

DOCUMENTARIES ABOUT
JEWISH RENEWAL IN
CONTEMPORARY CUBA:
Hope or Hype?

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HAVANA NAGILA: THE JEWS IN CUBA. Directed by Evan Garelle. Distributed by Snitzki and Stone.¹ (United States, 1995. Spanish and English, color, 57 minutes.)

THE BELIEVERS: STORIES FROM JEWISH HAVANA. Produced and directed by Bonnie Burt. Distributed by Bonnie Burt Productions.² (United States, 1994. Spanish and English, color, 16 minutes.)

ABRAHAM AND EUGENIA: STORIES FROM JEWISH CUBA. Produced and directed by Bonnie Burt. Distributed by Bonnie Burt Productions. (United States, 1995. Spanish and English, color, 33 minutes.)

A MIS CUATRO ABUELOS. Directed by Aaron Yelin Rozengway. Produced by the Instituto Cubano de Arte e Industria Cinematográficos. No distribution in the United States. (Cuba, 1993. Spanish, 10 minutes.)

In November 1991, the Cuban Communist Party repealed a ban on religious belief and made it possible for religious believers to join the party. In July of the following year, the definition of the Cuban state as based on Marxist-Leninist philosophical materialism was removed from the constitution. These decisions, coming at the end of the cold war during a period of increased economic hardship for the Cuban people, spawned renewed religious and spiritual activity on the island. One account in the U.S. secular press interpreted the growth of religious participation as "evidence of a massive loss of faith in government."³ The Christian press, in contrast, focused more on the Catholic Church's ability to serve basic needs due to the exemption of humanitarian aid to non-government organizations in the U.S. trade embargo. Whatever the un-

1. Snitzki and Stone, 819 W. Roseburg Ave., Suite 240, Modesto, Calif. 95350. Telephone (209) 571-0646.

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3. Tony Masland, "Learning to Keep the Faith," *Newsweek*, 13 Mar. 1995, p. 30.

derlying impulse, Cubans have returned en masse to all forms of religious faith. Baptisms increased from seven thousand in 1971 to more than thirty-three thousand in 1991. These figures alone signal the social and political relevance of Cuban religious renewal.⁴ Many of the “new faithful” are under thirty, which means that they were born after the Cuban Revolution and raised as Marxists and atheists. Their search for spiritual grounding reflects the depth of Cuba’s current crisis. In the midst of this “special period,” Cubans are looking to organized religion for the hope and stability once promised by Fidel Castro and the Cuban Revolution.

For Cuba’s Jewish community, which was on the verge of disappearing after the Mariel boat lift, the 1991 party decision and the 1992 constitutional amendment provided a lifeline. Community elders watched joyfully as young adults returned to synagogues and community activities, while Jewish children and teenagers began to participate in religious education and services. The small community finally felt alive with hope. Yet resources to support growth and rebuilding were scarce, and the community had to appeal to international organizations for help.

During this period, four documentaries were produced that preserve Cuba’s Jewish history and chronicle its present rebirth. Three videos made by U.S.-based documentarists are clearly meant to announce the revival of a Cuban Jewish community to the international community. The fourth, a Cuban film, is a more spiritual account of Jewish tradition and life in Cuba. All these documentaries herald the resurgence of Jewish practice and education, but each falls short of demonstrating the Cubanness of this revival.

In Latin America, the increasing portability and relatively low cost of video production have made video the medium of choice for recording oral histories and capturing the memories of elders in any community. Aside from the benefits of video to the producer, this medium is easily distributed to rural areas, shared with large communal (and often illiterate) audiences, and diffused internationally. The flexibility of smaller consumer-format videos (like “super8”) allows the video maker to work alone, without a large obtrusive crew disturbing the community. Further, subjects tend to be less intimidated by this format and more willing to discuss the complexities of racial, ethnic, and religious identity at length. The recovering Jewish community in Cuba has allowed two teams of video makers from the United States to document its history, memories, and the emergence of a new generation of youths who identify themselves as Jewish. The three resulting videos add to a growing body of video work by and about “exotic ethnic identities” in Latin America.⁵

4. Enrique López Oliva, “Religious Reawakening: Stirrings in Cuba,” *The Christian Century*, 19 Oct. 1994, p. 940.

5. The phrase is taken from Judith Laikin Elkin, “Exploring the Jewish Archipelago in Latin America,” *LARR* 30, no. 3 (1995):225.

