

Double or Nothing
Jewish Families and Mixed Marriage in the United States

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Mixed Marriage in Cultural Contexts

Presenter

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Shulamit Reinharz: Joyce Antler is the Samuel Lane Professor of American Jewish History and Culture at Brandeis University. Her major fields of interest include women's history, on which she has written six or seven books, and Jewish women's history and culture, on which she has also written path-breaking books, including *The Journey Home*, *The History of Education*, and *History as Theatre*. She also has a very interesting way of teaching at Brandeis University. She sometimes teaches a class to examine history by having them do archival research and then producing a play. She has done this several times with great success on campus.

The topic of her book *The Journey Home* fits in with a theme that has emerged here: not

only is there a journey within Judaism, as one becomes closer or further away from it throughout one's lifetime, but there's also a journey within intermarried families as well. It would be interesting to see if the journeys are the same or different.

Joyce Antler was a founder of the Brandeis University Women's Studies program and was its chair for approximately ten years. She's also the founder, with other people, of the Graduate Consortium of Women's Studies at Radcliff, and she has chaired the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities. Joyce is an extremely sought-after speaker, and we are fortunate that she is in town today to address us. She will be talking about intermarriage in Jewish culture. I am delighted to be able to present my friend and colleague, Joyce Antler.

Joyce Antler: Thanks so much. Congratulations to Sylvia for this wonderful book. People have mentioned the qualitative and the quantitative as a part of Sylvia's approach. I would also like to talk about how unusual it is that in this book, as in everything Sylvia does, she brings together the sociological and the cultural. The fact that cultural studies are so prominent in her book is, I think, wonderful, and the reason for my being up on this platform. Sylvia asked me to talk about chapter eight in her book, which is about popular culture.

Throughout the twentieth century and into this new century, perhaps no theme has been more ubiquitous in American Jewish culture than that of interfaith romance and marriage. From the moment in the 1927 *Jazz Singer* when Al Jolson, playing the cantor's son Jake Rabinowitz, sings "Mammy" at his Broadway debut, with his gentile girlfriend and his Jewish mother in the audience, it was clear that American Jews' encounter with the Promised Land would necessarily involve leaving traditional roots and embracing the other. And despite significant changes in American-Jewish life over the course of several generations, which were talked about this morning, in every era, writers, dramatists and filmmakers have portrayed interfaith romance as

an inevitable component of Jews' entrance in American society.

In Sylvia's chapter on popular culture, she discusses several specific cultural works, in particular *The Jazz Singer* and *Annie Hall*, as paradigmatic portrayals of the intermarriage scene. She also examines current trends. Discussion of the powerful themes that emerge from the focus groups conducted by the Morningstar Commission form most of the chapter—and those of you who were here last night heard Joan Hyler talk about the commission's conclusions.

From Sylvia's discussion, we come to understand that the often stereotypical portraits of Jews, both male and female, deeply influence how Jews see themselves and their romantic possibilities. I would like to commend Sylvia for the prominence with which she discussed this topic. It's rare that scholars take up the question of the effects of media. Her discussion of the Morningstar groups provides an important expression of these effects, which are largely negative. Sylvia says, "Media images of Jews affect the social construction of reality; they produce and perpetuate stereotypical perceptions, especially those of Jewish women."

I'd like to add my own observations about the importance of media as deeply affecting the way we deduce reality from images.

A few weeks ago I asked the students in a course I'm teaching on the history of childhood whether they agreed with the claim of sociologist Robert Putnam in his book *Bowling Alone* that television is the primary cause of the decline in community and civic participation. My students vigorously protested, insisting that TV built participation. The example they gave was that they were motivated to vote by MTV's Rock the Vote campaign of concerts and personal messages—there's one of Madonna wrapped only in an American flag telling people to vote. Students felt very proud that their civic participation had increased because they had watched MTV and other shows.

Another example: students came to me in panic because it turns out that my final exam was scheduled for the final episode of *Friends*. “Oh, my God, Professor Antler, what are we going to do?” I actually listened in sympathy as they explained to me that this is not just a TV show, this is about their friends, and they needed to watch it together. So I figured out a compromise.

A third example: students have told me that as they prepare for my final exams and final papers, they’re watching *The Apprentice*, *The Bachelor*, *The Swan*, and other reality TV shows. Whatever I may think of that, it is reality that they are not only studying in our classes, they are watching television. The sooner we are aware of this, the more we can understand what’s going on in our culture.

