



# ENTREVISTA

Not about to play it safe:  
An interview with Toni Cade Bambara

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*Toni Cade Bambara was born and raised in New York City where she received a B.A. in Theatre Arts from Queens College, 1959, an M.A. in Modern American Literature from City College, 1963. She is the author of several award-winning works: her novel **The Salt Eaters** won The American Book Award in 1981; «the Mama Load», published in **Redbook**, was a finalist for Best American Short Stories of 1978; her guest-edited issue of **Southern Exposure** was cited by The Council of Southern Life and Culture in 1977; her anthology **Tales and Short Stories for Black Folks** was named Outstanding Book of 1972 in juvenile literature by New York Times; her first collection, **Gorilla, My Love**, won the Black Rose Award for Literature from **Encore Magazine** in 1972; her first anthology, **The Black Woman**, published in 1970 and now in its 18th edition, has received several awards from Black women's organizations. Moreover, Ms. Bambara has written several plays and film scripts that have been produced by independents, five books, and 50 articles and stories.*

*Currently free-lancing, Ms. Bambara is completing work on 3 projects: a novel, **If Blessing Comes**, based on the Atlanta Missing and Murdered Children Case; a PBS script based on her story "Raymond's Run"; pre-production development for an independent movie concerning the Senegalese, African-Americans, and other Blacks in the German concentration camps during W.W.II.*

— Barbara Christian has defined Alice Walker as a Southern writer and Toni Morrison as a Northern one, but you yourself glide in and out. You make some absolutely incredible changes of perspective from the urban to the rural areas, from the North to the South. To what do you owe this tremendous versatility?

— I think it's fairly common. Where one is, what kind of voices one hears, or what kind of modes one moves in, Gospel mode, Jazz mode, Blues mode, they all

develop your ear. It's not peculiar to me. In looking at other writers, for example Ishmael Reed, if you look at the body of his work it's very clear when he left Chataanooga, when he left Buffalo, when he was in lower East Side New York, the California novels. I guess it has a lot to do with ear. I certainly have a trained ear, having grown up around people who are Southern, West Indian, Continental African, and certainly grew up around Blues men, Blues people, Jazz people, Gospel folk, so the different voice are familiar to me.

**— Can you notice a change in your own writing when you move from “the sleepy South to the Be-bop North”, as you have put it? Do you notice a change in your attitude while you are writing?**

— I noticed definite change when I moved from New York to Atlanta, a change in pace. For example, in putting the novel *The Salt Eaters*<sup>1</sup> together I was depending on a story I wrote some time ago that was published in the collection *The Sea Birds Are Still Alive*<sup>2</sup> called “The Organizer’s Wife”, and it was the first time I had attempted that voice and that pace, —slow, rural, the narrator as well as the characters. And I guess that story was a kind of rehearsal for *The Salt Eaters* which combines any number of kinds of voices; it's still basically “be-bop”, but it gives the illusion of moving into a gospel mode.

**— You are aware, then, of writing in a particular mode, as you say. For example, Eleanor Traylor has written an interpretation of *The Salt Eaters* as a jazz suite.<sup>3</sup> Do you do this on purpose? Were you aware of writing a jazz suite when you were writing *The Salt Eaters*?**

— When Eleanor Traylor uses the term Jazz Suite, one part of that is device. It is an attempt on her part to make the discussion manageable. So one part is device on the part of the critic. The other part is accurate description in the sense that there is enough about the structure and about the tone and about the relationship or ensemble playing of characters to justify the term jazz suite. But finally that's an invention on the part of the critic who wishes to collaborate with the author. I think it's very creative and it's very respectful. I think she's one of the finest critics around. I've enjoyed the work she's done on James Baldwin, on Margaret Walker, and she did a fabulous piece called “The Fabulous World of Toni Morrison” in which she collaborates with Toni's eye and her sense of fable. And looking at the texture of Toni Morrison's texts, you are doing the fable, a kind of dream memory, and Eleanor adopts the voice, the mode of the author that she's writing about, and I think that that is *so* respectful.

**— I was interested in that in your talk you mentioned that you had worked on a screen-play for *Tarbaby*.<sup>4</sup>**

— I did the first draft for the screen-play for Toni Morrison's novel *Tarbaby*.

She did the second draft, and I'm not sure who is going to be doing the third draft. But the movie is going into production this fall.

