

Yanomami

THE FIERCE CONTROVERSY AND
WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM IT

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WITH

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THREE ASSESSMENTS

In drawing the book's themes together in this final chapter, we turn to three assessments of the Yanomami controversy. The assessments consider the following questions: What are the key issues at stake in the controversy? How do we ethically assess what the various participants did (and did not) do—from Neel, Chagnon, and Tierney on the one hand to American anthropology and the American Anthropological Association on the other? And, most critically—since assessing blame for past actions is less important than trying to ensure that we do not repeat the ills so openly displayed in the controversy—where do we go from here? How might we develop a more publicly concerned and just anthropology?

The first assessment involves a joint letter written by the Roundtable's six participants and myself. As the El Dorado Task Force was being formed during the spring of 2001, a call went out for information. The seven of us decided to send the Task Force the Roundtable discussion (of chapters 8, 9, and 10) along with a letter emphasizing our shared concerns. The joint letter offers a counterpoint to the exchanges of the previous chapters because it emphasizes points the six participants hold in common. The problem is that these agreements are abstractly phrased. Participants in the Roundtable could concur on a number of critical points as long as major figures in the controversy—Neel, Chagnon, and Tierney—were not mentioned. Agreement broke down when one or another participant sought to discuss specific actions by specific people.

Still, important points are raised. The letter discusses (a) professional integrity, (b) just compensation, (c) "doing no harm," (d) the need to address complaints of non-American anthropologists regarding work done in their countries, and (e) the importance of having the Task Force's deliberations a public, educational process. There is an honest effort to consider what needs to be changed in anthropology and how we might do that.

The second assessment involves the El Dorado Task Force reports. I refer to "reports" (rather than "report") because, as mentioned in chapter 3, there were two reports prepared by the El Dorado Task Force that was commissioned by the American Anthropological Association to investigate the accusations in Tierney's *Darkness in El Dorado*: a preliminary one (that caused an uproar among critics of Chagnon) and a final one (that directly addressed Chagnon's actions). The final report is the most direct assessment of Neel's, Chagnon's, and Tierney's

actions that we are likely to see by the AAA. Whether one agrees or disagrees with the assessment—and there are anthropologists in both camps—one should view the final report as an act of courage. Not since 1919—when the American Anthropological Association censured Boas—has the AAA formally criticized a famous member of the discipline so publicly.

One might examine the two reports independently of each other. But I think it makes more sense to compare them. If we use the reports as a case study of how American anthropology ethically regulates itself in the face of public pressure, we might consider the following question: what did the preliminary report assert regarding the controversy's key accusations and to what degree these statements were (or were not) changed as a result of public pressure in the final report?

I have enclosed summaries of the two reports as well as a sampling of comments from people who e-mailed in their comments. As previously noted, I believe that what brought the change between the two reports was the more than 170 comments that flooded into the AAA Web site between March 1 and April 19, 2002. Since many of the experts' positions in these commentaries were well known (and had been mostly discounted by the other side before this), I deduce that it was the outpouring of the student comments that led the Task Force to make significant changes in the preliminary report.*

The third assessment is your own. In chapter 6, I outlined a number of questions anthropologists need to grapple with—relating to informed consent, “doing no harm,” just compensation, professional integrity, and establishing credibility. After reading parts 1 and 2 and the two assessments in this chapter, it is reasonable to ask where you, the reader, stand? What do you perceive as the central concerns involved in the controversy? Would you assess blame, and if so in what ways regarding which people or groups? And, most critically, how would you set things right?

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I. AN OPEN LETTER TO OUR ANTHROPOLOGICAL COLLEAGUES

October 8, 2001

Dear Colleagues,

This is an open letter addressed to the American Anthropological Association's El Dorado Task Force by the members of this Roundtable. Despite our clear disagreements regarding Tierney's *Darkness in El Dorado*—disagreements

*One hundred nineteen students sent in e-mails versus 36 professional anthropologists. Since some people sent in more than one comment, the 119 students constituted 77 percent of the total number of commentators.

EXCERPTS FROM THIS SECTION

“If the AAA is to be a self-regulating profession—rather than an organization regulated by outside authorities—it needs to make effective ethical assessments of its members’ behaviors during and following fieldwork. Certain issues raised by Tierney had been brought before the AAA in the late 1980s and early 1990s. . . . But the AAA proved unable or unwilling at that time to address them in a fair and open manner. While Tierney’s *Darkness in El Dorado* contains clear errors, the public uproar his book caused has proved critical in forcing the AAA to address a set of ethical issues it should have addressed on its own well prior to the book’s publication.”

“We would offer the following as guidelines for [just compensation]. . . . A mutually agreed upon equitable division of all royalties . . . Given that most anthropologists gain little in the way of royalties they might share, . . . there are still a variety of ways they might redress the basic asymmetries of research. The key . . . is working with informants and their communities to address their collective needs as they stipulate them—not as an anthropologist stipulates them. . . . The essential point is that anthropologists must provide help in terms that the people themselves directly perceive and directly appreciate.”

“Anthropologists are morally responsible to counter abusive uses of their work when it is made known to them by local officials and/or anthropologists. They need to speak out in clear and public ways in the countries involved that they oppose the implications others draw from their work, particularly when such implications harm informants in ways the anthropologist never intended.”

“The American Anthropological Association should . . . invest both time and energy in encouraging American graduate programs to include a substantive course in ethics prior to fieldwork. Further, the schools that conduct such courses should be placed publicly on the association’s Web site.”

“The Association’s members need to collectively participate in the deliberations [of the El Dorado Task Force]. . . . The inquiry needs to be a collective process in which, through our shared wisdom as anthropologists, we shape our shared future as a profession.”

which reflect the arguments the book has provoked within the profession as a whole—we collectively affirm it raises important ethical issues which are central to the current discussion. These call for a renewed discussion of general principles of research ethics and the responsibilities of anthropologists to the peoples they study. We would draw the El Dorado Task Force’s attention to several points in this regard.

First, the American Anthropological Association has to date proved ineffective—by its own admission—in adjudicating ethical issues relating

to the behaviors of its members. As the 1995 “Final Report of the Commission to Review the AAA Statements on Ethics” states: “To be useful a[n] adjudication system must: [a] Ensure due process, which involves collection of data, interviews, hearings, etc., [b] have the ability to impose meaningful sanctions, [c] have moral, if not legal standing, [d] be willing and able to take on all appropriate claims, [and e] be able to deliver what it promises. The Commission found that the AAA adjudication process failed to meet all of these tests” (*Anthropology Newsletter*, April 1996:13).

Yet if the AAA is to be a self-regulating profession—rather than an organization regulated by outside authorities—it needs to make effective ethical assessments of its members’ behaviors during and following fieldwork. Certain issues raised by Tierney had been brought before the AAA in the late 1980s and early 1990s, well before the book’s publication in the fall of 2000. But the AAA proved unable or unwilling at that time to address them in a fair and open manner. While Tierney’s *Darkness in El Dorado* contains clear errors, the public uproar his book caused has proved critical in forcing the AAA to address a set of ethical issues it should have addressed on its own well prior to the book’s publication.

Second, the dynamics of fieldwork often reinforce a broader political/economic asymmetrical relationship between “First” and “Third World” peoples. Anthropologists travel abroad, collect socially significant information through the goodwill of informants, return to write papers and/or books based on this information, and through such writing gain a professional position with, often, a professional salary. The informants, who provided the information, tend to remain in the same political/economic subordinate condition as before. Simply offering gifts during fieldwork does not compensate for the asymmetrical advantages that accrue to the anthropologist from the field-worker-informant relationship.

Related to this problem is another: Researchers commonly face conflicts between meeting personal research objectives and addressing the needs of the people studied. Researchers should attempt to balance these demands as far as possible so as, on the one hand, to keep faith with the sponsors of their research and, on the other, to acknowledge their ethical responsibilities to the people they work with—particularly recognizing and respecting their human rights.

Building on this point, we would note anthropologists collecting biological samples often explain these collections as benefiting the people involved. This may hold true in an abstract sense, since in collecting such biological samples we may learn more about the health of human beings. Clearly, however, this is not the same thing as providing medical assistance to the actual people who are asked to donate the samples. One might well argue that framing benefits in these abstract terms—as helping humanity rather than helping the particular people involved—constitutes another case of the political/economic asymmetry noted above: researchers advance their careers through fieldwork; informants do not. The principle that should regulate informed consent and

ethical practice alike in the collection of biological samples is that the health and welfare of the study population must always take precedence over any academic or scientific goal.

Central to providing both balance and justice, within this context, is a negotiated contract among the parties involved regarding the benefits accruing to each as a result of their relationship. Whether interpreted within the framework of gifts or exchanges, there needs to be clearly defined rewards. Yet because of the noted political/economic asymmetry, anthropologists often are at an advantage in such negotiations—having a clearer sense of the value gained in relation to the rewards returned. As a rule of thumb, one might follow John Rawls’s “veil of ignorance” in which anthropologists consider what constitutes a just balance without presuming to know which side—informant or anthropologist—they are on. As Rawls phrases it with the veil of ignorance, “the parties are not allowed to know the social positions . . . of the parties they represent.” What would anthropologists claim to be fair—under these circumstances—for all parties concerned?

