

"That Really Wasn't Me"

A Black, Immigrant, Caribbean Woman's

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As the quintessential "other," black women are not imagined as belonging to the nation-state, but rather, are subjected to a process in which we are "immigrant-ed."

L'auteure examine l'expérience des Noires dans le corps professoral. Elle avance que pour ces femmes, ce monde est un lieu de combat, une place où elles doivent de battre pour faire entendre leur voix, pour la reconnaissance de leur travail et de leur compétence.

"Are you sure this place is for you?"

In September 1997, I sat in a classroom with eight other graduate students and a professor, in the first session of a year-long seminar. As a standard operating procedure, we each introduced ourselves, including in our introduction information about our background, intended area of interest and the focus of academic work we have done in the past. As I sat listening to the other students' introductions, I carefully planned my own so that I/it would sound articulate. I opted to go last and stumbled through my well-rehearsed introduction in a less than articulate

manner. I spoke about my academic background, my previous work on Caribbean sayings and proverbs, and about my plan to continue working in this area. Later that day, as I reflected on the seminar proceedings, I remember thinking that the person I introduced and personified in that class *really* wasn't me.

During the year, I had the opportunity to lead two seminars, with the readings for the second one selected by me. I chose Dionne Brand's novel *In Another Place, Not Here* and came up with a number of discussion questions. While reading the novel, I was struck by the fact that although racism permeated the text, Brand did not mention the term itself. I felt that I needed to explicitly name and address racism in the class discussion. Yet, in setting up the questions, which I arranged thematically, racism appeared last and was alone on the back of the sheet of questions I distributed, almost as an afterthought. A question about reading practices led off the discussion and took up a large chunk of the time. After a discussion that also focused on the themes of spirit, place, and racism, I left the class (as I generally did) feeling disembodied by our engagement with the text through an "objectified gaze."¹

The experiences of black women² in the academy have been, and continue to be fraught with struggle, hardship, and suffering. In the numerous writings about their experience within the academy, black women have spoken about the challenges of being in a place that was not meant for them (Carty; hooks, 1990, 1993; Collins; Benjamin). For black women, the academy is a site of

struggle; a place where we have to fight to get our voices heard, to have our work recognized, and to be seen as competent.

The struggles that black women face in the academy mirror our experiences of being "othered" in the larger society. Black women, whether born in Canada or not, are perpetually seen as "immigrants," as "others," and are always asked "where are you from?" As the quintessential "other," black women (and blacks in general) are not imagined as belonging to the Canadian nation-state, but rather, are subjected to a process in which we are "immigrant-ed." That is to say we are seen as foreigners with little education, and as members of the working class.

Cast as "other," black immigrant women in particular, when new to the country and unfamiliar with the university as an institution, find it especially difficult. These women come with experiences that they may want to include in their academic work but often find that there is no space for them to do so. Even when space is made, black immigrant women find there is no space for their immigrant experience, since the dominant paradigm through which their experience is interpreted is North American. This is evident, for example, in the dominance of prescribed texts that speak to, and are grounded in the African-American experience. While there are similarities between the African-American and the black immigrant experience, there are significant differences that require the use of different paradigms

Lately, I have been asking myself whether the academy is a place for

Attempt to Be/long in the Academy

me, a place where I want to be/long. In this article I grapple with this question by critically analyzing the academy as an embodied subject. Hence, I begin by grounding it in a narrative that recounts two incidents from my first year of doctoral studies. These incidents highlight my concern about the tendency in academe to leave the personal out of intellectual work, and the apparent inability for multiple and conflicting theories to co-exist in the same space without setting up a hierarchy, or falling into the trap of relativism. I do a critical analysis of the narrative to get a sense of the workings of the academy and what was at play in the interactions that occurred. I do this as part of a “space-making” project aimed at making the academy a place where I can feel what Rutherford describes as “that most elusive of feelings, a sense of belonging” (25).

The concepts that frame this paper are key themes in Dionne Brand’s novel, *In Another Place, Not Here*. Set in an unnamed Caribbean island and in Canada (Toronto and Sudbury) the novel details the migration experiences of two Caribbean women—Elizete and Verlia—who move to Canada for different reasons. Brand foregrounds the women’s attempts to carve out spaces for themselves, as they try to “make themselves at home” in a place where they do not belong. For Elizete and Verlia, the task of making Canada a place where they can be/long involves imprinting themselves onto the Canadian landscape, marking it with their presence, and shaping it to fit their dreams. In doing so, they “make demands upon place and space” (Walcott 41), even as the

places and spaces they occupy make demands on them both. The sense of belonging that Elizete and Verlia are able to forge is one that precludes a secure relationship to the Canadian landscape, but allows them to make themselves present and to maneuver within the Canadian space.

