

Antin's interest in the "old country" suggests that second-generation Jews such as herself — of Eastern European and Russian descent, but born in the US — did retain cultural ties to the nations their parents came from as well as an allegiance to Jewish culture and history. Indeed, Antin's work provides a rare example of a white woman dealing with questions of feminism, assimilation, and Jewishness from the 1970s to the present. One of the recurring pleasures of her work is the way that, through the use of performance as a critical strategy, she transforms conventional social roles into complicated relationships laced with humor and irony. At the same time, her notion of the performative also highlights the open-endedness of questions connected to identities, since it acknowledges her ambivalence about positioning herself or others as fixed, stable identities that can be fully knowable or controlled.

## 4 The California work of US artist Martha Rosler

Judaism reeks of the past, of childhood, of strangling bonds and expectations . . . Judaism represented the secondary status of women, Judaism was the source or symbol of the world I wished to reject or reform.<sup>1</sup>

(Martha Rosler, 1999)

The topic of Jewishness for artist Martha Rosler, as for many radical Jews in the 1970s, was inextricably connected to Judaism the religion. As a socialist-feminist intellectual and artist, Rosler occupied a position that approximated, in part, what Isaac Deutscher in 1958 called being a "non-Jewish Jew."<sup>2</sup> For Deutscher, such a person is not a Jew trying to pass, to escape from the wounds of a community, but a secular Jew who is resistant to religious dogma, moralizing, and separatism. This kind of heretic Jew, who in Deutscher's words transcends Jewry, belongs to a long Jewish tradition that includes some of the great revolutionaries of modern thought: Baruch Spinoza, Heinrich Heine, Karl Marx, Rosa Luxemburg, Leon Trotsky, and Sigmund Freud. Deutscher writes:

They all found Jewry too narrow, too archaic, and too constricting. They all looked for ideals and fulfillment beyond it, and they represent the sum and substance of much that is greatest in modern thought.<sup>3</sup>

Rosler, too, felt estranged from Judaism, but for somewhat different reasons. Though she might agree with Deutscher's definition of the "non-Jewish Jew," how she arrived at that position also has a lot to do with gender. Indeed, her early rebellion against gender inequalities in the educational traditions of Judaism places her alongside any number of women writing from the 1970s to the 1990s. From Judy Chicago to Mierle Laderman Ukeles, intellectual Jewish women have long explored their anger about possessing secondary status within their own heritage.

For Jewish women like Rosler, who were distant from the practices of Judaism, the question of how to deal publicly with their Jewishness remained an issue,

especially in parts of the country that had very small Jewish populations. Oddly, this difficulty extended even to women's studies conferences, despite the active role of Jewish feminists in this arena. The first part of this chapter examines the tensions that both Martha Rosler and Nancy Miller, a New York Jewish feminist literary critic, faced in terms of how they positioned themselves and were positioned by others at two different women's studies conferences in the United States. In a more biographical section that focuses on Rosler, I explore in more detail her and other artists' confusion about what their "secular" identity consists of and what "Jewishness" means to them. The rest of the chapter reconsiders these questions in relation to the early artwork that Rosler did when she was living and working in San Diego, California in the 1970s, and how that charged political climate of change and revolution had an enormous influence on her art and life.

### **Jewish women and some debates around identity politics in the 1970s and 1980s in the United States**

At a socialist feminist conference in San Diego in the 70s, a group of women got together in small groups and talked about our various oppressions, before the term multiculturalism was used, and not a single woman dared to mention that she could have felt oppressed as a Jew, including myself.<sup>4</sup>

(Martha Rosler, 1997)

At a conference on feminist theory in Milwaukee in 1985 that Teresa de Lauretis organized . . . Evelyn Torton Beck exhorted Jewish women to identify themselves (take back their names and their noses) and wondered aloud from the platform, aggressively, polemically, why Jewish (better yet, Yiddish) female-authored texts were not taught in women's studies courses alongside Chicana, Native American, etc. works as "ethnic" or "minority" literature (which is a fair enough question). Sondra O'Neale, a black critic on the panel, had replied, equally polemically and upping the ante, that Jews had no right to speak of oppression or marginality since, unlike blacks, they could "choose to pass." At which point Blanche Gelfand rose from the audience to observe that six million of them seemed to have failed to exercise that option. Gayatri Spivak, another of the panelists, urged the audience to remember their Palestinian sisters, who were not with us, and whose men were dying. I sat there, in silent shock at the turn this politically correct occasion was taking, not saying anything, and waiting for it to be over. What was there, really, to say once the structure of competing oppressions had been put in place in those terms?

But what would it have meant then, mean now for me, to speak "as a Jew," as a Jewish woman? I who have never visited that "almost mythical place Israel," and whose most vivid daily (and not, therefore, entirely trivial) cultural sense of being Jewish is inseparable from being a New Yorker (if not theorized, at least revisited by Woody Allen).<sup>5</sup>

(Nancy Miller, 1991)

The questions Martha Rosler and Nancy Miller raise regarding their status as secular "Jews" at these two different public conferences seem appropriate as a starting point for a revisionist approach that imagines a more complicated relation between the discourses of feminism, socialism, nationalism, class, and Jewish identities. Such a perspective may begin to address what was unspoken at these conferences and what haunts these reminiscences, and what perhaps accounts for why most Jewish feminist scholars in the United States avoided the topic at that time.<sup>6</sup>

Both Rosler and Miller later regretted their silence and each have rethought what it was that kept them from speaking up earlier. This rethinking arises not because they saw their previous acts as wrong, but because each has since changed her mind. Still, Miller's hesitancy and ambivalence at positioning herself or being positioned by others "as a Jew" remains. As she said, "But what would it have meant then, mean now for me, to speak 'as a Jew,' as a Jewish woman?" Such developments also demand acknowledgment of the historical contingency of context and, in turn, raise questions about how, despite high-profile events and debates on multiculturalism, racism, and Eurocentrism, there remains a tendency to pit minorities against a monolithic and fixed white Euro-American power structure devoid of multiple ideologies and ethnicities.

The reasons for Rosler's and Miller's silence at the time were not simple, and they are not easily resolved even now. Indeed, this uncertainty still lingers for Miller. In the above quotation, Miller wonders what a stable diaspora-based identity, from which she might speak with some authority, might look like, since she sees her Jewishness as highly mediated (as revisited by Woody Allen, as inseparable from being a New Yorker, but not tied to Israel). Within Jewish-American discourse, there is a varied range of discussion around the concepts of a Jewish group identity and culture. Miller's position stands in relation to one discourse in which cultural identity is essentialized as the cornerstone of a Zionist nationalist politics associated with Israel, though she admits that even after visiting Israel, she feels no closer to an understanding of the identity question. Miller's emphasis on her distance from Israel is significant, since it suggests that the establishment of the state of Israel never had much power to generate ideologies that would determine her existence. However, what is surprising is her underlying acceptance of that version of Jewishness as the only one that can authorize her position when she cites Jenny Bourne, a British feminist, who writes that "there is, in the end, no stable diaspora-based identity for us as Jewish feminists; all roads seem one way or another to lead back to the question of Israel."<sup>7</sup> Without a connection to Israel, Miller remains without words to define her place. Thus, even years later, she doesn't challenge or complicate the terms of the debate established by Evelyn Torton Beck or the discussion that followed at the 1985 conference, by, for example, shifting the emphasis away from cultural identity and Jewish "essence" to something more hybrid, in which either Israeli nationalism or Jewish-American

assimilation is not the only relevant marker of identity. Nor does she challenge the segregationist impulse behind the panelists' remarks.

