

# The perspective of individuals, a family and the society on cuban revolution

[History](#), [Revolution](#)



In the novel, “ Dreaming in Cuban,” Christina Garcia examines the infelicitous social and political effects that the Cuban Revolution had on the Cuban population. In her literary mastery, Garcia combines her character choice with various stylistic tools to tell the story from the perspectives of individuals, a family, and a society residing in the U. S and Cuba. Although Garcia does not elaborate on the revolution, she strives to convince her readers that the revolution was a historical event that resulted in the migration of some Cubans to the U. S. Ultimately, the migration causes a detachment of three generations of Cuban women with their culture and their original identity.

Garcia portrays women as significant, but unrecognized participants in the social context of the Cuban revolution. She develops her story using Celia Del Pino, Lourdes Del Pino, and Felicia Del Pino as Cuban women from three different generations who have different opinions about the Cuban Revolution. Celia is strongly dedicated to the revolution. Contrastingly, Celia’s daughter, Lourdes is strongly opposed to the revolution and openly expresses her disdain for the “ El Lider,” a pick name for Fidel Castro, the leader of the Cuban Revolution. The third woman with a significant portrayal in Garcia’s story, is Felicia, the daughter to Lourdes, and Celia’s granddaughter. She is indifferent to the revolution and consistently attempts to unite the del Pino family to no avail. Essentially, the del Pino family represents any other Cuban family during the revolution, according to Ludlam(1). The women’s contradicting political views and the arising conflict illustrates how the revolution caused physical and emotional separation from individuals, families, and friends from their culture and ancestral identity.

Celia del Pino is portrayed as a citizen who is strongly connected with her culture and identity. She considers Cuba to be a homeland that should be protected and is ready to bear the cost of her allegiance to her homeland. To her, the revolution brings an opportunity for freedom and prosperity. Garcia portrays Celia as the matriarch of the del Pino family, a woman who initially fell in love with a married Spanish man named Gustavo hoping to pursue a common dream of liberation. However, Gustavo eventually departs at the height of the revolution. To demonstrate her resilience and allegiance to her nation, Celia is married to Jorge del Pino, a fellow Cuban, hoping to regain her Cuban cultural identity. She is initially convinced that marriage to a fellow Cuban would emanate in a prosperous life in Cuba. However, Jorge, though a fellow Cuban, mistreats her due to her affection for her past lover, Gustavo, an occurrence that pushes her to the point of losing sanity.

Garcia portrays Celia as a woman whose attachment to culture and identity is irreplaceable despite the myriads of challenges. Her husband, Jorge is a fellow Cuban, but he harbors dreams of migrating to America and striking wealth there. Jorge and Celia have children and grandchildren whom Garcia also uses to portray the familial differences in the perception of cultural and ancestral identity versus migration. Garcia portrays Celia as a revolutionary who believes that only political change can alleviate the extreme poverty and social inequality in Cuba. Celia supports “ El Lider”, Fidel Castro, and dislikes opponents of the revolution. Celia also distrusts the Americans and believes the rumors that they “ have ringed the island with nuclear poison, hoping to starve the people and incite a counterrevolution” (Garcia 3). As the

story begins, Celia guards the coastline against a perceived attack by American forces in a repeat of the “ Bay-of-Pigs” incursion (3). She “ studies the coconut palms lining the beach” and wonders if they are “ blinking signals to an invisible enemy,” a delusion that seems to enshroud her life (4).

Celia’s intense dedication to the revolution causes tension between her and the other members of the family. She does not communicate with her daughter, Lourdes for several years. In “ Women and the Revolution in Cristina Garcia’s *Dreaming in Cuban*,” Ferrera observe that Celia’s political inclination causes her the most aspersions (71). In Ferrera’s description, dedication to the revolution is also evident in her willingness to let go of her husband, Jorge and their daughter, Lourdes. Celia resists all possibilities of leaving Cuba and migrating to the U. S. Whereas Celia lives all her life in Cuba, Lourdes moves to America and starts up a successful business. Celia’s husband also moves to New York for medical services when he is diagnosed with cancer. Celia’s former lover, Gustavo also deserts her but seems to be the only person in her life who understands her commitment to the revolution as indicated in the multiple letters she writes to him.

During the Cuban revolution, women participated in all major activities but their role has not been recognized. Ludlam argues that Garcia selected her characters and the main theme based on her experience as a Cuban who migrated to the US. Consequently, Garcia seeks to highlight the significance of the contribution of Celia Sanchez as a strongly patriotic leader in the revolution. According to Ludlam, Garcia, as a Cuban herself chose Celia as

the main character based on her learned and actual experiences during the revolution.

As a migrant herself, Garcia creatively employs character choice and symbolism to portray the cultural confusion and desire for the cultural identity that engulfs Cubans as a result of separation from their culture and family bonds. Although some Cubans strive to adjust to their adopted cultures, others experience an insatiable longing to link back to their original culture and identity. Lourdes leaves Cuba and establishes a small bakery in the US. She strives to delink herself from her homeland, Cuba by dissuading her daughter from picking a Cuban identity. However, she does not willingly strive to separate her daughter from her Cuban roots since she allows Garcia and Felicia to meet and interact.

However, maintaining a cultural identity in a foreign nation is not easy. In Garcia's depiction, Celia acknowledges that sacrifices are necessary for the revolution to succeed. She writes letters to Gustavo, wondering why "most people aspire to little more than comfort" indicating her dedication to the revolution despite the challenges (49). Celia acknowledges that her support for political change requires her to embrace solitude and single parenthood. Her present family's support and endorsement of the American lifestyle makes her yearn for her past life with Gustavo. In one letter to Gustavo, she states that the people she shares her time with are "...insomniacs, thieves, anarchists, women with children...." (52).

Essentially, Garcia strives to enlighten the world about the significance of the role that women played in the Cuban Revolution. She portrays the excess glorification of male participants in the revolution, as indicated by the consistent reference to “ El Lider” as Fidel Castro and deliberately ignoring the contribution of other leaders. In a creative way, Garcia manages to elevate the female characters in her story without necessarily diminishing the male characters. “ Dreaming in Cuban,” therefore reflects an author’s creativity in using literature to convey a significant historical omission without appearing to change the course of history. The story has been adapted as a major study text in intercultural studies in the US. Similarly, the author is an established scholar of cultural studies in the US further affirming the ability of Cuban women to accept cultural change as illustrated in Celia’s eventual migration to the US.