

COMMUNICATIONAL METROPOLIS
Self-representation, ubiquitous subjects, exact imagination
Massimo Canevacci

People ask, 'Which do you prefer, 'Indian' or 'Native American?'
Neither is acceptable, nor is any version of the word 'Cherokee' ... The
Cherokee word for Cherokee is 'Ani Yunh Wiya'. If translated literally
it might mean *The People*, as so many other Indian nations call
themselves. None of the words you call us by are words by which we
call ourselves.

Durham, 1993:124

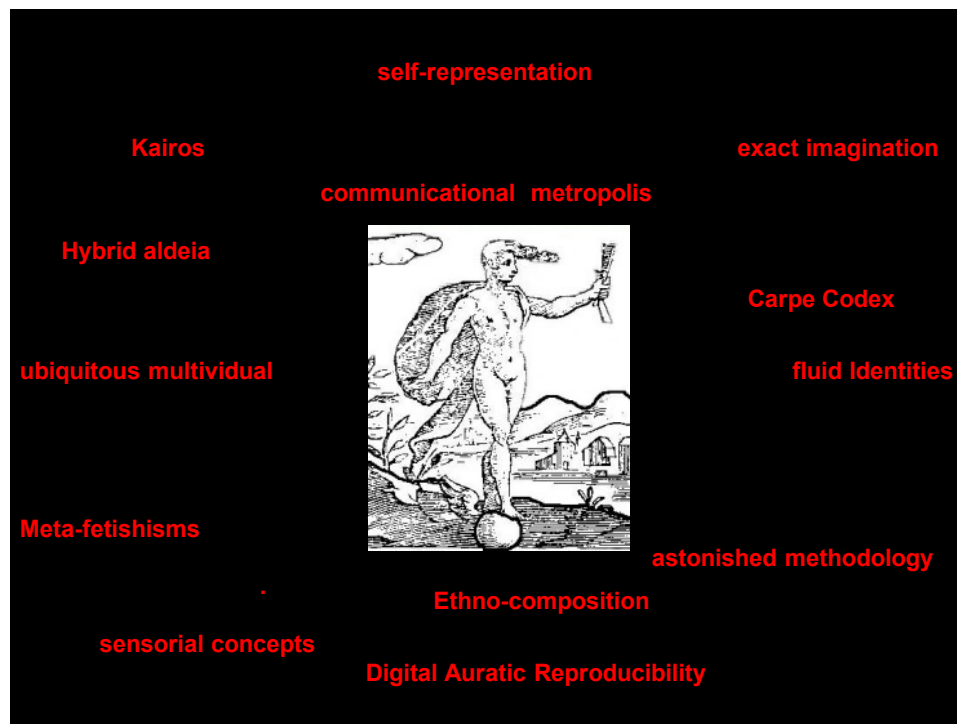
My paper will present a multi-sited anthropology applied to ubiquitous metropolis (São Paulo) and hybrid *aldeia* (the Bororo village in Meruri, Mato Grosso). The digital communication are connecting a mega-city as São Paulo and a small-village as Meruri. In these perspectives, common resources and a governed design of a city (or village) have to face the cultural challenge of ubiquitous subjects who are in a no-ending mix of space/time, developing a plural and transurban identity, and a fragmented montage of experiences.

Following George Marcus, the multi-sited ethnographic perspective is an approach that traces cultural formations and their circulation across different contexts. The multi-sited approach "moves out from the single sites and local situations of conventional ethnographic research designs to examine the circulation of cultural meanings, objects, and identities in diffuse time-space" (Marcus 1995, 96).

The emergence of this kind of multi-sited ethnography is a *trans-disciplinary* and *trans-spatial* methodology connecting and crossing cultural, ethnic and gender studies, expanded design, urban anthropology, digital communication and performative arts.

