

Cannibalism in Brazil since 1500...

One night in Berlin I came home very happy. I danced and jumped for joy. I had just been to a conference on Brazilian documentary films where, for the first time, mixed-raced Brazilians participated. Let me make myself clear: the conference included people who were not the descendants of Europeans. Up until that moment Euro-Brazilians controlled the discourse on cinema and almost all other fields in Brazil. Certainly they have controlled the visual arts, which are heavily influenced by European-descended artists and their definition of what the art discourse might be. This is in a country that has the second largest Black population in the world; second only to Nigeria. (Just to quickly give perspective on the skewed participation of non-European Brazilians in Brazilian society, on November 6, 2013 President Dilma signed a proposed law (that awaits congressional approval) which would reserve 20% of federal jobs for Blacks. Sadly, indigenous peoples have been left out.)

This conference, “Political Documentary Films in Brazil,” was held in November of 2011 at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin. It presented films previously shown at the International Film Festival in Rio de Janeiro, selected by the organizer of the Festival, Ilda Santiago. The discussion table featured Ms. Santiago at the center flanked by the filmmakers: to her left, four young Brazilian men of mixed-race origins and to her right, four Euro-Brazilians, two of whom were women (three, if we include Ms. Santiago). The visible divide was just a re-affirmation of the colonial presence in Brazil.

Tension due to the race (and therefore class) origins of the two groups built up during the discussion and finally became public—at least to those who could recognize what was occurring—I think the tension went largely unnoticed by the German audience. This tension came to a head when Sandra Kogut, sitting on the Euro-Brazilian side of the table, thanked the young mixed-race men for their viewpoint (Reader, don’t you like how the elites get to have “historical perspective,” while the rest of us simply have “viewpoints?”). She said it must be difficult for them to always be asked to make films about the same thing – the *favelas*, where they live. She said it was important in cinema to have a fresh eye - to be able to see things in new ways. The implication was that it would not be possible for any of these residents of the *favela* to achieve a professional or interesting level of filmmaking. Luciano Vidigal, one of the mixed-race filmmakers, tilted his head to look up at the ceiling. I recognized this gesture as the composure that comes from dealing with the many situations in Brazil that are structured to insure that descendants of Europeans are in charge. Luciano explained that, with their eyes, those that live in the *favelas*, they now look. The implication was that those in the *favela* were now looking at the Euro-Brazilians who have controlled cinema and therefore the representation of all Brazilians up to now. It is only in the last few years that I have seen us portrayed in the cinema or other cultural representations in works that are both by us and about us. In the past there were only representations by them but about us.

Tamar Guimarães, a Euro-Brazilian artist, during a talk we had, explained that “we cannot define a “us” and “them” with clarity (in Brazil)”. Since the systems of racialised privilege in Brazil recognize no such ambiguity, I will also continue, I am afraid, to speak without such nuances.

Cadu Barcellos, another young mixed-race filmmaker, added, “Our gaze is not better or worse than others ... it is singular like any other gaze would be... but the gaze of someone who suffers directly or indirectly must be heard...”

I noticed that, as Sandra began her paternalistic challenge to look with “fresh eyes”, a young middle-to-upper class Brazilian woman in the audience (the type with long, fine European hair that can be recognized immediately) looked across the aisle, to another similar type of young Brazilian woman. It was clear that they both sympathized with Sandra against the mixed-race men and they sniggered when Cadu began his response.

The condescending attitude of Sandra Kogut soon unleashed the class hatred of Eryck Rocha, Glauber Rocha’s son. He is also a filmmaker and sitting on the Euro-Brazilian side of the table. He began to speak in that superior tone of voice that made my hair rise on end. Being the daughter of a maid, I am sensitive to attempts by those who are powerful to exploit their dominance, and my reaction is always to try to get out of the situation as quickly as possible. Eryck Rocha made a big show of looking over to the mixed-race side of the table, making it obvious that he did not know any of the names of the filmmakers on that side. The message was clear; that he did not find them interesting enough to even bother to know their names and of course, he would not deal with them socially. He finally read out the name of Cadu in an arrogant tone of incredulity, saying, “Cadu, Cadu, that is your name?” (Indicating astonishment that such a name existed.) Eryck went on to tell Cadu that his work about the *favelas* was important, but that we were not there to discuss politics, but poetics. This despite the fact that the title of the talk was “Political Documentary Films in Brazil.” Perhaps he had also forgotten that the great Silvio Tendler had just said earlier in the evening that, “Cinema is political.” (I should note that Tendler was also sitting on the Euro-Brazilian side of the table, although he had the grace to admit his middle-class background, which is obvious to Brazilians.)

