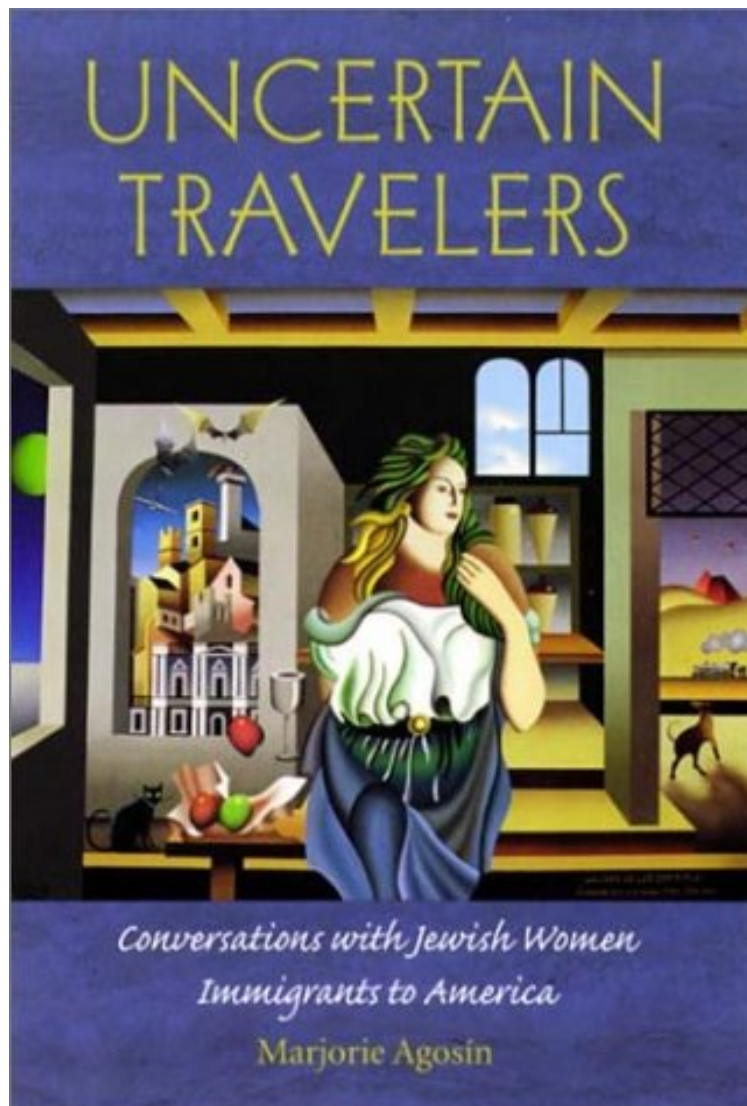


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Uncertain Travelers: Conversations with Jewish Women Immigrants to America (HBI Series on Jewish Women)

Marjorie Agosin

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Marjorie Agosin : Uncertain Travelers: Conversations with Jewish Women Immigrants to America (HBI Series on Jewish Women) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Uncertain Travelers: Conversations with Jewish Women Immigrants to America (HBI Series on Jewish Women):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Tales of Brave Women who Touch Your HeartBy Lynn Ruth MillerUNCERTAIN TRAVELERS: Conversations with Jewish Women Immigrants to America by Marjorie Agosin

