

160

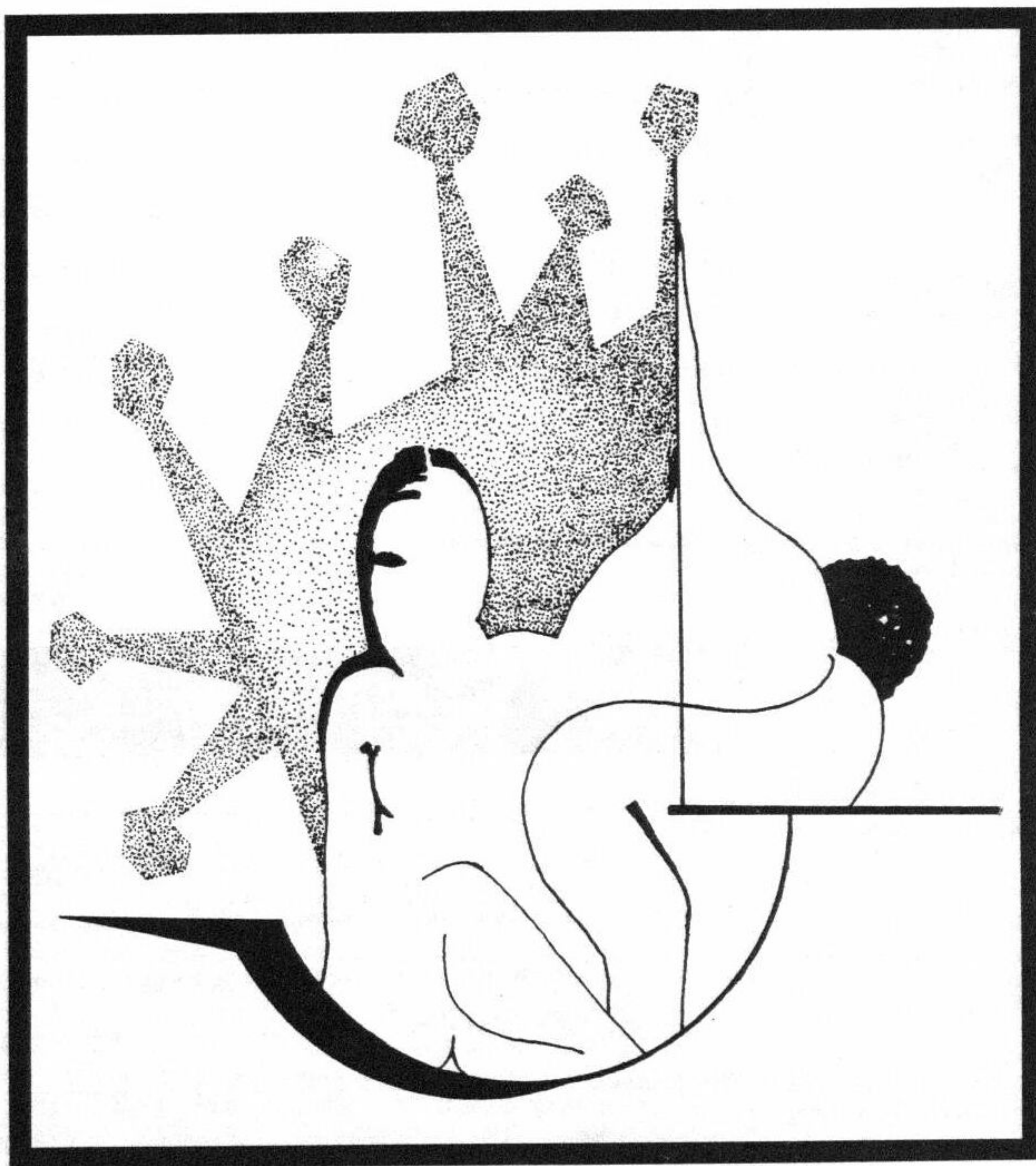
# AKHÉ

March/April, 1990

Vol. 2, No. 2

\$2

A Journal For Black Lesbians



For more artwork by artist Rox Johnson, see page 27.

# Aché

A Journal For Black Lesbians

MARCH/APRIL, 1990

VOL. 2, NO. 2

## PUBLISHER/EDITOR:

Lisbet

## CONTRIBUTORS

DeeAnne Davis  
Debra K. Floyd  
Ayofemi Folayan  
Rebecca Hall  
Rox Johnson  
Josylyn Segal  
Stephanie Smith  
Andrea Stanley  
Skye Ward  
Storme Webber  
Erica Wilson

Aché (pronounced a-chay) is a bi-monthly publication by black lesbians for the benefit of all black women. Aché is available the 1st week (or close) of every other month and the deadline for submissions is the 10th of the month prior to publication. Handwritten, typed materials and 3.5" diskettes using MacWrite or Microsoft Word are accepted. Include name, address, & phone # on all submissions. Don't submit originals, as we are not able to return them. Please specify if you would not like your full name reproduced in Aché.

The editor will not print words & images we deem to be racist, sexist, ageist, etc. The appearance of names or images in this publication does not indicate the sexual orientation of that person or persons. Subscriptions are \$10-25/yr (donations always welcome.) To subscribe, phone or mail your name & address to:

Aché: P.O. Box 6071, Albany, CA.

94706 phone: (415) 824-0703

The entire contents of Aché are copyright ©1990 and may not be reproduced in any manner, either whole or part without written permission from the publisher.

Aché is dedicated to the memory of Pat Parker & all the black women who have passed before us and whose work we continue today.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

3rd Annual NBGL Conference .....	Skye Ward	5
Conference Dedication Stirs Controversy .....	Skye Ward	5
Profile: Barbara Smith .....	Skye Ward	6
"Little Girls Smell Too" .....	Josylyn Segal	9
Miscegenation & the Law .....	Rebecca Hall & Erica Wilson	11
A Discussion On Being Biracial .....		12
"No Place to Breathe" .....	DeeAnne Davis	16
jeté (on Pearl Primus) .....	Debra K. Floyd	26
About the Artist - Rox Johnson .....		27
Sitting On the Fence .....	Ayofemi Folayan	28
Mixed Nuts .....	Stephanie Smith	29
Letter to my daughter .....	Rebecca's mom	32
Biracial Identity Development .....	"Ms. Belvedere"	33
Miscegenation .....	Storme Webber	41

## DEPARTMENTS

From the Editor .....	3
Letters to Aché .....	4
This Month In ... (calendar descriptions) .....	20
March/April Calendar .....	22
On The Table (biracial women) .....	28
Bulletin Board .....	42
The Back Page .....	44

Aché is a form of the Yoruba word ase or ashé (pronounced a-shay.) The concept of aché is as simple as it is complex; it is divine force, the power-to-make-things-happen.

The Yoruba worship nature, and according to Yoruba belief, the universe is created and controlled by a supreme deity that is neither female nor male but rather a vital force that encompasses all. Through embodiments of aché, messengers that can take *any* form, this supreme deity bestows upon us a sacred power, the power-to-make-things-happen. Aché literally translated means, "So be it," "May it happen."

*This issue is dedicated to all the performers and volunteers who helped create a magical month of February...*

■ Where do I begin... February was a definite turning point for Aché. Starting with the erotica event "we come...from fire," which brought over 100 women to Modern Times Bookstore (something I have *never* seen before) for an evening not one of us will ever forget. Special thanks to the performers Darlene Angela, Natalie Devora, Winn Gilmore, Teri Lethridge, Margaret Sloan Hunter, Storme Webber, and Stephanie Henderson (who also organized the event.) Also, many thanks to all the volunteers and other sisters who came out and made the evening so hot!!!

#### ■ CELEBRATING OUR TRIBAL CONNEXIONS...

The first anniversary of Aché was celebrated with a truly special evening at Koncepts Cultural Gallery in Oakland. Along with the standing-room-only crowd, the performers Gwen Avery, Rachel Bagby, Maria Cora, Diane Ferlatte, Debra K. Floyd, Allowyn

Price, Karolyn van Putten, and Storme Webber created some healing magic. That evening it was obvious that such self-affirming events need to happen much more often, and towards that end, the next celebration is now being planned...It was a shock to me to hear that for veteran performers like Gwen Avery, this event was the *first* time she had ever performed with all black performers in an all black production!! It will definitely *not* be the last...

■ The day after the anniversary event, I took a little time off to map out the future of Aché. I'm a little scared (and a lot excited) by what I see. The publication is growing *exponentially* (this month's publication is 12 pages larger than last months') and the Aché events are standing-room-only!! My main concern right now is, how do I keep up this pace? The task of producing (and financing) a 40+ page *monthly*

publication doesn't leave much time for growth planning, organizing a staff, or even living any kind of normal life for that matter.

I am committed to Aché - which I define not only as a publication, but as a organizing force which can bring women together to make our individual and collective dreams manifest. Above all, Aché must continue to exist and thrive. Therefore, starting with this issue, Aché will come out every other month (March/April, May/June, etc.) until a production crew is formed. With this extra time, I'll finally be able to focus on other pressing goals such as developing a steering committee and a financial network. (Anybody out there write grants?) I'm also looking forward to spending more time working on special events - starting Apr. 25th with "Bahia" Aché will be presenting films on the last Wednesday of every month at La Peña in Berkeley. See you there!

Take care of your blessings,  
Lisbet

Aché presents...

## **"Bahia: Africa in the Americas"**

A remarkable documentary that examines the African cultural traditions preserved by the people of Bahia, Brasil, in their music, dance, art, food and the Candomble religion.

Wednesday, April 25, 1990. 7:30pm  
\$3-6 donation.

La Peña, 3105 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley

## **Letters To Aché**

Aché,

I missed out on the benefit, I had to work. I heard it was a wonderful evening and very healing. I'm so happy that Aché is a part of our community. I was a member of Onyx Black Lesbian Newsletter. It was a lot of work putting out that monthly publication but we got a lot of satisfaction out of it.

I commend you for this glorious, much-needed & appreciated journal.

Love,  
A.C.

● ● ●

Dear Aché,

Thank you so much for the two beautiful benefits for Aché - the erotica reading and the Koncepts event. They were both very inspiring and a much-needed display and developing of Black women's culture.

Thanks,  
S.F.

Dear Aché,

I am writing this letter of support, along with a check for a new subscription to your publication. I attended the benefit for your journal, "Celebrating Ourselves," and it was wonderful! The different varieties of black lesbians, is fascinating. I felt warmth, love and an incredible positive glow in the room that I took home and will carry with me forever.

This past year, I have been reclaiming my African American culture. The fears of my own internalized colorism spawned within my family, have ruled me for twenty eight of my twenty nine years. My blossoming, in my newly found twelve steps groups, has given me a self love and esteem, which I have never known before. The positive images that I saw at the celebration, further encourage me to reclaim my black identity. Thank you for being there, and touching my life and my soul.

In recovery and sisterhood,  
N.J.

**3RD ANNUAL NATIONAL BLACK  
GAY & LESBIAN CONFERENCE  
FEBRUARY 17-19, 1990  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA**

*"...It was an act of perversion."*

***Conference Dedication Stirs  
Controversy***

**SKYE WARD**

The Los Angeles based Black Gay & Lesbian Leadership Forum convened the 3rd Annual NBGL conference on Feb. 17-19, 1990, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Atlanta, Georgia. The conference was hosted by Atlanta's African American Lesbian and Gay Alliance (AALGA.) The warm hospitality and support extended by AALGA members helped to create a "family affair" environment - a safe space for hashing out our differences, analyzing interlocking oppressions; and creating new strategies for alliance building within our diverse communities. In fact, unlike the previous two NBGL gatherings, this year's conference was characterized by an overtly political tone and healthy tension between reformist and radical conference participants.

Black feminist scholar and Kitchen Table Press publisher Barbara Smith delivered a scorching keynote address at the banquet dinner. Smith admonished black gay and lesbian organizers who fail to respect political and ideological differences among black gay activists. She also criticized the increasing number of black gay and lesbian opportunists who have co-opted the nation's minority AIDS programs, conferences and other black gay organizations, by profiteering and monopolizing resources and data generated from those operations. Smith reiterated what she termed her "political responsibility" in advocating for radical and revolutionary measures in creating new models for coalescence; and for dismantling the oppressive systems that dominate our lives. Her remarks were met with applause and standing ovation from the banquet attendees. (see supplemental side bar and profile on Smith)

Highlights of the conference included two outstanding performances by Lavender Light Gospel Choir, a multi-ethnic gay and lesbian choir from New York City. Their extraordinary performances brought a celebratory and healing energy to the conference proceedings. Also there were big improvements in the quality and quantity of workshop sessions. The sessions covered a variety of issues from Rural Black Gays & Lesbians; Sexism: The Root of Homophobia; History of Cross-dressing and Transvestites; Malcolm X - Political Activist; to discussions on sexuality, spirituality and other provocative and progressive topics.

The Atlanta site made the conference more accessible to brothers and sisters from the Southeast, Mid-west and other regions of the country. I was especially pleased to have met so many black lesbian feminists and pro-feminist gay men. Indeed, one of the more well attended sessions was entitled "We Are Sisters and Brothers" co-facilitated by Craig Harris, Anita Barnes, and Rebecca Helem. The filled-to-capacity workshop dealt with Black lesbian and gay interaction, communication, coalition building and co-acceptance. As a participant of that session I was

(continued on pg. 6)

The theme for this year's National Black Gay & Lesbian conference was "Celebrating Our History, Creating Our Future." Given the loss of so many of our black gay and lesbian pioneers in the last couple of years; the NBGL conference theme seemed an appropriate tribute to the lives of Pat Parker, Mabel Hampton, Bayard Rustin, Joseph Beam, and James Baldwin. But there were raised eyebrows and raised voices in protest by some conference participants who were outraged at the dedication of this year's conference to Chris Brownlie, a white former lover of Phil Wilson, conference co-chair.

Wilson is also past co-chair of Black and White Men Together and founder of the National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum in Los Angeles. This is not the first time Wilson has come under fire for allegedly using the conference to promote his personal agenda. Last year the NBGL conference was dubbed by at least one critic as "The Phil Wilson Show" because of what appeared to be his personal and business monopoly over conference proceedings. Chris Brownlie, his lover of over ten years, died of complications from AIDS in 1989. The conference program displayed a full 3-page dedication (including photograph) for Brownlie, as well as a reading of the dedication by Wilson during the memorial ser-

(continued on pg. 6)

## conference

(cont. from pg. 5)

pleasantly surprised to hear black gay men articulate their concerns around sexism and apathy by other gay men to issues affecting women. i.e. reproductive rights, violence against women, etc. In fact the dialogue that was generated in that particular workshop was indicative of the common ground many of the conference participants seemed to have sought in attending this year's conference. Forward! ■

## Controversy

(cont. from page 5)

memorial service for black gay and lesbian pioneers. The dedication seemed to many to be a direct contradiction in celebrating our history as black gay and lesbian activists.

Ironically, the conference program failed to mention the presence and contribution of Barbara Smith, a keynote speaker at the conference. With the exception of a one line listing of Smith under workshop presenters: *nowhere* in the program was there a biography or photograph of Smith.

With all due respect to Phil Wilson and at the risk of seeming insensitive to his tragic loss; the dedication of the still-very-young National Black Gay and Lesbian Conference to a white man, perpetuates the invisibility our black gay and lesbian pioneers have endured in less tolerant times.

If you would like to express your views write to:

The Natl. Blk/Gay & Lesbian  
Leadership Forum  
3924 W. Sunset Blvd. #1  
Los Angeles, CA. 90029

"The fact that we, as Third World women, face oppression specific to our combined racial, sexual, and class status means that we will also develop specific theory and practice in order to fight our oppression."

"Notes for Yet Another Paper on Black Feminism, or  
Will the Real Enemy Please Stand Up?"

by Barbara Smith, ©1979.

## PROFILE: BARBARA SMITH, PUBLISHER KITCHEN TABLE: WOMEN OF COLOR PRESS

"I believe in revolutionary and radical change."

[D.O.C. Conference, S.F. 1989]

Barbara Smith is co-founder and publisher at Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press in Albany, New York. Kitchen Table Press holds the distinction of being the only press in North America that is committed to publishing books by and for women of color. KTP, under the editorial direction of Smith, has brought us groundbreaking anthologies such as This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color; Cuentos: Stories by Latinas; and Smith's own book, the much-celebrated Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology which features the writings of 34 prominent black feminist writers. In addition to operating KTP, Smith maintains a rather busy speaking tour throughout the year. She is a noted scholar in feminist literary criticism and a dedicated and articulate activist, speaking out on issues pertaining to "political responsibility" and other global concerns.