In a micro-perspective, my multi-sited ethnography is based on my fieldwork that, since 2005, is trying to elaborate a wandering constellation where it is possible to design the transitive, conflictual, syncretic (crossing-and-mixing) process between a metropolis as São Paulo and an indigenous *aldeia* as Meruri. My aim is an attempt to prefigure a different Brazil, where it will be possible to apply an experimental transitive project in-between city and *aldeia* through common spaces and different governances.

My transfusion fieldwork between São Paulo and Meruri designs the following moving constellation where it is possible to look at an ethnographic composition, some conceptual keywords and a practical hypothesis:



My wandering constellation

1 - Communicational metropolis

Contemporary metropolis is characterised – differently from the industrial city and the modernist metropolis - by deep relations with the digital expansion of communication-culture-consumption. This encounter produces both post-industrial economic value and cultural values such as lifestyles, worldviews, syncretisms and mythologies. Communication is the most decisive element in the floating configuration of such a metropolis, in which the historical concept of society loses its classical centrality and becomes a metaphor (“social network”). The communicational metropolis offers a potential panorama beyond metaphysical dualisms, industrialist paradigms, sociological dialectics; without a politically defined centre and toward but a polycentric constellation.

The communicational metropolis does not have a politically defined centre, but a differentiated polycentric and polyphonic constellation, temporarily defined. Polycentrism means that consumption-communication-culture has increasing importance regarding classical production. This mutation is based on shopping-centres, theme parks, art museums, universal exhibitions, fashion shows, stadiums and, obviously, the Internet. And at the same time, the differences among work, labour, job, artificer and opus are growing. Polyphonies means that it is possible to interpret such a horizontal transformation through different and often aporetic narrations and no more with a monological discourse

This material/immaterial context develops a type of ubiquitous subjects that are no longer the homogeneous and massified public of the industrial age. They are pluralised and fragmented audiences that like to perform consumption and communication. “The whole notion of fragmentation implied that the rules given to architects and architectural

students were no longer valid" (Hadid, 1991:47). It is possible to affirm the same holds for anthropologists, or human science researchers in general, for whom fragmentation is a taboo.

Digital communication is even more important when considering the continuous techno-cultural innovations, behavioural values, mixture of languages (verbal, iconic, written, sonic) and identity relations. Culture - in the anthropological sense, which includes lifestyles, worldviews, myths, etc. - is a constituent part of the performative metropolis. In order to understand this metropolis, it is crucial to look at the relations between post-Euclidean architectures, public arts and expanded design. Zaha Hadid, the Anglo-Iraqi architect, is a contemporary creator of a visual philosophy that changes the aesthetical sensitivity of individuals and publics.

Her creative works may illustrate the emergence of this post-Euclidean culture. She developed a type of digital elaboration able to create architectural fantasies that do not belong to our everyday geometric experience. She applies a hybrid self-generative multi-dimension in architectural diagonal forms that have never existed before and that are not based on classical Euclidean geometry, composed of square, circle, etc. Thus, Zahad creates an innovative metropolitan experience, challenging our eyes, accustomed to rectangular and pyramidal buildings with modernist form.

Philip Jodidio interprets her work evocating "chthonic creatures, whose direction of movement is linear through adaptation to the underground" (2012:12). Now I will quote her more impressive post-Euclidean concepts: "hybridize, morph, de-territorialize, deform, iterate, nurbs, generative components, script rather than model" (Schumacher, 2008 - apud Jodidio, 2012:8). Perhaps her more complex concept is *Symptoms of a Repressed Impurity*. The history of Western civilization - based on the concepts of purity, authenticity, origin - eliminates all that is impure. So some impure code or symbol becomes a symptom that may configure the most unsuspected, strange, uncanny and enigmatic form. The eruption of a symptom may have any unforeseeable aspect, but never a regular one as in the Euclidian model. That's why she is a post-Euclidean generative architect with an *undisciplined transfusion*.

