

To Make Their Own Way
in the World

*The Enduring Legacy
of the Zealy Daguerreotypes*

Edited by
Ilisa Barbash
Molly Rogers
Deborah Willis

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With a foreword by

Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

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Christoph Irmscher

In his 1931 essay "A Small History of Photography," Walter Benjamin fondly remembers the early days of photography, the studios "with their draperies and palm trees, their tapestries and easels, which occupied so ambiguous a place between execution and representation, between torture chamber and throne room."¹ This chapter is about one such studio and the photographs taken there at the beginning of November 1865—but that studio was unambiguously a torture room and not a throne. In fact, it wasn't really a studio at all. Imagine a small courtyard in a dilapidated building in Manaus, Brazil, the ground littered with rocks, pieces of plaster, and other debris, with weeds growing in between. For Louis Agassiz, the Swiss American professor of natural history at Harvard University, this was the place where, by taking pictures of humans of different races, he would find conclusive proof that Charles Darwin was wrong—that nature didn't cross the boundaries definitively drawn by God and that, when it apparently did, the results were weak, inferior to the Caucasian norm. For dozens of residents of Manaus, black, Indian, or mixed, enslaved or free, this courtyard was where they had to shed their clothes and stand straight with their arms at their sides, while looking at a camera manned by a twenty-one-year-old recent Harvard graduate, Walter Hunnewell, who had just learned how to handle a camera himself.

It was a circuitous route that led Agassiz, born in 1807 in a small village in Switzerland, to this depressing courtyard in Manaus. His career as a naturalist had begun in 1829 with *Selecta genera et species piscium*, a beautifully illustrated work about Brazilian fish, based entirely on specimens collected by his professors in Munich and written in Latin, in the best tradition of descriptive natural history. Over the next two decades, Agassiz went from studying with the famous Georges Cuvier in Paris and teaching at a preparatory college in Neuchâtel, Switzerland, to an appointment at Harvard and the directorship of what he hoped would become the finest natural history collection in the world, the Museum of Comparative Zoology in Cambridge,

Massachusetts. Hundreds of publications bore his name, in fields as diverse as ichthyology, embryology, glaciology, marine biology, and taxonomy. His life would have been an unqualified success had it not been for the increasing influence of Darwin on his colleagues as well as his own students. For Darwin, Agassiz's view of natural history as the implementation of a divine plan was "impracticable rubbish," an embarrassing confusion of history and theology. When Agassiz left Cambridge for Brazil on April Fools' Day, 1865, he was, whether he realized it or not, already finished as a scientist: "I have no expectation that he will ever be of any more direct use in nat[ural] history," laughed the botanist Asa Gray, Agassiz's Harvard colleague, in one of his many letters to Darwin in England.²

Agassiz's troubled reputation had received a short-lived boost when, in the summer of 1863, Samuel Gridley Howe, a member of the American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission, wrote to ask him about the future of the "African race," a welcome occasion for the Harvard professor to hold forth, in a series of letters, about the evils of racial mixing.³ Slaveholding Brazil, where (as Agassiz later summarized the situation) masters mingled with slaves and slaves mingled with the natives, offered the best testing ground for this dismal theory. Thus, when the wealthy Boston businessman Nathaniel Thayer offered to pay all the expenses of an expedition to South America, Agassiz eagerly seized the opportunity to take his fight for scientific survival abroad. The Amazon River system was the largest freshwater basin in the world, and the fish he would be able to harvest there, confined into narrower limits than their marine counterparts, would yield useful evidence in Agassiz's ongoing quest to prove that in God's static world, all living things stay where they were created. But Agassiz had come to Brazil to collect not just fish, but also humans.⁴



When he established his studio in Manaus, Agassiz had already been in Brazil for several months, and he had become a celebrity of sorts, welcomed by Emperor Dom Pedro II and supported by government officials wherever he went. His professional woes seemed far away. In 1865, the city, accessible only by boat, was struggling to be more than what it originally was: a hollowed-out clearing in the woods. There was little indication yet that this settlement in the middle of the Amazonian rainforest would, in a matter of a few decades, become *the* commercial center for the rubber trade and, eventually, the richest city in South America. Manaus had started out as Fortaleza São José do Rio Negro, a fortress built by the Portuguese. Renamed Manaus in 1832, after the tribe of the Manaós Indians, it quickly became known as Cidade da Barra do Rio Negro, Portuguese for "City of the Margins of the Black River," until the name was switched back again, in 1856, to the original name, Manaus. When Agassiz arrived, the city was, in



Figure 7.1.
Albert Frisch, *Vista urbana da cidade de Manaus. Provincia do Amazonas* (Urban view of the city of Manaus. Province of Amazonas), 1865. Albumen print

many ways, still very much a cultural backwater. But in other ways, it wasn't. Agassiz might have thought of himself as the anthropological pioneer, conquering the rainforest with his modern equipment, but he had, in fact, been beaten to that goal by Albert Frisch, an accomplished photographer of German origin.

One of Frisch's photographs, taken precisely in 1865 (fig. 7.1), shows Manaus as it would have appeared to Agassiz and his party that year—a combination of dirt roads, huts, and palatial edifices, interspersed with remnants of the jungle.⁵ Frisch's photograph captures a settlement in transition, with a towering church under construction (the Cathedral Metropolitana de Manaus) facing, across an unfinished road, a row of makeshift buildings on the right. Note the contrast between the thatched roofs of the houses in the foreground and the more substantial structure of the cathedral.

The angle from which the photograph was taken draws our eyes to the road that separates those two versions of Manaus from each other, the

spectacular one from the picturesque one. Visually, it's clear who is the winner, and as the road fades into the background, we get a sense of the city's limitless potential. To the right of the center, a group of men can be seen milling around on a bridge, with at least two of them resting on their umbrellas—an apt image for the ambivalence captured in Frisch's photograph.

Even if they were seizing control of Manaus's architecture, whites were the minority in Manaus. William Scully, the editor of the *Anglo-Brazilian Times*, who also visited in 1865, estimated that the city had a population of around 5,000 people. He counted just around 350 houses and noted that the government buildings were in “dilapidated condition.”⁶ By 1872, when the first official census was conducted in Brazil, the number of inhabitants in Manaus had more than tripled. It was a wild mix, ranging from enslaved and free blacks, detribalized Indians in bondage, and free indigenous people to whites from Bolivia, Peru, and Brazil, as well as immigrants from Portugal and France. The categories of the census allowed only two colors for slaves—black or *pardo* (which meant “mixed” or dark brown).⁷ Thirty percent of the “blacks” in the city were enslaved, compared with only 10 percent of the *pardos*. The white inhabitants, too, amounted to just over 10 percent. Even granting that the population numbers in 1865 would have been much lower than those gathered in 1872, Agassiz would have found himself in the middle of a society with rather porous racial boundaries, in which it would have been difficult to tell who was what simply by the way a person looked. That was, precisely, the nightmare scenario Agassiz had evoked in 1863 regarding the future of the United States, when Samuel Gridley Howe of the American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission had asked him what on earth they should do with all those freed slaves. (Settle them in the South, Agassiz had counseled, and make sure that the North remains ours.)⁸

