



Eduardo Sterzi¹

On Photography as Circumnavigation of Anthropology²

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VERSÃO

Abstract

"I do take photographs, but I am not a photographer [...]". "I [...] see photography as a way of escaping from anthropology, leaving anthropology, just as I saw in indigenous anthropology, which I chose as a profession, as a way of getting away from Brazil." Relations between anthropology and photography—however constant—have never been straightforward in Eduardo Viveiros de Castro's intellectual development. For a long time, indeed until quite recently, he clearly evinced discomfort or hesitancy when asked to discuss his photographic experiences—perhaps due to an inability to pinpoint photography's role in his increasingly consolidated and recognized anthropological practice. However, it is this very persistence of his photography—despite his discomfort—that ought to be examined.

Keywords

Photography. Anthropology. Eduardo Viveiros de Castro.

Resumo

"Eu fotografo, mas não sou fotógrafo [...]". "Eu [...] vejo a fotografia como um modo de fugir da antropologia, de sair da antropologia, assim como vi na antropologia indígena que eu escolhi como profissão um modo de sair do Brasil." Jamais foram simples – por mais que tenham sido constantes – as relações entre antropologia e fotografia no percurso intelectual de Eduardo Viveiros de Castro. Durante muito tempo, até recentemente, era perceptível certo desconforto do antropólogo quando convidado a discorrer sobre suas experiências fotográficas. Esse desconforto vinha talvez de não saber indicar exatamente qual o lugar que a fotografia ocupava em meio a uma prática antropológica sempre mais consolidada e reconhecida. É essa própria persistência da fotografia a despeito do desconforto que, porém, merece ser pensada.

Palavras-chave

Fotografia. Antropologia. Eduardo Viveiros de Castro.

1-Universidade Estadual de
Campinas, Brasil.
ORCID:0000-0002-4047-6594

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1- Cf. Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, "A identidade na era de sua reprodutibilidade técnica" [Identity in the age of its technical reproducibility], interviews with Pedro Peixoto Ferreira, Fábio Candotti, Francisco Caminati, and Eduardo Duwe, *Nada*, 11 (2008), 36: "... my relationship with photography has always been very amateur, whereas my relationship with anthropology is professional."

2- A fine personal review of this period of maturity is offered in Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, "Transformação na antropologia, transformação da 'antropologia'" ["Transformation in anthropology, transformation of 'anthropology'"], *Mana*, 18, 1 (2012), 151–171. This piece was originally presented in a lecture delivered on August 24, 2011, at Museu Nacional as part of a competitive procedure for a full professorship.

3- Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *Araweté: os deuses canibais* (Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar and ANPOCS, 1986), no page numbering from 127 to 129. A *inconstância da alma selvagem e outros ensaios de antropologia* (São Paulo: Cosac Naify, 2002).

4- Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *Araweté: o povo do Ipixuna* (São Paulo: ESDI, 1992).

5- Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *Araweté: o povo do Ipixuna*, 2nd ed. (Lisbon: Museu Nacional de Etnologia and Assírio & Alvim, 2000). Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, Camila de Caux, and Guilherme Orlandini Heurich, *Araweté. Um povo tupi da Amazônia*, 3rd ed., revised and enlarged (São Paulo: Edições Sesc São Paulo, 2016).

6- The exhibition *Araweté: um povo tupi da Amazônia* was held from October 8 to November 8, 1992. In addition to De Castro's photographs, it featured images by Carlos Alberto Ricardo and Murilo Santos, videos by the latter and Labi Mendonça, paintings and drawings by Rubens Matuck, and *Araweté* artifacts.

Relations between anthropology and photography—however constant—have never been straightforward in Eduardo Viveiros de Castro's intellectual development. For a long time, indeed until quite recently, he clearly evinced discomfort or hesitancy when asked to discuss his photographic experiences—perhaps due to an inability to pinpoint photography's role in his increasingly consolidated and recognized anthropological practice. Apparently, taking photographs and using them in his books helped him formulate more precisely—for his own purposes—what he was not doing, rather than what he was doing (e.g., he was not doing "visual anthropology"); as if, despite the obvious quality of his photographs, he did not feel authorized to call himself a photographer, as if photography were little more than a persistent juvenile pastime that risked being seen as naive compared with the precocious maturity of his ethnographic and theoretical work.¹ In my own view, however, it is this very persistence of his photography—despite his discomfort—that ought to be examined.

