

Agata Zep – streszczenie pracy doktorskiej w j. angielskim

The thesis analyses five contemporary Spanish novels: *Caminando y hablando* (Harry Moreno), *Déjalo, ya volveremos* (Esther Bendahan), *Sefarad* (Antonio Muñoz Molina), *Mi nombre es Jamaica* (José Manuel Fajardo) and *De tu boca a los cielos* (Jose Carlos Cataño). Each of the works presents the issue of Sephardic identity in a different way, showing that this topic is still valid and needs to be told anew.

The analysis of selected novels is based on the assumption that there is a close relationship between identity and narrative, and that literature plays an important role in shaping beliefs about what the Self is and what the Other is. Identity is seen as a dynamic construct that is constantly being created, transformed and communicated in the form of stories.

The novel *Caminando y hablando* is the first to be analysed, because the model of identity presented in it is the most traditional and static, although this does not mean that it does not undergo changes. The motif of the return to Spain is also used here in a traditional way, in line with the myth of the lost homeland.

In *Déjalo, ya volveremos*, however, there is a much greater dynamism that emphasizes the processual nature of identity. The myth of Spain as the homeland of Sephardic Jews is juxtaposed with the difficult reality in which intolerance once again becomes the experience of Sephardic Jews.

The third of the analysed works, *Sefarad*, fits the experience of Jews of Spanish origin into a broader historical context, transforming it into a metaphor of exile. At the same time, the novel shows that Spain's rejection of the Jews is not just a matter of the past.

Mi nombre es Jamaica, in turn, focuses on the problem of reconstructing identity in a situation where a given person has not had contact with Sephardic culture so far. The novel presents a conflict between two characters representing two different variants of Sephardic identity, one of whom was brought up in a Jewish family, while the other decides to identify himself with the culture of his ancestors.

The last of the analysed works, *De tu boca a los cielos*, poses the question to what extent arbitrary choice of identity is possible. In this case, there are also two main characters looking for their identity: a Sephardic woman who questions her cultural identity, and a man in love with her who decides to convert to Judaism in order to gain her favour.

Comparing all these novels with each other, we can see both many similarities and significant differences. This proves both the complexity of the problem of identity and the originality of the writers who present it using a variety of literary techniques. The traditional pillars of Sephardic Jewish identity, such as the knowledge of the Judeo-Spanish language, or the myth of Spain as a lost homeland, are reinterpreted in the face of social changes and changing historical circumstances, as well as being the effect of the literary characters' internal searches. Regardless of whether the novel emphasizes more the importance of family roots or individual choice, the discussion of what Sephardic identity is in today's world proves that it is still a topic worthy of attention.