

The Spectacle of the Invisible: Sephardic Jewish Identity in Multicultural Education

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This study assesses from a North American Sephardic (Spanish-Jewish) perspective, the ambiguous relationships among Jews, "people of color," and definitions of "whiteness" in order to re-evaluate multicultural education in the United States. My intent is not to polarize multiple cultural identities but to illuminate and clarify differences in Jewish histories, identities, and cultures. The assumption that all Jews are and can pass as white, and therefore "have privilege," denies the complexities of racism, anti-Semitism, whiteness, assimilation, and multiculturalism. In a world where hierarchical divisions narrowly define our perceptions, our relations to power, and our multiple identities, Sephardic non-white Jews are often simultaneously defined and excluded by "whites," "people of color," and by those who are themselves stereotyped as the "monolithic Jew" (i.e., the German or Eastern European Jew). By examining historical and social constructions of "whiteness," I hope to compel Jews to politicize the construction of our identities within the context of the diaspora and cultural workers to strengthen the vitality, complexity, and legitimacy of a multicultural curriculum.

As a Sephardic female who is conscious of having been socially and culturally conditioned by American institutions, I experience daily an ambiguous "identity of exile," which I define as the spectacle of the invisible. This study assesses, from a North American Sephardic (Spanish-Jewish) perspective, the complex relationships among Jews, "people of color," and definitions of "whiteness" in order to examine the intersections of multicultural education and the politics of representation in the

United States. Such re-evaluation is particularly significant in light of growing anti-Semitism resulting from white supremacy at the extreme right, and various resistance movements at the radical left, such as the unexamined Christianity of Liberation Theology.¹

With this paper, I intend to use the term "spectacle of the invisible" as a lens through which I examine power relationships among Sephardic peoples, the United States as one of their many white "host" countries, and the repressive homogenization which such "hosting" breeds. Just as there is no monolithic Native American, or singular Asian, Arab, or African, Jews come from India, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Mexico, and Montana. My intent is not to polarize multiple cultural identities, but to illuminate and clarify differences in Jewish histories, identities, and cultures in order to strengthen the vitality, complexity, and legitimacy of a multicultural curriculum.²

Dominant forms of cultural and political representation in the United States call for all Jews to assimilate into white institutions. "White" is a socio-political construction, not a biological one, which is manifested within our society's power-structure. I use the terms "white" and "power-structure" to refer to a systematic universalizing and dehistoricizing of Jewish peoples now living in the United States: "Our school system teaches us that we must forget ourselves. We must...learn a language which universalizes, so that not only [are] our voices[s] silenced, but our very existence[s are] eliminated."³ In the United States, the multiple layers of Jewish identities are lumped together into the anonymous, homogeneous Jew and then lumped again into the category of "White." It is this ironic trap that perpetuates anti-Semitism and signifies the spectacle of the invisible.

The assumption that all Jews are and can pass as white (and therefore have privilege) denies the complexities of racism, anti-Semitism, whiteness, multiculturalism, and multiplicity of Jewish identities. I question, what color is this white?

According to James Baldwin:

No one was white before he/she came to America. It took generations, and a vast amount of coercion, before this became a white country...The Jewish community-or more accurately, perhaps, its remnants—in America has paid the highest and most extraordinary price for becoming White. For Jews came here from countries where they were not white, and they came here, in part, because they were not white.⁴

Given the recurrence of pogroms, inquisitions, quotas, and variations on the Dreyfus affair, clearly, Jews cannot and do not integrate into our "host" societies; we either become invisible or stand out as a stereo-

type. This contradictory condition results in assimilation and complicity in our own silencing. Assimilation is too often manifested as internalized oppression. Internalized oppression is "the result of psychological and ideological domination...the primary means by which we have been forced to perpetuate and agree to our own oppression."⁵ Similarly, Trinh T. Minh-ha states:

When those who are different, or 'other', are admitted to the discussion, they are only admitted on the terms of those in power, using 'their' language and 'their' standards for discourse. But, this just ends up 'allowing' those who are different to contribute to their own silencing, and at the same time, legitimizes the discussion.⁶

Assimilationists (i.e., Jews who readily identify themselves as white) are often whiter than white. (This is only the case, of course, until our "certificates of pure blood," "limpieza de sangre," are verified by authorities.) According to Audre Lorde, they take on the "language and manners of the oppressor" to give themselves an "illusion of protection."⁷ Cherrie Moraga tells us that those who are able to "pass" become acclimated to the sound of white language..." I had disowned the language I know best-ignored the words and rhythms that were closest to me. I had but off the hands in my poems. But not in conversation: still the hands could not be kept down. Still they insisted on moving".⁸

Hierarchical degrees of socially constructed whiteness determine power relationships; we are socialized to act as though "passing" as white grants us immunity and power. What is the nature of this passing? "To pass...is to get by in public life...but only at the mercy of detailed and conscious concealment and invention."⁹ Passing cannot presume acceptance and community: "For some Jews, 'passing' seems a choice; for others, passing means total denial and pain; for still others, passing is something they do without even thinking, and for still others, passing as white/American/normal is impossible."¹⁰ Whiteness, just as the mainstreaming, or what I identify as Yiddishizin, of what it means to be identified as a Jew, has functioned as a convenient tool for both exposing and denying my identities as a Sephardic woman.

In her essay, "La Guera," ("fair-skinned,") Moraga confronts her identity as marginal Chicana. She describes "a world that is both alien and common to me: the capacity to enter into the lives of others."¹¹ Moraga stresses that those who have the "ability" to pass, are only "peripherally advantageous." According to the specific circumstance, I am able to pass as white or as non-white, while simultaneously, I am defined as neither. Nava Mizrahi's poem of contradictions explores her experience of hybrid identities.

"To Be an Arab Jew":

To be an Arab Jew.
What is the title?
What does it mean?
Are you Arab? Are you Jewish?
Where you standing?
How can it even be?
You are either Arab,
Or you are Jewish-
Because there is the Arab-Jewish conflict.
But I am an Arab Jew,
Because Farha Abdallah
Came from Iraq
Which is Arab country.
Of course when she came to Jerusalem,
She become Farha Mizrahi.
She is Jewish.
She been to the synagogue
Every Friday night and Saturday morning.
She keeps kosher.
Her language is Arabic.
The music she listens to is in Arabic.
And her connection to the big world
Is through the Arabic department
Of the Israeli television.
Since she live in Jerusalem,
She could also enjoy some more
Program from the TV station in Amman.
I didn't grow up speaking Arabic.
And through my childhood, I wasn't able to communi-
cate with my grandmother.
My parents wanted me to speak Hebrew.
Then I went to school and learned English and French.
Arabic never been a priority for them.
In the housing project we lived in,
People from Persia Kurdistan Morocco
Iraq Egypt Bukhara Yemen
Lived one next to other.
And instead of a multi-culture
We heard the national radio play
European and "Israeli" music.
And then was the Arabic department.
But you don't really listen to it
Because in the projects everyone could hear

What you listen to-and you are
Ashamed to be caught
Being an Arab Jew.¹²

Not only does such ambiguous marginality threaten the homogenizing definitions of "what is a Jew?," but it clearly reflects social relationships Sephardic Jews have had within their/our host countries. "As Sephardim, it is our multicultural histories and hybrid sensibilities that enable many of us to identify with the crypto-Jews of the southwest, with the Ethiopian Jews, with the Palestinians, and the Moslems of Yugoslavia."¹³ This reciprocal responsibility reminds me of Rabbi Hillel's provocation, "If I am not for myself, who will be? If I am only for myself, what am I?" Rabbi Hillel's assertion resonates with the potential to cross borders set by historical and social constructions of power and their implicit and explicit ways in which assumptions about and representations of Jews inform cultural norms. According to David Rabeeya, "Sephardic Jews must recognize the international dimensions of their situation which is comparable to many other groups who have been subject to forces of bigotry and prejudice."¹⁴

