

**TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY**

**Affirmation of Cultural Tradition: A Folkloric Study of Nilo Cruz's**

***Anna in the Tropics***

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**By**

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## **Abstract**

Nilo Cruz's Pulitzer Prize winning play, *Anna in the Tropics* (2003) highlights the Cuban folkloric traditions. The study explores the lives of hardworking Cuban-American immigrants who spend their days manufacturing cigars by hand in a factory in Florida, America. The workers' involvement in traditional practices such as folk, dance, gambling shows their cultural aspect. The characters' keen interest in listening to the Lector, a Cuban émigré who tells the folklores and story from Tolstoy's novel while they work at the factory reflects the affirmation of their cultural tradition.

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## Introduction

The present research work is a study of a Cuban writer, Nilo Cruz's prize winning play *Anna in the Tropics* published in 2003. The study explores the lives of the exiled hardworking Cuban workers who spend their days manufacturing cigars by hand at a cigar factory in Florida, America. As they have to work hard and long, the workers feel mechanized and robot-like. They desperately feel to have lost their rich cultural tradition. They involve themselves in Cuban folklores, such as jokes, dance and gambling in order to escape from their monotonous life at the factory. Moreover, the new lector, who reads to them the story from Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, takes back to their past lives. So, the characters, adherence to Cuban folkloric tradition and their interest in listening to the hired lector, a Cuban émigré reflects the affirmation of their cultural tradition.

Cuban folkloric tradition is particularly rich, drawing from both Hispanic and Afro-Cuban tradition. As intoxicating as the traditional music of Cuba, and as delicious as Picadillo and plantains, storytelling is alive and well on the beautiful island of Cuba. A number of Cubans have brought with them their ancient tradition, along with their native language, their speech and superstitions. They have brought their cigar-rolling skills with them from Havana to Florida as well.

Originally cigars were rolled skillfully by hand, and they were considered the best in Europe and American markets. Ybor city, where *Anna in the Tropics* is set, was once known as the "Cigar capital of the

world." Named for Vicente Martinez Ybor, a Spanish-born entrepreneur who purchased a acre tract of land outside of Tampa, Florida in 1885 for the purpose of building a cigar factory there. Ybor city flourished in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, attracting other cigar manufacturers and eventually outpacing Havana as a producer of the finest hand-rolled cigars.

The multiethnic community that grew up around Ybor city's cigar industry was dominated by Cubans (including Afro-Cubans and Spaniards), though the cigar factories and related businesses also attracted Italians, Germans and Romanian Jews, many of whom adopted Spanish as their second language. As more and more immigrants settled in the United States, their separate social clubs – Italian, German, Spanish, Cuban and afro-Cuban – became increasingly important as social hubs and mutual aid societies, providing their members with recreational activities, medical care and cultural continuity.

Literary reveries are related to cigar smoke as literary books permit one to escape the weight of the world and defy the laws of gravity. Cigar workers were able to escape the monotony of manual labor through literary reveries. The art of listening don't offer immediate solution to life's difficulties, but to pause over a few lines of a book and share human emotions can bring a sense of consolation and alleviate reality.

Life has always been monotonous for the workers at the cigar factory because they are compelled to work hard and long in the alien land. In addition to the Cuban cultural rituals, the practice of hiring lectors to entertain the workers is a typical Cuban tradition. This practice in the

Cigar factories is associated with Cuban cultural tradition which can be traced back to Taino Indians. Cruz writes:

Lectors were very much part of Cuban-American culture and I was interested in these men from the time my father talked about them when I was a child. What fascinated me was the fact that the Cuban-American workers paid for these readings out of their pockets. They loved poetry and novels. (qtd. in Armstorng 13)

This shows how Cuban-American exiles show love for their culture, art and literature for their identity.

The days at the cigar factories were divided into three parts: in the morning the lectors read from newspaper articles, in the afternoon they read from the proletarian press, and the last part of the day was saved for the sweet delicacy of the novel. Besides providing literary escape, the lectors were instrumental in facilitating awareness and mobilizing change in the workplace and the larger political arena. Cuba's greatest poet and political leader, Jose Marti, read in the cigar factory of Tampa in the late 1800s. He believed that,

people who attended literary events were the ones who promoted ethics in politics and preserved the nation's honor. He was a firm believer that the purpose of literature was to help humanity and that one could not know a country without knowing its literature. (qtd. in "The Alphabet of Stroke" 88)



For the Native American of Cuba, the sacred tobacco leaf was tied to the language of gods. The leaves were smoked or converted into powder that was mixed with pulverized seashells. This fusion of ingredients was known as 'cohoba' and it was smoked or inhaled through the nose. The cacique (Indian Chief) used to communicate with the Divine through this sacred concoction. A well-known Spanish colonialist, Bartolome de las Casas, described the indigenous rite in chapter CLXVI of his *Apologetic Historia*, "and I witnessed how they celebrated the Cohoba and it was extraordinary to see how they took it and what they said . . ." (qtd. in "The Alphabet of Stroke" 87).

Nilo Cruz is a talented Cuban-American playwright. He is the recipient of numerous awards, including the 2003 Pulitzer Prize for *Anna in the Tropics* (2003). This is a poignant play and poetic play set in 1929. Florida is a Cuban-American Cigar Factory, where cigars are still rolled by hand and "lectors" are employed to educate and entertain the workers. The arrival of a new lector in a cause for celebration, but when he begins to read aloud from *Anna Karenina*, he unwittingly becomes a catalyst in the life of his avid listeners, for whom Tolstoy, the topics and the American dream prove a volatile combination.

Nilo Cruz is the first Latino to win the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. Born in Matanzas, Cuba in 1960, Cruz immigrated to the "Little Havana" area of Miami in 1970 on Freedom Flight, and eventually became a US citizen. He has authored many award winning plays. His famous plays include *A Park of Our House*, *A Bicycle Country*, *Two Sisters* and a

*Piano, Lorca in a Green Dress, Hortensia and the Museum of Dreams, Dancing on Her Knees, Night Train to Bolina, Beauty of the Father, A Very Old Man with Enormous Wing*, and the translations of *The House of Bernarda Alba* and *Dona Rosita, the Spinster*. Recently, he has won the 2003 Pulitzer Prize for Drama for *Anna in the Tropics*.