In San Diego in the 1970s, Rosler, too, found herself without words, but for reasons of her own. Rosler's uneasiness, unlike Miller's, was not tied to her worries, on the one hand, of not being a genuine enough Jew or, on the other hand, of not desiring closer ties to Israel. Fluent in Hebrew, Rosler visited Israel as a young teenager but felt distant from the culture there because she saw it as a racist culture that treated Arabs in an oppressive way. Indeed, Rosler's reticence was due to her own sympathy with the issues of class and race, issues raised most forcefully by the speakers attending the conference that Miller attended. For Rosler, how could she speak about her oppression as a Jew given the spectacular middle-class success of Jews, linked to a strong belief in education coming out of a Jewish rabbinical tradition? How could she speak of her own oppression, when she could "choose to pass as white," to echo Sondra O'Neale's remarks. However, Rosler also adds: "no one from my generation was able to escape the shadow of the holocaust." Understanding her own internalized cultural definition of Jewishness was hard enough, since it was so close to home, but making her uneasiness public in a rather segregated San Diegan context, where there were so few reference points to Jewish culture to begin with, must have seemed pointless, impossible even at the time.

### The interviews

Today, decades after Miller and Rosler had the experiences referred to above, the context has changed as a result of a set of contemporary developments: the emergence of a new debate in the United States among Jewish artists and critics around questions of ethnicity, coming out of the writings of Sander Gilman; the influential 1996 exhibition initiated by the Jewish Museum in New York titled *Too Jewish? Challenging Traditional Identities*; and a whole body of important scholarship on postzionism, postcolonialism, feminism, and transnationalism.<sup>8</sup> Across a range of media, such recent work problematizes earlier conceptions of identity in Jewish cultural practices, and it reveals a need for a more complex understanding of the way that Jewish identities and, in the case of Rosler, feminism are tied to other social identities and mediated through institutional discourses of art practice and art history. There is now a greater public acknowledgment of how "different kinds of oppression have damaged communities in different and to some degree incommensurable ways." As David Biale, Michael Galchinsky, and Susannah Heschel continue, "the future lies in a shared commitment to writing a new narrative rather than in the competition between histories of persecution."<sup>9</sup> Looking back now at three decades of Rosler's work with these comments in mind, we can assemble a more complex portrait of her work. Though I begin by looking at the biographical, the problematics of her work in the end cannot be equated simply

with her Jewishness — as a single absolute term that characterizes all her affiliations — since her work often not only contains a Jewish particularism but also adopts and champions other forms of marginality. In this regard, the coherence of her politics does not fit neatly within the feminist multicultural paradigm, since it is one neither of simple Jewish feminist ethnic pride, nor of identification with Israel or with the Jewish religion. Her earlier work in particular suggests a departure from the standard ways of thinking about Jewishness and feminism during that period.

In several interviews I conducted with Rosler in 1997 and 1999, she discussed at length some of the influences that shaped the evolution of her thinking and her work. In what follows I quote extensively from her comments about her religious Jewish upbringing in Brooklyn, New York, her art training, her political activism for civil rights and against the Vietnam War, and her involvement in the women's movement in California.

In a fascinating analysis of the importance of her religious upbringing Rosler recalls how "a lot of the themes and concerns in my work and my life have to do with a kind of secularization of the transcendental issues that my religious upbringing raised for me." She recalls how important the concept of justice was to her sense of self:

We used to talk about justice. Justice was part of what sank into my bones and motivated so much of what I do both in my work and my activism. A verbal preoccupation with questions of justice [was] even a folk issue, if one may say that, among the girls in my school in yeshiva.<sup>10</sup>

This passion for justice is something Rosler shared with Judy Chicago, who also attributes her inclination toward fighting for social justice as "shaped by what might be called Jewish ethical values, particularly the concept of *tikkun*, the healing or repairing of the world."<sup>11</sup>

Rosler's family remained close to their Central European roots. Though Rosler was from a lower-middle-class family (her mother was a schoolteacher and her father a lawyer), she was sent to the yeshiva and ~~was told that~~ the kitchen constituted the only secure domain for Jewish women. Rosler explains how she and other Jewish girls rebelled against the rabbi's low expectations for Jewish girls, who were put in gender-segregated classes and told that only the boys would go on to higher studies. Thus, Rosler attributes her own feminism in part to the highly contradictory legacy of Judaism, especially the disturbing contradictions between her liminality in the yeshiva and the ethical teachings of Judaism which put emphasis on personal responsibility for acting justly in the world:

The form of our rebellion against the rabbis was to demand justice and to demand it collectively. Not social justice, but justice. It was the moment of

yelling *ze lo butsedek*. (This is not just, this is not fair). We were thinking about questions of abstract justice – how you knew what justice was – and fighting against the authority of the male rabbis and trying to contravene in every way possible.

Their reaction was always to push back. But we knew they were always wrong and that we were right. We had this very ferocious sense that girls were not valued and so we had to make ourselves valuable.

You know, Jewish women are fighters. I think there's a long history of Jewish women who, when they are liberated from the bonds of the religion, realize that there is a larger world to conquer and to bring justice to.<sup>12</sup>

Indeed, Rosler's sense of estrangement from and ambivalence toward her religious education in her early life, especially how its unequal structure prepared women for submission, contributed to her need to create some distance between herself and the religion at an early age.

Rosler also speaks at length about the contradictory messages she received from her religiously observant family: their attitudes about McCarthyism, "traditional" Jewish gender roles, Jewish women's education, and assimilation to native languages. If we read literature by Jews in the United States from the 1950s, we see that the excessive erasure of Jewishness was considered an absolutely essential part of becoming successful in America. Such an attitude engendered in many Jewish families an ambivalence about how to reconcile their own Jewishness with the world of American life and culture. Rosler's family was no exception in exhibiting a justifiable wariness about the extent to which America's acceptance of Jews was real. Like many Jewish families in the 1950s, they wanted to hold on to their traditions while at the same time assimilating into American culture. Many Jews worried that the anti-Semitism of the 1920s and 1930s could flare up again, especially during the early 1950s when anti-Semitism seemed to overlap with McCarthyite anti-communism. Rosler recalls her father's fear as they watched the McCarthy hearings together on television in 1953:

I said, "Daddy, are you a communist?" And he, my father who was totally a passive and doting father, got up and chased me around the house and said, "Don't ever say that again!" So, you know, they were really terrified that the Gestapo would come in the middle of the night and take us away.<sup>13</sup>

The simultaneity of Jewish insider and outsider experience made Rosler's parents understandably anxious about how best to raise their children. Rosler's mother was politically a conservative Democrat and therefore relatively unaffected by the McCarthy witch hunts aimed at thousands of suspected communist sympathizers, yet the specter of the hearings and the blacklist had an important influence on her life. Rosler recalls how the idea of complete Jewish autonomy from American life

made her mother uneasy as well, since she shared an eagerness to prove that Jews were good citizens too. This made her mother ambivalent about whether or not she should celebrate Christian holidays, and if she should allow her non-Jewish friends into her home:

My mother was the one who was constantly pushing all those Jewish traditions, which to me was not American, you know, like not having Christmas and then, well maybe we'll do Christmas presents. Total ambivalence. Rhetorical absolutism and vacillating practice . . . Her best friend was Agnes McMillan, but no Christians were allowed in our house. So my mother was two people. One was the president of the Sisterhood of the Crown Heights yeshiva and the other was a member of the Girl Scouts, until she died at 92.<sup>14</sup>

This dualistic attitude extended also to the question of what languages, aside from English, were appropriate for Rosler to learn. Yiddish and Russian were spoken by her grandfather, but only Hebrew was considered as an acceptable component of her education. According to Rosler, her mother's explanation was simply: "Yiddish is for the old country. We are Americans now."<sup>15</sup>

Knowledge of the Holocaust was another defining Jewish experience for Rosler and her generation and further contributed to giving Jews a sense of otherness despite their acceptance within American society. In speaking about the Holocaust, Rosler details how family photographs came to represent the chasm separating her world, her life of 1950s America, from what she referred to as "the enormous, unspeakable horror of Jews in Europe that could not be discussed." Rosler explains further:

My mother had endless photographs of herself growing up in her teen years and so on, but virtually nothing of my father's family, and this all related to the fact that he had no family. Everyone was killed . . . So photographs in some way were a tantalizing reminder that there was another world that Jews had been part of that we were not supposed to think about or know about.<sup>16</sup>

Rosler's words demonstrate that within families the Holocaust created internal otherness in terms of unspeakable experiences as family tragedy that is silenced.

### California feminism and Rosler's early work

Rosler took part in the women's art movement and its rise in California in the 1960s and 1970s. This movement preceded such efforts in other regions of the United States and led the way in this regard. Women artists were creating a new context for making art that affirmed the personal and collective experiences of

women and that used materials from women's everyday lives. Rosler's perspective on the emerging women's movement at that time:

I resisted it for a long time. But I made no distinction. You know, I had that usual bullshit idea that if women are good enough to be with the boys, they'll be good. But at the same time . . . a number of different women's voices were emerging. Women like Carolee Schneemann, who everyone in the poet's group I was part of really admired and took her work very seriously. Very seriously. More so than Kaprow happenings and Oldenburg in the sense that it was much more personally risky and much more literally engaged with politics of the day in some respects, and also drawing on the different theater position in that it also was Artaudian. So it was syncretic in a way that was different from the Kaprow, Dine stuff.<sup>17</sup>

The growing acceptance of performance art not only gave visibility to women artists in a way that was unprecedented, it also enabled them to integrate their practice with the politicized working environment they grew up in during the 1960s. Through the influence of Schneemann and other performance artists on the West Coast, Rosler found ways to deal with feminist consciousness-raising and political activism by adopting contemporary strategies of avant-garde theater, film, happenings, and performance. Thus, feminist performance art such as Schneemann's, combined with the work of Artaud as well as the political activism of the period, had a bearing on the trajectory of Rosler's own work:

I thought of myself as an artist from an early age, which, of course, meant painting and drawing but also meant Abstract Expressionism. I realized that I had these two tendencies: one was to be completely abstract and very Jewish. I even understood that then, this notion of a kind of a transcendent image. And I was very interested in Rothko, even when no one was interested in his work.

So when I went to college, the whole world really exploded: Mario Savio and the Free Speech Movement, and antiwar stuff. I was very involved with student radicals and was one. And I realized that this other side of my practice was self-indulgent and also kind of not me — it was only half of me. But there was this other side that was very polemical and very engaged and indignant and I felt it was really necessary to do art that reflected this.<sup>18</sup>

The critical factor in the transformation of her practice as well as in her shifting attitude toward her feminism was her move to San Diego in 1968. The interest in feminism on the West Coast, which established itself much sooner than in the New York art world, had a lot to do with why Rosler returned to San Diego in 1969 for a second time:

I felt like New York was eminently provincial and that many things that were happening were happening outside New York, and we [Rosler and her husband at the time] owed it to ourselves to leave and see it.

The second time I went back to California it was because it empowered me, it empowered women in a way that New York did not allow. About that time in 1969. Yes, it's really true.

I started learning about feminism in New York by talking to other women. At first I said, well, the usual tough stuff. Well, I don't need that. Yes, their ideas have some validity but I don't need that really! Then in California, everything looked totally different all of a sudden.<sup>19</sup>

Although the history of the feminist art movement in Los Angeles is well documented and recognized, much less is known about what made San Diego such a special place in the late 1960s for an artist like Rosler, who was active in many different kinds of feminist groups:

San Diego was an enormously active political scene when we left. Enormously active. Really amazing. It was like South Africa in the early 90s. It was just full of ferment. All the schools were involved . . . On the one hand, I was going up to Cal Arts and meeting with the women from the Women's Building and they are all sort of beginning to verge toward the development of a separatist attitude which I respect. But then on the other hand, there's the Women's Liberation Front in San Diego that I was a part of, who had as our main priority activism, as you know, *not* self. Of course, we did consciousness-raising every week. It was an essential part of what we did, but it was to empower ourselves so we could be politically effective and also like ourselves, or whatever. But it was not therapy as an end in itself.<sup>20</sup>

Rosler's involvement in various feminist and political groups in San Diego at that time enabled her to find support for her perspective on gender as it relates to class issues. For Rosler, US feminism has a history of erasing the ethnic mark as well as the racial one. For her, feminism and middle-classness require the erasure of both race and class (and, I would argue, non-middle-class Jewishness). It is significant that Rosler doesn't make an "other" out of California but sees it as offering a challenge to her own thinking and her own identity. Her narrative of coming to California from New York is not the typical regional narrative, for she is able to see that the cosmopolitan centers are not necessarily that cosmopolitan, and the peripheries are not necessarily provincial.

The significance that gender, class, Jewishness, Marxism, and nationalism have for Rosler is evident throughout the body of her work, though her artistic practice has rarely been written about from such a perspective. Instead, her work has been praised mostly for its biting critique of documentary photography and, in her

early videos, of culture and class critiques. For example, one of her most influential photographic projects from the 1970s dealt with problematic representation of “bowery bums.” *The Bowery in Two Inadequate Descriptive Systems* of 1974/5 (Figure 4.1) deliberately critiques the documentary tradition of “victim” photography. As art critic Craig Owens observed,

Rosler has refused to photograph the inhabitants of Skid Row, to speak on their behalf, to illuminate them from a safe distance. For “concerned” or what Rosler calls “victim” photography overlooks the constitutive role of its own activity to be merely representative – the “myth” of photographic transparency and objectivity.<sup>21</sup>

stewed  
boiled  
potted  
corned  
pickled  
preserved  
canned  
fried to the hat