These unique videos add to the relatively small body of information on Latin American Jews available to non-Spanish-speakers.

Yet each video suffers the limitations of what Julianne Burton-Carvajal and Bill Nichols have termed *expository documentary*, which exhibits three main characteristics: the voice of an omniscient unseen narrator speaking in direct verbal address; images that illustrate the narration; and significant use of nonsynchronized sound.⁶ The expository documentary seeks to explain a particular historical phenomenon to its audience, who expect this mode of documentary to present an objective, compelling argument in which an ordered world unfolds according to a cause-and-effect logic. By definition, the expository form offers a third-person perspective on the social-historical facts being documented.

This attempt at objectivity is at once desirable and frustrating. It is desirable because we watch these films and videos to “learn something,” to get “facts.” But it is also frustrating because the third-person point of view distances the viewer from the personal realities of the subjects. Thus the distance between the U.S. audience for whom these videos were intended and Cuban Jews is magnified by the videos’ discursive strategy. The studied objectivity prevents any subtle exploration of the position of this minority community within a troubled society. Because each video isolates the Jewish experience in Cuba from the Cuban experience at large, it cannot provide a complete look at Jewish Cuba or at Cuban Jews. Instead, the videos depict the rebirth of Cuba’s Jewish community as unique when in fact it is closely related to religious revitalization throughout the island’s population.

Havana Nagila: The Jews in Cuba, directed by Los Angeles-based video journalist Evan Garelle, provides a broad overview of the history of Jews in Cuba in the past five hundred years. The video combines archival photos and film footage, family photographs, interviews, shots of the community in action today, and voice-over narration to argue that in the past century Cuba has welcomed Jewish immigrants and given them a place to start anew. This presentation of contemporary Jewish life in Cuba asserts that Jews suffer along with the rest of the Cuban people. The collapse of the Socialist bloc, culminating in 1989 with the reunification of Germany and the destruction of the Berlin Wall, has affected Cuban life adversely. Shortages of food and medicine, inflation, and general economic malaise have become part of everyday Cuban reality in the 1990s. Thus Jewish Cubans share the struggle for subsistence along with their compatriots.

Havana Nagila preserves oral histories of the refugees of World War

6. Julianne Burton, “Toward a History of Social Documentary in Latin America,” in *The Social Documentary in Latin America*, edited by Julianne Burton (Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1990); and Bill Nichols, *Representing Reality* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991).

II who came to Cuba and also of some postwar Jews. This video allows some of those who lived through these traumatic experiences to recount their stories, thus providing the viewer with a rich tapestry of Jewish Cuban history. The video highlights the fact that although Cuban-born Jews have maintained their religious traditions, they have tended to assimilate more than Jewish immigrants who arrived before World War II. Interviews and photographs combine to tell and show this assimilation, contrasting the images of Cuban Jews from different eras. What becomes apparent is the strong influence of older generations, within the Jewish community and within Cuban culture and society at large. While the picture of Cuban Jewry presented in *Havana Nagila* is generally rosy, the producers also show the other side. During the course of the video, the struggles of poor Jews, the obstacles faced by Jews after the fall of their “Cuban paradise” in 1959, and problems created by Cuba’s economic dependence first on the United States and later on the Soviet Union are all touched on.

Havana Nagila claims that in the 1990s (as throughout Jewish Cuban history), Cuban Jews are as essentially Cuban as they are Jewish. Since the revolution, however, Jews in Cuba have become increasingly secularized. Synagogues, schools, and cemeteries have all fallen into disrepair. Only the elderly have retained the religious element of Judaism. Those born after the revolution have felt that religious practice would hinder their careers. By the 1980s, it had become nearly impossible to form a *minyán* in order to conduct Sabbath services, and younger Jews frequently married outside the community.⁷ The 1990s, however, have brought a renewal of tradition and religious belief, largely because of the 1991 party decision and the constitutional amendment in 1992. These steps toward reconciling socialism with religious beliefs have liberated young Cubans, who now feel free to learn about their Jewish identity and participate in the community. This trend has led to a resurgence in community activities that include services on High Holidays, Hebrew lessons, and the performance of traditional Jewish marriages. Still, the community has no rabbi nor any *moyel* to perform the *bris* (ritual circumcision). The group survives only with help from the Mexican Jewish community and from the Canadian Jewish Congress, which has provided annually matzah and other kosher foodstuffs for Passover since the 1960s.