*Anna in the Tropics* set in 1929, portrays the lives of cigar factory workers in Ybor city, Tampa, Florida, when a new lector, perhaps the last to ply his trade, is hired. The men and women remain divided in their loyalties as economic hard-ship and the pressure to abandon old traditions force the owners of the Cigar factory to adopt new, progressive manufacturing methods if they wish to stay in business. As the lector reads from *Anna Karenina*, a novel of adultery set in nineteenth century Russia, he casts a spell over the workers, transforming their passions and desires through the affirming power of art. That the love they seek may result in a tragic end is ordained as much by the story of the Russian noblewoman as it is by the actions of the workers themselves. After 1931 the lectors were removed from the factories, and what remained of the cigar rollers consisted of low-paid American workers who operated machines. And, thus the Cuban tradition ended. Cruz mentions that,

[ . . . ] Once I decide to set the play in 1929, just when the tradition of lectors was coming to an end, and tell a personal story, as opposed to a political story, it all came together. In fact, it became much stronger and the social politics are still there. (qtd in Brustein 13)

As a prize-winning play, *Anna in the Tropics* has elicited a host of criticism since its publication. Regarding the theme and style of the play Robert L. Daniels comments:

The writing is spare and to the point, with elegant poetic flashes. The narrative is braced with humor and heartbreak. Nilo Cruz is an impressive storyteller and a supple weaver of dreams. There is no political subtext here, as in his previous plays. Instead, Cruz offers the clashed between old and new tradition and modernity. (Par. 1)

Similarly, Gigi Anders takes the play "as a lyrical and poetic play in which Cruz wants to share and document Cubans and Latinos' beautiful, powerful traditions and their cultural gift of art to the Anglo world" (147).

Even though he's a Cuban exile who often writes about Cubans in America, Cruz doesn't think his plays are political. He is for humanity as he says, "I'm more interested in humanity than anything," he says. Here are political elements in my work, but unlike some writers I don't have a political agenda" (qtd. in Stevenson 79).

However, the present researcher will observe the elements of folkloric cultural tradition in the text, which have not been explored as yet. The research work will study *Anna in the Tropics* (2003) from cultural point of view.

The study has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter presents an introductory outline of the work, a short introduction to Nilo

Cruz and a short critical response. Moreover, it gives a bird's eye view of the entire work.

The second chapter tries to briefly explain the theoretical modality that is applied in this research work. It discusses culture, cultural identity, folklore and the concept of Cuban Diaspora.

On the basis of the theoretical framework established in the second chapter, the third chapter analyzes the text at a considerable length. It analyzes how the traditional Cuban elements are used in the play. It sorts out some extracts from the text as evidence to prove the hypothesis of the study – the play highlights the affirmation of Cuban cultural tradition. And, the fourth chapter is the conclusion of this research work.

## **Chapter II**

### **Cultural Studies: A Theoretical Modality**

#### **Culture**

The word 'culture' refers to the process connected to growing crops that is cultivation. In its early usage it was used to refer to intellectual and artistic works or practices defining human society as socially constructed. Since every human society has its own shape, its own purpose, its own meaning, cultures vary because there is no single history, religion, society and geography. Thus the literatures as the reflection of culture also vary. And when someone brought up in one culture is placed in another culture s/he may feel alienated. So, the concept of culture is associated with identity. Cultural critic, Peter Brooks believes culture belongs to human consciousness that is developed and shaped by society. By culture he refers to "individual style or character, to a stage of artistic or intellectual development, to the expressive life and traditions of a social group, to a social- historical moment or a board epoch" (Brooker 50).

The culture is a mutable term and a simple definition as analysis appertaining to its fluctuating nature can be misleading. The term has been viewed differently in different periods by different thinkers. This means cultural studies, as discussed and defined by writers like Mathew Arnold, Raymond Williams, Stuart Hall, Peter Brooker, Chris Barker can be regarded as crucial for its study. By tracing the ways in which the concept of cultural studies has been defined by these critics, we can

explore the changing concepts of cultural studies. Chris Barker, a cultural critic views culture as:

Culture is not 'out there' waiting to be correctly described by theorists who keep getting it wrong. Rather, the concept of culture is a tool which is of more or less usefulness to us as a life form. Consequently, its usage and meanings continue to change as thinkers have hoped to 'do' different things with it. (Barker 35)

Barker believes culture is not something that is out there. It is tool for him and he focuses on 'how and for what purpose the language of culture is used.' So, for him culture is a set of practices constituted by the language game. It was during the late 18<sup>th</sup> century that the idea of culture as a whole way of life first arose (Graff and Robins 4210). Mathew Arnold, one of the pioneer in the field of cultural studies in his book *Culture and Anarchy*, saw culture as "The best that has been known and thought in the world" (qtd, in Said, *Culture* xiii). Arnold's view of culture involved different characteristics as 'beauty,' 'intelligence', and 'perfection'. For him, poetry is the major repository of 'culture' because it contains great and lofty ideas that help us to interpret life forces. The great literary work that contains the best that has been thought and said in the world transcends time and space and thus is universal. He contrasts culture with anarchy and anarchy comprises of the "self- class Protestantism" (Bertens 3). Thus Arnold makes a clear distinction between high culture and low culture. He doesn't see the possibility that 'the best' for one place

and time may not be the best for another situation. And he left if more people and societies share and preserve this notion beauty, truth and perfection of culture, the world will be a better place.

In contrast to this view British cultural critic Raymond Williams developed a new concept. For him culture is "a whole way of life of a social group or whole society". He in defining the concept culture, that is universally accepted, further says that it is a signifying system "through which necessarily a social order is communicated, reproduced, experienced and explored" (Williams 55). So, Williams bears witness to the fact that the dominant culture of the society may be different from the other and at the same time the culture of a section of society can differ from that of the other. He was basically interested in working class culture. Thus the distinction between high and low culture almost vanishes in Williams' formation and Arnold's 'culture' becomes knowledge of a specific elite. Yet he believes that we need some kind of common culture as a unifying force in society.

### **Cultural Studies**

Generally, Cultural studies concerns itself with the meaning and practices of everyday life. Cultural practices comprise the ways how people do particular thing such as observing certain festivals, eating and dressing in a given culture. Thus particular meaning attach to the ways people in particular cultures do things.