Zaha Hadid transfigures these uncertain symptoms in architecture through a not-normative geometry. Symptoms are the deviant results of a problem that a person or a culture does not want to look at. They are often skin eruptions. Just like a therapeutic psycho-architect, her solution is to liberate impurity from a secular stigma and transfigures the skin eruption into *chthonic disruption*.

Zaha Hadid calls her architectures *generative ones*: that's why she is also anthropologist and philosopher. This generates unprecedented forms creating *entities* that may be imagined as living creatures. *If her generative architecture is auto-morphic, it means by extension that common digital image can be auto-generative through exact imaginations*. That's why she is a post-Euclidean generative architect. "Hadid has broken not only the post-Bauhaus aesthetic, but more significantly, the grid and the solid

Euclidean” (Schumacher,25). If it is necessary to interpret symptoms, it is fundamental to face many disciplines, but first of all psychoanalysis.

In this transurban context, the artistic subjectivities express techno-hybrid identities, looking for autonomous first-person narrations (stories, visions, performances, musics). Such a "multividual" - fluid and multiple – is not a passive recipient of external cultural events, but an active participant, a co-creator subject that modifies the present patterns, liberating his/her own will of self-representation. The political practice of a transitive citizenship is going to be present in the performance metropolis.

Digital cultures spread out in the emergent metropolises not only offer technical support, but also the decentralising communicational setting which determines sensorial/rational ruptures in relation to the analogical. Therefore, the ethnographic glance needs to be trained along the visionary *visual-scape* of the communicational metropolis. On this panoramic *body-scape*, citizens affirm themselves as transitive and performative subjects, who are changing public institutions or private enterprises in relation to connective cultures, expanded arts, innovative architectures. Metropolitan panoramas become narrative plots determined by the assembly of fragmented experiences, spontaneous performance, trans-urban individuals, wandering groups, temporary crowds or identities. Such a fragmented montage is characterised by expanded design, augmented communication (UC, QR Code, iPhone, mash-up, etc.), common actors.

Therefore it is possible to follow projects by singular persons, informal groups or organised citizens who can create poetical-politic fictions (and frictions) between web-urban connections, augmented realities, partial stories, interactive sounds and assembled images. The expansion of such quiet invisible sensorial concepts is favouring the desire of being individuated, observed, and modified in a pragmatic horizontal line. That is, *common politics*. Such labyrinthine codes create enigmatic bonds, sensorial distortions, accidental encounters, unfinished montages. They dilate material/immaterial fragments that transform the urban configuration through fluid meanings. They extend autonomous subjectivities that choose to tell imaginary visions through their active mindful body. The making of a different metropolis is developed through a decentred capacity of feeling a communicational and ubiquitous subjectivity.

A reflexive “common” metropolis is narrated. Decentred, autonomous, syncretic textualities are expressed. Digital communication produces *augmented narratives* that redesign compositions temporarily assembled in the urban interstices. The traditional *roots* change from the misery of being a static, fixed, underground memory and turn into luminous ethnographic wandering *routes*. Trails and narrations are interconnected according to impure logics, by which the metropolises always nourish themselves against the “ideal city”, fetishised by philosophers, politicians and city planners. A street angle turns into a visual sequence, a public work of art, a labyrinth with many possible exits. A labyrinth that does not close but dilates. Street attractors, simultaneous metamorphoses, encounter suggestions, *flânerie* desires: such uncanny panoramas emerge through the urban common connections.

Self-representation, communicational metropolis, public art, digital culture and trans-urban subject are the unquiet and interchangeable elements which the ethnographic eye, increasingly characterised by ubiquity, should aim. Ubiquitous ethnography is emerging from the context and from the method, mixing spaces-times, involving the floating researcher's sensoriality in a material/immaterial fieldwork. Along such a process, the concept of *composition* filters, fragments and combines the data, presenting them ("composing" them) through differentiated languages. Composition manifests a partial comprehension of the research "object" increasingly transfigured as a "subject": something or somebody (*entity*) in between the subject and the object. The subject expands into the object as the material into the immaterial and vice versa. There is no dialectic in such a process, and even less synthesis but only temporarily hybrid montages, looking for empirical contexts and individual experiences.

