Havana. Those merchants prepare those famous cigars that people smoke or believe to smoke all over the world. The proliferation of the railroads will increase the small planters' profits by offsetting the taxes levied by those brokers, allowing them to directly send tobacco leaves to Havana or to the other cities. It is certain that many of the cigars that are used in Europe, and which bear the name of Havana, come from places other than Havana. However, one must acknowledge that many mediocre cigars can really come from Cuba. There are varying degrees of quality of tobacco, as well as of wine. The wine of Suresne, as well as that of Bordeaux is French, the same way that several leaves of tobacco come to Havana from different parts of the island, and they are quite different in quality.

Three hundred and seventy four million pounds of tobacco are produced worldwide; of that amount, Cuba produces only ten million pounds, The United States



provides 219 millions and Europe 136. Russia produces 21 millions; France produces 20 millions, while Germany produces more than 40 million pounds. In terms of tobacco consumption, Germany is still number one among the European states. The German's rate of consumption is 45 million pounds sterling, while that of the British Empire is 21 millions. Strange! It seems that with regard to population, it is the English nation that smokes the most, *la mas [sic] fumadora*, according to the Havana data that I have in front of me. France, which has twice the population of England, only consumes half, that is 10 millions. In Spain, Cuban tobacco is not used much because of high tax of importation is imposed on it in the kingdom. That is one of the grievances of Spain against Cuba.

Tobacco consumption is rapidly on the rise almost everywhere.<sup>162</sup> In France, it is a known fact that the collection of taxes produces a more substantial return each year. In England, in 1852, about four million more pounds than in 1851<sup>163</sup> were imported. In New York, more money is spent on bread than on tobacco.<sup>164</sup> It must be observed that in agreement with the democratic principles, taxes are higher on luxury cigars which are much more expensive than ordinary tobacco.

The universal use of that plant, which was still unknown three hundred and fifty years ago, is quite curious. Since that time, all the nations have picked up the habit of smoking, a custom whose empire, as has been observed, is much greater than what the

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<sup>162</sup> From 1856 to 1849, in 23 years, the exportation of tobacco leaves from Havana tripled, while that of cigars almost quadrupled.

<sup>163</sup> In 1851, 27,853,233 pounds; in 1852, 31,049,654 pounds. *Galigan's Messenger*, August 2, 1852.

<sup>164</sup> In 1838, 3,493,050 dollars were spent on bread in comparison to 3,0650,000 dollars were spent on tobacco. *American Almanack*, 1838. That difference has been on the increase ever since.

Roman Empire has ever been. It must be noted that that custom, which is almost universal among the civilized nations of the world originated among the savages. The civilized people in the antiquity did not know of its use. It is known, however, that the Thracians used to inhale hemp the most because of the hashish, with its undoubtedly exhilarating qualities, because it is extracted from hemp. Tobacco use seems to have been common among the American nations. The history of the Ohio reveals that tobacco use had existed in the Mississippi Valley five hundred years prior to the discovery of the new continent. Jacques Cartier<sup>165</sup> in Canada, and Cortez<sup>166</sup> in Mexico, found it in fashion. It is in Haiti and on the island of Cuba that it was first spotted. A remarkable thing was that the natives of that predestined island were already aware of cigars, because they used to smoke rolled tobacco leaves. In fact, the historian Oviedo is as critical on that use of tobacco as any of his enemies. "The Indians of that island, among their bad habits, have a despicable custom, which is to inhale the smoke of what they call tobacco<sup>167</sup> and which makes them lose their senses....," he wrote. This is evidently an exaggeration of the narcotic effects of tobacco. "And they do the same thing with a grass which has the characteristic of a poison, I believe," continues the author. The same author informs us

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<sup>165</sup> Jacques Cartier (1491-1557), Explorer, founder of Canada.

<sup>166</sup> Hernán Cortés (1485-1547) Spanish explorer, conqueror of Mexico.

<sup>167</sup> Ampère provides the following footnote: "Tobaco ou tobacco était le nom du Roseau percé à travers lequel les Indiens d'Haïti aspiraient la fumée. C'est par confusion que le nom du tuyau de pipe a été transporté à la plante. Tel est la véritable origine du mot tabac, qui ne vient point, comme on l'a dit souvent, du nom de l'île de Tobago" [Tobaco or tobacco was the name given to the perforated reed through which the Indians of Haiti inhaled the smoke. They called tobacco cohoba or cohobba. By confusion, the name of the pipe of the reed has been given to the plant. Such is the true origin of the word tobacco, which does not come from the name of the island of Tobago, as it is often said.]

that the Indians used to grow tobacco in their own gardens. In his [Oviedo's] days, smoking was not known among the European nations, and he refers to it with disdain, saying that only Negroes use it to relax.<sup>168</sup>

It is on the island of Cuba that the custom of taking a snuff tobacco was observed for the first time. Taking a snuff and smoking exist both side by side. According to Oviedo's testimony, a bifurcated pipe was used; one of the extremities of the fork was inserted in each nostril in order to sniff tobacco powder. Next to the Meta River, Doctor Roulin saw an Indian put in the pipe a powder called *yopo*.

The Mexicans used to smoke the pipe and the cigar after dinner. They would pinch their nose during that process, apparently not to lose any of the smoke, which they would often swallow. For the Mexican people, as well as for the savages of North America, tobacco smoke was something sacred. It played a role in the ceremonies of Montezuma, and on a bas-relief in Yucatan, two men were seen offering the smoke of a cigar and a kind of a cross, the same way Major Long saw the Omahwas using it in the Mississippi Valley, when they found and killed buffaloes. Before starting to touch the buffaloes, they would say the following prayer, "Master of life, here is some smoke."