As these stories reveal, our youth encounter is shaped by television. I was very interested to hear Professor Alba’s discussion this morning about boundary blurring. He spoke of four factors, and Chris Winship added a fifth factor. Let me suggest a 6th factor (we will have 20 by the end of the afternoon): mass culture has done a great deal to shape the ideas of youth. Perhaps it hasn’t done as much as it could to introduce ethnic and religious identities in the way we would like it, but because it provides a common culture where young people meet and share values, we should consider mass culture as a factor in boundary blurring. From *Sesame Street* to *Nickelodeon* to MTV to *Saturday Night Live* to *Friends* and beyond, there is a community and culture that we need to be aware of. This is what Sylvia’s chapter has made me think about.

The importance of mass culture in boundary blurring—a term I did not know before this morning—bears heavily on how young people encounter issues of identity, including ethnic and religious identity. As one film historian has written, “We exist in a moment when identity, memory, and history are recognized as media productions. Bits and pieces of identities, once

historically and personally located, now primarily cohere in the simulated memory of the media.

If the media cannot tell us who is a Jew or cast doubt on how Jews behave, how can viewers from a coherent sense of the reality of Jewish life?" In a sobering comment this historian adds, "Lacking a sense of our roots, distant from the gravitational pull of community and history, we have become strangers to our own lives in spite of this common culture."

The Morningstar interviews, which Sylvia so aptly analyzes, reveal in excruciating detail that Jewish men and women perceive each other according to negative popular images of how Jews look, sound, and behave. However, these images bear little resemblance to how American Jews perceive themselves. Let me highlight several questions that this material raises for me.

First, how did this gap between image and perception develop? Second, is there an inherent connection between the pervasiveness and valorization of the intermarriage theme in popular culture and the negative portrayals the Morningstar Commission reports? And finally, what is the connection between the perceptions gleaned from popular culture and the Morningstar reports and the realities of contemporary marriage? How can we carefully delineate the limits of these linkages?

Neither Sylvia nor I, nor anyone, I think, can provide thorough answers to these questions, but they're worth pondering. Sylvia's chapter is most suggestive about the second of these issues, the question of the connection between the intermarriage plot and stereotypical portrayals. She mentions the early melting pot romances, *The Jazz Singer* and *Abie's Irish Rose*, which project intermarriage as primarily positive, a way for Jews to enter the mainstream. These stories set the stage for what she called the continuing valorization of interfaith romances, which leads to the present day. But how did negative portrayals come to be a part of this intermarriage plot? Historically speaking, I see the representations of both Jews and of interfaith romance as

not clear, not linear or continual, but sort of zigzagging, changing over times. As the critic Harley Erdman has shown with drama, Neil Gabler with film, and David Zarowich with television, under the dominance of Jewish creative artists and entrepreneurs, popular culture avoided the portrayal of Jewish life for a good part of the twentieth century. Erdman refers to a decades-long, popular culture disappearing act occasioned by the moguls' self-denial. The suppression of difference meant that when you did have Jewish characters, usually they were exoticized, perpetuating their marginalization. Those who represented Jews in popular culture had to negotiate a chasm between visibility and invisibility, rationalization and the melting pot. Inter-marriage was not readily depicted in these years, but at a time when its presence in the population was slight and therefore unthreatening, it was portrayed, when it was, as favorable.

Following the assimilationist ideals of the early period and the quiescence of the mid-twentieth century, the portrayals of intermarriage and of Jews developed new trajectories in the sixties and seventies. The controversial *Bridget loves Bernie* became a landmark in television history. Maybe some of you were around at that time. In that show, Bernie, a Jew of lower-middle-class origins marries Bridget, a wealthy Catholic. It debuted two years after the national Jewish population survey had reported an increase of almost 32 percent in the number of Jews marrying non-Jewish spouses. This first television show about interfaith romance attracted an exceedingly negative reaction from the Jewish community. Jews blamed the show for advocating intermarriage and for what they considered negative portrayals of Jews. In the face of protest from the Jewish community, although not the Catholic community, the show was pulled after only eight months, despite the fact that it was CBS's most popular new show.

In contrast to the firestorm surrounding *Bridget loves Bernie*, the Jewish community had few complaints about the intermarriage of Rhoda in the show of the same name. In a much-

watched episode, Rhoda married Joe. People felt the show went down after that. It stayed on for a couple more years, but then it was pulled. There were few complaints from the Jewish community, perhaps because Jewishness was not a part of the show, and when they did complain it was about the negative image of Rhoda. In any case, *Bridget Loves Bernie* put Hollywood on notice that Jewish sensitivities needed to be recognized.

