



"Are You Black or Are You Jewish?"

The New Identity Challenge

TWO OR THREE TIMES A WEEK, on the streets of San Francisco, complete strangers walk up to Lisa Feldstein and ask, "What are you?"

She's not Indian, South American, Puerto Rican or—her favorite suggestion—French. The child of a black Christian woman and a white Jewish man from an Orthodox family, she usually gives them a straight answer. But for Lisa, and the estimated thousands of other biracial children of black-Jewish origin, the answers are not so simple.

A large segment of this biracial population was born into the liberalism of the 1960s, whose adherents hoped to achieve, by activism and example, an America in which race and religion would invite no bias. They have not succeeded. Indeed, in the subsequent three decades, the ideal has shifted more than once away from color-blindness toward racial and ethnic identification—stranding these black-Jewish offspring in hostile territory.

From all over the country, we found individuals willing, even eager, to describe their lifelong struggles to define themselves. Often, and movingly, they report childhoods spent in confusion, and adulthoods spent negotiating the polarized alliances of their birth.

But at this moment in America, they also find themselves with another choice. It is a choice evolving into a national grassroots movement of "multiracial pride," an attempt to assert all parts of the self as equally valid. They have organized nationally to add a "multiracial" category to the year 2,000 census—their option in the last census was "other"—and political and cultural groups have begun operating both online and face to face in cities throughout the country. A retreat for multiracial Jewish families is being planned for November at the Jewish

Retreat Center in Falls Village, Connecticut; and, in the company of black Jews by descent (Ethiopian), adoption, or conversion, they formed last year the Alliance of Black Jews. Organizer Robin Washington, the son of a Jewish woman and a black man, says of his own identification: "[I'm] one hundred percent of both."

These individuals defy the dictates of history, politics and simple appearance, and their stories illuminate the fracturing biases of a society that is not ready for them. But even as they demand recognition, the question arises: Does the multiracial movement add yet another allegiance to the list demanded by their social and political communities; or, in an increasingly multiracial country, does "their very existence," as one observer suggested, "change society"?

"Tannish Skin and a Gigantic Jewish Nose"

The legacy of the black-Jewish child is heavy: claimed by Judaism for her Jewish mother, sometimes rejected by Jews for the color of her skin, labeled as black by the age-old "one drop rule," embodying in herself the uneasy and sometimes violent social interface between two groups that have both admired and disdained each other.

In the late 1990s, these children, now in their twenties and thirties, are coming into adult consciousness of race in a climate that is in many ways much colder toward the black-Jewish pairing than when they were conceived. (It is similarly complex for those who adopt, marry, or convert across traditional color lines.) Indeed, the debris from the explosion of ethnic pride is still settling. Whether it's about rioting in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn, clashes over Louis Farrakhan's claims of

by Sarah Blustein



extraordinary Jewish participation in the slave trade, or the self-segregated lunch tables at colleges across the country, the basic question asked of these racially and religiously mixed people is: Are you black or are you Jewish? The message, as one woman put it, is, "either you're with us or against us."

People interviewed from all regions of the United States spoke of the ways they respond to this question, and of identities shaped by the complex constructions of adult politics and emotions. Lisa Feldstein recalls family lore about her father's two brothers, one of whom sat *shiva* for him when he married a black woman, her mother. "The one that decided he was dead," she says in Lise Funderberg's recent book *Black, White, Other*, "was upset that my mother was black; the other brother was more upset that she wasn't Jewish." Variants on her story are common, as are tales of rocks thrown and doors slammed by blacks in the faces of multiracial people whose allegiances they considered split. The definitions—and the rejections—come from all sides, echoes not only of culture and history, but of a deep confusion over race that had its first voice in their homes.

"A lot of times parents of mixed kids try to raise their kids with a non-racial ethnic identity," says Jan Weisman, who studies the Amerasian children of Thai women and American soldiers stationed in Thailand. "They try to pass on this idealistic idea to the kids, which does not prepare them for life. . . . Parents of mixed kids are generally quite out of touch with what the experiences of the children really are." (A number of those we spoke with, like Weisman, have carried their interest in questions of identity and race into their professional careers.)

