

PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THE AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION EL
DORADO TASK FORCE
Submitted November 19, 2001

INTRODUCTION TO THE PRELIMINARY REPORT

The American Anthropological Association El Dorado Task Force is charged by the Executive Board of the AAA to inquire into the allegations about anthropologists and others made by Patrick Tierney in his book *Darkness in El Dorado* (2000). The present report, for discussion at the Business Meeting November 30, 2001, is preliminary. The reasons for this are that, first, our work is guided by the basic principle that anthropological engagement must be conducted in dialogue and collaboration with the people thus engaged, and that such people should be regarded as fully autonomous participants in the development of research in their communities. Representatives of the Task Force meet with representatives of the Yanomami in Venezuela November 16-21; there is not time to incorporate the results of their discussions before the presentation of this report. Second, Venezuelan colleagues have undertaken some archival research for the Task Force that is not yet completed, and that will include materials from Venezuela not available in the United States. We wish to give full attention to these materials before submitting a final report. Third, we have not had sufficient time to discuss among ourselves all of the materials that we have been reviewing; the present preliminary report has had only one editorial pass through the entire Task Force membership. Our final report will be presented to the AAA Executive Board at its Spring meeting and will be distributed to members once it is accepted by the Board. The present preliminary report will review materials that we are prepared to discuss at this time. These materials will, we hope, give a general idea of the tone and tenor of our discussions and the general direction we are going. In the final report, new materials will be added and there may be some revisions in the language of this preliminary report.

PREAMBLE: The Executive Board of the American Anthropological Association established the El Dorado Task Force to conduct what the Board termed an “inquiry” on the allegations about anthropological practice among the Yanomami contained in *Darkness in El Dorado*, by Patrick Tierney. Such an “inquiry” is unprecedented in the history of the Association, so that the Task Force began by exploring exactly what an “inquiry” might be. The term implies both investigation – the determination of the truth or falsity of allegations -- and of reflection, of both a moral and a scholarly kind. Where we found that it was possible to make a determination of 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. This preliminary report includes some examples of such findings, which we approach as case studies. However, we have also undertaken a reflexive exercise, on the implications not simply of some specific moments of anthropological practice among the Yanomami, but on anthropological practice more generally, and its location in those relatively enduring regimes of knowledge and power which we can refer to in shorthand as the confrontation of Western elites with “others” whose presence requires classification, explanation, and incorporation into the systems of knowledge through which that power is in part constituted. These regimes do more than merely shape anthropological practice; they make it possible. However, at the same time, they make possible the use of anthropology to interrupt these very regimes, to expose their contradictions, and to open within them spaces within which new forms of knowledge can be uttered and new voices can be heard. By locating the work of our Task Force partly in the space of reflection, we hope to accomplish such an interruption. But at the very minimum we hope to inspire a movement in anthropological exchange beyond the relatively narrow zones in which debate over the meaning of *Darkness in El Dorado* has too often been restricted: Beyond a spurious distinction between value-free “science” and value-involved “humanities”, and, especially, beyond individuals and personalities. All anthropological practice is implicated in what went wrong in “El Dorado” – and we believe that things did go wrong. Some of the things that went wrong involved styles of anthropological investigation that are taken for granted or even explicitly advocated by many colleagues. Should the kinds of specific conjunctions of politics and personalities that developed around Yanomami anthropology take shape around other challenging field situations, the AAA may have to commission new task forces. However, we believe that such discussions should not take place only at moments when our discipline is threatened by scandal. Instead, “inquiry into allegations” – on the history of practice in our discipline, on our own practices, and on those of our colleagues -- should be part of the everyday work of all anthropologists. To make such reflection possible, we urge the use, at every level of every anthropological practice, of forms of discourse that will make that practice relatively transparent to

ourselves, to those among whom we study, and to those who come after us, so that our own practices, as much, at least, as the lives of our subjects, can be targets of inquiry. We hope to provide here an exemplary framework for such reflection, and for how we might use such an evaluation of our past, and our present, to shape our future.

PART I: BACKGROUND

A. Darkness in El Dorado. Before proceeding, we attend briefly to the central place in our inquiry of Patrick Tierney's *Darkness in El Dorado* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000). Clearly, Tierney's book provided the impetus for the Association to set up a Task Force for the unprecedented purpose of inquiry into the conduct of anthropology in a specific field situation over more than 30 years. We regard the work with profound ambivalence, finding the book deeply flawed, but nevertheless highlighting ethical issues that we must confront. However, our task is not to critique the volume. Many reviews of the work have been published (although almost none of these were by scholars who have actually worked among the Yanomami or even among indigenous peoples of the Amazon-Orinoco Basin more broadly (see Arvelo-Jiménez 2001; Geertz 2001, Grandin 2000, Proctor 2000, Sahlins 2000, Tooby 2000, Van Arsdale 2001, to mention only a few). One very detailed critique of the book can be found at the website of the University of California at Santa Barbara ("Preliminary Report", Department of Anthropology, University of California, Santa Barbara" (<http://www.anth.ucsb.edu/chagnon.html>); see also <http://www.psych.ucsb.edu/research/cep/eldorado>. Extensive discussions of the book can also be found at <http://www.publicanthropology.org>. An exceptionally complete collection of documents regarding the book and debates about it can be found at <http://www.anth.uconn.edu/gradstudents/dhume/Dark/darkness>.