Wagner Novais, from the mixed-race side of the table gracefully responded, “I think that the democratization of culture...(gives) new prisms for reality, so that people that come from this origin, who work with cinema...there is a formal process which everyone goes through, we go to university, then onto specializations, we are not deprived of the esthetic, artistic or poetical discourse. Of course, I will have my specificity due to my origin and my life. At the end of the evening, during the Q&A, a young Black Brazilian woman studying for her PhD in Berlin said: “I would like to thank you for the possibility of being here talking with Brazilians of different colors, of Black gaze, of the white gaze. We were both so pleased at this long awaited (and until that day seemingly impossible) moment when non-white Brazilians would actually be included in a discussion about the culture of Brazil in a public event.

Then I went home and danced to celebrate a Brazil of new possibilities. Sandra Kogut and Eryck Rocha had all but declared war; demonstrating that these elites will continue, as all elites do, not to share or give over power. They declared, in a surprisingly callous manner and with no embarrassment at the possibility of being challenged, their intention to fight against filmmakers who were of non-European descent. But we knew that already. That is what Brazilian elites have been doing since the 16th century. But now the ground begins to shift under them.

A few years ago I was asked by the artist, Tamar Guimarães, to join her in a talk about post-colonialism. I met Tamar when, as an art student, she requested a critique on her work. I do not like to have conversations about the post-colonial in Brazil, as they inevitably end badly. However, as Tamar was raised in Europe, I thought perhaps things would be different. I, therefore, agreed. From the indigenous perspective there has not been an end to colonization anywhere in the Americas. Post-colonization is a European phenomena – yes, in those countries who have lost their colonies due to the struggle of the native peoples of those colonies. These European countries are now liberated into being civilized, but in the Americas the indigenous population continue to be colonized by the descendants of the Europeans who remain with economic and political power.

It is important to mention that in 1994 there was only one indigenous person in Brazil who had received a university degree. In the very rich province of Minas Gerais (which is abundant in minerals, hence its obscene name) the first indigenous person to receive a university degree, Shirley Djukurna Krenak, did so only in 2006. Shirley went to a local university in the city of Governador Valadares in Minas Gerais. Racial quota systems, which have been recently introduced in Brazil, have allowed for indigenous students to enroll in federally funded universities. Unfortunately, because most come from impoverished families and live far from urban centers, the cost of travel, lodging, food and school material often makes it prohibitively expensive for them to continue and finish their degrees. There is a high drop-out rate. At this point, as there are only hundreds of indigenous students in university, any philanthropist could easily solve this problem by donating funds to indigenous students. Let us say, if there are 600 students each given a grant of 5000 euros, that makes a total of 3,000,000 a year: a sum that could easily be afforded by, let's say thirty philanthropists. Wealthy women could create an additional fund for indigenous women at university, especially for those going into medicine, which is a very costly education. Imagine what an amazing beginning of change we would have in the all fields of discourse in Brazil – where the European would no longer dictate the standard of “normality”. We would have the opportunity to begin to think in different ways ... to see in different ways.

Returning to Shirley and Minas Gerais: Eike Batista, (the brother of Helmut Batista, who runs artist residencies, book publishing and projects etc.) is of German-Brazilian descent and was, in 2012, the richest man in Brazil and the seventh richest in the world. He was born in Governador Valadares in Minas Gerais where Shirley and her family settled after being expelled from their reservation (as were all other Krenaks) due to the mineral wealth on their lands. Eike began his business career buying gold in the Amazon and then went on to own eight gold mines among many, many other things. (Helmut and Eike's father had been the Minister of Mines and Energy during two presidential administrations and a former president of the mining company Companhia Vale do Rio Doce, originally based in Minas Gerais.) Shirley Krenak is from the Krenak indigenous peoples in Minas Gerais and they have seen their lands systematically reduced and destroyed due to their mineral wealth. Shirley explained that,

“In 1970, more minerals were discovered on our lands and ranchers who would destroy our lands to raise cattle started to move into officially recognized Krenak lands. As a result of these politically powerful groups, the federal government declared the Krenak officially extinct in 1970. And since we were very much alive, we were forcibly removed from our lands and transported to other reservations far away

with diverse indigenous groups of non-similar languages. Those who resisted were arrested and imprisoned in prisons newly built on indigenous lands, which served as penal colonies with forced labor, solitary confinement, daily violence, torture and assassinations. During that time many of us lived clandestinely for fear of further forced migrations and imprisonments. In our exile we began to organize ourselves and some years later we began walking back to the Krenak reservation - some walked for 96 days. In 1988 we were again expelled from our lands."

