

JUDITH MCKEOWN

DECOLONISE YOUR MIND ... NOT MINE!!!!

every week I walk into *your* classroom
waiting...waiting for my mind to be
decolonised

I read the fanon, the achebe, the ngugi
truly
the spivak, the suleri, and the said
only to find out what you *really* believe

my body is text within the context of your
classroom
it seems there is no room
for me, in a sea, of white femininity
black femininity is swallowed up, erased, and
spit out

I can't help but to stand out (nor would I want
not to)

my skin, my hair, my comments—scary—are
incongruous with those of my classmates
—a word I use here loosely—

I am told I can't say that, I'm too angry, I
thrive on conflict

when I respond to a comment which conflicts
with my politics

NO! Africa is not merely an "imagined space"
and NO! it is not "backward" and
"primitive"

simply because a PHD 1 says so
again, I say NO

at home

I sit and wonder if this is the plan
to alienate, aggravate, or simply assimilate
me

a black canadian woman
into the irony

which is this academy
should I flee?

unappreciated, unwanted

I think

maybe

and this is why

there will be no phd

I refuse to fragment my multifaceted social
locations and identities

I will not compartmentalise the multiple
essences which make up my "judyness"
that would be ridiculous

and all of this

just to make the grade

I do not wish to degrade

who I have come to be

in order to be accepted in this here

world of academe,

which is ultimately just an imaginary space
to me

I am told that my demeanour in class is "off-
putting"

(for whommm, I wonder)

I am labeled "inattentive at best and
disrespectful at worst"

So, what can I do with my thirst
for knowledge

but continue to come to your class

pretend that my mind is being decolonised
instead of confronting the blatant fact

that

I am being strategically *recolonised* and
deliberately ostracised

for embracing my black female subjectivity
to this I can only say simply

you will understand my individuality in
time

but first you must...

DECOLONISE YOUR MIND ... NOT
MINE!!!!

Judy McKeown is currently a Master's candidate in English at York University, specializing in post-colonial and Diaspora theory and literatures. She is presently working on her M. A. thesis, which explores the complexities and intersections of gender, diaspora, and the multiple meanings of "home" in the writing of African and Indian descent Caribbean female writers in Canada.