In the course of a non-exhaustive and somewhat zig-zagging perusal of de Castro's oeuvre, one might even reach a conclusion that would be paradoxical at first sight: his discomfort—assuming it is not merely retrospective but actually current with or even prior to his photography—may be situated at the very origin of this persistence. If photography permeates his work, perhaps it does so precisely because it has no definite place or role established once and for all. Therefore, its role in de Castro's intellectual path may be seen more clearly, apart from its purely illustrative use, in the light of its author's most recent meta-anthropological, transdisciplinary, and ecopolitical interventions.²

In any case, its persistence is undeniable. Two of de Castro's books are ethnographic studies as such, and both feature his photographs: *Araweté: os deuses canibais* [*Araweté: cannibal gods*] (1986) and *A inconstância da alma selvagem* [*The Inconstancy of the Indian Soul*] (2002)³. Photographs are used most extensively to illustrate *Araweté: o povo do Ipixuna* [*Araweté: people of Ipixuna*] (1992),⁴ a shorter and less academic version of the 1986 volume, itself a book version of the doctoral thesis he had submitted two years previously as the first ethnography of this Amazonian indigenous people whose first official contacts with white people dated back to 1976. More recent editions of the latter title—*Araweté: o povo do Ipixuna*—have been published in Portugal (2000) with more elaborate photographic content and in Brazil (2017) as a revised and enlarged edition renamed *Araweté: um povo tupi da Amazônia*⁵ [*Araweté: a Tupi People of the Amazon region*]. Photos from the book were first shown for a 1992 multimedia exhibition at Centro Cultural São Paulo organized by the Ecumenical Documentation and Information Center (CEDI). As de Castro himself recalls, the exhibition sought to raise the general public's awareness of the need to demarcate *Araweté* land rights endangered by illegal loggers.⁶ For this purpose, de Castro returned to *Araweté* territory for two month-long visits (late 1991 and March 1992) together with an audiovisual team to produce updated ethnographic and photographic content, and a first video, directed by Murilo Santos. De Castro also had photos from all his previous journeys to the area (two months in 1981, nine in 1982–1983, and one in 1988).

Before the Araweté, previous photographs had featured three other indigenous peoples he had visited for specific projects: the Yawalapíti of the Upper Xingu (1976 and 1977), the Kulina of the Upper Purus (1978), and the Yanomami of the Surucucus Ridge (1979). Before the Centro Cultural São Paulo exhibit, his Yawalapíti photos had been shown at a group exhibition curated by Miguel Rio Branco in Rio de Janeiro (1977) and at the exhibition *Exploring Society Photographically* (1981) of images shot by anthropologists and sociologists, organized by Howard S. Becker for the Mary and Leigh Block Gallery, at Northwestern University (Evanston, IL). Note that although photography preceded his involvement with anthropology, by producing images of native Indians he was not abruptly turning away from taking still shots for his filmmaker friend Ivan Cardoso—among them his earliest photos featuring iconic Brazilian counterculture artists such as Hélio Oiticica and Waly Salomão. Along with his initial ethnographic research projects, the young anthropologist continued to shoot stills for Cardoso's films. To some extent, therefore, countercultural and anthropological gazes were conjoined for his photographic practice. In fact, I think there was some two-way traffic here, perhaps because both aspects emerged around the same time. But this temporal coincidence was merely the chronological materialization of more in-depth affinities between the two fields as the photographer became an anthropologist. Amerindian references, whether directly inserted or more transposed, had always been crucial to any definition of counterculture in Brazil and other countries too (not forgetting that one of Brazilian counterculture's key developments in the 1960s–70s was rediscovering Oswald de Andrade's anthropophagy from late-1920s counterculture). However, de Castro's ethnographic practice and in particular the anthropological and meta-anthropological theorizing of his latter period that posed a new status for the ideas and practices of indigenous Americans (as a counter-Western philosophy and an example of survival) would not have emerged without a framework forged in the wake of the 1968 worldwide revolution, that magical moment for counterculture. (Here, de Castro's use of Gilles Deleuze and Pierre Clastres springs to mind,⁷ but there was also a broader source of inspiration that cannot be reduced to the names of individuals, particularly intellectuals).