The Krenaks fought and were able to get the decree of extinction reversed and some of the land was returned and demarcated in 1997. The presiding judge said that if it was land that the Krenaks wanted then it was land that they would be given. And in accordance to his words, all that was not the land itself—fruit trees, for example—was destroyed. The reservation today consists of 4970 hectares of unfertile land home to 300 native people.

In 2005, the Krenaks, including Shirley and her brothers, mounted a fifty-hour blockade of the Companhia Vale do Rio Doce's (today called Vale S.A.) railroad, which transports minerals from the region. It was the first time in 100 years that the railroad, which crosses Krenak territory and has caused so much damage to the Krenak community, did not send trains rumbling past their lands. It was under the administration of Helmut and Eike's father, that Companhia Vale do Rio Doce (Vale S.A.) became one of the largest mineral companies in the world (it is presently ranked number two). Vale, extracts among other things, iron, which results in the contamination of the Rio Doce (Sweet River). There was massive deforestation of Krenak lands in order to provide wood for fuel for the railroad to transport the minerals to port. As a result of the protest of the Krenaks, Vale finally sat down to negotiate with the community. This resulted in compensation of 200 Real (around 66 Euros) per month for each Krenak for a period of six years. There are about 300 Krenaks in Minas Gerais who have survived the genocide project by the Portuguese and then the Euro-Brazilians.

So it seems we can definitely rule out Brazil's richest man from ever contributing to an inclusive discussion of life in Brazil. (Recently, Eike has lost lots of money. At the same time, his brother's artist-in-residency program has been suspended.)

Eike and Helmut's father was also responsible for starting up the open-pit mining of the Carajas Mountains. Only one-percent of the species of the area survived the Tucuri Dam, which was built, in part, to provide power to the mine. A railroad was built [Eike and Helmut's father originally began his career as a railroad engineer] through the lands of the Awá Guajá, resulting in their lands soon being rapidly invaded by loggers, *fazendeiros* and small farmers. The Awá Guajá population was severely reduced due to deaths caused by their defense of their lands and also resulting from the introduction of European diseases which they did not have immunities to. In one community alone, of 91 Awás, only 25 were alive four years later. In other words, exactly the same sort of elimination that had happened decades earlier with the construction of the railroad across Krenak lands. (Eike and Helmut's father has said that with the Carajas Mine they were pioneers of the idea of sustainable development.[!])

Now back to Tamar and post-colonialism in Brazil. Tamar said

"With so much traffic of people, it is difficult to speak of either a foreign or an 'original' Brazilian... And I am not speaking of this lack of origin with disappointment. I think of it with relief. Brazil's unstable ground when it comes to cultural references is not a regrettable trait but a truly positive one, one that should enable us to see a different relation to the post-colonial, understood explicitly as this fractured state.

...Nevertheless Brazil has always had to contend with multiple points of reference, cultural 'impurities' and symbolic inconsistencies right down to its core. This has been, I believe, for the better. ... Maybe we can't really aim for a decolonization, since we can't define an 'us' and a 'them' with clarity. Perhaps all we can do is speak of entanglements... And this was a way of proposing a relationship other than subaltern to the West, already proposed in the 1920s in Brazil (with the *Anthropophagic Manifesto*).

I would like to add an aside here, a succinct observation made by the sociologist Heloisa Buarque de Hollanda about the *Anthropophagic Manifesto*: "(The) acme of Brazilian modernism in terms of definition of a modern cultural identity for the country was the proposal of an "anthropophagic" model that suggests an attitude, not of imitation of the central countries, but of a cannibalistic appropriation of the "desirable" aspects of different cultures and values". And she goes on to question this by pointing out, "Actually, who eats who, and what is worth throwing out during the anthropophagic banquet?" I agree, that this modernist idea which has had the function of shoring up nationalism is no longer valid in an era when the importance of acknowledging differences and giving agency to otherness is pertinent in constructing new models for society's possible survival.