Recently she completed two weeks at Univ. of California Santa Barbara as a distinguished visiting professor in the U.C. Regents Lecture Series. Last month Smith was the keynote speaker at the National Black Gay and Lesbian Conference held in Atlanta, Georgia. On March 27, she will appear along with poet/activist Essex Hemphill and Angela Bowen (Natl. Coalition for Black Gays and Lesbians) on cable's Black Entertainment Television (BET.)

While in California Barbara met with the women of *Aché* to offer support and discuss expanding the journal to a national publication. She also took time out of her busy schedule to discuss with me works-in-progress at KTP and her feelings around Black lesbian organizing.

Skye: What projects are you working on at Kitchen Table Press?

(continued on pg. 7)

## Profile: Barbara Smith

**Barbara:** Our next book is going to be on women of color and the AIDS epidemic. It's called Our Lives in the Balance: U.S. Women of Color and the AIDS Epidemic. I've taken over the editing of that book as of late last year. There are a number of women working on it who are AIDS activists or full-time AIDS workers. We are also going to do a pamphlet - a poem by Audre Lorde which was published in one of her other books but has gone out of print. The poem is called "Need: A Chorale for Black Woman Voices." It was written in response to the murders of 12 black women in 1979 Boston. She has written a new introduction with the goal of having people in the black community in particular deal with the issue of violence against black women.

**Skye:** Isn't there another major book [The Third Wave: Feminist Perspectives on Racism] with editors Jacqui Alexander and Mab Sagest that KTP is working on? I'm excited about that book.

**Barbara:** Me too. That's the one I'm most excited about. This is a book I initiated in Nov. 1987 and I decided if there was going to be a decent book dealing with the issue of racism from a woman's perspective and a feminist perspective, I would have to publish it. It was very clear there wasn't anybody else interested in doing that. I had talked with one other lesbian feminist publisher, and also I had talked with at least one other white woman who could have been an editor to the book and they weren't biting...So I said, "hey, we need the book - we as

women of color need the book."

**Skye:** Some people equate the initial excitement and potential impact of [The Third Wave] with the tremendous impact of This Bridge Called My Back; and also view it as an important follow-up. Do you agree?

**Barbara:** Yes. That's the way I see it. KTP's major anthologies have done very well for us. So it will be in that tradition only it will be focusing on racism exclusively...Some people think those two previous books are about racism - they weren't. [Home Girls] was about black feminism...this book is definitely about get up in your face racism!

**Skye:** Given the successful track records of This Bridge... and Home Girls do you think The Third Wave will have to prove itself in terms of being utilized in black studies and women studies departments?

**Barbara:** Our books are very well respected. Every book we publish is very well chosen and also fills a gap. I don't think there will be any "proof" problem...

**Skye:** But then again why aren't other feminist presses and university presses publishing this book?

**Barbara:** That is not a subject they are interested in. Racism?! You know from an activist radical perspective? They aren't interested in that, they want to theorize. I'm so clear on that - I just spent three weeks working in California schools. That's what the academics are interested in - not the stu-

dents. Students want to change the actual conditions of their lives.

But a lot of these people in these institutions who teach are interested in theorizing. So they're not going to write a book about how to go up against the Klan. And yet there are people on these campuses who read and would buy a book like that. So, I think it will sell as well as This Bridge or better.

**Skye:** At the Dynamics of Color Conference (Nov. 1989) you poignantly stated that you are not concerned about dealing with racism on an interpersonal level - and that you viewed consciousness-raising as a step toward strategizing to eliminate racial oppression versus a technique in self-discovery. Would you please elaborate?

**Barbara:** I'm no longer interested in looking at racism interpersonally because you see I don't have to have racism explained to me. I don't need to find out what it is. I don't need to define it. What I need to figure out, and it will only work with other people's help, is how to move against it.

In the mid-1970's other people in the Combahee River Collective (a black feminist organization) and I were doing racism workshops with white women's groups. We heard all the stuff. We had actually subjected ourselves to the experience of hearing people say things that were both negative and upsetting and wrong, because we really believed in building a women's movement that was anti-racist. So we put ourselves in that position but by the early 1980's and even the late 1970's we ceased. We felt that there were white women who

(continued on pg. 8)

## Profile: Barbara Smith

were equipped to do that kind of work. And the point is, that after the racist onslaught in the 80's under the Reagan administration, that talking about racism is really far-fetched. The only thing we need to talk about is how to eradicate it.

**Skye:** What do you see our role being as black lesbians in the creation and maintenance of institutions that will promote our causes? i.e. women of color organizations, publications, conferences, etc.?

**Barbara:** To be responsible in the world. To be responsible to those institutions that keep our communities sound. Not all our people can afford to be philanthropic...but I know \$5.00 helps. To give you an example, Kitchen Table got two donations right before Christmas and they both made us stop and really take notice. One was a check for \$5,000 from one individual a well-known black woman writer. The other was two one dollar bills in an envelope from a woman. We aren't sure if she is in prison or if her lover is in prison. We send books free to anyone in prison. We had sent books, she sent us \$2.00. Two dollars buys eight stamps - I mean why pretend! The thing is, both gifts meant a lot to us...

**Skye:** I can remember growing up when we kept on the mantelpiece at least three envelopes for donations or fees. We had our monthly envelope for the NAACP, our church "missionary tiding" and the milkman money. There seems to be a void in our communities in terms of supporting important institutions.

**Barbara:** Yes, but you see the NAACP envelope and the missionary tiding used to be considered bills just like the milk envelope. My feeling is *this* is the bill I pay to be a human being in this society, to have been fortunate enough to have made it to adulthood without being disseminated by drugs, illness, physical abuse, etc. My debt is that I have to give back. That was the mentality we were raised with when we were growing up. You didn't assume your success was the result of your wonderful individual talent.

I encounter students in these schools now who think that they are at these schools because they deserve to be there. Well, so did my grandmother, she deserved to be there too. But you see, the society in the historical circumstances did not agree that she deserved to be there. We have to understand that a lot of people bled and died so that we could be there and we owe them something. It's a part of the human contract - I really feel that way.

**Skye:** I have found that many black women still equate feminism with the white women's movement of the 70's. Even those black women who are familiar with your work...

**Barbara:** ...and the work of Pat Parker and Audre Lorde and other women...

**Skye:** These women who have followed your work seem to separate or overlook your feminist analysis. Why do you suppose the separation and aversion to feminism?

**Barbara:** I don't understand it quite frankly. I don't understand how you can be a black lesbian and not be a feminist. Heterosexism and sexism are tied together just like the strand of a braid. You can't confront homophobia and heterosexism if you don't get to their root which is also sexism. Heterosexism has a lot of it's own, but it's also tied to sex role expectations and a lack of freedom for women.

**Skye:** As a black lesbian feminist I have encountered actual hostility from some black lesbians who object to my feminist stance...

**Barbara:** It's probably because they are not predisposed to being activist or active around their oppression. They're not disposed to organizing around their oppression, or either they have another political ideology that's opposed to feminism. My impression from reading stuff around this is that there are indeed black lesbians who subscribe to a black nationalist ideology; and that means that feminism goes out the window too. So that's really interesting given that the base of their oppression as lesbians come from sex role expectations.

**Skye:** In terms of outreach to our black lesbian community what do you have to say?

**Barbara:** The most important thing I could say is if we are ever going to see our conditions or our status change; then we are going to have to work toward that end create it ourselves. I believe in autonomy. I think a black lesbian magazine is a magnificent idea.

(continued on pg. 19)

# Little Girls Smell Too, a.k.a. Lesbians on Salary

by Joselyn Segal

Well they do...everybody's shit stinks...you may look pretty...but do you want to be heard or do you just want to get? And I mean get down or get your ass over to the club and get some? So we talk, we look, we even *look good*...uh,huh.

But a funny thing happens on the way over to highlightin' and embracin' our *wom-mun-ness*. It seems as though how we came to all this is not the point. In other words, few seem to care any more that it wasn't always easy to look at, get from, and give to women as we manage to do nowadays.

Someone, in fact many women, struggled for your ability to get when it comes to loving women, sleeping with women, fucking women and talking about it to boot.

Glory be. [This whole business of *gettin'* can be called taking. Taking it all for granted...or maybe it's like being on salary? You don't have to put in extra, just enough to get. No overtime.]

There once was a movement named struggle. Aah baby, I wasn't seein' double. It stood for movement towards the recognition, toleration, and acceptance of our desire and choice to act on our preference for women. Once upon a time we struggled for the right to express our love for women without the risk of being burned at the stake or institutionalized. Having been both an active and less active participant in the evolution of the out social political lesbian-urban-scene over the past decade, I find myself groping for rationales for the present day trend towards apa-

thy. Firstly, I would like to say that I am pleased to have experienced the tinting of women's events with the presence of *lesbians of color*. It was only recently when everybody was wondering "how come they are not here and how could we outreach, and wouldn't it be nice...etc?" with all the overtones of feminist oriented rhetoric but racist found ignorance.

But intentions were well meaning. As one of those few speckled spots who frequented women's events, I

tively come out however only a small number acknowledge that struggle still remains, despite the obvious that our sexual behavior is illegal and that people still commit suicide, become alcoholics and/or become institutionalized because of the impact of homophobia. White girls hip hop/black girls hip hop/brown girls hip hop/white girls salsa/black girls salsa etc. No etc. in fact, it ends at that. The uneasiness we initially acknowledged regarding our diversity at so-called wom-

---

*It is their choice to not struggle or get on the bandwagon of struggle. Isn't it enough that these women come to a pro-choice rally (even if it is primarily to look at girls?)*

---

suggested "change the music," literally and metaphorically but that's life. So life goes on, and the music changes.

Women's activities diversify, appreciation is felt and routine begins to get set as we get comfortable. After all, some diversity has been added and that's all we wanted, right? So diversity came. Women struggled and some even had a hard time at it straddling that thick line between tokenism and taste. Yet, somewhere an apathy began to set in. In fact, in retrospect the active struggle was real short. Masses of women have ac-

en's events somehow became masked by "hey, at least they are dancing with us."

Does it stand to reason that the disregard for struggle seemed to evolve when l.o.c.'s began to have a more visible presence via activities and cultural events? Once this became routine, was the cushion of choice set? Once we have choice we just stay aloof, especially if we are not part of making the choices. We reap the benefits and stay superficial. After all, we didn't personally offer anything to the choice, to the cause. It was all set up.

## Little Girls Smell Too, a.k.a. Lesbians on Salary

(continued from page 9)

We deserve to kick back and have a good time at least 20 hours a week. But, I question, how different we are from the straight high school girl who keeps up with the latest fashions and dances and expects that everything else (family, love, and sex) will just fall into place. As far as the het girls are concerned, family, love and sex do fall in and out of place. However, with lesbians, the family concept is too heavy, too loaded with implication; dealing with internalized and externalized homophobia. So, give nothing back and pass anything on. Just focus on "play and take," not an original game. We are dancing with one another and some of us are sleeping with one another. At least we can talk about *getting some*. Hey, we are also not in awe over the texture of our sisters' hair anymore, right?

I need to stress that I am aware that there have always been lesbians who don't give a flying fuck about trends or any kind of political and social consciousness, especially since many of these women are closeted and there isn't a great deal of support out there, anyway. My problem lies with the myriad of acting out lesbian-identified women who don't give a flying fuck about any sense of continuity or struggle.

Perhaps a professor will address a historical perspective, i.e., Stonewall to Now. But does it sink in, especially if we have figured out how to make it fashionable to play in public?

!!!FLASH!!! And yet another OPPRESSED GROUP IS COMPARED TO AFRO AMERICANS.

Dr. King is murdered and hope is incrementally shattered.

A firm grounding of progressive struggle never holds. Conse-

quently, struggle is lost for most young Afro Americans. Mostly forgotten, struggle is insidiously replaced by a "fuck you" anger, or "I am going to fuck your ass over and I don't give a fuck."

As one on the generational edge of the *fight for/fuck it* phenomenon, I don't want to see any suffering based on any form of racism or homophobia. Tall order. Regardless, I am inclined to come up with some kind of rationale for this phenomenon. Maybe the average lesbian (was there ever a time when *average lesbian* wasn't a concept?) is truly acting out an en masse adolescence that is reminiscent of age-related adolescent behavior. Maybe high school is vicariously revisited, as typified by the prevalence of peer pressure, carefree friendships, falling in love, and/or two-face Peyton Place scenarios. It is their choice to not struggle or get on the bandwagon of struggle. Isn't it enough that these women come to a pro-choice rally (even if it is primarily to look at girls?)

So lesbians of the eighties, light ones, red ones, brown ones, black ones, have caught-up with everybody else. Take it all to a level and stop. It is sufficient to be identified by appearance and behavior. Consequences are moot. As one who has straddled a biracial/bicultural existence all my life, I have a way of wanting more from the folks that compose my heritage and lifestyle. We cannot afford to remain status quo and satisfied. Once upon a time I expected more from American Jews and Afro Americans as people on the shit end of Western racism; to harvest some kindness and growth from the vantage point of oppressed groups. But, even oppressed groups have their limita-

tions. "Me first and fuck you and/or fuck it" seem to outweigh all sensibility. And yes, even lesbians of the 80's have come to epitomize this.

How do you encourage motivation when living for the status quo is the only relevant issue? Or maybe apathy is just the deep-rooted American way? Maybe we can blame it on the foregirls--the forewomen who didn't do enough?

Pass the buck...and fuck. If you are going to fuck women -- bond primarily with women, the least you can do is to find some time to take responsibility for your choice and know that your ass is still grass. What you do is still illegal and considered immoral in this country. Women still get locked away, drink and/or do drugs excessively, commit suicide just for being who they are. This negativity doesn't go away just because you ignore it. It doesn't go away just because somebody already struggled. If for no other reason, out lesbians owe some degree of consciousness to lesbians who suffer, the ones who don't take it all for granted. As the old adage goes; we mustn't forget where we came from, rather, we must remember from whence we came.

Josylyn is a "true renaissance babe" as a sometimes local musician/psycho-therapist/educator. She is an always searching romantic realist wanting herself and others to enjoy life better.

# Miscegenation And The Law

by Rebecca Hall & Erica Wilson

**M**iscegenation means the mixture of races. Historically in this country it refers specifically to the mixture of Black and white. It includes a broad range of intimacy from sexual connections to marriage and children.<sup>1</sup> Legally the term has a specific meaning: it was a felony in many states until the 60's.

In our preliminary legal research, we weren't able to find anti-miscegenation laws existing before the early 1800s. It has been suggested that the white slave-owning power structure of the south did not find race mixture threatening as long as they were the ones doing it (by raping their slaves and fathering children into slavery,) but with the "emancipation" of the slaves and the lessening separation of the races, race mixture and interracial marriage occurred more frequently.<sup>2</sup> If something were not done to "preserve the racial integrity" of white people, there would be a "corruption of the blood" and a "mongrel breed of citizens."<sup>3</sup>

What were these laws like? If a white person and a Black person were married, co-habited, or just slept together, both could be put in jail. In Virginia, the sentence was one to five years. The first legal issue became the definitions of Black and white. Many states defined someone as Black if they contained up to 1/8 "negro blood." If you were less than 1/8 Black, you were legally considered white.<sup>4</sup> Other states, however, were less "liberal." Virginia, for example, defined a "colored" person as one who had any ascertainable "negro blood," and a white person was someone who had "no trace whatsoever of any blood other than Caucasian."<sup>5</sup> Virginia's miscegenation laws applied to Native Americans as well but allowed a person who has 1/16 Indian or less to be considered white because of the "desire of all to recognize as an integral and honored part of the white race the descendants of John Rolfe and Pocahontas..."<sup>7</sup>

A lot of the cases we looked at were about what evidence was admissible to prove that a person was Black, according to whatever legal definition applied in the state. An example: "proof of kinky hair, nose and other features of grandfather of defendant, prosecuted for miscegenation, held properly admitted."<sup>8</sup>

Miscegenation laws were declared unconstitutional and thus unenforceable in 1966 in the Supreme Court case Loving v. Virginia. In that case Mildred Jeter, a Black woman, and Richard Loving, a white man, left Virginia to get married in Washington D.C. (where it was legal for them to do so) and then returned to Virginia, where they were arrested for violating Virginia law. They pled guilty and were sentenced to one year, but the judge preferred to have them out of the state, so he suspended their sentence on the condition that they leave the state and not return because:

Almighty God created the races white, black, malay and red, and he placed them on separate continents. And but for the interference with his arrangement there would be no cause for such marriages. The fact that he separated the races shows that he did not intend for the races to mix.<sup>9</sup>

The Lovings appealed this decision to the Supreme Court, which decided that Virginia's law, and all other anti-miscegenation laws violated the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment: "their can be no doubt that restricting the freedom to marry solely because of racial classification violates the central meaning of the Equal Protection Clause."<sup>10</sup>

How is this relevant to the black lesbian community? We often reject women who are "mixed" or light-skinned, claiming that they are not black or not black enough. It is political suicide in the face of a system of institutionalized racism that is designed to oppress to all of us, to reject each other and divide ourselves. According to the legal system, we are all sisters and it is essential to our survival to be just as inclusive in our definition.