The abovementioned feeling of “discomfort” (unease or hesitancy) was clearly evinced in de Castro's interview for the Portuguese publication *Nada*, in 2008. Asked about his impressions of his “involvement” with photography in the broader context of the latter's “use by anthropology,” de Castro replied with negative formulations that in my opinion were symptomatic of this discomfort, hence my deducing that the main reason for this feeling was precisely the difficulty of delimiting a place and a role for photography in his own anthropological practice. Eventually, this difficulty became a novelty and determined the rather elusive or even furtive attendance of photography in his work. Early on, de Castro wrote:

7- Viveiros de Castro himself emphasized Clastres' relationship with 1968. Cf. “The Untimely, Again,” a postface to *Pierre Clastres' Archeology of Violence* (Los Angeles: Semiotext[e], 2010), 9.



8- De Castro, "A identidade na era de sua reprodutibilidade técnica," 34.

I do not follow, apply, or invent any theory, nor do I have a very well-defined idea of the relationship between photography and anthropology. I have no articulated discourse about these two activities of mine, if only because they have very different places in my life and career. I am anything but a visual anthropologist, in any sense of the word. I am a verbal anthropologist, words have always been my main tools.⁸

9- Ibid.

The order of these denials speaks volumes. De Castro's hesitancy is also revealed in the expression "photographic work" that he used to answer a question from the sociologist Pedro Peixoto Ferreira. "[...] my relationship with photography is not about work. Let me put it this way: I do not do 'photographic work.'"⁹ Later on, in the same interview, he even refused to be called a "photographer" and said that photos appear in his books "more as adornments or vignettes than actual exemplars of authorial photographic production as if I were not only an anthropologist but a photographer too. I am not 'also' a photographer. I do take photographs, but I am not a photographer, at least not in these situations."¹⁰

10- Ibid., 40.

What does not being a photographer mean? First of all, it means insisting that there is a dividing line—which is dubious, as noted above—between his photographs of artists when he was working with Ivan Cardoso and his photographs of native Indians taken during his fieldwork, which he then separates from any more consolidated professional or intellectual commitment:

Photography was a hobby for me, and I earned a couple of bucks as a stills photographer. When I started my fieldwork as an anthropologist, I took it along as purely personal interest, but I have never used photography as a descriptive or analytical tool in my anthropological work. My theses and books could perfectly well get by without the odd photo here and there, or vice versa.¹¹

11- Ibid., 34–36.

I previously referred to an elusive or furtive attendance of photographs but, unlike the author himself, I would argue that their presence is sometimes decisive, if not from the point of view of the anthropological argument then in terms of the book's rhetorical, poetic, and artistic construction. To take one example, in *Araweté: os deuses canibais*, a section of photos is introduced immediately after a meaningful sentence that concludes the second introductory chapter: "Let us go to the Araweté."¹² In the book's context, "going to the Araweté" means primarily going to their photographs

and seeing them (the Araweté) through de Castro's gaze. As if photos had the ability to actualize the people in question; as if photos provided very strong initial (or more precisely preliminary) evidence that would then be developed by words.

In his piece for the catalogue of the exhibition *Exploring Society Photographically* some thirty years before the interview he gave to Nada, de Castro had acknowledged a somewhat less ornamental function for his photographic practice:

I took these pictures to capture aspects of Yawalapíti life I could not reproduce in written language and to show the aesthetic side of my perception of them, my pleasure in seeing them, difficult to include in an academic work. Anthropological monographs leave little room for 'nonstructural' aspects of the investigator's perception. On the contrary, they aim to structure that perception: diffuse impressions, aesthetic pleasure, or existential desperation are usually communicated orally to friends and colleagues, or made into 'literature' in the introductions to the monographs. I prefer to make these sensations public through photographs.¹³

12- De Castro, *Araweté: os deuses canibais*, 127.

These valuable notes enable a slightly more complex rereading of his serial denials in the 2008 interview: not being a photographer, not being a visual anthropologist, not having an articulated discourse around the relationship between photography and anthropology, photography not being part of his work—meaning anthropological work—or not being work or study in itself. Photography thus practiced and analyzed, one might add, does at the very least reveal an aspect within anthropological work itself that eschews being identified as “work” but lends a poetic dimension to it (hence the mention of other authors' introductions being “literature”—these somewhat ironic inverted commas were added by de Castro himself), an aesthetic and particularly pleasurable aspect that will hold out against structural schematizing.

