

Black writing "That which defines you also confines you"

(Tony Tanner, City of Words)

The use of the term 'black' in the nineties has several aspects. Historically, African-Americans used the term in the Civil Rights Movement to underline their demand for self-definition as non-white people. The public use of the term 'black' as contrasted to 'white' has made African-Americans visible as a group.

Since the 1980's people living in Western Europe who came from all kinds of non-European, non-Western backgrounds (so not just people from African descent) have also been calling themselves black. Again, the term black was claimed to signify a deliberate distinction with and protest to white uniformity. This wider use of the term 'black' is not very common in the USA or Canada.

Perspectives on the pros and cons of the term, and on all its implications of (self-) definition are constantly changing.



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