

**Brazilian professor of anthropology Eduardo Viveiros de Castro**  
**24 February 2013**

As an anthropologist with experience in Amazonia, as well as a Brazilian citizen, I wish to express in the strongest possible terms my agreement with Prof. Sahlins's position concerning the election of Napoleon Chagnon to the National Academy of Sciences.

Chagnon's writings on the Yanomami of Amazonia have strongly contributed to reinforcing the worst prejudices against this indigenous people, who certainly do not need the kind of stereotyping pseudo-scientific anthropology Chagnon has chosen to pursue at their cost.

The Yanomami are anything but the nasty, callous, sociobiological robots Chagnon makes them look like - projecting, in all likelihood, his perception of his own society (or personality) onto the tribe. They are an indigenous people who have managed, against all odds, to survive in their traditional ways in an Amazonia increasingly threatened by social and environmental destruction. Their culture is original, robust and inventive; their society is infinitely less 'violent' than Brazilian or American societies.

Virtually all anthropologists who have worked with the Yanomami, many of them with far larger field experience with this people than Chagnon, find his research methods objectionable (to put it mildly) and his ethnographic characterizations fantastical.