

MIDDLE EAST STUDIES IN ACTION

COMMITTEE FOR UNDERGRADUATE MIDDLE EAST STUDIES POSTER
SESSION, MESA 2023

# Uncovered History: An Exploration of the Latin American Mahjar

Miriam Alrahil

Florida State University

This poster explores the formation and presence of the Lebanese community in Columbia through the framework of contemporary Mahjar literature. While there is profound scholarship surrounding the North American Mahjar, or (post) exilic, literature, there is relatively less recognition or discourse in the west surrounding Arab diasporic communities in South America. Columbia is a particularly interesting case. Its largest foreign population consists of Arab migrants, yet there is a lack of available research surrounding this community. Literary analysis of Columbian Mahjar literature can illuminate the history of these migrants and expand knowledge of an understudied variant of Lebanese diasporic literature. This analysis can supplement developing theory around diaspora and associated exilic and post-exilic literature. South American Mahjar literature may constitute its own unique sub-genre or extension of post-colonial literature. I conduct pragmatic and stylistic analysis of literary texts from prominent Colombian-Lebanese writers such as Luis Fayad (1945-), Juan Gossaín (1949-), and Meira Delmar (1922-2009), paying special attention to their intertextuality and interlinguistic voices in an effort to transcend purely historical approaches to diaspora studies. I draw upon their cultural productions to analyze the hybridization of identity in conjunction with literary and historical analytical frameworks proposed by both non-Arab and Arab diasporists and postcolonial theorists, such as Edward Said and William Safran. I work with archived primary sources and periodicals in English, Spanish, and Arabic, extending the research done by Colombian historians and academics such as Pilar Vargas and Luz Marina Suaza. My research aims to offer a cohesive representation of contemporary Colombian Mahjar literature in order to contribute to a broader understanding of the ethnic collectivity of the Arab Diaspora community.

© The Author(s), 2024. Published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of Middle East Studies Association of North America. This is an Open Access article, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution licence (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which permits unrestricted re-use, distribution and reproduction, provided the original article is properly cited.





## The Ethnography of the Lebanese Diaspora in Colombia through Post-Exilic Literature: Case Study



Miriam Alrahil Florida State University

#### Historical Context

### Literary Context

- realismo Mágico: Emblem of Colombian Literary Tradition
  One of Colombia's most prominent literary genres
  Presents the magical as an ordinary part of an identifiable in
  Esst-Colonial Respectative is based in the rejection of the codominant paradigms for the rediscovering of an uncolonize
  identity 19

- identity." Written from a marginal reality of "othermess" that allows these stories to be hybridized and present cultural multi-subjectivities. "Indiget Literature is to be a first than the properties of the fair than the properties of the fair than the properties of the fair than the properties. Defined by the body of works, Iterary, Inequire, and specific themes and concepts produced and influenced by Arab emigrant writers and their experiences.

#### Author Biography: Juan Gossaín

#### Novel Structure & Analytical Frame

- Its hybridization stems from its multiethnic literary nature and its magical realist structure, used for identity construction and as a resistance to eutral hegemonic paradigms.<sup>3</sup> Simultaneously underlines Arab cultural identity and Latin American rational identity.<sup>3</sup> Hulsion of auto-biographical elements by Gossain creates a personal hulsion of auto-biographical elements by Gossain creates a personal control of the cont

- Influsion of auto-biographical elements by occasion receives a person-er biography. Healthcast collections in destroy in based on discher Healthcast out elem noises are one self-section of the distant homeland, the formation of a hybrid, southwated identity, and the composition of the parental dynamic.

  The there are cannied through employment of specific identity markers/tropes such as albasins to or inclusion of Arabic, Latheres coalins, soft presented or biographic and the com-position of the presented distances in the section of technical series for a Arabic, Latheres coalins, soft presented or biographs of the section of inherited cultural memory written by descendants of migrants.

## Phantom Nostalgia and Exilic

- \*\*is heavily intertwined with an other by the identity markers, and is noted in the "family memory."

  \*\*phasemon notality" was coined by poet Meira Delmail\*

  \*\*the differentiate from of notality accountwicted through migrate persons.

  \*\*The marker of the migrate persons are the migrate persons.

  \*\*The number of the migrate persons are notatingly of his master-of-fact reconstruction of his parents" file story.

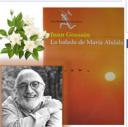
  \*\*By this, his inherited cultural memory of the distinct homeland is materiatized in the new land, such as such as persons are not migrate to the present of the migrate of the distinct homeland is materiatized in the new land, such as such as such as a such

- Examples from his feding. "

  "Incomposition is allowed, with only the help of his heart, the official memories is allowed, with only the help of his heart, the official memories of his sating with he first, that stomy morning in which he arrived from his vallege, of Leabnon?

  "Juddenly, comment by rosstalish, led plastes whisting an Arab song learned in his adolescence"

  "Me if judice, and judice, which has been been and the plant of the plant



#### Cuisine and Jasmine

- the acculturation process leads to the co-existence of the two cultural consciousnesses, and is primarily exhibited through identity markers related to food and flora. Allasions to Lebanses gustronomy ranged from being designated in Arabic to passively connotated in Spanish within a general culinary
- Direct Examples

#### Parental Dynamic

- Perental Dynamic

  The juxtaposition of the enterprising with Pusia and the poetic husband Abraham reflect two prominent aspects of the early julyon-commercialism and Maliyia Resray province, low post and a second to the properties of the street propriet label of "Turcus" by Maria and respection by Ambane exemplicise the social battle between services and province and the province of the services forsaking such inclusion to preserve the original identity.

  Maria as the figure of the mother symbolized the homestand and attachment to it. She is the must for husband's continued involvement with the Labelesse cultum, lenguage, and mentality.

  Symbolically, with her death in is first witnessed that Speaks the committee of the Ambane street in the Committee of the Speaks of the Committee of the Speaks of the Committee of the Speaks of th

#### Findings and Future Investigations

- Through the practipue of post-colonial and post-salisis uniting, Gossain forms a new, authentic construction of a multi-dimensional behaviors. The control interest in the control interest interes
- Prospectively, I will be investigating the anthology of poet Meira Delmar and the novel *La Caida de Los Puntos Cardinales* by author Luis Fayad, both notable descendants of Lebanese first-wave

#### References



Contact [Miriam Alrahil] [maa21@fsu.edu] [904-704-4227]

Cite this article: Alrahil M (2023). Uncovered History: An Exploration of the Latin American Mahjar. Review of Middle East Studies 57, 163-164. https://doi.org/10.1017/rms.2024.13