**— Did she ask you to do the first draft or did you offer? How did you get involved in doing somebody's else's work?**

— Originally the producer had a number of people in mind, Richard Wesley, Charles Fuller, a number of playwrights who were members of the screen-writers guild and had done work in Hollywood. A number of people he asked said that they were too soft, but there was a tough cookie in Atlanta named Toni Cade Bambara who was also a member of the screen-writers guild. Also there were people who were too busy, but a number of people recommended me, and so we finally met and talked and agreed on a deal.

**— Back on *The Salt Eaters*, you seemed to be very concerned with the idea of “wholeness”, and I relate you there to Alice Walker, and you are also very tied up with “the mud mothers” which I relate to Toni Morrison’s “ancient properties”. You all seem to moving in the same general direction. Do you identify with what critics are calling the “The Black Women’s Renaissance”? Do you feel that you all have common touchstones?**

— Out of the maybe 120 black women writers that get coverage—and that's a small portion of the ones that are producing work in the major press industry and the small press industry as well as a small press community that people are calling now a sub-culture for reasons unbeknownst to me—but out of that group we all certainly derive from a similar tradition; we all are aware of a chorus or a community or voices. We certainly all read each other, we all know each other, some of us grew up together, some of us are friends, some of us talk on the phone, we might travel together in delegations, we might meet each other on the reading and speaking circuit. So we're not unfamiliar with each other. We share ideas, we frequently tip our hats to each other in the texts. So there are certainly some connections, and, too, there are just certain kinds of ideas that are in the air because it's the moment. For example, black women's health, the whole issue that constitutes health. Since the 60s there has been rather wide-spread organizing, particularly in the South of health collectives by black women, like Lily Avery did in Atlanta with the National Black Women's Project which now has three or four chapters, or such as the Southern Rural Network of Black Women which has a very strong health component. The health issue is crucial, and also there has been a lot of work done reviving the importance of midwifery in the homes. A woman named Linda Holms, a marvellous organizer, journalist and poet has been doing a project for about two years now working in Alabama, primarily New Jersey, but all over the place, setting up conferences with midwives, trying to collect that history, trying to put that oral history together. So it's one of those things that's in the air. All of us are involved in

some way or another in some kind of organizing around heath, so it's not odd that you might find any number of books coming out with the same type of stories that tend to hit at that question.

— **When I was in France in April I had the opportunity to listen to Toni Morrison, whom I greatly enjoyed.**

— She's special.

— **Well, I think all of you are. But I asked her about something that she had said in an interview to the effect that the greatest differences that she can see today are between white women writers and black women writers, and I asked her my she thought so. Her answer was that white men write about white men, white women write about their problems with white men, black men write about their confrontations with white men, but black women write about each other. Do you see that? Do you feel that's true? Is it true for you?**

— I think it's a solid answer; it's a precise observation in general. In my own work I write about community.

— **But you write from a woman's perspective very definitely. For example, the end of *The Salt Eaters*, which is tremendously complicated, the woman's perspective...**

— Is always primary, unless, of course, I'm writing a story from a male's point of view such as "The Tender Man".

— **Well, that's part of what I meant about your versatility. You slip in and out of roles so easily.**

— It's called writing. (*Unfortunately the transcript cannot reproduce the delightfully warm laughter that accompanied this remark.*)

— **But not all writers do it as well, is my comment. Do you feel that you are honest when you write from the male's point of view? Can you understand the male?**

— They're not mysterious.

— **Do you think women are?**

— No. Well, yes, but there's a difference between genuine mystery and mere mystification. It's all a mystery finally, but I think the degree to which you are removed from power is the degree to which you are very sharp in your observations of other people, because it's a matter of life and death. Black people understand white people more that white people understand black people because we have to. Women understand men greater than men need be attentive to women because we have to. To that extent, I think, looking at any books at random, the portraits of men

done by women seem to me more solid and more trustworthy than the portraits of women done by men.

— You sound very close to what Alice Walker says: It's just a question of who has been looking at whom for the longest time. Also as I mentioned before, your preoccupation with "wholeness" of the person, of the community, relates you very closely to Alice Walker...

— With any Black writer.

— But you specifically use the word "wholeness", is what I'm saying. You use it several times in *The Salt Eaters* with reference to Velma, Palma, Obie, Minnie, Old Wife, etc.

— Yes, it's a nature motif.

— Do you know what you are looking for when you talk about wholeness? Do you have a very concrete idea of what it means to be whole?

— What it means to have integrity? To have honor, to have health, to have responsibility, yes.

