This research focuses on analyzing the diaspora of two specific cultures, the Cuban Americans and the Dominican Americans, and their dislocation from their countries of origin to the United States. Our literary analysis reveals the multiple difficulties and obstacles these families face in creating new lives for themselves. Many traditions and cultural facets are not carried over during the integration and assimilation into the U.S. mainstream culture due to the pressure these families feel to fit in. Family unity within the Latino culture is altered across seas and borders, affecting subsequent generations.

Our cultural and literary analysis takes into considerations the works of two prominent Latinx Caribbean authors; Loida Maritza Pérez’s Geographies of Home and Christina García’s Dreaming in Cuban. The study of these novels concentrates on the interpretation of the symbolic realities lived by the characters and how the multiple adverse conditions shaped the characters experiences. Utilizing Latinx urban theory on the processes of integration and assimilation, our research scrutinizes the critical role that family customs and beliefs play in individuals’ lives. It also highlights how in the midst of challenges these families face in a new country. Family loyalty is essential to families affected by this diaspora, the lack thereof only leading to further distress.

Abstract

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Marina “However, she is refused by a young white attorney whom she considers a prospective suitor. Marina sets fire to the papers she is supposed to be photocopying, ‘feeling free of the conventions which had kept her wobbling on a tightrope’” (Pérez, 98).

Iliana “The ghostly trace of ‘NIGGER’ on a message board hanging from Iliana’s door failed to assault her as it had the first time she returned to her dorm room to find it” (Pérez, 1).

“But it was no stranger standing before her now. It was her sister, whom she was meant to trust, her sister with whom she had shared the greater part of her life” (Pérez, 282).

Lourdes “The Castro revolution is traumatizing because it takes away from Lourdes an entire world of empowerment, her husband’s farm is taken away and their position as one of the most powerful families in Cuba is destroyed” (Aguiar).

Pilar She feels rejected by her mother, although Lourdes feels like no matter what she does, “Pilar hates me” (García 17).

Results

Marina “All of you are going to burn in hell! Burn! Next time evil comes into this house, it can carry you all off for all I care!” (Pérez, 278).

“I’ve seen the way you look at me! But God will cast you down instead!” (Pérez, 278).

Iliana “Like her mother’s and father’s too, her soul had transformed into a complex and resilient thing able to accommodate the best and worst” (Pérez, 321).

“Any difficulties she encountered from then on would be hers to work out on her own” (Pérez 321).

Lourdes “[Lourdes] views capitalism as a site of empowerment” (Sáez 136).

She copes with her trauma by overeating, then excessively exercising, and avoiding intimacy with her husband.

Pilar “By coming to grips with her Cuban heritage and her place in American society, Pilar is able to forget a new identity based upon the major forces that influence her life” (Schneiderman 6).

She returns home to her parents in New York instead of staying in Cuba.

Conclusions

Unity between family members disappears with each generation due to geographic displacement and trauma, unless an individual is resilient and utilizes challenges as a refinement process.

“Iliana and Pilar, although they also suffer different traumatic experiences – rape, discrimination, racism, isolation, inadequacy-their fragmentation ends up as a positive because of their resilience, high self esteem, and connections they have with their past homelands” (Aguiar 43).