My response to Tamar:

"Of course, we can speak of "us" and "them" with clarity from the point of view of colonization. There is the Indigenous and the Not-Indigenous. One cannot begin to overcome colonization if, as is the case in Brazil, it is not admitted because the distinction between colonizer and colonized supposedly cannot be made. (Camus, a Not-Indigenous Algerian, for example, thought that the decolonization of Algeria would not be possible.) Decolonization has occurred in many parts of the world and perhaps we can look to those places as providing possible models while we are in the process of inventing our own. To what extent would the Not-Indigenous be comfortable with agreeing that decolonization could begin? For example, would the Not-Indigenous in Mexico, who are just a moderate majority over the Indigenous, agree that colonization exists? They have not so far. And what would happen in countries like Brazil, where the Not-Indigenous are the overwhelming majority, and the Indigenous peoples are in the clear minority? The Not-Indigenous, as is the case, feel quite comfortable in assuming that colonization is over. This being the case, what do you tell those who are Indigenous? That they do not exist? That they do not count? That they should move forward? How could their colonial situation move forward by unilateral decree of the colonist? By the denial of the existence of colonized Indigenous peoples?

I would like to add that the effects of colonization, if we can ever think of Brazil as de-colonized, would remain forever. An example is the use of the concept of cannibalism, developed in the *Anthropophagic Manifesto* by Oswald de Andrade, a Euro-Brazilian from an eminent family. This concept legitimizes the appropriation of indigenous and Black cultures

by the transplanted European elite. This appropriation is enacted in defense of a “Brazilian” idea of the authenticity of that same transplanted European elite that demands in its logic and practice the physical disappearance of the original native people in order for this new special “Brazil” to remain unchallenged and unquestioned. The premise is that they are cannibalizing European art as “natives” and using their “Brazilian” impulses to cannibalize and then improve European art. In this manner, the whole history of colonization gets thrown overboard as we are all, in theory, like one another and therefore post-colonial.

Brazil is not special. Its beginning was just a bunch of racist thugs running around killing, enslaving and raping. Oswald’s paternal ancestors were part of the first wave of colonizers in the early 17th century in the province of Minas Gerais. These thugs were searching for gold. The euphemism preferred is ‘mining pioneers’, and along the way they killed or enslaved the local Puri natives. As these people proved difficult to exterminate they were infected with smallpox. By 1864, their complete extermination was thought to have been achieved successfully.

To continue the history of cannibalism in Brazil: In the real Brazil that consists of both Indigenous peoples, Blacks and settler colonists (to those who would deny the contemporary use of this term, please note the existence of the federal government organization, INCRA, National Institute of Colonization and Agrarian Reform. To those who cite their late arrival in the 20th century or yesterday and therefore their non-participation in the colonial brutality, please note you are occupying indigenous lands). Shirley Krenak explained:

“In the midst of their slaughter of us, legends of cannibalism, and endless similar stories about my people began to circulate. A king that came to our lands called Dom Joao VI decided on 1808 to declare war on my people, a war named ‘Guerra Justa aos Botocudos’ (The Just War against the Botocudos). The justification for that name, ‘Just War’, was that my people were “obstructing” development throughout the region. To be honest, my people were impeding the burning of the forests, the pollution of our rivers, the extraction of our natural wealth and our dignity stained with innocent blood. And because they thought this land had no owner they decided to completely exterminate us.”

Now back to the elites and cannibalism. Euro-Brazilians’ continuous fascination with cannibalism might perhaps be a subconscious acknowledgement of the genocide committed in Brazil against the native population. If you consider who is eating who, the level of cannibalization was astounding. There were between 20 and 30 million indigenous peoples in Brazil at the time of the beginning of Portuguese colonization in 1500. In the middle of the 20th century the indigenous population was reduced to 180,000. At the same time, 540 languages (not dialects) in Brazil became extinct because of colonization.

I think that this talk between Tamar and I should be re-titled: “Yet Again a Conversation that has Failed in Colonial America.”

In a conference on “Cultural and Artistic Identity in the Americas”, organized by Ivo Mesquita, of the eminent Euro-Brazilian Mesquita family, and hosted in São Paulo in 1991, no indigenous people or Afro-Brazilians were invited as representatives of their culture. The Brazilian delegation of about a dozen, all Euro-Brazilians, included Heloisa Buarque de Hollanda, from the eminent de Hollanda family. Heloisa is also a feminist; her publication in

the conference's book is titled, "Feminism: Constructing Identity and the Cultural Condition."