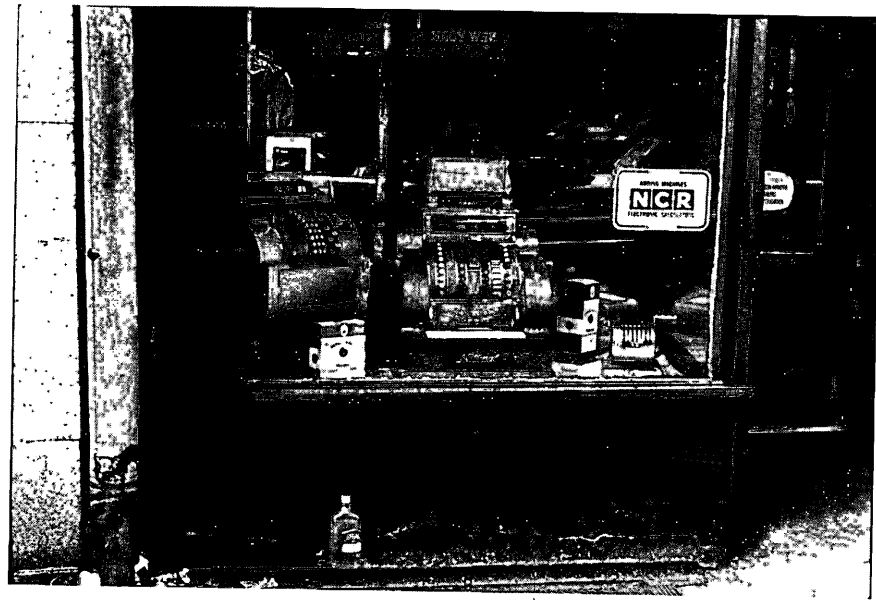


Figure 4.1 Martha Rosler, *The Bowery in Two Inadequate Descriptive Systems*, 1974/5, installation with black-and-white photographs and photographed texts. Courtesy of the artist.

Other representative examples of Rosler’s well-known earlier work are her video pieces *A Budding Gourmet* (1974), *Semiotics of the Kitchen* (1975) (Figure 4.2), and *Vital Statistics of a Citizen Simply Obtained* (1977). Since her videos deliberately offer a series of anti-aesthetic self-portraits, it is telling that the greatest attention has been given to the specificity of her “voice,” over her body. For example, art critic Amy Taubin has written: “Rosler’s voice is one of the strongest elements in her work. Rosler’s voice is tough, intelligent, and unmistakably of Brooklyn origin . . . the voice of a specific person who grew up in a specific time, place, and social class.”<sup>22</sup> Taubin’s point regarding Rosler’s insistent voice is significant in this context since part of the Jewish problem is that the voice is always considered too loud, too insistent, and too aggressive. No matter what one says or how one says it, it is considered inappropriate. This inappropriateness is a deliberate aspect of Rosler’s critical style, and her jarring voice is an integral part of it. Moreover, though attention has been given to what Laura Cottingham calls the “individual specificity of lived experience”<sup>23</sup> in Rosler’s work, what is surprisingly absent from these discussions is a complex understanding of the way her Jewish voice becomes a strategy in her work and is tied to a whole set of identifications mediated through gender, race, ethnicity, and class.

Thus, critics have rarely commented on the fact that Rosler’s work tends to deal with the dilemmas of what it means to be a divided, not fully assimilated Jewish female subject, one who is unable to identify easily with either her



Figure 4.2 Martha Rosler, *Semiotics of the Kitchen*, video still, 1975. Courtesy of the artist.



American citizenship or her own immigrant group. Indeed, questions of gender, citizenship, and nationalism in general are recognized much more by Asian-American and African-American women artists and critics, even though these concerns continue to be relevant to Jewish-American women such as Rosler. Also barely acknowledged in the critical literature on Rosler's work is the way she registered the diversity and differences among women in her early work, even though it was not fashionable then for feminists to do so. Though she might have been hesitant to speak publicly about these differences at the time, the notion of a "women's interest" shared by all women regardless of race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality was highly contested in her artistic practice from the 1960s and 1970s. Indeed, Rosler wrote about how the women's art movement in California was inattentive to these differences, primarily those of class, in her 1977 article "The Private and the Public: Feminist Art in California":

The idea of "the community of all women," which sees sexism as transcending class, is, it seems, an idea more popular among middle-class than among working-class women, who have generally defined a different order of priorities.<sup>24</sup>

In rethinking Rosler's work from this period along such lines of difference as outlined above, I am interested in setting up a different historical trajectory of feminist work from the 1970s – one that reveals that, even for certain feminists of that period, it was debatable to make assumptions about all women and their interests, despite the kind of universal theorizing at that moment that was privileged in the work of Judy Chicago, for example, specifically in terms of her vaginal imagery. It is significant that Chicago's focus was on the body, and this meant for the most part an erasure of other differences. It is precisely these other differences that come up directly in Rosler's early California work. She situates her art practice in relation to wider social issues to examine the American dream of upward mobility for women, questions of assimilation, and westward expansion. Rosler's focus tends to uncover a more complicated account about social class, ethnicity, and gender that underlies US society's many "happy" narratives and images for women in this postwar period of affluence. Much of her work during this period deals with narratives and images of postwar traditions practiced by women specifically in southern California, such as having garage sales and sending out holiday cards (specific works will be discussed below). She focuses on the desires of women from presumably white middle-class families to elevate their family's class standing by becoming a "gourmet" cook for the family or hiring a "Tijuana maid." She also looks at the complexity of these issues related to the social and political aspects of making food from the perspective of working-class women as well as Mexican women.

An interesting case in point are the photographic postcard novels Rosler made

in California in the early 1970s, which were published as a book in 1976 under the title *Service: A Trilogy on Colonization*<sup>25</sup> (Figure 4.3). Each of the three characters in these postcard novels – the housewife who is "a budding gourmet," the fast-food employee at "McTowers," and the "Tijuana Maid" – is identified as standing in some relationship to the food industry in San Diego. Each subject position has a relation to the others, and thus, ultimately, we cannot understand one narrative apart from the other two. Significantly, cooking and creativity have different meanings for each of the three characters. For the middle-class housewife, becoming a gourmet offers a liberating escape from reality to other places of the globe and enables her to enjoy the fantasy position of appropriating, through cooking the foods of other countries, cultures completely different from her own. It refreshes, enlightens, and inspires her to prepare something different for dinner each night; but, most important, it does so without inspiring, or requiring her to step out of place and upset the conditions of her everyday life. This is not the case for the fast-food employee, who starts out as an "unwrapper" at one of the 200,000 McTower's hamburger stands and eventually becomes a cook. In her desire to improve the quality of the food served, she becomes creative about her cooking and introduces real food into the menu. This brings her closer to the other workers but makes her risk losing not only her own job but those of her coworkers. The final result is a collective strike and plans for a revolution. Cooking is hardly a leisure activity for the Tijuana maid either, who gets paid a measly \$2 an



Figure 4.3 Martha Rosler, *Service: A Trilogy on Colonization*, "Tijuana Maid," 1976, serial postcard novel. Courtesy of the artist.

hour – to cook either Mexican food or typical American foods such as hot dogs, steak, meat loaf, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, and apple pie. Cooking is part of the job, along with cleaning and fending off the sexual advances of her male bosses. Rarely does she have the opportunity to enjoy her own cooking, and even more rarely is she appreciated for what she does without being exoticized or sexualized by her employer. Her dream is to become an independent caterer and bring her children up from Mexico to live with her.

*Service: A Trilogy on Colonization* (Figure 4.3) was notable in its departure from much of the work being done by feminist artists of the 1970s in southern California. California was often imagined by such feminist artists as a utopian space for feminism, where transparent relations between women could be freely developed both outside the controlling structures of the New York-based art world and regardless of social class, ethnicity, or race. However, in Rosler's work, that utopian aspect is missing, since she always makes material connections in her work between feminism and power relations.