1 Joel Williamson, New people: miscegenation and mulattoes in the United States, NY: Free Press, 1980, p. xii.

2 Ibid.

3 See Naim v. Naim, 197 Va. 80, 87 S.E. 2d 749 at 756, where the Supreme Court of Virginia reaffirmed the constitutionality of its' anti-miscegenation laws.

4 See State v. Gibson, 36 Ind. 389.

5 Loving v. Virginia, 388 US 1, 5, fn. 4.

6 Ibid.

7 Weaver v. State, 22 Ala. App. 469, 1880.

8 Ibid, p.3.

9 Ibid, p.12.

---

## Discussion: On Being Biracial\*

(\* in this context defined as mixed black & white)

Five women, each of us with one white parent, got together to plan and organize this issue of *Aché*. Our meetings quickly turned into marathon discussions; each of us had finally found a place to share our unique experiences and be validated. Often we found ourselves stuck, limited by language that did not allow us to speak of ourselves as whole people. We hope that you forgive our being awkward, at times even contradictory; but for some of us the discussion was actually the first attempt at articulating and examining the issues that have shaped our lives, and *still* influence our relationship to the rest of the black community. For other biracial women, we hope that you find something here that is affirming and supportive. For other black women, we offer this insight in the hopes that it may aid in building a more cohesive, healing, and accepting community.

**Stephanie:** My dad is African-American and my mom is Austrian/Russian/Jewish. I just recently got here from New York and I'm looking forward to speaking with other mixed women about what it's been like for us.

**Lisbet:** My father (who I never knew) is African-American and my mother is a Norwegian immigrant and I identify as an African-Norwegian-American lesbian.

**Josylyn:** My father, now deceased, was a Russian-Rumanian Jew and my mother is African-American & Native American. All my life people have been trying to put me over here and put me over there and me just trying to come from the center of everything I am.

**Andrea:** I'm really kind of apprehensive about this. I'm really really excited and I'm really glad to be here but I have a lot of stuff around this issue that I'm just start-

ing to deal with so I feel a little nervous and unnerved. Just talking about who I am, and dealing with the language part of it is hard.

People always ask me, what's your background, and I always just say my mother's Jamaican, my father's English, and I'm starting to realize that that's really vague.

My mother is mixed, my grandparents are mixed, as far back as I know. There's a lot of denial in my family about racial identity.

**Rebecca:** My mother is white & Jewish, with a Russian-German-Polish background and my father (no longer living) was black as black can be. They met in the Communist party. My father was 32 years older than my mother and he was born in 1898 and died 5 years ago at the age of 87. My grandparent's were slaves.

I have a lot of tension with this issue because it's very complicated. One of the things I'm most excited about, is getting a fix on how my experience of being

raised by my mother (because my father was largely absent) makes my experience different from other black lesbians, and also from other women of mixed heritage. I hadn't started thinking about those being different until a few months ago.

**Erica:** My mother is a Polish Jew, and my father is black and his family is originally from Jamaica and Guyana. They met in the Communist Party in the 1940's. They're both still living, and they both pretty much raised me. I feel really deep connections with my mother and that's something that I'd really like to explore especially with me having a white Jewish mother and feeling very connected to her, but at the same time identifying, being taught to identify and having the world see me as, at least colored. Class is definitely an issue for me, especially being light-skinned. How I function in the world, how I'm perceived.

(continued on page 13)

## biracial discussion

**L:** It's obvious that all of our issues are going to be different depending on how we were raised, but having a strong black figure in the home is something very different than my experience. How many of you were taught in the home, to identify as black?

**Rebecca:** I was taught to identify as black by my white mother, but it was kind of a mixed message because I wasn't being raised by a black person. So it was always like being taught that this is what your identity should be but there was no concrete model.

**S:** My dad died when I was 5. What my mom tried to do to get me some kind of black identity was to send me to Jack & Jill - are we all familiar with Jack & Jill? It's a bourgeois black organization where the sons and daughters of the black bourgeoisie congregate to plan the next generation. It was really damaging. All I got was light-skinned privilege nonsense and stuff like that. I'm an apologist for my mom on this one because my dad wasn't around and she related to his friends, and all their kids went there.

**J:** My parent's split up when I was real young, I was raised half by my mother and half by my father. I never got that I was black, I always got the message that I was very mixed, and no one was going to accept you so get used to it & get grounded in it.

I'm curious to hear about anyone else with a white father because I really identify with my father. There was a point during college when I wore a Jewish symbol. My father wasn't particu-

larly religious but I went through an orthodox conversion because someone told me I wasn't Jewish. Black women would come up to me, seeing the symbol, and say why are you wearing that? What about your mother? I would say, what do you mean, I'm Jewish, how am I denying my mother's existence? It was really unnerving.

**R:** There's 3 of us with white mothers and 3 of us with white fathers. That seems to me that that would be another big difference because of the relationship with a person's mother. My mother teaches black history. For a white person who marries a black person, you'd think there'd be some kind of cultural connection. Well, maybe not.

**L:** I come from a place where my mother has no consciousness whatsoever and everything that I got I got from myself. That's a big difference I feel, either your parents telling you you're black or 100% mixed and this is what you have to go through. At least you've been given some tools. I think a lot of what my issues are is having to go find all this out for myself.

**A:** What I got was nothing verbal. I would go back and forth to Jamaica and start learning stuff on my own. Being in that culture, and feeling the connection clued me in a little bit. There's a whole different set of issues - culturally from here.

**J:** A personal issue for me was to try and make it clear to people that my parent's did not bond because of some oppressive

crap. "No, not my parent's!!" I felt for years that I had to make that clear, especially seeing relationships where you know there is some kind of stuff going on. I always need to dispel that around my situation.

**L:** Being mixed, you're always in the middle, always the apologist for everybody. For me, the very concept that black and white people can be together for a good reason is a major issue because I always feel right in the middle of that. My father and mother came together for awful reasons - basically, my mother got knocked-up. She knew absolutely nothing about black people coming from a tiny fishing village and after having me she was like the classic 'scarlet letter' woman who could never go home again. I can think well maybe it's never right for races to mix, but being mixed myself I'm a walking incarnation.

**R:** This whole concept of being in the middle and walking that line is really complicated.

**E:** I feel like I can see 9 sides to every issue. People call me a devil's advocate but it's just what I see.

I was just home for a really bad week, the first time I came out to my parents. In the airport, right before I get on the plane, my mother says "I wish we had a chance to talk about this lesbian thing." So we got into it at the airport, and we're talking about this thing that's really painful, and my father starts saying all the classic stereotypical things - you're rejecting men and everything. And I said to him, "you're married to a

(continued on page 14)

## biracial discussion

white woman and I know when you married her everybody said 'why are you rejecting black women?' Can't you love someone just to love them? And not have it be a rejection of something?" That stopped him cold!!

S: Being in the middle comes up a lot for me being around blacks that make anti-semitic comments, and Jews that make knee-jerk comments. Part of being black and jewish, is when a jew says something that's obnoxious, there's a part of me that switches over to the black mode, and when a black person says something obnoxious part of me switches over to the jew mode. That's when Stephanie stops becoming a whole person. It happens alot.

L: This concept of being a whole person, I feel constantly split. I spent most of my adolescence listening to people telling me "Oh, you're not black" or "you're not white" constantly. Being whole, what does that mean without negating a real part of myself?

R: For me it's come up in a different way. Because I was told so strongly that I was a black person, my sense of being whole would be to be completely integrated in the black community and negate any other part of my experience. And it's not.

Also this idea of seeing your parent's as an exception, that's been really up for me. I grew up with a political consciousness around race and have always believed that all white people are racist, the whole politically correct way of understanding, but don't

talk about my mother that way!! It's really weird to talk to her about race issues, I keep waiting to hear something horrible come out of her mouth, it hasn't happened yet, but it could happen! It's really scary. I don't what I would do.

E: When I said my parents made it clear that I was mixed, but that's just one of the things that I heard. I was black, with the understanding always that I would never fit in, I was different in a very real way and that my identity was something that I would struggle with for the rest of my life. I was really to see myself as a black woman, not as a Jew.

This concept of a whole person - I think it's a really damaging way for us to think. Because we don't live in a world that allows these things to come together in a way that's totally comfortable. All of us deal with a lot of different dichotomies, even if both our parents are black. In this world, where there's so much racism and gender issues, I think we need to learn to live in a way where we can deal with the conflicts that inevitably come up with all of us. Particularly for those of us who are mixed where culturally we come from a lot of different places. Audre Lorde wrote this poem "House of Yemanya" about things being unresolved and that being its resolve.

Learning to live on that edge, which most black people have to do because we deal so much in the white world, at least in a world that is not accepting of us. For those of that are mixed it becomes much more complicated, and this thing about being whole is a really dangerous thing to talk about.

R: The idea that wholeness means excluding contradictions...

E: Wholeness meaning one. I think that you can find a place where you can be at peace and not in turmoil.

L: Something we really haven't touched on is terminology.

A: It gets really complicated... being in the middle and being forced by categories inherent in our language to say "black" or "white."

L: I would like to see a dialogue begin with other black women around this because with some of my friends I get a lot of stuff. I was talking to a friend of mine and her perceptions of me are coming from her experience in the black community. I had "good hair." What is that? The only thing I know is my mother didn't know how to deal with my hair, so it was always funny-looking. This friend was looking at my skin color and made all these assumptions which may have been true had I been coming from the black community. She was going "I bet your mother liked you best" or "I bet you got over because you were light-skinned," and these types of things. But not growing up in the black community, I didn't get over with shit!! I was the darkest thing around in my neighborhood, and being the "half-breed," I was extremely isolated.

We need to start a dialogue with other black women to get some of this shit out in the open. It's really painful because of the stuff that might come out, and I'm doing this work now because I'd

(continued on page 15)

---

## biracial discussion

like to be in a place where I'm ready to deal with it when it does.

\*\*\*\*\*

**J:** When I was a little kid I used to do some feature comparison. I'd think like.. white mother does than mean hair comes out a little different? Skin color.....? I was a closet geneticist when I was a kid.

**L:** It's really just a genetic crapshoot.

**S:** I was convinced that kids with black fathers looked different than kids with black mothers. I don't remember now what those conclusions were but... I definitely remember staring at other mixed kids. There were a lot of mixed families in my neighborhood and I remember there was sense of kinship, that we were different in the same way. So many of my friends and people in my life are mixed. I wonder if we just gravitate towards each other...

**L:** For me it's been such an evolution. Being first generation in this country, being the child of an alcoholic, being gay, and being mixed, all I remember is being a loner. It was easier for me to hang around white people because I'd grown up around them and it was easier to stay removed. Being around other black women, there's so much that can come up that can get so much more painful.

**R:** I'd love to get to the root of that. The answer that I find for that 'well I'm just more vulnerable to other black women' doesn't satisfy me. I've always found dealing with white people to be easier, just

feeling like there's a kind of distance I can maintain from them. Also, I just didn't care how they felt about me.

There's a lot of ways in which I'm different from most people, a lot of sources of potential alienation and vulnerability, to protect myself I'd keep a wall around myself. There was kind of a descending order of which people I actually cared what they thought about me. Like, I never gave a shit what white men thought about me. Then there was a toss-up between white women and black men.

I came out to myself when I was 17. The first few years of coming out to other people were hard but after that it wasn't that difficult anymore. When I was in college I had 2 black women roommates, one of whom I got very close to. It took me me 2 1/2 months to come out to her, and I was absolutely terrified that she would reject me. I *really* gave a shit on a deep level. That kind of fear does not happen to me except with other black women. I would really like to understand where that comes from.

**J:** I didn't go to school with black women at all, and it wasn't until college that I really dealt with some major shit with other black women. They were the militant group on campus, and that was the first time I'd ever experienced racism from the black side. I'd learned how to deal with the white folks, but not the anger...

**R:** One of the things that's helping me get beyond this fear, is the more black women that I have in my life, the more I realize that we

all have fears about each other.

**L:** With the white people I grew up around, I could be black. I'm black. When other black kids would ask "what are you?" it's like they could invalidate me at my core. When you're young, and not coming from a strong sense of who you are, that's real fear! Also in terms of sexuality, being young and feeling so vulnerable like you're the only one, there's so much insecurity.

**J:** A conscious, unconscious threat like "you're lighter so you must be passing" or "you have something that I don't have"...

**R:** I went to this workshop at the NIA Gathering on internalized racism and it was a real revelation to find that all of us have this fear of "not being black enough." I thought only people who were light-skinned, or only people from mixed backgrounds could ever worry about this. Like anyone who has 2 black parents has the corner on the definition what is black. What I was really surprised to see was how quickly someone could lose their sense of groundedness in their blackness. There were dark-skinned women, one who'd lived in a white community for 3 years & since she came back had been feeling totally alienated. There was another who felt she wasn't black enough because she like Socrates. She was an intellectual.

**J:** I think if you identify with white in some way, either physically, socially, or your environment, you're losing your "blackness" in someone else's eyes.

(continued on page 36)

The following is an excerpt from a novel-in-progress.

## "No Space to Breathe"

by DeeAnne Davis

"Melissa! Girl, what you doing back here?" Melissa has managed to pull, with all her determination and strength, two of the rhubarb stalks out of the ground before she hears the back porch door slam and Mama J's houseslipper-shuffle approach the back of the house. "First of all, you killing my plants. And second of all, I don't know *nothin* bout you sposed to be here -- and by yaself on that bike? You come by *ya-self* all the way over here?" Melissa lowers her eyes, surprised at Mama J.'s appearance, as she nods her head, yes. "Lil sister, you go'on and take that thing up on the back porch and git to the front room. We gon talk."

Mama J. doesn't follow Melissa onto the back porch, instead she walks around to the front, pulling weeds in the flower bed running along the side of the house as she goes. Of all the mornings for Melissa to show up, why this one, she thinks. It's nearly ten o'clock and the sky's already hot, not to mention the twins who she had yet to reckon with. "At least there wasn't a knock on my door by the police this morning," she mumbles.

All the sights, sounds and smells that are familiar to Melissa inside Mama J.'s house have become distorted by her fear. The smell of bacon overwhelms her as she enters the kitchen from the back porch. Heavy, the grease in the air sticks to the moisture in her face and armpits and clogs her nose. She walks toward the hallway that looks like a long tunnel now, narrow and dark. The front room looms before her. She stops at the archway as if her fear has already filled the room and there isn't any space left, even in a corner, for her body to sit down.

Mama J. stands at the front of the house, just below the steps leading up to the porch and door. This girl demands so much from life. Why won't she simply be a little girl, Mama J. ponders. And yet, she recognized Melissa's passion as a shadow of her own turbulent girl-years, years in which she bombarded

her mother with questions about who she was -- and how soon is it going to be, she would ask, before I am a woman! Mama J. chuckles at the memory. It suddenly occurs to her that Melissa is no longer a little girl, but a young woman. At twelve? Her mind screams. Yes, at twelve, she tells herself, Melissa is already getting her woman-feet wet.

Mama J. begins her ascent up the stairs; she pushes on each thigh with her hands as she goes. At the front door, she presses down on the latch and walks in.

Melissa is standing in the archway.

"Come on in here and sit down." Melissa wades through the thick air, stiff with fear, and sits in a corner of the couch. Her hands lie flat together, as if in prayer, between her knees.

"Now. What you doing here?"

"I don't know."

"Melissa, don't start with me. I don't have time. Now, I asked you a question."

"I came over to talk to you about something."

"And you had to tear up my rhubarb patch to talk to me?"

"No."

"Well, what in hell was you doing back there then?"

Melissa's face grows warm. "I was going to make you a pie." Her reply is barely audible, whispered into the air between her face and thighs.

"What did you say? Melissa. Talk to me, baby, not the floor."

"I wanted to try to make you a rhubarb pie or something."