The expansion of digital technologies cannot be interpreted as human body prostheses, but rather as continuous co-penetrations and hybrid mixtures in the course of which it is not possible to define where the object (a mouse, the screen, the keyboard) and where the subject (the fingers, the eyes, the body/mind) start. The digital techno-body favours the hybridisation inside screen-mouse-hand, differently from the analogical prostheses by which the hammer is added to the hand. It is an *eXpanded body* or a *post-human bodyscape*...

2 - Ubiquitous subjects.

My paper will present an anthropological perspective on time through the key-concept of ubiquity: *ubiquitimes*. Digital cultures and communication are going to transform the classical distinction of space-and-time, favouring a decentred and non-linear experiences of mixing *spacetimes*. A strong metaphorical use of this term has been used on web-culture. A shared affirmation is that the web is ubiquitous and so ubiquities characterizes internet's space-time (human and not-human) relations. *Ubiquitimes* also expands a restless montage of syncretic concepts and polyphonic methods in digital culture.

My incongruous montage of syncretic concepts and polyphonic methods stresses that the deep meaning of contemporary for me is not connected only to the actual time, but to expanded, restless and differentiated times. Following Oswald de Andrade, an important Brazilian poet, I adore his anthropophagic concept of *pressauro* as a mix of present, past and future.

The ubiquitous subject of the urban experience is *multividual*. Ubiquity is the contemporary condition that links metropolis and aldeia, subjects and cultures, body and screen. Through digital communication, ubiquity embodies a logical-sensorial immanence and tensions beyond material/immaterial dualism. Ubiquity may favor a potential imagination connecting digital technologies, common resources, de-centre governance. Ubiquitous visions are favouring a non-linear space-time paths, beyond any fix identity of *things* and *beings* where unlimited poetic and political imaginations are wandering.

I do not want to cover the history of the concept of ubiquity and its changes over time. In recent years there has been a strong metaphoric use of the term to identify a *modus operandi* through web-culture and particularly digital design. Consequently, the first statement is that the relation between the web and the metropolis is ubiquitous: the communicational ubiquity characterises the space-time relations in urban daily life. *Chthonic pressauro ubiquitimes...*

The current meaning of such concept inherits and expands that of *chronotopos* elaborated by literary and anthropological disciplines. Developing its scientific matrix (*chronos+topos* = time+space), Bakhtin (1988) applied such a concept to interpret 19th Century novels. Following his method, *chronotopos* unifies what *was* considered an *apriori* and so determines a pattern of writing, in which the author decentres each character in both psychological and narrative styles. In short, the *chronotopos* is a prerequisite for the development of literary polyphony and dialogical imagination, in which subjectivities have been multiplying in their specific and irreducible individuality. The hero is no longer a monological projection of the author, but each character develops his/her psycho-linguistic autonomy. That is, a polyphonic composition.

Another concept related to both is that of “simultaneity”. Futurists affirmed and loved such concept, and have applied it to plastic arts (painting and sculpture) and performative arts, in which poems, music and stories were simultaneously presented on stages or on streets. This expressive choice is fundamental for my statement: Futurists have been the first who, as avant-garde, loved the fluid metropolis as opposed to the boring countryside or the romantic moonlight. In Marinetti’s urban experiences, dissonant panoramas, body extensions and dislocated soundscape emerge simultaneously (Marinetti, [1909] 1968).