When Frisch was taking pictures of Manaus, he was on the payroll of the firm of the Swiss photographer Georges Leuzinger in Rio de Janeiro, the largest photographic establishment in Brazil.⁹ As is perhaps not well known, photography and the formation of the Brazilian empire went hand in hand. In 1833, the Monégasque-Brazilian inventor and painter Antoine Hercule Romuald Florence undertook a series of photochemical experiments and independently discovered the photographic process, at just about the same time that Daguerre was struggling with similar problems in France. By the 1860s, Brazil was mass-producing photographs. As it turned out, tourists disembarking in Rio, Bahia, or Recife were particularly interested in staged portraits of slaves at work, as long as they were picturesque and sufficiently exotic.¹⁰



One of the most accomplished Brazilian photographers working in Brazil during this period was Augusto (Théophile Auguste) Stahl, an Italian-born

Frenchman who came to Brazil in 1853, settling first in Recife and then in Rio. A master of landscape photography, he was known for the unusual viewpoints he would choose, often placing his subjects at the edge or in the background of his compositions and shooting them through intervening objects, such as the masts of a ship. In Rio, Stahl partnered with a painter and photographer named Germano Wahnschaffe, and it was there that Agassiz approached him with a suggestion for work of a different kind.¹¹

In 1850, Agassiz toured the plantations around Columbia, South Carolina, and took pleasure in identifying the tribal origins of different enslaved individuals. After his departure, the physician Dr. Robert W. Gibbes, through the services of local daguerreotypist Joseph T. Zealy, had a series of slave portraits taken, which were then sent to Agassiz in Cambridge. The Zealy daguerreotypes, as they became known, were, in a sense, a deviation from Agassiz's customary practice of conducting scientific fieldwork on site, which he once memorably described as "prendre nature sur le fait," or "catching nature in the act."¹² In the work carried out under his direct supervision, Agassiz continued to resist the use of the camera; it seemed too mechanical, too inflexible to him. Copious notes on the drafts made by his illustrators reveal that he liked to be in a position to influence and tweak the final product as much as he could.¹³ Once, in December 1862, he even chastised his master student Addison Verrill for secretly using photographs in his work with marine invertebrates. Agassiz made an exception only when it came to his personal publicity needs: he would readily order, sign, and distribute cartes-de-visite with his portrait (see fig. 7.10).

But when Agassiz arrived in Brazil, his attitude had changed. Scattered references in his wife's account of the trip show that he was commissioning photographs of plants, landscapes, and geological formations.¹⁴ The reasons for the shift are not clear, but since the majority of photographs taken during the Thayer expedition are of indigenous and black people, it seems reasonable that Agassiz's racial views had something to do with his new interest in photography. Although racial classifications had not concerned him much before his arrival in the U.S. from his native Switzerland in 1846, he was surely aware of remarks that Antoine Étienne Renaud Augustin Serres, professor of comparative anatomy at the Jardin des Plantes, had made in 1844 to the French Academy about the lamentable state of "comparative anthropology" as a discipline. As an immediate solution, in the absence of a proper "musée d'anthropologie" (museum of anthropology) Serres had proposed "un musée photographique des races humaines" (a photographic museum of the human races). For nothing, he claimed, could so faithfully and rapidly capture "les caractères physique de l'homme" (the physical characteristics of man) as the camera.¹⁵

Agassiz, who at one point had considered an offer to become the new director of the Jardin des Plantes, followed the news from France carefully

and thus would have known not only about Serres's idea, but also about the inspiration behind it—a series of daguerreotypes made by the French photographer Édouard Thiesson that showed, not coincidentally, a woman and a man from Brazil named Marie and Manuel. Both were members of the south-eastern indigenous Aimoré tribe, called the “Botocudo” by the Portuguese because of the *botoque*, or “plug,” they were known to insert into their lower lips. Rumored to be ferocious cannibals, the Aimoré had been the subject of ruthless extermination at the hands of the Portuguese invaders.

We are not sure where Thiesson took these daguerreotypes. There is no evidence that he actually spent time in Brazil, so it seems likely that he encountered Marie and Manuel in Portugal en route to Mozambique, where he went on to produce more portraits of a similar nature.¹⁶ Certainly, there is something indefinably sad about the way Marie stares into the camera (fig. 7.2). Hers is a portrait of loss and displacement, with her split lip (where the “plug” might have been) and her necklace continuing to serve as reminders of her tribal identity. (In the corresponding pair of images, Manuel avoids looking at the camera entirely.) A piece of the chair on which Marie has been placed is visible behind her shoulder, but this is not an image of domestic comfort. Thiesson's daguerreotype is a portrait not of Marie or, more generally, of a woman: it is a portrait of a woman's breasts.



Figure 7.2. Édouard Thiesson, *Femme Botocudo, dite Marie, face* (Botocudo woman, named Marie, frontal), 1844. Daguerreotype



Figure 7.3. Édouard Thiesson, *Femme Botocudo, dite Marie* (Botocudo woman, named Marie), 1844. Daguerreotype

The photographer must have told Marie to place her hands in her lap, a gesture that draws even more attention to her chest. The excess of textiles draped around the lower half of her body—maybe the top that she was asked to take off, maybe a kind of skirt—only serves to emphasize her nakedness. The overall effect of this arrangement is to make Marie’s body appear strangely bifurcated. While her head and shoulders seem light, an impression emphasized by the slight leftward tilt of her head, from her chest down she seems heavy, plump, and rooted, despite the fact that her waist, stomach, and legs are covered: an oversized, chthonic figure.

In the second daguerreotype, a profile view (fig. 7.3), we see a bit more of that chair, thanks to the awkward position Marie has been told to assume. Her head is demurely bent, and her hands are folded in a gesture of apparent submission. Her naked breasts, combined with the excessive layers of clothing gathered around her from the waist down, destroy any impression of “normalcy.”¹⁷



Thiesson’s portraits mark the iconographic tradition Agassiz likely had in mind when he acquired the Zealy daguerreotypes in 1850: a collection of frontal, profile, and back portraits that includes at least one tripartite view of a man called Jem, who is shown fully naked, from the front, the side, and the back. Agassiz showed his daguerreotypes at a meeting of the Cambridge Scientific Club in September 1850, but apart from that they went nowhere.¹⁸ Now, fifteen years later, in Rio, a city teeming with racial diversity, Agassiz wanted another chance. He asked Stahl to take photographs for him of “pure negroes,” in “perfect profile” and also from the front and from behind.¹⁹ Three years later, Thomas Henry Huxley, “Darwin’s bulldog” and the president of the London Ethnological Society, would complain to Lord Granville of the Home Office that most of the existing anthropological photographs were useless because they lacked uniform standards. He recommended that British agents in the colonies take pictures of indigenous people that would show them entirely naked and in fixed poses at the same distance from the camera and next to a measuring device: the notorious anthropometric ruler. Huxley also suggested that the sitters be featured in at least two ways—from the front and in profile—and that pains be taken to not obscure the women’s breasts (keep the sitter’s arms firmly at the sides of her body, he advised, and ask her to bend them so that the contours of her trunk remain visible). He was naive enough to assume that the “natives” in Her Majesty’s colonies would jump at the opportunity to be photographed.²⁰