Mama J. feels her nose flare up with irritation and begin to itch, the kind of itch she gets when a gnat or one of the dog's fleas pops into her nostril. As she attacks her left nostril with the back of her hand, she peers over it at Melissa who is attempting to sit back on the couch, her hands still tucked between her

(continued on page 17)

knees, with small discreet hopping motions.

Melissa's hair has been blown by the bike ride into what looks like a wasp's nest. The two golden barrettes anchoring down the tangled fury on each side of her temples are mostly hidden. Mama J. realizes that she needs something to calm her frayed nerves, and she thinks, something to calm Melissa's scary-looking hair.

"Okay, Missy. I'll take you out back and show you how to *cut* rhubarb. But girl, please stay outta there til I can take you back there myself."

"Okay."

"Go in the bathroom and get the grease and comb. We got to tackle that head. I don't know how you stand it -- all wild like that."

Melissa tries to get up with her hands still clasped between her knees, as if this is her natural posture. She stops for a moment, confused.

"Go on."

Mama J.'s prompting releases Melissa from her locked position, and she wades much faster this time through the stiff air, down the long hallway, through the kitchen thick with the smell of cooked bacon and into the bathroom. The red wide-toothed comb is sitting on top of the green jar of hair oil on the single shelf behind the toilet. She returns to Mama J. with the jar and the comb, walking a lighter step, hoping this distraction will make their imminent discussion easier.

"Now. What's on your mind?"

"Nothing." It was not going to be easy.

"What? Lord, give me strength! I asked you a question."

"Well."

"Mmmm hmmm."

"I was just wondering."

"Yes."

"Mama J.?"

"Yes?"

"I was just wondering --"

"You said that, baby."

"I know."

"Go on, then."

"I was just -- I just wanted to ask you -- I wanted to talk to you -- about living here."

"I thought we done already talked about that."

"Not really."

"No?"

"You didn't listen to what I had to say."

"Now right there is where you wrong. I heard what you said and what I got to say to that is no."

"But Mama J.?"

"What, baby."

"I didn't tell you everything."

"Come on with it, then."

"You don't know why I want to come here."

"Why, baby?"

"Well, because."

"Mmmm hmmm."

"I want to be with you."

"I thought you wanted to be with those heifers who made you feel bad."

"I want to be with them too."

"Why, Missy?"

"Because. I just do."

"Uh uh. That ain't gon get it."

"I want black girls to like me."

"You needs to meet some nice young black girls, then. I wouldn't let you walk down the street with the likes of those heifers. You know, Missy, LaRhonda and them she be with is fast and got bad mouths."

"They pick fights cause they angry inside bout the hand life done dealt them, but you got no place in that deck of cards, girl. There's nice, clean young girls your age right here in this neighborhood for you to spend your time with. They more'n likely got two black parents, if that's the papers you want em to carry, but they's just as lonely and feel like they got something wrong with em too -- it's natural for girls your age."

"I didn't say I think something's wrong with me."

"But you do. Only natural."

"I feel different is all."

"Different?"

"Yeah. I don't want to live on the white side of town anymore."

"You don't belong here. You belong wherever your mama and daddy see fit to raise you."

"How can you say that?"

"Don't talk back." Mama J.'s nose itches madly and she scratches it again, this time with the comb waving wildly in her hand. She begins parting sections of Melissa's thick hair, running hair oil with her finger down the parts. "What makes you think you belong here?"

"Cause you're black."

"We both colored, baby."

"I don't know."

(continued on page 18)

"Mmmm."

"I mean, I want to be colored -- black."

"Good god, child. You as black as they come. Just look at the snarls in this curly hair."

"They say I've got 'good hair.'"

"What you've got is hair. Hair, Missy, just like ever'body else. Don't let nobody tell you different." Mama J. feels herself becoming heated under her shift. "What we talking about?"

"I don't know."

"You do know." Mama J. has begun to braid Melissa's hair in long, sleek plaits running along both sides of her head. She pulls at Melissa's hair, the agitation in her fingers shocking Melissa's scalp.

"Owww."

"Hold still, then."

"I am."

"Hold your head down."

Melissa strains against the pull of the comb as it works its way through the few tangles left in her hair.

"I'm different because I don't belong anywhere. I hang out with white kids when I'm in school, but I don't really fit in."

"You ain't white, if that's what you mean. Never will be."

"I don't feel black either."

"It's not a feeling baby. Melissa. If you was to bring together a whole family of black folks -- ours, at a family reunion -- there'd be some dark faces, some tan and some light-look-like-they-white. Some of em gon have flat noses, some gon be straight as an arrow. They be fat lips and skinny lips. Kinky hair, permed hair, straight hair and red hair with big, fine curls. We got it all, baby girl."

"I know."

"Do you? Do you know that all those folks got white blood in em somewheres?"

"I never thought about it."

"Yes, ma'am. There's been mixing tween white and black since about the day we got here -- and on the way over here too. First was the white man raping the black women for sport and to make babies to work his land and do the house chores. Now it's just mixing -- tween men and women, both ways."

"Why aren't we all called mixed then?"

"Nobody cares bout mixed. Way ever'body look at it, just more crazy black folk."

"I care. I care because I can't make any friends. All the black girls hate me because of the way I talk

and because I don't live over here and because I don't press my hair --"

"-- If I ever catch you letting somebody put a straight comb through this head, I'll cut it off. You hear me?"

"It's just hair, Mama J."

"So you was listening, huh? Don't let nobody butcher what you got, is my point."

"I just want to fit in is all."

"Why don't you think being yaself is gon fit. There's plenty nice girls to like ya -- Monica and Benetha round the corner, for instance. Why you scared of yaself, baby?"

"I'm not scared, I'm *different*."

"Need to put you up on a cross."

"Not like that."

"Like what then?"

"Cause my mom is white -- and she can't help me."

"What's that s'posed to mean?"

"I can't talk to her, and I can't go anywhere with her."

"Oh? And where you going that's so important to leave your mama behind?"

"Mama J., she's not like you. She's not strong and she doesn't know how to talk to me, she talks at me, and I hate it when people stare at us and she thinks it's okay to introduce me to everybody we meet as her daughter -- then people act like they know something. I hate their stupid smiles; I hate explaining who she is when she comes around the white kids at my school; I hate --"

"-- Watch your mouth. You stepping in a hot puddle, lady. What is all this hate? Good lord, child, where did you find so much hate to dig up and carry in ya hand?"

"Baby, black is the color of our skin. Sometimes it's the color of the way people do thangs cause we all come from the same land and we brought Africa over here with us -- some of that still lives on in our bones. But the color of ya heart is red, just like ya mama's, mine, ever'body's. Your mama having a different color skin don't mean she don't love ya and want to take care of ya like any other woman gets babies pulled outta her. We mostly the same inside, same mixed up feelings."

"Missy? I don't think you've heard a thing I've said to ya."

"It is about a feeling and I don't have it. It's not in

(continued on page 19)

## "No Space to Breathe"

(cont. from page 18)

my bones."

"What're you looking for?  
What is it?"

"She can't give it to me."

"Who? Your mama?"

"Yea."

"Honey, you gon have to  
learn to love who you is. That's  
all."

"Who am I?"

Mama J. pauses. "You a  
well-developed-wavy-haired-  
white-mixed-colored-girl-from  
the other side of town. Now that  
ain't ugly or cute. It's just who  
you is. There's always gon be  
somebody don't like who we is or  
where we come from."

"She let's him beat her up."

"What did you say? Speak  
up, baby?"

"SHE LET'S HIM BEAT  
HER UP!"

"SHUT UP!"

Both woman and woman-  
child stop breathing.

Until now, Melissa has felt  
that Mama J.'s heavy thighs have  
been a protective shell around her  
shoulders. Now she feels vulner-  
able and unsafe in her secret ad-  
mission.

The only gesture Mama J.  
can manage is the run of her hand  
down the length of the back of  
Melissa's head. Braided, the  
rows are tight and neat on each  
side.

Dammit. The word satu-  
rates Mama J.'s mind as if it is a  
bell at the end of a knockout  
round -- and she is on the floor,  
layed out. Is this what this con-  
versation has been all about?

Mama J. thought she had  
been on top of the goings-on in  
her son's house, but now she  
knows her eyes have had blinders  
to each side, cutting off her vi-

sion. Her ears have been stuffed  
with cotton. And where have her  
senses been? The good sense the  
Lord provided. Her nostrils flare.

She reconsiders Melissa's  
proposal: How am I gon take  
care of a woman-child? Raised  
six sons, ain't never raised no  
girls before. Strength. Humph.  
I'm strong for living -- if she only  
knew.

Goddamn my son. What did  
I do to make him hate so? What  
does this world do to make us  
hate so? Seems like these kids got  
problems no matter who raise em  
or where -- but don't need to  
watch their mama get beat, that's  
for sure. Goddamn my son

\*\*\*

DeeAnne is a writer, actress  
and editor living in East Oak-  
land, CA.

### Barbara Smith Profile

(cont. from page 8)

Because it is not being dependent  
on somebody else to get the truth  
of our lives out. I also believe in  
coalition. The only way to be ef-  
fective in that coalition is to come  
from an autonomous base. So  
that you can have some place to  
go back to; so that if nothing else  
you can have some peace.

Skye: Barbara, thank you very  
much.

### "WOMEN OF TWO RACES: NAMING OURSELVES"

Our day-long workshop is  
designed for biracial women  
who want to share their expe-  
riences of growing up and be-  
ing biracial in the U.S. The  
purpose our coming together  
as biracial women is to ex-  
plore our attitudes, and beliefs,  
to examine the meaning of our  
existence, and to move our-  
selves toward a fuller under-  
standing of our lives from per-  
sonal, social, and political  
perspectives. We will use our  
personal experiences as the  
major "text" for our learning,  
which will also be supple-  
mented by some theoretical in-  
formation from the workshop  
leader. The day will consist  
of both experiential and didac-  
tic content and all participants  
will be asked to participate  
fully during the day.

Time: 10:00am to 5:00PM  
Cost: \$5, more or less as  
you're able.

(Date & Place are still being  
decided.) For further informa-  
tion and to reserve your space,  
call 824-0703. Workshop size  
will be limited.

Workshop Leader: Dr. Margo  
Okazawa-Rey who has done  
research on the topic of bira-  
cial identity development. Her  
interest on the topic grew out  
of her own experiences as an  
African Asian American wom-  
an.

# This Month In...

Due to the transition from a one-month to a two-month calendar, the April listings will appear only through the descriptions listed on pages 20-21, 24-25. The next issue of Aché (May/June) will feature a two-month calendar. The next deadline for calendar listings is April 20th.

## ART EXHIBITS

**Through March 30, A Multi-Cultural Perspective of the African American Experience** featuring work by Wendy Cadden, Licita Fernandez, Andrés Cisneros-Galindo, Diedre Harvin, André Kreft, Liz Maxwell, Regina Mouton, Shanju, and Aissatoui Vernita at the Center for Visual Arts, 1330 Broadway, Suite 100 in Oakland. Gallery hours are Tues.-Fri. from 11:30-5pm. For more information call 451-6300.

## DANCE CLASSES:

(not listed in the calendar)

**SATURDAYS & WEDNESDAYS (ongoing) ADVANCE BEGINNING & INTERMEDIATE MODERN JAZZ DANCE**, with Debra K. Floyd and live drumming. These on going classes are located at Finn Hall, 1819-10th St. in Berkeley. Advance Beg. are on Saturdays from 10:00-11:30am and Intermed. are on Wednesdays from 7:30-9:30pm and Saturday, 11:30-1:30pm starting with floor barre. Fee \$7.00 single class (there are student and class card rates.)

## ■ DANCE

**FRI. - Mar. 9 - A Cultural Dance Masters Concert** features Rosa Montoya's Bailes Flamencos, Malonga Casquelord & Fua Dia Congo, and Brazilian capoeira with Mestre Preguica & Omolu Senzala at S.F. State University's McKenna Theatre, 1600 Holloway in SF. \$10. For information call 338-2467.

## ■ EVENTS

**THUR. - Mar. 8 - Women's demonstration for International Women's Day.** Come celebrate women's resistance internationally and in the U.S. Bring your noise makers, banners, and your issues. For more information call 995-4735.

**FRI. - Mar. 9 - Comedian/Poet Karen Williams** will be performing at Mama Bears, 6536 Telegraph Ave. in Oakland. 8pm. Women only. \$6-8. Reservations suggested. 428-9684.

**SUN. - Mar. 18 - "An Evening with Douglas Turner Ward"** is a benefit for the Oakland Ensemble Theatre. Ward is the co-founder and artistic director of the Negro Ensemble Company, and he'll talk about his 20 years with NEC, his life in theatre, and African-American theatre's past, present & future. 7pm. \$10. Oakland Ensemble Theatre, 1428 Alice St. in Oakland. For more information call 839-5510.

**THUR. - Mar. 22 - An evening of comedy and song** with comedian/poet **Karen Williams** and **Karen Ripley** with singer **Melanie Demore** at La Peña, 3105 Shattuck Ave. in Berkeley. 8pm. \$7-10 sliding scale.

**FRI. - Mar. 23 - Satirist Donna Terry** will be performing at Mama Bears, 6536 Telegraph Ave. in Oakland. 8pm. Women only. \$5-7. Reservations suggested. 428-9684.

**FRI., Apr. 30 - "Greatest Hits, Vol. 1: Performance Hell"** is a two-act one woman work of performance theater by **Dee Russell**. This variety show of social madness features skits like the "LaToya Jackson" experiment. Not to miss!! 8pm at La Peña, 3105 Shattuck Ave. in Berkeley.

(continued on page 21)

## This Month In...

tuck Ave. in Berkeley. \$7. For more information call 849-2568.

**SUN. - Apr. 1 - "Social Change and the Fruits of Culture"** Alice Walker and Danny Glover present: A Celebration of African-American Culture featuring Ntozake Shange, John Handy, Mary Watkins, Diane Ferlatte, Dominique DiPrima, Vukani Mawethu, Belvie Rooks, Youth Power, Lorraine Hansberry Theatre, and Wajumbe Cultural Ensemble. This benefit for the Vanguard Public Foundation will be held at the Lorraine Hansberry Theatre, 620 Sutter St. in SF. \$25. For tickets and info. call 285-2005.

**WED. - Apr. 18 - Poets Present Poets**, erotica, stories, poetry & music by lesbians featuring writers **Stephanie Henderson, Nisa Donnelly, Ilse Kornreich, Winn Gilmore, Sonja Franeta**, and rap artist/poet **Lisa Carruthers** at Mama Bears, 6536 Telegraph Ave. in Oakland. 7:30pm. Women only. \$5-8. Reservations suggested. 428-9684.

### ■ FILM

**FRI-THUR. - Mar. 16-22 - "Looking for Langston,"** a controversial film by Isaac Julien, is a poetic meditation on racial & sexual identity & the innuendo surrounding the lives of the Harlem Renaissance artists including Langston Hughes. The release of this film has been delayed due to a suit brought against it by the Hughes estate. Also showing is **"Tongues Untied"** Produced and directed by bay area filmmaker Marlon Riggs and featuring poet Essex Hemphill, this film examines black gay life. Castro Theatre, 429 Castro St. in SF. 7 & 9pm. For information call 861-5245.

**SAT.-SUN. - Mar. 17-18 - "Visions of the Spirit: A Portrait of Alice Walker,"** is an intimate portrait of the writer filmed at Walker's California home, in the Georgia hometown and on the set of "The Color Purple." Roxie Theatre, 3117 - 16th St. in San Francisco. For showtimes call 863-1087.

**WED. Mar. 23 - The Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame** presents **"Port Chicago Mutiny"** with special guest artist Robert Allen. 6-10pm. \$5. Parkway Theatre in Oakland. For more information call 465-0804.

**WED. - Apr. 23 - Aché** presents **"Bahia: Africa in the Americas"** a documentary that examines African culture in Brazil, through music, dance and art. 7:30pm at La Peña, 3105 Shattuck Ave. in Berkeley. \$3-6 donation. (The Aché film series will continue on the last Wednesday of every month at La Peña.) For more information call 824-0703.

### ■ MUSIC

**WED. - Mar. 7 - Dub poet Linton Kwesi Johnson,** the Dennis Bovell Dub Band & Sister Breeze will be performing at Slim's, 333 Eleventh St. in SF. 8pm. \$15. For information call 621-3330.

**THUR. - Mar. 8 - Latin Jazz Fusion Quartet Different Touch** will be performing at Art's (east bay girl's bar) 4031 Broadway in Oakland. For more information call 654-2864.]

**WED-SAT. - Mar. 14-17 - Cuban percussionist Mongo Santamaria** will be performing at Kimball's, 300 Grove St. in San Francisco. \$15. Shows at 9 & 11pm. For information call 861-5555.