We would offer the following as guidelines for answering this question:

(a) A mutually agreed upon equitable division of all royalties that accrue to an anthropologist through the publication of works relating to the people involved. Such remuneration might take a range of forms: in the case of the Yanomami, for example, it could involve reimbursing individuals and groups or using the royalty payments to support projects directed by Venezuelan and Brazilian Yanomami and non-Yanomami specialized NGOs to improve medical, economic, educational, and environmental conditions. (b) A mutually agreed upon equitable division of all royalties drawn from biological specimens—either from the indigenous group itself or from flora and fauna in the area where the group resides—in a manner similar to that noted above. (c) Given that most anthropologists gain little in the way of royalties they might share with their communities of study, there are still a variety of ways they might redress the basic asymmetries of research.

The key here is working with informants and their communities to address their collective needs as they stipulate them—not as an anthropologist stipulates them. For example, informants may be eligible for governmental assistance but, for a variety of reasons, are unable to gain access to it. Informants may request anthropologists, given their skills in dealing with bureaucracies, to lobby on behalf of their communities. Likewise, communities may be short of medicines, such as antimalarial drugs, which the anthropologist can purchase. The anthropologist can, then, offer these medicines to the people themselves and/or restock local dispensaries. The essential point is that anthropologists must provide help in terms that the people themselves directly perceive and directly appreciate.

Third, anthropologists should take care to avoid constructing gratuitously damaging images or accounts of their subjects in their publications and media contacts to prevent possible harm to the dignity and welfare of the

individuals and groups they study. Having taken such care, anthropologists cannot be held responsible for the diverse and, particularly abusive, use of their publications. That is a matter of free speech. But, by the same token, anthropologists are morally responsible to counter abusive uses of their work when it is made known to them by local officials and/or anthropologists. They need to speak out in clear and public ways in the countries involved that they oppose the implications others draw from their work, particularly when such implications harm informants in ways the anthropologist never intended.

Fourth, there are a variety of reasons why the American Anthropological Association should maintain collegial relations with other national anthropological associations: as a sign of professional respect, to facilitate international cooperation among anthropologists, and to gain these associations' support for fieldwork in their countries. It is, therefore, critical that the association treat these other associations' concerns and complaints, regarding American anthropologists and American anthropology, in a formal and professional manner. The American Anthropological Association failed to do this in respect to the complaint lodged by the Brazilian Anthropological Association in 1988 concerning Napoleon Chagnon's writing. Specifically, it did not have a structure in place by which to deal with the Brazilian Anthropological Association's complaint at an organization-to-organizational level. The American Anthropological Association should now (a) establish a means for addressing such organizational complaints in the future and (b) write a formal letter of apology to the Brazilian Anthropological Association regarding AAA's failure to address their earlier complaint that will be published in both associations' newsletters.

Fifth, the American Anthropological Association needs to more vigorously pursue its own self-proclaimed educational efforts in the field of ethics. The American Anthropological Association's Executive Board accepted the Commission to Review the AAA Statements on Ethics' "recommendation that the AAA focus on an ethics education program for the American Anthropological Association and no longer seek to adjudicate claims of unethical behavior" (*Anthropology Newsletter* April 1996:14). What is certainly disturbing is that such educational efforts, if they exist, are barely recognizable by association members. The commission listed as the "objectives of the ethics education program . . . (1) to increase the number of candidates for all degrees in anthropology receiving training in ethics before graduating, (2) to provide ongoing education in ethical issues for all AAA members, and (3) to provide advice to AAA members facing/raising ethical dilemmas." To support this program, the Commission offered the following suggestions:

The AAA should (a) produce and periodically update a publication of case studies of ethical dilemmas anthropological researchers, teachers and practitioners might face, suitable for use in graduate training, postdoctorate training, and continuing education. [We would stress, the only publications widely familiar to the profession on ethics were published well before the Commission's report.

The publication listed on the association's Web site, Cassell and Jacobs' *Handbook on Ethical Issues in Anthropology*, was published in 1987. Fluehr-Lobban's *Ethics and the Profession of Anthropology* was published in 1991.] (b) The AAA should provide departments technical assistance in establishing educational offerings in ethics. (c) The AAA should conduct ethics training workshops at annual meetings and during the year. (d) The AAA should seek a joint grant with one or more other social science organizations to develop a basic ethics teaching module which could be used by all social sciences, calling on resources from across the campus, and which would be supplemented with department training specific to the discipline. (e) The AAA should develop broad guidelines to help departments determine the appropriate minimum of ethics training which should be offered to different levels of students (*Anthropology Newsletter*, April 1996:14–15).

Clearly, this has not occurred. The American Anthropological Association should therefore—in line with its own recommendations—now invest both time and energy in encouraging American graduate programs to include a substantive course in ethics prior to fieldwork. Further, the schools that conduct such courses should be placed publicly on the association's Web site. Certificates of completion might be issued to students who have performed satisfactorily in such courses. These certificates can then be presented to the relevant authorities, anthropological associations, and/or indigenous associations, if requested, in the countries of proposed research.

Finally, given that the American Anthropological Association, by its own admission, has proven ineffective in adjudicating ethical cases relating to the behaviors of its members, it should encourage the wider participation of its membership in its ethical deliberations. The open, public discussion of specific ethical problems—as has occurred in our Roundtable—allows association members to personally grapple with serious ethical issues in ways that abstract reports from the association do not. The experience is far more empowering, far more educational.

But to do this, the American Anthropological Association—needs to make the materials used in its deliberations more public. The secrecy that presently shrouds the association's inquiry into Tierney's *Darkness in El Dorado* contradicts the insistence enshrined in fundamental American democratic principles that (a) the presentation of evidence should occur in open court and (b) the "Sunshine Laws" of many states that require important government committees, boards, and council meetings be open to the public. This openness fits with the association's own code of ethics: "III.B.5. Anthropological researchers should seriously consider all reasonable requests for access to their data and other research materials."

The El Dorado Task Force should (a) make available for public release, at the earliest possible moment, an annotated bibliography of all the documents used in their deliberations. (b) Documents that can be released for general consumption, should be. (c) In respect to documents which, because of their personal nature, need remain private, the Inquiry should provide a clear, writ-

ten justification for such action in each case. The deliberations themselves may remain private but the materials used in arriving at decisions should be a matter of public record.

It would be a disservice to AAA members and to anthropology, more broadly, if the association—which, by its own admission, has proven ineffective in such matters to date—should now take upon itself sole responsibility for making judgments, in complete secrecy, on such a heated subject. To repeat, the process needs to be a shared, educational one for AAA members. The association cannot produce future ethical guidelines from on high. The association's members need to collectively participate in the deliberations. And to do this, the membership needs the documents the El Dorado Task Force uses to draw its conclusions. A formal report—without an annotated bibliography of all the evidence collected, without a chance to ponder the evidence before being requested to vote on accepting the Inquiry's report—simply will not do. The inquiry needs to be a collective process in which, through our shared wisdom as anthropologists, we shape our shared future as a profession.

Whatever intellectual differences on matters discussed in the Roundtable, our joint letter represents clear agreement on these critical ethical issues. We collectively urge the El Dorado Task Force to address them.

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RAYMOND HAMES (*University of Nebraska*)

KIM HILL (*University of New Mexico*)

LÊDA LEITÃO MARTINS (*Cornell University*)

JOHN PETERS (*Wilfrid Laurier University*)

TERENCE TURNER (*Cornell University*)

ROBERT BOROFSKY (*Hawaii Pacific University*),
Roundtable Convener

II. THE EL DORADO TASK FORCE REPORTS

[Note: Citations in this section refer to page numbers in the preliminary report or volumes I and II of the final report.]

As noted in chapter 3, the El Dorado Task Force was formally set up by the American Anthropological Association to inquire into the accusations presented by Patrick Tierney in *Darkness in El Dorado*. A preliminary report was presented at the American Anthropological Association's 2001 annual meeting and was soundly criticized. That criticism led the Task Force at its February meeting to make clear which members had written what sections. The preliminary report summarized here is basically the report as it stood in February 2002. The final report summarized here is the version presented on the AAA Web site, dated May 18, 2002. I have excerpted quotes from the reports and commentaries so

authors can speak for themselves. Obviously, there is editing in this and, equally obvious given the partisan nature of the arguments, some would wish for more quotes, more space. The summary that follows is only a guide to the more than five hundred pages of the report.*

Let me add three further comments. First, in the final report's summary below, the focus is on the "Introductory Statements by the Entire Task Force" (vol. 1:21–47). Here Task Force members were able to reach—openly and publicly—a consensus.

Second, the request for information called for in the "Open Letter to Our Anthropological Colleagues" reproduced earlier in this chapter was only partly addressed in the Task Force's final report. The report lists over 170 references, but few are cited in the "Introductory Statements by the Entire Task Force." Although certain individuals were interviewed (see I: 11–12 of the report), the details of what they said remains unclear, and the final report's interview list is noticeably missing "many of the key anthropologists mentioned in the [Tierney's] book" (*Anthropology News*, April 2001:59); Tierney himself was not interviewed. Such interviews were called for when the Task Force was established. The Task Force has certainly done extensive and thoughtful research in preparing the final report. But the report does not enable readers to follow the specific data that contributed to the members asserting particular conclusions. That story remains to be told.

Third, we might reflect, as we read the summary, on what the final report's ultimate goal was. Was it to simply make public what its members agreed on? Or was it to spur the AAA to action? As noted in chapter 7, the AAA affirmed that it would take a number of actions in light of the El Dorado Task Force's final report. To date, *most* of these have not been carried out. But the Task Force certainly deserves credit for achieving the first goal—reaching consensus on a number of important points. Given the politics involved, this was a major accomplishment.

