

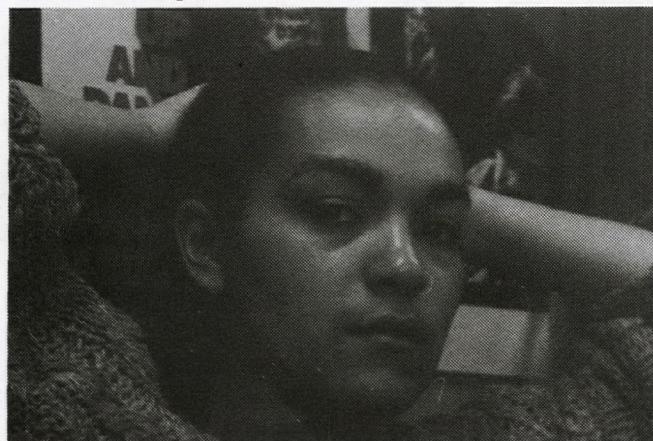
Las Tonalidades de Una Identidad

The Many Shades of an Identity

By/por Lynne Wanyeki

He vivido en Canadá por los últimos cuatro años. Decidí/pude venirme al Canadá porque tengo una madre blanca, escocesa-canadiense. Sin embargo, en el Canadá me he visto en la posición de/he aprendido a llamarle a mí misma Negra/De Color. El tiempo que he pasado aquí ha sido interesante/irónico debido a este hecho.

Lo que pasa es que mi padre pertenece a la nación Gikuyu. Yo me crié en Kenya, donde se me reconocía como de raza mixta/ "Point"/"Five"/ "Chotara". La cuestión de la identidad allá no era algo que estuviera siempre cambiando o fragmentándose de acuerdo al contexto. Y los nombres que yo misma me di o me dieron no eran necesariamente considerados como indicadores de mis alianzas político/culturales.



En gran medida, los procesos de definición/re-definición por los que he pasado/se me ha obligado a pasar aquí en el Canadá, me han sido útiles.

Llamarle Negra me ha dado un entendimiento más amplio de los Negros en la diáspora. Al mismo tiempo, esto ha ampliado mi entendimiento de los períodos pre-colonial, colonial y post-colonial en la historia de África. Curiosamente, entonces, he podido ver mejor a Kenya y África y mi propia relación con respecto a Kenya y África debido al tiempo que he estado lejos de allá.

Llamarle De Color me ha sido útil de la misma manera. Me he visto empujada a examinar las relaciones entre diferentes

I have lived in Canada for the past four years. I chose/was able to come to Canada because I have a white, Scottish-Canadian mother. Yet Canada is a country where I have learned/been expected to term myself Black/Of Colour. My time here has been interesting/ironic because of that fact.

You see, my father was of the Gikuyu nation. I grew up in Kenya, where I was recognized/acknowledged to be half-caste/mixed race/Point Five/Chotara. Identity there was not a constantly shifting/contextual/fragmented thing. And how I named/chose to name/was enabled to name myself was not necessarily taken as an indicator of my cultural/political alliances.

To a large extent, the processes of definition/re-definition that I have undertaken/been forced to undertake in Canada have been useful to me.

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"Identity there was not a constantly shifting/contextual/fragmented thing."

Terming myself Black has broadened my understanding of Blacks in the diaspora. This, in turn, has broadened my understanding of the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods in African history. Curiously, then, I have been better able to see Kenya and Africa and my own relation to/position in Kenya and Africa because of my time away.

Terming myself Of Colour has been useful in the same way. I have been pushed to examine the relations among different communities Of Colour, as well as the history that those relations are rooted in. And this has again extended to the way I perceive and comprehend the relations between the many nations of Kenya, of Africa and the peoples brought to/now situated in Kenya, to Africa.

Yet at the same time, I am aware of the fact that Black/Of Colour are terms that do not entirely correspond to my own sense of identity. They are terms which say nothing about my being of mixed race, nothing about the social/cultural/political

comunidades De Color, como también la historia en la cual se enraízan tales relaciones. Y esto, nuevamente, ha extendido mi manera de percibir y comprender las relaciones entre las muchas naciones de Kenya, de Africa y los pueblos traídos a/ahora situados en Kenya y Africa.

Sin embargo, al mismo tiempo, estoy consciente de que los términos Negra/De Color no cubren enteramente mi propio sentido de identidad. Estos términos no dicen nada sobre mi origen racial mixto, nada sobre la base social, cultural y política de la que vengo y con la cual todavía me siento tan identificada, nada sobre el hecho de que soy lesbiana, etc., etc., etc.

Reconozco la utilidad de los términos Negra/De Color porque sirven como una manera de estrategizar en el contexto de la cultura dominante en el Canadá. Pero también reconozco el hecho de que son términos adoptados/impuestos, dependientes de la existencia de una cultura dominante. El uso de los términos Negro/De Color por parte de la cultura dominante tiende a justificar su inhabilidad para/rechazo a genuinamente ocuparse de los asuntos que preocupan a los Negros y a las personas De Color. Esto significa que tales asuntos se ven limitados y definidos por el discurso multicultural de la cultura dominante. La hegemonía de la cultura dominante permanece asegurada y bien justificada.

¿Qué significa usar estos términos dada mi relación con la cultura dominante? ¿Qué significa usar estos términos dentro del contexto limitante desde el cual se han desarrollado y por el cual se han sub-sumado? Estas preguntas no pueden responderse en términos del multiculturalismo canadiense. El multiculturalismo es una invención que asume la presencia de una cultura dominante y que trabaja para que se mantenga.

background from which I come and to which I remain strongly identified, nothing about the fact that I am a lesbian, etc.,etc., etc.

I recognize the utility of the terms Black/Of Colour for strategizing in the context of the dominant culture of Canada, but I also recognize the fact that they are terms adopted/imposed that are dependent on the existence of a dominant culture. The dominant culture's use of the terms Black/Of Colour all too often justifies its inability/refusal to genuinely deal with the concerns

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of those who are Black/Of Colour. This means that those concerns become fixed in the limits defined by the dominant culture's multicultural discourse. The hegemony of the dominant culture remains assured/even justified.

What does it mean to use these terms in the face of my own relation to the dominant culture? What does it mean to use these terms within the limiting context from which they have evolved and by which they have been subsumed? These are not questions that can be answered in terms of Canadian multiculturalism. Multiculturalism is a construct which assumes the presence of a dominant culture and works to ensure its maintenance.

Volando por mi Cuenta Flying by myself

By/por Rodica Satuha

I was born on September 5, 1957, in a small city in Romania. I lived in a big house with a large yard together with my six brothers and five sisters. I grew up in a quiet and lovely family who gave us a good education.

I married in 1980 and had two children. My daughter Isabella is 11 now and my son Andrei is nine.

My husband came to Canada in 1988. His motivations to leave Romania were mainly two: political persecution and the search for improved well-being.

After two years I came to Montreal with my children sponsored by him. After a few days I was surprised when I saw that he drank and didn't come home for two or three days. I began