The calendar listings may change without notice so double-check with the source for any last minute changes. To list something in May/June's calendar, mail notice by April 20th to:

Aché, P.O. Box 6071, Albany, CA. 94706 or phone (415) 824-0703.

(continued on page 24)

# Calendar - March 1990

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
C - class, D - dance, E - events, F - film, M - music, N - nightlife, R - radio, T - theater, TV - television For details on calendar listings, see pages 20, 21, 24 and 25. Calendar listings may change without notice, so double-check with the source for any changes. To list in next month's calendar, send description by April 20th to: Aché, P.O. Box 6071, Albany, CA. 94706				1 T - "Wedding Band"	2 R - "La Verdad Musical" T - "Wedding Band" TV - "South Africa Now"	3 T - "Wedding Band"
4 R - "Amandla" T - "Wedding Band"	5 TV - "South Africa Now"	6	7 M - Linton Kwesi Johnson R - "Acoustic Journey" R - "Spectrum in Musical Form" TV - "Eyes on the Prize"	8 E - International Women's Day M - Different Touch T - "Wedding Band"	9 D - Cultural Dance Masters Concert E - Karen Williams R - "La Verdad Musical" T - "Wedding Band" T - "Blues in the Night" TV - "South Africa Now"	10 T - "Wedding Band" T - "Blues in the Night"
11 R - "Amandla" T - "Wedding Band" T - "Blues in the Night" T - "Dreamgirls"	12 TV - "South Africa Now" TV - "The Struggle Continues"	13	14 M - Mongo Santamaria R - "Acoustic Journey" T - "From the Mississippi Delta"	15 M - Mongo Santamaria T - "Wedding Band" T - "From the Mississippi Delta"	16 F - "Looking for Langston" "Tongues" M - Mongo Santamaria M - Eloise Burrell & Magdelin Luecke R - "La Verdad Musical" T - "Wedding Band" T - "From the Mississippi Delta" T - "Blues in the Night"	17 F - "Looking for Langston" "Tongues" F - "Visions of the Spirit" M - Mongo Santamaria T - "Wedding Band" T - "From the Mississippi Delta" T - "Blues in the Night"
18 E - Douglas Turner Ward F - "Visions of the Spirit" F - "Looking for Langston" "Tongues" R - "Amandla" T - "Wedding Band" T - "From the Mississippi Delta" T - "Blues in the Night"	19 F - "Looking for Langston" "Tongues" TV - "South Africa Now" TV - "Eyes on the Prize II"	20 F - "Looking for Langston" "Tongues" T - "Ma Rose"	21 F - "Looking for Langston" "Tongues" R - "Acoustic Journey" T - "From the Mississippi Delta" T - "Ma Rose"	22 F - "Looking for Langston" "Tongues" T - "Wedding Band" T - "From the Mississippi Delta" T - "Ma Rose"	23 E - Donna Terry F - "Port Chicago Mutiny" R - "La Verdad Musical" T - "Wedding Band" T - "From the Mississippi Delta" T - "Blues in the Night" T - "Ma Rose" TV - "South Africa Now"	24 T - "Wedding Band" T - "From the Mississippi Delta" T - "Blues in the Night" T - "Ma Rose"
25 R - "Amandla" T - "From the Mississippi Delta" T - "Blues in the Night"	26 TV - "South Africa Now"	27 T - "Ma Rose" TV - Barbara Smith/Essex Hemphill	28 R - "Acoustic Journey" T - "From the Mississippi Delta" T - "Ma Rose"	29 T - "From the Mississippi Delta" T - "Ma Rose"	30 M - Different Touch R - "La Verdad Musical" T - "From the Mississippi Delta" T - "Blues in the Night" T - "Ma Rose" TV - "South Africa Now"	31 M - Rashida Oji M - Matu/Anna Flechero & Sapphire T - "From the Mississippi Delta" T - "Blues in the Night" T - "Ma Rose"

# This Month In...

**FRI. - Mar. 16** - Vocalist **Eloise Burrell** & musician **Magdelin Luecke** will be presenting their own mix of originals and classic blues, jazz and acapella songs at **Mama Bears**, 6536 Telegraph Ave. in Oakland. 8pm. Women only. \$6-8. Reservations suggested. 428-9684.

**FRI. - Mar. 30** - Latin Jazz Fusion Quartet **Different Touch** with **Dee Harris**, **Jane Kaufman**, **Tammy Hall**, and **Josylyn Segal**, will be performing at **Mama Bears**, 6536 Telegraph Ave. in Oakland. 8pm. Women only. \$6-8. Reservations suggested. 428-9684.

**SAT. - Mar. 31** - **Rashida Oji** will be performing her own originals and more at the **Artemis Cafe**, 1199 Valencia St. in San Francisco. 8pm. \$4-6.

**SAT. - Mar. 31** - **Matu Feliciano** (congas) and **Anna Maria Flechero** (keyboards/vocals) will be performing at **Mama Bears**, 6536 Telegraph Ave. in Oakland. Special sneak preview of **Sapphire**, a new lesbian of color theater group. Not to miss!! 8pm. Women only. \$6-8. Reservations suggested. 428-9684.

**Apr. 11-12** - **Edwina Lee Tyler** & **A Piece of the World**, bringing talking drums, dance, chant & song, will be performing at **Kimball's East**, 5800 Shellmound in the **Emery Bay Marketplace** in Emeryville. Show are at 8 & 10pm, Tix. are \$15. For reservations and information call 658-2555.

## RADIO

**FRIDAYS, Mar. 2, 9, 16, 23** - "**La Verdad Musical/The Musical Truth**" with **Avotcja**. She plays jazz, blues, salsa, reggae, hip hop, and the whole spectrum of Pan-African music. Avotcja's show also has interviews and ticket give-aways. Fridays from 12-3pm on **KPOO 89.5 FM**. She also hosts "**Rhythm Drive**" on Thursdays from 4:30 to 6pm on **KPFA, 94.1 FM**.

**SUNDAY, Mar. 3, 10, 17, 24** - "**Amandla**" a weekly multi-cultural news and information show on **KALX, 90.7 FM** from 5:30-6:30pm.

**WEDNESDAYS, (on going) "Acoustic Journey"** Surprise yourself with traditional music from Africa, Asia, Latin America and some new ways of using it. **Karolyn van Putten** pilots this musical voyage including in-studio guest interviews and live performances. **KALW, 91.7 FM** from 9:00 to 10:00 pm. Call 648-1177 for more info.

**WED., Mar. 7, Apr. 4** - "**Spectrum - In Musical Form**" is broadcast the first Wednesday every month with **Tamu Duewa & Sadiki Nia** from 1:30am to 5am on **KPFA, 94.1FM**

## TELEVISION

**MON & FRI. - Mar. 5, 9, 12, 16, 19, 23, 26, 30** "**South Africa Now**" is a weekly news magazine produced by black South Africans that airs every Monday at 11pm on **KQED, channel 9** & Fridays at 8:30pm on **KQEC channel 32**.

**WED. - Mar. 7, 23** - "**Eyes on the Prize II**" an 8-part documentary chronicling the civil rights movement from the 60's through the 80's will be shown at 9pm on **KQEC channel 32**.

**WED. - Mar. 12** - "**The Struggle Continues: The Pride & Possibilities of African-Americans**" from 8:30-10pm on **KQEC, channel 32**.

**MON. - Mar. 19** - Pt. 8 of "**Eyes on the Prize II**" (1979-80's) looks at the Miami riots and the election of **Harold Washington** as Chicago's first black mayor. 10pm on **KQED channel 9**.

**TUE. - Mar. 27** - **Barbara Smith, Angela Bowen** and **Essex Hemphill** will appear on the **BET** cable network. Check local guide for time.

## THEATER

**SUN. Mar. 11** - The Broadway musical "**Dreamgirls**" will come to the **Paramount Theatre** on Broadway in Oakland. Tix. \$19.50 & \$22.50. 7:30pm. For more information cal 762-2277 or 465-6400.

(continued on page 25)

## This Month In...

**THUR.-SUN. - through Mar. 24** - Alice Childress' "Wedding Band" about an interracial romance in 1918. At the Black Repertory Theatre, 3201 Adeline St. in Berkeley. On Thur.-Fri. at 8pm / Saturdays at 2:30 and 8pm. For information call 652-4017.

**WED.-SUN. - Through Apr. 1** - The Oakland Ensemble Theatre presents the Negro Ensemble Company in "From the Mississippi Delta" a semi-autobiographical play which chronicles a young girl's rise from poverty in a tiny Mississippi town, to prostitution, to her experience with the civil rights movement, to the activists' educating herself and earning a Ph.D from a northern university. Shows Wed. thru Sat. at 8pm, and Sat./Sun. matinees at 2:30pm. \$12-19 reserved. Oakland Ensemble Theatre, 1428 Alice St. in Oakland. For information call 839-5510.

**Through Apr. 7** - The Lorraine Hansberry Theatre presents "Blues in the Night" a revue celebrating the blues and jazz of the '20's and 30's. At the Lorraine Hansberry Theatre, 620 Sutter St. in SF. For more information call 474-8800.

**Through Apr. 8** - "Ma Rose" is the west coast premiere of Cassandra Medley's drama about three generations of African-American women in the same family. Directed by Suzanne Bennett. Eureka Theatre Company, 16th St. & Harrison in SF. For more information call 558-9898.

### APRIL HIGHLIGHTS

**Apr. 11-12** - Edwina Lee Tyler & A Piece of the World, bringing talking drums, dance, chant & song, will be performing at Kimball's East, 5800 Shellmound in the Emery Bay Marketplace in Emeryville. Show are at 8 & 10pm, Tix. are \$15. For reservations and information call 658-2555.

Edwina will also be doing several workshops:

Apr. 13 - drumming workshop, 7-9pm.

Apr. 14 - dance workshop, 7-9pm.

Apr. 15 - master drum workshop, 12-2pm.

Workshops are \$60 each, and are held at the 8th Street Studios, 2547 - 8th St. in Berkeley. For reservations for workshops call 841-2672.

■  
*The revival of Aché's film series  
begins with:*

*"Bahia: Africa in the Americas"*

A remarkable documentary that examines the African cultural traditions preserved by the people of Bahia, Brazil, in their music, dance, art, food and the Candomble religion.

*Wednesday, April 23rd at 7:30pm.*

*\$3-6 Donation.*

*La Peña, 3105 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley*

The calendar listings may change without notice so double-check with the source for any last minute changes. To list something in May/June's calendar, mail notice by April 20th to:

Aché, P.O. Box 6071, Albany, CA. 94706 or phone (415) 824-0703.



## Pearl Primus: A Dancer/Choreographer For Change

In my last article I spoke of two women who are considered leaders in the Black Dance World, Katherine Dunham and Pearl Primus. I have always had a great interest in studying Pearl Primus and her choreography which consist largely of social and political themes.

Pearl Primus was born in Trinidad in 1919 and raised in the United States. She graduated from Hunter College (New York) as a biology major with hopes of continuing on to medical school. Various jobs soon led her to the National Youth Administration's dance group. Because she showed such a fine talent for dance she was urged to pursue this art form seriously. She continued her graduate work in the direction of psychology and then on to anthropology. It has been noted that from the beginning of her career as a modern dancer she manifested a great interest in African themes and subjects. In 1948 Primus received a Rosenwald grant which enabled her to make her first visit to Africa. Upon returning to the United States she found herself devoting much of her performing and choreography to African dance. Primus once made a statement expressing her feelings for specializing in African dance--"The subject is all-inclusive of every activity between birth and death. The seed that trembles to be born, the first breath of life, the

growth, the struggle for existence, the reaching beyond the everyday into the realm of the soul, the glimpsing of the Great Divine, the ecstasy and sorrow which is life, and then the path back to the earth--this is the dance." While traveling through Nigeria she was (conferred) with the title Omowale--child who has returned home.

Primus had strong feelings about the social injustices happening in the states and made this the theme of several of her works. In 1944 at the Belasco Theatre, Primus made her Broadway debut with dances that spoke of the Black experience such as: "Strange Fruit", "The Negro Speaks Of Rivers", "Slave Market", "A Study In Nothing", "Hard Times." Primus's debut was considered an "Historical evening in theatre" by Daily Worker critic Edith Segal. Segal and many other writers found Primus' "dances of protest" to be her "message" dances for their composition was designed to draw attention to the inequalities and injustices in the lives of American Blacks. "Strange Fruit" dealt with the reaction of a woman towards a lynching while "Hard Times" contained movement expressing attitudes of protest against sharecropping. Another work deals with the general ignorance of the Black heritage in America with Langston Hughes' poem "The Ne-

gro Speaks of Rivers." That poem was considered the basis for one of her best choreographed works.

Upon returning to her birth place in the West Indies, Primus met dancer Percival Borde who she married in 1954. The Primus-Borde union produced a long collaboration in dance performance, teaching and research. Together they accepted an invitation from the Government of Liberia to develop and direct an African Performing Arts Center in Monrovia for two years.

Throughout her life, Pearl Primus has used dance as a means of communicating her concern for mutual understanding between the races. She has always used dance to express her feelings about how Blacks are treated in this country. She was once quoted as saying, "The dance has been my teacher, ever patiently revealing to me the dignity, beauty and strength in the cultural heritage of my people as a vital part of the great heritage of all mankind." She further stated, "I'm learning to deliberately reach beyond the color of the skin and go into peoples souls and hearts to search out that part of them, black and white, which is common to all."

## Artwork by Rox Johnson



**"Rox" Johnson, a native of Washington, DC, is an artist and a physical scientist. She graduated from the Workshops for Careers in Art (now called the Duke Ellington High School for the Arts) and the Corcoran School of Art, and later, did graduate work at Howard University. Her work has been exhibited at the Montpelier Cultural Arts Center, Studio 1 and Henri galleries, and Crampton Auditorium of Howard University. Her medium consists of printmaking from silkscreens and woodcuts. Rox also studied physical science at the University of Maryland worked for the National Weather Service until her recent move to the Bay Area.**

---

## ON THE TABLE... *on being biracial*

### SITTING ON THE FENCE

by Ayofemi Folayan

I have been very vocal and very visible as a Black lesbian writer and activist on many fronts. I have done everything from marching in the non-violent Civil Rights protests in the sixties to clinic defense against Operation Rescue in the nineties. My life is pretty much an open book, major portions of which I have shared through my short stories, poetry, and in the performance piece, "Talking About Talking: The Power to Shape the World." I facilitate wellness seminars on everything from incest and sexual assault recovery to reproductive freedom entitled, "Breaking the Conspiracy of Silence." So I know the importance of naming the truth, the fundamental rightness of the African concept of NOMMO.

Yet there is one dreaded secret I rarely talk about that shrouds my life in a murky fog and keeps me paralyzed with the fear of its revelation: my biological father is a white man. It is a fact that creates all sorts of inner confusion and turmoil. Partially because those who display the physical appearance of being black are treated by the larger society as black, without any consideration of other components of that person's parentage. If a European has one parent who is Greek and one who is Irish, they are encouraged to claim equally both aspects of their heritage.

I think this is treated differently with African Americans of mixed heritage partly because of the legacy from slavery of children whose father was the slave-master. Even though everyone knew who the father was, law required that any child with any parentage of black blood must be treated as a slave. The children with noticeably European features were as a rule treated more favorably than those with more African traits.

I knew quite clearly that I was a black child in the eyes of the world around me, although I did not understand until much later that, in essence, my father had relinquished his privilege as a white European by choosing to marry my mother. In the strictly segregated world of the '50's, our interracial family was active-

ly rejected by the white communities and resentfully tolerated in the black neighborhoods. My father's Irish Canadian family completely repudiated him once they learned of his marriage to my dark-skinned mother whose roots were from the island of Barbados and the area around Birmingham, Alabama.

In the 60's, when everyone was chanting, "Say it loud, I'm Black and I'm Proud!", I felt ashamed of this man and whatever part of him endured within me. I remember hiding his picture after a black college friend asked me why I had some "honky" on display in my room and essentially challenged me to prove that I was really "black" enough. I didn't just put away his picture, though. I completely erased from my consciousness any acceptance of who he was and how important he had been in my life.

My denial of my father has been an act of omission rather than commission. I simply never bother to mention that he is white, although I talk frequently about the fact that he was a physician, that he grew up in Canada, that he came from a large family, and that he took me with him on trips to various places in Europe, where we lived for several years. For me, the decision to speak openly of his race is almost as momentous as the decision to be an "out" lesbian.