Via voice-over narration and interviews, *Havana Nagila* conveys the history of Jewish life in Cuba. Interviews with elderly Jews who came

7. A *minyán* traditionally consists of ten adult men. Fulfilling a *minyán* was so difficult in the 1980s that the community frequently asked foreign visitors to join them. Chuck Kleinhans, associate professor in the Department of Radio/Television/Film at Northwestern University and co-editor of *JumpCut*, recalls that on a trip to the Havana film festival in 1985, he was approached in his hotel and asked to join a *minyán* so that the community could hold services.

to Cuba as part of a wave of immigrants in the early twentieth century are juxtaposed with archival photographs showing that Jews were able to join Cuban society and to make a living, often beginning as itinerant peddlers and then going into retail. The interviews emphasize Jewish perceptions of an absence of xenophobia and anti-Semitism in Cuba. Although evidence exists that the first Jews to set foot on Cuban territory were *conversos* serving as Columbus's crew and translators,⁸ Jews were not allowed to enter Cuba legally until 1881. Formal permission to hold non-Catholic religious services was not granted until after Cuban independence in 1902. Before 1924 many Jews came to Cuba as a roundabout way of seeking entry into the United States. Some found Cuba and Cubans welcoming and generous and decided to stay on the island. After changes in U.S. immigration laws made it nearly impossible for Eastern Europeans to enter the United States from Cuba, Jewish émigrés decided to "make Cuba their America." *Havana Nagila* stresses the modern history of Jewish immigration to Cuba, implying that the recent revival is rising from the ashes of the Jewish community established between the two world wars.

The video does not differentiate, however, among different communities of Jews who came to Cuba in the early twentieth century: Ashkenazim, Sephardim, and those from the United States. These communities evolved independently of one another and kept their distance due to differences in language, culture, religious practice, and class. By ignoring these differences, *Havana Nagila* creates the illusion of a unified Jewish community. In reality, the division of the Jewish community into three major groups and a number of smaller ones prevented the Jews from establishing communal organizations, wielding political influence, and being able to serve adequately the massive influx of refugees arriving between 1938 and 1945.

Instead of noting the friction among Jewish communities, *Havana Nagila* focuses on the bad press Cuba got for refusing to allow the *St. Louis* to unload its cargo of European refugees, an action that sent the ship back to Europe where nearly a thousand of its passengers ultimately perished at the hands of the Germans. In one interview, historian Robert Levine comments that the Hollywood movie *Voyage of the Damned* gave a biased account of the *St. Louis* affair that overplayed Cuba's guilt. He presents an abridged version of his discussion of the incident in his book *Tropical Diaspora*, noting the complicity of U.S. officials and diplomats and emphasizing the pressure on the Cubans to refuse the ship. This incident notwithstanding, Cuba welcomed Jewish refugees, most of whom came

8. The term *conversos* refers to Jews who, under pressure from the Spanish Inquisition, converted to Catholicism. Conversos and their descendants, also called New Christians, were frequently subject to the scrutiny of Inquisitors and zealots who ardently sought out "Judaizers," meaning those accused of practicing Christianity in public and perpetuating their Jewish beliefs and traditions in secret.

to Cuba as a last resort and in hopes of eventually getting visas to go to the United States. In fact, Cuba gave refuge to more Eastern European Jews during World War II than any other Latin American country. In addition to backing the Allies against Nazism and Fascism, Cuba also maintained a fairly open policy toward Jews.

More than 90 percent of Cuban Jews fled the island after the revolution in 1959. Most left not because of religious persecution but for the same financial reasons as other many middle-class Cubans: their economic positions as entrepreneurs and successful business owners, not their religious affiliation, caused the Castro regime to categorize them as "enemies of the state." As Robert Levine notes, "even during the revolutionary government's anti-religious campaign, Castro bent over backwards not to persecute the Jews."⁹ To back up this conclusion, Levine points out that the only private enterprises not nationalized by the revolution were Jewish butchers, and Jews who kept kosher homes were allowed a different ration of meat and poultry than other Cubans.¹⁰ Moreover, the only private schools allowed to remain open were Jewish schools, although they were required to accept non-Jewish students.

To support the argument that Jews did not feel persecuted by the revolution (at least not the Jews interviewed on screen), *Havana Nagila* offers much of the same evidence as *Tropical Diaspora*. Like Levine's book, *Havana Nagila* posits that the only problem Jews had with the revolutionary government concerned Cuba's relations with Israel. Interviews with Jews who lived through the revolution and the subsequent restructuring of Cuba discuss the involvement of Cuban Jews in the politics of the revolution, their commitment to the revolution's social values, and their belief in its promises to provide for the needs of the Cuban people.