Brand’s portrayal of Elizete and Verlia’s struggles to carve out a space for themselves in many ways parallel my own struggle to make space for myself in the academy. Reading *In Another Place, Not Here* in juxtaposition with my experience of the academy, I examine what it means to be me and be/long in the academy. The identity that I am invoking here, is that of a black, immigrant, Caribbean woman. I find Brand’s theorization of place, space, and belonging particularly useful for examining my location in, and experiences of, the academy. These three concepts are central organizing themes of the novel and reflect Brand’s concern with the “here” of the Caribbean migrant experience. They also demonstrate her political project of re/figuring Canada, “implanting the experiences of black peoples, in this case black women, in the very crevices of the nation” (Walcott 41).

Brand explicitly constructs the black women in her novel as Caribbean women. By drawing on my experiences from the last school year, I will explore three interrelated issues: the academy as a site of social inter/action, the meaning of bodies in place/space of the academy, and the implications of carving out a space to be/long there. Specifically I ask: How does the academy as a site of social inter/action figure in the pedagogical encounter? What is the

meaning of my body, a black, female body, in the place/space called the academy? If space is the outcome of social relations, what are the implications of space-making projects for the academy?

Brand: on place

Focusing on the “here,” that is, on the location and the historical moment of Verlia’s and Elizete’s immigrant experiences, Brand deploys several conceptions of place. For Brand, place is a site that forms the setting for social inter/action; Verlia moves from Sudbury to Toronto where she joins the Movement and becomes an activist; she meets Elizete for the first time at a sugarcane estate where she tries to organize the workers into a co-operative. These sites are located in places that are bounded geographically and are distinguishable by their physical landscape. The nature of the social inter/action that takes place in each site is circumscribed in large part, by the history of the place and

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what it represents for all of its social actors. For Verlia, Toronto is a place where she can find the Movement, her people, and a way. In Toronto, she can become an activist and fight racism, an option not available in Sudbury, where her uncle and aunt try to hide their blackness.

Brand also sees place as "a palimpsest, a kind of parchment on which successive generations have inscribed and reinscribed the process of history" (Ashcroft *et al.* 392). So, for example, Elizete believes that Verlia's project of setting up of a co-operative among the sugarcane estate workers will be a difficult one because "Is not just people navel string bury here is their shame and their body" (15). What Elizete is referring to here, is the fact that "history is embedded in place" (Ashcroft *et al.* 392), and shapes the kinds of actions that are possible (and impossible) there. Similarly, when Elizete refuses to listen to Verlia because "It don't matter what woman say in the world" (13), she is invoking a history of sexism in which women's voices have been ignored, not only in the Caribbean, but throughout the world.

For Brand, place is both real and symbolic and, at times, the real and the symbolic converge. At the beginning of the novel, Elizete speaks of a desire to get to the junction, an actual place that she has been forbidden to go to by her "husband." The junction symbolizes the meeting of two worlds, the known and the unknown. When Verlia breaks the junction and comes to the sugarcane estate, she brings with her a world unknown to Elizete. The unknown lies beyond the junction, a place of possibilities and pain for both Elizete and Verlia. The junction in effect signifies the space between the here and the "not here." It is simultaneously both of these spaces and neither one nor the other.

Brand: on space

A second concept that organizes

Brand's novel is space. While space and place at times converge in the novel, for Brand, space differs from place in that the former connotes a more individually created and sometimes intangible dimension than the latter, which generally refers to an actual site or position. The conception of space that Brand employs, is that of a physical and metaphorical dimension. When Verlia arrives in Toronto from Sudbury, she finds a room off Bathurst Street, a street where she knows that she will "meet the sisters and the brothers in the Movement" (155). Bathurst Street is both a physical and metaphorical space which provides Verlia with a grounding, a feeling of belonging. In effect, Bathurst Street represents the space of re/birth and re/definition for Caribbean immigrants in Toronto.