Weisman herself was raised by her black mother (her white, Jewish father quickly out of the picture) in the predominantly black south side of Chicago in the 1960s and 1970s. She says she greatly resembles her Jewish father—"tannish skin and a gigantic Jewish nose"—a clear liability in that racially-charged environment. She recalls being shot at, spit at and stoned by students on the way to school because "white people in general were seen as the enemy." Rejecting her daughter's experience, however, and shunning the terminology of the time, mulatto, her mother insisted she was black.

But if her mother wanted her to be black in the street, she also had other dreams for her daughter. Because of the Jewish reputation for being brainy, Weisman's mother prohibited her from checking the "religion" boxes on school forms—"she was

holding out for me to be Jewish. I was a good student in school and she was always talking about how I had got it from my father," she recalls. "I was a Negro child who happened to be half Jewish. She never quite explained how it worked."

Melissa Patrick Smith was born in the late 1960s, the daughter of a Jewish mother and a black father. She grew up in an otherwise white home after her mother married a white Jewish man and raised a family. "I wore my hair in an Afro up until I was old enough to take care of it myself," she says. "That was mom's rule, because she didn't know how to take care of it herself."

As the only multiracial person in her family, Smith recalls an atmosphere of denial around the question of race—a silence similar to that which surrounds religion in some interfaith households, or which shrouds Holocaust experiences in some survivor families.

The 29-year-old speaks easily now, but recalls a more difficult time. "For a period I was very angry at my parents because I felt they didn't provide me with any real tools to deal with a lot of the shit that's out there, the racism. . . . One explanation that I had from my mother—it kind of makes me chuckle—she told me to tell kids, 'Sticks and stones will break my bones.' Or she would say, 'When people stare, they're just curious.' . . . We never talked about the fact that I was multiracial. . . . It was something that clearly made my parents uncomfortable."

Even when parents were very clear in their guidance, however, their black-Jewish offspring still report confusion, for their family structure was not reflected in the outside world. "Growing up, I was given very clear messages by my black mother that regardless as to how I identified myself, society and people in general would treat me as a black female," says 26-year-old Kim Buxenbaum of Crown Heights, Brooklyn, the daughter of a Jewish man and a black woman. "She'd say, 'You can consider yourself anything you want in here, but the minute you step out that door, . . . the fact that your father is white is not going to make one bit of difference.'"

Buxenbaum has recently finished her doctoral dissertation in clinical psychology at Rutgers University on "Racial Identity Development and Its Relationship to Physical Appearance and Self-Esteem in Adults With One Black and One White Biological Parent." In it, she explores identity splits such as she experienced growing up. The schism, she found, was quite common—36% of her subjects indicated different public and



Lisa
Feldstein

**"The minute you
step out that door,
the fact that your
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bit of difference."**



Kim
Buxenbaum with
her parents



private identities. Family attitudes, she found, were most influential in determining a child's racial and ethnic identity. Social factors pulled in second.

Tension around the issue of identity for black-Jewish offspring seems highest on college campuses, where clashes over racial and ethnic politics commonly erupt—in the classroom, the lunchroom or the dormitory. As a freshman on the Rhode Island University campus, where she was a student, Smith told members of the black student organization she was becoming involved in that her mother was Jewish. "It was strange," she muses about the effects of this admission. "I'm a friendly person, and I'm nice, and I've always gotten along with people, [but] when I joined the African-American student group, I had the most difficult time building relationships. . . . [The leaders of the group] really sent the message to me that they didn't want me around."

Smith says that even when she organized a chapter of the national Society Organized Against Racism on campus, she was joined by some groups of color but was told by the black student group "that they prefer not to work on things with white people." Suddenly, the one-drop rule was reversed: one drop of "white blood" excluded her from black society.

Elinor Tatum was on the overwhelmingly white St. Lawrence University campus only a day or two when a black student cornered her at lunch and starting testing the boundaries of her black identity. She recalls his asking, "So you don't have a lot of black friends here, do you? How are you paying for college? With a scholarship? Student loans?"

"I had a choice of being black on campus and associating with 60 people, or being myself and associating with everybody," says Tatum, whose mother is white and Jewish and whose father, Wilbert Tatum, publishes the New York black advocacy newspaper *The Amsterdam News*.

For the black-Jewish college student, these types of race politics present what may be an artificial—but nonetheless rigid—boundary between being black and "not black." All things, in this choice, are not equal. This is the 1990s, after all, when the objective observer can see that "Jewish" doesn't have a spectacular draw. Marriage between Jews, a Council of Jewish Federations study told us in 1990, is down to 50%. (Even announcing an intention to marry a Jew draws charges—from Jews and non-Jews alike—of both parochialism and elitism.)