With his Brazilian images, Agassiz, in locally circumscribed fashion, anticipated Huxley’s project. If Huxley’s interest was, arguably, anatomical, the intentions behind Agassiz’s portrait taking were grander, both scientific



Figure 7.4.
Augusto Stahl, *Woman*, 1865.
Albumen print



Figure 7.5.
Augusto Stahl, *Man*, 1865.
Albumen print

and political. The results, ironically, were small, dismal, and seedy. And Stahl turned out to be not quite the right man for Agassiz's purposes. As more than one scholar has suggested, he was too good an artist to entirely satisfy Agassiz's need to reduce human bodies to the status of pseudoscientific evidence.²¹

Take Stahl's image of a woman from Benin with strong, chiseled features (fig. 7.4).²² In a note on "Permanence of Characteristics in Different Human Species" appended to *A Journey in Brazil* (1868), his and his wife Elizabeth's account of their travels, Agassiz later offered a disquisition of sorts on the breasts of Indians and "negroes." He elaborated that in the former they seemed to "arise under the armpit, the nipple actually being projected on the arm in a full-faced view of the chest," whereas in black women the breast typically was "turned forward and downward, so that in a front view it is projected on the chest."²³ But Stahl did not require the subject of this portrait to look straight at us. His expert handling of the light moves our prying eyes away from the woman's breasts, so mercilessly exposed in Thiesson's daguerreotypes, and keeps the viewer's admiring glance focused on her beautiful face and her strong shoulders. This is not a sanitized image—a skin growth on the woman's forehead is clearly visible—but an

authentic representation, one that, despite the demeaning circumstances under which it was taken, grants the sitter a modicum of individuality.²⁴ In similar fashion, Stahl shows an African man in an introspective mood (fig. 7.5). Rapt in thought, he is seemingly oblivious to the camera, the light resting on his face, perhaps an indirect indictment of racist theories that would not grant a black person much of an inner life.

Even when he offers the three views of the body that Agassiz had requested, Stahl wraps his vulnerable subjects in a halo of gray, as if to soften the stark outlines of their naked bodies (fig. 7.6). In more technical terms, that meant photographing his subjects against a dark background and then printing the image through a stencil on white paper—a process that would have exceeded the demands of scientific illustration. Obviously, my reading of this technique differs from that offered by Marcus Wood, who sees the function of Stahl's backgrounds as isolating the subjects from the series in which they are included so that we may focus on them as "specimens to be viewed in the round."²⁵

In Stahl's portrait of a woman from "Congo," her place of origin according to an attribution handwritten on the backing of the print, the subject's neutral expression does not invite us in, and yet the camera has already gone ahead and done its work for us, presenting us with a seemingly



Figure 7.6.
Augusto Stahl, Woman, identified as
"Congo," 1865. Albumen print

compliant subject. The woman's quasi-military demeanor, arms firmly pressed to her sides, suggests that she was told to stand like that. If we do look at these photographs as a series, with the subject at first remaining hidden from us and then giving us a partial view of herself until, in the last installment, she finally turns around to face us, then that last shot disappoints: there's no grand revelation, no communication between her and us. The woman looks just past the viewer. She is not merely a case study. On her left leg, a chunk of flesh seems to be missing, perhaps an indication of past abuse (as is, perhaps, the bruise on her left breast). She is, Stahl's photograph again suggests, not a type specimen but an individual.

Given the testimony of these photographs, it is no wonder that critics have tried to find some form of subliminal resistance in Stahl's work, an attempt, deliberate or not, to thwart the pseudo-documentary impulse of Agassiz's photographic project. Wood, for example, praises Stahl's "quizzical generosity" and credits him with producing "images that celebrate the prevailing nobility, beauty, and humanity of the slave subject."²⁶ Agassiz, in other words, could not ultimately control the images his photographer had produced.



In Manaus, Agassiz got his third chance. We have, of course, no transcript of what happened during these sessions, and while it is tempting to infer from a photograph what might have transpired between a photographer and his sitter, such assumptions cannot be treated as solid facts. And yet, given the nature of these images, and the sheer number of them, our desire to give, in the words of the poet Robert Lowell, "each figure in the photograph / his living name" has a certain legitimacy, too.²⁷ Since there are so many images from Agassiz's Brazilian days, it is possible to see recurrent patterns, attitudes, and principles. Mini-narratives emerge and combine to tell a story that is remarkably consistent. As I am retelling it here, I am aware that a degree of interpretive license inevitably colors my attempts to summarize and generalize. Whatever was said and done in that Manaus courtyard over 150 years ago, we do know that Agassiz was present for every single picture that was taken. Given that we also know how irascible he could be with his Harvard students back home,²⁸ we may reasonably assume that he would not have remained a silent bystander as his photographer fumbled with his camera and plates. Looming in the background, Agassiz would have stepped forward when he could not contain himself any longer, shouting directions, in his heavily accented English, at sitter and photographer alike.

Unlike the professional Stahl, Agassiz's photographer this time around was a rank amateur. The scion of a wealthy Boston family, fresh-faced Walter Hunnewell had joined Agassiz's team as a volunteer collector

immediately after his graduation from Harvard.²⁹ Whatever Hunnewell knew about the camera he had just picked up in a crash course at another photographic firm in Rio, the Casa Leuzinger. While Stahl had used paper negatives, Hunnewell had learned the wet-plate collodion technique—a process that required preparation right before the image was taken and immediate processing afterward and was especially difficult to complete in warmer temperatures. Often, young Hunnewell seems to have been in a rush, forgetting to apply the emulsion to the entire glass sheet. On at least one of the images, Hunnewell left his thumbprint.³⁰

But it's precisely this rampant amateurism that makes these small negatives (each of them measuring 4 by 5½ inches) so interesting: they simply won't allow us to forget how and why they were made, the way that Stahl's compositions do. And then there's the sheer number of them (well over one hundred!), which alone would make it impossible to shove them aside.³¹ For Agassiz, the photographic sessions in Manaus were, in fact, a dream come true. Forget the pure blacks of Rio; here was his chance to demonstrate what happened when the races were allowed to mingle. In *A Journey in Brazil*, Elizabeth Agassiz described the "photographic saloon" he established in the living quarters they had been assigned: "a picturesque barrack of a room," part of a former government building that had once served as a public treasury. Their apartment was nothing but a lofty hall, "opening by a number of doors and windows on a large, green enclosure, called by courtesy a garden," though it was really more "a ragged space overgrown with grass, and having a few trees in it."³²