At a time when the rate of interfaith marriage was steadily climbing, following the demise of *Bridget Loves Bernie* and *Rhoda*, there were no Jewish-gentile intermarriages on television in a regular series for almost fifteen years. That's rather startling, actually. Then, in 1987, as Sylvia writes, there was *Thirty-Something*. We talked about that last night. We also saw clips from *Northern Exposure*, another highly regarded drama that was very important in inaugurating a new era in the portrayal of intermarriage on television. As Sylvia writes and explained last night, you can pick your own show, nowadays, if you want to watch intermarriage on television: *Mad about You*, *Murphy Brown*, *Love and War*, *Anything but Love*, *Flying Blind*, *LA Law*, *Beverly Hills 90210*, and *Brooklyn Bridge*, from which we saw a wonderful clip last night. So pervasive have been intermarriage and interdating on television that it is virtually impossible to find a Jewish-Jewish couple anywhere on screen. There are some, but they seem to disappear.

During the 1990s, the incidence of intermarriage on television, I would guess, would be 95, 97, 98 percent, something like that. Another striking fact is that almost all of TV's interfaith marriages or romances have been between Jewish men and non-Jewish women. Even as the number of Jews on TV grew exponentially—as they did in the nineties; I can give you a list of fifty shows with Jews on television after a long drought—Jewish women have been nearly invisible in mixed marriages. Two recent reverse-couplings, that of Jewish women and non-

Jewish men on *The Nanny* and *Dharma and Greg* are conspicuous by their rarity.

I would like to acknowledge the work of Keren McGinity. Karen is completing her PhD on intermarriage at Brown University. She has done wonderful work on intermarriage and popular culture and has called my attention to this theme in particular.

The trend toward mixed couplings of Jews on television—that is Jewish men with Jewish women—sets Jewish romance apart from those of other racial and ethnic groups, where men and women of the same background fall in love and meet and are shown on screen together. This pattern is accompanied by another equally prevalent representation—that of a stereotypical Jewish woman. Whether as daughter, mother, sister, cousin or friend, the TV Jewish woman is almost always seen at her worst: self-centered, materialistic, overbearing, manipulative and nagging. The powerful effect of these images on viewers is confirmed by the reports of the Morningstar Commission, which has provided extremely valuable and important information—about the only evidence of the harms that TV does. I can't praise this enough.

There are a variety of reasons for the current focus on intermarriage and the stereotypical portraits of Jewish women, which I believe go hand in hand. First, shows that are “too Jewish,” and by extension families that are “too Jewish,” will have limited audience appeal. Think *Brooklyn Bridge*: though this was a critically acclaimed show, it was pulled after about a year. I attended an American Jewish Committee conference in Los Angeles where the producers and writers of that show quarreled about why it was pulled so early. *Seinfeld* was allowed to stay on and find its audience, but *Brooklyn Bridge* was pulled, even though a targeted critical audience liked it. That left a negative in the minds of Hollywood people, a nightmare scenario: If a show is too Jewish, it won't have an audience.

One writer notes, “Traditional Jewish families make Hollywood squeamish ... TV

producers are worried that [the characters are] going to lose their sense of humor when they get married, like Sampson losing his strength when Delilah cut his hair. And much as workplace colleagues and neighborhood friends have replaced the traditional family in contemporary society, so they have on television.” Another quote from another writer: “Add Jewish into the domestic formula and any hope for a family program becomes a mirage.” So that’s the first reason why there are few Jewish families on television.

A second reason is that it reflects the demographic reality of Hollywood—the marriage patterns of the largely Jewish male group of producers, writers, and directors who are often intermarried themselves.

A third reason is that cultural difference, clash and conflict, like that between Jews and non-Jewish spouses and lovers, create tension and heighten viewer interest.

And, fourth, insiders insist that stereotypical portrayals are de rigueur in situation comedies that must develop their characters quickly. Even in drama, the tendency is to heighten, tighten, and simplify. At the AJC conference, I got into a little argument with the actor Jason Alexander [from *Seinfeld*]. He’s very Jewish identified, but he made the argument that you have to have stereotypes on television, because that’s how audiences identify. Being the good scholar that I am, I said, “What about the character Rachel in *Seinfeld*? You take her out to dinner and you’re trying to get her to eat lobster, and she doesn’t want to because she’s Orthodox. That was a very positive portrayal of a Jewish character. It seem to me that if you have imaginative writers you don’t have to present it in a stereotypical way!” I think he might have listened for twenty seconds.