The final report was written by Jane Hill (Task Force chair), Fernando Coronil, Janet Chernela, Trudy Turner, and Joe Watkins. Raymond Hames, as indicated in chapter 3, participated in the preparation of the preliminary report.

INTRODUCTION

The introductory sections to the preliminary and final reports overlap in numerous ways, with both making many of the same points. As the final report

*Because the two Task Force reports were published on the Web in Adobe's PDF format, I include volume numbers and page numbers for the citations. This is not feasible for the comments. But specific quotations can easily be found by searching for the individual under the El Dorado Task Force Report on the AAA's Web site at www.aaanet.org. The final report can be found at <http://www.aaanet.org/edtf/index.htm>. Although the preliminary report was removed from the AAA Web site when the final report was published, a partial copy of it, dated November 19, 2001, is located on the Hume Web site at http://members.aol.com/archaeodog/darkness_in_el_dorado/papers.htm. The Hume Web site copy of the report presently is missing the section on "Allegations and Case Studies."

EXCERPTS FROM THIS SECTION

“*Darkness in El Dorado* has served anthropology well in that it has opened a space for reflection and stocktaking about what we do and our relationships with those among whom we are privileged to study.” (Final Report)

“We must attend carefully to the responses of colleagues internationally, who have asked why American anthropologists are moved to action by an attack from outside the profession, but not by the collegial inquiry and concerns of our fellow anthropologists in other countries.” (Final Report)

“I asked six specialists who have worked with the Yanomami if they had been approached by the Task Force [for information], and none had.” (Commentary: L. Sponsel)

states, the American Anthropological Association’s Executive Board’s charge to the Task Force “to conduct an ‘inquiry’ is unprecedented in the history of the association, so that the Task Force had to think about what an ‘inquiry’ might be. The term implies reflection on the truth or falsity of allegations—and also of reflection of a moral and theoretical kind as well. In no sense did we consider our work to be an ‘investigation.’ Nor did we consider the materials that we developed to be ‘evidence.’ Where we found that it was possible to suggest something about the truth or falsity of allegations (or of the approximate location of an allegation in the large zone that exists between these two poles) we have done so” (I:9).

The final report goes on to state:

We concur with the findings of the AAA Executive Board, based on the report of the Peacock Committee [the Ad Hoc Task Force], that the allegations in *Darkness in El Dorado* must be taken seriously. *Darkness in El Dorado* has served anthropology well in that it has opened a space for reflection and stocktaking about what we do and our relationships with those among whom we are privileged to study. But the required reflection goes beyond these matters. For instance, we must attend carefully to the responses of colleagues internationally, who have asked why American anthropologists are moved to action by an attack from outside the profession, but not by the collegial inquiry and concerns of our fellow anthropologists in other countries. We are aware that many of the allegations raised by Tierney’s book have been raised before by other scholars and journalists, including Brazilian and Venezuelan colleagues. We are thus moved to reflection about our relationships with our colleagues around the world and especially in Venezuela and Brazil. (I:9).

Both the preliminary and final reports continue: “All anthropological practice is implicated in what went wrong in ‘El Dorado’ [i.e., the Yanomami region]—and we believe that things did go wrong” (I:10). The allegations examined are grouped into five categories: “(1) fieldwork practices of anthropologists, (2) rep-

resentations and portrayals of the Yanomami that may have had a negative impact, (3) efforts to create organizations to represent the interests of Yanomami or efforts to contribute to Yanomami welfare that may have actually undermined their well-being, (4) activities that may have resulted in personal gain to scientists, anthropologists, and journalists while contributing harm to the Yanomami, and (5) activities by anthropologists, scientists, and journalists that may have contributed to malnutrition, disease, and disorganization" (I:8).

The introductory material also offers an overview of the Yanomami (written by Janet Chernela, Raymond Hames, and Jane Hill) that focuses on their present condition. Chernela adds a human rights update. Jane Hill discusses the AAA's role "in advocacy for the Yanomami" as well as "debates on Yanomami anthropology." Hill states that the AAA has, through the Yanomami Commission (headed by Terry Turner) and the Commission on Human Rights ("led by its first chairperson, Leslie Sponsel"), been a strong advocate for Yanomami rights, especially for establishing the Yanomami land reserve. She observes that there has been continuing debate about Chagnon's work, such as in the *Anthropology News*. She adds that while one letter (by Bruce Albert criticizing Chagnon) was refused publication in the newsletter, a letter that "characterized Brazilian concern about the impact of Chagnon's work as motivated by 'confused grievances'" was published. "Members of the Task Force concur," Hill writes, "that it is regrettable that this language appeared in the AN" (II:11).

Sample Commentaries

Leslie Sponsel (professor, University of Hawaii) focuses on two issues. First, he observes:

The Task Force claims "All members have made every effort to become thoroughly acquainted with the anthropological literature on the Yanomami in the specific area that they were assigned, consistent with their expertise" (p. 3). However, the Task Force cites a relatively obscure 1983 publication by J. Saffirio and Raymond Hames, but does not cite a more wide-ranging and far more influential and accessible earlier report by Alcida Ramos and Kenneth Taylor (1979) which first drew attention to the plight of the Yanomami in Brazil, following the devastating consequences of the construction of the northern perimeter highway deep into their territory.

Second, he questions the Task Force's competence in producing an objective report. He notes that the fourth charge of the AAA Executive Board asserts:

"It is expected that the Task Force will seek information from AAA members, the author, and key anthropologists mentioned in the book" (AAA 2000b). In its Preliminary Report the Task Force asserts that "We have conducted a number of interviews, emphasizing interviews of persons with first-hand knowledge of the Yanomami" (p. 3). Several months ago, I asked six specialists who have worked with the Yanomami if they had been approached by the Task Force, and none had. . . . Why

has the Task Force ignored most Yanomami specialists? Could it be because the overwhelming majority of them have repeatedly been critical of Chagnon for decades?

Juan Villarías-Robles (professor, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Madrid, Spain) also questions the Task Force's objectivity. After mentioning the scandal that surrounded Boas (the "father" of American Anthropology and the only person ever to be censured by the American Anthropological Association) exposing American anthropologists working in Central America as U.S. government spies, Villarías-Robles queries whether a similar prejudicial investigation was under way. He notes, "In the 'Background' of the [preliminary report's] Introduction . . . it is stated that Tierney's book is 'deeply flawed, but nevertheless [highlights] ethical issues that we must confront.' I have taken sentences [such as this] as a subtle confession of bias against Tierney as a guiding principle—which is obviously unacceptable in any dispassionate inquiry."

ASSESSMENT OF ALLEGATIONS AGAINST JAMES NEEL

Because the question of whether Neel's vaccination program spread measles among the Yanomami has been dismissed by all parties concerned (except perhaps Tierney), the controversy concerning Neel really centers on two issues: (1) Did Neel have informed consent from the Yanomami when he conducted his research? (2) When the measles epidemic arose during Neel's research and Neel was under time constraints, did he focus sufficiently on the Yanomami and their health needs or did he give greater priority to his own personal research at the expense of the Yanomami?

Did Neel Have Informed Consent for His Research?

Preliminary Report (*Primary Research Responsibility: Trudy Turner*)

The key questions regarding informed consent are (a) did the 1968 Neel expedition follow 1968 standards for informed consent, and (b) in what ways did their efforts at informed consent fall short by Yanomami standards as well as by ours today. Trudy Turner concludes:

Informed consent procedures today . . . would usually offer subjects an opportunity to be informed of the results of the study. The Yanomami believe that they should have been informed about results, and believe that they were not so informed. We are not aware of any efforts by Neel to "follow up" with information on study results designed to be intelligible to interested Yanomami.

In summary, judged against the standards of 2002, the "informed consent" procedures used by the Neel expedition were minimal. However, judged against the standards of 1968, the use of procedures such as an explanation of the purpose of

EXCERPTS FROM THIS SECTION

“The Yanomami believe that they should have been informed about results, and believe that they were not so informed. We are not aware of any efforts by Neel to ‘follow up’ with information on study results designed to be intelligible to interested Yanomami.” (Preliminary Report)

“Neel not only vaccinated the Yanomami without their consent, he did so without the ability to successfully control their symptoms.” (Commentary: M. Dalstrom)

“The Task Force has found no evidence that Neel and his team were unusual in the cursory and misleading nature of their consent procedure. Nonetheless it cannot be condoned . . . The research procedures did, however, pose another kind of risk, which we can identify today in the sense of betrayal and injustice shared by many Yanomami.” (Final Report)

the research provided to subjects, considerable care in determining appropriate compensation, and the provision of some follow-up medical attention, were appropriate and even advanced. The Task Force observes that at this period many citizens of the U.S. and Europe were the unwitting and uninformed subjects of medical research; the Yanomami in fact received more explanation and compensation than was typical at that period (p. 4).

Sample Commentaries

Jennie Campana (student, Bucknell) writes: “It is easy to see the difficulties that Neel and Chagnon faced in attempting to obtain informed consent from the Yanomamo during the 1968 expedition. The language barriers that existed were extensive. Although Chagnon had a certain command of the language, concepts such as atomic energy, genetics, etc. would have been difficult to explain. But the fact that truly hits home with this aspect of the El Dorado debate is the fact that the members of the Yanomamo community who were subject to the sampling felt, and still feel, that they were misled by the scientists. . . . Could it be deduced from this episode that anthropologists and scientists consider research more important than the desires of the people who are subjected to this type of study? What kind of message is this sending to the international community??”