An unenthusiastic Elizabeth found their quarters to be rather makeshift. They were sleeping in hammocks at one end of the hall, surrounded by boxes and trunks. At the other end, a few writing tables and other stray pieces of furniture had been supplied, among them a "Yankee rocking-chair that looks as if it might have come out of a Maine farmer's house." With its brick floors and ubiquitous ratholes, the building was a rather "rickety castle," to be sure.³³ But since no one else lived there, Agassiz was the king of this domain, free to do as he pleased. It is fitting that this space had once been a treasury (or *tesouro*) and therefore the nexus between local affairs, the administrator of the province, and imperial power. And although the building, now entirely lost to history, was no longer being used for that purpose, it still would have been associated, in the minds of the residents, with political power, an aura that certainly would have enhanced Agassiz's standing in Manaus.³⁴

I assume that the enclosure or courtyard of the *tesouro* served as the setting for all of Hunnewell's photographic sessions, with perhaps one exception, where a boy appears to be sitting in the doorway of Agassiz's apartment.³⁵ There are no trees in any of the images, but it is likely that the sessions did take place right here, perhaps with Elizabeth watching some of the goings-on from inside the apartment. Here Hunnewell would

have had adequate light and, presumably, space to move his subjects around. In some images, we see sheets draped over a gate, and in one, an elderly woman is holding an umbrella³⁶—crude attempts, no doubt, to control the influx of light or to add some variety to the setting. Sometimes Hunnewell would repeat a shot, perhaps in order to get better light or because Agassiz didn't like the way the background looked. Consider this seminude sitter posing before both a closed window (fig. 7.7) and an open one (fig. 7.8).³⁷

As I was making my way through the more than one hundred images taken in Manaus, that inner courtyard became increasingly familiar to me. This was not Zealy's plush, comfortable studio frequented also by other, paying sitters. While it is perhaps impossible to understand fully what the men, women, and children of Manaus went through, I can at least imagine the rough ground they stood on, the walls that surrounded them, the doorways and windows behind or next to them that opened up to other spaces. Some of the props remain the same throughout the series—a rickety chair, a stone bench or ledge of sorts in the background, a gate with wooden slats. Chairs played an important role in early portrait photography, since long exposure times rendered it imperative for commercial photographers to make their sitters comfortable. Some chairs assumed iconic character,



Figure 7.7.
Walter Hunnewell, Woman,
1865. Glass-plate collodion



Figure 7.8.
Walter Hunnewell, Woman,
1865. Glass-plate collodion



Figure 7.9.
Walter Hunnewell, *Woman*,
1865. Glass-plate collodion



Figure 7.10.
John Adams Whipple, *Louis Agassiz*,
early 1860s. Signed carte-de-visite

such as the ornate piece of furniture used by John Adams Whipple in Boston, which also appears in a widely available carte-de-visite of Louis Agassiz taken in the early 1860s. But what a difference there is between Hunnewell's courtyard shots and Agassiz's complacent portrait, where the studio's decor (including what looks like an oil painting of the Arc de Triomphe) is included to enhance the self-conscious grandeur of Agassiz's pose (figs. 7.9 and 7.10)!³⁸

Other props change, too, notably the clothes discarded by the sitters. Sometimes we see them neatly folded on the chair or on the bench; at other times, they are in a disorderly heap on the ground, with the sitter stepping, or having been instructed to step, on them. The chair serves as a crude measuring tool. We can tell who is small and who is tall, who is slim and who is not. In some shots, Agassiz's subjects stand before it; in others, they're next to it; and occasionally, they even sit on it. In one, a child can be seen standing on it.³⁹ Most dramatically, in one of the pictures, the chair has ended up on the ledge (see fig. 7.23).

In *A Journey in Brazil*, Elizabeth comments on the fear of photography as a medium that proved to be an obstacle at the beginning of the

project and evokes the now familiar canard that the camera might steal your soul:⁴⁰ “The grand difficulty is found in the prejudices of the people themselves. There is a prevalent superstition among the Indians and Negroes that a portrait absorbs into itself some of the vitality of the sitter, and that any one is liable to die shortly after his picture is taken. This notion is so deeply rooted that it has been no easy matter to overcome it.”⁴¹ Of course, Elizabeth would have been eager to represent her husband’s photographic interventions as cutting-edge, as marking the advent of progress in backward Manaus. But we know for a fact that photography was not quite unknown in Manaus; compared with Frisch’s nuanced compositions, Hunnewell’s bumbling attempts to pose as a serious photographer would have seemed pathetic even to those with only a faint idea of what these machines were good for. On a more general level, though such a thought wouldn’t have occurred to her, it is bitterly ironic to hear Elizabeth ascribe the reluctance of their potential sitters to “prejudice,” given the deeply prejudiced nature of her husband’s enterprise.

If Agassiz & Co. never let go of their own biases, the people of Manaus turned out to be much more adaptable, as Elizabeth noted. Or perhaps the new attitude was simply due to the fickleness of the native mind—given how easily satisfied these people were, vanity won out over prejudice, and soon there were lines outside Agassiz’s studio. At least this is what Elizabeth wants us to believe: “[O]f late the desire to see themselves in a picture is gradually gaining the ascendant, the example of a few courageous ones having emboldened the more timid, and models are much more easily obtained now than they were at first.”⁴² This was perhaps the period when another expedition volunteer, the permanently disenchanted Harvard medical student William James, gained entry to Agassiz’s “saloon” and was surprised by the willingness with which Agassiz’s sitters complied.⁴³

There is no record anywhere that the people who showed up at Professor Agassiz’s establishment got paid or were offered any other rewards for posing. But in a repressive society, being encouraged to appear in a building once associated with political power might not have been seen as optional. There is also the possibility that some of Agassiz’s subjects were initially flattered by the attention they got from the famous foreigner. If one believes Elizabeth Agassiz, having one’s picture taken by Walter Hunnewell had become a great spare-time activity, the thing to do in Manaus on a dull afternoon. Many of the women are wearing nice dresses and jewelry, some have ribbons or other ornaments in their hair, and one of the sitters has elaborate braids wrapped around her head.⁴⁴ Once the actual process was underway, any enthusiasm Agassiz’s sitters might have felt probably evaporated rather quickly, thanks to the heat and the circumstances.

Of course, having one’s portrait taken in 1865, when exposure times were long and photographers overwhelmed and impatient, was never a casual affair. But Hunnewell’s photographs go the extra mile in faithfully conveying



Figure 7.11.
Walter Hunnewell, Woman,
1865. Glass-plate collodion



Figure 7.12.
Walter Hunnewell, Woman,
1865. Glass-plate collodion

just how torturous and awkward an experience these sessions were for most everyone involved. Some of his sitters stand, while others lean. They stare, blink, or frown. And, of course, no one smiles. Inevitably, the chair straightens the subjects—so that no one hunches, bends, or leans (one woman uses it for support).⁴⁵ With their often ramrod-straight posture, the naked bodies of Agassiz's subjects provide a perhaps unintended contrast to the messy environment in which their portraits were taken. And the windows and doorways in the background, whether they are closed or open, enhance the feeling of entrapment these images convey—there is the possibility of escape, but not if you are half-undressed and about to be photographed.