The trend in which the positive portrayal of intermarriage goes hand in hand with exaggerated character depictions is a cause for worry rather than celebration. It is a pattern that

appears in contemporary films as well as television. It fits the paradigm that Sylvia describes so well: the valorization of intermarriage coexisting alongside stereotypical portrayals.

Let me give you some examples from recent films and television shows. In *Keeping the Faith*, which came out in 2000, a rabbi, played by Ben Stiller, and his best childhood friend, a priest, played by Ed Norton, fall in love with Anna, an Irish Catholic friend portrayed by Jenna Elfman. The rabbi wins the girl, who secretly takes conversion classes so that all ends happily. The message of this funny film is that interfaith romance is viable, even when a rabbi is involved. Interestingly enough, the rabbi's mother, Ann Bancroft, encourages the relationship, because she learned from her prior rejection of his older brother's mixed marriage that it doesn't pay to resist. Many observers lauded the fact that the girlfriend becomes a convert to Judaism. Nonetheless, I find troubling the comparison among the sought-after, non-Jewish girlfriend and the unattractive Jewish women.

Then there is *Meet the Parents*, 2000. Ben Stiller plays the unfortunately named Glib Parker, a male nurse who is in love with an upper-class school teacher, whose difficult and supremely self-confident father, played by Robert DeNiro, finds his daughter's boyfriend wanting. Stiller's Jewishness and his awkward, mumbling presence comes between them, as does his supposedly less-than-masculine bearing.

Along Came Polly, which is in the theaters now (2004), seems like an update of *Heartbreak Kid*, a film from twenty years ago. Again we have Ben Stiller (I think I've discovered something about Ben Stiller), this time playing an uptight, obsessive Jewish guy who marries an energetic real estate agent, a Jewish woman played by Deborah Messing. They have a traditional Jewish wedding, but she goes off and cheats on their honeymoon, and he finds solace with his former girlfriend, the impulsive, pretty Polly, played by Jennifer Aniston. So he dumps

his nasty Jewish wife and finds happiness with a very nice, and very non-Jewish, Polly.

Is it a coincidence that Ben Stiller plays the male Jewish lead in each of these three films? Stiller has become the representative of the comic Jewish male. Uptight and overanxious, his ideal partner is the cool, gentile woman, whose placidity balances his neuroticism. In *Keeping the Faith* and *Along Came Polly*, this lovely heroine is contrasted with the negative attributes of Jewish women. Notwithstanding Jake the rabbi, the other characters played by Stiller depict the Jewish male in traditionally stereotypical ways: insecure, clumsy, less than fully masculine, in short, a *schlemiel*. And the Jewish women in the films have their own specific character quirks, all of them negative.

For the last few years, television's most critically acclaimed situation comedy has been Larry David's *Curb Your Enthusiasm*. David plays himself, a grumpy Jewish comedian married to the lovely, blond, non-Jewish Cheryl. Mean-spirited and aggressive, with a tin ear to the social niceties of any situation, David wreaks havoc in every episode, while Cheryl is left to pick up the pieces. Hilarious and often brilliant, *Curb Your Enthusiasm* is but another in a long line of media portrayals of intermarried couples: the nerdy—or in this case nervy—Jewish male married to the confident, non-Jewish blond who, if she can't polish her husband's rough edges, at least complements his defects. Interestingly, Cheryl's sang froid at Larry David's impossible exploits contrasts with the foul-mouthed hostility of Susy Green, Larry's agent's wife and his best friend, played by Susie Essman, who was also in *Keeping the Faith*. Sarcastic and insulting, directed as a frizzy, frumpy, tardy housewife, the Jewish Susie is a complete contrast to the understated but glamorous Cheryl. Sound familiar? Time prevents me from cataloguing the many instances in which a Jewish female character is shown in this negative fashion in contrast to a lovely non-Jew. To give one more example, take the contrast between the female stars of *Friends*, two of

whom are unsuccessfully half-Jewish, and Janice, the whining, nasal, former girlfriend of Chandler, whom he and others try to dump—a very real, negative Jewish type.