For example, in her first performance/installation work, *Monumental Garage Sale* (1973) (Figures 4.4 and 4.5), at the University of California, San Diego, she explored how garage sales offer a portrait of a California self, one seen through commodities that are ultimately recuperable within the cash economy. Though Rosler adapted this performance somewhat differently in other places, for the San Diego piece she created the persona of a single white mother surviving on a



Figure 4.4 Martha Rosler, *Monumental Garage Sale*, 1973, multi-media installation and performance, held at the gallery of the University of California, San Diego. Courtesy of the artist.



Figure 4.5 Martha Rosler, *Monumental Garage Sale*, 1973, multi-media installation and performance, held at the gallery of the University of California, San Diego. Courtesy of the artist.

shoestring budget. The garage sale included everything imaginable in such a household, including used diaphragms and condoms, used welfare cartons, personal letters, baby clothes, and empty milk bottles. Despite many clues that not all the objects for sale were hers, the nature of the objects set up a play between the California persona Rosler was creating and her lived experience up to that point. In certain respects, this piece was also about Rosler's uneasy encounter with different forms of social relations in suburban culture in southern California and their profound cultural difference from the Brooklyn Jewish culture in which she grew up. As Rosler explains:

The garage sale is my first genuine American piece. New Yorkers don't have garage sales. New Yorkers believe in largesse. If they don't want something, they stick it on the streets for someone to take . . . A big tradition in my childhood was the idea that you would never, never stoop so low as to put your old clothes out for sale on the streets.<sup>26</sup>

In her largely Jewish neighborhood in New York, the old rag picker could be heard yelling up to the housewives for their old clothes which they would donate as opposed to sell. In southern California, people had garage sales and there was no stigma attached to it. However, *Monumental Garage Sale* is a parody of an actual



garage sale since it achieves a level of unusual intimacy in terms of the objects it puts up for sale. On one level, it evokes the life of a single mother living with little money, which resonated with Rosler's everyday reality at the time. On another level, it tells the story of the life of a single mother as a social story rather than an individual one. This social story repositions Rosler in relation to her persona in this work and forces her to see her own difference within what appears to be an emotionally neutral Christian world, in which there is no shame or loss of dignity in putting one's intimate belongings on the street to sell to passers-by. The piece points out her difference as a New York Jew, who finds it culturally important to preserve aspects of one's personal belongings so they cannot be touched by the cash nexus. Goods may enter the house of Jews as commodities, but they become personalized through consumption and use and thus cannot leave the house solely as commodities in the same way.

In another postcard series titled *X-Mas Cards* or *From Our House to Your House* (1974–78) (Figures 4.6 and 4.7), Rosler shows more directly her awkwardness – the otherness – she felt as a Jewish woman in a Christian-dominated society in southern California. This work adds images to text and was mass-produced to bear the preprinted message “Season’s Greetings from Our House to Your House,” in holiday script, and typically included a family photo and a personalized message. Most of the “family photos” in the series depict Rosler awkwardly standing alone in the kitchen in a fairly severe pose. In one, she stands looking morose in a wedding dress, squeezed between the stove and the sink in a crowded kitchen (Figure 4.6). Another image is a production still from the video work *Semiotics of the Kitchen* and simply says “Grater,” after the implement she is holding (Figure 4.7). A third presents Rosler standing in the kitchen in a



Figure 4.6 Martha Rosler, “Untitled,” 1977, from the Series of Holiday Cards *From Our House to Your House*, series of holiday cards, mailed annually, 1974–78. Courtesy of the artist.



Figure 4.7 Martha Rosler, “Grater,” 1976, from the Series of Holiday Cards *From Our House to Your House*, series of holiday cards, mailed annually, 1974–78. Courtesy of the artist.

cook’s uniform, and the text reads: 5’4” by 128 Pounds at Home in Kitchen. Rosler explains how her work is a parody of the American custom of sending holiday cards:

This is an American form – an American custom. This is exactly like sitting at home on Christmas Eve in New York City, watching every year the same TV shows, the Christmas episodes, before they discovered *It’s a Wonderful Life*.

They would run their Christmas shows, the same ones every year, and I would be sitting there and looking and thinking: Christmas. Not my holiday. Christmas was not my holiday. Christmas, wish it was my holiday. It’s sort of like being a sociologist, having my eyes pressed up against the window pane, you know, looking at all these customs and thinking how strange they were.

... So when I discovered that people did this unbelievably vulgar thing, which was to have photographs and stupid sayings and send these things out as Christmas letters . . . it was like watching those TV shows where they have the log and the fireplace that symbolize Christmas. You know, you have the little fireplace, a little log burning in it. All totally tame and totally quaint and totally meaningless. It has no content; it is totally bland . . . So I took one of these bland cards and had printed on the back: Dear Tom, America is nothing like this. It was a snowy scene of someone’s house out in the country somewhere and it said, “Season’s Greetings.”<sup>27</sup>

Rosler’s ironic reuse of this Christmas tradition questions the false self-effacement that has characterized many American Jews in their willingness to fit into the

dominant culture's celebration of Christmas. This project enabled Rosler to fully conquer a public space that is marked as Christian and make it her own. In doing so, Rosler points to a double erasure: of Jews, but also of the gritty realities not shown in these picture-perfect cards.

Significantly, one of the least known of Rosler's works from this period, titled *She Sees in Herself a New Woman Every Day* (1977) (Figures 4.8 and 4.9), is also one of the few pieces from the 1970s to deal with what it means for women to situate their art practices within the context of a white Jewish family.<sup>28</sup> This work focuses explicitly on Jewish mother–daughter social relations told from the point of view of the daughter. The complex generational ambivalence is captured in the piece's narrative structure. Different histories and different conceptions of what it means to be female and Jewish in the United States separate two generations of women of Jewish descent. In this photo-text piece, shoes are what express these differences between mother and daughter. Initially, shoes stand for strict maternal discipline and an exaggerated sense of thriftiness, at the expense of the daughter's own comfort and health. There is a pair of Mary Janes that deformed the daughter's feet but were purchased because they had sensible buckles; then there are two large hand-me-down-looking rubber boots acquired for the daughter to grow into but which were too unwieldy to walk in. Finally, there are the teenage daughter's high-heeled shoes that she purchased herself, which still didn't fit her. Like her earlier Mary Jane shoes, these too "pressed on a nerve" and compelled her to walk

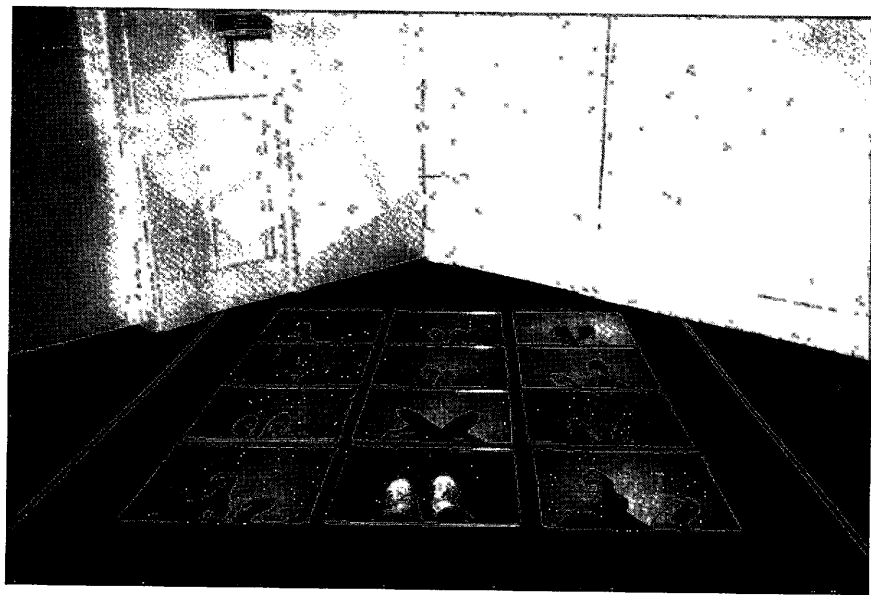


Figure 4.8 Martha Rosler, *She Sees in Herself a New Woman Every Day*, 1977, photo and audio floor installation. Courtesy of the artist.