The Indians of Virginia believed that the Manitou (spirit) dwelled in the smoke of tobacco. Among the Natchez, the priest, leading the people, would go on top of a hillock to watch the sunrise. As he was doing so, he would let go a puff of smoke in honor of the sun, which those people worshiped. Even today, it is still customary among a few

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<sup>168</sup> Ampère again explains, "La première nouvelle de la pipe fut apportée en Europe l'an 1408, par un prêtre nommé Romano Pano que Colomb avait laissé en Haïti lors de son premier voyage" [In 1408, a priest named Romano Pano, left in Haiti by Columbus during his first trip, brought the first information concerning the pipe to Europe].named Romano Pano, left in Haiti by Columbus during his first trip, brought the first information concerning the pipe to Europe].

savages, should they encounter a rattlesnake, the animal which they call *grandfather*, to direct at him the smoke of their pipe. Is it maybe to benumb it?

The pipe, or the calumet as those who think they are creating *couleur locale* by using an old French word would say, is not only a part of the councils of Indians in their peaceful assemblies. There is also a calumet of war as well as a calumet of peace. When an expedition is underway, the red pipe is circulated, and each individual extracts a draft, and in doing so enlists in the expedition. Besides the use of tobacco in religious ceremonies and political deliberations, the Native Americans used it as a medication and so did the Mexicans; they used it also to bring the drowned back to life, as Diereville<sup>169</sup> observed it among the Indians in Acadia.

The history of tobacco also exists in the Old World. First, it was used as a medicinal plant. Towards the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the illustrious Raleigh introduces the use of smoking in the English court. It is reported that his servant, seeing a pipe in his mouth, thought that he was burning, and threw a bucket of water upon his head. It is also reported that one day Raleigh decided that Queen Elizabeth should imitate him and he made her smoke a pipe. They go on to say that Elizabeth had bet him that he would not be able to weigh the smoke produced by the pipe. Raleigh compared the weight of the tobacco before and after the operation. Thus he determined the weight of the exhaled smoke. The queen, admiring that analysis, which perhaps was not rigorous, told the illustrious traveler, after losing the bet, that he was the first to make gold out of smoke. Elizabeth never missed one moment to show her wit. James the First never emulated

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<sup>169</sup> Diereville, M., French traveler, was born in 1670. He is known as a poet, a surgeon and a merchant.

Elizabeth's indulgence towards that new taste, and although he was the founder of Virginia, in which tobacco was almost the only crop, and even was used to pay the salary of civil employees and Anglican ministers, he wrote a book, which he pedantically gave the Greek title *Miscapnos* (enemy of smoke), denouncing that custom which he loathed. James was not the only sovereign who was hostile toward the use of tobacco. The use of tobacco was prohibited in Russia under death penalty; it was also forbidden in New England. In Turkey, the Sultans, at the instigation of the Muphtis; in China, the emperors of the Ming dynasty prohibited the use of tobacco, just like the Czars of Russia and the Puritans in America. The Puritans compared the smoke coming from the pipe with the smoke coming from the abyss, and during the horrible immolation of the so-called sorceresses called the *tragedy of Salem*, one of the victims lit a pipe on the scaffold. The people shouted, "you see how she is surrounded with flames and the smoke of hell." Cromwell, in spite of his Puritanism, did not prohibit that pleasure. It is even reported that during his indecisions concerning the title of king which he was tempted to take, he asked for pipes and a candle. Then, after smoking profusely, he resumed the serious business at hand.

Taking a snuff has also inspired a few qualms. Pope Urban VIII excommunicated those who smoked tobacco in the church. Clement XI, who was more tolerant, restricted the interdiction to St. Peter's Church. Thus, tobacco, which was part of the cult among the Native Americans, which the natives of the island of Cuba held as sacrosanct, according to Oviedo, was considered profane in Boston, in Constantinople, and in Rome. It is even believed that a candidate who was about to be canonized was denied the honor of sainthood, because the devil's advocate proved that he had the habit of taking a snuff

of tobacco. Other Popes, in reality, showed more tolerance and anointed the use of the snuff box by drawing out of it themselves. One Pope presented his snuff box to a *chef-d'ordre*, who refused it by saying, "Holy father, I don't have this vice." The pope, unhappy with this type of rejection, said, "If it were a vice, you would have had it."

It is known that in Germany, in Holland, pipes, and in Spain, cigars and cigarettes have long been a universal need. In France, until recently, smoking has been the specialty of seamen and soldiers. It has been swiftly infiltrating the *beau monde* but under the name of fantasy and debauchery, during the time of La Fronde<sup>170</sup> and in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, under the Regency. Nowadays, the use of tobacco is so common that one who abstains is almost an exception. That habit, unknown before the discovery of America, has literally been around the world in three centuries, and throughout the Orient, where it is more common than anywhere else in the world, all the way up to China. It is hard to conceive Orientals without a chibouk and narghile. However, they had no knowledge of such thing prior to Columbus.<sup>171</sup> Such a universal inclination towards tobacco must be due to its slight narcotic effect, and on its effect on the nervous system. Seamen are allowed to chew

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<sup>170</sup> La Fronde (1648-53)- Series of outbreaks during the minority of King Louis XIV, caused by the Parlement of Paris' effort to limit the increasing power of the crown.