Matthew Dalstrom (student, unspecified affiliation) comments: Neel “knew that it was possible that the vaccine could cause the patient to experience strong enough symptoms to put their lives in danger. Neel not only vaccinated the Yanomami without their consent, he did so without the ability to successfully control their symptoms. If consent was properly acquired then the Indians would not have taken “off in fright when they heard we [Neel and colleagues] were giving inoculations.” . . . Since he did not have enough gamma globulin to treat his patients . . . he should have researched the Yanomami indigenous medical system. Then he could have adequately determined if they had the ability to deal with the symptoms the vaccine would create.”

Final Report

The Final Report discusses this issue under the general heading “2.1.1. Consent, Research and Humanitarianism: James V. Neel and the Yanomami Then and Now.” The section begins by noting “a contrapuntal alignment”—a fancy term for disagreement—between Janet Chernela’s Yanomami interviews and Trudy Turner’s interviews with the original researchers who participated in the 1968 expedition. The former indicate that Yanomami feel deceived by Neel; the latter, that the researchers felt they made an honest, but imperfect, effort to explain their project to those involved. Quoting from the report:

The consent procedures of the Neel expedition were not in compliance with official standards for informed consent in force at the time of the expedition (and would not, of course, meet today’s standards). In this failure, however, they reflect practices that were then common. . . . It would have been possible and desirable to explain to the Yanomami in understandable language that the main goal of the expedition involved improving understanding of genetically-inherited differences between Yanomami individuals and villages, and between Yanomami and other people around the world. . . . While this research goal was potentially of general benefit to humanity, it would yield no immediate health benefit to the Yanomami. Yet the Yanomami might very well have been interested in these broader scientific goals of the expedition and even been willing to participate in them for their own sake, had they been given information that would have permitted them to make an informed decision (1:22).

. . . Neel’s expedition collected samples of bodily materials (blood, sputum, urine, feces), using standard procedures that had proven over many years with many populations to have an extremely low risk of complication. They had no reason at the time to suppose that these procedures would pose risk to Yanomami donors, and they had reason to believe that the minimal risks were balanced by benefit, medical care provided by physicians on the research team to a disastrously under-served population. The Task Force has found no evidence that Neel and his team were unusual in the cursory and misleading nature of their consent procedure. Nonetheless it cannot be condoned” (1:23).

The report continues: “The research procedures did, however, pose another kind of risk, which we can identify today in the sense of betrayal and injustice shared by many Yanomami” (1:23).

How Did Neel Balance His Concern to Pursue His Research Objectives with Administering Help to the Yanomami during a Devastating Measles Epidemic?

Preliminary Report (*Primary Research Responsibility: Trudy Turner*)

Trudy Turner and Jeffrey Nelson’s “Turner Point by Point” (2001) presents a critique of an earlier paper by Terry Turner (“The Yanomami and the Ethics of Anthropological Practice,” Terence Turner 2001b).

EXCERPTS FROM THIS SECTION

“Once he [Neel] was aware of the magnitude of the epidemic he immediately took steps to prevent further spread of measles. . . . It must be remembered that no matter what Neel felt, he did vaccinate.” (Preliminary Report)

“The arrival of the epidemic . . . made medical demands on the expedition that it was not prepared to meet, unless it had been willing to put aside more of its research activities temporarily to allow it to vaccinate as many people as possible before they were exposed.” (Commentary: Terry Turner)

“The Task Force recognizes that Neel faced a structural conflict between his research program as approved and funded by the AEC, and the vaccination campaign. His notes are full of his frustrations in this regard. . . . Some members of the Task Force argue that the research program, by funding the team’s presence in the region, made the vaccination program possible. Other members of the Task Force, however, argue that the question must be kept open, given the possibility that the vaccination program might have been more efficient had it been uncomplicated by the many dimensions of the AEC-funded research that Neel continued to pursue. We are unable to reach agreement on this matter.” (Final Report)

Trudy Turner and Jeffrey Nelson state: “Much of what [Terry] Turner says [regarding this matter] . . . is based on conjecture. He uses his interpretations of the material as fact. His major complaint is that Neel gave his first priority to research and the second to the humanitarian effort” (p. 17).

The key statement regarding Neel’s intentions comes from Neel’s notes: “At Patanowā-teri we will also make our principle [*sic*] collections of biologicals, and I will concentrate on this while Bill does PEs [physical exams]. Thus, I will get stools and soils while Bill does PEs for 3–4 days—then we get blood, saliva, and urine . . . then inoculate if at all” (p. 13).

Trudy Turner and Jeffrey Nelson state:

[Terry] Turner makes much of the “if at all” statement in Neel’s journal. We have another interpretation and an alternate reading of the material: “if at all” (p. 48). It is important to note that Neel addresses the vaccinations specifically as “a gesture of altruism and conscience” (5 February 1968 entry in field notes: 79). Likewise, he notes how frustrating this vaccination process is: “more of a headache than bargained for.” However, he never suggests that he ever “seriously considered jettisoning the ‘altruism and conscience’ of the vaccination campaign and [abandoning] the vaccinations altogether” (Turner 2001b:32); he does, however, clearly state in frustration that he would like to put the vaccinating into the “hands of the missionaries.” Moreover, the context of “if at all” must account for the fact that the Indians had a history of fleeing those administering the vaccinations: “they took off in fright when they heard we were giving inoculations” [1 Feb. 1968 entry in field notes: 76]. Vaccinating “if at all,” administering the vac-

cinations “at the very last” [5 February 1968 entry in field notes: 79], or placing the vaccinations into the hands of the missionaries may be indicative of this “flight” problem alone. It should also be noted that this was all written before Neel was aware of the magnitude of the epidemic and before the all-Orinoco plan [for fighting the epidemic] was devised. Once he was aware of the magnitude of the epidemic he immediately took steps to prevent further spread of measles. At this point, he gave preventative doses of MIG [measles immune globulin] to those exposed, but who were not yet sick, but not vaccinated. He also administered penicillin to those who were the most ill. It must be remembered that no matter what Neel felt, he did vaccinate (p. 14).

Sample Commentaries

Terry Turner (professor, Cornell University), in responding to Trudy Turner and Jeffrey Nelson’s response to his paper, asserts:

“Turner Point by Point” [Turner and Nelson 2001] is an extraordinary document, considering its context. It is an attempt by a member of a supposedly objective and impartial commission of investigation, with the help of a research assistant, to refute and dismiss in every significant particular an extensive compendium of new research findings dealing with the allegations the commission is supposedly investigating, supplied in good faith to the commission in response to an appeal by its chair for exactly such contributions to aid the commission in its work. . . . It is clearly an attempt to deal with the findings of my research . . . by killing the messenger.

As such, “Turner Point by Point” can only be understood as a product of the peculiar structure of the El Dorado Task Force, which has put individual partisans of the principal figures under investigation in charge of preparing the sections of its report dealing specifically with them. This “division of labor” has given us an investigative commission in which Raymond Hames, a defender and partisan of Napoleon Chagnon, has been assigned to write the section of the report on Chagnon, and Trudy Turner, a biological anthropologist committed to the categorical defense of James Neel against any and all allegations of ethical conflicts or of harboring embarrassing eugenic ideas, has been placed in charge of the part of the report dealing with James Neel. . . .

The Brazilian medical team [see pages 113–114], Albert and I have each challenged the ethics of Neel’s attempt to split the difference between his medical and scientific goals during the epidemic on the grounds that it led to failure to move quickly enough to vaccinate some groups of Yanomami before they were exposed to the measles. This rendered the vaccinations ineffective as immunization. . . . The arrival of the epidemic, in other words, made medical demands on the expedition that it was not prepared to meet, unless it had been willing to put aside more of its research activities temporarily to allow it to vaccinate as many people as possible before they were exposed. . . .

My point about the relation between Neel’s medical and research goals is not, as [Trudy] Turner and Nelson try to make out. . . . [Turner and Nelson 2001], that Neel had no humanitarian concerns. It is that while Neel had both medical and research objectives for the vaccinations, and that while these objectives are mutually compatible in principle, they did come into conflict in the context of the epidemic.

After questioning Trudy Turner and Jeffrey Nelson's interpretation of "if at all" (as referring to Yanomami possibly fleeing inoculations), Turner goes on to state: "In my analysis of the question I give the most weight to the evidence of Neel's itinerary for the expedition, and his unwillingness to make serious modifications in the routing and rate of the expedition's movements to make possible more effective measures against the epidemic, such as more timely vaccinations and the possibility of not going to relatively remote and unexposed places on the original itinerary where this would mean exposing them [the villagers] to disease carriers who might accompany the expedition."