— When you wrote your essay for Mari Evans' book, *Black Women Writers (1950-1980), A Critical Evaluation*, entitled "Salvation is the Issue"<sup>5</sup> you said, "Laughter frequently glazes over the seams of the casing and cliché rage all but seals the very casing I would split and rip off to get at the inner works, to that underlying design that throws open the path to the new age, the new order in which I envision myself blowing a chorus or two in the language of the birth canal and maybe even of the caul." That is, you are looking for a new way of writing, of expression, and I assume that is what you are trying to do in *The Salt Eaters*...

— No. I'm looking at some of the writers who are coming along now, particularly women who have done a lot of travelling, who may have linguistic backgrounds, and who come at the tradition from another angle. It's not that they are concerned so much with originality as with renewing the tradition, but they've got something else. There's something new that's happening because they belong to a generation that came of age after desegregation. So for so many years freedom, and protest literature, the protest voice was the key voice. And then a generation rose up where that's no longer the major issue, not that anything's been solved, but that is no longer the theme, and they are doing something else. And I think what they are doing is leading us past or leading us through this last quarter of the twentieth century to something that's up ahead. We don't have a vocabulary for talking about it yet, but I'm very aware in reading particularly some of the new young poets that are around the South that they're after another vision; they're after something new, something particular. They're bringing something down the canal.

**— Do they know what they're doing? Or are they just looking?**

— I don't know; that's the last question in the world I would raise with a writer, "Do you know what you are doing?" meaning that the text is the answer, and if it's not there, the question is not meaningful. That is to say, when you have the text, there are several ways to evaluate its significance whether you're a critic or a reader: its value to the reader, its value to the moment, its value to history... and also its value to the artist at the moment of creation. As a reader, I'm struck by that first, and talking about these young poets coming up, there is something about the process of their having done this that is the answer to that question. It's a quest, it's a search, and the text is the question and the search and the answer. Another way to evaluate the significance, and it's really hard, is to evaluate the relationship of the text to itself.

**— You are talking about process then. The process is the answer not the product. That's a very woman-oriented sort of evaluation.**

— That's the Black Aesthetic. The proposition of music is also about the process not the product. It's not going to be the same. We do "Body and Soul" this morning and then Colman Hawkins does it tomorrow afternoon, it's not going to be the same. Even if we have the sheet music and the notations, it's not going to be the same. I can't get at this business of evaluating the text in terms of itself except to say that the story, or the situation, or the thing exists somewhere in the sound barrier, in the ether, I don't know, and it confronts you, beckons you, come and tell my story and you either shy away or you go ahead and do it. So, when people say, for example, what is your first concern when you're writing or having finished writing, the audience? the readership? No, your first concern is the story's relationship to itself: did you get it right? And it's almost not your relation to it, but is this the shadow story that came to you and did you get it right? Do those characters sort of nod; does the language sort of sparkle?

**— The language is definitely impressive in *The Salt Eaters*. The first time I read the novel, to be honest, I plowed through it. I said to myself, "I am going to read *this book*" and I read *that book*. Once finished I found that I was glad that I had read *that book*. Yet a year later, a whole year of study later, I pick up the book and I find it delightful.**

— That's a typical experience. After the first version of Eleanor Traylor's critical discussion of *The Salt Eaters* called "My Soul Looks Back in Wonder", which was published in the *First World*, I went and sat down and read the book again. Every time I read it, it is an act of discovery, but I particularly enjoyed it once she had organized that discussion around it.

**— Oh, really? You mean you get things back from the critic?**

— Sure, that's what a good critic does. A good critic feeds it back to you and

tells you how it's read, tells you how it is threaded, how they thread and read it. Then you can go back to it. Because you are not consciously thinking, "I will now set up a scene that does this and that..."

**— It is very complicated. I read it and admired you all the way through it, but I swear it was difficult! It was much better after I read Gloria T. Hull's discussion<sup>6</sup> who tried to divide it up a little bit and made more sense of the relationship of characters in it.**

— Both of those discussions together make a lot of sense: the notion of structuring a piece like a jazz suite, five tone scale, I mean, that device is very shrewd, very helpful; and then, Gloria's look at the circles which, of course, is really how it's put together.

**— Is this very helpful?**

— It allows me to read it again in a new way.

**— When Gloria Hull says correctly that you deal with everything in that book, and I think that practically every socio-political movement is mentioned in it, and you bring so many concerns of activists on all levels into it, she criticizes you for not bringing in anything about the gay movement.**

— It's a very accurate criticism, very sound.

**— You take that as helpful?**

— Certainly, she's absolutely right.