'Cultural studies' is an institutional name often given today to bring together all new vocabularies and practices emerging on the field of

cultural criticisms and theory. It is different to define cultural studies because it has no referent to which we can point. For Chris Barker, a cultural study is a set of practice constituted by the 'language -game' of cultural studies. It is not a tightly coherent unified movement with a fixed agenda but a loosely connected group of tendencies, issues and questions. A cultural study is composed of elements of Marxism, New historicism, Feminism, Gender Studies, Anthropology, Studies of race and ethnicity, popular culture studies, and postcolonial studies. Regarding its diversities, Kenneth Womack writes:

Cultural Studies manifests itself in a wide array of interpretative dimensions, including such interesting field of inquiry as gender studies, postcolonial, race and ethnic studies . . . The politics of nationalism, popular culture, postmodernism and historical criticism among a variety of other topics. (243)

In this regard, cultural studies refuse the idea of 'universal' culture. So, cultural study is multi or post disciplinary field of inquiry, which blurs the boundaries between it and other subjects. It remains difficult to pin down the boundaries of cultural studies as a coherent, unified, academic discipline with clear cut substantive topics, concept and methods which different it from other disciplines. But what is crucial here is Barker's view on cultural studies. He believes it is always connected to 'power' and 'politics'. He says "Cultural Studies is a body of theory generated by thinkers who regard the production of theoretical knowledge as a political



practice" (Barker 5), where knowledge is never an objective phenomenon but a matter of positionality.

A cultural study in this sense is a 'discursive formation.' For Stuart Hall, as quoted in Cultural Studies, it is a "a cluster (or formation) of ideas, images and practices, which provide ways of talking about, forms of knowledge and conduct associated with particular topic, social activity or instructional site in society" (Barker 6).

A good deal of cultural studies is centered on questions of representation, that is, on how the world is socially constructed and represented to and by us. Indeed, the central strain of cultural studies can be understood as the study of culture as signifying practice of representation which requires us to explore the textual generation of meaning.

The proposition from these observations can be drawn as-cultural studies refers to multi stranded intellectual movement that places cultural analysis in the context of social formation, seeing society and culture as the product of historical processes unlike frozen artifacts, emphasizing the inextricable relations between culture and power and calling attention to social inequalities- thus always making a committed call for democratization.

### **Cultural Identity**

Identity is the meaning or self-concept that one gives to oneself or the meaning in general that human beings give to them. In other words, it is the sum totality of values attached to individuals by an age and a

community, in terms of their class, caste, group or culture and institution of any kind. Thus, with the change in values, or the intellectual developments in human history, man's concept of self has always changed. It has sometimes only been modified and at other times radically changed.

Identity has become the central area of concern in cultural studies during the 1990s. Identity is the process how we describe ourselves to each other. Cultural studies explores how we come to be the kinds of people we are, how we are produced as subjects, and how we identify with descriptions of ourselves as male or female, black or white, young or old, Asians of Europeans. As perceived within the domain of cultural studies, identities are not things which exist simply there with universal qualities, rather they are discursive constructions. Thus, in this sense, identities are constituted or made. Balibar perceives: "Identity is never a peaceful acquisition. It is claimed as a guarantee against a threat of annihilation that can be figured by another identity or by erasing of identities" (186).

Identity, a discourse of tradition, is not transparent or unproblematic. For critics like Stuart Hall identity is a 'production', which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within representation. There are, according Hall, at least two different ways of thinking about 'cultural identity'. The first position defines 'cultural identity' in terms of one shared culture, a sort of collective 'one true self' which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common. Hall writes, "Within the terms of this definition, our cultural identities provide us, as 'one people' with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of

reference and meaning" (111). Such a conception of cultural identity played a critical role in all the postcolonial struggles which have so profoundly reshaped our world.

Cultural identity, in the second way of thinking, along the many points of similarity has critical points of deep and significant difference which constitute 'what we really are', or rather 'what we have become.'

Hall writes about the second notion of cultural identify as:

Cultural identity, in this second sense, is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. (112)

In this second sense, identity is subject to continuous 'play' of history, culture and power. Far from being grounded in a 'mere' recovery of the past, waiting to be found, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within the narratives of the past. It is only from this second position of the identity proposed by Hall that we can properly understand the traumatic character of the 'colonial experience' out of which are constituted the identities such as Indianness, Carribeanness, Africanness, and Blackness. The ways in which such identities were positioned by and subjected in the dominant

regimes of representation were the effects of a critical exercise of cultural power and normalization.

A country's cultural practices, such as rituals, customs, values and norms, beliefs, superstitions, festivals, tales, music and dance, and folklore are the powerful elements that determine the identity of the people of a particular country. So, folklore deserves some discussion here.

### **Folklore**

Folklore is the body of expressive culture, including tales, music, dance, legends, oral history, proverbs, jokes, popular beliefs, customs, and so forth within a particular population comprising the traditions (including oral traditions) of that culture, subculture, or group. It is also the set of practices through which those expressive genres are shared. The academic and usually ethnographic study of folklore is sometimes called 'folkloristics.'

Folklore, according to Elliott Oring, "comprise the sum total of traditionally derived and orally or imitatively transmitted literature, material cultural and custom of subcultures . . ." (50)

The concept of folklore developed as part of the 19th century ideology of romantic nationalism, leading to the reshaping of oral traditions to serve modern ideological goals; only in the 20th century did ethnographers begin to attempt to record folklore without overt political goals. The Brothers Grimm, Wilhelm and Jakob Grimm, collected orally transmitted German tales and published the first series as *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* ("Children's and Household Tales") in 1812.

The term was coined in 1846 by an Englishman, William Thoms, who wanted to use an Anglo-Saxon term for what was then called "popular antiquities." Johann Gottfried von Herder first advocated that

the deliberate recording and preservation of folklore to document the authentic spirit, tradition, and identity of the German people; the belief that there can be such authenticity is one of the tenets of the romantic nationalism which Herder developed. (9)

The definition most widely accepted by current scholars of the field is "artistic communication in small groups," coined by Dan Ben-Amos a scholar at the University of Pennsylvania, and the term, and the associated field of study, now include non-verbal art forms and customary practices.

While folklore can contain religious or mythic elements, it equally concerns itself with sometimes mundane traditions of everyday life.

Folklore frequently

ties the practical and the esoteric into one narrative package. It has often been conflated with mythology, and vice versa, because it has been assumed that any figurative story that does not pertain to the dominant beliefs of the time is not of the same status as those dominant beliefs. Thus, Roman religion is called "myth" by Christians. (qtd. in Leach 29)

In that way, both myth and folklore have become catch-all terms for all figurative narratives which do not correspond with the dominant belief structure. Sometimes "folklore" is religious in nature, like the tales of the

Welsh Mabinogion or those found in Icelandic skaldic poetry. Many of the tales in the Golden Legend of Jacob de Voragine also embody folklore elements in a Christian context: examples of such Christian mythology are the themes woven round Saint George or Saint Christopher. In this case, the term "folklore" is being used in a pejorative sense. That is, while the tales of Odin the Wanderer have a religious value to the Norse who composed the stories, because it does not fit into a Christian configuration it is not considered "religious" by Christians who may instead refer to it as "folklore" (*The Encyclopedia Britannica* 487).