<sup>171</sup> Ampère provided the following footnote: "Un fait remarquable prouve que l'usage de fumer n'est pas très-ancien en Orient: c'est que dans les *Mille et une Nuits*, dont la dernière rédaction paraît être du seizième siècle, et où les mœurs orientales sont peintes avec une merveilleuse fidélité, il n'est jamais fait mention de la pipe. On n'y voit pas non plus figurer le café. Aujourd'hui le tabac et le café sont devenus des besoins si impérieux pour les Turcs, que pendant le jeûne de rhamadan, aussitôt qu'un coup de canon a annoncé le coucher du soleil, ces hommes a jeûn depuis son lever allument une pipe et prennent une tasse de café avant de toucher à aucun aliment" [A remarkable fact proves that smoking is not very ancient in the Orient. In *One Thousand and One Nights*, whose final composition seems to have dated of the sixteenth century, and where the Oriental customs are described with an astounding accuracy, there is no mention of pipes. There is no mention of coffee either. Today, tobacco and coffee have become such essential needs for the Turks that during the fast of Rhamadan, as soon as the cannon announces sunset, those men who have been feasting since sunrise light up a pipe and drink a cup of coffee before taking any food]

tobacco only aboard their ship. For all those who smoke, the disgusting taste is only a part of the attraction. The attraction consists of the moral and intellectual effect of the narcotic principle which tobacco contains, and produces on the brain, as well as the feeling of euphoria which it communicates to the mind. Excited and calm at the same time, vaguely lulled the mind, one seems undulated and entranced with the exhaled smoke which goes straight up or erratically.

Coming to Havana, I was convinced of the exaggeration of what I was told in the United States concerning the dissatisfaction of the Cuban people. I thought that the Yankees exaggerated that dissatisfaction a bit, and even that they supposed it so they could profit from it. However, since I have been here, I have constantly witnessed it among all the social classes, from the most powerful to those of a more modest condition. Everyone complains about Spain. "What has eradicated the cultivation of coffee is that they quadrupled the tax on flour from the United States. Now, the United States takes their flour to Brazil in exchange for their coffee," he said. A woman adds the following, concerning the celebrations which were to take place following the queens' delivery: "The festivities will be very sad." Here is another conversation I had with an honorable Creole whose name I shall not mention. We were talking about legislation, and he informed me that Spain was thinking of giving itself a code. "However, there will never be a similar thing for Cuba. Our island is only good to pay import and export taxes, which rise to 33 for 100? Spain always finds a way to get our money. That's the only thing our government is good for. If you want, we will give it to you at a lower cost. As far as justice goes, there is an improvement. They have eliminated the judges' money and presents given by the litigants. They have a salary of 5,000 piastres. Thus, they do not

drag the cases anymore, but the lower employees drag the cases *ad infinitum*. The results of the litigations depend on the least clerk and often on a simple messenger. In criminal justice, there is no contradiction of the witnesses. One is absent during the depositions; one can only see them take their oath. Questions are asked and answered in writing. That makes up a dossier, and a transcript is read to the judges. Judgments are unbelievable. The other day, a lawyer had two cases. He was sure to have won one and lost the other. The opposite happened.” My speaker concluded like Pantagruel that the best thing to do would be to flip a coin for the decision of the tribunals, as the wise Brid’oison used to say.

It is not that Cuba is not enjoying some actual prosperity. The population is increasing; commerce and the customs’ revenues are on the rise every year. The writers in the United States have carefully noted that this progress corresponds to that of their country, which occupies the first place in Cuba’s commerce. It is certain that, except for coffee, whose production has dropped sharply, all the other products of the island have had a constant progression. However, the people of Cuba hardly benefit from the economy; Spain reaps all the benefits, and taxes that the people of Cuba did not vote on prevent progress on the island.

The government, in its official journal, states that the people in the United States pay more taxes than the people of Cuba. He concluded that the people of Cuba are happier than the people of the United States because, from Ohio to New York, from Maryland to Pennsylvania, taxes have gradually been increased from 80 to 100%. Even if the fact were true, it does not matter. It all has to do with the nature of the taxes and the use thereof. The taxes that they collect in the United States are not intended to benefit a



jealous mother country and to pay hated employees. The United States citizen pays voluntarily, because he is free, because he has to determine the use of the allocated funds, because he belongs to himself, because soldiers are not sent from two thousand leagues away to guard him; administrators are not sent to watch over him; judges are not sent to judge him. Each person is called upon to defend the country as a militiaman, to govern as an administrator, to administer justice as juror.” A Cuban writer very well described the difference: “The treasury is everything in that country; the protective role of the government is felt in all the institutions and there is not one public or private business of importance which cannot count on the assistance of the treasury,” he said. Take the absolute reverse way, and you will have an idea of things as they are in the United States.

The two most important reasons for the dissatisfaction against Spain are, on the one hand, the indirect customs’ taxes levied against the colony, and, on the other hand, the impossibility for Creoles to find employment.

The Spanish government has kept the old system, which was once that of all the States towards their colonies. This consists in constantly sacrificing the interests of the colonies in favor of those of the motherland, instead of facilitating colonial development and benefiting from it. Thus, because of exorbitant taxes on the flour from the United States, the people of the island are forced to get their wheat from Spain, which in turns charges them a hefty tax. What insults the Creoles even more is that they do not have any civil servant function- from the most important to the least important ones. To that, the Spaniards reply that many Cubans hold important positions in Spain. However, that does not prevent the Creoles from feeling alienated in their own land. An important person on the island told me, “I could not be a game-keeper.” One observes with a great displeasure

that no mercy was shown towards the Creoles who participated in the last events, but that the queen has put more fervor in reprieving Americans from the United States. The young are learning English, and when one tells them about their Spanish background, they respond: "We are not longer Spanish; we would like to be able to forget our language." In sum, the colony's discontent has reached its zenith. *Siempre fiel* is Havana's motto, and it has keys for armorial bearings. This fidelity could very well mean that one of these days Havana will use those keys to open the door to the United States. This does not mean that the people of Cuba have a special penchant for the North Americans. Furthermore, the natural indolence of the Creoles did not make them men that are entrepreneurial and daring. As long as Spain will have an army and a navy to contain Cuba, such as the case is today, Cuba will not easily revolt. However, one can assert that force is the only bond which links Cuba to the motherland. But that is not a guarantee for the future. That situation poses a huge stumbling block for Spain. All the revenues taken from the colony go toward replenishing the armed forces, army and navy. If Spain should need those soldiers and marines in a European struggle, Cuba will definitely slip away from Spain forever. Violence prevails in the sessions of the Councils of Spain; passions are enflamed up to the highest degree against the colony. I have heard some Spaniards declare that they are waging a fierce war against Cuba, that there was nothing to yield or to grant, that they were going to forbid Cubans to send their children to school in the United States, etc. This is a hopeless agenda. Those extreme policies will not hold up. On the other hand, I have learned on good authority that the current governor, General Concha (José Gerónimo de la Concha, Governor from 1854 to 1859), who had energetically defeated Lopez' troops and punished the riot attempts, thereby maintaining Cuba's allegiance to