Havana Nagila concludes with a brief epilogue updating viewers on three of the interviewees. One man has emigrated to the United States, while the Cuban government granted permission for another young man to enroll at Yeshiva University in New York as Cuba's first rabbinical student since the revolution.¹¹ In 1994 a third interviewee helped establish Cuba's first Hadasah chapter. Although one member of the community has left, *Havana Nagila* concludes that the Jewish community in Havana is thriving.

Two more personal accounts of Jewish Cuban experience complement the historical *Havana Nagila* video: *The Believers: Stories from Jewish Havana* and *Abraham and Eugenia: Stories from Jewish Cuba*, both directed by San Francisco-based video maker Bonnie Burt. Both videos bridge the distance implicit in unadulterated expository documentary by borrowing

9. Robert M. Levine, *Tropical Diaspora: The Jewish Experience in Cuba* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993), 251.

10. *Ibid.*, 276.

11. "The Story of David Said Levy, the Rabbinical Student, Is Told in 'Latkes, bueno!,'" *New Yorker*, 10 Dec. 1993, pp. 57–59.

elements from observational and interactive documentary. For instance, the “voice of God” narrator has been replaced with more direct narration by community members. Many images of the community in prayer services, classrooms, and community gatherings illustrate the activities of the Cuban Jewish community. In some cases, interviewees talk to one side of the camera, implying a conversation with the camera operator or video maker. Most important, Burt’s documentaries incorporate many of the important characteristics that Burton-Carvajal has identified as *interactive documentary* in that they “emphasize partiality, interpretation, the lived experience of social actors as apprehended and conveyed through a process in which subjects and filmmakers are both instrumental.”¹² These two videos are stylistically fairly conventional nonetheless. They employ many of the same documentary techniques, combining first-person testimony by members of the community with archival photographs and beautiful footage of Havana and interior areas of the island.

The Believers focuses on the surprising renewal of the Jewish community as well as the basic survival problems facing all Cubans in the era following the cold war. The video does not cogently connect the two issues, however, missing an opportunity to argue for the fundamental Cubanness of Cuban Jewish life and identity. Both of Burt’s pieces contain an implicit argument that Cuban Jews are Cuban, that they suffer the same indignities as their compatriots, and that Jewish identity does not preclude national identity. This question is an important one for issues of identity and nationality in Latin American studies, and it is unfortunate that Burt does not explore it in any detail.

The “believers” are Jews who have returned to their faith and youths who have discovered their Jewish identity for the first time since the Communist Party determined that religious belief and loyalty to the party may not be incompatible. *The Believers* explores the daily struggles of the thirteen hundred Jews estimated to make up the Jewish community in Havana. A series of interviews with Cubans who were born Jews as well as with converts presents their plight to a larger Jewish audience. Most of this short tape discusses shortages of food, medicine, gas, electricity, and educational materials. It suggests that Cuban Jews gain nourishment from their faith and spirituality, a kind of “soul food” that helps them survive the current shortages. The “believers” interviewed in this video, older Jews and younger ones, acknowledge that the renewal of a religious community that was dying out ten years earlier is nothing less than a miracle. But although *The Believers* posits this revival as a Cuban miracle, it neglects the subject of similar spiritual and religious renewal among non-Jewish groups. As a result, the video’s argument for the Cubanness of the Jewish revival falls flat.

12. Burton, *Social Documentary in Latin America*, 5.

Abraham and Eugenia presents the intimate struggles of two Cuban Jews who have maintained their faith individually for more than thirty years, despite the Communist Party's ban on religious believers and the dwindling of the Jewish community in numbers and resources. Abraham's story takes viewers to Jewish Havana to reveal the infrastructure and rituals of Jewish life in the capital city. The administrator of Adeth Israel synagogue, Abraham has served the community as the kosher butcher and the secretary of the burial society. *Abraham and Eugenia* opens with shots of Abraham and Papo, the Afro-Cuban caretaker, in the Jewish cemetery. Jewish immigrant communities around the world have always established burial societies as their first claim on their new lands. The Cuban Jewish burial society was founded in 1900, and the cemetery was inaugurated in 1905. The society was begun by U.S. Jews who came to Cuba during the Cuban-Spanish-American War. Although Abraham stresses the importance of community control of the cemetery, of deciding who gets buried there and where they will be buried, the Cuban state recently took over care of the cemetery. Many shots in this sequence show its general state of disrepair, attesting visually to the state's limited interest in religious burial.