And CJF researcher Jeffrey Sheckner reports that the statistic everybody really wants to know—and that he doesn't—is how many black Jews there are in this country.

The pressures in the black community, meanwhile, are intensifying. Recent graduates testify that hyphenating a black identity is not often encouraged: a conservative black man is approached on the street by fellow black students and called "white boy;" a black woman who straightens her hair reports being shunned.

The Halcyon 1960s: When *Loving* Prevailed

The irony is that it was such rigid definitions of race that the parents of these black-Jewish offspring were confronting in the 1960s. It was a moment of innocent ideals, as some recall it, when according to the liberal line the difficulties of their children's interracial, interreligious parentage were supposed to evaporate. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, black-white births were at a high of 2.5% of all births in 1968, when the statistics began to be compiled, compared with just over 1% in 1988. Even some parents, recalling decisions made three decades ago, will admit to a political shading.

"Many still see a racially mixed marriage as a gesture of defiance against law and society," proclaimed a New York Times editorial in June 1967. The occasion, marking its 30th anniversary next spring: the Supreme Court ruling, in the case of *Loving v. Virginia*, that states could no longer outlaw miscegenation. "As legal barriers fall and society adopts a more tolerant attitude," the Times continued, "young people of all races will see marriage as an expression of confidence in the future, not revolt against the past. Love will then be truly color blind."

Jane Lazarre, a Jewish woman and author of the early feminist tract *The Mother Knot*, married her black husband Douglas in the late 1960s and raised two sons with him. She recalls being taught explicitly by her New York Communist parents to be color-blind. In her newly published book, *Beyond the Whiteness of Whiteness*, she writes of a time "when the Communist Party was trying to eradicate racism from its ranks, when you could be brought up on charges (before a party tribunal) for ordering a 'black and white' soda. 'We are all the



Elinor Tatum
with her parents

"You almost had to feel guilty," reflects Lazarre about her youth, "if you didn't like someone who was a different race."



Jane Lazarre

Jewish Mothers, Black Children



Ruth McBride with her 13 children, and with her son James

IN A RECENT FLOOD OF BOOKS about multiracial identity, Jewish mothers struggle to become part of the world of color in which their children live. Writes Jane Lazarre about the first of two sons she had with her black husband, "In the innocent, exultant power of the first day of a first and wanted pregnancy, I realized that I—my body and self—was no longer exactly white." From that moment on, she, and others, spent years in the effort, as Maureen Reddy called it, of *Crossing the Color Line*.

Dreadlocked Mom

Twenty-four-year-old Kimani Fowlin, a dancer and choreographer, graduated college in 1990. She keeps a framed photograph from that day on her desk at work. Fowlin wears a black robe, accented by a strip of Kente cloth. Father, on one side, beams. Mother and daughter, both bronze-skinned, wear their hair in cascades of dreadlocks. Says Fowlin:

"My father is Jamaican and my mother is Jewish. They met in the sixties. . . . Ever since I was very young, Mom has been pro-black. It's a weird situation; she hates being white. She hasn't become black—she can't. Her skin color seems kind of dark, but it's because she uses Sudden Tan. . . . She does not like the white race.

So basically, she was the black influence. My dad was the more white one in the family. Very interesting. But she's a very angry person and just hates the injustices of what Whites have done to Blacks constantly and still do. . . . She finds beauty in the black race in every aspect, like physically: the big nose, the big lips. . . . I wish I had videotapes so I could show you how we communicate and how within a public situation—say we're with a group of black people—Mom will take on this black persona. She fools people all the time. To me, she doesn't look black, but she's got the attitude."

