

## **Promised Lands: American Israeli Literature**

### **Abstract**

In contrast to mainstream Jewish American culture with its relatively happy synthesis of American and Jewish elements and its decidedly American national orientation, the small minority of American Jews who opt to move to Israel and take on Israeli citizenship leave the most prosperous and powerful nation on earth, and the most materially successful and socially integrated Jewish diaspora community in history. In doing so, they face the material, cultural, and linguistic dislocations of immigration and the challenges of life in a domestic society and geographical region fraught with conflict.

Despite its small size, this American Israeli population has produced dozens of writers of indisputable aesthetic achievement and striking ideological diversity. Their writings offer a unique window onto the nature of American and Jewish identity as seen in situations of radical transition. The goal of my project is to write the first comprehensive study of this subject, showing how this unknown and relatively new immigrant literature deepens and challenges our understanding of American and Jewish national identity, as well as the capacity of literature to represent and shape experiences of place, foreignness, and homecoming.