Ryk Ward (professor, University of Oxford) writes in reply to a commentary by Frechione that Neel was more interested in observing than treating the measles epidemic:

The message of Frechione's posting is transparently clear: It represents an accusation that Neel deliberately wanted to withhold vaccines from the Patanowä-teri, so he could observe the consequences of a measles epidemic in an unacculturated population. . . . As a member of [the] 1968 expedition, who was present throughout the entire time that Neel and (Willard) Centerwall were in the field, including the visit to the Patanowä-teri, I categorically deny this accusation. . . . Before arriving at a village, Neel was in the habit of making a detailed plan of action, and discussing this with the members of his team. In advance of arriving at the Patanowä-teri, Neel decided that the FIRST task to be undertaken was to vaccinate. . . . Accordingly, soon after arriving in Patanowä-teri late morning of February 21st ("after a hard 3-hour slog through the jungle" — Neel's words), Neel and Centerwall spent the afternoon vaccinating, and carrying out physical examinations. Apart from completing the vaccinations and physical examinations, no other fieldwork was done that day. . . . Not only is this schedule . . . clearly documented in field notes and Asch's film, but [it] is even detailed on page 96 of Tierney's book. It is abundantly clear that Neel's first priority in Patanowä-teri was to do his best to prevent an epidemic.

Final Report

The final report seems to detour away from the question of Neel's priorities during the epidemic, paying much attention to a question not particularly emphasized in the controversy: was the 1968 vaccination campaign organized for research, as a humanitarian program, or both? This issue considers the purpose behind Neel bringing measles vaccine on his research trip. Was it simply to help the Yanomami, or did he have a research motive as well? The far more crucial question, discussed here, is, what did Neel do when confronted by the measles epidemic? The final report turns to this question in one paragraph: "The Task Force recognizes that Neel faced a structural conflict between his research program as approved and funded by the AEC, and the vaccination campaign. His notes are full of his frustrations in this regard. . . . Some members of the Task Force argue that the research program, by funding the team's presence in the region, made the vaccination program possible. Other mem-

bers of the Task Force, however, argue that the question must be kept open, given the possibility that the vaccination program might have been more efficient had it been uncomplicated by the many dimensions of the AEC-funded research that Neel continued to pursue. We are unable to reach agreement on this matter” (I:27).

Beginning to Mend the Damage

The Task Force concludes its collective comments on Neel in a section entitled “Beginning to Mend the Damage.” It highlights the Yanomami’s sense of betrayal regarding the espoused goals of Neel and colleagues’ research and offers guidelines for trying to positively address the problem.

The Task Force takes seriously the evidence that there has been long-term social and psychological suffering among the Yanomami as a result of the 1968 Neel expedition. According to independent interviews conducted among bilingual Yanomami by Janet Chernela . . . there was consensus that the Yanomami were misled by the promise of health benefits in the “consent procedure” of the Neel expeditions and this promise was not fulfilled. . . .

Obviously many Yanomami who report feeling betrayed by this unfulfilled promise were barely touched by the expedition or were not even alive when it occurred. However, the sense of having suffered an injustice is no less real among them. This sense of injustice comes from the fact that the Neel expedition treated the Yanomami as if they were less than fully capable of understanding and of determining their own destiny. . . .

Janet Chernela and Fernando Coronil have spoken to Yanomami representatives who want the sample materials that were collected by the Neel expeditions, especially those that were collected from people now deceased, to be destroyed or returned to them for appropriate disposition. . . . (I:29)

The Task Force recommends that other scholars follow Weiss [who has stopped all research involving the Yanomami blood samples in his laboratory] in imposing an immediate moratorium on scientific work with materials collected from the Yanomami during the Neel expeditions. The moratorium should remain in place until new agreements can be worked out between the scholarly community and the Yanomami under contemporary procedures of informed consent. One of the results of such new agreements may very well be return of the original biological materials under terms specified by the Yanomami. Ultimately, though, we believe that better communication and informed decisions expand possibilities and lay the beginnings for new collaborations between the Yanomami and the research community, in which the Yanomami are full decision-makers. Moreover, we believe that these agreements should include a commitment by the anthropological community to full collaboration with the Yanomami to see that adequate medical care is provided to Yanomami communities, especially in Venezuela where the need is greatest. This effort should not take the form of vague promises that, for instance, genetic research may ultimately facilitate finding cures or prophylactics for infectious diseases. Instead, it should take the form of working with colleagues internationally

EXCERPT FROM THIS SECTION

“We believe that [there] . . . should [be] . . . a commitment by the anthropological community to full collaboration with the Yanomami to see that adequate medical care is provided to Yanomami communities, especially in Venezuela where the need is greatest. This effort should not take the form of vague promises.” (Final Report)

toward immediate and material benefit in the form of training, equipment, medical supplies and medicines, clinical access and personnel, and other benefits that will be accessible to Yanomami throughout their homeland. Many barriers to the success of such efforts exist, but the effort must be sincerely made. (I:30)

**FIVE ADDITIONAL ALLEGATIONS
IN THE PRELIMINARY REPORT**

The Task Force, in its preliminary report, focused on a relatively narrow set of issues relating to Chagnon. The final report makes an effort to examine and assess the accusations against Chagnon in a more global way. As a result, one cannot neatly move from the preliminary report through the commentaries to the final report.

Chagnon's Collecting of Yanomami Names

Preliminary Report (*Primary Research Responsibility: Raymond Hames, Supplemental Editorial Responsibility: Jane Hill*)

Ray Hames assesses the tactics Chagnon used in collecting genealogies: “Among the Yanomamö, use of personal names for maturing males, mature men, or the dead regardless of sex is subject to a number of stringent regulations (Lizot 1985:125–36). In a public context, it is inappropriate and insulting to address a man by his name or mention the name of a dead relative to a close kinsperson. In a private setting these rules change depending on the social relations and context that exist between speaker and listener” (p. 2). He goes on to cite Bruce Albert to affirm that, as a researcher, “one is able to legitimately collect personal names” (p. 2). Hames also observes that a slew of other ethnographers besides Chagnon collected and published Yanomami names—“from Bruce Albert [to] other Yanomamö ethnographers such as Jacques Lizot, Alcida Ramos, Eguillor Garcia, and Marco Ales. . . . Tierney (2000) contains many Yanomamö personal names, some accompanied by photographs” (p. 11).

“The more interesting claim about the collection of names,” Hames suggests, “is that Chagnon used unethical methods in his genealogical research by rely-

EXCERPTS FROM THIS SECTION

“The use of [Chagnon’s fieldwork] techniques was a consequence of the Yanomamö providing Chagnon with false information. . . . This of course does not excuse Chagnon for the tactics.” (Preliminary Report)

“When he was lied to . . . he [Chagnon] should not have thought of a way to deceive them, rather to gain trust from them.” (Commentary: E. Hopkins)

“Should we go out and coerce children into giving us names in order to complete our research?” (Commentary: K. Peer)

ing on local pariahs, enemies, and children. To some extent, the use of these techniques was a consequence of the Yanomamö providing Chagnon with false information during the initial six-month period of field research. This of course does not excuse Chagnon for the tactics he may have employed to gain correct genealogies, but it does provide a relevant context. Of these three specific accusations it seems to us that the use of children and ‘bribing’ of children is the most questionable” (pp. 2–3).

He concludes by suggesting that “it is our sense that many of the mistakes Chagnon made around names were honest and unintended and that he learned from these errors. We are, however, concerned about the use of children as informants as well as the use of aberrant and abnormal individuals. While these are ‘classical’ anthropological field techniques, we believe that in today’s environment, of increasing concern for the dignity and autonomy of human subjects, we should open a new dialogue on such methods” (p. 3).

Sample Commentaries

Elizabeth Hopkins (student, California State, Hayward) writes: “As I read about the Yanomami tribe, it never really occurred to me that the way Chagnon went about getting members’ names was wrong. On the other hand, when I read the accusations and the reasoning why the way the Yanomami names were gotten, I changed my mind. I really do feel that the Yanomami were disrespected by being tricked into telling their sacred names. . . . He could have really gone about it in a different way. When he was lied to by the tribe for six months, he should not have thought of a way to deceive them, rather to gain trust from them. Manipulating children to get the names of men, women, and deceased tribe members showed that Chagnon did not respect the Yanomami way of living.”

Karisa Peer (student, Middlebury) states: “Chagnon was so desperate to attain ‘successful’ research that he employed some obviously unethical methods. How does Chagnon feel . . . to be a role model for current anthropology students? Should we go out and coerce children into giving us names in order to complete our research?”

Chagnon's Involvement in Yanomami Political Affairs

Preliminary Report (*Primary Research Responsibility: Raymond Hames*)

At issue in this section is the impact Chagnon's fieldwork had on Yanomami affairs. Rather than focus on the broad issue of whether Chagnon stimulated warfare through his distribution of extensive trade goods, this section considers the narrower "allegation in *Darkness in El Dorado* that Napoleon Chagnon put Yanomamö lives at risk in a peace-making negotiation in one instance, and by aiding a raiding party in another" (p. 1). Regarding the former, Hames concludes, "It is clear from Chagnon's writing that the Yanomamö want to use Chagnon as an instrument of peace and that he obliged them at great personal risk to himself" (p. 1). As for the latter, Hames notes, "Tierney, and to some extent Ferguson, seem to suggest that the failed raid would not have occurred without Chagnon's assistance. Chagnon's text clearly states that the Yanomamö had decided to make the raid and then asked him to help. There is no indication that the raid was contingent on Chagnon's assistance" (p. 1).

Hames concludes: "We believe that ethnographers should not, with premeditation, directly or indirectly involve themselves in hostile acts. But one could imagine other circumstances where involvement in hostilities is unavoidable. . . . That Chagnon assisted the Bisaasi-teri in brokering a successful peace treaty with the Mishimishimaböwei-teri is clearly praiseworthy. However, we believe that the proper stance for anthropologists is to encourage those we study to make peace and not war, and to avoid direct or indirect facilitation of hostilities except in an emergency" (p. 2).

