



Handbook of American-Jewish Literature: An Analytical Guide to Topics, Themes, and Sources

Lewis Fried, Gene Brown, Jules Chametzky, Louis Harap

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The title is perhaps a bit deceptive, for this is assuredly more than 'handbook' might indicate. . . . Fried's anthology is a truly complex work, bringing together eighteen essays of mostly uniform high quality, and masses of bibliographic resources to present a comprehensive overview. . . . Fried's book does not present the original works themselves, but rather culls mostly outstanding essays on the prose, poetry, drama, and literary criticism produced by Jewish writers in America from the final decades of the last century to the present. *Studies in American Jewish Literature*

Focusing on the Jewish contribution to American writing, this guide offers a comprehensive view of Jewish identity and experience in American society, together with important bibliographic information for the scholar or researcher. In eighteen essays written by a distinguished group of specialists, it provides a wealth of fact, interpretation, and commentary relating to American-Jewish literature, criticism, and other writing published since the 1880s.

In his introduction, Fried reviews the history of American-Jewish writing and the major social, moral, and political concerns that have affected it. The essays that follow focus primarily on the literary culture created by Eastern-European Jewish immigrants and their children, as they shaped and were shaped by their experiences in America. The first several chapters look at American-Jewish fiction from 1880 to the present. Drama and autobiographical works also are discussed as are American-Yiddish poetry, criticism, and other writing. Other chapters assess the influence of theology, Zionism, and the Holocaust on American-Jewish writers, as well as the relationship of their works to other literatures and international critical perspectives. Themes that are explored from several perspectives include the relevance of the diaspora to the American-Jewish literary imagination; the forging of multiple loyalties and reconciliation into an American-Jewish culture; and the making of an American-Jewish identity.

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