Darkness in El Dorado is the single most complete source on the history of anthropology and other scientific endeavors among the Yanomami. We concur with the findings of the AAA Executive Board and our predecessor ad hoc task force, the "Peacock Task Force" chaired by former president of the Association James Peacock, that the allegations in the book are by no means trivial, that much evidence is presented in the book in support of the allegations, and that they must be taken seriously. *Darkness in El Dorado* has served anthropology well in that, in making these allegations, it has not only inspired us to inquire into its specific claims, but has opened a space for reflection and stocktaking about anthropology more generally, and especially for reflection about our relationships with those among whom we study. But the required reflection goes beyond this specific relationship. The response to the book on the part of the U.S. anthropological community – which often simply reproduced the highly polemical tone of the book – is itself worthy of our attention, raising questions about the nature of our disciplinary community within the United States and the ways in which we engage with one another's work. Further, 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. We take *Darkness in El Dorado* seriously and, following suggestions of the Peacock Task Force and the AAA Executive Board, have used it as a framework to guide our inquiry.

B. The El Dorado Task Force: Charge, Membership, Procedures. The AAA El Dorado Task Force was constituted by the Executive Board of the AAA at its meeting of February 3 & 4 2001 (see <http://www.aaanet.org/press/eldoradoupdate.htm>). Louise Lamphere, President of the Association, named 5 members to the Task Force, following the text of the Board motion. These are Jane H. Hill (Chair), Janet Chernela, Fernando Coronil, Trudy Turner, and Joe Watkins. In August 2001 President Lamphere appointed Raymond Hames as a sixth member. The Task Force has had two face-to-face meetings (April 20-21, 2001, October 26-28, 2001) and has also conducted extensive exchange by e-mail and telephone.

Each member of the Task Force has had specific tasks and obligations. 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. In addition to reading in the anthropological literature, we have consulted other materials including newspapers, films, grant proposals, and correspondence. Trudy Turner has conducted research in the James V. Neel Archives at the American

Philosophical Society. We have conducted a number of interviews, emphasizing interviews of persons with first-hand knowledge of the Yanomami. As of the preparation of this report, Janet Chernela has conducted a formal interview with Davi Kopenawa Yanomami in Demini Village, Roraima State, Brazil. Janet Chernela and Fernando Coronil have held conversations with Josð Siripino, a representative of the Yanomami from Venezuela. Trudy Turner undertook interviews and correspondence with 16 anthropologists and biologists who have undertaken research that involved the collection of biological samples in indigenous populations. A complete bibliography of materials consulted by the Task Force will be provided in the final report. The bibliography will include mention of consultations where we were asked to keep the consultation in confidence.

In taking *Darkness in El Dorado* as a framework, one of the first tasks for the group was to develop a set of priorities for inquiry. The book includes hundreds of specific allegations. Following the Board resolution, the Task Force grouped the allegations into five major sets, and has focussed on a few instances in each set that seemed most amenable to inquiry. The sets are (1) fieldwork practices of anthropologists, (2) representations 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. In addition, we have considered allegations relating to medical research and medical emergencies among the Yanomami. In this preliminary report we include a sample of our results. The method of inquiry that we have settled upon is the case study. The format for these studies is as follows. First, we lay out the relevant texts and other information, such as personal communication information, that we have collected. We lay out what we think happened, and why we think it happened. We then discuss the lessons that the case holds for anthropological practice and the training of anthropologists.

C. The Yanomami. The Yanomami Indians are located in the *municipio* (county) of Alto Orinoco, Amazonas, in southern Venezuela, and also in north-central Brazil in the states of Roraima and Amazonas. “Yanomami” is the usual representation of the name of the tribe in Venezuela and in Brazil. There are at least five major subgroups of the Yanomami (Yanomamö, Yanomam, Ninam, Sanumá, and Aica; see Map). There are also various regional communities within the linguistic groups. The Yanomami are semi-sedentary forest dwellers, inhabiting communal longhouses, known as *shabonos*, ranging in number of inhabitants from 30 to 350. Shabonos are in turn linked by kinship, alliance, and proximity.

The population of the entire group is uncertain; recent estimates range up to 27,000. The Venezuelan population in 1992 was reported as 15,193 in 150 villages (@-venezuela web site). The Brazilian population is approximately 11,000. There is a good deal of movement by Yanomami back and forth across the international boundary.

The Yanomami practice a number of low-impact subsistence activities, including hunting, gathering, and small-scale cultivation, mainly of plantains and root crops. About 70-75% of protein is acquired by hunting, fishing, and collection. In Brazil, recent policy is that bases occupied by health care workers and employees of FUNAI (*Fundaç o Nacional do Indio*) do not distribute food to the Yanomami. Hunting is still a primary source of meat for those Yanomami who do not live in areas that have been destroyed by goldmining. Because Yanomami resource use is extensive, rather than intensive, the natural regeneration dynamics of the forest is unimpeded, although there is much evidence that the Yanomami landscape is as “anthropogenic” as any other in the tropics (Smole 1976). The dramatic exceptions are the areas in Brazil that have been devastated by goldmining operations.

