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Sugar and Revolution (A Requiem), Lecture by Duanel Díaz Infante

Cuban Research Institute, Florida International University

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Throughout the last century, Cuban historians and writers have depicted sugar mills as diabolic monsters, while fire in the cane fields has been a major metaphor for revolution. Rather than the counterpoint of tobacco and sugar, the underlying counterpoint of Cuban history would be this major opposition between sugar and revolution. This talk intends to investigate the topic by revisiting a number of works related to both the revolution of 1933 (by Fernando Ortiz, Luis Felipe Rodriguez, Alberto Lamar Schweyer) and that of 1959 (Edmundo Desnoes, Antonio Benitez Rojo, Reinaldo Arenas). With the dismantling of the sugar industry undertaken by the Cuban government in the last decade, Dr. Díaz Infante argues that the counterpoint has come to a paradoxical end: the monster is finally extinguished, but so is the very idea of revolution. There are no more cane fields to set on fire.