Not that I expect the entire community to use this as an excuse to reject me. I even once attended a "mongrels" workshop at a black lesbian gathering called "Becoming Visible" in San Francisco in 1978. What I noticed is that I immediately felt as though I was disqualified from attending the function because I had admitted to not being "pure" black. This reaction was almost overpowering and manifested itself in every way: body language, posture, tone of voice, and eye contact all became apologetic. I was convinced that I had somehow lost all status as a black person.

When I think about it, very few African Americans are without some element of European bloodlines. It just seems so immediate to me that my father who I

(continued on page 29)

## ON THE TABLE...

knew and interacted with was the introducer of that element of my heritage, not some distant and unknown progenitor. I feel guilty when I enjoy classical music and European artists or select white women as friends and lovers. It is as though I have betrayed the black part of myself, when in reality, I have abandoned the white part of myself consistently. I don't want to acknowledge a cultural heritage that includes racism or how racism has affected my experience of the world. It has been easier to pretend that part of me is not real.

It is time for me to proudly accept all of who I am. While that is a course that is not easily or clearly defined, it is necessary for me to come out of yet another closet to live my life without apology for any aspect of myself. It is not enough for me to silently know the truth. I must speak it boldly and without justification. I am glad this issue of *Aché* gave me the opportunity to do so.

□ \*\* □ \*\* □

### "Mixed Nuts" by Stephanie Smith

In mid-December 1953, Dora Goldberg, the matriarch of a merchant class Austro-Russian, mid-western clan entered her living room to find a scene which could only be described as truth being stranger than fiction. Jan, her rebellious jazz singer daughter--replete with cigaret holder and two-inch wide blonde streak offsetting a jet black chignon--was presenting her fiance to his future in-laws. Confidently perched on a leather ottoman, (previously the only object of color in the house) was Johnnie Smith, the suitor. Johnnie was stunningly handsome, disarmingly charming young graduate student, who apart from his flawless command of the Yiddish language, bore no resemblance to the Jewish Doctor that Dora had envisioned on the other side of her daughter's six-tier wedding cake. Johnnie Smith, ya see, was colored. Today, he'd be African-American, in 1953 he was colored.

Alex, Dora's husband, a soft-spoken man with a remarkably tolerant nature, began the inquisition. He asked, in a diplomatic tone, if the couple was aware of the magnitude of their decision. Marriage, he said, presents enough obstacles when both partners are of the same race and religion, but in the case of such divergent backgrounds, he feared the hurdles would

prove insurmountable. Johnnie's reply was a sincere, if trite, "But, Mr. Goldberg, we love each other." Dora, whose command of tough-love techniques was well ahead of her time, became exasperated with her husband's line of questioning and went for the jugular--"what do you intend to do," she demanded, "if you have children?" At this point, Johnnie rose, drew himself to his full 5'5" and declared, "when we have children, Mrs. Goldberg, it will be a different world."

Without missing a beat, Johnnie turned to his awestruck fiance and said, "ready to go baby?" Jan, who found herself temporarily incapable of speech, closed her jaw and nodded in assent. Johnnie picked up Jan's suitcases, and arm-in-arm, he and his intended strolled out of the Goldberg home.

One winter night, fifteen years and three children later, my father turned to my mother and said:

*"Goddammit baby, do you realize what I did? I walked into a white man's house and strolled off with his only daughter. Sheeet, I coulda got my ass shot off!"*

I cannot say that the ensuing 37 years have produced the radically different world that my father prophesied. The world and the mere mortals which inhabit it have not made it easy on this black/Jewish lesbian. That's alright though, I would not have chosen it any other way. The topic of black women with one white parent, aside from being a mouthful, is a daunting subject for me. To define terms, I consider myself mixed, I identify myself as bi-racial. Society considers me black and identifies me as black.

I have spent a great deal of my life in varying stages of denial about the pain that my mixed heritage has caused me. It has always been easier for me to tell stories about how much fun it was growing up with my maternal grandparents. I have only the fondest of memories of them--warm, funny, loving and observant Jews. Stories of my brothers' vain attempts to keep yarmulke's affixed to their mega'fro's during passover seder's, or my father's fluent Yiddish (acquired through years of working for Jewish merchants) flow off of my tongue. I am coming to realize that what I have been unwilling to share is at least as telling as what I have revealed in passing and shared with friends.

Among the things that I don't share, because I do not like to remember, is the 22 year silence between my mother and her only brother. (I should note that the duration of the silence is unremarkable in a culture

(continued on page 30)

## ON THE TABLE...

that sits *shiva* for its deviants.) This split was precipitated by my uncle's reaction when, after 6 years of marriage, he learned that my mother had finally become pregnant. Previously, my uncle had been the one of the staunchest supporters of my parent's relationship. He spent weekends and his vacations from college working alongside my father in my parents' record store. My mother's career, as a jazz singer kept her on the road away from St. Louis for long periods. My father and his brother-in-law had developed what appeared to be a good working relationship, if not a nascent friendship. However, even with a six year head start, "Uncle" Barry was incapable of accepting the fact that his sister was about to give birth to mixed-child. Admittedly, logic is not the strong suit of the Goldberg clan, but the fact that any kid born of this union would not be an Askenazi poster-child, was apparent from day-one. Still, it was too much for Barry to, uh...bear. Upon hearing the news of the impending birth, his enlightened response was:

*"Fine! It's your life, do what you want -- just don't let any of your nigger babies call me Uncle!"*

In true melodramatic fashion, 22 years later -- following a deathbed plea from my grandmother -- the siblings did eventually reconcile. While the silence between the siblings was indeed broken, none of us "nigger babies" has ever called him uncle.

I can't provide a diatribe on black-Jewish relations. I do know that in the microcosm that was my family, the two sides, with the exception noted above, got along. Early childhood memories of my house are filled with all kinds of people. The holidays at our house looked like a mini-session of the United Nations. The immediate family consisted of African-Americans from the south and midwest and white Austro-Russian Jews. Through intermarriage, the extended family grew to include Italians, Greeks, Scandinavians, Puerto Ricans and the occasional WASP. Yes, at an early age I knew that everybody's family did not look like mine.

While I may be guilty of practicing large-scale denial, I do not dwell on my uncle's reaction to my parents' audacious desire to conceive. I do not dwell on it, I believe, because it is not representative of my experience with my mother's family. My relationship with my maternal grandparents was, without question,

the most fulfilling relationship of my youth. My grandfather was my loyalest ally, my most patient coach, my wisest tutor -- and, (to my grandmother's chagrin) my erstwhile co-conspirator and partner-in-crime. In short, my white, Jewish grandparents functioned for me and my bi-racial siblings as grandparents ought -- they were a repository of unconditional love.

My attachment to the Jewish side of my family makes it painful for me to be asked to deny that heritage. As a black Jewish woman, my cross/*mogen david* to bear is that I am able to be stung by both anti-semitism and racism, regardless of the color of the perpetrator. Invariably, I am blindsided by the attacks. I have spent most of my life in seemingly enlightened, politically correct, ostensibly liberal surroundings. Initially, by my parent's design, and later by my own choice. While I have been intellectually stimulated and occasionally emotionally fulfilled by these environs, it is also true that the majority of my most damaging and invalidating experiences have been found in these settings. I have always expected more from my people. All of my people.

Throughout childhood, we saw my father's family only for some holidays, weddings or funerals. I am only now beginning to understand some of the reasons that my father's family had been only peripherally involved in my life. I have surmised, through clandestine conversations with extremely close-mouthed relatives that it was just too painful for his family to have anything more than cursory contact with us after my father's death.

My father was murdered in 1971. He was shot, at his desk, by a disgruntled employee, forced to bleed half-to-death while white cops bungled the search for him and finally, allowed to die in the "historically *negro* hospital," which is not to be confused with St. Louis Jewish Hospital, the facility closest to his office.

The gifted police force of the border town that is St. Louis Misery did nothing to belie their racist reputation in the bungling of my father's murder. Although the cops neglected to ask him who shot him, my father volunteered the name of the attacker during the lengthy trip to the appropriate hospital. However, that statement was inadmissible because it was not a deathbed statement. See, the cops didn't ask my father, after the doctors told him that he was dying, if he knew who his assailant was. Although the cops (any my mother) heard my father identify the man who killed him, it was a useless piece of information. Without a

(continued on page 32)

## ON THE TABLE...

deathbed statement or a witness, the man went free. My father is still dead. His murderer, last time I checked, was driving a cab in St. Louis.

At the time of his death, my father was the only adult male in his family. My paternal grandparents died of alcoholism while in their forties. In their case, the disease was exacerbated by the struggle of trying to survive as poor, black grandchildren of slaves, on a day-to-day basis in amerika. In 1966, five years before my father's death, his younger sister succumbed to the same disease that had earlier claimed their parents. The method, however, did vary slightly. After cashing her "relief" check, Aunt Buttercup treated herself and her "friends" to massive amounts of booze. In the middle of the bender, her "friends" got greedy. They took her money, beat her up and threw her from a moving car. Neither the beating, nor the ejection from the car killed Buttercup. The cause of death was officially "severe alcohol intoxication." Thirty-four when she died, Aunt Buttercup left five children between the ages of one and twelve.

The bleak, diseased, abbreviated lives of my father's immediate family is a difficult legacy for me to embrace. I would like to say that the epic-tragic aspects are the reason for that difficulty. I would like to say that, but it is not true. Aside from being alcoholics, my father's mother and two sisters all shared one more common trait--lesbianism. Yes, they had children. Yes, they had husbands. But, fact is, they were all women-lovin'-women. In a genetic/environmental crapshoot, my parents received a third generation alcoholic-lesbian. I do not believe in coincidence. I do believe that the combination of factors which appeared to curse my grandmother and aunts, does not portend such gloom and doom for me. By grace and fortune, I live in a time where open expression of my sexuality is possible-not easy, not encouraged, not welcome-just possible, and that alcoholism is a treatable disease.

Although it was not always so, today I am aware of the incredible gift that I received at birth. My parents represented not only the union of two creative, loving, resilient individuals, but also the convergence of two cultures rich in history and tradition. My parents' wish was that their children would have knowledge of and pride in both cultures. My gift to them and to myself is to live my life in a manner that validates my whole person, never to compromise any part of myself to make it easier for anyone else.

"On the Table" is a monthly forum where you respond to various topics. If you have any comments about anything that you read here, please write to Aché; we need your feedback if the dialogue is to continue.

Next topic:

☛ Exploring the Issues that Divide or Unite Black Women

Submissions can be in the form of letters, essays, poetry/prose, short statements, or artwork. Please specify if you would not like your full name included.

Upcoming topics:

May/June 1990 (next issue)  
**Exploring the Issues that Divide or Unite Black Women**  
(deadline April 10)

July/August 1990  
**Relationships with Black Men & Building Alliances with the Gay Male Community**  
(deadline June 10)

Mail submissions to:

Aché,  
P.O. Box 6071,  
Albany, CA. 94706

**Dearest Daughter Rebecca,**

**2/1/90**

You asked me to write you about my perspectives about the impact of your mixed racial heritage upon you. I think that the biggest negative impact upon you and your brother is that you have been put in a marginal position because you do not belong to any social group. It is a situation which has made you exceptionally needy emotionally, and at times, both vulnerable and defensive.

First of all, race in the abstract has little meaning. But within the framework of our history and society, Blackness is an immediate, visible badge of inferiority and social disadvantage. While the civil rights movement brought about the end of overtly legalized segregation and opened up some opportunities for a Black middle class and professional group, racial discrimination against all classes of Blacks has become more intense, de facto segregation in schools and housing more extensive, and poverty and social marginalization of inner-city Blacks has reached a point where survival not only of the Black community, but of the U.S. is seriously called into question.

How does this affect you? You are Black. When people look at you, when you look in the mirror, you are Black. But you have not been socialized as a Black person. You do not feel at home among any sector of the Black community. You were reared by your mother, who is not Black. Your Father was Black, but his parents and siblings were all dead when you were born, and you did not know them. Each of your families came from marginal social communities, and from families which were marginal within their own marginal communities. They were movers and shakers, strong, independent, brilliant, defiant people with a deep respect for learning. Your father and I were attracted to each other, and loved each other because of our deep commitment to black freedom as the first priority in our lives. The animated differences we had about how to bring this about reflected the depth of both our commitments. During the first ten years of our marriage, I helped him with his writing. Thereafter, our age difference made for different perspectives and priorities. I was a premature women's liberationist, and fought for my intellectual and creative autonomy, something your father could never understand. But as you surely know, we loved each other deeply. My work as a historian is a political act. Nothing is more important to self-image and self-esteem than knowledge of and identification with a viable past. This is why all people thirst for knowledge of their past. The old testament is a history of the Jews, and the rituals reenforce our celebration of triumphs over great odds. This grounding in history is the most important source of Jewish survival skills. It should be clear what your family history means to you. You are the descendent of a tradition which your father would call, of "struggle." His primary commitment was to African-American freedom. But your father never had a narrow identity. He was a true internationalist, a universalist. His commitment to the African-American struggle was not only because of the indignation at the mistreatment of his own people, but because he saw this struggle as strategic to the liberation of all humankind.

I have written about the fadenya among the Mande: the hero that brought about necessary change by challenging the social order, defying the badenya principle, meaning the family compound, which stresses order and stability. A Mande proverb goes, "The fadenya is only welcome in troubled times." We do, indeed, live in troubled times. But we who have an intuition of the future and base our lives upon it will inevitably obtain growing recognition and appreciation as time goes by. This has been true in my life. If you remember, when you were an adolescent I told you things would get better, and they did. Now I tell you again. Things will keep getting better for you as more time passes. Will your social isolation, your feeling of marginalization, improve? Maybe not. But you must fundamentally validate yourself. You do not need a group to validate you. Do you know how important that is? People who conform to the world as they find it and are attuned only to the present lose out as times change. The older they get, the worse off they are as they lose family, friends, and social networks, and as their imminent goals in life and relevance to the world shrink and disappear. There is nothing more depressing than the average, normal, socialized person my age.

**All my love,  
Mom**

# *Biracial Identity Development: Which One Are You Anyway?*

*by Ms. Belvedere*

In our race-conscious and racist society, women and men of color necessarily undergo stages of racial identity development as a dominant theme in their overall development as human beings. For many biracial people, it becomes focal point, and, for both monoracial and biracial people, the process can be lifelong. In this article, I will enumerate some of the salient features of the biracial identity development process derived from having conducted research on the topic and from my own personal experience as an African Asian American woman.

Taboos against interracial marriage in most cultures have meant that couples and their children are often met with some form of social condemnation, however subtle it may be. Although interracial marriages and unions are now common-day phenomena numerically, they are still anomalies for which society has been and continues to be unprepared. The children of these marriages and unions are viewed by many as marginal persons or threshold people whose attributes are ambiguous since they elude or slip through the network of racial and other classifications that usually locate positions in the society and cultural spaces within it. "Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention ceremony."<sup>1</sup>

When interracial marriage is met with rejection by one or both

families, it often has the effect of separating children from grandparents and denying them the deep cultural heritage and identity which are commonly passed on through this bond. Despite this loss of family and tradition, the biracial person is likely to grow up influenced by the culture of each of the parents' groups. Even if the family operates predominantly out of one cultural perspective, the biracial member is often keenly aware of her connection with the

abilities, and appearances. Later, when the child becomes exposed to influences outside the family, such as those in the neighborhood, at school, or through the media, comes the importance of societal classifications. The biracial child is then confronted with others' perceptions of oneself, which is, at the least, based on monoracial, often stereotypical, conceptions of race and, very often, on harsh judgements about not being easily classifiable. Moreover, in many

**we need not view the biracial woman as a marginal person condemned to live in two worlds, but rather as one whom fate has given the opportunity to unite two different worlds, because she lives between and beyond her social and cultural groups...**

other culture.

Family, neighborhood, and school, as well as the media, provide contacts that help build early expectations of what life will be like as an adult. Children first identify with aspects of people by which they themselves are most immediately and concretely affected. Thus their early identities are based on what they learn from parents, or other parent figures, about certain over-valued and ill-understood body parts, physical

cases, society's perception of the child is not congruent with her own image, one that she has drawn from her parents.

This connection between the biracial person's self-image and her parents becomes a critical element in racial identity formation. Many biracial persons talk of almost a literal connection between each part of her identity and the respective parent who is of that race. For example, the "White part" is associated with the father

(continued on page 34)

## *Biracial Identity Development: Which One Are You Anyway?*

who is White and the "Black part" with the mother. Therefore, when she is asked to "decide what she really is," meaning "choose one race or the other," the decision has less to do with choosing racial identities than with choosing which parent she will favor or even whose existence she will acknowledge, and, by implication, which parent she will disfavor or "kill off," metaphorically speaking. What person would willingly do either?