—From *Black, White, Other*, by Lise Funderburg (William Morrow, 1994)

The Only Place to Stay

Ruth McBride, born Rubel Dwajra Zylska in 1921, grew up in a family of Orthodox Jewish, Polish immigrants in rural Virginia, where they ran a grocery store. Her mother, partly paralyzed, was a loyal housewife. Her father "would call [her] by any name and make fun of her disability," McBride recalls. "His marriage was a business deal for him. He only wanted money." Considered "low" among Jews "because we dealt with shvartses," taunted in school as a "Christ killer," and sexually abused by her father, Ruth fled for New York, where she married a black man and

lived out her days a Baptist. "My family," she told her son James in an interview, "mourned me when I married your father." She continued:

"If there was one thing Tatch [Ruth's father] didn't like more than gentiles, it was black folks. And if there was one thing he didn't like more than black folks in general, it was black men in particular. So it stands to reason that the first thing I fell in love with in life was a black man. . . . None of the boys in school would even bother with me. So after a while I had me my own friend, [who was black], and he didn't care that I wore secondhand clothes or was Jewish. He never judged me. That's the first thing I like about him, in fact that's what I like about black folks all my life: They never judged me. . . . They just said, 'Come as you are.' . . .

"There was no turning back after my mother died. I stayed on the black side because that was the only place I could stay. . . . With whites it was no question. You weren't accepted to be with a black man and that was that. They'd say forget it. Are you crazy? A nigger and you? No way. They called you white trash. That's what they called me."

—From *The Color of Water: A Black Man's Tribute to His White Mother*, by James McBride (Riverhead Books, 1996)

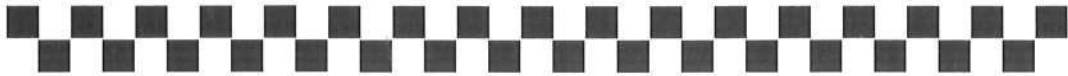
The "Shame" of Belonging

Raised by her New York Jewish communist parents to be color-blind, Jane Lazarre became a teacher of black literature, the wife of a black man and the mother of two biracial sons. In her new book she writes:

"I am the distant cousin of Holocaust victims, the child of an immigrant Jew, the daughter-in-law of a woman who remembers her grandmother telling stories of her childhood in slavery, the mother of two young Black men who are the fifth free-born generation of people enslaved for fourteen generations.

"All this is my history and I come from all of this. When I walk through the white world, I am a white woman . . . who is not looked at with suspicion or fear or even hatred when I walk down a beautiful ocean beach in New England or northern California where my children's brown bodies instantly stand out differently than does mine, their skins beautiful and rich brown against the water and sand. I am an ordinary American woman protected by this whiteness, . . . and I am weighted down with the transforming shame this knowledge brings.

—From *Beyond the Whiteness of Whiteness: Memoir of a White Mother of Black Sons*, by Jane Lazarre (Duke University Press, 1996)



same, there are no differences between people,' was the weird non sequitur in response to any childish notice of color differences among strangers or friends. We were taught to sing, 'You can get good milk from a brown-skinned cow, the color of the skin doesn't matter anyhow.'"

"You almost had to feel guilty," she reflects in an interview, "if you didn't like someone who was a different race."

Lazarre may be an extreme example, but there are many other offspring of liberal parents who had hoped to pass over into a colorless world.

Lisa Feldstein, whose San Francisco home is a far cry from the Spanish Harlem apartment in New York where she grew up, speaks of her father's involvement in the Civil Rights movement, of a childhood spent going to marches, singing "We Shall Overcome" at home. She says her parents made no distinction between the Holocaust and slavery or any other tragedy of human history. "These were all part of greater wrongs that had to be righted," she says. "It was all one big piece."

Among those for whom this idealism was particularly strong were Jewish women. Jews comprised up to a half of those going south for 1964's Freedom Summer and other major civil rights efforts, and women comprised about one third, writes Debra Shultz in her recently completed history Ph.D. dissertation on Jewish women's participation in the Civil Rights movement in the South. "It seems reasonable to assume," she continues, "that many of those anonymous white women volunteers were Jewish. . . . [C]learly their primary impetus was to be part of a democratic movement to fight racial injustice."

Anecdotal evidence and government statistics on black-white offspring indicate that interracial coupling and marriage in that era were primarily between black men and white women. "Intensely focused on white racism, utterly unaware of racism against Jews . . ." Shultz quotes one of her sources, who went South to work for civil rights, as saying, "I felt only shame at the label—Jew girl from Brooklyn—and at the stereotype—hypocrite, liberal in public but won't bring him home to meet the family. I determined not to be like the others; not to be like myself."

Reflecting, with more than two decades of hindsight, on her decision to live in a multiracial family, Jane Lazarre admits she didn't anticipate the racial tensions that would so quickly re-emerge. "Racially it was a time of great hope," she says. "It was

a vision that everybody shared, that we would be able to move past race . . . a vision that I had of raising happy children, both in terms of gender and race, as free as possible to be who they were."

