



# Smithsonian

*National Museum of Natural History*

## Guide to the Timothy Asch and Napoleon Chagnon films of the Yanomamo

Cataloging supported by Smithsonian Institution Women's Committee

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Human Studies Film Archives
<b>Title:</b>	Timothy Asch and Napoleon Chagnon films of the Yanomamo
<b>Date:</b>	1968-1975
<b>Identifier:</b>	HSFA.1984.16
<b>Creator:</b>	Asch, Timothy Chagnon, Napoleon A., 1938-
<b>Extent:</b>	121 Film reels (color sound; 95,866 feet; 16mm) Linear feet
<b>Language:</b>	English .

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Received from Timothy Asch and Napoleon Chagnon in 1984.

### Related Materials

The National Anthropological Archives holds the Timothy Asch papers.

### Processing Information

Titles are supplied by the archivist for untitled films.

### Preferred Citation

Timothy Asch and Napoleon Chagnon films of the Yanomamo, Human Studies Film Archives, Smithsonian Institution

### Restrictions

The collection is open for research. Please contact the archives for information on availability of access copies of audiovisual recordings. Original audiovisual material in the Human Studies Film Archives may not be played.

### Conditions Governing Use

Contact the repository for terms of use.

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## Scope and Contents

Film documentation of the Yanomamo Indians of southern Venezuela shot by Timothy Asch and Napoleon Chagnon. Collection also contains camera and sound logs, correspondence, production notes, sound recordings, and related publications.

Please note that the contents of the collection and the language and terminology used reflect the context and culture of the time of its creation. As an historical document, its contents may be at odds with contemporary views and terminology and considered offensive today. The information within this collection does not reflect

the views of the Smithsonian Institution or Anthropology Archives, but is available in its original form to facilitate research.

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## Selected Bibliography

Chagnon, Napoleon A. 1977. *Yanomamö, the fierce people*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Cohen, Hart. 1979. "The Ax Fight: Mapping Anthropology on Film." *Cine Tracts: A Journal of Film and Cultural Studies*. 2(2): 61-73.

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## Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

### Subjects:

Yanomamö (Yanomamo)

### Cultures:

Yanomamö (Yanomamo)

### Types of Materials:

Sound films

### Places:

Orinoco River (Venezuela and Colombia)  
South America  
Venezuela

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## Container Listing

Yanomamo film project, 1968

23 Film reels (color sound; 15,623 feet; 16mm)

Notes: Outtake film footage of the Yanomamo Indians of the Amazon Basin of southern Venezuela and northern Brazil documents all aspects of Yanomamo life including inter-village politics and exchange, socialization, familial and kinship relations, subsistence activities, and the impact of acculturation.

HSFA 1984.16.20

Yanomamo film project, 1971

79 Film reels (color sound; 69,362 feet; 16mm)

[Image\(s\): Yanomamö Film Project, 1971](#)

Notes: Outtake film footage of the Yanomamo Indians of the Amazon Basin of southern Venezuela and northern Brazil documents all aspects of Yanomamo life including inter-village politics and exchange, socialization, familial and kinship relations, subsistence activities, and the impact of acculturation.  
Legacy Keywords: Language and culture ; Shamans headmen Yanomamo Venezuela ; Subsistence activities Yanomamo ; Exchange inter-village Yanomamo

HSFA 1984.16.1

[The Feast, 1968](#)

1 Film reel (color sound; 1044 feet; 16mm)

Notes: Edited film from the 1968 Yanomamo film project shot in the Amazon Basin of southern Venezuela and northern Brazil between the Negro and the Upper Orinoco rivers. Film documents a village feast held to re-establish an alliance between two Yanomamo groups, the Patanowa-teri and the Mahekodo-teri. At this ceremonial event, Yanomamo men adorn their bodies with paint and feathers and display their strength in dance and ritualized aggression. The film provides a context for understanding the social, political, and economic entailments of ceremonial reciprocity among the Yanomamo.

Legacy Keywords: Language and culture ; Ceremony feasts Yanomamo Venezuela ; Weapons ritual aggression Yanomamo ; Dwellings shabono Yanomamo Venezuela ; Aggression ritualized Yanomamo ; Warfare Yanomamo ; Adornment ceremonial feathers body paint Yanomamo ; Dance ritual Yanomamo ; Exchange ceremonial alliances Yanomamo ; Food preparation feasts Yanomamo

HSFA 1984.16.7

Magical Death, 1973

1 Film reel (29 minutes; color sound; 1044 feet; 16mm)

Notes: Edited film from the 1971 Yanomamo film project shot in the Amazon Basin of southern Venezuela and northern Brazil between the Negro and the Upper Orinoco rivers. A portrayal

of shamanic activity and its role in inter-village alliances and magical attack in Yanomamo society. The drama of shamanic possession is shown over a two-day period as a powerful shaman summons the hekura spirits to destroy the souls of an enemy's children for their new allies. The film elaborates indigenous ideas of spirit possession and interprets the relationship between Yanomamo shamanism, warfare, and politics.