I asked the Brazilian delegates of one panel, "Why are here no Indigenous people or Afro-Brazilians as delegates?" A woman from the delegation responded (I do not know if it was Heloisa or Aracy Amaral, Ana Maria Belluzzo or Stella Teixeira de Barros) that Brazilians are not racist and did not consider inviting delegates by "race" and that they (the delegates) therefore represented everyone. None of these highly educated and privileged speakers questioned their exclusive participation as Euro-Brazilians in the process of defining Brazil, which has the second largest Black population in the world.

Would it not have been an amazing gesture of empowerment if Heloisa Buarque would have, instead of agreeing to be a delegate, insisted that an indigenous woman take her place? Or if not, realizing that there would be no native and Black participation from Brazil present at all, immediately and publically resigned her position as delegate and left the conference?

Heloisa, writes eloquently that the "experience of Brazilian women and Blacks remains one essentially marked by intolerance and sexual or racial prejudice." (It is interesting to note, however, the omission of the indigenous once again.)

The elite does not give up its power. No matter how feminist it is.

The Eco-Sindical (Ecology and Unions) Conference of the Força Sindical in São Sebastião in São Paulo, in 1991, was the first time that workers met in Brazil to discuss environmental issues. Força Sindical is a union organization and as usual most of the delegates were men. I was to speak on the first day right after the preliminary session. After lunch, I was asked if I would agree to speak at the end of the day because we were running late. I agreed. At the end of the day, I was asked if I would give up my right to speak. I replied, I had no problem not speaking, I am a reluctant speaker and am only too happy not to be in the public eye. But as I was not representing myself; I clarified that I was the only speaker to address indigenous issues and insisted that you cannot have a conference in São Sebastião, one of the first brutal enclaves of colonization and of slavery of indigenous peoples, and not have a speaker on this topic. I think that perhaps, I was asked not to speak, not because I was a woman, but instead because indigenous peoples are not seen as important enough to partake in more "serious" discussions. Must I add, that although it was a working class organization, the leaders of this union were descendants of Europeans.

In 1980, a liberalization program was begun by the military dictatorship (forced by popular revolt) and the conference of the *Sociedade Brasileira para o Progresso da Ciência* (SBPC – Brazilian Society for the progress of Science) which was held in Rio de Janeiro was a celebration of some possible freedoms. I came to hear the feminist discussions. A couple of years earlier, I had been in São Paulo and had had a disappointing experience with feminists there. I hoped this one would be better.

In São Paulo I had interviewed one eminent novelist and feminist at her home. Upon arriving, the writer answered the door and led me to the living room. On the way we passed the kitchen where her maid was listening to a small transistor radio, after having just finishing washing up the lunch dishes. The writer demanded she turn off the radio and get back to work. While we discussed the development of feminism in São Paulo, the maid interrupted to

ask if tea was to be served on the everyday china or on silver. The writer, in a sharp and displeased tone, told her to use her head.

I then went on to meet a small feminist group. I must interrupt here and add that my enunciation of Portuguese (taught to me by my parents who were ill-educated) reveals my lower class country origins very quickly. The feminists attempted to offer their expert advice to me. I insisted on a mutual discourse and was snubbed – rudely.

At the SBPC feminist symposium, Pia Matarazzo spoke. At the time, I remember white (there were no other type visible) Brazilian feminists telling me that I had to support Pia Matarazzo, a highly competent businesswoman. She inherited her father's business empire over the expectations of her brothers. My father was the sometimes driver of her father. During the time my father worked for him, I remember that he and my mother ate a few beans, lots of rice, some vegetables and no protein. My sister and I shared a yogurt for our evening meal. There were continual problems about getting enough to eat during our childhood. I did not understand why I should support Pia, who was part of the cause of these problems. At this feminist symposium there were no indigenous or Black delegates. A young Black woman from the audience, a student at the university where the SPBC event was held, spoke in a soft and nervous voice to these European-descendent middle-to-upper class women, who were the sole representatives of women from Brazil at this symposium. The young Black woman asked, how many of them had been able to come to the meeting because their maids were caring for their husbands and children – were cooking their dinners and picking up the children at school? She asked why these women had not been invited. These feminists, did not even bother to respond. Not one of them. The young Black woman was left there dangling in that very public space of raging quiet and powerlessness. If anyone has some time and has access to the archives of the SBPC in Rio de Janeiro and can find the names of the women who participated in this symposium I would appreciate it.