Who these children were to become, however, was much more complicated than the liberal rhetoric of the day. It was also more complicated than the words, like "mulatto" and "mixed race," that came to describe them. As primary caretakers, the mothers of these black-Jewish children quickly learned that their idealism didn't easily apply to real life: in day-to-day activities, politics broke down and became personal. Often, they had to compromise the ideal of color-blindness in order to locate themselves in an environment in which their children would be accepted—which often ended up being in a black community.

Such compromises were particularly demanded by a racial-charged climate, which erupted quickly out of the decade's earlier universalism. By the time the Supreme Court ruled in the Loving case, the impulse toward racial and ethnic segregation had already resurfaced. A strongly separatist black pride movement and Israel's 1967 victory in the Six Day War—a spur to Jewish pride—not only created a rift in the black-Jewish alliance of the Civil Rights movement, but began to pit the twin aspects of these interracial, interreligious children against each other.

"In the seven years I'd been with Roi," recalled writer and teacher Hettie Jones (née Cohen) about her Civil-Rights era marriage to black militant and playwright Amiri Baraka (né LeRoi Jones) in *How I Became Hettie Jones*, "I'd watched the loosening of what would one day be called 'black rage.' I knew it could turn on me but that was part of the risk and I hadn't imagined how much. Now some people were beginning to say that hypocritical Roi talked black but married white. Others, more directly, said he was laying with the Devil."

Indeed, Jones' surprise (and the current media's sentimentalism) notwithstanding, the black-Jewish alliance of the 1960s demanded a certain denial about the level of hostility that had existed in earlier decades. For even as blacks and Jews were thrown together, categorically, in the margins of American society, they were separated by an economic and social differentiation that bred hostility.

In the opening pages of his 1988 book *Broken Alliance*, Jonathan Kaufman cites a 1948 article in *Commentary* maga-



Lisa Feldstein and her younger sister Michelle

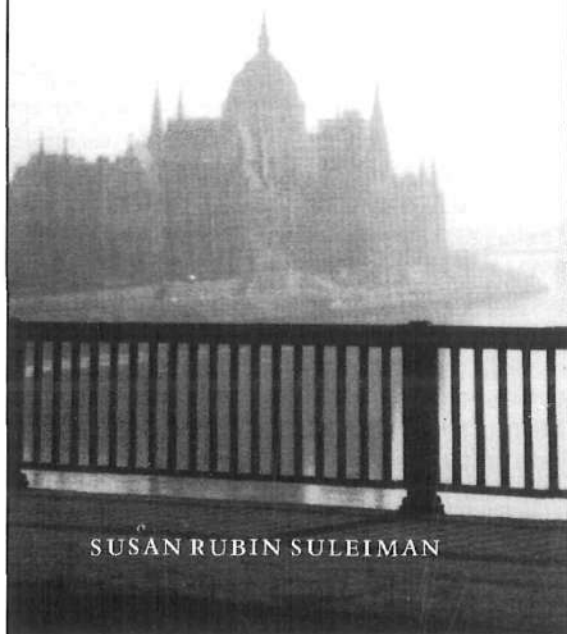
"It was a vision that everybody shared, that we would be able to move past race."



Anne Ludden with her son Cullain

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zine by James Baldwin stating, "The Negro identifies himself almost wholly with the Jew. The more devout Negro considers that he is a Jew, in bondage to a hard taskmaster and waiting for a Moses to lead him out of Egypt."

Proof, in the nostalgic vein, of a historic alliance. But just two paragraphs later, in passages Kaufman omits, Baldwin clarifies: "This same identification . . . serves, in contemporary actuality, to implement an involved and specific bitterness." Jews in Harlem, he tells us, will trade with blacks, but take advantage of them, and therefore are hated. But the bitterness is deeper. "When the Negro hates the Jew as a Jew he does so partly because the nation does and in much the same painful fashion that he hates himself. . . . Just as a society must have a scapegoat, so hatred must have a symbol," he concludes. "Georgia has the Negro and Harlem has the Jew."