13- Id., “Two Rituals of the Xingu,” Howard S. Becker (trans.), in *Exploring Society Photographically*, edited by Howard S. Becker. (Evanston: Mary and Leigh Block Gallery/ Northwestern University, 1981), 54.

On this point, there is an extremely important strategic idea in de Castro's thinking and praxis to be noted: the almost paradoxical idea of escaping inward (rather than predictably escaping outward). This idea appears for the first time in the initial section—precisely named “Escaping from Brazil”—of *O campo na selva, visto da praia* [Countryside in the forest, seen from the beach], published in 1992¹⁴. His more widely known formulations on this subject may be found in 1999 and 2007 interviews in which de Castro states his decision to “do ethnology to escape from Brazilian society, this supposedly compulsory subject matter of every social scientist in Brazil,” before explaining that “fleeing from Brazil was a method of reaching Brazil from the other side”; in short, a ‘circumnavigation’: “It was escaping from Brazil to reach another more interesting place, that was not so weighty, numbered, and measured by what [Jorge

14- Id., “O campo na selva, visto da praia,” *Estudos Históricos* 5, no. 10 (1992), 170–172.



15- Id., "O chochalho do xamã é um acelerador de partículas" [The shaman's rattle is a particle accelerator] (1999), interview with Renato Sztutman, Silvana Nascimento, and Stelio Marras, in Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, edited by Renato Sztutman (Rio de Janeiro: Azougue, 2007), 47. Id., "Uma boa política é aquela que multiplica os possíveis" [A good policy is one that multiplies possibilities] (2007), interview with Renato Sztutman and Stelio Marras, *ibid.*, 249.

16- Id., "A identidade na era de sua reprodutibilidade técnica," 36.

Luis] Borges called European categories—a place more interesting than 'Brazil' as defined by those holding power.¹⁵ If anthropology is an escape from Brazil (the official Brazil adequately described in terms of State and Nation) into another Brazil (wild, uncharted), then photography emerges as an escape from anthropology itself, as de Castro explicitly states in his interview for Nada:

I ... see photography as a way of escaping from anthropology, leaving anthropology, just as I saw in indigenous anthropology, which I chose as a profession, as a way of getting away from Brazil.... You must always have a way out, for everything. Otherwise, you are really trapped. I like having alternatives and photography was a way out from anthropology in every sense of the term: getting out of the fieldwork situation when it induced despair (which often happens) or on the contrary when it aroused perceptions and affections that could hardly find a place in my writing.¹⁶

19- Ibid

17- Ibid

In its own way, I think this 'escaping' also leads to unknown territories within anthropology itself, to spaces of poetic wildness in which the anthropologist places his own "scientific" authority on the line. Therefore, photography goes together with de Castro in his "escape from Brazil" as "a kind of resource," "almost as if it were part of a fieldwork diary," or "an input that has been profoundly transformed by the time it reaches anthropological work as such."¹⁷ De Castro himself—hinting at one of the points of incidence of this input—draws attention to the contrasting or even paradoxical relationship ("nonetheless paradoxical") between the fact that he has never reflected on "the status of images in anthropological work" and the fact that "the status of vision in the societies ... studied" is highly relevant. "I have written exhaustively about Amazonian perspectivism, and this visual metaphor is neither accidental nor uncontrolled. On the contrary, it is a metaphor founded on the importance of vision for Amerindian cosmologies, together with the other senses. Hierarchizing the senses does not make much sense, but vision is surely a crucial reference for the indigenous concepts of knowledge and perception as a whole."¹⁸