Folk tales are general term for different varieties of traditional narrative. The telling of stories appears to be a cultural universal, common to basic and complex societies alike. Even the forms folktales take are certainly similar from culture to culture, and comparative studies of themes and narrative ways have been successful in showing these relationships. Also it is considered to be an oral tale to be told for everybody.

On the other hand, folklore can be used to accurately describe a figurative narrative, which has no sacred or religious content. In the Jungian view, this is but one method of analysis,

it may instead pertain to unconscious psychological patterns, instincts or archetypes of the mind. This lore may or may not have components of the fantastic (such as magic, ethereal beings or the personification of inanimate objects). These folktales may or may not emerge from a religious tradition,

but nevertheless speak to deep psychological issues. (qtd. in Bruch 19)

The familiar folklore, "Hansel and Gretel," is an example of this fine line. The manifest purpose of the tale may primarily be one of mundane instruction regarding forest safety or secondarily a cautionary tale about the dangers of famine to large families, but its latent meaning may evoke a strong emotional response due to the widely understood themes and motifs such as "The Terrible Mother", "Death," and "Atonement with the Father." There can be both a moral and psychological scope to the work, as well as entertainment value, depending upon the nature of the teller, the style of the telling, the ages of the audience members, and the overall context of the performance. Folklorists generally resist universal interpretations of narratives and, wherever possible, analyze oral versions of tellings in specific contexts, rather than print sources, which often show the work or bias of the writer or editor.

Contemporary narratives common in the Western world include the urban legend. There are many forms of folklore that are so common, however, that most people do not realize they are folklore, such as riddles, children's rhymes and ghost stories, rumors (including conspiracy theories), gossip, ethnic stereotypes, and holiday customs and life-cycle rituals. UFO abduction narratives can be seen, in some sense, to refigure the tales of pre-Christian Europe, or even such tales in the Bible as the Ascent of Elijah to heaven. Adrienne Mayor, in introducing a bibliography on the topic, noted that most modern folklorists are largely unaware of

classical parallels and precedents, in materials that are only partly represented by the familiar designation Aesopica: "Ancient Greek and Roman literature contains rich troves of folklore and popular beliefs, many of which have counterparts in modern contemporary legends" (Mayor, 200).

Folklore, in its broadest sense, is the part of the culture, customs, and beliefs of a society that is based on popular tradition. It is produced by the community and is usually transmitted orally or by demonstration. Folklore includes arts, skills, music and dance as well.

For most of this century and the last, folklore has referred to those products of the human spirit created outside the written record and kept alive by oral transmission.

It includes folk song and folktale, passed on the participatory audiences by an active tradition-bearer (a grand-parent, a sea chantey man, an Appalachian singer a Negro with a repertory of blues or spirituals); folk dance practiced in a group with ancient choreography and untutored leaders; folk plays and ancient rituals; traditional rules for stacking hay, for planting corn by the light of the moon for building canals, or for decorating barns with hex sign; folk medicine; and weather lore. (Pelton 23)

In traditional definitions of folklore, too much may have been made of the absence of print and writing. The unwritten record, captured in the field by folklorist or a chronologist, must be supplemented by various



written accounts. These include the "ballet" (ballad) books of those not wholly illiterate; the broadside ballads, sold by Autolycus in Shakespear's *Winter's Tale*, and still sold in the 19<sup>th</sup> century; the "Songsters" of New York; the "Chapbooks" with such old favorites as *Jack and the Beanstalk* or the *Wise Men of Gotham*; subterranean pamphlets on astrology, medicine, and cooking; and the country vicar's record of the mummer's play circulated in his local district.

### **Anthropological Approach**

Folklorists used to be preoccupied with comparative religion and methodology. These subjects are still appropriate in the study of folklore but are now treated in a more formal manner by anthropologically inclined specialists. Once little distinction was made between the lore of "subcultures" dominated by the technological and scientific culture - those of the cowboy of America or Argentina, the American Black, the lumberjack, or the gypsy - and, the more or less isolated cultures like those of the American West, Amazon Valley, central Africa, or 'Out-back' Australia. The lines still are hard to draw. As the isolated cultures (often erroneously called "primitives") become more and more acculturated, the conserving and revolutionary movements among subcultures work toward reawakening of the older functional patterns from which they have departed. When education in the Soviet Autonomous Republics, in the new African nations, or among the American disadvantaged populations increases reading ability, folklore often seems in danger of being overwhelmed and the cry is to "collect while you still can" (Babloyan 87).

The "folk" has always been hard to define, and once a society has rejected the older, class-conscious habits of the "gentry" the task becomes harder. At one time Americans were tempted to equate "folk" with "rural" but now that rural folk have moved to the cities, the city itself has become a preserving and creative mother of folklore.

An effort once was made to separate the "authentic" products of the genuine folk from the "fake" products of the mass media. However, more and more folklorists have begun to discern a continuum from the informal popular culture reinforced by the media to the highest artistic creations of the human spirit. Deep in every man life the springs of unconscious thought and motive, which create our folktales, our Sophoclean tragedies, our folk medicine, and our wonder drugs. The spirit of flight has led us physically to the moon, as it had spiritually in Indian legends long before. The folktale of Love Salt became *King Lear*, but even modern soap operas show the danger of substituting vanity for love. The scope of folklore is as wide as the folklorist has the intellect and imagination to make it.

### **Nonliterary folklore**

Customs, magic, and ritual, because they lack the formal elements of ballad and folktale, have often been neglected in the study of folklore. Some of them are described as follows.

### **Superstition**

The superstition or folk belief set off in the past somewhat too strongly against the dominant beliefs of western culture, has had poor treatment in America, though the French work of Arnold Van Gennep and

the German *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens* (Handbook of German Superstitions) are masterpieces whose use is not confined to their countries. Since many a legend or Sage centers around some superstition connected with shrine or weather or natural object, beliefs do not wholly escape the category of oral literature.

The best American study is that by Wayland Hand, which names informants, provides with sense parallels, and arranges the material with sense and system. Some examples are:

Birth and its sequels: babies are found in hollow stumps and sugar barrels.

