

Jewish Identity in Latin American Literature

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When leaving Europe during the Holocaust was the only way to survive, the reasons for and the circumstances about going to Latin America were quite different. Many of the refugees landed in a Latin American country unintentionally, as their destinations had been others.

There, on the other side of the Atlantic ocean, being Jewish united the new arrivals not so much because they shared a religion, but rather because being Jewish had forced them to leave their home countries. Most of them also shared a language, a form of expression.

Nevertheless, literary expressions of Jewish immigrants to Latin America only came up some decades after the Holocaust, mainly in the 1970s. Nowadays, Latin American Jewish writing presents the diversity and hybridity in Latin American culture. Today, the grandchildren or even the great-grandchildren of the Shoa are speaking, respectively writing, and they are going new ways of dealing with the past, especially in the 21st century.

It is interesting to observe that within the Jewish Latin American literatures, there are quite a number of common *topoi* to be found and refound all over the continent. In my presentation, I'm going to draw some of the basic traces of Jewish Latin American literature and I want to show some of the main topics dealt with in their literary works. This will lead me to the actual Jewish literature in Latin America so as to the interests and the narrative techniques to be recognized in it.

By following the literary development of one author, Susana Gertopan, I will establish comparisons to different works of other authors in South America. She has written four novels so far, and in accordance to her novels, my presentation is divided into the following chapters:

1. Waiting for the return: *Barrio Palestina* (1998)
2. Living with a foreign identity: *El nombre prestado* (2000)
3. Returning into a new future: *El retorno de Eva* (2003)
4. Living in an eternal exile: *El otro exilio* (2007)

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Scliar, Moacyr: *O exército de um homem só* (1973)
— . *O centauro no jardim* (1980)
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