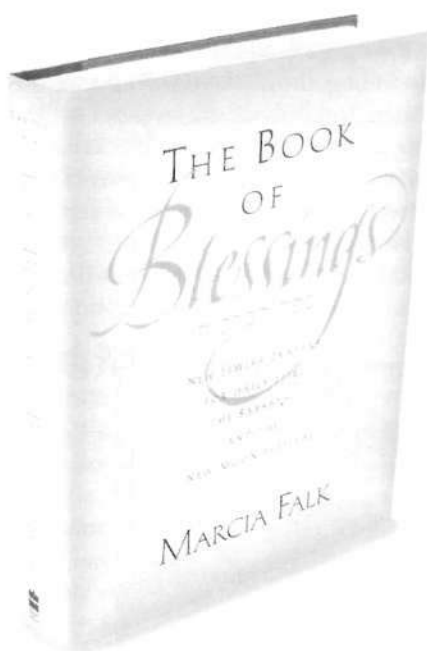
"There's My Box. There's Me"

The perfect synthesis of the universalist vision of the mid-1960s and the ethnic-pride impulses that followed, multiracial identification has been growing on a grassroots level for about a decade, finding its voice as "multiracial pride." These individuals are refusing to choose sides—in the face of social pressures—between their two parental legacies. Triply marginalized—as black, as Jewish, and as multiracial—they are finding a way to a collective belonging.

"Multiracial pride is no less valid than any other pride," proclaims Susan Graham, the founder of Project Race, a Georgia-based organization aimed at adding the "multiracial" category to the national census. This drive, and similar ones on the state level, to amend standardized academic tests and other forms, currently holds the multiracial pride movement's political spotlight.

For Graham, a white Jewish woman who has two children—now 8 and 12—with her black husband, the issue is both personal and political. In 1990 she began to realize the problems her son could face throughout his life when she received the census form and saw there was no category for him. A call to the census bureau finally yielded the answer: he's the race of his mother, white. In

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school, however, when the boy's teacher was asked to classify him for school records, she marked him as the race of his father, who happened to pick the boy up that day.

"My son was white on the census, black at school and multiracial at home," she says. Her son himself went on to testify before a House of Representatives hearing on this issue, by the time her daughter enrolled at school four years later, Georgia had legislated a multiracial slot. When her daughter saw the box, Graham reports, the girl said, "There's my box. There's me."

With almost perfect regularity, respondents recall the trauma of having to check just one of these little boxes.

"Across the board, people tend to want to be identified as both black and Jewish," says Aliyah Baruchin, the daughter of a Jewish man and a non-Jewish Greek woman. Baruchin herself is dating a man from West Africa and is writing a book entitled *Blood Knots: Black-Jewish Intermarriage and the Politics of Love*. "People want to be one hundred percent black and one hundred percent Jewish."

"You Might Not Like This"

In practice, however, these concepts are easier to proclaim than to live. It is with considerable conscious effort that some do manage to create a multiracial environment for themselves. Jan Weisman, who has settled in an academic community in Seattle, says she has no desire to return to her black roots on Chicago's South Side. There, she says, she has to "become black." Instead, she's "developed a strong desire to live in an environment [where] I can be totally open about being mixed. You definitely have to put on an act when you're not with mixed people. . . . Here I can be myself."

Those who succeed work hard at it. They network on the Internet, on campus, through friends. But it does not happen easily or by passive involvement. Nor has the Jewish establishment—if our interviewees' experiences are any indication—responded warmly to their call. Anne Ludden, herself born in the late 1960s to a Jewish mother and white Christian father, is

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raising the three-year-old son she conceived with a black man to be a traditionally observant Jew. Though the boy always wears a hat or *kippah* and *tzitzit* and even at his tender years can manage the laws of *kasbrut* on his own, the family attends a Reform synagogue.

"Reconstructionist and Reform shuls are much more embracing of us as Jews, and tend not to look at the racial background," she says. "I'd love to be able to raise my son in an Orthodox setting, but many Orthodox individuals wouldn't be so comfortable with that."

Feldstein, who isn't gay, nonetheless belongs to a predominantly gay and lesbian synagogue in the San Francisco area; she says that there, questions of racial identity don't come up. "The only tensions I've experienced there have had to do with sexual identity," she says.

And Graham, raised as a Conservative Jew herself, says she simply was not comfortable with "the typical, Conservative suburban synagogues. Where we were comfortable—you might not like this—was with the Jewish humanists."