In a world where hierarchical divisions and definitions narrowly define our perceptions, our relations to power, and our multiple identities, as a Sephardic non-white Jew, I am simultaneously defined and excluded by "whites," "people of color," and by those who are themselves stereotyped as the "monolithic Jew" (i.e., the German or Eastern European Jew). Once again, I am the spectacle of my own invisibility. This spectacle exploits the reductionism of Jews' ambiguous identities and denies, exoticizes, or ignores a Spanish presence while it objectifies the anonymous Jew who supposedly has the option and desire to assimilate and who can conveniently, albeit temporarily, fit into the mainstream.

Thus, I perceive myself as a kind of hidden or invisible Jew in Christian North America.¹⁵ Sephardim are often mistaken as Moslem or Catholic and "pass" into situations where anti-Semitism would have silenced a Yiddish speaking person. Three years ago, for example, when I was living in Tunisia, for reasons of daily survival I had to conceal that I am a Jew. In spite of the guilt I felt, I was grateful to be mistaken as an Arab from the city. On the other hand, "Ashkenazi Jews here in the U.S. often label Sephardim as 'exotic,' and often do not see us as really being Jewish, given that our physical characteristics, or languages (including our Hebrew), as well as our literature, folklore, music, foods, and rituals are a hybrid of Spanish, Arabic, and Turkish."¹⁶

Another layer of this contradiction of an identity of exile is that for the very reason the Sephardim had been exiled from their own particular countries for being Jews, when they arrived in the United States they had to prove to other Jews that very "Jewishness":

The American Jewish population here had no idea that these immigrants [Sephardic or Levantine] were Jews. The Hebrew Immigration Aid Society (HIAS) sent people to the boats to help the Jewish arrivals, but they failed to identify the Sephardim as Jews. Rabbi Marc Angel goes on to say that the Sephardim weren't recognized as Jews by the Ashkenazim because they didn't know Yiddish; their pronunciation of Hebrew was different; and their names were Alhadeff, [Cardoza], and Angel, which to Ashkenazim didn't sound 'Jewish'.¹⁷

The Sephardic "invisible" identity of the "minority within a minority"¹⁸ is reinforced by what the mainstream perceives as mainstream Jews. For example, the stereotypical "known" Jew speaks Yiddish. Ladino, the language of the Sephardim, is not acknowledged as a Jewish language; thus, it is not a target of derision, as is Yiddish. Michele Wallace makes a similar case against theoretical discourses, in which "race" is marginalized, trivialized, and excluded. "[Such convenient omissions] provide the component parts for the structure of racism in the dominant discourse. It has meant and continues to mean that as you turn to the cultural left you are greeted by the emphatic symbolic representation of your own invisibility. At least 'race' is real to the reactionary right."¹⁹

Clearly, homogenizing definitions of all peoples tend to perpetuate racism and divisiveness. It is essential, therefore, not to ignore basic cultural differences among Jews living in the United States. My personal experiences resonate with Barbara Christian's statement: "Many of us are particularly sensitive to monolithism because one major element of ideologies of dominance, such as sexism and racism, is to dehumanize people by stereotyping them, by denying them their variousness and complexity."²⁰

Because in the United States we are taught that ambiguity is not only threatening, but "absolutely" invalid, the reductionism of identities has become institutionalized. Ethnic ambiguity threatens the purity of the power-structure. In institutional arenas (universities, public schools, governmental, and cultural sites), and in organized hate groups, Jews are consistently defined by others: the economic essentializing view of the corporate Jew, alluding to both wealth and conspiracy; the Israeli perceived as only the Zionist,²¹ erasing the existence of Arab-Jews and Palestinian-Israelis; the religious Jew, delegitimizing the secular Jew (discussed below); and the Eastern European or German Jew, ignoring the presence of Spanish Jews and all other non-white "non-Ashkenazim." "Jewishness" is amplified as a race by the extreme right and reduced to a religion and/or Israeli politics by the Left—both liberal and radical. In contrast, Amalia Mesa-Baine stresses that, "power [functions] as the

