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Testimonio de Victoria

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I am a millennial. Born to a mixed race Latinx single mother in the barrios of San Diego. The Afro-Latinx blood coursing through my veins gave way to a consciousness, the one of being Black, Queer and genderqueer in Amerikkka. I use three K's in the "America" to symbolize the ableist cissexist white supremacist capitalist framework of "America". I came from a family that was torn apart by generations of racism within the household. Victoria Ann Marie Ameyamor Espinoza Porter, the names given to me from generations of resilient womxn who held together mi familia while battling the oppressions in the calles of Los Angeles. I am the child of two parents given away and grounded somewhere foreign. My father whose story began in Puerto Rico and continues in Los Angeles and my Mother whose life began being pushed out of her family for being un negro. I am the generation of post 9/11 and flowing with the waves of revolution. I am a millennial. The shade of brown that kissed my skin showed me power others inherently possessed.

When I came to UC Davis, it was hard for me to find confidence here. I often struggled for resources while my white counterparts had parents that funded their every move. I struggled again with loving my Blackness, even though in previous years of my life I had found my confidence. There's something about the institution that makes you question yourself.

Growing up I wanted to be white, to feel good enough and not have older men sexualize my body. I hated the way my Afro-Boricua curly locks spiraled in all directions creating a cloud of puff on my head. The way my jeans hugged my hips and my butt gave me a lot of extra cushion. I felt like my body did not belong to me, and I had no attachment to it and I fought internal battles with myself wishing it would change. I did not feel worthy of love and allowed older womxn to take advantage of my body. My Black body was not valuable. White women are reified as the incarnation of both sexual and racial purity. The reification is bought at the price of the devaluation of women of color (Castañeda, 313). I was in countless relationship with womxn who used, abused

and devalued my body for their own self-preservation. I allowed the white supremacist framework colonize my mind, body and spirit. It told me that my body was not worthy of the love and care that white bodies are born with. The legacy of the Americas is violence and exploitation based on sex, gender, race, sexuality, class, culture, and physical condition—based on the power and privilege to exploit and oppress others that each of those elements confer on us (Castañeda, 317). I am a millennial, born after the civil rights movements, whose body is still exoticized, sexualized and devalued. But the shades of brown that kiss my skin give way to a new sexuality consciousness that heteropatriarchy tried to erase.

My queerness is a political statement. Every time I call myself Queer I am unshackling the chains that were put upon my feet the moment I took my first breath. Being Queer was something I needed to come to terms with because while I was trying to hide it, I was killing myself both on the inside and out. I tried to be “normal” but I felt something was fake. I engaged in relationships with boys who were sexist and who constantly asked me to expose my body to them. I let people take my body for themselves, never questioning if it was something my body wanted. Over and over again we are reminded that sex and race do not define a person’s politics (Moraga, 149). My race and sex do define my politics. Being Queer is more than sexuality, it’s a way you navigate the heteropatriarchal system, which perpetuates heteronormativity, cisgenderism, and stereotypes of sexuality and gender. I call myself BlaQueer because like all groups of people there are those who are excluded and those who are privileged. All my queerness wraps around my Blackness in a body that forms me. My Blackness just as queer, just as magical, just as rare. We come from a marginalized sexuality while still marginalizing our own people. The shades of brown that kiss my skin made me Queer both by race and by sexuality. But these shades, which made me conscious about my sexuality, gave me a consciousness of my gender.

I am a millennial, the generation that continues to be socialized to the socially constructed gender norms. I had been born a girl, assigned female at birth, but felt like one of the guys. I was a Tomboy and never conformed to the gender norms for boys and girls. I am boi. I was just me, neither male, nor female. I felt comfortable in my body but I felt more masculine some days and more feminine other days. My gender fluidity scared people that I was subjected to forms of physical and verbal abuse from my peers. I am not confused, I know who I am. The institutions that continue the discourse around gender make me an invert. I am a combination of multi-facet characteristics that come together in a perfect Queering. I am genderqueer. Genderqueer, as in “Fuck you” to the institutions that continue to push gender binaries. What we are suffering from is an absolute despot duality that says we are able to be only one or the other. It claims that human nature is limited and cannot evolve into something better. But I, like other Queer people, am two in one body, both male and female. I am the embodiment of the hieros gamos: the coming together of

opposite qualities within (Anzaldúa, 41). My shades of brown that kiss my skin gave way to a racial oppression consciousness.

Afro-Puerto Rican is the combination of two cultures of resistance and power. The shades of brown that kiss our skin are a form of resistance from colonial power that once conquered our land. Being Afro-Latinx I went through a questioning of my identity because I was raised as Latinx but Amerikkka's definition of Blackness formed how I seen myself. My Blackness is dangerous, it scares those who are confronted with themselves because the Latinx culture is filled with many cultures and looks. I am Black, a descent of enslaved people and womxn who fought to keep my culture alive. White Supremacy tried to erase my shades of brown that gave way to my consciousness.

I did not always love my shades of brown that blessed my skin. My grandmother was the womxn who made me want to be lighter. She believed whiteness was closer to godliness and because of her I was afraid to be in the sun or I'll turn to un negro. She told me of stories of beautiful fair skinned womxn who conquered the world, mostly smashing the patriarchy at any turn they could. I often wondered about the womxn with darker skin, the ones we fought along with, like my sisters. Mi familia hated their shades of brown. The white man took the beauty we seen in our eyes and colonized it, making our shade deviant and unnatural. My shades are what white women aspired to have, spending thousands to maintain. While they appropriate my shades, my familia still finds ways to love them. The shades of brown that kiss my skin gave way to my revolutionary consciousness.

I am married to the revolution. Capitalism perpetuates and feeds all systems of oppression that keep people with my shades from moving forward. The revolution promotes equity, sustainability, equitable distribution of resources and the decriminalization of mi familia, my people, and mi barrio. I am a descendant of powerful revolutionary people who have been criminalized for sticking to what they believed in. Audre Lorde, Angela Davis, Assata Shakur, are my heros. I am resistant to the capitalist society that profits off of the genocide of my people. I am socialist because I believe that the one percent should not be able to run our people. In order to create a successful revolution we must not recreate the same systems of oppression that capitalism socializes us to believe. I want to change society, to liberate Black and Brown people, Queer people, Trans people, womxn in all forms, children, folks with disabilities, and poor people. The nationalism I seek is one that decolonizes the brown and female body as it decolonizes the brown and female earth (Moraga, 150). The shades of brown that kiss my skin gave way to my feminist consciousness.

I am a feminist because I believe in the liberate of all womxn, people, queers. I believe in a gender equitable world. I hope to dismantle the patriarchy and the shackles of misogyny. I am a feminist to resist patriarchy and misogyny everywhere, and put an end to gender based violence. I am a feminist because I believe rape culture should not be a culture. I am a feminist because I am Queer. I am a feminist because I want to liberate all people and end

socially constructed hegemony that was created during colonization. The shades of brown that kiss my skin made me who I am.

I am a millennial. Born to a familia of resilient people who have resisted white supremacist society in order to give me life. The shades of brown that kiss my skin give way to a decolonized consciousness. We are all beautiful no matter what white supremacy tells us. Langston Hughes once told me, "Beautiful, are the souls of my people."

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