Spain, is threatened to be recalled. This is because that man is as wise as he is firm because he thinks that one should take advantage of the moment when one is victorious and strong to make some concessions which would bring back the Creoles.<sup>172</sup>

The United States will never give up their plans for the occupation of Cuba, that magnificent island which is at their doorway, and whose boats touch on their way from New Orleans to New York. The southern states would love to have another slave state added to the Union. Thus, the associations to prepare the conquest of Cuba are multiplying and they gain in amplitude daily. The Lone Star Society is organizing in all the U.S. big cities, holding public meetings and calling for the annexation of the Spanish island. The oral or writing reasoning behind such arguments is sometimes unbelievable. Sometimes, they insist on the need to have a country whose climate is temperate enough to serve as a refuge for people with tuberculosis; other times, they advance the argument that Cuba is an integral part of the continent, which was accidentally separated from the Florida Coast by the gulf stream. If this is true, then France, which adjoined England during antediluvian times, could, in the name of geology, reclaim it! Those arguments have not yet persuaded the government of the United States, which does not have any plans to invade Cuba. However, supposing that political honesty is always existent in the presidency of the United States, something I could not vouch for, the constitution gives the president so little power over the States to allow him to prevent coups that are similar to that of López. I don't believe that such coups would succeed as long as the Spanish fleet and the army are there. However, as I have stated before, the forces could be called

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<sup>172</sup> Ampère elucidates his point with the following footnote. "En effet, le général Concha a été brutalement destitué. Après la dernière révolution, le poste qu'il occupait si bien lui a été rendu. [General Concha was brutally dismissed. After the last revolution, the post that he was so good at was given back to him].

elsewhere. Is it possible to keep a country against its will for a long time? Finally, if the Creoles succeeded in organizing a serious insurrection and in holding out to a certain point, Cuba would find itself in a situation that is similar to that of the English colonies, when they rose against the motherland for far lesser grievances. It would be very difficult for the United States Congress and the president of the American Union, pressed by public opinion, to prevent help from being brought to the rebels, or even to refuse support for Cuba, on the principle to which the United States owe their own existence (206-224).

*L'isle de Cuba et La Havane*

## CHAPTER XXXV

## A SLAVE AUCTION

Slave auctions are announced through a small printed note that one receives with the daily newspaper. The buyers come and stand, until the appointed time, in the front room where the overseers live. The slaves are all locked up in the covered room, and the entrance to the door, that must open for the buyers, is overcrowded because buyers and their agents have been standing in line before day break. A singular spectacle it is to witness the zeal or, to put it a better way, the rage with which they fight over a spot near that door, such that a man who is only wearing a shirt and light pants is drenched with sweat. Not since the times of food shortage that we have had have we seen such long lines like the lines of hungry people seen at the doors of bakeries.

Finally the time comes, and the door opens up. No! Nothing can do justice to that strange spectacle of horror. The buyers or their agents jump upon the unfortunate slaves; each one picks up as many as he can, in order to have enough of a pool from which to choose. Those who come to do a great deal of shopping bring several other men with them; they all press against the wall the most Negroes they possibly can and encircle them either with their arms or with their handkerchiefs. What screams! What frightening sighs! This is especially evident among the women, who, due to the location of the room they occupy, are the first ones exposed to the invasion of the barbarians. That's when the idea that they have been taken from their homeland to be eaten echoes in their minds. The furor with which those buyers hurl themselves upon those unfortunate women does not leave them with any doubt. They all stand there cornered and show signs of the most

violent despair. The buyers endeavor to reassure them, but there are some of them whose physiognomy is not so reassuring! Afterward, they choose, and reject from the group already formed, those men and women who are judged unfit, to take some others who have been rejected or neglected by other buyers.

The slaves whom they chose receive an article of clothing, and the women after that cry a little less. The sight of a big white shirt soothes them a little. Sometimes, on the back of the shirts is inscribed the name of the master, and another name, which will become that of the slave. To finish the consolation rite initiated by the awarding of the shirt, every slave man or woman is then given a cigar.

However, it happens sometimes that some brothers, sisters, a father and a son, are among different groups. Then they signal one another with their hands, or they call one another, and screams, as well as tears, start all over again. They are careful to sell together the mother and the baby, if the baby is still nursing; but if the children are big enough, nobody cares. Little boys cry first when they see their mothers crying, but soon these boys start laughing again.

A white woman holding a little baby by the hand had just bought three small Negro boys. She showed them to her little son, and the little slaves were already caressing the young son, although he rejected them saying they were black.

I must not forget two rituals that not all the buyers perform. One seems useless; the other would be an insult to decency if decency existed where human sentiments are totally absent. Some buyers, by means of interrogation to all the slaves in their power, inquire: "*vendido*," are you sold? The slave must answer affirmatively either by gesturing with his head, or speaking aloud, if he knows enough Spanish to do so. In the second

ritual, the loincloth is raised or the shirt that he has just been given is raised, and parts of his body that he usually conceals are quickly inspected. Both sexes are subjected to a search for any hernia that the nature of the work that these slaves are intended for might aggravate or endanger.