**— You were unaware of this, then? This omission was not on purpose? This was not something you don't want to touch?**

— No, I was not aware of it's having not been there. And I'm even more amazed that it was not there since I'm very much part of the gay movement in the sense that I'm very supportive of what they're doing; in the sense that they bring to the whole question of how many frameworks and how many perspectives do we need in order to understand how this stuff is put together in order to dismantle it. I don't know of anything that's more important than the feminist analysis and the gay analysis, because you can be as clear as you want about race and class, but you will not have it, you will not have all the prongs together. Once you get the sex-gender-caste pathologies, you're a lot clearer, because the class thing gets a lot clearer. Then once you get sexual preference, or the gay politic analysis, then you're really a lot clearer. And when I say I'm very much involved, I mean I don't know anybody that's keeping a closer watch, particularly on what lesbian critics are doing with texts, because I think they have a greater vested interest, a greater perspective, a more trustworthy perspective of the whole patriarchal oppression. And I think also they

have a greater vested interest in dismantling it, in which case they have a lot to teach, and I very much pay attention to it. So the fact that I left it out is amazing to me.

— **I admire your openness. You know you might have been defensive about the whole thing.**

— Oh, no, I'm very serious about improving. It feels good.

— **I very much enjoyed your anthology *The Black Woman*<sup>7</sup>, read it cover to cover, but after all that was compiled 15 years ago. Have those concerns changed? Do you see that black women are still concerned about the same things? They must be somewhat since the book is now in its 18th edition.**

— I'm very concerned. As the editor I am, of course, pleased that the book is moving and the royalties are still coming in, but as a member of the community I'm alarmed, because that book by now should just be considered an interesting historical curiosity —“Oh, yes, things started, doors opened because of this book, there was a market out there”— and fine, and that should be the end of that discussion. The fact that it is still used and is still startling in some quarters is very scary. I really have not looked at that book in years so I really can't get too specific, but the book that I had meant to do, I may still do yet because no one has quite done it. And that was that originally I had wanted to pull together position papers on various women's groups, such as the women's caucus within the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, the Third World Women's Alliances position papers, those of the women of SNCC, and so forth. That was the kind of book I originally wanted to do. There were lots of reasons mitigated against it, but I think it's extremely important now for someone to pull those old position papers together, as well as new things, things that are coming out of the Southern Rural Network, for example, out of the National Coalition of Women of Color. There's a massive organizing effort, broad-based organizing, going on now and someone needs to start pulling those papers together. The concerns have not changed. No. Racism is still a problem, sexism is still a problem. We're still at the bottom: 75% of us are still in poverty; our children are still growing up in poverty; those kind of issues are fairly chronic.

— **You write at the beginning of the issue of *Southern Exposure* entitled “Southern Black Utterances Today” of which you were Special Issue Editor that “Blk riting is not always and only about writing. Frequently it's about flexin, clenchin, arresting mad underdevelopers. Sometimes it's smothered incense.”<sup>8</sup>**

— I think I was trying to demystify the notion of literature (*this last word pronounced with a heavy, false British accent*), the notion that when people produce a magazine, the first question is, is it a literary magazine? and you try get a little bit clear about that because that makes you eligible for funding. If it's a literary magazine, then you can get literary funding. But the question arises, “Who's defining

what as what? Or who has the right to define, who has the privilege?" I think in that statement at the beginning of the magazine I was simply trying to cut through that notion, because many people that we approached, certainly people that I approached, —I co-edited that with Leah Wise— felt that they were not writers. You know, it's very hard to say "a writer is a person who writes", if the image of "writer" is somebody who runs around with cashmere sweaters and an Irish setter and a secretary. Somehow there is this image of the writer. So many people who had really fine stuff that I wanted and I felt belonged in there had to be told that "writing is when you say so and so and you put it down on paper; that's writing and you are a writer." And the statement was also addressed to lots of people who would pick up the magazine and expect to see the names that they generally associate with journals of literature.

**— Do you define yourself that way? Are you a "literary person"?**

— In my neighborhood, particularly when I lived in Atlanta, people identified me as a writer, and they would come over to the house and say, "Well, what all do you write?" And I'd say, "Well, I write poems, and essays..." And they'd say, "Well, do you write protest letters?" "Yes, I do". "Can you go down to the corner to Miss Margaret's and help her write a letter to her nephew?" "Yes, I can." A writer is a writer. And they would pay me, and bring by Jell-o, fix my car, or shingle my roof, and I was the neighborhood writer. You want to sell your Ford wrecker? Fine, and I would write the contract. Give me a piece of paper and a pencil. That's what a writer does: a writer writes.