The Yanomamö of Venezuela have had a long history of direct and indirect contact by outsiders (although they have been less strongly affected by outsiders, especially in recent years, than the Brazilian Yanomami). The first reports we have of the Yanomamö come from the Bobadilla expedition of 1789 (de Civrieux 1970). Brief descriptions of the Yanomamö by later explorers are found in Schomburgk (1840), von Humboldt (1967[1859]), Koch Grünberg (1965 [1917] and Rice (1921). Smole (1976) argues that the Yanomamö were probably directly and indirectly affected by slaving and rubber tapping incursions beginning in the late 1800s and early 1900s which decimated many of the riverine dwelling native peoples along the upper Orinoco and its major affluents. There is evidence to suggest that the Yanomamö were able to avoid some of this catastrophic contact because they were remote interfluvial dwellers at the time. Ethnohistorical data suggests (Chagnon, 1997) that the Yanomamö have been expanding into the riverine

vacuum created by initial contact over the last eighty to ninety years. There was some short-term rubber tapping in the area in the 1930s. Sustained contact by outsiders probably began in the 1950s with James Barker's entry into various places such as Ocamo, Platanal and Mavaca on the upper Orinoco. Barker was a New Tribes Missions linguist whose goal was to learn the Yanomamö language, translate the Bible into the Yanomamö language, and to assist in the creation of a string of New Tribes missions in the area. Soon after Baker arrived, the Catholic Salesian Order of missionaries arrived in the area and began to compete for Yanomamö souls with the New Tribes Missions, often setting up their missions on the opposite side of the river where New Tribes missions were located. In the 1950s Otto Zerries (1955, 1964) was the first ethnographer to work among the Yanomamö (it should be noted however, that James Barker published scholarly ethnographic accounts of the Yanomamö in major Venezuelan anthropological journals, e.g., Barker, 1953). In the 1960s a sustained era of ethnographic research was initiated by Napoleon Chagnon and Jacques Lizot.

Sporadic government presence in the area began in the late 1950s when malaria health services workers began to visit Yanomamö villages along the upper Orinoco. Government presence became more sustained following growth of missionary work in the 1960s, leading to permanent installations along the upper Orinoco (at Tamatama, La Esmeralda, Ocamo, Mavaca, and Platanal and in the Parima highlands). Commercial penetration into the area has been sporadic. In the 1950s and 1960s occasionally petty traders would work their way into the area to trade with the neighboring Ye'kwana and Yanomamö villages associated with Ye'kwana villages (Arvelo Jiménez, 1971). Very little exchange occurred between the Yanomamö and traders because the Yanomamö had little to offer. Today, commerce between outsiders is largely restricted to major mission and governmental sites and it is effectively regulated by *Guardia Nacional* units at La Esmeralda and elsewhere.

The current legal status of the Venezuelan Yanomami is as follows. In 1991, following upon recommendations made by an international conference on the Yanomami held in Caracas in 1990, President Carlos Andres Pörez issued a decree (No. 1635) establishing the Reservo de Biosfera Yanomami/Parque Nacional Parima-Tapirapeco (PNPT). The Reservo de Biosfera is established under a UNESCO program for biosphere preserves and, at over 30,000 square miles, is slightly larger than the PNPT. The PNPT encompasses all of the lands used by the Yanomami during recent history (J. Cardozo, personal communication, 5-25-01). No more than 30-40 non-Yanomami live in the region (J. Cardozo, personal communication, 5-25-01). Within the PNPT the Yanomami enjoy *derecho de usufructo en perpetuidad* 'use rights in perpetuity'. They are the only indigenous group in Venezuela that enjoys this level of land rights and land protection. However, they do not hold title to the land. They cannot dispose of it, nor can they sell the land or rights in it (such as mineral or timber concessions). Furthermore, their rights to development within the PNPT are constrained: they cannot use technologies or methods of exploitation (such as new types of fish poison or dynamite) that are not part of their customary techniques of exploitation as determined by the government at the time of the establishment of the PNPT. The use of firearms is apparently permitted. Arvelo Jiménez and Cousins (1992) suggest that there are many problems with the level of land protection afforded by the RBY/PNPT. In addition to the National Park and Biosphere Reserve and the State governments, the *municipio* of Alto Orinoco is designated as an indigenous municipio with representatives from Ye'kwana and Yanomami. The current *alcalde* is Jaime Turon, who is Ye'kwana.

Since the first announcement of the publication of *Darkness in El Dorado*, the Venezuelan government has closed the RBY/PNPT to all but official government visitors (November 17, 2000, "Statement by the Office of Indigenous Affairs of Venezuela (DAI) Concerning the Allegations of the Book *Darkness in El Dorado*", 99th Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, November 17, 2001).