18- Ibid

However, the point here is not to take de Castro's photographs as illustrations of Amerindian perspectivism or any of his other theoretical elaborations starting from Amerindian theories. The anthropologist himself warns, "... my photographs are there, the various works I have written are here, and the relationship between them (if any) is infinitely complicated. Either the path is too long, or there is no path, but there is no direct relationship."¹⁹ But if not illustrations, they are something else: the indirect relation between photography and anthropology, in de Castro's case, may be described as metaphorical or even allegorical. These photographs

may also be seen as translations in the strong sense of the word: as Haroldo de Campos would say, they are transcreations,²⁰ or intersemiotic transpositions that primarily interrogate the very possibility of reconstructing meaning from different processes for producing sense (or more precisely, senses in more than one sense of the word)—which, to some extent, also alter established forms of target-text code (photography in this case) depending on the signifying singularities of the “source text” (indigenous lifestyle and philosophy, but also the anthropologist’s interpretation of them). They are transcreations of both the practices and ideas of the indigenous peoples studied (as well as the practices and ideas of the artists portrayed by him) and the anthropologist’s theoretical hypotheses about them (and also about the artists²¹). De Castro himself has on more than one occasion revisited the notion of anthropology as translation, aware that “translation will always be treason, as people often say,” but also that “however, it all depends on choosing who is to be betrayed.” Translating—transcreating—means finding an “efficacious betrayal or treason”: “in a nutshell, the aim is to reconstitute the indigenous conceptual imagination in terms of our own imagination. In our own terms, I said—because we have no others; but the key point here is that it must be done in a way that is capable (if all ‘goes well’) of forcing our imagination and its terms to emit totally different and unheard-of meanings.”²²

It is no coincidence that some of de Castro’s most memorable photographs reveal the gap between photographer and subject, the distance between one and the other, but also how empathy may bridge or shorten this gap or distance (there is a striking play of gazes and smiles in his images, particularly those featuring Araweté people). But these photographs also show the gap between this photographer-anthropologist’s practices and those of other photographers who have portrayed indigenous peoples.

Hence, for example, against an anticipated “aesthetic of poverty,” the anthropologist says he prefers the naturally photogenic images of the Araweté.²³ Although his photography may be circumstantial or occasional, de Castro is by no means a naïve photographer. His images of the Kulina, Yawalapíti, Yanomami, and Araweté show a lucid awareness of the challenges facing photographers working with indigenous peoples. This awareness, which may be deduced from an analysis of his images, is explicitly shown a posteriori in discursive form in a series of comments on a collection of photographs of Indians for a series of videos posted on the blog of Instituto Moreira Salles (IMS) in January 2011.²⁴ For de Castro, photography means critically examining photographic portrayals of Amerindian peoples.

He deliberately conceives photographs that contrast with the alibi role fulfilled—sometimes involuntarily—by earlier photographs of Xingu Indians:

For a long time, the Parque do Xingu played a fundamental ideological role. The Indians of the Xingu were always the most photographed, filmed, and visited of all the Brazilian Indians; they are

20- Cf. Haroldo de Campos, *Transcrição*, edited by Marcelo Tápia and Thelma Médici Nóbrega (São Paulo: Perspectiva, 2015).

21- Cf., for example, Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, “O igual e o diferente” [Same and different], a piece written for *Ex-posição*, a group exhibition organized by Carlos Vergara in 1972. For more on this piece see Veronica Stiginger, “Parangolés and Dancing Gazes,” in this catalog.

22- Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *The Inconstancy of the Indian Soul*. The excerpts have been translated from the Portuguese especially for this publication.

23- Id., “A identidade na era de sua reprodutibilidade técnica,” 41.

24- *Cara de índio – conversa com Eduardo Viveiros de Castro*, Blog IMS, a set of five videos, <http://blogdoims.com.br/cara-de-indio-conversa-com-eduardo-viveiros-de-castro/>. In Portuguese.



25- Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, "Two Rituals of the Xingu," 59.

conspicuous in illustrated books for tourists about exotic Brazil, on postcards, and in stereotypes of the mass media. Thus, the 'protection' given the Indians of the Xingu—the federal guarantee of the right to self-determination and the possession of their lands—served as an alibi, disguising the misery and plunder suffered by other Brazilian Indians. While this helped the Indians of the Xingu themselves—after all, it is better to be visited by the king of Belgium or photographed by Japanese tourists than killed by a fazendeiro [rancher] or have your land expropriated by a multinational mining company—it nevertheless gave a distorted picture of the Indians' real situation. Now, with the Parque do Xingu in danger of disappearing in the face of official indifference, things will certainly get worse, and the presence of the whites will no longer be confined, as in the pictures I took, to colored balloons, glass beads, and hunting rifles.²⁵

The above comments on the IMS collection highlight the poised composure of Albert Frisch's and Marc Ferrez' photographs:

For viewers today, they convey a strongly forced, artificial component that shows pronounced contrasts with the photos of José Medeiros or Maureen [Bisilliat], for different reasons. José Medeiros followed the more photojournalistic tradition, while Maureen was more for her large-scale dramatic close-ups. Here, on the contrary, there is this middle-distance thing. Even if it is a photo of couples, groups, or people, there is a certain distance, and there is always this 'arranged' feel—like a floral arrangement, so to speak. Typical scenes.