The influence of Thiesson is clearly visible in Agassiz's obsession with women's breasts. Consider these two photographs, the first showing the woman dressed—and nicely dressed, too, with some kind of bonnet attached to the back of her head and equipped with earrings and bracelets (fig. 7.11). In the second photograph (fig. 7.12), taken from a greater distance, her torso is exposed, focusing the viewer's eye on the contrast between her breasts and her rolled-down, billowing dress. In an appendix to *A Journey in Brazil*, Louis Agassiz insinuates that, in a hot country like Brazil, the “uncultivated part of the population” regularly walked around “half naked” anyway, so pictures like the ones he was collecting weren't such a big deal after all.⁴⁶



Figure 7.13.
Walter Hunnewell, *Woman*,
1865. Glass-plate collodion



Figure 7.14.
Walter Hunnewell, *Woman and
child*, 1865. Glass-plate collodion

Yet the piles of clothes tell a different story: in Agassiz's courtyard, nakedness was not natural, but something carefully stage-managed by the professor. Some photographs show small children, fully dressed,⁴⁷ half-dressed,⁴⁸ or naked.⁴⁹ At least one portrays an old, white-haired woman, her eyes lowered and her breasts bared to the camera (fig. 7.13). Another one shows a very young baby being held by its mother (fig. 7.14). The latter image, perhaps due to the child's age, is even more unsettling than some of the ones showing nudity. One cannot help but think that, to Agassiz, the very presence of that baby must have seemed like an insult, the living proof that racial mixing is not, as his racial ideology compelled him to believe, the end of the biological road. But likely the only alternative to including the child in the picture would have been for him to offer to hold it.



Given the haphazard nature of Agassiz's "recruitment" in Manaus, it seems a mystery today how he could have hoped to assemble anything remotely resembling a representative catalogue of "mixed-race" types. All of Hunnewell's negatives are numbered, most of them twice, with four-digit numbers reflecting an earlier cataloguing system of the Peabody Museum,

and the double digits likely representing an earlier attempt to catalogue them—perhaps Agassiz’s own. It is possible that the numbers referred to notes Louis or Elizabeth had kept separately and that one would have to assume are now lost.⁵⁰ Despite such accounting, there is no discernible order to the negatives in either system. For whatever reason, images that show the same person were separated, though it is easy enough to recreate the sequences to which they belonged.

Several of these restored visual narratives begin with the sitters fully clothed. As they disrobe, under Agassiz’s supervision, the purpose of his “photographic saloon” reveals itself. For example, one sequence shows a fully dressed, clean-shaven young man, likely mixed-race, with finely modeled facial features and roundish cheeks. His head is slightly cocked and his full hair neatly combed. His shirt is open at the neck, and his left hand rests comfortably on his trousers. He looks warily at the camera. His firmly closed lips indicate skepticism (fig. 7.15). In the final installment of the series, we see him standing upright in front of Agassiz’s inevitable chair, fully nude, his nakedness enhanced by the white wall behind him (fig. 7.16). Any indication of control he might have had over this process is gone. Behind him is the open doorway, as if taunting both him and the viewer with the possibility of exiting this nightmare.



Figure 7.15.
Walter Hunnewell, Man,
1865. Glass-plate collodion



Figure 7.16.
Walter Hunnewell, Man,
1865. Glass-plate collodion



Figure 7.17.
Walter Hunnewell, Man,
1865. Glass-plate collodion



Figure 7.18.
Walter Hunnewell, Man,
1865. Glass-plate collodion



Figure 7.19.
Walter Hunnewell, Man,
1865. Glass-plate collodion

A particularly poignant series presents an older, lithe, muscular man with an impressive moustache (figs. 7.17–7.19). Unlike many other sitters, he turns his wide-awake, unembarrassed face directly toward the camera. He complies with the photographer's instructions, but—both in his half portrait, where he is still fully clothed, and in the final, frontal shot—he seems to be quivering with suppressed energy. His body is just ever so imperceptibly at an angle, and his right shoulder appears ever so slightly raised. This is a man who has things to do. As he reminds us, there's more at stake than a person's dignity in these naked photographs. When Agassiz's sitters stripped for Hunnewell's camera, they were shedding not just their clothes but the means by which they could most immediately express their sense of individuality. Note the beautiful, interestingly patterned shirt the man was wearing. In the next two shots, it has turned into a crumpled heap on Agassiz's chair.

It is sobering to see how Agassiz's manipulations transform confident men and women into nothing more than pieces of animated flesh.⁵¹ A dapper, handsome man appears in the following sequence (figs. 7.20–7.23). His wavy hair, in the first shot of the sequence, gives him an almost artsy appearance. In the next few installments, his white outfit is entirely gone, and he appears standing in a corner, first with his back to us, his posture drawing attention to his wide shoulders—a characteristic of “the Indian,” as Agassiz explained in his notorious appendix to *A Journey in Brazil*.⁵² We cannot see his face here or in the profile photograph, but the contrast between the man's relaxed pose in the fully clothed shot and the tightly controlled pictures in the rest in the sequence is telling. It almost seems as if the man has been pushed into the corner of the courtyard. In the last image, the chair has been lifted onto the ledge, perhaps in an effort to show that the man's shoulders are so wide that they obscure the top of the chair.

Another series shows two men posing—or should we say, *being* posed?—together (figs. 7.24–7.26). One can only speculate on Agassiz's reasons for this arrangement. Was he aiming for a further diminishment of individuality? If so, the pictures produce the opposite effect. The differences in body type, facial features, and demeanor are evident and render futile any attempt to see these men merely as representatives of types.

Stripped of their clothes, they stand at attention, their nudity highlighted by the glow of their skin.⁵³ In the first two images, the chair separates the two men; in the final shot, where they are the most vulnerable, where they are required to face the camera with their genitalia exposed, the ominous chair has vanished behind them and they seem to be almost touching each other. Had the two men met before? Had they shown up together? Or was their joint appearance before the camera the result of Agassiz's whim, his divine fiat? The shorter of the two was also photographed separately (fig. 7.27)—this time fully clothed, his sculpted features expressing nothing that would help us understand his view of the situation.



Figure 7.20.
Walter Hunnewell, Man,
1865. Glass-plate collodion



Figure 7.21.
Walter Hunnewell, Man,
1865. Glass-plate collodion



Figure 7.22.
Walter Hunnewell, Man,
1865. Glass-plate collodion



Figure 7.23.
Walter Hunnewell, Man,
1865. Glass-plate collodion



Figure 7.24.
Walter Hunnewell, Two men,
1865. Glass-plate collodion



Figure 7.25.
Walter Hunnewell, Two men,
1865. Glass-plate collodion



Figure 7.26.
Walter Hunnewell, Two men,
1865. Glass-plate collodion



Figure 7.27.
Walter Hunnewell, Man,
1865. Glass-plate collodion



Figure 7.28.
Walter Hunnewell, *Woman*, 1865.
Glass-plate collodion (Note that the number on this negative was mistakenly written on the emulsion side.)



Figure 7.29.
Walter Hunnewell, *Woman*, 1865.
Glass-plate collodion (Note the figure, possibly Agassiz, entering the frame at right.)