Legacy Keywords: Language and culture ; Shamanism magical attack Yanomamo Venezuela ; Alliances inter-village shamanism Yanomamo ; Spirits hekura invocation of Yanomamo ; Possession shamans Yanomamo ; Aggression magical attack shamans Yanomamo ; Warfare inter-village Yanomamo ; Drugs hallucinogenic spirit possession Yanomamo

HSFA 1984.16.10

#### Arrow Game, 1974

1 Film reel (color sound; 16mm)

Notes: Edited film from the 1971 Yanomamo film project shot in the Amazon Basin of southern Venezuela and northern Brazil between the Negro and the Upper Orinoco rivers. Film depicts the way in which young Yanomamo boys learn skills for hunting and warfare. Young boys engage in an arrow fight in a clearing, practicing their aim with blunt arrows and dodging the shots of their playmates.

Legacy Keywords: Language and culture ; Play bows and arrows Yanomamo ; Socialization in play Yanomamo ; Aggression training for Yanomamo ; Weapons bows and arrows Yanomamo

HSFA 1984.16.2

#### Children's Magical Death, 1974

1 Film reel (7 minutes; color sound; 252 feet; 16mm)

Notes: Edited film from the 1971 Yanomamo film project shot in the Amazon Basin of southern Venezuela and northern Brazil between the Negro and the Upper Orinoco rivers. Film shows a group of young boys pretending to be shamans. Imitating their fathers' activities, the boys blow ashes into each other's noses and chant to the hekura spirits.

Legacy Keywords: Language and culture ; Shamanism mimicry of Yanomamo Venezuela ; Play as socialization Yanomamo ; Spirits invocation of Yanomamo

HSFA 1984.16.4

#### Climbing the Peach Palm, 1974

1 Film reel (9 minutes; color sound; 324 feet; 16mm)

Notes: Edited film produced from the 1971 Yanomamo film project shot in the Amazon Basin of southern Venezuela and northern Brazil between the Negro and the Upper Orinoco rivers. A young

Yanomamo man constructs a climbing frame in order to harvest the fruit from the spiny barked peach palm tree.

Legacy Keywords: Language and culture ; Food gathering Yanomamo Venezuela ; Division of labor sexual Yanomamo ; Ecology tropical rainforest Venezuela ; Kinship obligations of Yanomamo ; Technology Yanomamo

HSFA 1984.16.5

#### A Father Washes his Children, 1974

1 Film reel (15 minutes; color sound; 540 feet; 16mm)

Notes: Edited film produced from the 1971 Yanomamo film project shot in the Amazon Basin of southern Venezuela and northern Brazil between the Negro and the Upper Orinoco rivers. A Yanomamo shaman and village headman takes nine of his children and grandchildren to the river where he washes them.

Legacy Keywords: Language and culture ; Hygiene bathing Yanomamo Venezuela ; Ecology tropical Yanomamo

HSFA 1984.16.6

#### Firewood, 1974

1 Film reel (10 minutes; color sound; 360 feet; 16mm)

Notes: Edited film produced from the 1971 Yanomamo film project shot in the Amazon Basin of southern Venezuela and northern Brazil between the Negro and Upper Orinoco rivers. The laborious and tedious daily work of collecting wood by Yanomamo women is revealed in this film. A woman is shown chopping a large log as her children play nearby. The day's worth of wood is loaded into a large basket and the burden slung on a tumpline from the woman's forehead for the return to the village.

Legacy Keywords: Language and culture ; Chores chopping firewood Yanomamo Venezuela ; Division of labor sexual Yanomamo ; Ecology tropical rainforest Venezuela ; Division of labor by sex Yanomamo ; Firewood gathering of Yanomamo ; Play children Yanomamo

HSFA 1984.16.8

#### A Man and his Wife Weave a Hammock, 1974

1 Film reel (12 minutes; color sound; 432 feet; 16mm)

Notes: Edited film from the 1971 Yanomamo film project shot in the Amazon Basin of southern Venezuela and northern Brazil between the Negro and the Upper Orinoco rivers. A Yanomamo village headman weaves a cotton hammock while his wife and infant watch. Film reveals aspects of interpersonal family relations.