In addition to their rights as users in perpetuity of the RBY/PNPT, the Yanomami have the status of *indigenas* under Title II, Chapter VIII, articles 119-126 of the Venezuelan Constitution of 1999 (revised and corrected 2000). These articles guarantee rights to language, culture, religion, social organization, political organization, economic practice, and land adequate to develop and guarantee their forms of life, with the state charged to use resources on indigenous lands without infringement on this guarantee. In addition, as indigenous people they are guaranteed rights to health care that takes into account their specific cultural needs, and to culturally appropriate bilingual education. Under Title II, Chapter VIII, by virtue of birth on Venezuelan soil or having a father or mother born on Venezuelan soil, the Yanomami, like all indigenous people, are full citizens with all of the rights of citizens specified in Title III and other sections of the Venezuelan constitution.

Beyond participation as citizens in all levels of political process, Yanomami representatives participate in organizations of indigenous peoples, including ORPIA (*Organizaci\ n de Representativos de los Pueblos Ind\ igenous de Amazonas*) and CONIVE (*Consejo Nacional de los Indios de Venezuela*). Many Yanomami are also organized through a trade and marketing cooperative, SUYAO (*Shaponos Unidos Yanomami de Alto Orinoco*), initially established with support from the Salesian Mission but now fully independent and run by Yanomami, who may solicit advice from the missionaries. A number of Yanomami have settled at the mission stations, where health care and education is available. There is now a small cadre of Yanomami who are literate and who even have advanced training in fields such as nursing. Some Yanomami are active in local and state-level politics beyond the indigenous organizations specifically.

In spite of constitutional guarantees in support of the well-being of the Yanomami, serious problems remain (see, for instance, Colchester and Watson 1995; U. S. Department of State, Venezuela Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1998). Pursuant to a judgement of the Interamerican Court in 1996 that Venezuela failed to protect its Yanomami citizens against incursions from Brazil that led to the murder of at least 16 Yanomami at Haximu (Hashimo-teri, in Chagnon's spelling) on August 15, 1993), the Venezuelan government has agreed to provide health care to the Yanomami by funding new health posts in isolated regions, with the goal of providing access to basic health care to 80% of the Yanomami population. This plan is still under discussion and has not been implemented (J. Cardozo personal communication 5-25-01). Yanomami who live near the international border often cross into Brazil to seek health care at clinics there run by NGO's discussed below. Adequate access to health care is clearly a major concern for the Yanomami (Chernela, interviews with Davi Kopenawa and Jose Siripino). We note that the Venezuelan Constitution now specifies health as "a fundamental social right and obligation of the State, which will guarantee it as a part of the right to life." (Title III, Chapter V, Article 83).

The approximately 11,000 Yanomami in Brazil live primarily in indigenous zones administered by FUNAI (*Funda\cao Nacional do Indio*), primarily in the *Terra Indigena Yanomami* in the states of Roraima and Amazonas. This territory, established in 1992 by the federal government of Brazil, comprises 9,664,975 ha, guaranteed in usufruct to the Yanomami. Under the Brazilian Constitution of 1988, revised in 1999, Indians are full citizens by virtue of birth on Brazilian soil or by virtue of having either a father or mother born in Brazil. Indians have certain special constitutional rights: They are permitted to use indigenous languages in public education (Title VIII, Chapter III, Section I, Article 210, Paragraph 2). The state is assigned special responsibility for protecting indigenous cultural expression (Title VIII, Chapter III, Section II, Article 215. Title VIII, Chapter VIII, *Dos Indios*, is devoted particularly to indigenous land rights; Indians are granted "originary rights" over their traditional territories, to which they have exclusive usufruct. Only the National Congress can authorize hydroelectric projects or mining on these territories (Indians are exempted from a constitutional provision (Article 174) encouraging the formation of mining cooperatives). A special provision permits the removal of Indians from their territories, by act of the National Congress, in an emergency (the only case mentioned is that of epidemic), with immediate return guaranteed once the period of risk is over.

The zone inhabited by the Brazilian Yanomami is of strategic and geographic import, and the legitimacy of the demarcation of Yanomami lands specified in 1992 continues to be challenged by powerful interests including representatives in the state and federal governments. Yanomami territory is the site of the water divide between two major river systems, the Orinoco system to the north in Venezuela and the Rio Branco system to the southeast in Brazil. The area was relatively isolated until invasions in the 1980's by gold miners, which continue today.

From 1910 until 1970 contact between the Yanomami and national Brazilian society was intermittent or small-scale. However, a number of permanent posts were established in the region beginning in 1940 by mission orders and the *Servi\cio de Prote\cao aos Indios* (SPI), now known as FUNAI. As foci of manufactured goods and health care, these permanent centers served to stimulate processes of sedentarization among formerly nomadic peoples.

Large government projects reached the Brazilian Yanomami in 1971 (Ramos 1995) when the Plano de Integra\cao Nacional (PIN) was instituted to integrate the northern frontiers into the ambit of commerce and modernity that characterized the Brazilian south. One component of this program was the Perimetral Norte (northern perimeter roadway), constructed between 1973 and 1976 (and now abandoned) through the southeastern sector of Yanomami territory. By 1981 colonization projects brought into the region settlers, sawmills, and goldminers. In addition to demographic losses due to diseases, the invasions brought social disintegration and environmental destruction. Colonization projects constitute an expanding

frontier that, unless curbed, threatens the integrity of Yanomami society and territory (see Saffirio and Hames (1983) on the impact of the northern perimeter roadway).