For Futurists, simultaneity is the aesthetic experience made of fluid fragments between metropolis and technology. An expressive pulse of distorted images or “free words” (*parolibere*) beyond any classic grammar are performed thanks to a simultaneous subject: the *futurist*. And the futurist is the one whose subjectivity is trained to understand the flexibilities and mixture between space-times in the urban panoramas. Such simultaneous optics is a multi-faced art. The future is announced through the iconic-sonic dissonant movements originating in the streets, crossing the atelier window, going to the painter’s canvas or the musician’s score. *Simultaneously*, the street embodies futuristic arts.

I have referred to the material dimension which characterises simultaneity. In contrast, the concept of ubiquity is disentailed from such a unique empirical matrix. Perhaps the autonomy of philosophical ubiquity derives from an archaic abstraction mystically connected to a deity. The ubiquitous is not the result of the empirical experience in daily life as the simultaneous is; on the contrary, it belongs to a visionary perception of the invisible in which the human condition is constantly observed by the divine, from which it is not possible to run away by hiding in a secret place, since “the ubiquitous being” can find you everywhere.

Contemporary ubiquity develops the sensorial immanence of logics through material/immaterial hybrid communication. It expresses conceptual tensions beyond dualism. Ubiquity presents an immanent *and* transcendent critique to a way of feeling the human condition based on binary oppositions. These feelings are functional to reconduct the quotidian complexities inside the dichotomic domain of *reason*. Ubiquity is uncontrollable, unintelligible, indeterminable. Out of the dominant political control of monological rationality ("ratio") and of any linear space/time determination or theological predicament. From this perspective, it is possible to pull out its undue misappropriation from what is defined as "god". Therefore, it is important to elaborate ubiquitous visions for humanist extra-margins inventions: beyond the national border, the fixed identity of thing or beings. In such a common movement, ubiquity offers unlimited poetical-political compositions.

Ubiquity is the potentiality of the exact imagination that joins common spaces and private times together: ubiquity is the transcendent immanence of material/immaterial.

The space-time coordinates become tendentially superfluous and the silhouette of a ubiquitous subject has expanded. The ubiquitous identity dives the personal experience through instantaneous relation with "the other": an "other" equally ubiquitous, living where his/her digitalised communicational system is active. Such experience does not mean dematerialisation of interpersonal relations; it certifies complex psycho-corporal networks, optical and manual connections, and cerebral imaginary dislocating the *static mobility* of the subject. The "multividual" concept is manifest in such ubiquitous connections. Ubiquitous ethnography expands connective "multividualities"; a pattern which connects fragments of spaces/times. The subject of the ubiquitous ethnographic experience is *multividual*, the one who is multiplying temporary identities.

The concept *Digital Auratic Reproducibility (DAR)* is emerging along the process about ubiquitimes and multividual (Canevacci 2012). Performing arts, expanded design and digital communication are morphing the *aura* into *reproducibility* and vice versa. *DAR* is related to the mutant concept of ubiquitous entities. Instead of dialectic opposition or dichotomic paradigm, *aura* and *reproducibility* (Benjamin) are digital mixed articulations and the common result is becoming syncretistic, polyphonic, and diasporic. This *reproducible aura* – an aporia for dialectical thinking – is the concrete perspective of a ubiquitous designer.

Following Mark Weiser (unfortunately he died in 1999), widely considered the "father" of *ubiquitous computing*, ubiquities characterizes internet space-time relations and I add human and not-human ontological conditions:

"Ubiquitous computing names the third wave in computing. First were mainframes, each shared by lots of people. Now we are in the personal computing era, person and machine staring uneasily at each other across the desktop. Next comes ubiquitous computing, or the age of calm technology, when technology recedes into the background of our lives" (1995).

Ubiquitous computing will present in his view these scenarios:

- The more you can do by *intuition* the smarter you are
- The computer should extend your *unconscious*
- Technology should create *calm*

Intuition, unconscious, calm are ubiquitous concepts that are designing an emerging *common multividual*, challenging the traditional separated disciplines, affirming different behavior in everyday life.

3 - Self-representation.