Other examples of intermarriage show that the “double-or-nothing” ideal remains deeply present in our popular culture. Examples include the character Charlotte, on the mega-hit *Sex in the City*, who converts to Judaism to marry Harry, the nice Jewish man, and a character on *The OC*, which Sylvia talked about last night.

Is popular culture incapable of freshening this stale narrative? The perpetual repetition of this intermarriage plot line is utterly disheartening, even when presented in such a creative fashion as Larry David’s show. What troubles me is the lack of any alternative: Jewish families—that is a Jewish husband and a Jewish wife—are apparently still beyond the pale of what is believed to be acceptable to a broad audience, so much so that such depictions have almost completely vanished from the screen. Even such exceptions as the much commented-upon marriage of Grace Adler, the attractive Jewish character played by Deborah Messing—Brandeis graduate—on *Will and Grace* to a Jewish doctor played by Harry Connick, does not ring true. Deborah Messing, we learned last night, won a Jewish image award and deserved it. But the husband, the Jewish doctor, regularly disappears from the story, having been scripted as a human rights activist who is always off saving some poor third world country. Despite her marriage, Grace still loves her best friend, the non-Jewish, gay Will Truman. This leaves the prime comic situation one which critic Vincent Brunk calls “fag hag”: the antics of a heterosexual woman who dotes on gay men. In another comedy, *Suddenly Susan*, the Jewish husband, a rabbi, is killed off. So Jewish-Jewish relationships, even when they’re written into [the script], usually wind up in the trash bin. There are exceptions, as in WB’s *Seventh Heaven*, but it seems clear, as Sylvia says, that on television, the future lies in intermarriage.

With increasing numbers of Jews becoming part of mixed marriages, both in reality and in popular culture, Sylvia suggests that perhaps the more unrealistic and anti-Semitic ways of seeing and interpreting real Jews will decline. Despite the common negative perceptions of Jewish identity, as depicted in the Morningstar interviews, the very fact that mixed marriages are increasingly valorized within the media may have some advantageous consequences. Sylvia may be more optimistic than I am. I believe that the patterns the focus groups describe—Jewish men as neurotic, Jewish women as boring and oppressive—live on in so many contemporary depictions simply because they’re convenient laugh triggers. In the shows that I have described, neither Jewish men nor women are depicted as particularly romantic. They’re often grotesque or exotic—if you can even recognize who they are. Not much has changed since Maurice Berge, writing about the portrayal of Jewish masculinity on television some years ago, pointed to ubiquitous stereotypes [of Jewish men]: “The... subordinated *schlemiel*, the neurotic, the cryptic, and the feminized Jew, precisely because they appeared as *nebbishes* and wimpy *schlemiels* ... had to be validated by gentile wives or girlfriends.” As for the Jewish women, to quote the Morningstar reports in Sylvia’s book: “they’re dorky, they’re ugly, they talk a lot, annoying, very obnoxious, nasal, very JAP-py.”

Although often these images make for easy, quick laughs, such humor is cruel and upsetting to Jewish women. It lessens self-esteem, particularly for young women, who especially rely on the media for their role models. And those non-Jews with little acquaintance with Jewish women tend to accept the stereotypes as real, as we’ve seen from the Morningstar reports. These stereotyped and predictable character types have become part and parcel of the popular culture intermarriage narrative.

Earlier melting pot representations show that intermarriage in popular culture tended to

satisfy the yearnings of American Jews, and the majority of Americans, [confirming their] belief that pluralism and tolerance were viable ideals. In film and television today, however, intermarriage has become formulaic and rigid, always accompanied by such predictable types as the Jewish male *schmiel*, the gentile wife or princess, and the vulgar Jewish girl. The cultural work of the earlier intermarriage plot based on historically salient needs has been replaced by a much less appropriate expression of common shtick. Outside of television I think there is more hope of more varied and diverse types because other media allow more attention to character development. The fiction, drama and film of recent years have shown some innovative characterizations. Think of *Kissing Jessica Stein*, *Lucy and Toni*, *Traffic*, *A Walk on the Moon*: these films deal with same-sex marriage and divorce in innovative ways. Even on television—I suppose I am an optimist like Sylvia in the end—I think it's probably not impossible to hope for positive change.