They are 'paradigmatic scenes,' 'photos marked by the notion of type.' In short, while Maureen Bisilliat's photographs portray Indians as individuals,²⁶ Frisch's show then as types. From these opposed extremes, we may conclude that de Castro's main interest is no longer in individuals or types but a different form of representation that may be called "example," to borrow a word from his own meta-theoretical and ecopolitical vocabulary.

None of de Castro's essays have examined this issue unless I am mistaken, so one has to watch the margins of his textual production, his tweets and interviews. In March 2016, he tweeted a series of aphorisms distinguishing examples from models:

26- And the extreme close-ups of body parts, characteristic of Bisilliat's work with the Xingu Indians, show something like the representational limit of the individual: the super-individualization of bodily fragments reveals an implosion of individual aspect as such.

Difference between model and example. Model imposes copy; example inspires invention. Verticality—model, horizontality—example.

A model is an engineer's ideal; an example is a bricoleur's stimulus. Models give orders; examples give clues.

The element of the model is Self, example, doing...²⁷

A model is Platonic and extensive; an example is empirical and intensive.

In short: a model falls from the sky; an example rises from the earth.

An example gives you several ideas. A model rams one Big Idea down your throat.

A model implies believing; an example prompts creating. Models are catechetical; examples are heuristic.

Models are based on joining or membership, examples on alliance or affinity.²⁸

27- To which Déborah Danowski replies: "Examples work by varying, models by copying. Examples are Tardean, models Platonic" (@debidanowski, 17 March 2016).

28- @nemoid321, 17 March 2016.

De Castro revisited this distinction in his interview with Alexandra Lucas Coelho:

Models must be distinguished from examples. Indians are examples rather than models. We will never be able to live like Indians, for all sorts of reasons. Not only because we cannot do so, but also because we would not want to. Nobody wants to give up using computers or antibiotics or anything like that. But the Indians do set an example of how to balance work and leisure. Basically, they work three hours a day. The average working time of primitive peoples is three or four hours at most. All they have to do is hunt, eat, and plant cassava. We have to work eight, twelve, sixteen hours. What do they do the rest of the time? They make up stories, or dance. Which is better or worse? I always find this American model strange: we work twelve hours a day for over eleven months a year, to take fifteen days off. Whom does it benefit?²⁹

29- Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, "A escravidão venceu no Brasil. Nunca foi abolida" [Slavery won in Brazil. It has never been abolished] interview with Alexandra Lucas Coelho, Público, Ípsilon supplement, Mar 16, 2016.



30- Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, apud Rafael Cariello, "O antropólogo contra o Estado", *Piauí*, 88 (Dec. 2013).

31- Eduardo Viveiros de Castro and Déborah Danowski, "Is there a world to come? Essay on fears and ends," in *Cannibal Metaphysics* (Minneapolis: Univocal, 2014).

32- Marielle Macé, *Styles. Critique de nos formes de vie* (Paris: Gallimard, 2016). The book's first chapter (11–54) is headed "Pour une 'stylistique de l'existence'" —the expression here is Foucault's. For the many references to Viveiros de Castro, cf. 30–31, 41, 203, 249–250, 271, 278, 341, and 343.