Papo's comments on his role as the cemetery's caretaker provide some of the most poignant and thought-provoking moments of this segment. His father was the caretaker from 1923 until he died in 1963. Papo began working with his father during his childhood and was invited by the community to continue as caretaker after his father's death. He is now retired and continues to serve the community as a volunteer because he loves the work. Papo briefly comments that most Cubans know little about the Jews and have "malas ideas" due to their ignorance. He adds that he knows these bad ideas are untrue and declares, "Yo me siento un hebreo más en este país." This juncture is one of the few moments in *Abraham and Eugenia* that refers to the relationship between Jewish Cuba and Cuban Cuba.

Abraham discusses the deterioration of the Jewish community in the years since Castro's revolution in 1959. The Jewish day school continued to operate into the late 1960s, with the state providing buses to take the children to and from school. When the bus service was discontinued due to economic hardship, the school closed, and the children began to attend local public schools. To continue Jewish education, the Havana community ran a Sunday school. Abraham recounts that the Sunday school ceased to function after the 1980 Mariel boat lift because "the children and the teachers left." This outcome boded poorly for the Havana Jewish community. Its leaders feared that Jewish life in Havana would end by the 1990s due to intermarriage, general assimilation, and lack of education and resources. But in 1990, the community unexpectedly began to thrive. A religious school was created to serve more than a hundred

students of all ages. Tradition and continuity evidently concern all members of the community, young and old alike.

Abraham contributed to the continuity by preparing his son Yacob to become a bar mitzvah, the first in the synagogue since 1979.¹³ Abraham's wife converted to Judaism two years before the ceremony, and the couple was married again in a religious service conducted by a Mexican rabbi. Burt witnessed the bar mitzvah in December 1994, part of which is presented in her video. Interviews with women of the community detail the special preparations that were made for the celebration. A rabbi came in from Guadalajara, Mexico, to officiate. The fact that the community allowed Burt to bring her camera into the service is striking for a traditionally Orthodox Jewish community that under other circumstances would prohibit filming of a religious ritual of this import, especially by a woman. The Cuban Jewish community takes great pride in its persistence and its rebirth. Yacob's bar mitzvah provides incomparable testimony to the strength and endurance of the faith of Jews surviving what Levine calls "the tropical diaspora."

The second part of *Abraham and Eugenia* demonstrates this same strength in the interior of the island, through the experiences of a Jewish woman named Eugenia. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Jewish colonies were founded in Santiago, Camagüey, and Cienfuegos, mainly by Sephardic Jews fleeing Turkey and Greece. During World War II, Ashkenazi Jewish refugees from Poland and Russia joined these colonies. Today, each community counts fewer than a hundred families due to intermarriage and lack of Jewish education. Economic hardship forced all the Jewish communities in the interior to turn their synagogues over to the state. Their current moment of renewal derives largely from the persistence of elder family members and the lifting of bans against religious belief. Eugenia charmingly but candidly narrates this renewal and its effect on her family and friends.

Eugenia's story deals more with the past than does Abraham's. Her memories and ongoing contributions to the Jewish community in Santiago illustrate the even greater difficulties encountered by communities in Cuba's interior. As one of three daughters of a very religious father, she recalls that when he died at the age of fifty-five, his biggest concern was that his daughters marry Jews. Eventually, however, his daughters realized that they had only two choices: not to marry or to adapt to Cuban life and marry non-Jews. All three married gentiles. Eugenia's husband agreed to allow her to educate their children as Jews, helping her keep part of her promise to her father. Interspersed with

13. *Bar mitzvah* translates literally as "son of the Torah." It is the religious ritual by which a thirteen-year-old boy achieves adult standing within the Jewish community (a girl performs a "bat mitzvah" as a "daughter of the Torah"). As part of this rite of passage, the child must read in Hebrew publicly and comment on a portion of the Torah.

Eugenia's narration of her family history are images of her daughters singing Jewish and Hebrew songs, underscoring the importance of Jewish tradition in their family. But Eugenia's story is not linked well to the Jewish provincial experience as a whole. It remains an isolated personal tale of spirit, faith, and hope. Personal histories do not necessarily need to be contextualized broadly to be significant, and certainly the oral history that Burt records is valuable and rich. For the video's intended audience of non-Cubans, however, it might have been useful to situate the personal in the context of the community and the revolution.