Legacy Keywords: Language and culture ; Weaving hammock Yanomamo Venezuela ; Crafts weaving Yanomamo ; Interpersonal relations familial Yanomamo

HSFA 1984.16.11

#### Moonblood: a Yanomamo Creation Myth as Told by Dedeheiwa, 1974

1 Film reel (14 minutes; color sound; 504 feet; 16mm)

Notes: Edited film from the 1971 Yanomamo film project shot in the Amazon Basin of southern Venezuela and northern Brazil between the Negro and the Upper Orinoco rivers. A Yanomamo shaman tells the myth of the creation of human beings from the blood of the moon spilled by the ancestors. In Yanomamo society the myth is a charter for social relations as it serves the ideological function of accounting for human violence.

Legacy Keywords: Language and culture ; Shamans storytelling myths Yanomamo Venezuela ; Myths Creation Yanomamo ; Storytelling shamans Yanomamo

HSFA 1984.16.12

New Tribes Mission, 1974

1 Film reel (12 minutes; color sound; 432 feet; 16mm)

Notes: Edited film from the 1971 Yanomamo film project shot in the Amazon Basin of southern Venezuela and northern Brazil between the Negro and the Upper Orinoco rivers. One of two related films on the Yanomamo dealing with the role of Catholic missions. The film describes the goal of the mission in Bisaasiteri--to preach Christian salvation and encourage a rejection of indigenous spiritual beliefs and practices--and provides visual evidence of the material processes of change.

Legacy Keywords: Language and culture ; Missions Catholic Yanomamo Venezuela ; Acculturation Yanomamo ; Schools mission teachers Yanomamo

HSFA 1984.16.15

Weeding the Garden, 1974

1 Film reel (14 minutes; color sound; 504 feet; 16mm)

Notes: Edited film from the 1971 Yanomamo film project shot in the Amazon Basin of southern Venezuela and northern Brazil between the Negro and the Upper Orinoco rivers. Film shows a Yanomamo shaman weeding his manioc garden and clearing leaves from around his plantains. Depicts the nature of interaction between a man and his wife and children.

Legacy Keywords: Language and culture ; Subsistence activities gardens Yanomamo ; Interpersonal relations familial Yanomamo ; Family interpersonal relations Yanomamo

HSFA 1984.16.19

Ocamo is My Town, 1974

1 Film reel (23 minutes; color sound; 828 feet; 16mm)

Notes: Edited film from the 1971 Yanomamo film project shot in the Amazon Basin of southern Venezuela and northern Brazil between the Negro and the Upper Orinoco rivers. One of two related films on the Yanomamo dealing with the role of Catholic missions. The film describes efforts of an extraordinary Salesian priest to soften the impact of civilization on the local Yanomamo people living in the area of his mission on the Ocamo River. Depicted are a number of the changes which



the mission has brought to the Yanomamo such as use of new medicines, the raising of cattle and chicken, and the use of new foods.

Legacy Keywords: Missions Catholic Yanomamo Venezuela ; Acculturation subsistence practices Yanomamo ; Schools mission teachers Yanomamo ; Fishing Yanomamo ; Language and culture

HSFA 1984.16.16

#### Myth of Naro as Told by Dedeheiwa, 1974

1 Film reel (22 minutes; color sound; 792 feet; 16mm)

Notes: Edited film from the 1971 Yanomamo film project shot in the Amazon Basin of southern Venezuela and northern Brazil between the Negro and the Upper Orinoco rivers. One of two related films which presents a versions of the myth of "Naro the Ugly" which deals with Naro's jealousy over his brother's wives. The myth describes the origins of harmful magic among the Yanomamo. Viewed in conjunction with the film MYTH OF NARO AS TOLD BY KAOWAWA, it provides a comparative view of narrative performance and oratorical style among the Yanomamo.

Legacy Keywords: Language and culture ; Myths malign magic Yanomamo Venezuela ; Oral performance myths Yanomamo ; Storytelling Yanomamo

HSFA 1984.16.13

#### Myth of Naro as Told by Kaobawa, 1975

1 Film reel (22 minutes; color sound; 792 feet; 16mm)

Notes: Edited film from the 1971 Yanomamo film project shot in the Amazon Basin of southern Venezuela and northern Brazil between the Negro and the Upper Orinoco rivers. One of two related films which presents a versions of the myth of "Naro the Ugly" which deals with Naro's jealousy over his brother's wives. The myth describes the origins of harmful magic among the Yanomamo. Viewed in conjunction with the film MYTH OF NARO AS TOLD BY DEDEHEIWA, it provides a comparative view of narrative performance and oratorical style among the Yanomamo.