In the latter part of the 1970's newly available public satellite imagery called the attention of mining interests to the Parima Range. Within a few years, prospecting rights and mineral concessions covering every portion of Yanomami territory were officially registered with the national Mineral Production Department (DNPM). Until the present time, active mining and exploration has been blocked by regulations prohibiting mining in indigenous areas – although recently-proposed legislation threatens to remove these legislative obstacles. Small-scale “wildcat” mining, however, was well underway by the mid-1980's. The progressive invasion of wildcat prospectors, the *garimpeiros*, was disastrous. In 1985 President Sarney, responding to pressure from the mining lobby, issued decrees reducing the area of demarcated Yanomami territory. By 1987 a notorious “gold rush” was underway, with approximately 40,000 wildcat miners estimated to have entered Yanomami territory between 1987 and 1992. This is four times the population of Yanomami. The invasion brought violence, disease, social chaos, deforestation, and the pollution of land and water. Miners served as dispersal agents of contagious diseases such as measles, influenza, whooping cough, and venereal disease. Morbidity and mortality rates soared among the Yanomami.

Miners were concentrated in the riparian forests of the affluents of the Rio Branco. They entered the area by means of clandestine airstrips or along the water courses. With the demarcation and registration (*homologação*) of Yanomami lands in 1992, prospectors were removed by federal forces. Over one hundred clandestine airstrips created by miners in the Yanomami area were destroyed. Yet many prospectors remained. Among them were those on the upper reaches of the Rio Mucajai near the Venezuelan border in the vicinity of Haximu. In 1993, after the official removal of miners from the area, remaining illegal miners massacred sixteen Yanomami from Haximu, including children. Survivors of the massacre at Haximu fled in several directions, with a number finding refuge with relatives in the nearby villages of Totoobi and Homoxi. Two miners were found guilty on charges of genocide and sentenced accordingly. This judgement was challenged in July 2000 but was sustained in September 2000. Haximu is in Venezuela, and the Venezuelan government sent investigating commissions to the area. Venezuelan Yanomami accused the Venezuelan government in the Interamerican Court of failure to defend them against border incursions (the Venezuelan government has one small army post in the Parima region). The court ruled against Venezuela, and the Venezuelan government has been ordered by the court to compensate the Yanomami. The form of compensation is a plan for improved health care in the region (see above).

In spite of laws to the contrary, miners still carry out clandestine activities on Yanomami lands in Brazil. FUNAI openly recognizes the ongoing illegal presence of miners (personal communication to Chernela, July 2001), but is constrained by resource limitations. Miners therefore remain with impunity in the most remote regions.

Military bases provide additional problems. Although conscription among the Yanomami has stopped, complaints of sexual abuse near military facilities continue. More military bases are planned by the government but are opposed by the Yanomami, the CIR (*Conselho Indígena de Roraima*, an indigenous organization representing the Yanomami of Roraima), and advocates of indigenous rights.

Several NGO's, based in Boa Vista, carry out health and educational projects in the Brazilian Yanomami territory. In Venezuela medical care is available only at mission posts, so many border-region Venezuelan Yanomami cross the border for health care.

CCPY (Comissão Pro-Yanomami, originally “Committee for the Creation of the Yanomami Park”), an NGO formed in defense of Yanomami land rights in the 1980's, now carries out an educational project for bilingual literacy. It reports 91 literate Yanomami. CCPY develops pedagogical booklets or readers, written by Yanomami and edited and selected by anthropologists and pedagogues. The content of the readers is thus closely related to Yanomami knowledge and concerns, in contrast to the conventional materials used in state education programs.¹

URIHI, based on a Yanomami term glossed as “forest”, is an NGO that emerged from CCPY. The two have overlapping boards of directors that include the anthropologists Bruce Albert and Alcida Ramos. URIHI works with the Brazilian government to bring health care to the Yanomami. In April 2001 they held the first conference on Yanomami health in Boa Vista. Since URIHI began working among the Yanomami, infant mortality has dropped dramatically and malaria has been brought under control in a number of areas. However, problems of tuberculosis and other upper respiratory infections continue.

Moreover, 100% of all Brazilian Yanomami tested positive for onchocerciasis (African River Blindness), and are undergoing regular treatments.

The work of these two NGOs is exemplary and should be considered as a model for what might be accomplished in Venezuela.

D. The Role of the American Anthropological Association in Advocacy for the Yanomami and Debates on Yanomami Anthropology

We briefly review here the actions of the American Anthropological Association over the last 30 years or so in reference to concerns and debates about the situation of the Yanomami. This section does not address any allegations made in *Darkness in El Dorado*. Space limitations prohibit attention to the involvement of the Association in the situation of other Amazonian indigenous groups during this period.

Resolutions in support of the protection of Yanomami lands, reviewed below, were introduced from time to time at the Annual Meeting over a number of years, beginning in 1970. All these resolutions were passed, and appropriate communications made to governments and international agencies over the signature of the AAA President. A major AAA effort was the establishment and funding of a temporary commission, the AAA Yanomami Commission, which functioned during 1990-91.