ability to create self-definitions upon which one can act."²²

Assimilation to expected norms (in contrast to active Jewish secularism) leaves Jews powerless to personally define and publicly voice our identities beyond institutionally stereotyped categories which are perceived "natural." As a Sephardic woman, if I am to challenge the erasures of assimilationism, to demystify and communicate beyond constructed boundaries, I must examine my experiences of cultural isolation from the "American Jewish community" *within* its social context in the United States.

Multicultural advocates, as historical agents and cultural workers, have the responsibility to recognize the dangerous dichotomy of defining racism as all white people oppressing all people of color. This schism denies complexities of both "white" (quotation marks emphasized) people's "color" and people of color's "color" and how they may overlap.²³ Without such a recognition, multicultural educators too often perpetuate the unaccountability of whiteness and its historical and social power-structures.

Chandra Talpade Mohanty stresses:

The challenge of race resides in a fundamental reconceptualization of our categories of analysis so that differences can be historically specified and understood as part of larger political processes and systems. The central issue, then, is not one of merely acknowledging difference; rather, the more difficult question concerns the kind of difference that is acknowledged and engaged. Difference seen as benign variation (diversity), for instance, rather than as conflict, struggle, or the threat of disruption, bypasses power as well as history to suggest a harmonious, empty pluralism.²⁴

I am defining multiculturalism not through a self-referential lens (i.e., having a voice simply for the sake of hearing oneself speak), but through a lens which reflects multiculturalism's relationship to white supremacy and institutionalized racism. This perspective renders articulate not only those voices who have been historically eliminated, but those voices who get heard precisely because of such an elimination. I do not intend to promote pluralism, as referred to above as the "notion that all positions in culture and politics are now open and equal,"²⁵ or inclusiveness, which is defined by Michele Wallace as a "color-blind cultural homogeneity which originates in liberal humanist ideology."²⁶ Instead, I am advocating an impassioned resistance based on the specificity of difference; one which interrogates and holds the "white power-structure" accountable.

Baldwin states that anti-Semitism among Blacks often stems from displaced hatred toward the good white Christian-American institu-

tions.²⁷ Similarly, Earl Raab defines political anti-Semitism as perceiving the Jew as the corporate structure. The concept and propaganda of a Jewish conspiracy, which once again presumes a universal identity of Jewish peoples, detracts public attention away from the taken for granted hegemonic power structure.

The irony of American Jews being identified with the all pervasive, all intrusive power structure lies in the economic and political position of Jews as "middlemen":

Black rage at white power was transformed into anti-Semitism by the myth of the omnipotent Jew...The omnipotent Jew and rapacious black male are twin spectres in the Western psyche, always available to be played as an instrument of public policy. It is Bush and the elite he epitomizes that are ultimately empowered by Crown Heights. Now, blacks may be held up to Jews as the real anti-Semites, even as Jews are held up to blacks as the real racists.²⁸

The assumption that economic status is the key to control within the power structure is based on the absences and ignorance of Jewish histories in the United States. This assumption equates money with the privilege of defining one's own identity and relationships within society. Because this reductionist perception breeds an insidious anti-Semitism, the need for education of Jewish histories, both present and past, becomes even more vital:

The socio-economic success of some American Jews in no way mitigates the importance of invigorating university curricula with relevant and previously neglected Jewish cultural contribution. Elevated class status has not immunized economically successful American Jews against discrimination or cultural exclusion. Only an environment which fosters an appreciation of Jewish contributions to American culture among Jews and non-Jews alike can alleviate an anti-Semitism which thrives on stereotypes of Jewish wealth.²⁹

Oppression of Jews in the form of institutional assimilation and cultural exclusion persists in large part because numerical representation does not reflect or constitute cultural representation. By inserting token fragments of Jewish histories into curriculum (such as the Holocaust taken out of historical context), professors neutralize and depoliticize our histories and identities, thus erasing memory.

