



'You Should See Yourself': Jewish Identity in Postmodern American Culture

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The past few decades have seen a remarkable surge in Jewish influences on American culture. Entertainers and artists, such as Jerry Seinfeld, Adam Sandler, and Tony Kushner have heralded new waves of television, film, and theater; a major klezmer revival is under way; bagels are now as commonplace as pizza; and kabbalah has become as cool as crystals. Does this broad range of cultural expression accurately reflect what it means to be Jewish in America today? Bringing together fourteen essays by leading scholars, "You Should See Yourself" examines the fluctuating representations of Jewishness in a variety of areas of popular culture and high art, including literature, the media, film, theater, music, dance, painting, photography, and stand-up comedy. Contributors explore the evolution that has taken place within these cultural forms, whether transformations have been gradual or sudden, and how we can best explain these changes. Are variations in our understanding of Jewishness the result of general phenomena such as multiculturalism, politics, and postmodernism, or are they the product of more specifically Jewish concerns such as the intermarriage/continuity crisis, religious renewal, and relations between the United States and Israel? An introduction by Vincent Brook frames the essays by comparing Jewish identity in American culture to the fractured identities that are the norm in postmodern society. Accessible to students and general readers alike, this volume takes an important step toward advancing the discussion of Jewish cultural influences in this country.

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