AAA Resolutions on the Yanomami

Major AAA resolutions for which the Task Force has been able to identify texts include the following. In 1979, Shelton Davis, Judith Shapiro, Louisa Stark, Kenneth Taylor, Charles Wagley, and Napoleon Chagnon co-sponsored a resolution to the Annual Meeting of the Association objecting to plans by the Brazilian government to fragment Yanoama lands, and in support of an initiative developed by Brazilian colleagues, the creation of a Yanoama [sic] Park “as defined by the Committee for the Creation of the Yanoama Park (CCPY)” (ANL 21:1(4)).ⁱⁱ At the same meeting Kenneth Taylor introduced a motion against a proposal to devolve guardianship and protection of Indians to individual Brazilian states and territories, and in support of the responsibility of the Brazilian federal government for Indian affairs. Both motions were passed, and the AAA delivered them to the Brazilian government and other appropriate recipients.

In 1980-81 the AAA co-signed with the Brazilian Anthropological Association a complaint to the Organization of American States against actions of the Brazilian government in regard to Yanomami lands.

In 1982 in Washington DC, Kenneth Taylor offered another motion condemning the interdiction of Yanomami lands in Brazil. The motion passed unanimously and was communicated to the government of Brazil.

In 1987, the Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting of May 22-24 report that a letter was sent to the President of Brazil thanking him for signing a decree creating a *Parque Indígena Yanomami*.

The Carneiro da Cunha Letter

In 1989, the Association published in its *Newsletter* a letter from Maria Manuela Carneiro da Cunha, who wrote as immediate past President of the Brazilian Anthropological Association (ABA). The letter was published under a note from the then Editor of *Anthropology Newsletter* that stated:

“The following letter from Maria Manuela Carneiro da Cunha [President of ABA at the time of the original posting of the letter in 1988] was addressed originally to the AAA Committee on Ethics. Subsequently, the president of the Brazilian Anthropological Association (ABA), Antonio Augusto Arantes, stating that Carneiro da Cunha’s letter “expresses the (Brazilian Anthropological) Association’s point of view about Prof. Chagnon’s (Science) article”... asked that the letter be published in AN. We herein publish the exchange between Carneiro da Cunha and Napoleon Chagnon (California-Santa Barbara), which will appear concurrently in Portuguese in the ABA’s bulletin. Ordinarily, AN Correspondence submissions are not to exceed 500 words. This exchange, between one of our own distinguished members and another national anthropological association, is extraordinary and an exception to the rule.”

Carneiro da Cunha cited the use in the Brazilian press of stereotypes of the Yanomami as “violent” and suggesting that these stereotypes played into the hands of enemies of the Yanomami. The editor of the *Anthropology Newsletter* solicited a reply by Chagnon, who wrote at similar length rejecting in strong terms the accusation that he was at fault.

The AAA Yanomami Commission

In August 1990, Judith Lisansky wrote Jane Buikstra and Annette Weiner, AAA President and President-Elect, calling their attention to the great threat to the Yanomami in Brazil, suggested that “The AAA could join with ... Brazilian and international efforts by forming a special commission or temporary committee to investigate the situation of the Yanomami and add its voice to the international outcry.” Lisansky suggested immediate action rather than any delay to wait for an Annual Meeting resolution. Buikstra suggested such a commission to the Board of Directors and Executive Committee of the Association. In 1990, the Board of Directors of the Association unanimously recommended the formation of an AAA Yanomami Commission (BOD 118.14 Fall 1990). By action of the Executive Committee at its Fall 1990 meeting, the AAA established a special Commission to Investigate the Situation of the Brazilian Yanomami. Terry Turner was appointed Chair, with members Bruce Albert, Jason Clay, Alcida Ramos, Stephan Schwartzman, Anthony Seeger, and consultants Claudia Andujar, Manuela Carneiro da Cunha, and Davi Kopenawa Yanomami (AAA 1991). Among the AAA funding for the work of the Commission was a grant of \$1500 for Chairperson Turner to go to Brazil. In February and March 1991 Turner visited Boa Vista, capital of the state of Roraima, where most Yanomami live, and consulted widely with government officials, missionaries, members of NGO’s, and Davi Kopenawa (AAA 1991; Turner notes that the work cost him considerably more than \$1500 (Turner 2001a)). Turner met again with Davi Kopenawa in April 1991. The Commission produced a 23-page, single-spaced report.

While the work of the Commission was just beginning, the President of the Association, Jane Buikstra, on November 29, 1990, wrote President George H. W. Bush a letter regarding the situation of the Yanomami.

