

relating

"In blackness there is great virtue if you will but observe its beauty."

Antar

Positivity for the '90s

by Jacen Brathwaite

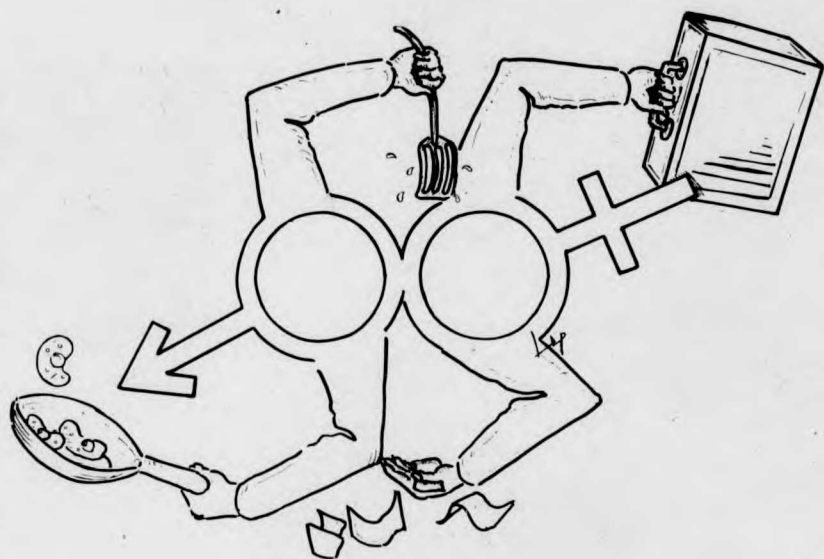
Here we are folks, Black History Month. The one month a year devoted to Black people and their contributions to history.

In full spirit, I have decided to make my contribution to present day history. Before I start, however, I warn all those reading that this article is written for Black people. That is to say, you won't find any universals in this article. It is biased and I'm admitting it before it's said. Granted, the advice can be used by anyone, but brothers and sisters, I'm talking to you.

Now that my disclaimer is out of the way and I've hopefully lost all readers who aren't sure what colour they are, let me get down to business.

First of all, I would like you to consider these phrases: "I don't know! Go ask your mother!" or "Wait 'til your father gets home!" These are the phrases of the past, and don't fool yourself, of the present as well. These phrases suggest that both the man and the woman have their respective jobs in the home and the community.

How many sisters reading this have heard that they should know how to cook? That is an example of gender roles. As a woman, you are expected to know how to cook, clean, raise children and manage the household. Now I'm not speaking for all, I'm sure, but personally I wouldn't be too excited about this as my future in this world. All you have to do is be born a



graphic • Leo Campbell

woman and all these jobs are yours! Congratulations, ladies! It sucks doesn't it?

Don't think I forgot you guys. You've got your jobs too. First of all, you have to know how to fix everything. In addition to that, you have to do all the heavy yard work. Yeah, you know what I'm sayin'. Those hot days when you're outside cutting the grass and you're sister is inside the house... washing the dishes. Or what about when you're outside freezing so the

driveway is free of snow when dad gets home?

You get the point. But by now you're probably wondering why I'm spreading all this negativity. "But we know all that shit. Why you want to trip on us like that?" All right. Let me get to the point of the article.

Let me begin by saying that I love my people and I believe in them and what they can do. And in discussing gender roles, I can't help but believe that this is one of our

ways to being equal to "the man."

Let me explain. Personally, I think white women are fighting a losing battle in the quest for equality with their men. As far as I'm concerned, white dudes ain't ready for a woman who is doing the same thing as them. However, I don't want to make this into an exposition on women's liberation so let me continue on my chosen path.

Erase the gender roles! There. That's my Big Statement.

Now the first benefit of this would be the fact that the youth can become more self sufficient. We are moving towards the age of the single parent family. Why not have a father who does more for his children than discipline them? By reducing the roles of males and females to the strictly biological ones, we are eliminating the proverbial weak link in the chain. Imagine a people where everyone can do for themselves, instead of having to depend on others for help. If we grow up living like this, it will encourage us to do for ourselves as well.

Not only will we become more independent, but for those of us who grew up in the world of the gender roles, it will promote the utmost respect for the opposite sex. We will begin to realize just how hard the job that the other is doing really is. We will also begin to appreciate women, guys. Like it or not, women go through a lot and to be in a woman's shoes is a tight fit for a long walk.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the mixing of gender roles

will enhance the race. The white man might keep us out of the top of his institutions, but he's the ultimate loser. He keeps dealing with white people so he's going to get the same perspective every time--W.A.S.P. The sister or brother that he doesn't want in his school might have the cure for A.I.D.S! Using that same logic, apply it to yourselves. If you keep somebody out of your scene, that scene ain't gonna change. I guess what I'm saying is that you need more than one side of the story to finish the book, so ladies, fix that .t.v., and guys cook dinner while you're wife kicks back to watch the Superbowl!

What we need to aim for is a society where the gender roles are no longer gender roles. When a man stays home to cook, don't say he's doing woman's work. As long as you call it that, you haven't learned.

You've got to work towards a stronger society than what we've already got. Don't think that if you've got what a white man has, you've got power. Work towards your own ends. His world is crumbling, so it's obvious that it doesn't work the way he sees it.

To model our culture after a failure is a failure in itself. We've got the chance to take the initiative on these ideas to strengthen ourselves as a whole, not just pockets of success here and there. This is our chance to create a new direction in our history. You want positivity? Well here's a phrase that's new for '92. Live Black, Live Strong, Live EQUAL, and Live Long.

Choices

by Roxane Brown

Within the last two months, I have witnessed two friends struggle with the issue of abortion. Each handled her situation differently, yet each experience raised the question of abortion morals, consequences and social reactions.

At 18 years old "Jean," became pregnant by counting her "safe" days after ovulation, to have sex unprotected. Terrified of the reaction of her family and friends, Jean avoided the issue until the fourth month of her pregnancy.

Due to the high risk of an abortion at such a late stage, Jean was required to go into the hospital one day prior to, and stay one day after the abortion (this involved hiding and lying to a lot of people)

Needless to say, abortion was not a "simple" process for Jean at all.

"Alana's" situation is somewhat different. At 19, and a fulltime university student, she had always said if she got pregnant, she would have an abortion rather than jeopardize her education, and suffer the beatdown from her mother.

Alana realized after her period was one week and a half late, that she must be pregnant. One week later, she had an appointment for an abortion. Four days after that, Alana, along with her man, spent 4

hours in a clinic, and was released.

Alana was back to her regular routine by the next day, never missed school, and said she has never looked back.

Guilt, is a part of it, she admits, "but I know realistically that I could never be a mother now, I'm pursuing my educational goals, and I don't have time to cry and grieve all day, I did the best thing for everyone involved, believe me."

I find it almost inconceivable, that in the 90's unplanned pregnancy is such a prominent issue. Especially considering the amount of FREE birth control counselling and availability of contraceptives for youth today. I cannot conceive of people not taking advantage of one of the last "free" offers. The consequences of abortion are lesser for younger girls; however like any operation, there are risks of internal bleeding, tissue remaining in the uterus, P.I.D., pelvic, inflammation, disease, infection, and risks of future attempts at pregnancy. I am not saying abortion is right or wrong, I think there is a case for each side. I have simply realized the relevance of the issue due to my friends' experiences and cannot find a reasonable excuse for this unfortunate, risky and prominent occurrence in 1992.



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