The conception of space as a product of struggle and negotiation is also evident in Brand's novel. Though Verlia and Elizete have to struggle to make themselves present in the Canadian landscape, they are still able to carve out, or to find spaces for themselves. Keith's and Pile's contention that, "space is produced and reproduced and thus represents the site and the outcome of social, political and economic struggle" (24) is supported in Brand's text. As an illegal immigrant, Elizete is able to carve out a space in which she could resist erasure on a number of different fronts. The seemingly simple act of changing her name allowed her to work and get away from the Gladstone bar where she had lost herself.

For Verlia, the Movement in Toronto and the revolutionary movement she forms on her return to the Caribbean, become spaces where she can resist racism and the effects of colonialism. But these spaces are not untroubled; they emerge out of particular histories and social relations, and are "filled with politics and ideology" (Soja 6). Thus, Verlia encounters sexism and homophobia in these spaces of resistance.

Brand: on belonging

A third concept that informs Brand's novel is that of belonging. In the novel, belonging cannot be understood outside of the framework of place and space. Brand's characters experience feelings of belonging or lack of belonging in relation to particular places/spaces. These feelings do not remain constant but are continually shifting. For example, Verlia experiences a sense of belonging in Toronto, in the Movement, however these feelings do not always extend beyond the space(s) of the Movement. At a rally against the Klan, she is reminded that she does not belong by cries of: "Go back to where you came from!" (173). In neither of these cases, then, does belonging denote security or permanence. Instead, belonging, here, is about having space to maneuver.

In the novel, belonging is linked to identity, desire, subjectivity, and feelings of identification with a particular place. As well, it is also linked to the ability to recognize and name. Thus, Elizete's great-great-great-ma Adela, who was brought to the Caribbean as a slave, refuses to belong to the Caribbean, by refusing to name it and the things there. In Elizete's case, her feeling of not belonging to/in Canada is linked to her inability to name the things she finds t/here, when the names she knows would not fit. By contrast, she gives names to the things that Adela refuses to give names to and, in doing so, marks the place of the Caribbean as somewhere and develops feelings of belonging to it.

The notion that there is a one-way relationship between people and the spaces/places they occupy, is ruptured in Brand's work. Verlia and Elizete struggle not only to fit into their environment in Toronto, they also actively reconfigure the environment to fit it to their desires and are both changed in the process. Brand renders belonging a practice in which people act upon and within places, transforming them and being

transformed in the process. These transformations reconfigure the landscape and influence the identifications that people make. This is evident in the way in which the Movement reconfigures the space of Toronto and in Verliá's identification as an activist.

Place, space, belonging and the pedagogical encounter

Brand's understanding of place encompasses location, position, and other synonymous spatial designations, as well as its symbolic nature. Her multiple renderings of place allow for an interesting analysis of the narrative at the beginning of this section. As one of many sites of social inter/action within the academy, the classroom functions as a place/space designated for teaching/learning. In many graduate classrooms, teaching/learning takes on an air of "intellectualism" characterized by the use of abstract, esoteric language and the invocation of well-known theorists (usually white males) (Monture-Angus; Graveline). Often, this kind of intellectualism means that our life outside of the academy is bracketed and inter/action focuses on issues related to the academic domain. This is evident in the way that my classmates and I introduced ourselves. Our introductions focused on academic interests and achievements, not on whether we had a family or a pet, or the activities we participate in outside of school. Implicit in this is the assumption that these things are not valued or are not important in a graduate seminar. Thus, our introductions set the tone for the type of inter/action that would occur throughout the year; we would interact with each other as "graduate students (read: devoid of race, class, gender, and other markings of identity).

Much of the inter/actions during that class were akin to playing a game, not unlike the language games that Lyotard refers to in *The Postmodern Condition*. Lyotard ar-

gues that language games constitute social relations and are "the minimum relation required for society to exist" (15). These games are activated with an utterance, a move in the game. Lyotard points out that the rules of the game, a prerequisite for game playing, are the product of an explicit or implicit contract between the players, and that any modification of the rules, changes the game. Thus, the game of "performing the graduate student" was one whose unspoken rules preceded our entry into the classroom. Since we have had prior experiences in graduate classes, we were familiar with the rules of the game: speak about your academic history and the focus of your past graduate work, have an idea of what you want to focus on for your thesis, be able to articulate it well, and if at all possible, include the names of a few well-known theorists. While I could have introduced myself differently, I chose to follow the rules of the game and performed the graduate student introduction, since failure to do so may have meant being seen as an incompetent player. As the only black woman in the class, I felt the potential for isolation loom large before me, should I have decided to speak about my life outside of the university.