The women were all reassured and dressed up when I heard some piercing cries emanating from a shed where was the kitchen, which at the same time served as a retreat for some Negroes who knelt around the fire. It was a young Negro woman, with a veil upon her eyes, and whose sight was limited and in danger, and who was crying, upon the departure of her companions, when she no longer could hear their voices or their cries, which left her in solitude that grew deeper and deeper.

Silence finally reigned supreme again in the yard. Buyers, as well as their goods, passed by in the vestibule. The slaves were counted and classified as the buyers were paying. A Negro *pieza*, man or woman, cost then four hundred piastres; the second class, which is that of the *muleques*, and the third, which is that of the *mulecones*, costs three hundred eighty. Two months before that, a *nègre pieza* only cost four hundred piastres in Havana, and three hundred in Santiago. "Abominable Christians," cried Voltaire, somewhere, "the Negroes that you sell for twelve hundred francs are worth twelve hundred times better than you!" The cost of Negroes in Santiago was about the same as in Santo Domingo before the revolution.

The slaves are classified according to their height, measured by means of two black bars stretched along one of the jambs of the door, which we mentioned earlier. A long time ago, they were sold for up to one year or eighteen months on credit; today, only cash is accepted.

However, the nearly blind Negro woman came herself to the door of the vestibule, which opened on the yard: she lifted her veil. She was impatient because she was unable to see; she was listening attentively, and she was crying; she was burning with the desire to know what had become of her companions, and what her own fate was going to be.

The entire cargo is not sold on the same day, however. Another group of deformed, sick, and blind Negroes were left behind. Some people were speculating about those queues of "cargo." A sick Negro costs fifty to one hundred piastres, and either he recovers, or he is lost. What happens with Negroes who are blind or cannot be cured? I couldn't get any accurate data on the topic.

Oh, you whom I do not want to honor with the name of generous souls but with the name of humane souls, because humanity is even scarcer than generosity, you, who did not need to see the cruelties of slavery to solicit its cure, receive here the homage of a man who has seen these unbelievable cruelties. More than once, amidst a frivolous world preoccupied with its pleasures, your eloquent voice, like the arrangement of words more or less cunningly assembled to charm the ear and arouse curiosity, resounded to no avail. May I, who have witnessed such frightening ills, find the expressions that make the enjoyment of such luxuries bitter! Let those images that appear in the joy of sumptuous feasts be similar to those crushing words a mysterious hand wrote during the impious King Balthazar's feast. But what? I, myself, am not worthy to pronounce those words; those great and formidable words. I dared to place a price on my fellow man's head! It is true that after committing such an odious act, I was not able to understand it. The word "slave" became unintelligible to me, the moment that the slave came into my possession.



You [Voltaire] will be counted among the defenders of an outraged humanity, you whom I have already mentioned. You will be the eternal happiness of our language, and had you not confused in your ingenious prohibitions useful illusions with deadly beliefs, prejudices favorable to mankind's happiness with errors which are harmful to society! And you too, majestic painter of nature, who begins a not very accurate essay on these unfortunate Africans with those happy words which salvage many errors of physics and natural history: *I cannot write their story without sympathizing with their condition!* [his italics]. May the names of virtuous men such as Wilberforce (William Wilberforce 1759-1833), Clarkson (Thomas Clarkson 1760-1845), Anthony Benezet (1713-1784), be solemnly pronounced by African mothers with as much tenderness and pleasure as the names of their own father, their husbands or their sons!

If considerations of high politics established Pitt (William Pitt, the Younger 1759-1806) and Fox (Charles James Fox 1749-1806) in the British Senate and Bernstorff (Peter von Bernstorff 1735-1833) and Schimmelmann (Earl Ernst Heinrich Schimmelmann 1747-1831) in the Danish Council to follow and spread the impulsion given to minds by altruistic virtues, must not be rewarded because of that? Of course not, alas! Rarely does politics follow the advice of an austere wisdom and the inspiration of decent people.

It was undoubtedly a wonderful day for humanity, the day of the signing of the abolition of the slave trade, in spite of the opposition of contrary interests. The respectable Mr. Clarkson, giving an account of that memorable Senate session, said that the moment the bill was passed, a ray of sunshine, as if illuminating such a moving celebration, flashed out of the clouds which covered the sky. Woe to the cold souls,

whom in that observation from a sensible heart would see nothing but the narrowness of a superstitious mind!

No, I cannot forget about you either, you, ecclesiastic scholar. In order to make Europeans feel more humanely toward the African race, you endeavored to gather examples of virtue, talent and knowledge, which seemed to you favorable to their cause, as if it were necessary for those unfortunate Africans to be smart and virtuous to be considered our brothers. It is as if some Asian or American nations that are more barbarian than the Africans are, that are maybe less apt for civilization, would offer us in their uncouth and constant ignorance, a pretext to treat them as brutes! Alas! It is not due to their aptitude to virtue, science, and to words of genius of the children of Africa are our brothers. It is because they have the same defects, the same vices and the same troubles as we do. Let not a brutal and haughty white man look at the sons of Zaire and of Calabar as stupid animals and beings that are inferior to our nature! When one thinks that the great inspirations of Christianity, that the sublime thoughts of philosophy do not prevent those haughty white men to stoop to the degrading yoke of despotism, as long as it deceives vanity with personal interest; as long as it rebukes jactance with terror. When we think about the numerous examples of abjections found in our own annals, one can imagine how much it would cost us to eliminate that European supremacy which puffs up our hearts and which we owe to happy circumstances and which we are always ready to let the fruit thereof be ravished from us (350-359).

*Voyage aux Antilles***Chapter XI****Mulattoes**

In the ordinary language of the colonies, the word 'mulatto' is used to describe any person of mixed blood, the offspring of an interracial union between a black and a white. In the strict and legal language, a *mulatto* is the son of a white man and a Negro woman. The expression "man of color," in colonial parlance, also has two distinct meanings: in official documents, it means all freed men, including Negroes; in conversation, it describes anyone of mixed blood, the progeny of a white and a black exclusively.