The elite does not give up its power. The “confusion” that arises in Brazil is that the European feminist discourse is the basis for the development of feminism and the women who have access to this are highly educated women from privileged backgrounds. Until things began to change quite recently due to the government’s racial quota in universities, Black women and especially indigenous women did not have access to universities. None of this is new. But we forget that the Americas are colonized by Europe. And that changes how we must look at the discussions we might have. Because of colonization we must support indigenous struggles in the Americas first and foremost. And because we are feminists we must support first and foremost indigenous women in the Americas. During the 29th São Paulo Biennale (2010) I presented my film, *Iracema* (de Questembert). The work features a main character played by Shirley Krenak, the young warrior and leader of her community in the Krenak Reservation in Resplendor, Minas Gerais. I requested that Shirley be invited to speak about her peoples history and current struggles during the many panels on different issues held at the São Paulo Biennale. I asked a young woman who was an official of the Biennale. She was not interested and Shirley was not invited and has never been invited to any conference organized by non-indigenous Brazilians, although she is a leader of her people and an eloquent speaker.

We must ask why there are no indigenous women in the arts, sciences, business etc. (I had thought to write “indigenous women in positions of power”, but the supremely devious model of unacknowledged racism has made sure that native peoples did not have access to

education until recently. And so we are not at the level of conversation to speak of positions of power.) It is important to ask that every time we go to a museum, to a conference, to an exhibit in a gallery, to the doctor's office, to a university class. We know that the Euro-Brazilian feminist elite will not ask themselves this. And worse, they have willingly conspired with the state discourse of exclusion that insures their exclusivity of representation to make us not question these things.

They are the ones with the “fresh eye” that can look at culture “objectively”.

They are the ones who are not “racists” and do not see any races in Brazil.

They are the ones who are continuously cannibalizing the indigenous and the Black while presenting themselves to Brazilians and the world as the authentic Brazilians – the indigenous does not quite measure up. As one Euro-Brazilian woman who works with the Yanomami once said, “**Our** Indians are not like the ones in North America;” Implying a lack in intellectual capabilities. (As Brazilian indigenous peoples were, until quite recently, deliberately denied access to higher education, European-Brazilians then compare them unfavorably to their North American cousins who have had some opportunities to attend university. Also indigenous peoples from North America have been nationally and internationally organized since the early 20th century. Until recently, these possibilities had been denied to Brazilian indigenous peoples by the Brazilians, themselves.) She is also a respected feminist.

The elite’s relentless denials, their talk of complexity, of nuances are the games that they have been taught to play in a paternalistic and racist society that white feminists willingly accept because therein continues to lie their possibility of power.

In the 1920s, the possibilities of specifically native or Black perspectives were subsumed by the elite’s implantation of the concept of cannibalism, wherein seventy years later a intellectual can unashamedly say that “We” represent everyone.

That royal “We” was a Euro-Brazilian financially-privileged “WE”. Now there is an official policy of inclusion by the Workers’ Party government. This is resulting in a shift in the discourse by some members of the elite who have now thought it opportune to renounce their “whitetude” which is not at this moment fashionable while at the same moment not relinquishing any of the accompanying privileges.

Some have over-night become proudly mestizas, although their blond hair and fair skin does not prevent them from entering blue chip galleries with Black security guards at the door.

One Euro-Brazilian artist who holds a professorship at an art academy (needless to say there are no indigenous persons who hold this position and I doubt if there is a Black intellectual who does) recently said to me, that she does not know what “color” she is. It is quite easy. I wished I had the grace of quick reply: “Walk into a boutique in your very upscale neighborhood, walk into a gallery in your neighborhood and see how many Black Brazilians you find who are not cleaning or serving. Is your skin color not reflected in that of your colleagues at your academy? As you walk into a museum, do your insides tighten because you fear a guard will call to you loudly and tell you that you are not allowed because you do not belong there?” That is how you know what “color” you are.

Race in Brazil cannot occupy a secondary position in feminism but must be concurrent. Otherwise we will be lending support to the Cannibals, the descendants of Europeans in power socially and economically who continue to command the discourse while they deny the possibilities of the inclusion of indigenous peoples and Blacks from that same discourse.

Maria Thereza Alves, Berlin, November 7, 2013