Figure 4.9 Martha Rosler, *She Sees in Herself a New Woman Every Day*, 1977, photo and audio floor installation. Courtesy of the artist.

home in her stockinged feet. The photographs of shoes that accompany the narrative text deliberately do not convey the same complexity as the narrative. Instead, the array of footwear displayed in a sequence of twelve photographs suggests the inability of the daughter to conform either to her mother's strict material discipline or to assimilated standards of beauty for her own generation, since she was unable to wear the kind of shoes that signaled desirable femininity with its promise of beauty and perfection.

Rosler's images of legs and feet in different pairs of shoes also reference catalogue photographs and suggest a form of American commodity fetishism in which the legs and shoes have an overcharged erotic effect, because the reader has to add the body to create the idealized image of a woman in his or her imagination. This tactic was used often in many of the picture magazines of the period, such as *Life*, with images that represented a mythic notion of woman through her body parts. The privileging of "women's" individual body parts was just one example of the overall standardization of American beauty and glamor to which many Jewish women could not otherwise conform.

In *She Sees in Herself a New Woman Every Day*, the narrative is addressed to the mother, and thus the audience is obliged to occupy her position, which entails confronting and bearing with the daughter's repudiation of her orthodox mother's repressive confinements of her. The yeshiva, which the daughter was forced to attend for eight years, and her childhood home life are remembered as

extensions of the mother's control and thus as sites of pain and repression: "I hated the yeshiva, I hated it for eight years, in the fourth grade I said, thank you God, thank you God, only four more years of this – I used to want to stay home but you wouldn't let me."<sup>29</sup> From the outset of the daughter's narrative addressed to "you" (the mother), Rosler leaves little room for an empathetic response from the audience. Even though the viewer is positioned to identify with the mother, the viewer cannot do so without accepting the mother's religious Jewish background and her outmoded and supposedly rigid way of raising her daughter, which is tied to her religiosity. Instead, the viewer is left in the position of a witness trying to piece together a coherent story from a daughter's fragmented narration, in which the metaphor of shoes is used to stand in for the source of the daughter's retrospective renarration of her pain at the harsh treatment she received and her inability to find a source of new pleasures as an adult.

Rosler's task of recomposing history through narrative falls short when it comes to filling in the crises that have shaped the mother, since they are unknown to and unheard by the daughter in this piece. They are only alluded to by the mother's coercive actions and her orthodox doctrines about child discipline. It is significant, however, that the mother's hidden pleasures become known only through the daughter's defiance, when she discovers her mother's beautiful shoes – "silver dancing shoes with high heels and buckles, silver dancing shoes from the 1920s or 30s, laced with thin silver laces" – in "a smaller, creep-in closet" where the daughter occasionally hides to escape her mother's tyranny. These "wonderful shoes," as she calls them, offer another portrait of the mother, one inconsistent with the daughter's despairing and angry monologue in which she describes her mother as solely a strict maternal figure without beauty, desire, or sexuality.

The piece's narrative also casts antagonisms that are not exclusively generational but due as well to different conceptions of class, whiteness, and gender among Jewish-Americans. Toward the beginning of the text, for example, the daughter disrupts the mother's attempts to integrate her as an assimilated white subject in a culturally uniform way, by pointing out the contradiction between her being raised as an orthodox Jew and having to attend the yeshiva on the one hand, and then being dressed up as a Christian for a photo shoot on the other hand: "You'd dress me up for photos, I remember. I remember one – I still have it, or you do – I was wearing a Scotch plaid dress, a little blond Jewish girl with a Dutch haircut in a Scotch plaid dress – and on my head was a little Scotch cap."<sup>30</sup> In her household, the making of Jewish-American culture included denying its influence altogether in public, by dressing "Scottish" and wearing sensible shoes – plain brown laced oxfords that contained what might otherwise be perceived as a wanton Jewish sexuality.

Rosler's masquerade captures the complex, unsynthetic constitution of the

daughter as a Jewish female subject, uncontained by and antagonistic toward her religious education and her parents' emphasis on cultural assimilation. Most notable is the way that the daughter rebels against the normalizing influences of both her orthodox upbringing and her American socialization, and how the pressures of these two forces nevertheless have an effect on her as an adult. Her mother's insistence on buying shoes that were too big makes the daughter unable to buy a pair of shoes that actually fit her later in life. Thus, her "education" is informed by her observations of the inconsistencies of her mother; yet the effect is inconclusive since it offers no assurances that the daughter will either inevitably practice the abuse visited on her or escape its effects altogether.

It is therefore appropriate that Rosler does not conclude her piece with a happy ending. The lack of a happy ending is evidenced by the photographs that accompany the narrative, since the photographic images of shoes just keep repeating themselves in a series. One can wear another pair of shoes, but a new pair of shoes does not offer a resolution to the author's ambivalent position. The narrative also ends on a disturbing note, since it draws on a well-known French fairy tale – the story of Cinderella – but concludes not with the gratification of the magic slipper fitting on Cinderella's foot, but with the mutilation of the feet of Cinderella's half sisters and the death of the stepmother. By concluding this way, Rosler refuses her audience the undisturbing aesthetic experience they might have hoped for, one that might resolve the generational differences between the mother and daughter or between sisters.

She refuses the identification of her immigrant subject with any of the usual suspects, whether a national fiction of inclusion, a tie to one's own immigrant group, or the embrace of a feminist universalist community. Just as the shoes in the photographs function as the given concrete particulars, unassimilable within dominant narratives that privilege an uncomplicated notion of development and growth, the bizarre ending of Rosler's anti-Cinderella fairy tale does not comply with the notion of a unified aesthetic form or any simple narrative of innocence and childhood, or with that of immigrant assimilation. The very concepts of development, synthesis, and identity are challenged here. Nor does the deadpan, easy-to-understand narrative style of her photo-text project enable Rosler to transcend the oppressiveness-of these relations, since its narrative mode of discourse renders explicit the points of tension.

*She Sees in Herself a New Woman Every Day* has a great deal in common with Rosler's other works from the period, in the sense that she presents a piece that doesn't assume complete knowledge of either the mother or the daughter, or posit an uncritical understanding of either. While the piece dramatizes the pain in the mother-daughter relations, it doesn't try to promote a one-dimensional notion of "authentic" Jewish mother-daughter relations either. Rather, it suggests the ways that public Christian culture at once intrudes upon, sets up tensions

within, and remakes a Jewish household. Indeed, Rosler's piece provides a rare example of a white woman dealing with questions of gender, assimilation, and Jewishness during the 1970s to remind us not only of the heterogeneity of identities among Jews but also that the shift that took place toward Jewish assimilation in the United States was anything but uniform.