The question 'Who represents who?' takes up Marx's criticism of the division of labor. The current acceleration of digital culture has further 'divided' subjects belonging to different cultures or same experiences, producing a *visual hierarchy* of the dominant logic. A division exists between those who communicate and those who are 'communicated' and between those who historically have the power of narration and those who are in the lonely state of being narrated objects. A specific political knot binds 'those who represent' to 'those who are represented', according to what I call the *communicational division of labour*. This division should be taken into account when defining experimental methods and the pragmatics of research on urban communication and governance.

The ethnographic procedures according to which the anthropologist traditionally represented the "natives" with his/her external logics, alien writings, videos and photographs, arguable authorities have been - if not extinguished - at least mitigated. This change has been happening either under post-colonial impulses, a critical anthropology beyond the prevailing monological discourse, the "open architecture". As a result, it seems evident that "those who have the power to represent whom" has become a central knot that entangles itself in the still dominant hegemony of the majoritarian part of the academic West.

Such a multi-faced critique focuses on, affirms and supports the autonomy of the subject, questioning the paradigm of that traditional authority of representation. The issue of "who represents whom" extends the critique on the division of labour, as Marx represented in the 19th Century. The current post-industrial phase and the acceleration of digital cultures include other "divisions" between subjects that belong to diverse cultures and experiences: for example, the division between who communicates and who "is communicated", between who historically has the power of narrating and who is in the mere condition of being narrated to.

Therefore between "who represents" and "who is represented" there is a specific linguistic knot, related to what I call the "communicational division of labour", which must be faced through methods and practices. Between those who have the power to frame the other and those who should continue to be framed there is a *hierarchy of the vision* that it is part of an ossified logic to be questioned on its presumed objectivity (Canevacci, 2012).



2005: José Carlos embraces his wife, while Paulinho is filming - 2015: André filming the José Carlos Koguri Funeral

(photo Massimo Canevacci)

Other subjectivities have been developing extremely decentred abilities about the use of the screen and of the spray, about iconic elaborations in the streets and digital editing at home. The communicational division of labour between those who perform and those who are performed - between self and hetero-representation - penetrates the emergent contradiction between the production of digital technologies and their decentred use by subjects who have an autonomous worldview. Such *division* and such *contradiction* redefine the power scenario in which the anthropology of communication confront the persistent attempt to folk-stereotype the Other. The external researcher does not have the right to affirm his/her absolute paradigmatic anymore; he/she needs to be positioned in a process that favours the narrative autonomy of the other, renews the ossified methodologies of the academy, and dissolves the surviving power of late-colonial discourse (e.g. the persistent revival of the term "tribal").

Self-representation affirms plural ways through which those who have long been considered mere *objects* of study become *subjects* who interpret themselves in the first place and also creates the communicational metropolis. The so called "tribal" cultures or, better, extreme youth individualities are related to how languages are continuously constructed, exposed and changed between the non-homogeneous ("ex-tribal") subjects and the metropolis through web-communication.

The concept of *nomos* seems questionable; it defines a law or rule to be followed in order to justify the repetition of given moral conditions and to resist to any cultural or artistic mutations. I want here to present the perspective of individual heteronomy beyond the classical dimension of autonomy. *Heteronomy can become a vision that alters the nomos*, transforming it - from an established rule of inscrutable laws or canon - into flexible, sensible modules involving the otherness that is normally excluded or repressed for the autonomous subject. Becoming heteronomous: this is the transitive performative citizenship that is challenging the nation-state form and the perspective of teaching (Pessoa 1980). The polyphonic *composition of heteronomies* may favour this fluctuant archipelago of *eus*, as the plural of I (or I's). This montage of *eus* involved fragments of me, pieces of all my plural identities growing internally.