Stories of interfaith romance reflect the very real situation of many Jews and non-Jews in America. They are a legitimate subject for both comedic and dramatic television. But because Jewish men and women receive a great deal of their self-worth from their reflections in the media, the challenge is to examine intermarriage honestly and with some complexity—as we're doing today—as well as to create situations with dramatic tension or comedic appeal that pair Jewish partners with each other at least some of the time. With its immediacy and accessibility, television affords wonderful opportunities to introduce viewers to diverse ethnic lifestyles, traditions, and beliefs. Like film and fiction, television can play a positive educational role in helping to shape identity. I don't know if popular culture can provide the educational, intellectual, and experiential depth (I'm quoting loads of Sylvia's words) that many intermarried families are seeking. That's the message with which she optimistically closes her book. There's

no doubt that, along with fiction, film, drama, and other culture media, television plays a significant role in shaping consciousness, identity and history. I will close by saying that if we, as audiences, insist on more imaginative, more experiential, and deeper portrayals, there is a reasonable chance that we can bolster the will of the artistic and production community to respond in kind. We can always turn off the set, can't we?

Regina Stein: I'm Regina Stein, director of the Hadassah Leadership Academy. There was a comment last night about GLAAD and the impact that it had on the stereotypical images of gays and lesbians in the media. I wondered as you were speaking if there is anything going on in the black community in America in terms of the stereotypes of blacks in the media and if, perhaps, there might not be something we could learn from that community as well.

Joyce Antler: There is something going on in terms of not only African-Americans, but a coalition of people of color and portrayals in the media.

It's actually very discouraging. Once a year they come out with a report which always says that the portrayals of people of color and older Americans and handicapped Americans are not very positive. Usually the numbers are going down, and the television networks in alarm say we're going to do better. They make some small changes. There are watchdog groups looking at this, very similar to the Morningstar Commission in fact. It's important to keep the media on their guard. If there is nobody protesting, not much is going to happen for change.

Bruce Phillips: I've been wanting to ask somebody who actually knows about popular culture about something that occurred to me while I was reading Sylvia's book, and that you referred to as well: the re-emergence of intermarriage. The stuff that I've read on popular culture, for example, Eric Lott's *Love and Theft* or Mike Davis's *An Ecology of Fear*, suggest that sometimes the apparent topic actually includes much more. So minstrelsy was not only about

race, it was about gender. Mike Davis suggests that all these films about aliens are really not about outer space at all, but about immigration and class. Assuming that these guys are not totally off the wall, it occurs to me: is the interest in intermarriage among Jews really an interest in intermarriage among Jews, or is it a safe way of dealing with larger issues of intermarriage? In other words, there's only a two percent chance that any American could marry a Jew, but maybe it's safer to talk about that than about marrying a Hispanic or marrying a black or marrying an Asian. Possibly the great interest in Jewish intermarriage is that it's a safe way of talking about other kinds of intermarriage that are also, as Richard Alba talked about, on the increase.

Joyce Antler: Possibly. I'd love to hear what Sylvia thinks of this, because she does write about it. I'm not exactly sure whether it covers a larger point of view. It seems to me that there are a lot of Jews in the media, and they like to present themselves, and Jews are interesting characters. But can you actually imagine a show with a Jewish family or Jews talking to each other? Can you imagine it? I think it's actually hard to imagine. You can imagine a black family, a Hispanic family, an Italian family, an Asian-American family—but the idea of a Jewish family seems to me so boundary-crossing at this point that one way to deal with Jewish characters is to have them intermarry. I think it's sad that we can't have enough variety in presentations of these character types.

Q: I'm struck by something. I'm not quite sure I can articulate it, but I think it's good news. The fact that the popular culture is able to focus on mixed marriages—despite the extreme characteristics of the people involved in these—and make it palatable to a general audience, means to me that there is a certain social acceptance of this kind of co-existence. They have actually gone one step further now. There are gay guys and straight guys together on television for the first time, which seems to indicate as well a particular social acceptance of that kind of

life. Not yet touched, however—and perhaps for the simple reason that there isn't enough humor or social acceptance yet—is the black-white, mixed color, or mixed racial marriage. Perhaps because society can't accept these relationships totally, there isn't enough humor to associate with them to make it palatable to society. So, as I said, I think the message is good news because the social acceptability seems to be greater.

Joyce Antler: I think it's an interesting comment. I would repeat what I think Sylvia argues, exactly in the line that you go: that the valorization of intermarriage that we see on television can have positive effects. That hopefully it will mean a truer representation of Jews as they are, rather than as cultural exotics. But let's see what happens. It can change very quickly. The evidence is not all that clear to me that it's going to play a positive role.