The human body: if your palm itches, some one is going to give you something.

Domestic pursuits: it is bad luck to hand towel on a doorknob; find a pin and let it lie. You'll need that pin before you die.

Love and marriage: wear your sweethearts' hair in a locket to make him think of you.

Death and funeral customs: you must not entirely finish a new house or someone will die.

Witches, ghosts, and magic: to prevent conjuring, wear a dime in your shoe.

Cosmic phenomena: a comet is a sign of war. Weather: when frogs croak, winter's broke. Animals: you can stop a screech owl from hollering by crossing two sticks; it is band luck to shoot a dove.

Plants: when corn begins to tassel, disappear.

Prophecy: if summer and winter are both hot, the world soon ends.  
(qtd. in *Encyclopedia Britannica* 498)

One cannot rationalize all these beliefs and find their functions, yet their prominence in the life of man assures us they must have some reason for existing beyond human perversity. They often have clear uses: the explanation of sugar barrel babies would control a sibling's curiosity an itching palm is at least symbolic of greed, doorknobs function better without impedimenta; thrift even in pins is salutary; there may be no magic power in the hair in a locket, but mentioning it to one's sweetheart has psychological power and allure; the fallacious *post hoc ergo propter hoc* (after this, therefore because of this) is vindicated in the case of finished houses and comets, for since death and war are always with us, it does us no harm to remember; confidence, if not a dime, helps us against witches; crossing the demonic screech owl or protecting the angelic dove are religious acts; the frogs and the fleas many reflect keen natural observation and awareness of a looming doomsday is a sure cure for scientific hubris. Since we all are the folk, we can not be too supercilious about these products of the North Carolina Piedmont.

### **Diaspora**

The concept of Diaspora goes back to human history. The term was initially used by the ancient Greeks to describe their spreading all over the then known world. But, the term traditionally refers to Jewish community. In this context, Diaspora refers to the Jews who scattered after Babylonia captivity and in the modern period to Jews leaving outside of Palestine and

latterly Israel. For them the concept of Diaspora implies a traumatic exile from historical homelands and dispersal throughout many lands. They try to create cultural form of their own. The concept of forming own culture in an alien land is a special feature of Diaspora.

Irrespective of its traditional meaning, in recent times the term is associated with colonial experience. When we examine Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin, they believe Diaspora can't be separated from colonialism, as it was this historical condition that led to the displacement of people across the world. Ashcroft et.al. view "Colonialism itself is a diasporic movement" (Ashcroft, 69). Under colonialism the meaning of Diaspora has been extended to cover a range of different cultural and ethnic groups held together by shared cultural or religious commitments and having some sense of 'exile' from a place or state of origin belonging.

Within cultural studies the term is used to describe the dynamic network of communities without the stabilizing allusion to an original homeland or essential identity. Diaspora has been used in the studies of race and ethnicity to describe a range of cultural affiliation connecting the groups dispersed voluntarily or involuntarily across national borders.

The term with the transformation of time has also been extended now to include the descendents of diasporic movements generated by colonialism, which have developed their own distinctive cultures, which both preserve and often extend and develop their originary cultures. Observing diaspora from this standpoint critic Thomas Bloom Hansen views Diaspora as:

The term 'diaspora' not only transmits a certain sense of shared destiny and predicament, but also an inherent will to preservation and celebration of the ancestral culture and equally inherent impulse toward forging and maintaining link with the 'old country'. (Hansen 12).

To live in diaspora is to experience the trauma of exile, migration, displacement, rootlessness and the life in a minority group haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back. As Rushdie in this regard says:

I have been in a minority group all my life - a member of an Indian Muslims family in Bombay, then Mohajir- migrant-family in Pakistan and now as a British Asian . . . creating an 'Imaginary Homeland' and willing to admit, though imaginatively, that s/he belongs to it. (Rushdie 4)

### **Cuban Diaspora**

The history of Cuba has played a role and even shaped what has become a Cuban Diaspora. During the nineteenth century Cuba witnessed the greater half of Latin America achieve its independence either through violent uprisings or through peaceful means. It wasn't long before Cuba itself felt the inevitable desire to also achieve independence through any means possible. The struggle finally erupted in October of 1868 when native Cubans decided to rid the country of the ruling Spaniards. It would take a lengthy three decades before Cuba would declare an independence that would invite another outsider to meddle in its business. Soon after its

hard fought independence, Cuba would be occupied by the United States for four years.

The first Cuban exiles and took place between 1868 and 1958. During the outbreak of the war "it was estimated that over 100,000 Cubans sought refuge abroad" (Piloto, 7). It was certain that the majority of Cubans migrated "to the United States and Europe" (Piloto, 7). Those Cubans, who migrated to Europe, were mainly a "small group of aristocrats who could afford to live in leisurely" (Piloto, 8). However, those who left for Europe were an overwhelming minority, as the majority made their way to the United States. Another "group consisted of mainly middle class professionals and businessmen" (Piloto, 8), and these individuals found their way to cities like "New York, Philadelphia, and Boston" (Piloto, 8). However, the largest group of migrants strongly migrated to "the southeastern United States, most notably Florida" (Piloto, 8). Within this phase there also were many migrants that would migrate after the struggle for independence would end. For example, "during the first five decades of the twentieth century, smaller groups of Cuban migrants came to the United States" (Piloto, 11). These migrants were attempting to "escape political turbulence in Cuba" (Piloto, 11). As it was mentioned earlier, Cuba was plagued by dictators earlier in this century. Many of these newcomers found refuge in "Miami and New York" (Piloto, 11). It is important to mention that the great majority of these migrants "migrated with the original idea of returning home as soon as conditions improved" (Piloto, 7).

However, when the war ended, many were faced with the decision of either staying in this new home or actually going back. The idea of going back, "meant staring over in a war ravaged society" (Masud-Piloto, 11), and many decided to not take that risk. Instead, they began to start small businesses for survival. Some migrants started Cuba's cigar rolling business for their identity. However, not all were as lucky to begin new businesses; some were simply aided by having the presence of a community and not feeling completely lost in a new country.

### **Dislocation**

Dislocation is the outcome of willing or unwilling movement from known to unknown location. As quoted by Hall, Ernesto Lac Lau defines dislocation as a structure that is characterized by a never- ending process. He says: a dislocated structure is one whose center is displaced and replaced by another ("The Question" 278). The phenomenon of dislocation in modern society is the result of transportation from one country to another by slavery or imprisonment, by invasion and settlement. Agreeing with this idea there are some critics who define dislocation as a structure which is characterized by a never ending process.