Sample Commentaries

R. Brian Ferguson (professor, Rutgers University, Newark), who suggested Chagnon's distribution of Western goods intensified Yanomami warfare (in *Yanomami Warfare: A Political History*), begins by stating "It is surprising that a former student of Napoleon Chagnon, Raymond Hames, was chosen to write some of the reports [on Chagnon]. Dr. Hames is a strong supporter of Dr. Chagnon." He continues: "I doubt any commission, any few scholars brought in to fact-find on a deadline, could completely untangle all these events [related to how Chagnon's gift giving stimulated Yanomami warfare]. But they are not even mentioned. The effort devoted by this Task Force to considering anthropologists' involvement in Yanomami political affairs is far less than that centered on Neel's activities involving biomedical issues. It barely scratches the surface, and for the record, it must be made clear just how limited this investigation has been. One could read this report by Hames without getting any idea that the role of distributed Western goods in political conflict and war is even an issue. That is pretty amazing."

Dominic Gaccetta (student, Hawaii Pacific University) writes: "Political decisions for any society are heartfelt beacons of values, principles, and ideals. An ethnographer's presence should not disrupt the natural flow of events. . . .

EXCERPTS FROM THIS SECTION

“Ethnographers should not . . . involve themselves in hostile acts.” (Preliminary Report)

“One could read this [preliminary] report . . . without getting any idea that the role of distributed Western goods in political conflict and war is even an issue. That is pretty amazing.” (Commentary: B. Ferguson)

“Perhaps a counter task force should be made to evaluate . . . how well the task force and the AAA followed through on whatever is decided.” (Commentary: D. Gaccetta)

Chagnon had no ties to the area. Whatever damage he caused by . . . [his] actions, he gets to leave and return to his shiny home. . . . Now the Task Force has a situation in front of them where it looks like they will go in one of two directions. The most likely seems to be in favor of providing excuses for what happened, saying it will not be allowed to happen again, but really doing nothing. I could be mistaken though and the Task Force might take a stand and provide guidelines for ethnographical research that would keep researchers in check. I would stress that there is nothing now in place in the AAA to make sure the Task Force’s decisions are upheld. Perhaps a counter task force should be made to evaluate the task force in place now, and evaluate how well the task force and the AAA followed through on whatever is decided.”

Chagnon’s Public Dialogue with Members of Study Communities

Preliminary Report (*Primary Research Responsibility: Jane Hill*)

This topic refers to Napoleon Chagnon’s negative statements regarding the noted Yanomami activist Davi Kopenawa. Hill states:

We are unable to confirm that Chagnon ever referred to Davi Kopenawa . . . as a “parrot”; this language is quoted by Tierney from an article by Peter Monaghan in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (Monaghan 1994:A19) and is not there attributed to Chagnon directly. Monaghan states “Mr. Chagnon and his supporters dismiss [Davi Kopenawa] as a parrot of human-rights groups and say he does not speak for the tribe.” However, the above citation [and the one in chapter 2] are the only published writings by Chagnon on Kopenawa . . . that we have seen cited, or identified ourselves. They are carefully worded and say nothing about “parrots.” However, we suggest that Chagnon’s remarks were problematic in their context. They were written at a time when there was the most serious threat to Yanomami lands; between the mid 1980’s and 1992, when Yanomami lands in Brazil were finally demarcated with their present boundaries, Brazilian anthropologists, accompanied by other anthropologists, . . . international NGOs such as Survival International, and the

 EXCERPTS FROM THIS SECTION

“To raise questions, in very widely-distributed publications, about the authenticity of a person who had unquestionably become a very positive symbol of the Yanomami and an important political asset in this fight could not fail to undermine Yanomami interests.” (Preliminary Report)

“When the anthropologists . . . begin criticizing the Yanomami as being ‘inauthentic,’ they only become another one of the puppet masters attempting to influence and direct the future of the Yanomami. . . . [Since the] Yanomami have been subjected (without consent) to over 40 years . . . of . . . questioning, ‘experiments’ and bombardment . . . they were more or less forced to take sides and form alliances with certain groups who support their cause.” (Commentary: H. Ficker)

Yanomami themselves were engaged in an extremely difficult and dangerous fight to protect these lands. To raise questions, in very widely-distributed publications, about the authenticity of a person who had unquestionably become a very positive symbol of the Yanomami and an important political asset in this fight could not fail to undermine Yanomami interests (p. 2).

Sample Commentaries

Harvest Ficker (student, Middlebury) writes: “When the anthropologists . . . begin criticizing the Yanomami as being ‘inauthentic,’ they only become another one of the puppet masters attempting to influence and direct the future of the Yanomami. Instead, anthropologists need to look at the greater picture that will help lead the Yanomami to a state less influenced by outside forces. It is important to keep in mind the fact that the Yanomami have been subjected (without consent) to over 40 years of observations, questioning, ‘experiments’ and bombardment from scientists and anthropologists. Therefore, they were more or less forced to take sides and form alliances with certain groups who support their cause.”

Nirvi Shah (student, San Diego State) observes: “There is no evidence to show that Chagnon said Davi [Kopenawa] was a ‘parrot’ for his tribe. There is no evidence in this paper to show what Chagnon’s exact opinion was at all. However, if we accept Chagnon’s remarks as specified by Hill, Turner et al., then his remarks are, indeed ‘unusual as well as condescending.’”

Allegations of Inappropriate Sexual Relationships with Yanomami

Preliminary Report (*Primary Research Responsibility: Jane Hill*)

This section deals with the sexual behaviors of anthropologists in the field—both in the Yanomami case and in a more general sense. Regarding the Yanomami,

EXCERPTS FROM THIS SECTION

“In reflecting on the Lizot case, we observe that anthropologists, like other human beings, are sexual creatures. Inevitably, sexual attraction and sexual relationships will develop between anthropologists and those they encounter during field work.” (Preliminary Report)

“If the allegations against Lizot of unethical sexual behavior are true should we, or more fundamentally can we, accept his conclusions on normative sexual behavior among the Yanomami as fact (or truth)? Are the activities he described really normative or did the presence and actions of outsiders (military personnel, miners, and of course himself) create an environment that transformed Yanomami sexuality into the sexual behavior he witnessed?” (Commentary: A. Vance)

two cases in particular are mentioned: Kenneth Good’s marriage to Yarima and Jacques Lizot’s relations with teenage boys. Hill states, “The El Dorado Task Force believes that the allegations about Lizot’s activities among the Yanomami made in *Darkness in El Dorado* are well-founded.”

She also discusses sexual relations more generally: “In reflecting on the Lizot case, we observe that anthropologists, like other human beings, are sexual creatures. Inevitably, sexual attraction and sexual relationships will develop between anthropologists and those they encounter during field work” (p. 2).

Sample Commentaries

Diana Mabalot (student, Hawaii Pacific) comments: “I do think that it is unprofessional for anthropologists to have sexual relations with a group that they are studying, because in a way, it makes the researcher seem disrespectful to their society, especially if it is against ‘cultural’ values, morals, and beliefs. It also makes the researcher seem uncaring, and less concerned with the people that . . . [he or she is] studying. I agree that anthropology field work should have guidelines and rules regarding the anthropologist’s behavior because it might affect their research and their relationship with the people. It is just like the rule that teachers can’t date students, or not dating, more generally, in the workplace. It’s just professional. But on the other hand, if an anthropologist becomes interested, not in sex, but in love, and has a close relationship with a ‘subject,’ I can understand why an affair might take place. It is hard to fight back feelings, especially when it’s deep like love.”

Amy Vance (student, Gettysburg) writes: “In Lizot’s book *Tales of the Yanomami: Daily Life in the Venezuelan Rainforest*, he provides extremely vivid accounts of Yanomami sexual activity—describing young males as frequently engaging in sexual activity . . . ([including] copulation with animals), homosexuality as . . . prevalent in Yanomami society, and incest as condemnable yet frequent. . . . Here is where I have to question the credibility of Lizot’s findings. . . . If the allegations against Lizot of unethical sexual behavior are true

should we, or more fundamentally can we, accept his conclusions on normative sexual behavior among the Yanomami as fact (or truth)? Are the activities he described really normative or did the presence and actions of outsiders (military personnel, miners, and of course himself) create an environment that transformed Yanomami sexuality into the sexual behavior he witnessed?”

Regarding the Film *Warriors of the Amazon*

Preliminary Report (*Primary Research Responsibility: Jane Hill*)

This portion of the report refers to the staged production of *Warriors of the Amazon*, and the fact (noted in chapter 2) that “a film crew allegedly watched a woman and child die” (p. 1). Hill states,

The Task Force concurs with Tierney that the film is profoundly problematic. . . . First, the film, made in the 1990’s, is obviously staged. (Tierney enumerates a number of pieces of evidence for this [Tierney 2000:216–17].) The film is incongruous in that while it shows many trade goods, the Yanomami wear almost no western clothes (one or two men in shorts are shown). (p. 18)

“The images of the dying young mother and her baby are problematic. . . . It is filmed as a moment in ‘nature.’ Tierney states that the film was made only an hour by motorboat from the infirmary at the Mavaca mission (Tierney 2000:221). Hames states that this is an exaggeration; the distance might be as much as 3 ½ hours, depending on conditions and mode of transportation. Nonetheless it would have been easy to take the woman, who is quite young, perhaps even still a teenager, to the hospital. (p. 18)

There is a grim lesson here for us all: decent ordinary people, in the grip of a racializing representation that the film reproduces in almost every dimension, can behave in ways that deeply shocked members of the Task Force as well as Tierney and his informants and that must have been a dehumanizing experience for the Yanomami. (p. 19)

Sample Commentaries

Wes Cadman (student, Gettysburg) comments: “I am embarrassed . . . [by] what Lizot and “Warriors of the Amazon” have done to represent the anthropological community. The sad thing is I can almost understand letting a woman die while filming IF you go into the film with the intention to be as unobtrusive as possible and really get what their way of life is all about. But this film was not even close to catching the natural Yanomami culture. By bribing them with trade goods and setting up the whole movie like some high school play, you immediately lose all realism of the situation and therefore in my eyes have a responsibility to help out the people you are studying, especially medically.”