This inner multiplicity explains not only the traditional Other but also my inner Other, my other selves, my inner alterity: *my-selves*, my *multividual eus*. It is worth noting that “individual” is a Latin translation of the Greek term for *atomon*, the indivisible; now the *in*-prefix may be replaced by *multi*- in order to express the multitude of *egos* (“eus” or “ii”) inside the same subject. The multividual is divisible, plural and fluid. Ubiquitous. The same person may have a multiplicity of identities, various ‘I’s, and so ‘multividualizes’ her/his subjectivity. The psychological implications would need a specific research, along with a self-searching on the part of the subject-ethnographer, who experiments on her/himself these accelerated transformations.

The exact imagination was a philosophical as well as sociological and aesthetic concept that marks the conjunction of rational knowledge, emotional experience and aesthetic form. In my own work, I am trying to extend this dissonant concept towards a *wandering common* that connects city and aldeia, critical theory and digital cultures. In such a wandering methodology it is possible to outline anthropological design and performative approaches through a moving constellation elaborated by an exact imagination.

The concept of syncretism may be the keyword for focusing on one of the most important anthropological challenges: how to mix different cultures, identities, styles and voices without eclecticism or exoticism. Syncretisms are glocal polyphonic movements *beyond* (not against) the radical fundamentalisms or neo-racist statements toward the pure or authentic culture or religion (Canevacci 2013b). Polyphonic and dissonant syncretisms are offering a cosmos-political perspective through an ethnographic glance. The actual meaning of syncretism is autonomous from any religion: syncretism is a re-enacting concept as well as a disruption statement, beyond the traditional meaning of philosophical superficiality or religious cut-up. A significant cosmopolitan as differentiated public is attracted by a progressive trend toward syncretisms: an assemblage of cultural fragments selected from movies, artists, musicians, fashion designers, pieces of literature or essays. Digital syncretisms are liberating the depth of surfaces, the abstraction of thought, and an endless ethnographic aesthetics in order to prepare the researcher for the encounter with the unknown and thus desired stranger.

In a special occasion, I visited the Xavante aldeias of Sangradouro to organize a meeting with Kleber, the Xavantes cacique Domingos Mahoro’e’o and the famous video maker Divino Tserewahu. I had a simple proposal for the meeting: using digital communication to encourage self-representation activities between the two different cultures (Bororo and Xavante), trying to overcome their reciprocal prejudices. Domingos gave a long speech, at the end of which he made a proposal: “Let’s call the project *Digital Aldeia*.” All of us immediately agreed. The title perfectly summed up the meaning of the project. Since September 2012, the *Aldeia Digital* blog and the Facebook page have gone live, and the 219 fans now include Xavante and Bororo members. Fans and users can have conversations with Marcos Terena, Kamataxi Tsicão, Izomar Guarani-Kaiowa Lacerda, Xingu Vivo, Ysani Aweti Kalapalo and Natal Anhahö’a Dutsã, amongst others. The information section of the Facebook page states the following: “This is the community page for the Digital Aldeia project. We use Internet as a tool for spreading the indigenous

culture, fighting for the rights of indigenous peoples, exchanging information and news and using technology in the schools of the aldeias”.

A native commons....

4- Digital Aldeia: Meruri

My research was conducted according to the following precise hypothesis: the tensions between *mutation* and *tradition* affect a large cross-section of contemporary cultures, each according to its own circumstances; this struggle takes on an even greater meaning in the cultures we call ‘indigenous’, due to the many cognitive and emotive elements that come into play, and serves as a parameter not only for understanding this sparsely populated *aldeia* in a remote region of Mato Grosso, but also for analysing certain vitally important issues regarding globalization. Processes of *visual communication* and, to a greater degree, *digital culture* are integral to understanding these tensions, composed of dialogical polyphonies, partial conflicts, and mobile syncretisms. As I have already affirmed, the subject representing this ritual must be a participant in the culture, that’s why the theme of *self-representation* is methodologically and epistemologically crucial. Finally, digital communication is not a trait that should be considered merely technological: various heterogeneous flows of culture and individuality permeate the body of the digital. This qualitative difference radically alters the *mutation/tradition nexus regarding the self-representation of digital communication*.