The fourth documentary under review was directed by a Cuban filmmaker and produced by the Instituto Cubano de Arte e Industria Cinematográficos (ICAIC). *A mis cuatro abuelos* was shot on film by Aaron Yelin Rozengway.¹⁴ The opening scene of a young woman visiting the Jewish cemetery and the liturgical quality of the organ music immediately give the film an intimate and ethereal quality. It defies assignation to a particular documentary film mode, having neither the omniscient narrator and persuasive qualities of expository documentary nor the active participation of the filmmaker that marks interactive documentary. Rather, the film's poetic mixture of many documentary modes belongs to the rich body of Cuban cinema since the revolution that has experimented with film language.

A mis cuatro abuelos begins with the young woman visiting the Jewish cemetery and leaving a pebble on the tombstone of a relative. She washes her hands and leaves the cemetery, boarding a bus headed toward Havana. As she looks out the window, the camera follows her gaze, coming to rest on the building occupied by the Jewish community center. From this moment, viewers set out on a tour of Jewish Havana and never see the young woman again. Like the other three documentaries, *A mis cuatro abuelos* uses interviews with community leaders to inform viewers about Jewish history on the island. These interviews, however, are embedded in an array of images that evoke the filmmaker's (or the silent witness's) quest for the story of Jewish Cuba. A camera moves slowly throughout Havana to different synagogues and community centers, filming Jewish prayer, study, and music. Although the head of one of these community centers speaks to the camera about the community's history, *A mis cuatro abuelos* avoids the deliberate objectivity of Burt's and Garelle's videos. Interviews with young and old Jews stress personal and family history. These interviews, in combination with images of community activities involving three generations, evoke a sense of continuity and tradition.

Unlike the other three videos discussed here, *A mis cuatro abuelos* does not attempt to present a holistic view of Cuba's Jews. Perhaps for

14. Yelin's father Saúl Yelin was a secular Jew and one of the founders of ICAIC.

this reason, it avoids the flaws and omissions of the other documentaries. This video connects parts of the community through its soundtrack, as in revealing that the sounds of a seemingly non-diegetic string quartet¹⁵ are a rehearsal of liturgical music at the community center. The shortest of the works considered here (only ten minutes long), *A mis cuatro abuelos* is part documentary, part poetry. The visual and aural evidence of Cuba's Jewish history and present create a moving homage to the community's elders and a tribute to its young people.

Despite the lyrical camera work and spiritual music track, *A mis cuatro abuelos* leaves many questions unanswered, such as who is the grandchild of the four abuelos, the "I" of the camera? Who are the interviewees? *A mis cuatro abuelos* as a documentary does not provide information as clearly or deliberately as Burt's or Garelle's pieces. But as a film, it evokes the essence and spirit of Jewish life in urban Cuba and elsewhere—family, tradition, spirituality, peace. *A mis cuatro abuelos* also avoids the distancing created by the discursive approaches of the three video documentaries already reviewed. Rather, its rhetorical strategy involves viewers emotionally in the quest. The film's camera work, especially the long takes of community events and personal histories, engage viewers, asking them to participate in the on-screen exploration. Although it too isolates Cuban Jewry from the rest of Cuba, *A mis cuatro abuelos* causes viewers to recognize that separateness and to question it.

Taken as a group, these four documentaries offer valuable information as well as insight into Cuban Jewish life. Each is the product of a specific discourse that determines to a certain extent the content of the use-value of the resulting documentaries (or in what context each would be most useful). The U.S.-made videos belong to a body of journalistic or sociological documentary seeking to present information about the world to U.S. audiences. Specifically, Burt's videos intend to spark concern and to elicit U.S. Jewish support of the burgeoning Cuban Jewish community.¹⁶ Yelin's film belongs to postrevolutionary Cuban documentary filmmaking. As such it presents a segment of Cuba to an audience of Cubans and leads them to engage critically with the facts and images presented. While these four documentaries serve different audiences in different ways, as a body of work they provide an invaluable if incomplete glimpse of the rebirth of the Cuban Jewish community.

15. *Non-diegetic* refers to the fact that the music lacks a visible source and is therefore assumed to originate from outside the film's story.

16. Both videos end with an address to which the viewer can write for further information about contributing to the cause of the Cuban Jewish community.