**— You became known as a writer first as a short story writer and you have said that you really enjoy the short form even though it is not very orthodox to say so. You are now involved in writing another novel, but will you go back to the short story?**

— I'm always writing short stories. I like the form, I like the size, I like the fact that it makes a modest appeal for attention. There's no big fan-fare. It's just a little story, so you can do a lot of things, you can get a lot of things done. I also like the short story because there's a very particular readership that won't hang with a novel but they'll read a short story. Most of the feedback, the most voluminous feedback that I get from readers is whenever a story appears in *Redbook*. I get all these letters commenting on the story, so I really do like that form and I stick with it.

**— Are you compiling a new collection, or do you just keep writing until you feel that it's ready to go?**

— There are some stories that will go out some time this winter to journals, to magazines... There are times when you've written yourself out of the novel and you need time to let things percolate. Some people then choose to sit around and gnaw their fingernails and call it writer's block and go see the therapist. I prefer to simply

change tables and work on something else. If someone calls up and says "Well, we've got a new issue of so and so, do you have any stories?" I like to have one ready. So then I'll start working on the story and the novel or the script or whatever waits. However, if I'm working on a script that tends to be all-consuming because TV and movie people want it right away, so that becomes a steady kind of work. But I'm always working on something. In fact, most writers I know are always working on any number of things for the simple reason that you have to.

— In your essay "Salvation is the Issue" you state that while working on the TV film on the life and work of Zora Neale Hurston, you set up a four-by-eight-foot slab of Sheetrock in the yard atop three sawhorses and worked out the scenes on butcher paper using different color pens. Did you actually write the script that way?

— Yeah, and I really do recommend it. I ran a workshop not long ago with a number of writing students who had been absolutely locked, I meant the way your joints can get locked by terror, having taken course after course of writing courses, with maybe two or three teachers, and so they were constantly writing for these maybe two or three sensibilities, and they were just all locked up. They were absolutely in bondage in terms of rules — "You can't shift the point of view" and "You mustn't forget the relationship of time and place", and they were just bound up. So, we cleared the desk, and I brought in a bunch of butcher paper and we just brainstormed for a while, just walking around the room, just walking around the table, just writing. We decided to do something collaborative so we started an opera, or something, and everybody just wrote, and walked around the room and looked at what someone else wrote, and changed that scene.

There was a seduction scene that took place in an art gallery that I had set up and the woman's dialect was very hip, but I left the man's dialect kind of weak. So the men came over and they'd straighten up that dialect, and really fix it up. And it was wonderful, I mean, many people felt very much released. They found a new way to work. I highly recommend working on large pieces of paper anyway, if it's a large piece of work, because it's just hard to make the work manageable if you're doing a script or a novel. Some people work with three or four notebooks for the various chapters or the various versions. I just happen to like to see it all at once, so I like a large table with piece of paper. And in working on the Zora script it seemed right to work outside.

— Has that been aired yet?

— No, it was never finished.

— What happened to it?

— Many of us were brand new at what we were doing; it was the first time the producer had produced, the director had directed, and the first time I had done a

script, but it just got dropped, primarily because I got caught up in the Atlanta Missing and Murdered Children situation because a girlfriend of ours was missing. So that got me off the project, and as I say when you work with media you have to give up all your time. You must keep checking in, people knock on your door, etc., and I could not keep up that pace, but it may come around again.

**— You are now working on a script for a movie about the Senegalese, African-Americans, and other Blacks in the German concentration camps during World War II. Is that still in the works?**

— Yes. I've been wanting to do something for a long time about the numbers of black people who were lost in the camps. No one ever talks about it.

**— I have never even read anything about it.**

— It's not a matter of reading. In the past seven years I have not found anything in print that I can use, I mean that speaks to me really. But I remember growing up, listening to folks (there were always meetings at my house) who had been in vaudeville in the thirties and wound up in Europe and got caught in France during the occupation, or people I know, my uncle for example, who had deliberately gone to Germany because he had a child there from World War I, and he got caught. If you go to Germany, of course, there are black people in Germany, there have been black people there since the eighteenth century. And they thought they were citizens, until the rise of the Nazi party, so they were all under house arrest, and were afraid to leave their homes. Many of them wound up in the camps and died. Lots of people, again vaudevillians from the States as well as black people in Hungary who were part of the travelling circuses, took refuge in Denmark, only through that embassy they and the diplomats got rounded up. So I'm doing two things on that; one is a book and one is a movie, and they don't have too much to do with each other. It's not the novelization of the movie or the movie version of a book; they're just two different kinds of projects. One is a movie that I intend to do some time this year, and the other is a novel that keeps nudging me up at night so I'm sure I'll get started on it sometime this month probably.