Dislocation in postcolonial discourse is the result of transformation from one country to another. The term is defined in Key Concepts in Postcolonial Studies as:

A term for both the occasion of displacement that occurs as a result of imperial occupation and the experiences associated with his event . . . The term is used to describe the experience



of those who have willingly moved from the imperial 'Home' to the colonial margin, but it affects all those who, as a result to colonialism have been placed in a location that, because of colonial 'hegemonic' practices, needs, to be 'reinvented' in language, in narrative, and in myth. (Ashcroft 73).

Dislocation can also be extended further to include the psychological and personal dislocation resulting from cultural denigration as well as voluntarily chosen status.

Dislocation in many cases exists within the country. Defining the term from this perspective Ashcroft, Gareth and Tiffin say: " . . . dislocation is a feature of all invaded colonies where indigenous or original cultures are if not annihilated, often literally dislocated i.e. moved off what was their territory" (Ashcroft, 75).

For some critics dislocation isn't only transformation to different locations. Recent critics like Rajan and Mohanram argue that dislocation is a key factor which helps to form a distinctive form of culture. These days 'Bangara' a typical Indian Punjabi music is given a different flavor with western touch. This new flavor is played in different places. This music is rearranged and reproduced with western technological mix. The resulting form of music is generating a new and powerful form of cultural in the West.

### Chapter III

#### Affirmation of Cuban Cultural Tradition in the Text

Cruz's *Anna in the Topics* is set in the steamy confines of a Cuban Cigar Factory outside of Tampa, Florida 1929. The play recalls a time when technology was a lesser beast, and joys like fine cigars were lovingly rolled by hands. The cigar factory is run by a Cuban exile, Santiago, and the workers are all Cuban exiles as well. Though they have been exiled for political reason, the workers have no interest to get involved in politics. Instead they stick to their cultural tradition by observing different festivities and rituals at the factory. The play dramatizes the conflict between wanting to assimilate to new culture and modern technology and maintain one's cultural traditions. The workers' keen interest in Cuban folklores and the lectors, who tells them stories as part of a Cuban tradition, reflects the affirmation of their cultural traditions.

The play begins with the Cuban folkloric tradition of organizing cockfights and betting money on it. The workers have been heavily drinking, but they are not drunk. This shows how enthusiastically they are immersed in their traditional practice of cockfight. They are not influenced by American culture and fashion. They wear "typical, long-sleeve, white linen shirts (guayabera), white pants and two-tone shoes" (9). The spectacle of the workers in traditional Cuban dress betting on cockfight really gives a lively picture of Cuba at the factory in America. One of the workers expresses his great joy when he watches the cockfight:

Cockfights! See the winged beauties fighting in midair!  
Cockfights! I'll take five, ten, fifteen, twenty dollars on  
Picarubio. Five, ten, twenty on Espuela de Oro. Picarubio  
against Espuela de Oro. Espuela de Oro against Picarubio. (9)

The "sounds" of a crowd at a cockfight" heard several times in the first Act between the dialogues of the workers in the play highlights this Cuban tradition, which the workers at the factory want to maintain. This game of cockfight is highlighted and described in the whole of first scene of the play.

The men who bet on cockfight give Cuban name to their cocks. Ellades continues betting money as he says, Twenty, forty, sixty, eighty, one hundred . . . Twenty, forty sixty . . . Ready for the next fight! We have 'Colabrana' against Falcon de Acero. I'll take five, ten, fifteen, twenty dollars . . . 'Colabrava' against 'Falcon de' Acero Diamante Negro against Crestafuerte and Crestafuerte against Diamante Negro. (13)

When Santiago, the owner of the Cigar factory loses money on the cockfight, he asks his remote brother, Cheche to lend him money Santiago asks Cheche to lift up his foot so that he could sign his name and amount lent, a typical Cuban Practice which Santiago wants to maintain at the factory in America. Cheche is not originally from Cuba, but he just claims that he is a brother to Santiago. So, Cheche is not well aware of Cuban practice and customs. The dialogue between Santiago and Cheche reveals this:

Santiago: Then lift up your food

Cheche: What do you mean lift up any foot?

Santiago: (Grabbing Cheche's leg): Lift up your foot,  
hombre!

Cheche: What the hell? . . .

Santiago: Let me have the sole of your shoe

Cheche: What are you going to do (lifting up his foot)

Santiago: I'm signing my name on the sole of your shoe.

Cheche: What for?

Santiago: Proof. Testament that I'll pay you back. See here:

"S" for Santiago. (13)

Conchita explains to Juan Juliana another aspect of Cuban culture:

One day I gave him [a shy boy from new London] a braid that I'd cut from my hair and told him to bury I under a tree. I explained to him that back in the island most women cut their hair once a year on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February, when plants and trees are pruned, for the feast of Saint Candelaria I told him how women offer their hair to the earth and the trees, for all the granary and fruits to come. And I gave him my little braid in a box and told him to choose a tree in the park. (43).

While the men are busy betting money on cockfight, womenfolk eagerly wait for the arrival of the new lector at the cigar factory. When the sound of a ship approaches the harbor, Marela, Conchita and their mother Ofelia "stand by the seaport" to receive the lector (10). The news of the lector's arrival fills them with excitement because it has been age Old

Cuban tradition to have lector at the Cigar factory. Marela expresses her excitement "Then that must be it [ship]. Oh, I'm so excited! Let me look at the picture again Mama" (10). They do not care what he looks like.

What they require in the lector is his good voice. Ofelia says, "But what's essential is that he has good vocal chords, deep lungs and a strong voice" (10). Her daughter, Conchita adds, "What's more important is that he had good diction when he reads" (10). Marela further comments on the lector saying, "As long as he reads with feeling and gusto, I'm content" (10). The mother and her daughters' remarks on the upcoming lector reflect the affirmation of their Cuban tradition of having lectors at the cigar factory.

They are so elated at the idea of hiring the lector that they are ready to sacrifice part of their meager pay for the lector's strip and salary. Ofelia even takes some money from the safe without her husband's knowledge. She asks her daughter not to disclose this to her husband. She says, "Don't tell your father, but I took some money from the safe to pay for the lector's trip" (11). When the daughter supports her act, Ofelia further reiterates:

Oh, I don't feel a bit guilty. Doesn't your father spend his money gambling? Then I'll do as I wish with my money. I'll spend my money on the best lector we can get. The gentleman who recommended him says that he is the best lector of Havana. (11)

The place, Havana lies in Cuba, which the workers greatly crane for. That is the reason why Ofelia wants the lector from Cuba. The person from Cuba, who is most familiar with Cuban culture, is the preference.

