



“It wasn’t until my second year of university that I started to think about black British history [...] I’d only ever encountered black history through America-centric educational displays [...] the household names of America's civil rights movement felt important to me, but also a million miles away from my life as a young black girl growing up in north London. But this short university module changed my perspective completely. It dragged Britain’s colonial history and slave trading past incredibly *close to home*.

[...] My friend, on the other hand, stuck around for a couple of tutorials before dropping out of the class altogether. ‘It’s just not for me’, she said. [...] I didn’t have the vocabulary to raise it with her at the time. But I know now that I was resentful of her because I felt that her whiteness allowed her to be disinterested in Britain’s violent history, to close her eyes and walk away. To me, this didn’t seem like the information you could opt out from learning” (EDDO-LODGE, 2017, pp. 1-3; italics added).

Dear Nini,

My point was that you succeeded in raising awareness of ‘othering’ but only from the point that it’s white people doing it to other races and your material and leading questions were suggestive. The point of the lecture was to realise there ‘is no race’ and ‘skin colour doesn’t make us different’ but I was made to feel ashamed because of mine.

The Britishness I refer to is my ethnicity, and yesterday I felt as though I couldn’t be proud of that in the same way others in the room could be proud of theirs. My example of singing the national anthem was merely an example to aid you in understanding my points.

I won’t be there next week.

Thanks.