Rather than defining ourselves, we have internalized the constructed desire to learn "their" language, "their" HlStory, and "their" culture:

in school, nothing encouraged us to look to our homes and backgrounds for cultural resources worthy of preservation. The message was just the opposite: we were to erase all traces of who we were and where we came from. Higher education continues the process of making us "become" something new.³⁰

Within this institutionalized space of "becoming" the pre-defined invisible other, we are taught to speak white Christianizing English--"Standard English"--the language of those in power. "Standardized means the rule, the norm...Although we all come from different experiences and our silencing each takes on different forms, Standard English silences us all in some way."³¹

In the following citation, June Jordan discusses a form of institutional racism many African-American children experience. She could very well be describing various Jewish children's experience in the United States:

What those children brought into the classroom: their language, their style, their sense of humor, their ideas of smart, their music, their need for a valid history and a valid literature history and literature that included their faces and their voices... Nobody wanted to know what they felt or to teach them to think for themselves. Nobody wanted to learn anything from them.³²

This pedagogical omission continues to be played out in university classrooms. Too often, when Jews come out of the closet by specifically raising "Jewish concerns", we are confronted by a hostile Left. When I voice my direct empathy with "oppressed Others," I am told my voice diverts the issue at hand—acknowledging those who experience "real" oppression—"real" racism. This myth of scarcity, in which there exists an unspoken monopoly on oppression, where anti-Semitism is pitted against racism, reifies the very power-structure which constructs oppressive conditions.³³

One example of politically correct anti-Semitism, in this case internalized anti-Semitism, is that of a well known Chicana activist-"borderland intellectual" whose (textual) politics of location emphasize multiple, often conflicting and always leaking identities, but as a professor in the classroom, she chose to selectively omit any discussion of her one-fourth (sephardic) Jewish ancestry. I cannot help wondering if her peda-

gogically abridged version of her personal politics of location was the conscious result of needing to satisfy her students' unquestioned assumption of the myth of scarcity, in which the discussion of everyday Jewish oppression is deemed distracting and illegitimate.

When white supremacists have the power to make their world a White world, Jews have historically been one of the primary groups to be eliminated:

It's obvious for people in Europe that anti-Semitism is a form of racism. People don't have any questions about it, partly because they've experienced it close at hand and because they're re-experiencing it now. Europeans have often seen Jews as a very different people. In the U.S. the distinctions are blurred. Jews are seen as white people who go to Jewish church. So Jews need to explore an analysis that connects anti-Semitism to racism and makes plain to Jews what the dangers of racism are to us, and makes plain to progressives and people of color what the dangers of anti-Semitism are to them.³⁴

Discussions on anti-Semitism which are either subsumed under or overshadowed by discussions on racism simply perpetuate monolithic definitions, and bypass the interconnecting relationships among power, authority, and privilege. (Multi)Cultural workers must clarify specifically about, for, and/or with whom we are speaking.³⁵ Ironically, many students, faculty, and those specifically involved in the "diversity industry" who spend so much of their time and energy on educating and fighting against racism simultaneously sponsor and publish (both subtle and blatant) anti-Semitic (and racist) speakers and articles.

To counter-act "ethnic amnesia" cultural workers must develop a solid knowledge of Jewish histories which would give Jews the tools to analyze the multiple manifestations of their/our oppression. (Of course, this is against the interests of those who dominate the modes of representation.) This struggle, which uses cultural memory as a resource, resists the blurring and erasure of identity and culture which assimilation breeds.