As Cheche is not from Cuban culture, he does not give any importance to Cuban customs and traditions. He undermines the tradition of having lectors as he blames trivial problems on the lectors as his wife ran away with a former lector. The following dialogue elucidates that a former lector. The following dialogue elucidates that,

Marela: He doesn't like lectors.

Ofelia: He doesn't understand the purpose of having someone like you read stories to the workers.

Juan Julian (lector): But that has always been a tradition  
conchita: He's from another culture

Marela: He thinks lectors are the ones who cause trouble (21)

When the ship on which the new lector is supposed to be traveling arrives, the mother and her daughter get emotional. They want to cast a spell on the lector so that he would come to their favor. As they have strong belief in Cuba customs, Merela" wrote the lector's name on a piece of paper and placed it in a glass of water with brown sugar cinnamon" because a "plam reader" has told her that if she sweeten his name, the reader come their way (13). They talk about how spell worked on Rosario's lover. Conchita describes the effect of the spell:

They say she could not stop crying after her lover's death.

That her whole face becomes an ocean of tears, and the father had to take her back to Cuba, to see if she would get better.

But a fever would possess the girl at night. They say she'd

run to the sea naked. She'd run there to meet the dead lover.

(15)

The new lector, Juliana is at the factory. When Ofelia asks Juliana how he likes the place, Tampa, he becomes nostalgic and says that it's a city in the making. Ofelia says that the workers at the factory are "still trying to create a little city that resembles the ones we left back in the island" (22). This shows how the Cuban workers are living their lives in Diaspora. They are really dislocated from their familiar and domestic culture in the alien world. Juan Julian comments on the short comings in Tampa:

It's curious; there are no mountains or hills here: Lots of sky I have noticed . . . And clouds . . . The largest clouds I've ever seen, as if they had soaked up the whole sea. It's all so flat all around. That's why the sky seems so much bigger here and infinite. Bigger than the sky I know back home. And there's so much light. There doesn't seem to be a place where one could hide. (22)

Julian does not like cities as he thinks in the country one has freedom. He quotes his father as he says:

As my father used to crocodile, buildings all around you like teeth. The teeth of culture, the mouth and tongue of civilization. He is a silly comparison, but it makes sense to me. Back in Cuba, we work fine to six days a week, building and cementing our paths and down come tumbling trees and

nets, a whole paradise of insects. And all for what on Sundays we return to a park where we could still find greenery. The verdure of nature. (420).

Marela's statement "one can always find shade in the park. There's always a hiding place to be found, and if, one can always a hide behind light" exposes the exiles' predicament in the new surroundings (22). America has become a 'hiding place' for them.

Juan Julian's reading of Anna Karenina by Tolstoy to the cigar workers, which he does with "Passion and Fervor," makes them immersed in the reader and the story. Julian begins with the love, closeness, kindness, separation in the story, which makes nostalgic and years for their home country, Cuba. The women praise the lector for his good voice which they compare with a 'singing bird.' Ofelia remarks that "only a fool can fail to understand the importance of having a lector read to us (the cigar rollers) while we work" (27). When Marela says that Cheche is not happy with him, Ofelia says:

When I lived in Havana I don't remember ever seeing a tobacco factory without a lector. As a child I remember sitting in the back and listening to the stories. That has always been our pride. Some of us Cigar workers might not be able to read or write, but we can recite lines from Don Quixote or Jane Eyre. (27)



The story from *Anna Karenina* takes the cigar workers to their dream world. Marela talks about dreams that are associated with certain things in Cuban culture. Marela says to Conchita:

No everything in life is dreams. A bicycle dreams of becoming a boy, umbrella dreams of becoming the rain, pearl dreams of becoming a woman, and a chair dreams of becoming a gazelle and running back to the forest. (30)

This symbolic association of dreams affirms the workers' desire to maintain their cultural traditions.

Cigar-rolling is the part of the life Cuban people, which they associate with other life's activities like marriage. The following dialogue between the mother and daughter shows this:

Marela: And I've wedded more than a thousand. That's what I like about putting the bands around the cigars. It's like marrying all these men without actually seeing them.

Ofelia: Men marry their cigars, my dear and the white smoke becomes the veil of their brides. My mother used to say, "When a man marries, he marries two women, his bride and his cigar." (30)

This shows the workers life's bond with cigar-rolling. Though Conchita's husband, Palomo seems to be influenced by materialistic attitude, Conchita strictly sticks to their tradition. This creates a conflict between the husband and wife, Conchita, whereas Palomo is interested in

money making, which them to the verge of divorce. The dialogue proves this:

Palomo: Why? Because I like money?

Conchita: I'm talking about literature and you talk about money.

Palimo: And what do you want me to say?

Conchita: I want you to talk about the story, the characters.

Palmo: Wouldn't you like to have all the money they have?

So you don't have to spend the whole day rolling cigars and working after hours so we can save money and have our own business.

Conchita: I don't mind rolling cigars, as my mind wanders to the places and things which money can't buy. (32)

We can infer that Conchita is intent on preserving the cultural tradition of cigar-rolling, whereas her husband seems to be on the path to forget rich culture of Cuba. Remi, a freelance writer in Florida believes that the play *Anna in the Tropics* deals with the theme of 'tradition vs. change" (12). But I believe that no Cigar workers go for new technology doing away with their culture except Cheche who is not really from Cuba though he claims to be Santiago's half-brother. Ofelia reveals this:

We call him Cheche. He is my husband's half-brother. We didn't know he was part of the family, but one day he showed up at the factory with a birth certificate and said he was my father-in-law's son. So, we took him in, and ever since he's

been part of the family. But he is really from a town up north.

(Laughs) My father-in-law got around. (20)

This unfolds the fact that Cheche is from different culture, so he has no love and respect for Cuban cultural tradition. He tries and works tooth and nail to do away with the practice of having lectors and introducing machines. He tries to convince the workers at the factory saying, "I'm not joking. I'm talking about the modern world. Modernity. Progress.

Advancement (50). But Ofelia objects to him, "If working with machines means being modern then we're not interested in the modern world" (50).

After this, there comes an "applause from the workers," which reflects the entire workers' adherence to the traditions (50).

