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BLACK
C o M M e n t a t o r**

Commentary, analysis and investigations
on issues affecting African Americans
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**Re: By Dissing Palin, Oprah Hurts Obama
Inclusion
By The Reverend Irene Monroe
BlackCommentator.com Editorial Board**

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In the past, Oprah has had presidential hopefuls on her show like Al Gore and George Bush during their 2000 bid. By having both candidates on her show, Oprah not only appeared bipartisan, she also catered to her audience, comprised of both Bush Republicans and Gore Democrats.

When Oprah endorsed Barack Obama, I was excited to see her publicly take a stance politically, something she had never done before. And the historic nature of this presidential election, in my opinion, demands one from all Americans.

In sharing my elation about Oprah publicly endorsing Obama and going on the campaign trail with his friends, both white and black, male and female, I stated that she helps racialize Barack's candidacy, especially in light of Obama presenting himself as a post-racial candidate. While I debated back and forth with friends that it makes sense she would endorse him, irrespective of his color, simply because he's her hometown senator, bringing something fresh to the ticket. Many of my friends felt so, too, was Hillary's run historical, as the first female to run for this position on the Democratic ticket.

I was quickly told by dissenting voices that Obama's race played a profound role, not

only in Oprah's choice for president, but also in using her crossover influence to win him voters.

I penned, "[By Dissing Palin, Oprah Hurts Obama](#)" to provoke thoughts about the intersection of race and gender. And how political pundits have espoused that white women might very well decide the presidential race.

Has anyone cared to poll how African American women are voting? And how *my* demographic electorate might, too, decide the race?

Or is it that women and blacks are categorized in such a way that pollsters as well as political pundits assume that all women are white and all blacks are male?

An irate reader, ignoring the gender issue in my piece, sent me this missive:

"Your most recent opinion piece criticizing Oprah for not interviewing Palin - who disagrees with Clinton's views on almost every issue - has driven me to write. Rather than analyzing why Oprah might not want to give Palin a national forum to spread further lies and her arch-conservative platform, you manage somehow to defend Palin at the expense of Oprah and Obama!"

Sarah Palin on McCain's ticket no doubt excites Republican women. And just as women for Hillary can arguably assert that their candidate is a first, so too, can Palin's. But invisible in this grab for female voters are black women, an important segment of the electorate in this campaign but one that seems to be a non-issue.

Oprah endorsing Obama and not inviting both Hillary and Palin to her TV couch is no doubt her prerogative. But we cannot ignore how her endorsement of Obama has ignited a storm, in my opinion, of angry white women and men, both of whom, out of a sense of white privilege, feel Oprah owes them because of her success.

"ohhhh, what a sad day in oprah land...whites did make you and if you keep spending your white earned money on racists like barack, then you will have to work like the rest of americans, even after retirement....i never liked her anyway...like Palin said...i am not seeking the medias good word...she darn sure doesn't need oprah for anything...keep going oprah...bite the white hands that feed you, " a white male wrote to me.

How much weight do TV celebs really have in endorsing candidates? Are we putting a lot of weight on Oprah solely because of her influence? Or are we putting extra weight on Oprah because both she and Obama are black and her endorsement conjures up fear in some folks, like my neighbor who said, "Blacks are now taking over!"

An African American male wrote me applauding Oprah's stance for not having Palin on her show but he misunderstood mine for raising the issue.

"What puzzles me is why any woman of color would ever think that white women's agendas include them. White women have always used and misled black women for social and political gain. I applaud Oprah for finally acting like a woman of color and denying access to those who would grind African-Americans, especially me, underneath their heels! I'm surprised at you for

insinuating that Oprah owes so much to white women.”

I don't!


However, by Oprah closing off her TV couch to all the candidates, once she publicly endorsed Obama, might impact her ratings. But the real question for me is, do white fear, anger and unease about Obama get transferred onto Oprah because she endorsed him?

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BlackCommentator.com Editorial Board member, the Rev. Irene Monroe, is a religion columnist, theologian, and public speaker. A native of Brooklyn, Rev. Monroe is a graduate from Wellesley College and Union Theological Seminary at Columbia University, and served as a pastor at an African-American church before coming to Harvard Divinity School for her doctorate as a Ford Fellow. Reverend Monroe is the author of [Let Your Light Shine Like a Rainbow Always: Meditations on Bible Prayers for Not-So-Everyday Moments](#). Click on the above link to order now at pre-release pricing. As an African American feminist theologian, she speaks for a sector of society that is frequently invisible. Her website is irenemonroe.com. Click [here](#) to contact the Rev. Monroe.

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