The pedagogical encounter in the introductory class represents an interesting, yet troubling tension for me—a tension between being able to introduce myself in a way that brings my academic and non-academic interests together, and diverging from the rules of the game. Reflecting on this tension raises some thought-provoking questions: Who is the "me" that I felt was absent in my introduction? What kind of introduction could have captured my sense of who I am? What did I want from an introduction that would have more adequately captured the "me" I saw myself as at that moment?

The question of who I really am, has undertones of an essentialist notion of identity that overlooks the dynamic, shifting nature of identity

(Weedon; Appiah and Gates; Hall). The person I introduced really was me, but it was me in relation to a particular context and set of relations. From this perspective, my performance as the "graduate student" does not connote a binary split between the "me" and the "not me" as much as it demonstrates my negotiation of a particular context. Given the absence of this binary, what might be interesting is not an exploration of who is the "real me," but rather what is at stake in the feeling that "that wasn't me." What does this sentiment mean in terms of my desires? It seems to me that the stakes might lie in the construction of identities such as the "graduate student," in relation to place and space. In the seminar, identity was limited to the "graduate student." What then of the limits of the very identity that I have been asserting in this article: black, immigrant, Caribbean woman? Might my anxiety about my introduction be symptomatic of the inevitable limits, failures, and contradictions of all identity categories?

There is no one way to read my introduction. Perhaps, I wanted a type of social inter/action that was less burdened with the need to perform the "graduate student." It is also possible that I wanted to diverge from the rules that govern its performance. Or perhaps I wanted to reconfigure the social relations of the classroom so that who we are outside of the academy becomes an explicit part of classroom discourse. Then again, my feeling that the person I introduced wasn't me, can be read as a recognition of the ways in which place and space function to essentialize identities and circumscribe the ways that myself and others were forced to introduce ourselves. In the place/space of the seminar, the image of the "graduate student" we all (re)presented was lacking in any explicit reference to identity. Our negotiation of the imposed category of "graduate student" reflected a degree of similarity, yet the

introductions/performances we gave were infused with different desires, anxieties, and power relations. Several questions come to mind: who were we, the students, performing for? What might the expectations of a black, immigrant, Caribbean woman graduate student be? What are the implications of performing

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this type of graduate student, especially in terms of space, place, and belonging?

The place/space of ambivalence in the pedagogical encounter

A simple response to the question of who we were performing for, is that we were performing for our peers, the professor, and for ourselves. However, because of the power differentials at play, there was more at stake in our performance for the professor. After all, the professor was the person that was responsible for evaluating us, and grades do matter. This fact was not lost on me when I chose to pursue doctoral studies, nor was I unfamiliar with the type of social inter/action that is valued in graduate classrooms. In fact, I was well aware of the nature of graduate work, but I did not allow my ambivalence towards it to prevent me from pursuing doctoral studies. My ambivalence is not uncommon, for I

have heard many other graduate students express a similar ambivalence about their studies. For instance, I have heard graduate students poke fun at their decision to pursue doctoral degrees, a decision they often characterize as masochistic.

For me, one component of this masochism is the problematic of racism in the academy. My knowledge that the academy is a hostile environment for black women, a place where the struggle against erasure is ongoing, makes my presence t/here not only masochistic, but ambivalent as well. In conversations with other black, female graduate students, the dynamics of our racial and gendered positionings in academe are a source of both pleasure and pain. Yet we persist in the pursuit of higher education, cognizant of the reality of these positionings, and the fact that “de higher monkey climb, de more him behind expose.”³ Rather than an anomaly, ambivalence seems to be a central component of graduate studies. How then does ambivalence figure in my experience of the first class? How might ambivalence be related to my desire to be me and belong in the academy? What do I want from graduate studies/the academy?

