



Eve Ensler and “Congo Stigmata”

We were extremely distressed to read Eve Ensler’s article [The Congo Stigmata in Talk](#) this morning. We have grave concerns about her appropriation of the physical damage and trauma of Congolese women caused by gang rape with her own experiences of cancer.

We encourage everyone to read this [storify of tweets compiled Mikki Kendall](#) which fully explains the quite serious problems with Ensler’s article. We also recommend this [open letter to Ensler written by Lauren Chief Elk](#) on the erasure of the activism of Indigenous women in Canada by the One Billion Rising campaign. Both of these are extremely important analyses of the white saviour complex and the appropriation of the experiences and lives of women of colour for publicity.

We are going to highlight a few of the major concerns we have below:

1.

The appropriation of the experiences of Congolese women to promote her campaign.

2.

The use of medical procedures as a form of entertainment.

3.

Consent: both in terms of wondering if Ensler had consent from the woman whose operation she witnessed and the appropriateness of consent considering the implications of power imbalances.

4.

The glorification of the damage caused by gang rape to the bodies of Congolese Women.

5.

The dehumanisation of Congolese women.

We will not end male violence against women and children by resorting to the same White Saviour constructions that have caused irreparable damages to billions of people across the world. We cannot end violence against women and children until we recognise the humanity of all of us; this article reduces Congolese women to bodies and holes. That isn’t recognising their humanity; it is replicating the same power structures of the White Supremacy.



Added by Admin 10.54am 12.12.13:

This piece has just been brought to our attention and is a must read:

[One Billion Rising, Eve Ensler and the contradictions of carceral feminisms](#)