Another critical element in understanding biracial identity development is the unequal status or position of the two races that a biracial person embodies. Children's awareness of color differences usually occurs around age three and, by ages four and five, they are able to talk about skin color. Soon thereafter, they also learn the differential values placed on each race. Furthermore, most children socialized in the U.S. come to believe that it is better to be White than anything else. This belief, often quite subliminal, is inculcated even in children raised in homes where race pride is vigilantly stressed. For example, many little girls growing up in ethnically conscious homes still prefer to have the blonde Barbie dolls when given a choice. This phenomenon, of course, is due to the hegemony of White supremacy rather than to attributes or commitments of families.

In the case of the biracial child, she will come to realize that she herself embodies two unequally valued races: one has higher status or is more acceptable in the larger society than the other. Again, this valuation may be learned outside the home, but it

learned, nonetheless. There are at least two common, early responses to the status difference, and both seem to be aimed at reducing the inherent conflicts arising out of those differences. A child may strive to belong fully to the "higher" group and avoid identification with the less socially valued one, thereby seeking a position of privilege. Or she may decide to align herself only with the "lower" group, thereby eschewing any connection to privilege based on race.

The tendency toward one or other posture is influenced by physical appearance and its relationship to societal classification and geography. Societal classification of biracial persons tends toward the direction of their less socially valued side. Generally, for instance, the larger society will identify a White and Black person as Black, Asian and White as Asian, and Black and Asian as Black, and each of those person's experience of race and racism will be linked directly to her physical appearance.

Although there is tremendous variation in appearances, a biracial person is likely to possess some of the physical traits of each of the two races of the parents. Certain physical traits, such as skin color, are more emotionally loaded than others, and thus carry with them implications for both child and parent. Physical appearances also shape the kinds of perceptions and interactions a biracial child encounters outside the home. Often members of the community can identify her as being of mixed descent. Consequently, whatever racial prejudice, ranging from mild aloofness to biting contempt, exists in the community toward the

mixed person will impinge on one's consciousness.

So a woman of Black and White parentage who "looks White" will have a qualitatively different sense of herself and of the world around her than if she were to "look Black." And there are women, with appearances that fit none of the easily identifiable categories such as Black or White, whose racial classifications are in the hands of an individual beholder. These women might receive comments such as, "I know you're Samoan because I was there once and saw people who look just like you!"

Geography -- the neighborhood, city, region of the country where a child lives during her formative years -- will also have an impact on her racial identity. Environments in which the people around the biracial child more closely reflect her physical self or acknowledge and accept her "biracialness" are the places where the child is less likely to experience conflict around the issue of racial identity. Thus, for example, an European-American and African-American child who "looks Black" and lives in a "Black neighborhood" -- the child and her surroundings are more or less congruent -- will have fewer, or less intense, conflicts and will probably come to identify more strongly with the African part of herself than the European.

### *DIFFERENCE, INTERNALIZATION AND ACCEPTANCE*

For many, if not most, biracial women, there may be a feeling of overwhelming difference --

(continued on page 35)

## *Biracial Identity Development:*

from everyone -- and an insidious process in which this difference is internalized in self-destructive ways. Consequently, acceptance -- from peers, family, and community -- may become an overriding concern and one's main hope may just to belong fully to *some* group. The experience of not being fully accepted by any one group may then trigger intense feelings of alienation. Moreover, a person's need for independence or for upholding her self-respect may then conflict with this all-out drive for acceptance, creating varying degrees of ambivalence and confusion.

The powerful feeling of being different frequently carries even into one's family. A woman may realize that she is fundamentally different -- at the same time being the same -- even from one's father and mother, and other relatives. Siblings provide the same racial heritage, but even here, the difference, and experiences of acceptance, may be dissimilar. During certain periods in a person's development, there may even be a growing inability to identify with one's parents.

This feeling of difference, of being always on the edge or outside of, may also lead to an intense drive for acceptance, at almost any cost, for some. Presumably, the acceptance is for one as a person, but sometimes, it may mean acceptance as a stereotyped image, which might be the only way others can, or are willing, to relate. A woman may try very hard to conform to the stereotypes, even to the extreme of making herself into a caricature, as a way of being "accepted" in order to overcome the tremendous feeling of isola-

tion. When the terms of acceptance become too great, however, an individual may rebel and reject the group entirely. A woman may then search for another group to join or channel her energies into a competitive drive to "prove" her worth as an individual, thereby, in effect, attempting to become "raceless."

### *RESOLUTION AND TRANSCENDENCE*

There does seem to be a process whereby persons of mixed racial heritage resolve the conflicts described earlier and transcend the socially constructed categories that bound her in the past. A biracial woman in my study described that process in the following way:

The way I conceive of biracial identity development is that first one is in a stage of being unconscious -- not unaware that you are of a particular race -- but unconscious of what it means to be of that race. You can walk around and know that you're White or Black or Black and White, but you're not aware of the political and social significance. The second stage is when you become conscious and go through a lot of changes, like not wanting to be who you are, or wanting to be something else -- really going whole-hog, being separatist even -- whatever your trip is, going through a very extremely sensitive consciousness of who you are racially in the world. The final step is being able to transcend all of those, and being able to differentiate yourself and others -- accepting that you are both of whatever you are, or that someone is an Asian individual, not just a walking stereotype. It's about differentiation and individuation. It's also about

coming to terms with the political realities and consequences of race: we can have personal racial identities and we must have socio-political racial identity too.

To get to that last stage I think you have to go through extremes. You have to go through a stage of almost hating people in a way and really getting into your own thing -- a heavy duty separatism, just because conditions in this society don't embrace any kind of positive development. You have to go into this extreme environment you create and think of yourself and your race as being superior and smarter and better -- all the things people tell you you're not. For me it was the phases of being White only then Black only, and now I'm at a place where it's okay, wonderful, to be both, and somehow trying to use both aspects of who I am to create a better world.

This model raises a critical point. If it is necessary for a woman to experience the conflicts of the "conscious" stage before she can move to a greater state of resolution, then a period of ambivalence and ethnocentrism is a very positive achievement because those conditions allow, sometimes force, a person to continue to explore her racial identity in order to reconcile the discordant elements of being two races in a single body and self.

### *BRIDGES ACROSS RACES AND CULTURES*

Biracial/bicultural women have tremendous potential as mediators across races and cultures. The definition of the marginal person, proposed by sociologist Charles Willie<sup>2</sup>, is one who rises

(continued on page 40)

## biracial discussion

(continued from page 15)

E: I wonder how much of this definition of black is fairly recent, with the anti-intellectualism, and classifications of what it means to be black, speaking black english and the rest of it... Since the '60's and Black Power and self-ghettoization...

R: I don't think it's new at all. I think this whole tension around 'passing' is really old, and it's connected. I used to hear about these parties in the 20's where you couldn't get in if you were darker than a paper bag. You always hear about people "getting above themselves..."

E: The tension being there is one thing, but when you start talking about black people being able to move beyond and outside the black community that's when things like Black Power start to appear and really rigorous categorization about what it means to be black.

S: I see that as cyclical. I remember in college when all the "Black to the Future" & "I Love Being Black" t-shirts started popping up. That whole movement brought up a massive inferiority complex in me. If I never felt black enough before...I didn't relate because I didn't know them, because I didn't grow up with them and I didn't identify. That felt bad.

R: What does identify mean to you?

S: I don't know. But I do know what I wasn't able to do, and I've never felt that my struggle as a black woman was as much as it would have been had I not

been....I hate this shit!!! I don't want to deal with this, this hurts. The bottom line is that I feel like I was protected and spared some shit and I feel like there's some serious class stuff happening. I just feel like my struggle just wasn't enough.

L: Kind of like "survivors guilt." The thing is that even if you have 2 black parents you can still feel this. If you're black and have white friends, or you listen to rock music, or went to a white school, or whatever the shit just keeps going. The bottom line is we are using these things to divide ourselves instead of acknowledging the diversity that is there, whether we like it or not.

A: I wonder how much of this is what we're programmed to understand through the media of what black is from a white perspective.

S: You go from Huggy Bear to the Cosby show.

R: This guilt that you're talking about? That's something that I haven't experienced. I never felt that my struggle wasn't as difficult as a "real black woman." I definitely had class privilege, my family was dirt poor but they were *intelligencia*. I never felt my struggle was less difficult, if anything more, because I never had a centered place to come from and that's what I'd always wanted. I felt more envy than anything else.

L: I'd do anything to have a place to call home. It feels like there's no place that's just for me. There's also the pain that I feel as I move farther and farther away

from my white mother and any sense of family I've ever known in the white community. The stronger I become in myself, the more it feels like I'm closing the door on my past, never being able to return. I have no place to go home to anymore, and there's so much pain and denial between myself and other family figures, the tension is right there, so real and unspoken.

J: I come from a music and drug subculture and I remember feeling like no one else comes from this and I felt real alone for years. I could never walk around saying I'm proud I'm black, because that wasn't quite accurate for me. There was never button for me!! Maybe the fear is, don't label or limit me! Don't say that I'm just this!! My whole thing is making bridges, not throwing stones.

S: Something you said just triggered it for me. For me to say that I was proud of being black felt like I was making myself not whole. The times when I'm most comfortable are the times when I can consider myself mixed.

A: This comes back to the definition of "black." Why is that limiting, what does that mean to you, and why can't you claim it?

S: And why does claiming it mean that I can't be the other things that I am...

R: You said you feel most comfortable when you identify as mixed. That doesn't feel comfortable to me and I'm trying to figure out why. Because I feel like I'm black. In the healthiest way, black means all of who I am and it also

(continued on page 37)

## biracial discussion

means ways that my experience might be different including being comfortable with white people, at home with white people, whatever. But there's a certain level at which I feel most comfortable around black people. There's a feeling that I don't have to explain myself, or feeling that other black people feel things on a gut level like I do.

E: I feel that as well. I really relate to how it's harder to go home the more conscious you get...I found myself being totally alienated from my white friends when I went home. Partly because I'm a lesbian, but a large part because I'm spending more time with black people and I realize how healthy it is for me. There's a lot of shit there too that I'm dealing with, but ultimately it feels very supportive to me.

R: I'm agreeing with you but I don't want to negate the part of me that feels very unsafe with other black people.

S: I feel most comfortable around mixed people, but I also feel really comfortable around other black lesbians. My experiences are those of a black woman. I grew up in St. Louis, being called "nigger this" & "nigger that," - when am I going to feel black?

\*\*\*

J: I get defensive when people assume where I'm coming from.

R: I think the bottom line of your uncomfortableness is that you feel that if you accept the label of "black" that means you have to be

a certain way. You're saying "don't put that on me because that means I'll have to negate the rest of who I am." I'm saying it's not so much the label and what it means as it is who has the power to define it.

J: I need to make it clear that I'm coming from more than one place. Many black people respond to me "oh, you're mixed, well so am I, who isn't?" I feel the tendency to dilute myself more and that's what I'm trying not to do. Why should I identify as "black," even though black can mean a multitude of things, when I know what "black" means to the masses? What I'm trying to do right now is trying to get support in identifying with everything that I am. In terms of the continuum, even in sexuality, does it have to be this or that?

R: Well, let's talk about why it's important to identify as black.

E: What comes to my mind is that there's real importance to claiming yourself as a black woman. That means not only dealing in the black community, forcing them to accept me as a whole person, but also in political terms. For example in South Africa, there are real important political designations.

R: Political people of color in South Africa who are trying to achieve solidarity, will identify themselves as black so there's not this divide and conquer. I'm not "colored" or whatever, I'm black.

E: I think it's dangerous to talk about starting a mixed movement

because there's a real problem - who do you identify with? How supportive are you in the black struggle? Politically, I think there's a tremendous amount of importance to it. To me, that's a great deal of how I think of myself and how I come to this.

R: Being the other "red diaper" baby in the group, I want to second that because I see it as a political issue. As far as white people are concerned, we're black. That's a fact of life. The idea of why should we take their label - for a political reason. Because, we have to be together and united and claim it in order to fight against the oppression. There's a certain level that we as "mulattos" or whatever have certain privileges (this is the historical tension of the "house nigger" versus the "field nigger") but there's also that fact that we're black no matter what.

It's also about wanting to educate the black community that I belong too, which may have less to do with politics and more to do with making a home for ourselves...

\*\*\*

L: I want to talk about our relationships with other mixed people.

I've always noted other mixed people, but it took a long time to be ready and able to start some sort of dialogue on it. I remember being thrilled to death to actually relate to somebody on that level, and then to realize that there's a whole world of difference amongst other biracial people in terms of how they view themselves and how they've come to deal with the whole thing.

(continued on page 38)

## biracial discussion

What I found was I could open myself up without having to educate but on the other hand, sometimes we'd get to this place where we would tear each other apart & gut to the core. It's similar to what all black women do to each other, validating our own experiences by invalidating others.

How can we accept diversity in a society where lines are drawn and everything's either/or? How do we get to a place where we can talk about building multicultural coalitions when we spend so much energy on drawing the boundaries that divide us from each other, without realizing that these lines are totally subjective?

E: We deal with such a narrow mind-set here in America and everything is black and white. If you look internationally, African people are everywhere in every kind of mixture imaginable.

\*\*\*

S: I feel like I need to make a distinction between people that came together to act something out and others (like my parents) that came together because they wanted to be together.

L: Like you're here on purpose? There's a part of me that knows that people can just love each other regardless of skin color, but for me the issue is more that the dynamic is always there at play. A dynamic that is so deep and pervasive.

J: I think what you're trying to say is that the way our parents bonded influences our identification. Granted, we can't get away

from the black & white dynamic. Perhaps the model of our parents influences our comfort or discomfort...

S: What I was responding to is the idea that I have something in common with people who were mixed eons ago. My stuff is more direct than that. I identify with people who have shared experiences based on what they got at home.

L: I see what you're saying. Historically, black people are mixed all the way back to the slaves and their masters. That is different than 2 people coming together in the here & now....

S: Bless you!! That's what I was trying to say. For some reason, I needed to state that difference.

R: Let's talk about why being mixed black & white is different than being mixed black and anything else. There's a difference when half of you is the oppressor.

S: It's hard to be out there talking about "whitey" and then go home to your white mother. That's a little too schizophrenic for me. I've known mixed people that are able to do this but I can't fathom it. I know where the anger comes from but there's a part of me that will never forget that there's half of me that's white and could be perceived as the oppressor.

R: Something we were talking about before is this concept of assimilation and if you're half white you have one foot in the door which is not the case if you're

Afro-Chinese because Chinese is not the dominant culture. So your experience of being mixed is going to be different.

J: What I'm feeling now is the whole Jewish thing. There's white skin privilege but there's other stuff... There's the tendency to think that one oppression is more severe than another is there, but having been on the other end of Jewish prejudice, I can tell you that the similarities are very real.

S: I've gotten that argument from other Jews in college who would try and compare our histories of oppression. "Our cultures really aren't that different."

L: Both oppressions are real, and once again we're talking about validating a history by invalidating another. Between blacks and Jews, what's at play is a very real black/white dynamic that needs to be acknowledged without invalidating the Jews history of oppression.

R: This idea that Jews have white skin privilege and that's all. I feel that I am very acknowledging of the history of Jewish oppression and anti-Semitism but my feeling is that white Jews are still white. And in relation to black people they're the oppressor.

\*\*\*

J: Has anyone ever walked down the street with your white parent and wondering what someone else thought the relationship was?

Everyone: Always!!!

(continued on page 39)

## biracial discussion

**S:** When I was growing up there was a lot of shame around that. My dad died when I was real young and my mom was a single parent with these 3 mixed kids. The assumption was always that there was no father and for her it was like being invalidated all the time. For me, it was always feeling ashamed and different.

**R:** I've had so many experiences like going to the grocery store and every time I say "mom" all kinds of people turn, black people, white people. It happens all the time. When I went home to N.Y. last my mom and I went to a Casselberry-DuPree concert for my birthday. We go and my mom's giving the woman the tickets and I'm walking behind her and the woman says "you're together right?" and my mom was so happy because that was the first time that anyone had assumed we were together. I said, "oh well, it's the crowd."

**S:** My mom is so touchy-feely. She always wants to walk down the street arm-in-arm and it brings up all this shit for me.

**J:** My father, being white, and I would walk down the street and there was always the assumption that I'm the "little fuck." He was always so defensive around that.