Andrew Ulrich (student, Idaho) writes: “In anthropology . . . there are three things a person is accountable to. The first . . . is the people being studied. The second . . . is the people funding . . . [the research], and the third . . . is people in

EXCERPTS FROM THIS SECTION

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“By bribing them with trade goods and setting up the whole movie like some high school play, you immediately lose all realism of the situation and therefore in my eyes have a responsibility to help out the people you are studying, especially medically.” (Commentary: W. Cadman)

the same profession. This film crew may have stayed within the boundaries that their employers set, and they may have even stayed within the morals of most of the colleagues of the profession of photography and cinematography, but their behavior toward people of the Yanomami was demoralizing. . . . Two out of three in this standard is not good at all. . . . They watched a woman and an infant die when the community of the woman and infant clearly saw this as inappropriate.”

**THE FINAL REPORT’S ASSESSMENT OF THE
ALLEGATIONS AGAINST NAPOLEON CHAGNON**

Regarding topics missing from the final report, the Task Force indicates that it “has missed . . . [Ray Hames’s] specific expertise about the Yanomami [since his resignation], which prevents the Task Force from completing its work in at least one important area, an inquiry into the allegations that Napoleon Chagnon instigated violence among the Yanomami; there was not enough time between Hames’ resignation and our deadline for another member to undertake research on this matter.” No explanation is offered for why the “Allegations of Inappropriate Sexual Relationships with Yanomami” is not dealt with in the Final Report.

“Professor Chagnon,” the Task Force observes,

has refused to talk to any member of the Task Force, which we regret. Colleagues (Irons, Hames) who have talked to him have from time to time shared his views with the Task Force. We know that he objects to this inquiry in the strongest terms. We hope that we have proceeded in the spirit of trying to learn from mistakes that he has often modeled in his own work. (I:31)

Chagnon has been exceptionally frank in discussing his mistakes in his textbooks, and we believe that criticism of his work should give proper credit to his openness in matters such as his mistakes in collecting Yanomami names. . . . Members of the Task Force know how easy it is to make mistakes in the field, and we recognize that most careers do not come under such close scrutiny. (I:31)

A major allegation against Chagnon is that he exacerbated violence among the Yanomami through his practices of distributing gifts. This is a major argument of Ferguson (1995), and it is adopted by Tierney 2000. The Task Force finds this to be a very complex matter, and one that it could not address fully without Hames' expertise. (I:31) [Note: Hames gives his assessment of Ferguson's argument in chapter 10.]

The Task Force focuses on two sets of allegations against Chagnon in the final report. There are "first, allegations that his representations of Yanomami ways of life were damaging to them and that he made insufficient effort to undo this damage, and second that his association in the early 1990's with FUNDAFACI, a Venezuelan foundation that sponsored his research, represented an unethical prioritizing of his own research concerns over the well-being of the Yanomami. We concur with both these allegations" (I:31).

Allegations Relating to Problems of Representation

The final report states:

Insofar as Chagnon's role in these debates has affected the Yanomami, the important question for the Task Force is, were Chagnon's representations damaging to the Yanomami, and, when the possibility of such damage was brought to his attention, did he respond adequately to this concern? The conclusion of the Task Force is that it is likely that these representations have been damaging to the Yanomami, and that Chagnon has not adequately addressed his responsibility to try to undo this damage.

Despite changing the characterizations of the Yanomami in his published works, Chagnon has never spoken out clearly and unequivocally to attack misuses of his work by journalists. Instead he has repeatedly used precious opportunities provided by contexts like *New York Times* op-ed essays and interviews in major magazines to attack professional enemies rather than to render clear support to the Yanomami. The Task Force is concerned by the fact that Chagnon has never found it possible to speak out effectively and unequivocally in support of Yanomami human rights in a context where such statements would receive wide circulation. Rather than allying himself with groups with an established record of advocacy for the Yanomami, he has repeatedly attacked such groups as romanticists who manipulate the Yanomami for their own purposes. (I:33)

Changes in Chagnon's Textbooks. A point emphasized by supporters of Chagnon is that Chagnon did indeed make significant changes in editions of *Yanomamö* in response to criticisms. The Task Force observes: "We review a number of changes in Chagnon's monographs that support the conjecture that he was indeed responding to the widespread perception among his colleagues that there was a potentially damaging overemphasis on violence in the first edition of his textbook. As the editions of his textbook are revised he increasingly tries to balance his discussions of Yanomami warfare and violence with attention to more

EXCERPTS FROM THIS SECTION

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“Chagnon has from time to time had the opportunity to discredit . . . [negative] representations, and unfortunately has not used these opportunities effectively. One example of such a missed opportunity is Chagnon’s 1995 interview in the important Brazilian magazine *Veja*.” (Final Report)

“Anthropologists have a responsibility to resist the siren call of simplifying essentialism[s] and to work to create public appreciation for the world in its full complexity. Anthropologists will not always be able to control the forces that work against such appreciation. However, they have a responsibility . . . to speak out when publishers and journalists advance simplistic and damaging stereotypes, and they especially have this responsibility when their own work may be the unintended source of these.” (Final Report)

cooperation-oriented forms of Yanomami politics. In the fourth (1992) edition of his textbook he eliminates the subtitle *The Fierce People*. Furthermore, the more stereotypical characterizations in the prefaces to his books by his editors, George and Louise Spindler, and other authors, are softened and eliminated” (I:34).

Chagnon’s Interview in Veja. Regarding a much-discussed interview with the popular Brazilian magazine *Veja*, the Task Force writes:

Chagnon has from time to time had the opportunity to discredit . . . [negative] representations, and unfortunately has not used these opportunities effectively. One example of such a missed opportunity is Chagnon’s 1995 interview in the important Brazilian magazine *Veja*. . . .

In the interview, Alcantara quotes Chagnon as saying that “Nobody is interested in the real Indian. Western society needs an imaginary Indian, an idealization.” When Alcantara asks Chagnon, “What is a real Indian like?”, Chagnon is quoted as replying: . . . “Real Indians sweat, they smell bad, they take hallucinogenic drugs, they belch after they eat, they covet and at times steal their neighbor’s wife, they fornicate, and they make war. They are normal human beings. This is reason enough for them to deserve care and attention.” An extract from this quotation is used as the boldface caption under the photograph on the first page of the article.

The problem faced by advocates of the Yanomami in Venezuela and especially Brazil is, unfortunately, not to combat romantic images of Indians, but to deal with a public—and, most importantly, powerful national and regional politicians and businessmen—that sees Indians as worthless savages who block the development

of Brazil. Chagnon's remarks about sweating, smelling, belching, and fornicating, in this context used precisely the terms of this popular image, which can be found reproduced in films, television programs, cartoons, and other sites where the most vulgar images of Indian "savagery" are reproduced for public consumption. And, most unfortunately, much of the rest of the interview attacked NGOs, other anthropologists, and missionaries who have advocated for the Yanomami. About them, Chagnon is quoted as saying that their motives are ignoble, aimed at recruiting the fame of the Yanomami—derived (he notes "without false modesty" [p. 8]) in part from his own work—for purposes that have nothing to do with their well-being. It is unclear on what basis Chagnon founds these attacks. (I:37)

The Denial of Coevalness and the Image of the Yanomami as an Endangered People.
The Task Force criticizes Chagnon for his

representation of the Yanomami as a 'Stone Age' people. . . . In the 1968 edition of the textbook, we find Chagnon characterizing the Yanomami as "unacculturated" and "primitive" (the latter term was already disappearing from much anthropological discourse in 1968 but was used frequently in this work). . . . Especially in the new sixth chapter, devoted to "change" and "acculturation," it is clear that Chagnon believes that "change" is something new for the Yanomami (Chagnon 1977:164) (I:38).

The systems of classification and metaphors that Chagnon uses into the 1990's fall directly into the discursive system that Fabian (1983) has called the "denial of coevalness." Fabian and others have clearly demonstrated the objectifying and racializing implications of this discursive system. Promoting critical understanding of the limitations of these ideas should be a major goal of any introductory course. Any use of Chagnon's books in anthropology courses should include, in our view, a full discussion of these usages and their implications with this goal of critical understanding in mind (I:38–39).

Responsibility and Representation: A Reflection. In its concluding remarks to this section, the Task Force writes: "Anthropologists have a responsibility to resist the siren call of simplifying essentialism and to work to create public appreciation for the world in its full complexity. Anthropologists will not always be able to control the forces that work against such appreciation. However, they have a responsibility . . . to speak out when publishers and journalists advance simplistic and damaging stereotypes, and they especially have this responsibility when their own work may be the unintended source of these" (I:40).