The Commission planned a publicity campaign to coincide with a state visit to Washington DC by Brazilian President Collor de Mello June 17-19, 1991. President Bush raised the matter of Yanomami lands with Collor during the state visit. Results of the Commission’s activities included a two-part series on the Yanomami in the *Washington Post*, in which Commission member Steve Schwartzmann was quoted, and an op ed piece by Commission Chairperson Turner (1991a) which was published in the *New York Times* and the *International Harold Tribune*. In addition, coverage of the Yanomami situation just before Collor’s visit appeared in *In these Times* (Moberg 1991) and *Science* (Gibbons 1991). The Voice of America broadcast an interview with Turner on its “Report to the Americas,” and National Public Radio in New York City also broadcast an interview. Turner (1991:1) commented in a memorandum to Commission members that “Ironically, this was virtually the only press coverage Collor, or Brazilian affairs more generally, received during his visit.” Members of the Commission believe that this campaign had an impact on subsequent actions by Collor de Mello. Turner and Schwartzmann were attacked in an editorial in *O Estado de Sao Paulo* (“A Ecomentira”) that coincided with Collor’s return to Brazil. On July 12, 1991 the *International Harold Tribune* reported that “Mr. Collor sacked the head of the Brazilian Indian Bureau last month following criticism from Mr. George Bush, the US president, that he had failed to demarcate the territory of the Yanomani [sic] Indians.” (Johnson and Fidler 1991; Turner 1991b). By July 14, Collor had installed a new FUNAI director “with instructions to demarcate the Yanomami reserve without delay, with the 1985 boundaries”, and had released funds for expulsion of miners from the Yanomami area and for an antimalaria campaign (Turner memo to President and Executive Board, AAA, and Members and Consultants of Yanomami Commission, 91-07-14). Correspondence between the AAA and the Brazilian government continued, and on January 9, 1991, President Collor wrote to AAA President Annette Weiner stating his commitment to a positive indigenist policy and requesting her views as to whether or not his initiatives had “fulfilled the expectations manifested in your previous correspondence.” (Letter Collor to Weiner Brasilia 92-01-09). Yanomami lands were demarcated and registered during 1992, within a year of Collor’s state visit to the U.S.

The minutes of the meeting of the AAA Executive Committee for Spring 1991 (EXC 13.72) unanimously accepted the report of the Commission on the Yanomami and an amended public statement. The Executive Committee thanked Terry Turner for his efforts and dedication.

The Commission for Human Rights

In 1992, partly as an outgrowth of the Commission on the Yanomami, and partly as the result of independent efforts beginning in 1990, the AAA established a Commission for Human Rights. The Commission, led by its first chairperson, Leslie Sponsel, early involved itself in threats faced by the Yanomami, especially the Haximu Massacre of Aug. 15, 1993 (AAA Human Rights Commission Meets, 1993. Anthropology Newsletter November 1993:3,4; Turner 1993). Work of the Commission at that time

included letters to government officials in Brazil and the US, the UN, and the OAS. Commission for Human Rights member Terry Turner published a *New York Times* op-ed article (August 26, 1993; this piece was followed by a *New York Times* editorial on Aug. 27, 1993), and was interviewed on CNN and the Brazilian television network GLOBO. The Commission for Human Rights also requested that all anthropologists send letters of concern to officials of the Brazilian and Venezuelan governments. AAA President Annette Weiner wrote the Brazilian Ambassador to the U.S. and the Brazilian Minister of Justice expressing the “outrage” of the Association at the Haximu massacre and calling for protection of the Yanomami. The AAA Department of Government Relations also conducted an extensive letter-writing campaign. The Commission for Human Rights has since become the permanent standing Committee for Human Rights of the AAA, and has continued to involve itself in issues involving threats to the human rights of indigenous populations in Latin America and elsewhere.

The Continuing Debate on Chagnon’s Work

The AAA continued to receive communications regarding the work of Napoleon Chagnon. At the 1993 Annual Meeting, anonymous pamphlets and fliers attacking Chagnon for alleged unethical practices were distributed. While no one has been willing to publicly claim responsibility for the anonymous materials, Salamone (1997:17) states that

... it is beyond dispute that the Salesians carried a package of materials to the 1993 American Anthropological Association meetings in Washington, DC, leaving this package on a display table with no identification as to their origin. Unfortunately, the Salesians still do not understand the anger most anthropologists feel regarding the receipt of anonymous mailings and handouts.

During 1994 the AAA was asked to defend Chagnon against attacks (Letter by James P. Hurd to President, AAA, St. Paul, MN February 17, 1994). Jack Cornman, then Executive Director of the Association, reported to Jim Peacock, President, that the Commission on Human Rights had already declined to become involved in the matter because “From the Commission’s perspective, the Chagnon dispute was not about human rights.” Cornman suggested to Peacock that the AAA lacked the resources to do more than “deplore anonymous attacks on anyone” (Cornman, Memo to Peacock, Arlington, VA 94-04-03). However, during this period the *Anthropology Newsletter* published letters in defense of Chagnon and in response to the anonymous pamphlets (e.g. Wolfⁱⁱⁱ *AN* March 1994:2, Fox *AN* March 1994:2). The same year the *Anthropology Newsletter* published letters and commentary in opposition to Chagnon (Cappelletti *AN* May 1994:2; Turner *AN* May 1994) and by Chagnon (Chagnon and Brewer Carias “Response to Cappelletti and Turner”, *AN* September 1994:2).

At the 1994 meeting, a major session, chaired by Frank Salomone, met to consider scholarly debate around Chagnon’s work, and included comments by Chagnon himself, by Terry Turner, and by representatives of the Salesians, including Fa. Jose Bortoli, and of the New Tribes Missions (Gregory Sanford) (Salamone 1997).