Five subtle divisions separate white from black among the men of mixed blood. From the union of a white man and a Negro woman comes the mulatto, the first distinction; now, if a mulatto woman joins the black or white race, there is an ascending or descending scale, which has four degrees in total: two to form white, and two to go back to black.

Here are the degrees that lead to black. The union between a mulatto woman and a black man yields a "capre;" the union between a "capre" woman and a black man yields the "grife."

Here are the degrees that lead to white. The union between the mulatto woman and the white man yields the “mestif;” if the “mestif” woman joins a white man, the result is a “quadroon.”<sup>173</sup>

Thus, the [grife] is immediately related to black, while the “quadroon” immediately relates to white. One more union, from one side or another, makes the distinction between the two almost impossible....

Nevertheless, for the mestif and for the “quarteroon”, the skin color could easily fool even the experts. Many mestifs and a great majority of “quarteroons” are as white as can be. The elegants of the Jockey’s Club have had for sometime, the good fortune of two mulattoes from New Orleans whom they took for two Provencal Marquises, and whom I have met in New York. Only Creoles can perceive the difference between whites and people of mixed blood who vary between mulatto and quarteroon. In France, all that is classified under the generic and banal name “Americans.”

Thus, a mulatto is the descendant of the union between a white man and a Negro woman. I purposely say “son of a white man and a Negro woman,” and not “son of a Negro and a white woman” because, as a characteristic of the French woman in the colonies, there has never been, and there will probably never be, a white Creole woman joined in union with a Negro. “Why is that,” you will probably ask? My God, for hundreds of obvious reasons! I am going to cite a few just for you because the women who will read me in the Antilles will be scandalized by your doubt, and they will find monstrous even the necessity of a discussion on the topic.

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<sup>173</sup> The terminology De Cassagnac used here is almost obsolete, except for “mestif” which turns into “métis” or mestizo in Spanish, and quadroon or cuarterón in Spanish. See *Dictionnaire de l’Académie Française* (1798).

A Negro has never been, for a white woman in the colonies, anything other than a very ugly African, rather coarse, seldom clean, and of a suffocating smell. The Jewish race, which has always remained pure, is physically endowed, as we know, with a very pronounced amount of that smell. However, this smell is at such a high degree among Negroes that for the white man it constitutes a true natural infirmity. It is impossible to pass near a Negro, even at ten-step distance, without being overcome by his odor, a hot odor, musky and nauseating; congenial and permanent, to which all the baths of the world are ineffective. Thus, the unfortunate Negro, no matter what he may do, is always rough-hewn; his feet are monstrous and ridiculous; the savage of Africa still lives within him; he does not know his father nor any avowed family; his heathen religion is, no matter what one may do, filled with childishness. Finally, the Negro does not possess the conditions that constitute physical beauty or natural charm in the eyes of whites: he is either ridiculous or frightening; he makes one laugh or tremble with fear. The union between a white woman and a Negro is, therefore, not something worthy of debating in the Antilles.

One must not believe, however, that the Negroes are shocked by that exclusion on the part of white women. Not only do Negroes not protest against it, they accept it; not only do they accept it, they help maintain this exclusion. Less than two years ago a free Negro married a white servant in Paris. He came back to his country with his wife. When he arrived in Point-a-Pitres, he started walking along the streets holding his wife's hands but the Negro women of the town were so shocked that a white woman had stooped to her natural dignity, that they started to follow her everywhere, with frenetic boos. They made such a scene; the commotion continued for several days. When that white woman realized that it would be impossible to ever overcome such repugnance, which stemmed

from what the Negro women considered a degradation, she made the logical choice, and she went back home.

When a working-class European woman sometimes marries a black man, she says to herself that he is an American. Black men pass for Americans in France in the eyes of the masses, for the very reason that they usually come from the colonies. Their black skin only strikes the masses as accidental. A working-class European woman would marry a black man, the same way one marries a one-eyed man or a hunchback: they see the man, not the race. However, the same women who marry a black man in Europe would not marry him in the Antilles, because they would be refrained by the simple knowledge of the low social status of Negroes. In France and in Europe that is called prejudice; over there, among the wisest men, it is called reason.

I have carefully inquired, in all the countries that I have visited, about the inclinations of the white population and the black population to commingle. Everywhere, I have found that separation is the order of the day. There is, however, in the English islands, a few rare examples of white women who have married black men; all those white women, without any exception, were English servants, who had followed their masters to the Antilles. I do not believe that there is one example of a white Creole, French, English or Spanish, who had taken a black man as husband. One of the Catholic priests from Kingston, Jamaica, told me that a young Irish woman, part of the recently arrived immigrants in the colony, came to see him regarding her prospective marriage to a black man, and asked him if he wanted to give them the nuptial blessings. The father answered that he would willingly do it if that were her wish, but that he would recommend that she seriously think about it, before she decided to undertake such a

serious endeavor. He informed her that there were profound differences between blacks and whites, which she, new to the colony, had not yet realized, and which might later surface, causing her great pain, and at a point when it would be too late for her to change her mind. The young Irish woman insisted that because the black man owned a shack and a little bit of land, she was tempted because she who had inherited only misery in her homeland would then become landowner. However, the priest was persistent because he did not want the young woman to be unhappy because of her inexperience. He promised to marry her, but in the span of three months. Well, those three months sufficed to open the young woman's eyes to the customs of Negroes, even those who had become Catholic; and she came willingly to the Priest to tell him that she had abandoned her plan and that she thanked him for the period of reflection he had allowed her which had led to her to a change of heart.