You might not like this. The question, almost glossed over, persists: why is she apologizing? For marrying a black man? For her children's uncommon heritage? She and her children, like all multiracial children, are among those for whom the "right" to belong—as blacks, as Jews, as Americans—is anything but assumed. Instead of inheriting the richness of belonging to two cultures, she and her family have found themselves entirely

welcome at none.

Many more are those who declare their allegiance to both sides of their identities but indicate, by the clues of their day-to-day affiliations—a style of dress, a manner of speaking, neighborhood of choice, religious practice—a more partisan reality.

Speaking from the newsroom of The Amsterdam News, where she is associate publisher and chief operating officer, the 25-year-old Elinor Tatum proudly announces the balance of black and Jewish culture in her home growing up, about going to synagogue on the High Holidays and to church when she visits her black relatives down South, about her black, Christian father leading the Passover seder. She recalls the generations of slaves, memorialized at her father's family reunions, and the stories of her Jewish aunt, who was liberated from Terezin. She considers herself a "bridge" and a "peacemaker" and proclaims, "I'm not going to let anyone make me—I guess you could put it in terms of citizenship—renounce who I am."

In the political nitty-gritty of black-Jewish relations, however, some of her proclamations, on Louis Farrakhan, for instance, display a slant she seems not to admit. Of his Million Man March, staged last year in Washington, she says, "I'll tell you one thing. It made people stand up and look at him for a moment and say, 'This man has power.' He can be seen as a positive force at times and for other people he is a destructive force. I have



"I was a Negro child who just happened to be half Jewish," says Weisman.
"My mother never quite explained how it worked."

Jan Weisman in a school photograph.

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Monday, Dec. 23 - Thursday, Dec. 26
And for those who can't come to Drisha,
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seen him as both. . . . A lot of what he says is very well documented, in terms of Jews, and a lot of things he quotes are written by Jews."

This same type of split appears in the words of James McBride, whose new book *The Color of Water* tells the story of his Jewish mother's life raising him and his 12 siblings in a black New York community. He declares his strong black identity with the subtitle *A Black Man's Tribute to His White Mother*, and he's got little that's kind to say in its pages about his mother's native Jewish community.

Nonetheless he has absorbed the language of the new movement toward multiracialism, and expresses perhaps its most utopian vision. Having traced in an interview his feeling of being "caught between white and black," and his desire, at one point in his life, to be "all black," he concludes, surprisingly: "I see it as an advantage. I really do. When you're raised by a white woman who is Jewish, one of the things you learn very quickly is that neither whites nor Jews nor blacks have a monopoly on perfection. . . . You learn to use that to your advantage. . . . To let go of the anger."

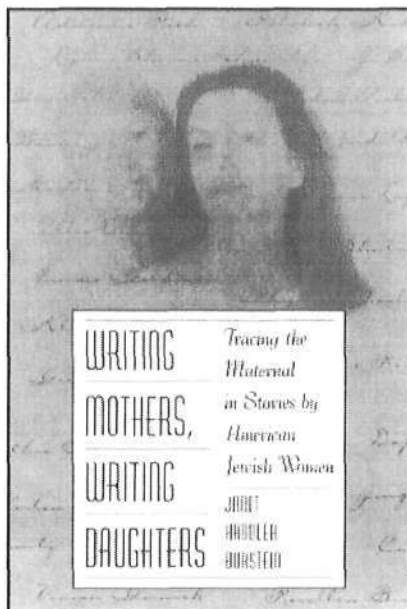
The language of multiracialism is new, its meanings sometimes vague. At times it sounds like rhetoric; at others, like the nascent efforts of a community learning to speak. For these individuals are fighting social forces that would reject their claims of dual citizenship. As Baruchin has found, even on the most superficial level of appearance the multiracial aspect is not always observed. The face of the multiracial individual, she says, is just beginning to be recognizable. ■

Sarah Blustein, recipient of the Newswomen's Club of New York's Front Page Award and a Contributing Editor at the national weekly newspaper the Forward, joins LILITH's staff as Associate Editor with this issue.

Page 13 photos, left to right: (top row) Lisa Feldstein, Adam Lazarre, Jan Weisman; (bottom row) Elinor Tatum, James McBride, Kim Buxenbaum, Khary Lazarre.

JEWISH

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ANZIA YEZIERSKA
Introduction by Gay Wilentz

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