

What is your name?

Stephanie Baldwin

What is your gender?

Female

What ethnicity do you identify as?

African-American

What race do you identify as?

Black

Where were you born?

Miami, FL

Where were your parents born?

Miami, FL

Is your blackness unique or does it have similarities to other ethnicities?

I think it has similarities to others. It has differences too. Food is one thing. A lot of the cuisine is the same. I feel as though, as we go further through generations, we are losing the unity that was present when I was younger. There is certainly a lack of cohesiveness.

Do you feel like your blackness is questioned? If so, what aspects?

I grew up in a segregated neighborhood so I did not feel questioned. I was not integrated until senior high school.

Do you believe there to be an implicit or explicit hierarchy of blackness? i.e. Is Afro-Cuban seen as lower than African-American in society?

I think there is. I think some immigrant communities hold themselves higher than African-Americans. To me, we're all Black.

Did you grow up in a house or apartment?

House

How many people lived there?

6 people

Which of the following rooms were in your living space? Bedroom, Bathroom, Kitchen, Dining Room, Living Room, Den, Foyer, Library, Office, Front Porch, Back Porch, Balcony, Basement, Laundry Room, Front Yard, Back Yard

Bedroom, Bathroom, Kitchen, Living Room, Front Porch, Back Porch, Laundry Room, Front Yard, Back Yard

What activities did you participate or witness in the kitchen or on the porch that is unique to your culture? If you did not have a formal porch, was there a communal space that acted as a porch?

Doing hair. Disposing of grease in a pickle jar, not to reuse, but for the trash. We spent a lot of time on our porch because we didn't have a lot of room. When we woke up, we went outside. We spent a lot of time outside because we were a community. More than this generation.

What type of non-conventional activities did you participate or witness in the kitchen, on the porch? If you did not have a formal porch, was there a communal space that acted as a porch?

We would do our hair in the kitchen.

What is your relationship to water?

I don't see how one could live without water. I have a pool, but I have not been in the pool. But I need water, I need it to be visible. It's comfort. I lived along a canal when I grew up and if I had a choice of a place with water compared to not having water, I would pay extra to be by water. To say I will enter the water, that's different. Water is so peaceful. I spent a lot of time at the beach, but not swimming. I was always a little scared of the water. I was caught in a tide as a kid, so it changed my relationship with water. My uncle had to save me.

A Spectrum of Blackness

Interview with Stephanie Baldwin
by Germane Barnes

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In what spaces do you feel liberated?

I feel liberated or free everywhere in my home. Although, I would not go into my daughter's room. I have that right, but I wouldn't.

In what spaces do you feel restricted?

I don't think I feel restricted anywhere. However, I don't like working and sleeping in the same area. I feel as though these should be separate. I think the bedroom should be for sleeping, not working. The kitchen is another area where I do not feel comfortable. Perhaps the common area as well, my husband spends the most time here so I tend to give into him.

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