This exemplary character of de Castro's photography is clearly brought out by images of one or more native Indians engaged in some activity—such as preparing food—while resting in a hammock or on the ground. This is a flagrantly paradoxical attitude by the capitalist West's standards. How can a single gesture combine laziness and action, resting and producing? Here we have a concrete image of the anthropologist's celebrated anticapitalist and counter-Marxist statement: "Work is not the essence of man, no frigg'in' way; activity perhaps, but not work."³⁰

Viewed as a sequence, these photos pose a kind of macro-allegory of indigenous lifeways actively counterposed to the West's, which taken to an extreme in the context of de Castro's and Déborah Danowski's reflections on the Anthropocene takes us to a formula in which the Amerindians—whose worlds started ending in 1492—are "specialists in ends of the world"³¹ and to the conclusion that we may follow their example in an attempt to survive the imminent end of our own world caused by man-made climate change. Particularly striking in this respect are some of de Castro's photographs of characters that are not immediately identifiable as either indigenous or nonindigenous. A lady from Altamira is dressed rather unusually for any standards, Amerindian or Western. These photographs capture a certain despondency or melancholy of impoverished indigenous peoples but also hope for the future (that is already there in the form of emergence) and a dignity that cannot be obliterated.

On the other hand, I believe there is also something of this "becoming Indian" (to use an expression after Deleuze and Guattari) or "turning Indian" (after Oswald de Andrade) in de Castro's photos of artists such as Hélio Oiticica or Waly Solomão. There is something there that is beyond artistic posing, that is no longer just art but a vital commitment that is made and exhibited on their bodies.

De Castro sees photography as a product of collaboration—co-activity, co-poiesis—between photographer and subject. Photographic-anthropological poetics only materialize from a poetic pre-vision of everyday life invented and experienced by indigenous peoples. It is poetics in the full sense of the word, precisely because this way of life does not conform to Western hegemonic gestural and experiential patterns. The same is true of the artists portrayed by de Castro, although there is a difference: artists are deliberately counterposed to dominant modes—they cannot but take dominant modes as their point of departure, even if only to oppose them—while for the Indians, this means, so to speak, just going about their lives. Therefore, the example set by Indians is in some ways more of a challenge for Western societies than the one posed by artists. No matter how wild their art, it is from the outset at risk of being domesticated and becoming yet another commodity. Thus, modernity's most revolutionary art was that which set out to abolish the separation between art and life. Not accidentally, Marielle Macé found that de Castro posed major pointers for her essay claiming a "stylistic of existence" that is also a "critique of our life forms" ("our" meaning Western).³² Macé emphasizes the anthropologist's willingness to study "thinking styles" of indigenous peoples, which would be a way of "honoring the power of conceptual

imagination and creativity inherent in every collective,” but also a way of “favoring the return effect of this force for ourselves: in other words, reflect on what will become of us if ‘we’ let ourselves be truly reached, moved, by other ways of being human.”³³ In fact, as Macé points out, this way of thinking no longer poses “‘other’ against ‘same’”: “there are only ways of altering.”³⁴ This expression—ways of altering—is useful to grasp what is at stake in the uncertain but very rich zone of contact between photography and anthropology in de Castro’s trajectory. From this expression and the extension Macé affords it, we may revisit two important notions that the anthropologist was already elaborating in his early research with the Yawalapíti—fabricating the body and bodily mannerisms³⁵—and under their light realize that through their sympathetic and sym-poetic adherence to the bodies portrayed and their ability to convey some of the emotion of this contact—his photographs prompt viewers to suspect they hold more variations of the wild body within themselves.

33- Ibid., 30–31.

34- Ibid., 249.

35- Cf. Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, “Esboço de cosmologia yawalapíti” [Outline of Yawalapíti cosmology] and “Perspectivismo e multinaturalismo na América indígena” [Perspectivism and multinaturalism in indigenous America], in *The Inconstancy of the Indian Soul* (especially under the subtitle “fabricating the body” and the excerpt in which the expression “bodily mannerism” appears). The expressions have been translated especially for this publication based on the text in Portuguese.

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VERSÃO

Eduardo Sterzi

Escritor, crítico e professor de Teoria Literária na Universidade Estadual de Campinas (UNICAMP). Publicou, entre outros, *Por que ler Dante* (crítica, 2008), *A prova dos nove: alguma poesia moderna e a tarefa da alegria* (crítica, 2008), *Aleijão* (poesia, 2009), *Cavalo sopa martelo* (teatro, 2011) e *Maus poemas* (poesia, 2016). Organizou *Do céu do futuro: cinco ensaios sobre Augusto de Campos* (2006) e foi um dos curadores, com Veronica Stigger, da exposição *Variações do corpo selvagem: Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, fotógrafo* (2015).

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