



Strange Enemies: Indigenous Agency and Scenes of Encounters in Amazonia (The Cultures and Practice of Violence)

Aparecida Vilaça

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In 1956, in the Brazilian state of Rondônia, a group of Wari' Indians had their first peaceful contact with whites: Protestant missionaries and officers from the national Indian Protection Service. On returning to their villages, the Wari' announced, "We touched their bodies!" Meanwhile the whites reported to their own people that "the region's most warlike tribe has entered the pacification phase!" Initially published in Brazil, *Strange Enemies* is an ethnographic narrative of the first encounters between these peoples with radically different worldviews.

During the 1940s and 1950s, white rubber tappers invading the Wari' lands raided the native villages, shooting and killing their victims as they slept. These massacres prompted the Wari' to initiate a period of intense retaliatory warfare. The national government and religious organizations subsequently intervened, seeking to "pacify" the Indians. Aparecida Vilaça was able to interview both Wari' and non-Wari' participants in these encounters, and here she shares their firsthand narratives of the dramatic events. Taking the Wari' perspective as its starting point, *Strange Enemies* combines a detailed examination of these cross-cultural encounters with analyses of classic ethnological themes such as kinship, shamanism, cannibalism, warfare, and mythology.

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