Radical leftists continue to use the term "Judeo-Christian" when criticizing ethnocurricula. The naturalized institutionalization of "Judeo-Christian" perpetuates the myth that Jewish histories are voiced through Eurocentric histories. Such a notion once again equates Jewish identity with the white power-structure. Using the term "Judeo-Christian"

successfully deceives Jews into believing that the two civilizations are really alike...to minimize again our distinctiveness and the uniqueness of our tradition[s] and

culture[s], and to anesthetize us against recognizing and remembering the Christians oppressed us for many centuries in the name of their 'civilization.'³⁶

Jews defining ourselves in the Diaspora becomes "a commitment...in which politics and Jewish identit[ies] are intimately connected...How we define ourselves as Jews determines our politics and how we express them." Irena Klepfisz goes on to discuss "the radical concept of Jewish secularism...the possibility of being a committed unassimilated Jew without being observant." To be secular is to experience the "desire to affirm Jewish identity and unequivocally to disassociate oneself from assimilationists."³⁷ Judaism embodies multiple ethnic and political identities: it is not, as the Left—both radical and liberal—claim, simply a religion and/or Israeli politics.

A visible Jewish autonomy can be based on the Hebrew word, *tzedakah*, meaning justice. The Torah and high holidays (examples of popularly perceived religious signifiers) are integral elements of Jewish philosophies and cultures: "Hanukkah, Purim, and Pesakh are not dependent on synagogue observance, but linked to historical and political Jewish events."³⁸ They are stories of resistance and survival which can and are directly applied to contemporary political contexts around the world. This vital recognition of geographical and cultural differences acknowledges the presence of not only the Sephardim and the Ashkenazim, but also, Oriental Jews from Turkey, the Balkan countries, Syria, and Northern Africa (particularly Morocco, Tunisia, and Egypt); Jewish communities in Ethiopia, India, China, Iraq, Lebanon, and "edot Hamizrah" (the Oriental communities in Israel of Asian-African origin), to name but a few elements of the Jewish Diaspora.

As a child of a Sephardic Holocaust survivor of a European based World War, I am propelled to activate histories through a recognition of multiple identities and empathetic experiences. Like many Jews who have resisted internalized anti-Semitism, Diego Rivera attributed his partial Jewish ancestry to his passionate drive to fight against social injustices.³⁹ I too have learned that being a Jew means actively resisting everyday violence.⁴⁰ By reducing Judaism to religion, as an isolated category, all Jews who define ourselves as secular-political Jews must confront an imposed and internalized erasure of identities.⁴¹

The majority of the students of color who spoke out at Sarah Lawrence College's 1991 *Forum on Racism*, insisted that Judaism is not a race but a religion. The result is that the difference between secular and assimilated Jews is not even considered by most Jewish (and, evidently, non-Jewish) college students today. This limiting perspective too often confuses secularism with assimilation. Klepfisz's definition of a strong Jewish secular consciousness can be defined through "intergrated art and politics, introspection and activism, a concern for Jewish survival and the survival of other peoples."⁴²

Part of the unstable common ground that many Jews share with people of color is:

the sense of uprootedness-expulsion, moving to strange lands, searching for safety, for a home; the power of history of anti-Semitism with its hatred and genocide; ...sharing and the fear of losing that connecting thread; assimilation...self-denial, and self-mutilation, the betrayal of our own in order to be 'one of them';...recognition of worth a coming into language of Yiddish or Ladino, one that is connected with music and dance and food and humor, the humor that says so much about how people live with loss, pain, dislocation, that says so much about survival and joy, sharing and love.⁴³

Because, as Stuart Hall claims, "all identity is constructed across difference," we must recognize and act on the profoundly hybrid character of "race," "ethnicity," and "nationality." Rabbi Marc Angel's statement: "Sephardim are able to balance contradictions without feeling hypocritical about it"⁴⁴ reinforces an acceptance of the potential to activate the permeability of identities. Adrienne Rich emphasizes the transformative potential of such intersubjectivities: "The relationship to more than one culture, nonassimilating in spirit and therefore living contradiction, is a constant act of self-creation."⁴⁵

Perhaps we, as cross-cultural activists who exist within and between multiple worlds, can learn from the Crypto-Jews of the southwest United States, who, as spectacles of the invisible, for the past five-hundred years have been living as Catholics in name only, while passing on to their descendants both their hidden Jewish traditions and their fear of exposure. The complexity of these communities' hybrid identities embodies the possibilities for cross-cultural alliances.