That dislike of white women towards black men is almost absolute; that this separation/dislike which is maintained because of inferiority in education and customs, the regularity of domestic life, and also, one must not forget, the inferiority in shapes and physical beauty, will disappear one day, I am doubtful of, however. The dislike of white men towards Negro women is also almost complete. I don't believe that one can cite one instance in which a white man has made an African woman his wife. Maybe one would find, in the English islands, rare cases of white men who have married mulatto women, but those unions also result from particular circumstances. Thus, not so long ago, the mayor of Jamaica married a mulatto woman. That, however, occurred after twenty years of their living together, at an advanced age when one is more comfortable correcting one's mistakes instead of making them, and one becomes deaf to the social conveniences,

and listens instead to the voice of reason. That was the case for the mayor of Kingston, and everyone praised him for that.

Since white men do not marry black women, what is the origin of the mulatto class? My God, one must tell it, because that is the truth: children born out of wedlock originally form the mulatto class.

One must add, that in the eyes of African Negroes, there is nothing wrong with illegitimate birth because legitimacy of birth does not offer any advantages; or rather, the concepts of legitimate birth or illegitimate birth do not make sense to the African Negro. This makes no sense because he does not recognize marriage. The family, such as Christianity instituted it, does not exist among Negro tribes; men have women, almost always slaves, slaves from birth or slaves who are bought, the number of which they augment as much as they want, or as much as they can, and which they give, exchange, or sell, without wounding any of those so noble sentiments that the family has placed on and developed in us, and with which the Negro is not familiar because he is not aware of them, because he is ignorant of the duties, the rights, and family ties, that forms our concept of family. The Negro women from Africa are not exactly unchaste or shameless; they are timid, simple, submissive and even fearful. I have seen more than one hundred of them who came from the coast: they were almost totally naked. They did not seem to be embarrassed by their nudity, but they were nonetheless preoccupied by it, which makes one believe that shame is inherent in them. Those poor women do not understand the distinction between spouses and concubines. If you should ask them to choose between one or the other title, they would not know which to choose because they consider themselves the wives of the men, black or white, under whose roof they live.



The declamatory tub-thumping philanthropists who accuse the white men in the Antilles of violating the black woman's modesty have no idea what they are talking about. I admit that white men have failed in their moral duty, as Christians, but it is not fair to exaggerate their culpability, and if God forgives them, it is not up to Negro women to hold grudges. I am not aware of a nobler quality than a compassionate heart and the inclination to feel pity towards the sufferings of others. By the same token, I do not know any other handicap that is more ridiculous than that exaggerated and whiny philanthropy, which cries upon remote and imaginary misfortunes, to spare itself from become soft on the present and banal weaknesses. The novels of the past century such as *Paul et Virginie*, *les Incas*, and the absurd declamations of *L'Histoire philosophique des Deux-Indes et d'Alzire*, have described Africans and Indians, in general, as sweet creatures, tender, humane, compassionate, and Europeans as a heap of criminals and assassins. Now, any paradox whatsoever finds ardent partisans, because of its strangeness; the world is full of mistaken knights who continue to slander white men and exalt black and red-skinned people. It has never occurred to any of them that Christian and civilized men have more value than pagans and savage men; that the latter dwell in idolatry, and the former in the holiest and most sublime religion that has ever existed; that Europeans live within the family unit, while the African lives in promiscuity. Moreover, education, moral thoughts, practical lifestyles being essentially different among these groups, it is impossible for them to see things from the same perspective, and pass similar judgment on the same events and circumstances.

It is moreover very simple to tell oneself that the African, born in his country, in the midst of slavery, and having no idea of our free society, with our public guarantees of

intellectual, civic, political and industrial freedom, far from feeling saddened and hopeless, had to have found some betterment in his destiny while living as a slave among Europeans in America because of the kindness and the charity of the Christian ways. It is not difficult either to understand that Negro women, slaves in Africa of some miserable and scabby chief, both servants and spouses of that black man, destined and dedicated to that condition by their religion and their custom, should not be pitied when they occupy the same function they used to back home, especially when in America they acquire more individual importance by obtaining better care and receiving more attention. Well! The philanthropists of comedy, products of the bad philosophy of the last century, who needed imaginary misfortunes in order to exhale their whiny morality, insisted on seeing in the Negroes, people molded according to our ideology, with the same penchants, the same passions, the same prejudices; and they made young Christian virgins out of Negro women, veiled in their chastity and sighing in their soul, and having been raptured by the sweet promises of troubadours in the desert, only to be thrown into the detestable arms of a barbarian master.

Well! I am sorry to inform them that such is not the case: the Negroes that come from Africa do not have the least objection to slavery. They only object against the regulated work involved in farming, since they are used to a nomadic life, and the irregular and relaxed life of fishing, hunting, and the gathering of rubber. If one wants to feed them to do nothing but dance, they would be the happiest mortals on earth. As to the Negro women brought from the coast, they consider themselves naturally as the spouses of the ones who feed and lodge them. When one sees the ordinary suitors they would have had in their country get off the boat, it is easy to think that those men will be easily

replaced. That is, in addition, their sincere wish. If the philanthropists think that the slaves are unfortunate, a little trip to the Antilles will radically convince them of the contrary.

In spite of all that the ignorant philanthropists can pretend, the enslavement of Africans in the Antilles elevates and ennobles them more than I could ever describe. It would be superfluous to argue that because it is clear that slaves who go from absolute slavery in the hands of savages and idolatrous masters, to moderate slavery in the hands of civilized and Christian masters, must absolutely feel a sensible improvement in their domestic situation, and undergo real progress in their way of feeling and thinking. When one is a barbarian, one does not mix with civilization with impunity, however little it may be. I have already stated the profound difference between African Negroes and Creole Negroes, and the type of aristocratic intelligence, education and morality of which the latter demonstrate so much pride.

