

Davi Kopenawa talks about violence in Western society

During my faraway travels to the white people's land, I have sometimes heard them claim that we are warlike and that we spend our time shooting arrows at each other. Obviously, the people who say things like that do not know us and they are mistaken or lying.

[...]

We Yanomami have no liking for what the white people call 'war' in their language. They blame us for arrowing each other, but they are the ones who really make war. We certainly don't fight with the same harshness as they do. [...] They fight in huge numbers, with bullets and bombs that burn down all their houses. They even kill women and children!

[...]

The white people think themselves clever, but their thoughts are fixed on the things they want to own. It is because of these thoughts that they rob, insult, fight and, in the end, kill one another. It is also because of them that they mistreat all those who get in their way. It's why they, ultimately, are the truly fierce ones! When they fight wars, they throw bombs everywhere and don't think twice about setting fire to the earth and sky. I have watched them, on television, fighting over oil with their planes. [...] It worried me a lot and I said to myself, 'Hou! These people are so warlike and dangerous!'

Excerpt from *La chute du ciel, Paroles d'un chaman Yanomami* (chapter XXI) by Davi Kopenawa and Bruce Albert

An English translation of *La chute du ciel, Paroles d'un chaman Yanomami* entitled *The Falling Sky: Words of a Yanomami Shaman* is due to be published by Harvard University Press in November 2013.