Allegations Relating to FUNDAFACI

Regarding the FUNDAFACI project to set up a private Yanomami reserve in Venezuela, the Task Force writes: "Tierney claims that throughout his career Chagnon took advantage of his professional status, personal connections and

EXCERPT FROM THIS SECTION

“Chagnon’s involvement in FUNDAFACI was unacceptable on both ethical and professional grounds. It violated Venezuelan laws, associated his research with the activities of corrupt politicians, and involved him in activities that endangered the health and well-being of the Yanomami. Chagnon apparently chose to overlook these problems in order to pursue his own research questions. For this reason the Task Force believes that a charge of a breach of ethics is proper under the AAA Principles of Professional Responsibility, the code of ethics then in effect, which required that the best interests of the study population should always be the first consideration of the anthropologist. It would also constitute a breach of the current Code of Ethics, which states that ‘anthropologists must do everything in their power to ensure that their research does not harm the safety, dignity or privacy of the people with whom they work.’” (Final Report)

material resources to gain access to the Yanomami and to advance his own career as their major ethnographer. While scholars have disagreed concerning the validity of many of these claims, they are in fundamental agreement about the impropriety of Chagnon’s involvement in FUNDAFACI. In a field deeply divided by critics and supporters of Chagnon’s work, this remarkable consensus suggests that this allegation may be well founded in this particular case. The evidence the Task Force has gathered thus far supports this consensus. On the basis of the evidence we have gathered we feel that Tierney’s account of Chagnon’s participation in FUNDAFACI is accurate” (I:41).

In analyzing the reasons why Chagnon got involved in this project, the Task Force notes:

Napoleon Chagnon, who by the late 1980s was a polemical figure in anthropological circles in Venezuela and Brazil, had been unable to obtain stable institutional backing for his research among the Yanomami in Venezuela for many years (Venezuelan law since 1975 required foreign scholars working in border areas such as Amazonas to have an affiliation with a Venezuelan institution). . . . However through his association with Brewer Carías in FUNDAFACI, Chagnon managed to gain access to the Yanomami through FUNDAFACI. Thus, while technically Chagnon had Venezuelan support for his research, this support overrode the objections of the government agency and officials directly charged with regulating research access to indigenous groups in Venezuela. (I:42)

Tierney’s (2000:188) claim that the FUNDAFACI proposal would have established a “private biosphere [that] would have given Brewer and Chagnon a scientific monopoly over an area the size of Connecticut” cannot be proven, since the plan was eventually aborted. Yet the evidence suggests that their aim was indeed to develop significant personal control over this area through FUNDAFACI. By placing this area under the control of the foundation, Brewer Carías would have

been able to pursue his mining interests and Chagnon to advance his anthropological research unhampered by their lack of local support and or by professional or governmental controls. The activities that they carried out in preparation of this project lend support to this assessment (I:43).

Is There a Pattern? The Task Force concludes:

Chagnon's involvement in FUNDAFACI was unacceptable on both ethical and professional grounds. It violated Venezuelan laws, associated his research with the activities of corrupt politicians, and involved him in activities that endangered the health and well-being of the Yanomami. Chagnon apparently chose to overlook these problems in order to pursue his own research questions. For this reason the Task Force believes that a charge of a breach of ethics is proper under the AAA Principles of Professional Responsibility, the code of ethics then in effect, which required that the best interests of the study population should always be the first consideration of the anthropologist. It would also constitute a breach of the current Code of Ethics, which states that "anthropologists must do everything in their power to ensure that their research does not harm the safety, dignity or privacy of the people with whom they work" (I:44).

TOWARD COLLABORATIVE MODELS OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH

The final report states:

Members of the Task Force believe that anthropological research with indigenous peoples should deepen the informed consent model in the direction of fully "collaborative" models of research. Collaborative research involves the side-by-side work of all parties in a mutually beneficial research program. All parties are equal partners in the enterprise, participating in the development of the research design and in other major aspects of the program as well, working together toward a common goal. Collaborative research involves more than "giving back" in the form of advocacy and attention to social needs. Only in the collaborative model is there a full give and take, where at every step of the research knowledge and expertise is shared. In collaborative research, the local community will define its needs, and will seek experts both within and without to develop research programs and action plans. In the process of undertaking research on such community-defined needs, outside researchers may very well encounter knowledge that is of interest to anthropological theory. However, attention to such interests, or publication about them, must itself be developed within the collaborative framework, and may have to be set aside if they are not of equal concern to all the collaborators. In collaborative research, local experts work side by side with outside researchers, with a fully dialogic exchange of knowledge (that would not, of course, preclude conventional forms of training). . . .

The Task Force has learned from Yanomami interlocutors that they need improved health care, better access to education, fairer access to their rights of polit-

 EXCERPT FROM THIS SECTION

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ical involvement as citizens, the guarantee of security of their lands, and adequate protection against violence from within and without. We believe that anthropological research among the Yanomami should have as an early goal to help them put in place political frameworks that will permit definition and articulation of these needs, assuming that the Yanomami concur that such development is important. In any case, we believe that anthropological work among them in the foreseeable future should be developed in collaboration with them to address questions that are to a great degree defined initially within Yanomami communities, and elaborated in consultation with such outside researchers as the Yanomami may invite as consultants (I:46).

The final report concludes, “We suggest that the future of anthropology among indigenous peoples lies primarily within the collaborative model, with its intrinsic recognition of their full and unfettered right to define their own futures” (I:47).

 III. WHERE DO YOU STAND?

In a concluding chapter such as this, the author frequently sets out where he or she stands on the key issues discussed in the book. It constitutes a way for drawing various themes together.

But the goal of this book is not to simply highlight what I (or the Roundtable participants) think. The problems exposed by the Yanomami controversy run too deep to be resolved by the wave of a single wand—by which I instruct readers on what to do and they do it. Academia does not work that way. Such declarations often lead to counterdeclarations and these, in turn, lead to debates that, while producing piles of publications, rarely lead to social change.

This book seeks to do more. It began, in the dedication, by listing the students who got involved in the politics of the El Dorado Task Force reports and made a critical difference in what that Task Force ultimately produced. It ends by asking readers to now get involved in reshaping anthropology as we reflect, through the lens of the controversy, on where we need go from here.

My plea to you, the reader, is to do more than simply passively take in my (or the Roundtable participants') perspectives. My views on the controversy are woven into the various chapters of part 1 as well as into the very structure of how the book is organized. And the Roundtable participants' views are apparent throughout the part 2 discussion. You, the reader, should now decide where you stand on the issues raised.

Here are four sets of questions you might ponder:

1. What do you perceive as the central concerns raised by the controversy? Where do you stand on them?
2. Would you assess blame and, if so, in what ways regarding which people or groups?
3. What is your opinion of the Roundtable's collective letter and the Task Force's final report? How would you improve on them if you were to write them yourself?
4. How might we go about changing the structures that fostered the controversy and the disciplinary ills so openly displayed in it? How would you set things right?

I would offer two notes of caution and one note of hope as readers proceed to answer these questions.

First, there will always be more references, more data, one could cite regarding the controversy. But essentially all the information you need to form your views is right here in this book. To allow others to intimidate you at this point with data that they possess but you lack is only to perpetuate academic status games.

Second, as suggested in chapter 6, readers might frame their assessments less in terms of absolutes—especially since various points remain in doubt—than in the pragmatic terms of what would help the people we work with (and others beyond the academy) to address the critical problems they face. We must remember that there is a world beyond the academy, and that world makes anthropology possible. It provides places to go, people to visit, money for research. Surely we should ask how we might serve this wider world's interests as well as our own. We cannot focus only on our own self-interests, leaving a concern for the broader good to others. Who will trust us—abroad or at home—if we pursue only our self-interest? This is one of the clear messages of the Yanomami controversy. To revitalize the discipline, we need to renew our responsibilities to others.

My note of hope derives from how the 119 students responded to a call for action. It can happen again, only on a larger scale.

I indicated in part I that the Yanomami controversy is part of a continuing tension within the discipline. Anthropology embraces a noble ideal. No other intellectual project in world history has mobilized so many scholars with such energy to understanding others different from themselves with less concern for conquest or financial gain. But when we turn from abstract affirmations to concrete actions, it is clear that the project has been imperfectly realized. Anthropology tends to be embedded in societies with imperialistic aims, and at times the discipline has reflected those aims. Anthropologists have not always demonstrated—in actions as well as words—their responsibilities to others beyond the academy.

The tension between aspiration and action is not going to go away. But recognizing it, understanding it, provides a foundation for change. The goal is to make the anthropological vision of engaging with others with respect and fairness a pervasive reality. Bringing change to anthropology will not be a spectator sport; it will involve courage, action, and persistence. We have the means to move ahead, applying the tools available at the Public Anthropology Web site, www.publicanthropology.org, to widen the discussion beyond coteries of specialists and beyond the discipline itself. And, using such efforts as a foundation, there is the possibility for, if not changing the world, at least holding out a beacon of hope, an affirmation of possibility, of the direction in which relations between First World and Third World countries, between the rich and the less rich, between the more powerful and the less powerful, might move regarding mutual respect and fairness for all.

The Yanomami controversy constitutes a call to action. Highlighting what is wrong, it challenges us to set things right. “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world,” the anthropologist Margaret Mead once wrote. “Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”