It is in fact among the Creole Negroes that one only begins to find that sentiment of personal dignity, which is at the foundation of civilization. An African Negro woman belongs to whoever wants to take her; a Creole Negro woman belongs to whom she wants to give herself. The philanthropists imagine themselves that the master has absolute power over his female slaves; this is a profound error. When there is a beautiful slave girl on a plantation, she has plenty of suitors. The slave driver who takes the slaves to work, and who is a Negro himself, the overseer, who is almost always a white man, declare themselves the first candidates; a few rich folks join in the mix; and the river of [Tendre] over there has almost as many reefs as it does here. Unfortunately, it is not the whip, nor intelligence or beauty that tames the beautiful slaves; it is the double portion of doubloon

gold, the money, evaluated at eighty six francs and forty six cents. It is gold that acts as Thesee:

*Charming, young, dragging all the hearts behind it;*

wherever the New World appears to be similar to the Old. It is therefore to the gold that the slave women belong, not to their masters, and although the Creole slaves are much different from their African counterparts because of a greater dignity and much self-respect, I must state out of regrettable necessity that their sentiments of pride rarely rise to a level that would allow them to reject the gold that they are offered. But, alas! The honestly raised and laborious European women, are they beyond similar temptations? Of course not! Again, vice in the Antilles presents such a bounty for them because it is necessary to have gold, while in Europe vice is rewarded only with silver and sometimes copper.

However, what characterizes the slave women of color- even those in whom one may find the most good and beautiful sentiments, is that in spite of the very real progress that they have made in regular and civilized practices, they have not yet been able to understand that not only does modesty require obscurity, it also requires silence. The African slave, who does not know what opinion and scandal is, practices the philosophy of Diogenes in all its crudity, without any shame or impudence. When the Creole slave realizes that she is doing something wrong, she hides herself, but after hiding, she talks about it.

Discrete and mysterious adventures are something impossible with women of color... The woman of color loves to be happy, but she especially loves that people know about it. Only religion, with time, can complete the already sensible moral progress of

slave women. Less precocious, in general, than white women, those that are carefully reared/raised until around eighteen years of age, keep some very modest and sweet habits; then the peril begins, and few want and know how to escape from it.

I said all of the above to explain the origin of the colored class. That origin is all extra moral and extra legal. There is probably not one mulatto who is not an illegitimate child or the descendant of illegitimate children. One must understand that this represents one of the reasons why unions between the white class and the class of color are forbidden. Old and honorable families, in which there has always been, traditionally, a profound respect for religion and mores, are naturally reluctant to accept strangers with no regular kinship in their rank, because their existence is a sign and a reminder of disorder. In France, for some years, the prevalent moral theories in the novels and the theater have favored bastard children. Those theories are erroneous theories because they confuse two things that are totally different: the personal merit of the illegitimate or adulterous child, which can be great, and the fault and vice of his parents, which are indisputable. They must choose either to maintain the social anathema, which adheres to the bastard children, or abolish marriage. I can understand a woman who loves and marries a man who does not have a legitimate kinship because he is honest, because he is intelligent, and because he is marked with those qualities that win the affection and the devotion of a woman. However, I do not fully understand a father or a mother who does not discourage their daughter from contracting such a marriage, because a family must always furnish good examples, and a son must always be able to quote and honor his father in everything.

Philanthropists who cry out against the white families in the Antilles because they refuse union with the class of people of color are undoubtedly pleading for the corruption of convention mores and against marriage. They are demanding that families among which there are no blemishes equally accept a class in which, except with a few honorable exceptions, there are three or four generations without a marriage. This means that they want some respectable Christian families to authorize corruption among themselves, or justify it outside their families. This means that they want a mother, making no distinction among a young man born of honest parents and a young man of adulterous parents, to teach her daughter that she does not need to sanctify her affection through marriage, and that the chastity of her spouse does not merit any more respect than the impurity of the courtesan.

There are even more reasons which oppose the union between whites and people of color, reasons that are less serious and less severe than those which stem from the irregularity of mores, but which are as important. Every mulatto is a servant or the descendant of a servant. I do not want to criminalize or reproach this. The convention, which abolished domesticity and substituted servants for semi-officials, committed an error. The condition of slaves is, in itself, as moral as the condition of all the other workers; one can be as honest here as elsewhere, and it is possible to acquire some of the most polite manners by living among people who are well groomed. However, servants are just workers. In the interest of domestic bliss, one must not marry out of his social class. Kings who marry shepherd women are fitting for comedic operas, and so are vaudevilles in which sons of generals in France marry seamstresses. While this makes the sensible women who go to the Gymnase shed tears, one must be mindful that theater is

theater while society is society. A man and a woman who will spend their lives together need, in order always to be united, to have the same ideas, the same sentiments, the same education, and, consequently, corresponding families in the world. Ascending or descending the social ladder, through marriage, is always imprudent, often a mistake, and sometimes a misfortune.

Below the men of color who own property, who get married, and who maintain relationships with whites, who are city councilmen and officers of the militia, are the mulattoes who own nothing and have nothing to do. Those who have nothing to do are unfortunately the most numerous. How do they make a living? It would be rather difficult to describe it. Many of them still maintained a friendship with the field slaves who feed or at least help them...

In general, mulattoes have weak minds, and consequently are enthusiastic about anything. An idea or a sentiment is enough to make them do just about anything. They are superstitious, and fearing spells, they carry amulets. Individually, danger might make them draw back; however, with a well-trained troop, they are as brave as lions...

One should not lose sight of the fact that the plague of the Antilles is the class of colored men, because they live for leisure and at the same time they aspire to have power. When I shall have returned to the topic of Saint-Domingue, you will see that mulattoes are the tyrants of the black men. The African loves the white man and the white man loves him, because he understands the hierarchy and accepts it. The mulatto does not like or understand any other hierarchy except at the top, and he wants to reach the top without going through the necessary obstacles that stand in the way of one's getting there (225-260).

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