In *The Buried Mirror*, Carlos Fuentes makes a radical claim for reciprocal responsibility:

We are men and women of La Mancha. In Spanish, la mancha means "the stain." [It is crucial that] we understand that none of us is pure, that we are all both real and ideal, heroic and absurd, made of desire and imagination as much as of blood and bone, and that each of us is part Christian, part Jew, part Moor, part Caucasian, part black, part Indian, without having to sacrifice any of our components.⁴⁶

NOTES

¹Judith Laikin-Elkin, "Colonial Legacy of Anti-Semitism," *Report on the Americas* 25 n. 4, (February, 1992).

²"Since most Sephardic perspectives have historically been publicized by non-Sephardic Jews, it is essential now that Sephardic Jews themselves offer their own perceptions on historic events." David Rabeeya, "Sephardic Perspectives: Past, Present and Future—Contemporary Arab-Israeli-Ashkenazic-Sephardic Issues", *Jewish Education News*, CAJE-33 (1992): 2-3.

³Laura Wernick, "Why I Can't Write My Thesis" (Social Science Senior Thesis, University of California Berkeley, 1991), 26.

⁴James Baldwin, "On Being 'White'... and Other Lies", *Essence*, (April 1984).

⁵Lipsky, in *Notes on Anti-Semitism and Anti-Oppression Work*, ed. Naomi Nim (1991), 2.

⁶Trinh T. Min-ha, *Women Native Other* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989).

⁷Audre Lorde, "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference" in *Out of the Other Side: Contemporary Lesbian Writing*, eds. Christina McEwen and Sue O'Sullivan (London: Virago, 1988).

⁸Cherrie Moraga, "La Guera", *Loving In the War Years* (Boston: South End Press, 1983), 55.

⁹Lisa Henderson, "Justify Our Love: Madonna and the Politics of Queer Sex," in *The Madonna Connection: Representation, Politics, Subcultural Identities, and Cultural Theory*, ed. Cathy Schichtenberg (Boulder: Westview, 1993), 121.

¹⁰Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz, "Towards a Radical Jew in the Late Twentieth Century", in *The Tribe of Dina: A Jewish Women's Anthology*, eds. Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz and Irena Klepfisz (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), 308.

¹¹Moraga, 44.

¹²Nava Mizahhi, "To Be an Arab Jew", *The Tribe of Dina*, 231.

¹³Micaela Amato, personal conversation, 1992.

¹⁴Rabeeya, 3.

¹⁵"We are Christian in everything. We live in a Christian state, attend Christian schools, read Christian books, in short, our whole 'culture' rests entirely on Christian foundations". Franz Rosenszweig in *Response, A Contemporary Jewish Review: "Special Issue: Multiculturalism, Jews and the Canon"* (New York: Response, 1991).

¹⁶Amato, personal conversation, 1992.

¹⁷Marc Angel, "Our Different Heritages: Sephardim and Askenazim", *Jewish Congress Monthly*, January 1992.

¹⁸Rita Arditti, "To Be Hanu" [Ladino word meaning good-looking woman], *The Tribe of Dina*, 16.

¹⁹Michele Wallace, "Multiculturalism and Oppositionality", in *Between Borders: Pedagogy and the Politics of Cultural Studies*, eds. Henry Giroux and Peter McLaren (New York: Routledge, 1994), 186.

²⁰Barbara Christian cited in Wernick.

²¹"While Some leaders of the Sephardic Jewish community in Arab lands actually took part in the growth of Arab nationalism, they were unaware of the growth of a similar nationalism called the Zionist movement. These leaders were conceptually unprepared to transfer their experience in the Arab world to an unfamiliar European-Ashkenazic movement called Zionism." Rabeeya, 3.