## 5 Contemporary feminist art practices in New York

This chapter is partially inspired by a panel I moderated in November 2002 at the Jewish Museum in New York entitled "Is Anything All Right? Three Generations of Jewish Women Artists in Postwar America," which included the artists Danielle Abrams, Rhonda Lieberman, and Elaine Reichek. The title comes from a Jewish joke which reads as an accusation hurled at Jewish women by Jewish men and was intended as a provocation to consider why there has been so little scholarship on Jewish women artists. The joke is about three Jewish women who go into a restaurant. The waiter, in order to preempt any criticism from what he perceives to be three possibly critical clients asks, "Is anything all right?" before the women have time to complain. By referencing a joke that plays on stereotypes of "difficult" Jewish women who are too demanding and impossible to please, I was perversely performing the very problem that I was claiming to identify. However, I also used it to gesture toward some of the continuing difficulties that Jewish women artists must negotiate if they choose to self-identify as Jewish women artists as opposed to simply white or mainstream ones.

It is worth noting that, until the 1990s, public discussions of Jewishness in the New York art world were very rare. To expose both the erasure of Jews in the art world and their own participation in that erasure, artists Rhonda Lieberman and Cary Leibowitz put together a landmark exhibition titled *Fear of a Jewish Planet: Let My People Show!* at Four Walls Gallery in Brooklyn, New York, in 1991.<sup>1</sup> Part of what made the exhibition so important was that it touched on the issue of how Jews historically were trying to pass as non-Jews not only in the art world but also for each other. The absurdity of such a situation over time prompted an interrogation of whom this performance might be for and a discussion of just how vulnerable Jews really are in the art world.

In 1996, curator Norman Kleeblatt returned to the issues raised in the Four Walls exhibition and put together a major ground-breaking exhibition and catalogue appropriately titled *Too Jewish? Challenging Traditional Identities*, presented at the Jewish Museum in New York. Much of the work in the exhibition was developed precisely around prevailing self-censorship of artwork that might be

- 2 Portions of this chapter previously appeared in the following places: L. Bloom, "Rewriting the Script: Eleanor Antin's Feminist Art," in H. N. Fox (ed.), *Eleanor Antin*, Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1999, 159–90; L. Bloom, "Contests for Meaning in Body Politics and Feminist Conceptual Art: Revisioning the 1970s through the Work of Eleanor Antin," in A. Jones and A. Stephenson (eds), *Performing the Body/Performing the Text*, London: Routledge, 1998, 153–69; L. Bloom, "Ethnic Notions and Feminist Strategies of the 1970s: Some Work by Judy Chicago and Eleanor Antin," in C. Sousloff (ed.), *Jewish Identity and Art History*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999, 135–66. A Japanese version of the latter essay appears under the same title in *Rim: Pacific Rim Women's Studies Association Journal* 7, no. 1, March 1998, 46–70.
- 3 A. Raven and D. Marrow, "Eleanor Antin: What's Your Story?" *Chrysalis: A Magazine of Women's Culture* 8, Summer 1979, 44.
- 4 A. Wooster, *The First Generation: Women and Video, 1970–75*, New York: Independent Curators Incorporated, 1993, 21.
- 5 For further background on the feminist art programs active in Los Angeles in the early 1970s, see the California Institute of the Arts exhibition, *The F-Word: Contemporary Feminisms and the Legacy of the Los Angeles Feminist Art Movement*, October 1998, curator Nancy Buchanan.
- 6 M. Schapiro, *Anonymous Was a Woman: A Documentation of the Women's Art Festival, A Collection of Letters to Young Women Artists*, Valencia, Calif.: Feminist Art Program/California Institute of the Arts, 1974, 53.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Ibid., 66.
- 9 Antin quotations from *Anonymous Was a Woman* appear on p. 58.
- 10 J. Chicago, "Letter to a Young Woman Artist," in Schapiro, *Anonymous Was a Woman*, 67–8.
- 11 Schapiro, *Anonymous Was a Woman*, 54.
- 12 See Linda Nochlin's groundbreaking article, "Why Are There No Great Women Artists?" in V. Gornick and B. Moran (eds), *Women in Sexist Society*, New York: Basic Books, 1971; reprinted as "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" *Artnews*, January 1971, and in T. Hess and E. Baker (eds), *Art and Sexual Politics: Women's Liberation, Women Artists, and Art History*, New York: Macmillan, 1973, 1–43.
- 13 For background on the impact of feminism on the arts in the United States during this period, see Jones (ed.), *Sexual Politics*. For Britain, see R. Parker and G. Pollock (eds), *Framing Feminism: Art and the Women's Movement 1970–1985*, London: Pandora, 1987. For a thoughtful assessment of feminist art, art criticism, and arts education in the United States and Britain in the 1990s, see K. Deepwell (ed.), *New Feminist Art Criticism: Critical Strategies*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995.
- 14 For two excellent examples of how a feminist political project affected the rethinking of art history, see W. Chadwick, *Women, Art, and Society*, New York: Thames and Hudson, 1997; and G. Pollock, *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism, and the Histories of Art*, New York: Routledge, 1988.
- 15 See *Confessions of the Guerrilla Girls*, New York: HarperCollins, 1995, for the poster campaigns and activities of the Guerrilla Girls, an anonymous group of US feminist political artists formed in 1985 specifically to critique racist and sexist art-world institutional practices.
- 16 For examples of writings on race and gender in the visual arts see Bloom (ed.), *With Other Eyes*; Ella Shohat (ed.), *Talking Visions: Multicultural Feminism in a Transnational Age*,

- Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1998; Kymberley N. Pinder (ed.) *Race-ing Art History: Critical Readings in Race and Art History*, New York: Routledge, 2002; Michelle Wallace, *Dark Designs and Visual Culture*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004; Lisa Farrington, *Creating Their Own Image: The History of African-American Women Artists*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. For more on lesbian feminism and the visual arts see T. Boffin and J. Fraser (eds), *Stolen Glances: Lesbians Take Photographs*, London: Pandora Press, 1991; Harmony Hammond, *Lesbian Art in America: A Contemporary History*, New York: Rizzoli, 2000.
- 17 Introduction to Broude and Garrard (eds) *The Power of Feminist Art*, 10.
  - 18 Y. López and M. Roth, "Social Protest: Racism and Sexism," in Broude and Garrard (eds), *The Power of Feminist Art*, 140.
  - 19 Quoted in Wooster, *The First Generation*, 41; originally cited in E. Antin, "Dialogue with a Medium," *Art-Rite* 7, Autumn 1974, 23–4.
  - 20 C. Nemser, "Eleanor Antin," in *Art Talk*, New York: Scribner, 1975, 281.
  - 21 J. Frueh, "The Body through Women's Eyes," in Broude and Garrard (eds), *The Power of Feminist Art*, 195.
  - 22 K. Clark, *The Nude: A Study in Ideal Form*, New York: Pantheon, 1956.
  - 23 Unpublished correspondence with the artist, October 1998.
  - 24 Ibid.
  - 25 Gilman, "The Jew's Body: Thoughts on Jewish Physical Difference," in Kleebatt (ed.) *Too Jewish?*, 70.
  - 26 Nemser, "Eleanor Antin," 282.
  - 27 Text from artist's archives.
  - 28 From *4 Transactions*, 1972. Typewritten text and ink on paper; collection of the artist.
  - 29 E. Antin, "Women without Pathos," *Artnews*, January 1971, 3–4; reprinted in T. Hess and E. Baker (eds), *Art and Sexual Politics: Women's Liberation, Women Artists, and Art History*, New York: Macmillan, 1973, 86–7.
  - 30 Ibid.
  - 31 Ibid.
  - 32 Ibid.
  - 33 In some ways this project resembles Elaine Reichek's *Post-colonial Kinderhood*, 1993, displayed in 1993 as part of an exhibition at the Jewish Museum, New York City. Both works are ironical portraits that deal simultaneously with questions of assimilation, domestic interiors, and white ethnic female lives.
  - 34 R. Dyer, *White*, London, Routledge, 1997, 129–31.
  - 35 Quoted in Henry Sayre's introduction to E. Antin, *Eleanora Antinova Plays*, Los Angeles: Sun & Moon Press, 1994, 13.
  - 36 A transcript of the screenplay to Eleanor Antin's film *The Man without a World*, by [a fictitious person, "Yevgeny Antinov"] and Eleanor Antin, was published by Green Integer 66, Los Angeles, 2002. For an excellent review of the film, see J. Skoller, "The Shadows of Catastrophe: Eleanor Antin's *The Man without a World*," *Film Quarterly* 49, no. 1, Fall 1995, 28–32. See also E. Zweig, "Constructing Loss: Film and Presence in the Work of Eleanor Antin," *Millennium Film Journal* 29, Fall 1996, 34–41.