On August 14, 1996, AAA President Yolanda Moses wrote a strongly worded letter to Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, expressing the concern of the Association “about the failure of the Brazilian government to take action against the new invasion of Yanomami reserve by over 3,000 gold miners,” and insisting that the Brazilian Government release funds for a program, *Operação Seta Livre*, which had blocked entry of miners into the Yanomami lands. The letter was copied to the Minister of Justice and the President of FUNAI (*Fundação Nacional do Índio*).

Most recently, in 2000 and 2001, the AAA established two successive task forces to evaluate the allegations against anthropologists and the implications for anthropology of Patrick Tierney’s *Darkness in El Dorado*. As part of this work, AAA officers and members of the El Dorado Task Force have met with representatives of the Brazilian Anthropological Association and with representatives of the Venezuelan Commission on the Yanomami.

Criticisms of AAA Involvement

It must be pointed out that, in spite of this record of activity, colleagues, especially in Brazil, who have been active on the front lines of advocacy for the Yanomami – to the extent of placing themselves in personal danger --, believe that the AAA has been unresponsive to their concerns. Brazilian colleagues were distressed at what they regarded as a long delay in the publication of the Carneiro da Cunha letter, written in 1988 and published in 1989. A decision by the editor of the *Anthropology Newsletter* to end the debate after the exchange between Carneiro da Cunha and Chagnon meant that a request by Bruce Albert to

reply to Chagnon's attack on himself and on Alcida Ramos (in Chagnon's reply to Carneiro da Cunha) was denied (although a letter by Richard Machalek (1989), in support of Chagnon, was admitted). Brazilian anthropologists were also offended that, having denied Albert the opportunity for a communication in 1989, the *AN* published letters by Eric Wolf and Robin Fox defending Chagnon in 1994. They are particularly disturbed that the *AN* approved language in the letter from Robin Fox (1994) that characterized Brazilian concern about the impact of Chagnon's work as motivated by "confused grievances". We believe that members of the Task Force speak for the Association in stating that it is regrettable that this language appeared in the *AN*. The delay in the publication of Carneiro da Cunha's letter, given the urgency of the situation of the Yanomami in 1988 and 1989, is also regrettable (We note that the delay may be partly due to the fact that the letter was addressed to the Committee on Ethics, not to the *AN* itself. Terence Turner (e-mail to Coronil November 13, 2001) recalls that the Committee on Ethics was at that time inactive. Furthermore, Turner recalls internal debate about the disposition of the letter, with then-President of the AAA Roy Rappaport arguing in an *AN* publication that the ABA's complaint was not really about an ethical matter).

It must also be noted that Napoleon Chagnon disapproves of the way that the AAA has handled attacks on him. He wrote (1994) that the AAA, its staff, its officers, and its journal editors were all hopelessly "political". Chagnon has written that he believes that he was treated unfairly by Don Brenneis, then editor of the *American Ethnologist*, when he was given only a very short time to reply to an article by Jacques Lizot such that his reply could appear in the same issue with Lizot's paper (Chagnon 1994, 1995). The Task Force notes that Brenneis was under no obligation to invite a reply from Chagnon, and issued the invitation as an act of scholarly courtesy.

One reason that there is dissatisfaction with the role of the Association is that many members have hoped that the AAA would censure individuals accused of unethical conduct. Such censure is not within the power of the Association, which is not a certifying body. Even during the period before 1992, when the Committee on Ethics from time to time received charges against members, the Committee was able to function only as a mediator. The Association, as a scholarly society, has attempted to provide a forum for open exchange about the situation of the Yanomami, and continues to take seriously that responsibility. Reflecting on the handling of communications in the *Anthropology Newsletter* in the late 1980's and early 1990's, we believe that it would have been appropriate for the *AN* editor to receive all appropriate communications from international colleagues with expertise about the situation of the Yanomami. Communications from outside the U.S. should be treated with special attention, not only because international colleagues are often in possession of key information and ideas not accessible to U.S. anthropologists, but also because it is quite difficult for them to dispute from a distance what may be regarded as arbitrary bureaucratic decisions and policies. This is, of course, easier to do in an era of universal fax and e-mail than it was in the period between 1988 and 1994. We also believe that editors of all AAA publications must be especially careful to work with contributors to eliminate ad hominem or uncivil language, regardless of its target, in letters, articles, and reviews. In addition, we believe that the American Anthropological Association must work to build better communication with our sister associations in other countries.

Acknowledgement

In developing this review the El Dorado Task Force used summary minutes of meetings of the Executive Board and Board of Directors, and materials that appeared in the *Anthropology Newsletter*. We also have materials from the work of the Special Commission to Investigate the Situation of the Brazilian Yanomami, which functioned in 1990-92. We are grateful to Bill Young, Stacy Lathrop, Peggy Overbey, and Kim Guthrie of the Association's staff for retrieving the relevant documents for us.

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ⁱⁱ The Report of the Special Commission to Investigate the Situation of the Brazilian Yanomami (AAA 1991) notes another resolution in 1978. We have not been able to retrieve its text but we believe that it was similar to the 1979 resolution.

ⁱⁱⁱ Eric Wolf was one of the directors of Chagnon's 1966 University of Michigan Ph.d. dissertation.