²²Amalia Mesa-Bains, "The Real Multiculturalism: A Struggle for Power and Authority," in *Different Voices: A Social, Cultural, and Historical Framework for Change in the American Art Museum*, ed. Marcia Tucher (Chicago: Library of Congress, 1992), 88.

²³According to Audre Lorde, "It is not our differences which separate [us], but our reluctance to recognize those differences and to deal effectively with the distortions which have resulted from the ignoring and misnaming of those differences. [we must] identify and develop new definitions of power and new patterns of relation across difference." Lorde, 275. Without connections, recognitions of differences and similarities in our histories, we are insulated in our own oppressions. Through reading about and listening to experiences of women of color, I began to clarify

both my role in their oppression as well as my own relationship to anti-Semitism. These experiences reveal that although the racism I experience is different from other women, I am not alone: "Its through acknowledging and understanding our own oppressions that we come to really gain an understanding of others' oppressions." Wernick, 49.

²⁴Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "On Race and Voice: Challenges for Liberal Education in the 1990's, in *Between Borders*, 146.

²⁵Hal Foster, *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays in Post-Modern Culture* (Seattle: Bay Printing, 1983).

²⁶Wallace, 182.

²⁷Nat Hentoff, *Black Anti-Semitism and Jewish Racism* (New York: Richard W. Baron, 1969).

²⁸Richard Goldstein, "The New Anti-Semitism: A Geshrei," *The Village Voice*, 1 October, 1991.

²⁹*Response*.

³⁰Irena Klepfisz, *Dreams of an Insomniac: Jewish Feminist Essays, Speeches, and Diatribes* (Portland: The Eighth Mountain Press, 1990), 38.

³¹Wernick.

³²June Jordan, *On Call Political Essays* (Boston: South End Press, 1985), 29.

³³The "dis-ease" of coming out and openly discussing anti-Semitism is rampant among Jewish social activists who do not acknowledge the multiple layers of their/our own Jewish identities. This institutional production of silence feeds on its self-legitimizing curricular omissions. Audre Lorde tells us, "For we have been socialized to respect fear more than our own need for language and definition, and while we wait in silence for that final luxury of fearlessness, the weight of that silence will choke us." Lorde, 44.

³⁴Kaye/Kantrowitz, "Raising Consciousness and Making Change: Workshop on Anti-Semitism and Jewish Identity", in *The Issue is Power* (Aunt Lute Books, 1992), 8.

³⁵Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Woman Native Other*, (Bloomington: Indiana Univer-

sity Press, 1989).

³⁶Rosenberg, 43.

³⁷Klepfisz.

³⁸Klepfisz, 195.

³⁹*El Lapid: Journal for the Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies.*

⁴⁰I am told that I am white, yet, growing up in a small towns in Colorado and Texas, I have never identified with "normalized" white experiences. Where I grew up, people thought that my mother and I were gypsies. Our clothes were strange, our food was strange, we smelled strange, and we had strange accents. I encountered individuals who were convinced that underneath our curly hair, we were hiding our horns.

⁴¹"In sharp contrast to the Sephardic Jews who in their heyday were among the leading statesmen, diplomats, philosophers, scientists, mathematicians, astronomers, navigators, physicians, etc., of Spain, North Africa and Egypt, the Polish Jews, with very few exceptions, considered interest in any realm of non-Jewish intellectual endeavor as un-Jewish and therefore prohibited". Raphael Patai, *The Vanishing Worlds of Jewry* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1980), 21.

⁴²Klepfisz, 210.

⁴³Bernice Mennis cited in Wernick, 38.

⁴⁴Ruth Mason, "Diverse and Proud: Sephardic Culture Persists Despite Assimilation," *B'nai B'rith International Jewish Monthly* (January 1992): 12.

⁴⁵Adrienne Rich, *On Lies, Secrets, and Silence: Selected Prose 1966-1978* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1979), 35.

⁴⁶Carlos Fuentes, *The Buried Mirror: Reflections on Spain and the New World* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1992), 192.