Again, I turn to Brand to help me grapple with these questions. Brand sees ambivalence—a kind of not-here-not-there position—as a space of possibilities. This is evident in her portrayal of the position that Verlia and Elizete occupy in Toronto. Walcott calls this an in-between position in which the women are both insiders and outsiders in the Canadian nation-state; they are simultaneously here and not here (41-42). By foregrounding what the women are able to do, Brand reveals different ways of being in an in-between space and the possibilities of that position. For Verlia, the position of in-between-ness is one in which she can re/make herself. Despite her recognition that Toronto “was against her from the beginning” (163) Verlia decides that “She can live in this city and make it seem as if she’s never left

home” (181). Similarly, Elizete is able to survive as an illegal immigrant through a strategic practice of visibility and invisibility. She melds into the landscape at the mall, changes her name to elude immigration officers, and curses the factory boss who refuses to learn her name and confuses it with that of other black, female workers. These women are able to reconfigure the landscape and make their presence known in the face of a constant threat of erasure.

Like the Verlia and Elizete, I want to do some reconfiguring. I want to reconfigure the landscape of the academy and make my presence as a black, Caribbean woman felt t/here. In fact, I entered the doctoral program intent on “shap[ing] the direction and focus of the various forms of knowledge available to me” (hooks 1993: 102). I planned to focus my work on the Caribbean and Caribbean-diasporic issues, and to assert my black, immigrant, Caribbean woman identity as a central part of who I am. The first class of the seminar was an opportunity to do this, but I performed instead the “graduate student.” For me, a performance of the former would mean asserting my black, immigrant Caribbean woman identity and non-academic interests, in concert with an introduction of my academic history and area of interest. My failure to do so can be read as a signifier of ambivalence; my ambivalence about wanting to assert my sense of who I am and wanting to follow the standard operating procedure. It is important to note that none of my colleagues made reference to their racial or ethno-cultural identities. This seems to suggest that these identities are part of the norm, therefore a naming of them is not necessary. It also suggests that such identities are not implicated in the work that my colleagues do or in their inter/actions in the classroom. My colleagues’ omission of their racial or ethno-cultural identities in their introductions might also mean that they saw no need to make such identities explicit.

My decision not to assert my racialized, gendered and ethno-cultural identity can, however, also be read as a strategic move that is grounded in a understanding of the context in which I was acting, and the social relations that are at play there. Or, to put it in my grandmother's words, I realized that "there's a time and place for everything."⁴ In the seminar, I was the only black/racial minority student. In such a situation, much of what I do and say cannot be easily divorced from the significance of my race.

The tensions of belonging

For me, a black, immigrant, Caribbean woman, belonging in the academy is about the desire to resist erasure. It is about marking the academy with my presence, not merely by being there, but by asserting this presence. My choice of Brand's *In Another Place, Not Here*, for one of the seminars I led, was central to this desire to resist erasure. Yet, it is possible that I participated in this erasure by the way in which I engaged with the novel and with my colleagues. As noted in my narrative, the theme of racism appeared last on the list of discussion questions, despite its centrality to Brand's novel and to my own experiences. Moreover, I looked at the text through an "objectified gaze" that divorced it from my own experiences. My engagement in the seminar raises a number of questions for me: How can we understand my positioning of the topic of racism in the seminar? What is the relationship between its positioning and my desire for belonging? How does my preoccupation with my colleagues' reading of the novel figure in my desire for belonging and concomitant fear of erasure?

Brand's understanding of the way in which racialized power relations determine what we say and how we say it, is again instructive. Both my preoccupation with my colleagues' readings of the novel and my unease

with placing racism as the last topic of discussion, shed some interesting light on the pedagogical encounter. Perhaps as graduate students, we perform the rules of the game, perform the graduate student, for an endless number of reasons and possibilities. Maybe we simply desire to be liked by the teacher, our peers; or maybe some days we are just tired of the seemingly continual and dreary battle of identity politics; maybe we desire the limitless possibilities imagined with our degree and thus perform as expected. Perhaps we want a letter of recommendation from the professor; or maybe, some days, we just feel a bit under the weather.

A reading of Brand suggests that my experience of leading the seminar is linked to struggles for space, resistance, and non-erasure. In fact, the very choice of Brand's text is part of the struggle for space, effected through a focus on issues related to the Caribbean and the Caribbean diaspora. Brand's gestures to the importance of naming may clarify my point. For Elizete's great-great-grand ma Adela, the refusal to name the place she was brought to was an attempt to erase that place on the one hand, and to avoid the erasure of the place she was taken from, on the other hand. Naming resists erasure, as Carter argues "by the act of place-naming, space is transformed symbolically into a place that is, a space with a history" (377).