214 pages; University Press of New England "I am certain that my early beginnings and the paths I traveled . . . have opened my heart to the misery and pain of others," says Katherine Scherzer Wenger in conversation with Marjorie Agosin in her book *UNCERTAIN TRAVELERS*. Wenger, born in Romania in 1950, arrived in New York in 1963 and is now a psychotherapist in Boston. Although her family survived World War II and she was born after the war was over, that struggle for survival still dominates her life. "Though not having directly gone through the Holocaust, I believe that the reverberations of that event resonate in our soul if not in our conscious mind," she says. "There is still a longing in me to find a meaningful way of living a Jewish life." It is this experience of exile and identity that Agosin explores in her mesmerizing account of her discussions with nine amazingly perceptive Jewish women immigrants to the United States. These women arrived in this country from Europe and Latin America between 1939 and the 1970s and each has become stellar in her chosen field despite daunting odds. Yet no matter how far they have traveled from their roots, their past colors their perceptions of the present. "I think the way many immigrants experience their lives is that they leave things behind. And once they leave the thing behind, it somehow disappears." says Susan Rubin Suleiman who was born in Budapest in 1939 and came to this country in 1950. "I think you have to be able to return and discover that those things don't disappear. People don't die just because you leave them." Suleiman is now a Professor of Romance and Comparative Literatures at Harvard and author of several books. Yet she is determined to preserve her memories. "We move on and yet maintain the connection to the past that we have now reestablished, or are trying to reestablish," she says. Agosin's own background makes her eminently suited to undertake the challenge of revealing the diverse experiences of exile. Although she was born in Maryland, her family returned to Chile before she was a year old and stayed there until they immigrated to Athens, Georgia in 1971. Agosin, a poet and writer who has published several previous books is now a professor of Spanish at Wellesley College. "Uncertain Travelers is a book of conversations with women like myself," says Agosin. "Educated Jewish women with complex itineraries who have traveled much and landed at last in the United States in the second half of the twentieth century." The main theme of this book is the challenges in each woman's journey from one culture to another. They discuss food, friendship, work, language, writing, anti-Semitism and politics with penetrating wisdom and each interview reflects the very personal response of the traveler to her own distinct set of experiences. The initial discussion is with Zezette Larsen, who recalls hiding from the Nazi's in a Catholic convent in Belgium, her deportation to Auschwitz-Birkenau and her eventual move to New York City in 1951. Despite barriers that would have defeated a lesser personality, Larsen managed to earn a masters degree in social work at Rutgers, spend time in Israel and then move to Massachusetts where she became the executive director of Jewish Community Housing for the Elderly in Newton. When she discusses her future now that she is in her late sixties she says, "I think there is a whole world out there that we have to take care of. And that, it really is so much easier not to, and to close your eyes. But that is so dangerous." The book launches the Brandeis Series on Jewish women sponsored by the International Research Institute on Jewish Women. This series plans to illuminate the challenges and achievements of Jewish women throughout history. If Marjorie Agosin's book *UNCERTAIN TRAVELERS* is any indication of the quality of this project, it will be an invaluable contribution to the body of literature we have reflecting the contributions of Jewish women throughout history. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. this woman was not named ZEZETTE Larson. In her final days she had developed bad mesenility. But she was always goid and kind. By Maria Shannon The woman you interviewed who was the first woman to drive a automobile in Holland was my Great grandmother. Blue eyes and a loving husband who traveled to and from Amsterdam with no children of their own. This is my family. The woman's name is Martha Louise De Jung Catz. the2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Uncertain Travelers: Conversations with Jewish Women Immigra By Maurice T. An engrossing and sensitive book in dialogue form between Marjorie Agosin, a Chilean woman living in the United States and teaching at Wellesley College and other educated Jewish women who have emigrated to the United States from Europe, Cuba, Chile and other countries. The joys and difficulties of adjusting to a new culture, the feeling of "otherness" both in their homeland and in their new homes are explored and described in a meaningful way. I felt the thoughtfulness and personality of each participant as they answered the questions asked by the interviewer.

An exploration of Jewish women's immigration to America.

From Booklist Marjorie Agosin, a Chilean writer and human rights activist, is the author of *A Cross and a Star: Memoirs of a Jewish Girl in Chile* and *Always from Somewhere Else: A Memoir of My Chilean Jewish Father*, two unforgettable books of poetic beauty. Her new book, the first of the Brandeis Jewish Women series, contains interviews with nine Jewish immigrants who arrived in the U.S. from Europe and Latin America between 1939 and the 1970s. They came from different places and for different reasons, some to escape political turmoil or to pursue economic opportunities. Some fled Europe just before World War II or, having survived the war in hiding or in concentration camps, emigrated once the war had ended. Some came as children, others as adults; some arrived well-off, others as veritable refugees. Each interview is preceded by a brief biographical introduction. The women discuss such subjects as anti-Semitism (here and abroad), politics, friendships, the Holocaust, families and childhood, and their

Jewish legacy. *Uncertain Travelers* is an important contribution to women's and Jewish studies. George Cohen
From the Publisher 6 x 9 trim. 20 illus. LC 99-30391 About the Author MARJORIE AGOSIN is Professor of Spanish at
Wellesley College. Her many books include *A Map of Hope* (1999), *Dear Anne Frank* (1998), *Always from
Somewhere Else* (1998), *Ashes of Revolt* (1996), and *A Cross and a Star* (1995). She recently received an award from
the Boston division of the United Nations for her work in human rights.