The opening decades of the twenty-first century are distinguished by a newly framed and re-generated outlook of Jewish American literary studies. This volume introduces readers to new perspectives, new approaches, and a widening of interpretive possibilities in Jewish American literature accompanied by the changes of the new millennium. Now that we are over a decade into a new century, the field of Jewish American literary studies has begun to reshape itself in response to a “new diaspora,” a newly defined sense not only of Jewish American literature, but of America, an expansion of new genres, new voices, and new platforms of expression. This book reevaluates questions of race, feminism, gender, sexuality, orthodoxy, assimilation, identity politics, and historical alienation that shape Jewish American literary studies. Several chapters show the influence of other cultures on the field such as Iranian-American-Jewish writing, Israeli-American, and Latin American literary expression, as well as the impact of Russian emigres.

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THE NEW JEWISH AMERICAN LITERARY STUDIES

Edited by

VICTORIA AARONS

Trinity University
Contents

Notes on Contributors page vii
Acknowledgments xiii

Introduction: Toward a New Jewish American Literary Studies 1
Victoria Aarons

PART I CONCEPTS 19

1. “Jewish American” or “American Jewish”: The Hybrid in Literary Studies 21
Berel Lang

2. A New Diaspora: Jewish American Writers from Across the Globe 30
Victoria Aarons

3. Wrestling with Politics: Jewish American Writing from Left to Right (and Back Again) 45
Michael E. Staub

4. Israel and America in Jewish American Writing 59
Eli Lederhendler

5. Jewish American Writing and Race 74
Dean Franco

6. Gender and Feminism in Contemporary Jewish American Writing 90
Jessica Lang
vi

Contents

Part ii contexts 109

7. Rethinking Post-war Jewish American Writers 111
   Timothy Parrish

8. The Insistence of Psychoanalysis in Contemporary Jewish American Fiction 124
   Willis Salomon

9. Reimagining the Past, Imagining the Future: Myth, History, and Mystery in Contemporary Jewish American Fiction 140
   David Brauner

10. Women’s Voices: The Assimilated Subject and the Persistence of Marginalization 156
    Catherine Morley

11. A Guide for the Heretic: Charting the Journey Off the Path of Tradition 169
    Avinoam Patt

Part iii “New” forms and histories 195

12. Rethinking Literary and Ethical Response to the Holocaust: Reading “With Hitler in New York” 197
    Gary Weissman

13. Jews in Contemporary Cinema and Television 216
    Nathan Abrams

    Judie Newman

15. Jewish-Latin American Literature 245
    Darrell B. Lockhart

16. Jewish American Literary Studies Abroad 267
    Gustavo Sánchez Canales

Index 283
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viii  Notes on Contributors


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x  

Notes on Contributors


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When Ray Ryan, Senior Commissioning Editor of English and American Literature at Cambridge University Press, first posed the possibility of compiling an edited volume on The New Jewish American Literary Studies, he expressed his enthusiasm in gathering together a group of lively and informed scholars to produce, as he spiritedly put it, “A book that captured all the tumultuous energies over the last 10–20 years.” I want to acknowledge here Ray’s pioneering of the “new” Cambridge series, his keen foresight in recognizing the changing landscape of Jewish American studies in the decades surrounding the turn of the twenty-first century, and his steadfast confidence in my ability, as editor, to pull it off. Our enthusiasm for this project was matched by that of the scholars – from the United States and abroad – who I knew would bring to this collection a wealth of experience and expertise and a lively range of innovative approaches to the field. I consider it my very good fortune to have worked on this collection of essays with Ray and with those scholars who have collaborated here to introduce expansive possibilities for imagining a new Jewish American literary studies.

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xiii