My preoccupation with how my colleagues would read Brand's portrayal of Elizete and Verlia's experiences in Canada, and specifically in Toronto, had to do with my fear of erasure. Since Elizete and Verlia's experiences in many ways parallel mine I wanted to see how the class would interpret them. Moreover, I wanted to see how we/they would engage with the women's immigrant status and the subtext of racism that Brand weaves throughout the novel. As it turned out, race was not made explicit in the class discussion and the women's status was not addressed. Is this the erasure that I fear about

the pedagogical encounter? How is this angst linked to my black, female, body in the space/place of the seminar? And finally another question: How can pedagogy benefit from knowing its ability to effect feelings of erasure? These questions implicate my own desires and feelings of belonging, and their influence on my reaction to my colleagues' engagement with Brand's novel.

Yet as alluded to earlier, suppose the invocation of my black, immigrant, Caribbean woman identity would not have provided me with the feeling of belonging? What then of space-making projects and the desire for belonging? If invocations of my identity fail to create feelings of belonging, then space-making projects premised on such naming are seemingly futile. But supposing it is possible that invocations of this heritage do elicit momentary feelings of belonging, then does this mean that such projects are always in process? The need for a constant renewal of space making is even more evident if we consider that the feeling of belonging may be an impermanent, if not elusive, state. Clearly, if, in the first class, I had invoked my identity as a black, immigrant, Caribbean woman, making explicit how my colleagues might read my body, there is no guarantee that they would read my body the way I wanted or that I would feel a sense of belonging. Even if I did, that feeling probably would not have lasted for the rest of the year. Why then the imperative to make space and the desire for belonging?

The imperative to make space, coupled with a recognition that space making is a continual process, a constant battle, mirrors Brand's notion of place as a palimpsest. For, the academy, like a palimpsest, is marked by a constant inscription and reinscription of histories. This is evident in the range of theories that have emerged and continue to emerge, retaining traces of those developed earlier. More recently, with the decline of positivism and the

"death" of grand narratives (Lather) the university is increasingly a site of a multitude of struggles, among them feminist, queer, antiracist, and postcolonial. Yet, even among, between, and within these varying and sometimes overlapping discourses, there exists much tension, contradiction, and competing interests. As such, the academy is like a landscape upon which discourses are continually competing for re/inscription.

Is it then possible that my feeling that my introduction wasn't me is about feeling erased, about regretting a missed opportunity to impose my presence on the landscape of the seminar? How do feelings of erasure figure in the pedagogical encounter? Perhaps, my fear of erasure is in part related to my desires for something different, for interactions that diverge or rupture the standard operating procedures. If I had ruptured the landscape, like Verlia and Elizete, by breaking or at least pushing up against the rules of the game, perhaps I would have walked out of the class feeling quite differently.

For a black, immigrant, Caribbean woman like myself the academy is a tough geography, full of desire, ambivalence, and struggles for belonging. Thus, an earlier question of "how pedagogy might benefit from knowing its own capacity to effect feelings of erasure?" gives rise to a final question: how might I benefit from knowing how my own desires, fears, and anxieties render the academy a tough geography?

Conclusion

Brand's theorization of place, space, and belonging are useful for examining my own location in the academy as a black, immigrant, Caribbean woman. My experiences of the academy are shaped by ongoing struggles to carve out space for myself and to experience a feeling of belonging, be it elusive or otherwise. These struggles are characterized by continual negotiations of the "performances of the graduate student"

and the related ambivalence, desires, anxieties, and contradictions. By positing the academy as both a site of tension, struggle, and possibility, I render it a place/space where I can belong on my own terms.

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¹The concept of objectivity is one of many concepts that have been destabilized with the advent of postmodern and poststructural discourses (Lather). My use of the term "objectified gaze" refers to the practice of looking at a text in a detached manner, as if it bears no relation to the self.

²Here, I am speaking about women whose bodies have been marked by skin colour as black. I am also speaking about black women as a group. While I recognize that this can be construed as essentialist, I agree with Martin that it is not the talk of essences that is dangerous, but the uses to which it is put.

³A literal English translation reads: "the higher a monkey climbs, the more his behind is exposed." The gender bias in this proverb is not lost on me, nonetheless I find the proverb useful.

⁴While this saying may sound like it fixes time and place, it in fact advises caution and advocates careful observation before action. Moreover, it recognizes the importance of context.

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