**L:** My stuff with my mom gets really heavy. When I'm out on the street, I have a hard time being with her and it's not even clear why because our history has always been so negative. I think part of it is classic first-generation of an immigrant stuff, where your parent doesn't speak english right,

or understand how things work, and you're embarrassed...

**E:** You're like a second generation co...

**L:** That's exactly right. I remember my mother cleaning house for this old white woman and almost hiding the fact that she had a daughter because she thought the woman would want to see a picture or something. That's really how I operate with her too. Coming to terms with her is something I'm really grappling with.

**R:** My mother would never exactly hide the fact, but it still happened where people would assume one thing and then see the rest of the family and all shit would break loose.

**E:** My mother would hide the family when she needed to, like when she rented apartments. She would go and sign the lease then just show up with our family and hope that the landlord wasn't an asshole enough to kick us out.

**R:** Can we talk about how we've dealt with the white parts of our family? I know that's not an issue for everybody here, but I know for me that the whole issue around my mother's family has had a profound effect on me and my experience of myself in ways that I'm just beginning to realize.

When my mother married my father she was disowned by her family. I never met my mother's side of the family until I was 12. My grandmother invited my mother to a family reunion and told her not to bring the kids because her friends would be there and it

would be embarrassing. But I knew that if my grandmother met me she would just love me because I was her grandchild and we were blood and I was a nice person. The whole experience of going there and trying to prove myself over and over again was such a painful experience. I was the only black person there except for the help, and people even tried to give me their coats. I had my grandmother call me a nigger to my face. She can't accept me at all and it took me years to get it.

Then there's other parts of my family. Every time I go there I feel terrible. I can go feeling centered in who I am, the lesbian issue is just a whole other dynamic to it, and after three days I'm crawling on the ground. Now I don't even go anymore.

**J:** Don't you think that affects how you identify so strongly? Background messages, what's reinforced, what's not reinforced, what's taken away, what's not taken away all influences how we come to terms with who we are.

**S:** My experience with my mom's side of the family couldn't have been any more different. After my father died, my mother's family was it. There were around, I was raised by three Jewish mothers and that affects my identity and the way I relate. I never felt like they treated me any differently.

\* \* \*

This discussion, held over the course of one month, never came to any kind of resolution or natural end. It will continue in the next issue of *Aché* with a discussion of the particular issues of black Jewish women.

## Which One Are You Anyway?

above two or more social and cultural groups, not one who finds her identity solely among existing racial categories. Instead, according to Willie, she finds her identity in the synthesis of the two races she embodies, learns from both, and becomes more than what she was by embracing only one race. We need not view the biracial woman, then, as a marginal person condemned to live in two worlds, but rather as one whom fate has given the opportunity to unite two different worlds, because she lives between and beyond her social and cultural groups.

It should be made clear that people are typically fearful of living between, and beyond their races, because of their fear of loss of identity. For biracial women, born into a potentially marginal status, experiences of searching for security and acceptance may be so painful that she feels it necessary to identify with one group or the other. She may need to go through a period of strengthening her identity as a member of one group before realizing that this monocultural or monoracial identity is not all that she is, and, by sticking to just that one identity, she is actually limiting her identity. The words from the Black Power Movement seem appropriate here: no person can be healthy, complete, and mature if they must deny a part of themselves.<sup>3</sup>

Since the Black Power Movement of the late-sixties and early-seventies, people of color, as a whole, are learning to overcome their ambivalence, self-consciousness, race-consciousness, and self-hatred through an historical re-alignment with the past. An example of this is that creative

writers from all the racial groups - African American, Asian, Latino, and Native American -- are in a battle to reclaim for their people, as Erik Erikson asserts:

[a] surrendered identity -- not something to be searched for and found, to be granted and given, to be created or fabricated -- but something to be recovered. This must be emphasized because what is latent can become a living actuality, and thus a bridge from the past to future...Identity consciousness is overcome only by a sense of identity won in action.<sup>4</sup>

Many biracial women have surrendered their identity, often the identity society refuses to recognize, or the identity which it recognizes but fails to see. Recovering this surrendered identity is a process of healing and renewing, connecting to one's past and future in a process which speaks of meaning and purpose. The following quote from another biracial woman illustrates this point:

There are all these dichotomies, conflicting or contradictory pairs that I somehow managed to order...and has kept me reasonably healthy and strong. I had to transform into assets those things which I felt were deficits or burdens. I'm becoming less self-absorbed, moving out of the identity stage into the world, taking those things with me as assets -- things that I'm going to be able to work with; things that have given me the vision of a different kind of world I want to help create. I guess that's the romantic part of me -- considering myself a revolutionary. Political activism is how I've pulled everything together

and found how to use my assets in helping to transform the oppressive conditions in our society. Perhaps this is my coping mechanism, though I feel well beyond that place of simply coping, and feeling defensive and vulnerable. I think I can now be more of an activist because I'm less uptight about who I am -- about wanting acceptance from others. Before I had to put it all out there so everybody saw who I was. And I wanted everyone to approve. Now I feel people either see me or they don't; I don't have any control over that. And I don't seek acceptance and approval in the extreme ways that I did. That makes me less vulnerable, less controlled by others' opinions. These are essential qualities of being a revolutionary: you can't worry about whether people are gonna think kindly of you or like you.

The biracial and bicultural experience may not be difficult for everyone. Those for whom it is painful -- arousing conflict, demanding resolution -- become, through their journeys, their trials, their healing, the teachers of what they have learned of the depths of the human spirit, and make possible for others to care and to connect.

### Notes

1. Victor Turner, *Ritual Process*, 1967.
2. Charles Willie, *Oreo: On Race and Marginal Men and Women*, 1975.
3. Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America*, 1967.
4. Erik Erikson, *Identity, Youth, and Crisis*, 1968.

---

Poetry by Storme Webber

if i sit still & quiet for too long/my mind starts jumpin/mis ceg enation  
mama/mama "all blk men wanna do iz rape you/how do you think i got storme?"  
my skin the color of sambo's pancakes & them tigers he made run all around  
that tree till the blk & the orange/beige made yella/so his mama cd make him  
more pancakes/he loved em so  
unfortunate childhoods are like rocky hills/you cn either keep climbing over  
& around all that mess scratching & cutting yrself/or cn grab on (the edges  
are well-defined/give you something to hang onto & toughen yr skin at the same  
time) & keep climbing up/sometimes you cn look back/for a minute/just for a  
minute/just to see how far you've come/but not too long/vertigo might hit &  
you cd tumble back down/to where they're callin you "come back come back to us"  
instead i say these words over & over until they lose their magic/their bad magic  
& gain some whole new stuff/gris-gris for some deep blk amazon power roots--  
what's in my blood/native magic/alaskan shaman & louisiana red people/  
norwegian sailors & dark spanish men/an american blend/  
w/dreadlocks & scuffed-up boots



## "diaspora"

a collection of poetry and graphics  
by Storme Webber

\$20. Special limited edition,  
each copy numbered and signed by the artist.

To order write:

Storme Webber  
272 E. 7th St. #3B  
New York, New York  
10009

# Bulletin Board

**Make Aché work for you!! List your service (send a business card), find a roommate, organize a group or whatever!! FREE to all black women!!... The next deadline is April 20th.**

## GROUPS

New ACofA meeting now forming for black gays and lesbians. For more information call Melissa at 995-2581.



Support group for black Lesbians in multicultural relationships meet the 1st Sunday of each month in Oakland. For info: 839-3302 or 653-5732.



Black Lesbians exploring the issue of fear in our lives, and how it separates us. Group meets weekly on Friday eves. 3-month commitment required. For info call Joyce at 839-3302 or Takai at 346-5872.



Lesbians of Color Support Group every Thursday evening from 6:30 - 8pm at the Pacific Center, 2712 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley



Mujerio, the bay area Latina Lesbian organization, holds monthly meetings on the 3rd Saturday of each month. 5pm. All Latina Lesbians welcome. Info: 587-7384.



## HOUSING

Lesbian of Color household forming. A 36-year-old black lesbian and a 38-year-old latina lesbian are looking for a 3rd l.o.c. to form a new new household. For more information call 563-3048 or 346-3081.

## NOTICES

### U.C. Berkeley Women of Color Conference

Planned by students *and* community members, coordinated by Filipina lesbian. Sample caucus questions: What is the stand women of color need to take on the issue of violence against women, whether the perpetrators be white men, men of color, or women themselves? By what criteria shall we evaluate white feminism while creating a feminist/women of color empowerment for ourselves? For information or input, contact Elsa at 655-3960. April 28, 1990. 9am. The conference will be held at Booth Auditorium on the U.C. Berkeley campus.



### Aché needs:

- ◆ artwork by black women
- ◆ coverage of current events
- ◆ poetry/short stories

- ◆ letters of support
- ◆ donations
- ◆ articles on health

Also, if you read an article that you think would be of interest to other Aché readers, let us know!!

The biggest need right now is to find several grantwriters who would be willing to write on Aché's behalf. If you know anybody who might be able to help contact:

Aché  
P.O.Box 6071  
Albany, CA. 94706  
(415) 824-0703.



### Dancing Lady

who is very interested in keeping her strip tease skills honed, is available for your next special event. Locally I have danced in SF at Amelia's, The Baybrick Inn, and A Little More. So, if you're having a party or even a smaller more intimate occasion - let me entertain you!! Fee negotiable. For more info. call Teri, 532-8836.



Literary anthology for, by and about black lesbians seeking POETRY (any form or length) and SHORT FICTION (maximum 25 pages.) Send unpublished submissions and queries with self-

# Bulletin Board

addressed, stamped envelope to: Terri Jewell, 211 W. Saginaw #2, Lansing, Michigan, 48933. Deadline: April 1990.



## What is a Lesbian?

Seeking radical, creative, uncensored approaches to this question for upcoming anthology. Send with s.a.s.e. to Lise Weil, P.O. Box 70, Montague, MA. 01351. Deadline June 1, 1990.



Women interested in participating in making a panel or panels for the Africans who have died of AIDS to be included in the Names Project Quilt. Please contact Reatha at (415) 835-1552.



## UJAMAA

The Women's Building Project of the East Bay. A new group of women of color, dedicated to the concept of cooperative economics and survival. Our initial goal is to secure funds to purchase a multicultural center. Task committees now forming. For more info. call (415) 255-2155 or 436-6145.



## "Black Lace"

The first and only erotic magazine by and for African American lesbians will be published by the BLK publishing company. **Black Lace** will feature erotic photography, short stories, fantasy letters, poetry, feature articles and other

items of interest to the African American lesbian community.

To submit to **Black Lace** write:

Alycee J. Lane,  
P.O. Box 83912, Los Angeles,  
CA. 90083-0912  
(213) 410-0808



## "A Celebration of Colors"

is a 1990 Women of Color calendar featuring 13 beautiful and strong women from the Bay Area. This calendar is a grassroots project put together by Julie Mau and Maria Salazar, with a lot of help from our sisters in the community, as well as our ancestors. The purpose of the calendar is twofold: to raise monies for several Women of Color/Lesbians of Color community-based organizations, and to empower ourselves as Women of Color by defining **FOR OURSELVES** what is beauty, and what is strength. The calendars are currently on sale at Modern Times, Old Wives Tales, A Different Light and Mama Bears. Also, if you have suggestions for next year's calendar and/or would like to buy a calendar (\$5-7 sliding scale), call 255-9426 or write/stop by 2037 - 15th St., San Francisco, Ca. 94114.



## SERVICES

Black woman mathematician available for tutoring children and adults. \$12/hr. 654-5432.

Is your daycare provider understanding of your special family? Daycare by Stephanie, a developmental program for children. 8 wks. to school age. 7am to 6pm. Mon-Fri. O.M.I. area, SF. For info. call 334-2077.



## Fashions Management & Consultant Services

Deborah Matthews  
(415) 841-2672



## GWEN AVERY FOR HAIR

Precision haircuts, styles,  
colors and perms.  
550-7666.



## "A SAFE & CARING MASSAGE"

by Debra K. Floyd for yourself or a thoughtful gift to a friend. An hour treatment (\$35) consists of a full body massage, grounding, relaxation breathing and ends with a warm wrap. Call 548-2143 for an appointment.



## THERAPIST AVAILABLE

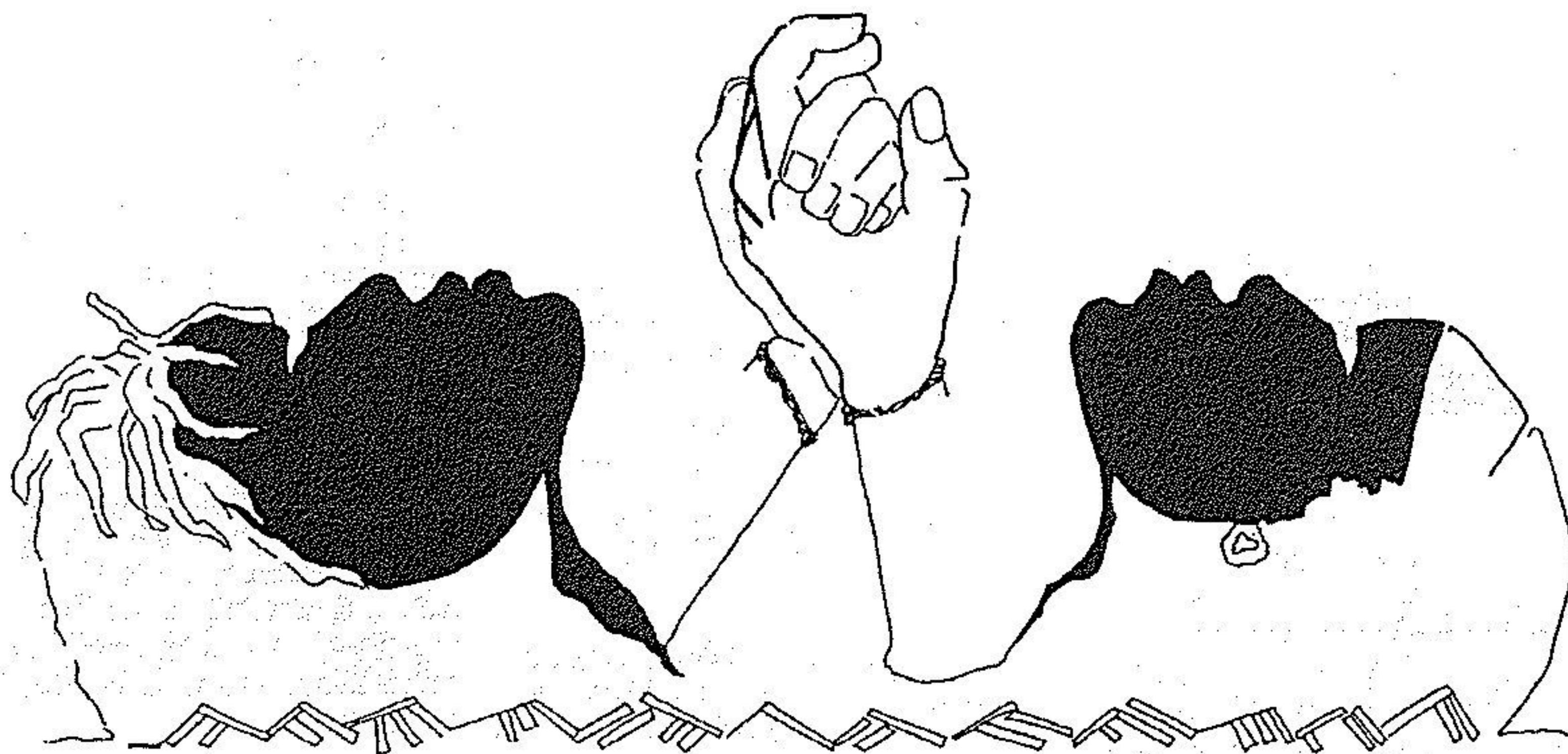
Supportive counseling including cross-cultural, sexual abuse, and substance abuse issues for individuals and couples. East Bay. Sliding scale. J. Segal, MFCC Lic. # MX0 2357. (415) 532-2452, leave message.



# THE BACK PAGE

**Support Aché.**

**Subscribe  
today!**



(artwork by Rox Johnson)

"Achê." Aché, vol. 2, no. 2, March-April, 1990, p. [1]. Archives of Sexuality and Gender, [link.gale.com/apps/doc/SURTVJ971279599/AHSI?u=umuser&sid=bookmark-AHSI&xid=813a281a](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/SURTVJ971279599/AHSI?u=umuser&sid=bookmark-AHSI&xid=813a281a). Accessed 8 Dec. 2022.