Agassiz's hidden presence during these sessions reveals itself in at least one of the photographs, in which we get a glimpse of what I suggest are his right hand and leg. It is impossible to know for sure if this is Agassiz. However, according to both Elizabeth Agassiz's and William James's accounts of the sessions in Manaus, there were usually only two men present other than the sitters: Walter Hunnewell, whose place would have been behind the camera, and Louis Agassiz.⁵⁴ In addition, the man walking into the picture is portly—as Agassiz, whom Ralph Waldo Emerson once called the “fat . . . foreign Professor,” certainly was—and he commands respect, as Agassiz did: the girl, featured with her back to the camera in the first shot (fig. 7.28), is now half-turned in his direction (fig. 7.29), as if he had just told her to comply with one of his commands.⁵⁵ The white pant leg and jacket serve to enhance the contrast between the intruder and the girl. Has he come to turn her head in the direction of the camera? Or to reposition the chair? Or has he already accomplished what he wanted?

Indians had remarkably straight legs, Agassiz asserted in his appendix on racial characteristics,⁵⁶ and in this photograph there is an evident contrast between the girl's left leg and the curved leg of that inevitable chair, which, in turn, uncannily responds to the contours of Agassiz's trouser-clad limb: white supremacy as manifested in the degree to which our limbs match those of our furniture.

We know, of course, that Agassiz was directly involved in the making of these photographs—one of the many differences between Zealy's daguerreotypes and Hunnewell's glass plates. William James had seen Agassiz “cajoling” his sitters, who “consented to the utmost liberties being taken with them.”⁵⁷ This photograph confirms his role. An even closer look shows a book on the window ledge, something Agassiz must have deposited there before he approached the girl. Worlds collide here, and yet we are more likely to identify with the girl than with the professor—with her surprise and her vulnerability (there is not a shred of clothing in sight), with the discomfort she must have felt standing there, all by herself, on the rocky ground.



In *A Journey in Brazil*, there are repeated hints that Agassiz *was* planning to publish the enormous archive he had assembled in Manaus: “I hope sooner or later to have an opportunity of publishing these illustrations, as well as those of pure negroes made for me in Rio by Messrs. Stahl and Wahnschaffe,” he declared.⁵⁸ Elizabeth chimed in. Referring to the “very complete series of photographs” of the “many varieties of the colored races” Agassiz had assembled, she predicted that “Mr. Agassiz” would soon treat the subject in “more detail,” should he “find time hereafter to work up the abundant material he has collected.”⁵⁹ That time was never found, but perhaps not because Agassiz was too embarrassed by his own activities or he wanted to keep the photographs “secret,” a charge made in some of the existing literature about Agassiz's activities in Brazil.⁶⁰ Truth be told, Agassiz didn't publish anything of note after his return to the United States and before his death in December 1873. Illness and frustration over the success of the Darwinians had taken their toll.

Some of the Brazilian photographs did make it into print, however. The French translation of *A Journey in Brazil*, prepared in 1869 with Agassiz's active encouragement, contains one woodcut based on a Stahl photograph and four that were likely drawn from Hunnewell's series. One is particularly startling. Titled *Jeune fille mammaluca* (Young Mameluca girl), the woodcut, executed by the French engraver Henri Théophile Hildibrand,⁶¹ preserves some of the original setting: we see traces of the stone ledge behind her and even get a glimpse of the crumbling walls. Her necklace is still there, but she has been stuck back into her dress (figs. 7.30–7.32).



Figure 7.30.
Walter Hunnewell, Woman,
1865. Glass-plate collodion



Figure 7.31.
Walter Hunnewell, Woman,
1865. Glass-plate collodion



Figure 7.32.
Henri Théophile Hildibrand,
Jeune fille mammaluca (Young
Mameluca girl), 1869. Woodcut

The placement of Hildibrand's image wasn't accidental. In the passage it was meant to illustrate, Elizabeth Agassiz recounts a morning walk she took in Manaus, during which she encountered three women, two "old and hideous," but the third as handsome as any she had ever seen, "with a tinge of white blood to be sure, for her skin was fairer ["son teint était plus délicat"] and her features more regular than those of the Indians generally."⁶² But if we look closer at Hildibrand's woodcut, the woman's frown, so prominent in the original, hasn't disappeared. It is as if the woman's dismay over Hunnewell's disagreeable enterprise has survived even the illustrator's attempts at making it respectable.

Hunnewell's images don't allow us what Roland Barthes described as the particular pleasure of photography—the escape from seeing and the transition into the deeply personal realm, however diminished and melancholy, of aesthetic pleasure: "in order to see a photograph well, it is best to look away or close our eyes."⁶³ Hunnewell's images make it impossible for us to look away; like Zealy and Stahl, he turns his sitters from acting persons into seen things, things meant to be seen—leaving them, as perhaps the last trace of agency, only the freedom to fold their clothes or throw them on the ground. But unlike Zealy's and Stahl's photographs, Hunnewell's amateurish efforts are not artistically compelling. Their very dullness, their numbing, shabby monotony—especially when one views them as a series—frustrate all our attempts to transform them into something they are not. And that is precisely why they are still worth looking at, despite the obvious concern that the act of reprinting them even in this essay, facilitating a second, third, or fourth

look, would appear to render us complicit in the ideological bias that produced them.

Hunnewell's images make us uncomfortable because they won't allow us to view them from a safe distance. They embody the kinds of pictures James Elkins evokes in *What Photography Is* (2011): "Unclothed by the glamorous robes of the sublime," they are not what one would frame and hang on one's walls. In these amateurish compositions from Manaus, the "edges of the picturesque" have invaded the space of the photographs themselves—the crumbling walls and debris-strewn ground, the weeds, the windows that open onto nothing at all, the doors that lead to areas where no one lives.⁶⁴ This is the cracked colonial space, the failing empire shrunk to a dilapidated courtyard ruled by an aging scientist at the end of his career and a twenty-one-year-old recent graduate with a new toy he could not fully handle. It was not a photographic salon and not even a "saloon."

Notes

Thanks are due to the late Daniel Aaron, who read and commented on an earlier version of this essay, as well as to Darlene J. Sadlier and Lester Stephens, for their crucial advice. Sávio Stoco in São Paulo and Otoni Mesquita in Manaus, Brazil, gave excellent advice during my quest for the location where Walter Hunnewell might have taken his photographs. Pat Kervick saw to it that I had access to the original negatives. My most profound thanks go to curator Ilisa Barbash, for her vision and inspiration; to Molly Rogers, for her pathbreaking work on the daguerreotypes; and to Katherine Meyers Satriano, associate archivist, and Meredith Vasta, collections steward, at the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology.

1. Walter Benjamin, "A Small History of Photography" (1931), in *One-Way Street and Other Writings*, Edmund Jephcott and Kingsley Shorter, trans. (London: New Left Books, 1979), p. 247.

2. See Christoph Irmscher, *Louis Agassiz: Creator of American Science* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013), pp. 129, 143. For a condensed account of Louis Agassiz's science—progressive in its emphasis on fieldwork, deeply conservative in its ideological principles—see the introduction to my edition of Louis Agassiz, *Introduction to the Study of Natural History*, Christoph Irmscher, ed. (Basel: Springer, 2017), pp. 1–22.