In early 2005, something unusual happened. Six Bororo came to see me at my department. Meaningful words and gifts were exchanged: they offered me a ritual necklace called a *bokodori inogi*, with a pendant of two large *tatu* (armadillo) claws, which were joined end-to-end with black resin, hanging from a red cotton strap. The necklace takes its name from *Akaruio Bokodori*, the mythical hero of the Bokodori clan. One might even extend Bokodori’s name to all of the Bororo, as did Claude Lévi-Strauss. Few months later, I was in Meruri (Mato Grosso) to participate in the famed *Bororo Funeral*, just the same *aldeia* (village) that he monitored by plane ten years before my visit, mourning its supposed disappearance and where he wrote his celebrated book *Tristes Tropique* around 1940.

Here the Bororo dwell in brick and cement homes south of the Salesian mission, while the other village of Garças continues to live through great adversity in their *ocas* (huts) of wood, mud, and straw. José Carlos Kuguri was the *mestre dos cantos* (song master) who was also the husband of the deceased, making his role in the funeral more complicated and at the same time extraordinarily interesting and quite unique.

“I walked into the *baito*, the men’s house at the centre of the village, where women are only admitted during a funeral or *nominação* ritual. Inside, the classic partitioning separates the different clans, with two separate halves subdivided into eight clans, each with its identifying colours. There, José Carlos Kuguri, the *mestre dos cantos*, sat alone in a dim corner. He must have been around 60 years old, perhaps younger, and he sat with a large *pariko*, the quintessential Bororo feather art, on his head. A few metres from the *baito* lay the tumulus of his wife, which had just been covered with *buriti* (palm) fronds and a thin layer of earth. I sat in front of him with our legs crossed as he smoked a large hand-rolled cigarette with what seemed like a purposefully lowered gaze in

silence, When he livened up, as if he had come back to the present, to his lean, taut physique. He looked me straight in the eyes and reached out his hand, pointing a wooden stick like an extension of his finger towards the dirt floor between me and him: 'If you are from Rome,' he said, 'you are on that side, while I remain on this side. Because of this we will always be different.' As he spoke, he drew a clear, dry line, raising a small cloud of scattered dust between the two of us" (Canevacci, 2013:96).



Funeral Bororo 2005: the skull of the wife of José Carlos 2015: the José Carlos Kuguri's skull (photo Massimo Canevacci)

If at the very beginning of my research on the Bororo Funeral, that hard **line of dust** made my research hypotheses, as originally defined, problematic, time after time we became friends, a great friendship until José Carlos died some months ago and I participated in a very emotional and special way to his funeral. Here, his 'decarnalized' skull is in the process of transformation into an *arara* and thus, into an ancestor. The Bororo skull transits within and outside what Western culture defines as clearly distinct orders (time and space). The *transitive power* of the funeral ritual merges the living with the dead, the material with the immaterial, nature with culture, all according to concepts that appear utterly inadequate when viewed only according to our Western conceptual order. The human (skull), the animal (*arara*), and the divine (ancestor) are reunited, or better yet, connected within the hierarchical order. It was not the identity of a simple *arara*, but an ancestral *arara*, a totemic *arara*, an *arara* close to both the living and the dead.

Few months later, I invited in my Brazilian University (IEA-USP) two special men: Kleber Meritororeu and Felix Adonoenau. They spoke about their Bororo cosmology and the challenge for their culture. The transfusion project will be possible only if they will be the fundamental subjects for this complex relation in-between tradition and mutation, Meruri and São Paulo. A metropolis and an *aldeia*. It's time to invent an ubiquitous common involving "native" cultures...



Kleber Meritororeu and Felix Adonoenau at the IEA-USP conference (photo Massimo Canevacci)

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