Cheche further explains:

We are stuck in time. Any why are we stuck time? We are operating in the same manner that we were twenty, thirty, fifty years ago . . . (interruption [from the workers.] Hold on . . . Hold on . . . And why are we stuck? We are stuck because we are not part of the new century. Because we are still rolling cigars the same way that Indians rolled them hundreds of years ago. I mean we might as well wear feathers and walk half naked with bores in our noses. There are machines that do tobacco stuffing at the speed of light: bunching machines, stripping machines . . . (51).

At this, Ofelia responds," and with all those machines, do they have any workers left?" (51).

Palamo, who carves money however, is for the presentation of the old ways of Cuba. He says, "We have to be maintaining ways. Out methods the old process we use. What we brought wit us from the island. (Raises his hands) we brought these [hands] to roll our cigars, so we don't need an apparatus or whatever you want to call it . . ." (52).

Then another "assertive comments" are heard from the crowd (52).

Cheche cannot argue with the workers and he puts the blame on the lector. He wants to abolish the tradition of having lectors in the cigar factory. He gives examples of other cigar companies which, he clams, "have done away . . ."

Juan Juliana, who is from Cuba, is for maintaining the practice of hiring lectors defends Cheche:

My father used to say that the tradition of having readers in the factories goes back to the Taino Indians. He used to say that tobacco leaves whisper the language of the sky. And that's because through the language of cigar smoke the Indians used to communicate to the gods . . . The workers are the oiders. The ones who listen quietly, the some way Taino Indians used to listen. And this is the tradition that you're to destroy with your machines. Instead of promoting and popularizing machines, why don't you advertise our cigar? or are you working for the machine industry ? (53)

Moreover, Santiago decides to have his daughter, Marela pose for the new label of cigar in a more traditional [Cuban] way. Santiago says, "You'll make a great Anna. But you have to wear a flower in your hair and make her look one of her look like on of our women. I'll get you a flower, my dear" (58). Thus he wants to promote Cuban cigars by introduction Cuban woman for advertisement. When the launching of new cigar brand named "Anna Brand," Santiago expresses his satisfaction:

Well, senora s y senores, today we've taken time from work to drink and dance, and to celebrate the new cigar brand we are launching into the market. This well- crafted cigar is wrapped in the finest leaves from Vuelta Abajo in Pinar del Rio the tip of the island of Cuba. The length of this new cigar is six and one-eighth inches. The ring gauge is fifty- two. I truly believe this is our fines toro. (71)

His wife, Ofelia also overjoyed at the launching of new cigar brand. They all organize a dance party. Ofelia prides on being a good dancer, which she attributes to famous Cuban music and dance. She thinks Americans are not good at dancing, but good at only "making movies, radios and cars" (70). Most Americans don't know how to dances," This shows that she highlights Cuban music and dance over American's.

After the launching ceremony, "There gunshots" are fired as part of Cuban tradition (73). In their culture, "no inauguration is complete without the breaking of a bottle or a gunshot" (72). Ten Palomo reminds Santiago of the lector, Juliana who has brought the world of *Anna Karenina*.

Santiago passes the cigar back to Palomo. Palomo takes off his hat and gives Juan Juliana the cigar. This is an offense since "The cigar should never be handed directly to the person that is supposed to smoke" (73). There has to be a mediator to facilitate the communication with the gods" (73). Juliana smells the cigar, looks up, and "makes a gesture to the gods" (73). This is their traditional belief which they want to continue in Florida, America.

After the lector finishes the story from *Anna Karenina*, there follows a break for a few days, which makes Ofelia and her daughter Marela restless. Ofelia says:

What silence: I never knew that silence could have so much weight. Can someone say something? Can someone read? We are listeners! We are outsiders! I can't get used to this silence all around us. It is as if a metal blanket has fallen on us. (82)

As they are in America, the workers could have reworked to other means of entertainment, but it is their love for the lector. On the other hand, they want to have their own identity by following their traditions. Marela says, similarly

I should write his [Lector's] name on a piece of paper and place it in a glass of water with brown sugar, so his spirit knows that he is welcomed in this factory, and he can come here and drink sweet water. And nobody better tell me that it's wrong for me to do this! You hear me, Mama! (Tears come to her eyes) (82)

This is the typical traditional Cuban belief which sets the cigar workers apart from other workers from other countries. The succeeding chapter concludes the arguments put forward in this part.

## Chapter IV

### Conclusion

A country's culture reflects its identity. Traditional beliefs, norms and values, religion, myth, folklore etc are the means through which a country can assert its identity. If a country has no typical culture of its own, it has to borrow cultural values from other countries. In *Anna in the Tropics*, Cruz shares and documents Cuban and Latinos' beautiful and powerful traditions and their cultural gift of art to the Anglo world.

Cruz's *Anna in the Tropics* introduces the Cuban cultural practices from the opening scene, which draws a lively picture of Cuban society. The men completely immersed in betting on a cockfight and womenfolk watching and eagerly waiting for the new lector reveals how serious and spontaneous the Cuban cigar rollers are in preserving the Cuban cultural traditions in the alien land in America.

The men could have become involved in other types of gambling activities, but it is the cockfight that they enjoy and participate in. Moreover, they call their prospective winner cocks with Cuban names. Cruz's description of cockfight in the whole first scene highlights Cuban practice.

Santiago and his family, who hail from Cuba, have brought with them Cuban cigar rolling tradition. They are now hand rolling each cigar skillfully. They consider the tradition of cigar rolling as part of their culture. Cuban people believe that when a man marries, he marries his bride and his cigar. Moreover, they associate cigar smoking with



communication with the gods. In order to make known to the world their country and culture, they launch the new brand of cigar with Santiago's daughter Marela in Cuban traditional attire. This shows their affirmation of their traditional culture.

Other Cuban cultural practices include writing the credits on the sole of the shoes, cutting hair and burying in the earth for rain and greenery, and firing gunshots at important ceremonies.

Another tradition they have brought with them from Cuba is the practice of employing a lector, a person who tells stories and reads novels to the workers while they roll the cigars in an effort to keep up with the tradition. Juan Julian, the new lector decides to read the romance novel *Anna Karenina* about a married woman who takes on a lover, which ends in disaster. The lector reads the book with an intense passion that brings out diverse emotions in Santiago's family. *Anna Karenina* becomes much more than a novel. It helps the characters reveal their problems, insecurities and desires in the alien world. With every turn of the page, the characters are drawn together and become nostalgic.

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