3. The first to draw attention to this correspondence was Stephen Jay Gould in *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1981; repr. 2006), pp. 47–50.

4. See Christoph Irmscher, *The Poetics of Natural History*, 2nd ed. (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2019), pp. 2, 254, 280–81; and Louis and Elizabeth Agassiz, *A Journey in Brazil*, 6th ed. (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1868), p. 481.

5. On Albert Frisch, see Frank Stephan Kohl, "Um jovem mestre da fotografia na Casa Leuzinger,"

Instituto Moreira Salles: Cadernos de Fotografia Brasileira 3 (2006), pp. 185–203; and Frank Stephan Kohl, "Albert Frisch und die ersten global zirkulierenden Amazonasfotografien." *Academia*, https://www.academia.edu/11159540/Albert_Frisch_und_die_ersten_global_zirkulierenden_Amazonas_fotografien.

6. William Scully, *Brazil; Its Provinces and Chief Cities; The Manners and Customs of the People; Agricultural, Commercial, and Other Statistics Taken from the Latest Official Documents; with a Variety of Useful and Entertaining Knowledge, Both for the Merchant and the Emigrant* (London: Murray, 1866), pp. 358–59.

7. Admittedly, the translation of *pardo* as *mixed* is a little confusing, since Brazilian racial hierarchy was based on color, not on blood. On the hierarchy of races used by the Portuguese, see Darlene J. Sadlier, *Brazil Imagined: 1500 to the Present* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008), pp. 113–14.

8. Ygor Rocha Cavalcante, "Slave Resistance and the Notion of Space: The Case of Afro-Amazonians (1850–1880)," in *Another Black Like Me: The Construction of Identities and Solidarity in the African Diaspora*, Elaine Pereira Rocha and Nielson Rosa Bezerra, eds. (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge Scholars, 2015), pp. 132–57, 140; and Irmscher, *Louis Agassiz*, pp. 246–51.

9. George Ermakoff, *O Negro na fotografia Brasileira do século XIX* (Rio de Janeiro: G. Ermakoff, 2004), pp. 297–98.

10. From the now substantial body of work on nineteenth-century Brazilian photography, see especially Gilberto Ferrez and Weston J. Naef, *Pioneer Photographers of Brazil, 1840–1920* (New York: The Center for Inter-American Relations, 1976); Gilberto Ferrez, *Photography in Brazil, 1840–1900* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984); Pedro Karp Vasquez, *O Brasil na fotografia oitocentista* (São Paulo:

- Metalivros, 2003); and Bia Corrêa do Lago and Pedro Corrêa do Lago, *Os fotógrafos do Império: A fotografia Brasileira do século XIX* (Rio de Janeiro: Capivara, 2005). For a more comprehensive history up to the present, see Boris Kossov, ed., *Um olhar sobre o Brasil: A fotografia na construção da imagem da nação: 1833–2003* (Rio de Janeiro: Objetiva, 2012). An indispensable compendium of representations of blacks in Brazilian history is Ermakoff, *O Negro na fotografia*. See also the 2005 exhibition at the Musée d'Orsay, Paris, *The Brazilian Empire and Its Photographers*.
11. See "Imagens para Louis Agassiz," in Bia Corrêa do Lago, *Augusto Stahl: Obra completa em Pernambuco e Rio de Janeiro* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Capivara, 2001), pp. 228–35.
 12. Reported in Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's journal, April 7, 1848, Longfellow Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.
 13. Irmscher, *Louis Agassiz*, pp. 176–77.
 14. Out of the twenty woodcuts included in *A Journey in Brazil*, fourteen were made from photographs by Augusto Stahl, Germano Wahnschaffe, the Casa Leuzinger, and a variety of (presumably amateur) photographers ("Senhor Machado," "Senhor Pimenta Bueno," and "Dr. Gustavo"). For references to "geological" photographs and Machado's "travelling photographic machine," see Agassiz and Agassiz, *A Journey in Brazil*, pp. 86–87, 102.
 15. L'Abbé Moigno, "Photographie: Son histoire, ses procédés, sa théorie," *Revue scientifique et intellectuelle* 30 (September 1847), pp. 321–74; see pp. 363–64. See also Étienne Serres, "Anthropologie compare: Observations sur l'application de la photographie à l'étude des races humaines," *Comptes rendus hebdomadaires des séances de l'Académie des Sciences* 21 (1845), pp. 242–46.
 16. See Deborah Willis and Carla Williams, *The Black Female Body: A Photographic History* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), p. 11.
 17. On the profile as reducing the sitter's identity as well as her claim to character and emotion, see Willis and Williams, *The Black Female Body*, pp. 11–12.
 18. Molly Rogers, *Delia's Tears: Race, Science, and Photography in Nineteenth-Century America* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2010), pp. 233–34. See also John Stauffer, "Not Suitable for Public Notice": Agassiz's Evidence," chap. 10, this vol.
 19. Agassiz and Agassiz, *A Journey in Brazil*, p. 529. For more on the selection of Augusto Stahl's subjects (a disproportionate number of whom were West African), see Flávio dos Santos Gomes, "Agassiz and the 'Pure Race': Africans in the City on the Atlantic," in *(T)Traces of Louis Agassiz: Photography, Body and Science, Yesterday and Today | Rastros e raças de Louis Agassiz: Fotografia, corpo e ciência, ontem e hoje*, Maria Helena P. T. Machado and Sasha Huber, eds. (São Paulo: Capacet Entertimentos, 2010), pp. 44–52.
 20. Anne Maxwell, *Picture Imperfect: Photography and Eugenics, 1870–1940* (Brighton, U.K.: Sussex Academic Press, 2010), p. 30.
 21. See, for example, Marcus Wood, *Black Milk: Imagining Slavery in the Visual Cultures of Brazil and America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 288.
 22. "Benin," the handwritten note on the print, is misread as "Bruno" in Machado and Huber, eds., *(T)Traces of Louis Agassiz*, p. 92.
 23. Agassiz and Agassiz, *A Journey in Brazil*, pp. 530–31.
 24. For more on Augusto Stahl, see Lago, *Augusto Stahl*, as well as my earlier analysis in *The Poetics of Natural History*, pp. 286–87.
 25. Wood, *Black Milk*, p. 275.
 26. *Ibid.*, p. 289.
 27. Robert Lowell, "Epilogue," in *Day by Day* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977), p. 127.
 28. See Christoph Irmscher, "Mr. Clark's Headache," chap. 5 in *Louis Agassiz*, pp. 168–218.
 29. Walter Hunnewell's father, the banker and railroad magnate Horatio Hollis Hunnewell, was the first to cultivate rhododendrons in the United States. The New England town of Wellesley, Massachusetts, is named after Hunnewell's extensive estate, which also includes an arboretum. Walter (1844–1921), the fourth of Horatio Hunnewell's nine children, graduated from Harvard College in 1865 and later became the head of his father's banking firm and cultivated his own Italian garden on Lake Waban in Wellesley. *Harvard College: Class of 1865. Secretary's Report No. 11: 1907–1921* (Boston: George H. Ellis, 1921), p. 79.
 30. Thanks to Jeff Wolin for a conversation about Walter Hunnewell's technique. John M. Monteiro speculates that Hunnewell also took photographs elsewhere during the trip. See John M. Monteiro, "Mr. Hunnewell's Black Hands: Agassiz and the 'Mixed Races' of Manaus," *Mirror of Race*, May 8, 2012, <http://mirrofrace.org/monteiro/#16a>.
 31. I had access to 116 images by Walter Hunnewell (PM 2004.24.7575–2004.24.7691). The associated albumen prints, along with those by Augusto Stahl, were donated by Alexander Agassiz—Louis's son and successor at the helm of the Museum of Comparative Zoology—to the Peabody Museum Library on June 26, 1910, and were later transferred to the Peabody Museum Archives; see <https://www.peabody.harvard.edu/node/43>. The prints originally came in three albums (PM 2004.1.436.176–2004.1.436.178), none of them likely the original containers (the covers have been preserved separately). Meredith Vasta, collections steward, Peabody Museum Research Office, personal communication, September 21, 2015.
 32. Agassiz and Agassiz, *A Journey in Brazil*, p. 250. Given the context, Elizabeth Agassiz's use of the word *saloon* was probably ironic. While the original French meaning of the term (as a drawing room for entertaining and conversing with guests) persisted, the American "saloon" was a more public space, used for assemblies and exhibitions or, in the Western version, for the consumption of liquor. See *Oxford English Dictionary* (2019), s.v. "saloon."
 33. Agassiz and Agassiz, *A Journey in Brazil*, p. 251.