**— Are you close to finishing your novel on the Atlanta Missing and Murdered Children?**

— Yes. *If Blessing Comes* should go into copy production this spring and should be out next fall.

**— Did you get started on this novel for personal reasons, as you said before that you had a friend who was missing?**

— No, I got involved in this because I am a community worker, and I work in the streets and I was very much aware that something was going on, and that attention was not being paid to it.

**— Isn't it very hard for you to be so caught up in such an emotional issue and yet be objective enough to write a novel about it?**

— Well, I've never felt any obligation to be objective or even reasonable. What concerned me about the pain of doing that book was not being objective, or reasonable or even fair, was that I didn't want to produce a "chill-out", because that doesn't get anything done. And it was very hard because there were many people who actually betrayed the city, other friends of mine, so that made it very difficult. The real agony of doing a book like that is that you have to stay with it, and that everyone must be taken into account, and I don't want to hustle anybody, which is one of the reasons it's a novel and not a documentary. Telling the truth in a country where there are no truth-speaking traditions that are respected is extremely hard.

**— It's just that it's so recent, and people seem to find that some kind of distancing is needed to get it all in, to get it all together — though maybe that's the whole -male-academic attitude— while you have been so close in to what was happening in Atlanta.**

— It requires somebody very close because the highly selective police-media fiction that has been accepted as the version of the truth can only be broken open by somebody who is very close. Atlanta is a very interesting town, as any town is; it's a wonderful place, that has a very heavy p.r. It's image is extremely important, being the third busiest convention city in the country, and many people who have lived there all their lives, fifth and sixth generation Atlantans, otherwise very coherent, very intelligent, fall under the spell of the p.r. and will accept that version —I don't just mean of the case— they will accept any version of the city in spite of their own experience. That's very scary. But in some ways it's very peculiar to convention towns. For example, there was a time when Maynard Jackson, who was a very beloved mayor but isn't always under control, also began to believe the p.r. And he spoke in Cleveland, Ohio, saying there were jobs, and boom prosperity and construction. People came by the droves into Atlanta with their suitcases, ready to move into the city! And it became a tremendous burden on the city hall workers, which of course was where they showed up, and all of it was based on this compelling talk that Mayard had done because he was under the spell of the p.r.! You know, this is getting kind of weird!

**— Is Random House going to publish this novel also?**

— Yes, this will be a Ventures paperback.

**— Did they just say "Fine, go ahead and do it?"**

— The last contract I signed was a two book contract.

**— You have spoken of things, people disappearing, for example SNCC being "written out" of the Civil Rights history, and I would think it**

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would be in the interest of some people to “write out” or “disappear” your version of the Atlanta Missing and Murdered case. Didn’t you have any problems? Have you been pressured in any way at all?

— A security question is raised, certainly. I’m not a crazy person, certainly. It’s a dangerous business.

— Are you not afraid?

— Well, yes, but playing safe doesn’t make you safe; being white doesn’t make you safe. Trying to play it safe makes you crazy.

(New Orleans, La., USA, September 1985)

Notes

1. Toni Cade Bambara, *The Salt Eaters* (London: The Women’s Press, Ltd., 1982).
2. Toni Cade Bambara, *The Sea Birds are Still Alive* (New York: Random House, 1982).
3. Eleanor W. Taylor, “Music as Theme: The Jazz Mode in the Works of Toni Cade Bambara” in *Black Women Writers (1950-1980): A Critical Evaluation*, ed. Mari Evans (Garden City, New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1984), pp. 58-70.
4. Toni Morrison, *Tarbaby* (London: Triad/Panther Books, 1984).
5. Bambara in Evans, pp. 41-47.
6. Gloria T Hull, “What It Is I Think She’s Doing Anyhow: A Reading of Toni Cade Bambara’s *The Salt Eaters*”, in *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology*, ed. Barbara Smith (Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, 1983), pp. 124-142.
7. Toni Cade Bambara, *The Black Woman: An Anthology* (New York and Scarborough, Ontario: New American Library, 1970).
8. *Southern Exposure: Southern Black Utterances Today*, Volume III, Number 1 (Spring/Summer, 1975), inside cover.