#### 4 The California work of US artist Martha Rosler

- 1 M. Rosler, unpublished interview with the author, 18 August 1999.
- 2 Deutscher was raised orthodox in Poland in the early part of the twentieth century and later made his reputation as a poet and then as a socialist intellectual.

- 3 I. Deutscher, *The Non-Jewish Jew and Other Essays*, edited and with an introduction by T. Deutscher, London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1968, 26.
- 4 M. Rosler, unpublished interview with the author, December 1997.
- 5 N. Miller, *Getting Personal: Feminist Occasions and Other Autobiographical Acts*, New York: Routledge, 1991, 96.
- 6 Laura Levitt also analyzes Nancy Miller's response to a women's studies conference to raise questions about the academic field of feminist studies and whether it can provide a home for Jewish academics such as herself; see L. Levitt, *Jews and Feminism: The Ambivalent Search for Home*, New York: Routledge, 1997, 107–31.
- 7 Quoted in Miller, *Getting Personal*, 103.
- 8 See Sander Gilman, *The Jew's Body*, New York: Routledge, 1991; *Inscribing the Other*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991; *Smart Jews: The Construction of the Image of Jewish Superior Intelligence*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996; "The Jew's Body: Thoughts on Jewish Physical Difference," in Kleeblatt (ed.), *Too Jewish?*; Laurence J. Silberstein, *The Postzionism Debates: Knowledge and Power in Israeli Culture*, New York and London: Routledge, 1999; Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*, London: Verso, 2004; Miriam Peskowitz and Laura Levitt (eds), *Judaism since Gender*, New York: Routledge, 1997; Jon Stratton, *Coming Out Jewish*, London and New York: Routledge, 2000, among others.
- 9 D. Biale, M. Galchinsky, and S. Heschel, "The Dialectic of Jewish Enlightenment," in *Insider/Outsider: American Jews and Multiculturalism*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998, 11.
- 10 M. Rosler, unpublished interview with the author, December 1997.
- 11 Chicago, *Beyond the Flower*, 5.
- 12 M. Rosler, unpublished interview with the author, December 1997.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 M. Rosler, unpublished interview with the author, August 1999.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 M. Rosler, unpublished interview with the author, February 2000.
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 C. Owens, "The Discourse of Others: Feminists and Postmodernism," in H. Foster (ed.), *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, Port Townsend, Washington: Bay Press, 1983, 55–77.
- 22 A. Taubin, "And What Is a Fact Anyway?" *Millennium Film Journal* 5, Summer/Fall 1979, 59–64.
- 23 L. Cottingham, "Crossing Borders," *Frieze Magazine*, London, November–December 1993, 54.
- 24 M. Rosler, "The Private and the Public: Feminist Art in California," *Artforum*, September 1977, 68.
- 25 The book consists of three novels and one translation; in their original form, the novels were sent through the mail as postcard series, one card every five to seven days.
- 26 M. Rosler, unpublished interview with the author, 18 August 1999.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 The transcript of the full text from this work appears in M. Rosler, "She Sees in Herself a New Woman Every Day," *Heresies* 1, no. 2, May 1977, 90–1. One of the only reviews of this work is by Abigail Solomon-Godeau, from her exhibition catalogue,

*Sexual Difference: Both Sides of the Camera*, New York: Wallach Art Gallery, Columbia University, March 1988.

- 29 Rosler, "She Sees in Herself a New Woman Every Day," 90.
- 30 Ibid.

## 5 Contemporary feminist art practices in New York

- 1 The title was inspired by the Public Enemy album *Fear of a Black Planet*. The announcements for the exhibition were in bar-mitzvah-like script, inviting people to share in this joyful occasion. The exhibition included the installation of a range of artifacts: *Artforum* ads, art postcards, art catalogues, and books. Stamped on each artifact was either Honorary Jew, Jew Wannabe, Jew-Lover, or plain Jew. By having the audience choose a stamp or combination of stamps with the above monikers, the exhibition was toying with the inadequacy of such labels. The opening included an Oprah-like talk-show event, where the participating artists discussed Jewish presence and/or absence in the art world in an attempt to dispel the shame that is attached to being too Jewish in the contemporary art world.
- 2 Kleeblatt, *Too Jewish?*, ix.
- 3 M. K. Kantrowitz, *My Jewish Name and Other Stories*, San Francisco: Spinsters/Aunt Lute Book Company, 1990, 26.
- 4 Greenberg, "Self-Hatred and Jewish Chauvinism," reprinted in *Collected Essays*, vol. 3, 178–9.
- 5 R. Lieberman, presentation at the Jewish Museum, 6 November 2002.
- 6 Greenberg, *Collected Essays*, vol. 3, 78–9.
- 7 Lieberman, presentation at the Jewish Museum, 6 November 2002.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 M. Plante (ed.), *Deborah Kass: The Warhol Project*, New York: Distributed Art Publishers, 1999, 30.
- 10 D. Kass, correspondence, with the author, 4 July 2004.
- 11 Janet Malcolm, in a *New Yorker* essay on Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas and their years in occupied France, develops the theme that Stein never overtly addressed her Jewish heritage or dealt with lesbian culture except in an oblique way. See J. Malcolm, "Gertrude Stein's War," *The New Yorker*, 2 June 2003, 58–81.
- 12 E. Reichek, presentation at the Jewish Museum, 6 November 2002. Unpublished text.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Interview with Sherry Millner, June 1999, unpublished text.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 J. Braderman, *Joan Does Dynasty*, New York: Women Make Movies, 1986; text from a transcript of the video reprinted in J. Braderman, "Joan Does Dynasty: A Neopagan, Postsituationist, Socialist/Anarcho/Feminist Exposé," *Independent*, August/September, 1986, 14–19.
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Brodtkin, *How Jews Became White Folks*, 2.
- 21 The work was initially presented in 1998 at the Fine Arts Gallery, University of California, Irvine. The installation consisted of four monitors, one in each of the four corners of the gallery. Each monitor was surrounded by a metal cage giving the impression that the characters were trapped in the roles the artist created for them.