34. There is an old treasury building (*antigo edifício do Tesouro Público*) in Manaus Harbor, with an inscription on the neoclassical facade dating it to between 1887 and 1890, but it is not clear if it was built to replace a previous structure dedicated to the same purpose. The topography of Manaus changed once the rubber trade boomed, and earlier records are difficult to obtain. Information obtained through the web portal of Brazil's IPHAN (Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional); see "Manaus," IPHAN, <http://portal.iphan.gov.br/pagina/detalhes/269>. Flávio Stoco (São Paulo) and Otino Mesquita (Manaus), personal communication to Darlene Sadlier, May 26, 2016.
35. See PM 2004.24.7639, showing a little boy sitting on a chair, with unfamiliar objects in the background (a piece of furniture loaded with papers?). Note the shadow created by his dangling feet.
36. PM 2004.24.7612.
37. Young William James, a member of Agassiz's party, refers to Agassiz's "photographic establishment" as a "room," although this might reflect the way Brazilians would treat an inner courtyard, as part of their house. William James, "Brazilian Diary," November 10, 1865, in *Brazil through the Eyes of William James: Letters, Diaries, and Drawings, 1865–1866*, Maria Helena P. T. Machado, ed., and John M. Monteiro, trans. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006), p. 88.
38. For an interesting use of such an elegant chair, see the mysterious quarter-plate melainotype (or tintype) of a small African American schoolboy posing in an upscale photographic studio reproduced in Ross J. Kelbaugh, *Introduction to African American Photographs, 1840–1950: Identification, Research, Care & Collecting* (Gettysburg, Pa.: Thomas Publications, 2005), p. 90.
39. See PM 2004.24.7602.
40. Probably the most famous adherent of this theory was novelist Honoré de Balzac, who, according to the famous French photographer Nadar, was convinced that the camera steals a part of the soul. Balzac, who only sat for his portrait once, in 1842, argued that "all physical bodies are made up of a series of ghostly images, an infinite number of leaflike skins laid on top of each other." Each time a daguerreotype was made, a layer was removed and transferred to the photograph. Repeated exposures thus meant a loss of the very essence of life. Nadar (Gaspard-Félix Tournachon), *Quand j'étais photographe* (1900), in *Photography in Print: Writings from 1816 to the Present*, Vicki Goldberg, ed. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1981), pp. 127–28.
41. Agassiz and Agassiz, *A Journey in Brazil*, pp. 276–77.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 277.
43. James, "Brazilian Diary," p. 88.
44. See PM 2004.24.7686.
45. See PM 2004.24.7635.
46. Agassiz and Agassiz, *A Journey in Brazil*, p. 529.
47. See PM 2004.24.7602 (a girl standing on the chair); PM 2004.24.7610 (a boy sitting on a chair); PM 2004.24.7618 (a very nicely dressed girl on a chair); PM 2004.24.7636 (a cocky boy posing as if he were an adult); PM 2004.24.7642 (a teenage boy); PM 2004.24.7644 (a girl in a lacy dress); and PM 2004.24.7681 (a girl with two women).
48. See PM 2004.24.7613 and PM 2004.24.7639.
49. See PM 2004.24.7591; PM 2004.24.7597; and PM 2004.24.7599.
50. Given the comprehensive nature of Louis Agassiz's archive, it is startling how few manuscripts in Elizabeth Agassiz's handwriting have survived, as if she had wanted to erase any evidence of the ghostwriting she had performed for him. See Irmscher, *Louis Agassiz*, p. 271.
51. This phrase was suggested to me by Daniel Aaron on September 12, 2015.
52. Agassiz and Agassiz, *A Journey in Brazil*, p. 530.
53. Thanks to Ilisa Barbash for her comments on this image.
54. William James reports that when he sought out the "Prof." in his "photographic establishment," Walter Hunnewell with his "black hands" (soiled from his work on the glass plates) came to let him in. He does mention another visitor, the young Brazilian writer and politician Tavares Bastos. See James, "Brazilian Diary," p. 88. See also Irmscher, *The Poetics of Natural History*, pp. 289–90.
55. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Journal, November 1852," in *Emerson in His Journals*, ed. Joel Porte (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1982), p. 441.
56. Agassiz and Agassiz, *A Journey in Brazil*, p. 531.
57. James, "Brazilian Diary," p. 88.
58. Agassiz and Agassiz, *A Journey in Brazil*, p. 529.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 296.
60. See, for example, Carlos Haag, "As fotos secretas do Professor Agassiz," *Pesquisa Fapesp* 175 (September 2010), pp. 80–85.
61. Agassiz and Agassiz, *Voyage au Brésil*, trans. Felix Vogeli (Paris: Hachette, 1869), p. 288.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 289; Agassiz and Agassiz, *A Journey in Brazil*, p. 283.
63. See Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, Richard Howard, trans. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), p. 53.
64. James Elkins, *What Photography Is* (New York: Routledge, 2011), pp. 218, 219.

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Chapter 7

Figure 7.1. Leibniz-Institut für Länderkunde, Leipzig, Germany; Archiv für Geographie; SAM023-0011

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Figure 7.4. PM 2004.1.436.1.78

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Figure 7.33. Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia; Charles Bregler's Thomas Eakins Collection, purchased with the partial support of the Pew Memorial Trust

Figure 7.34. Philadelphia Museum of Art; Art Resource, New York. Purchased with the SmithKline Corporation Funds



To Make Their Own Way in the World
The Enduring Legacy of the Zealy Daguerreotypes

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