Legacy Keywords: Myths malign magic Yanomamo Venezuela ; Oral performance myths Yanomamo ; Storytelling Yanomamo ; Language and culture

HSFA 1984.16.14

#### Bride Service, 1975

1 Film reel (10 minutes; color sound; 360 feet; 16mm)

Notes: Edited film produced from the 1971 Yanomamo film project shot in the Amazon Basin of southern Venezuela and northern Brazil between the Negro and the Upper Orinoco rivers. In this vignette from daily life, a headman's son returns from hunting with a wild turkey and a basket of fruit for his father-in-law. The ensuing events depict how this transaction of a gift

is negotiated since avoidance rules prohibit the hunter from delivering the food directly to his father-in-law. The film provides material for examining Yanomamo sex roles, division of labor, and obligations within the family.

Legacy Keywords: Language and culture ; Food gathering Yanomamo Venezuela ; Division of labor sexual Yanomamo ; Villages Yanomamo Venezuela ; Kinship avoidance rules Yanomamo ; Polygyny Yanomamo ; Authority kinship politico-jural rules Yanomamo

HSFA 1984.16.3

#### Tapir Distribution, 1975

1 Film reel (15 minutes; color sound; 540 feet; 16mm)

Notes: Edited film from the 1971 Yanomamo film project shot in the Amazon Basin of southern Venezuela and southern Brazil between the Negro and the Upper Orinoco rivers. A tapir killed by the most prominent headman in Mishimishima-bowei-teri is presented to a group of male affines who constitute an important political bloc in that Yanomamo village. The film shows how the meat is prepared, cooked, and distributed and interprets how the gift of the animal is used to reinforce a shaken alliance with the headman's affines. The politics of exchange depicted in this film relate to events depicted in THE AX FIGHT.

Legacy Keywords: Language and culture ; Food quest hunting native fauna Yanomamo ; Food preparation butchering tapir Yanomamo ; Food kin groups distribution of Yanomamo

HSFA 1984.16.17

#### Tug-of-war, Yanomamo, 1975

1 Film reel (9 minutes; color sound; 324 feet; 16mm)

Notes: Edited film produced from the 1971 Yanomamo film project shot in the Amazon Basin of southern Venezuela and northern Brazil between the Negro and the Upper Orinoco rivers. Children and women of a Yanomamo village play a game of tug-of-war.

Legacy Keywords: Language and culture ; Play tug-of-war Yanomamo Venezuela ; Ecology tropical habitat Yanomamo

HSFA 1984.16.18

#### The Ax Fight, 1975

1 Film reel (20 minutes; color sound; 1080 feet; 16mm)

Notes: Edited film produced from the 1971 Yanomamo Film project shot in the Amazon Basin of southern Venezuela and northern Brazil between the Negro and the Upper Orinoco rivers. The film documents a fight which erupts in Mishimishimabowei-teri Village involving clubs, machetes, and axes. The footage, which is repeated four times, includes: (1) the unedited record of the fight, (2) a replay of the fight scenes in slow motion in which key figures and their kinship relations are identified, (3) a discussion of the fight in terms of kinship structure which illustrates the fight as a pattern of conflict and alliance over time, and (4) an edited version.

Editor: Paul E. Burgos ; Sound Editor: Craig Johnson

Legacy Keywords: Conflict ingroup violence ; Aggression gestures postures threat ; Adornment authority headmen feathers ; Ingroup antagonisms insults cursing ; Factions lineages marriage alliances ; Weapons bow stave club machete ax ; Aggression escalation of ; Kinship ; Language and culture ; Tattooing

Depicted: Mohesiwa ; Sinabimi ; Uuwa ; Yoinakuwa ; Nonokawa ; Kebowa

HSFA 1981.5.1/1984.16.24

Jaguar: a Yanomamo Twin Cycle Myth as Told by Daramasiwa, 1976  
1 Film reel (22 minutes; color sound; 729 feet; 16mm)

Notes: Edited film produced from the 1971 Yanomamo film project shot in the Amazon Basin of southern Venezuela and northern Brazil between the Negro and the Upper Orinoco rivers. Film documents a performance of the myth of Jaguar-- a prominent figure throughout South American mythology-- by a virtuoso Yanomamo storyteller. The nuances of non-verbal communication and the details of the narrative suggest reflections on the nature of performance and communication in Yanomamo society and the complexity of its intellectual systems.

Legacy Keywords: Language and culture ; Storytelling myths Yanomamo Venezuela ; Myths Jaguar performance of Yanomamo ; Performances mythology Yanomamo ; Oratory storytelling Yanomamo

HSFA 1984.16.9