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# YANOAMA DESCENT AND AFFINITY : THE SANUMÁ / YANOMAM CONTRAST

BY ALCIDA R. RAMOS AND BRUCE ALBERT

## INTRODUCTION <sup>1</sup>.

The recent debate as to whether the concept of descent is applicable to the "Yanomama", "Yanōmami", "Yanomamö" or "Yanoama" (Shapiro, 1974, 1975; Taylor and Ramos, 1975; Lizot, 1975) has inspired us to write a comparison between two sub-groups of this linguistic family <sup>2</sup>, in order to establish two main points. First, sub-group differences can be very great, much greater than Lizot's suggestion that they are mere "nuances of the situation" (1975 : 625). The distinctions between Sanumá and Yanomam go far beyond a matter of nuances : there are radically different structural principles at work. Second, given the extent of these differences between sub-groups, there is a logical possibility that descent be present in some and absent in others. By means of the controlled comparison approach (Eggen, 1954), we propose to demonstrate that this is indeed the case.

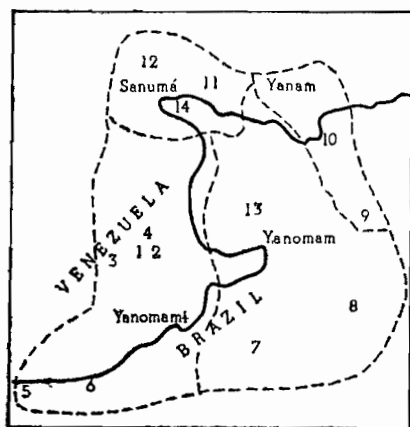


FIG. 1. — Yanoama sub-groups and locations of research (after Taylor, 1974).  
 1 — Barker. 2 — Zerries. 3 — Chagnon. 4 — Lizot. 5 — Knobloch. 6 — Polykrates.  
 7 — Becher. 8 — Diniz, Shapiro, Albert. 9 — Montgomery. 10 — Migliazza.  
 11 — Barandiaran. 12 — Wilbert. 13 — Shapiro. 14 — Taylor, Ramos.

The Sanumá and Yanomam are two of the four languages distinguished by Migliazza (1972) as the principal members of the Yanoama linguistic family. These languages are : Sanumá, Yanómamí, Yanomam and Yanam (see map above). The degree of mutual intelligibility varies among the four languages. Sanumá and Yanomam seem to be the farthest apart.

### THE SANUMÁ<sup>3</sup>.

The northernmost division of the Yanoama family, the Sanumá live on the watershed of the Orinoco-Amazon basins, on the Parima Range, both in Venezuela and in Brazil. They number about 2,000, of which approximately 500 live on the Brazilian side of the border. Unlike most other Yanoama groups, the Sanumá, at least those of the upper Auaris river valley, do not live in round houses ; theirs are rectangular in shape, one to four per village, divided into several compartments, each occupied by a nuclear or extended family. The size of the villages is in average between 40 and 50 people. Their economic activities are basically the same as the other Yanoama groups : subsistence planting of manioc, bananas, tobacco, some roots, hunting, gathering, and some fish-poisoning in the dry season.

### THE RELATIONSHIP SYSTEM.

The Sanumá divide their relatives into kin and affines, in what can be recognized as a two-section system, as described by Needham (1958, 1960, 1964) and Maybury-Lewis (1965, 1967). We give a summary statement of the kinship categories covered by the terminology in the list below.

KIN.	AFFINES.
<i>hawa</i> — male kin of ascending generations	<i>soazea</i> — male affine of 1st ascending generation
<i>nawa</i> — female kin of ascending generations	<i>saazea</i> — female affine of 1st ascending generation
<i>hebala</i> — kin of own generation, same sex, older than ego	<i>solí</i> — male affine of own generation (m. sp.)
<i>hoosa</i> — kin of own generation, same sex, younger than ego	<i>hʔziba</i> — female affine of own generation (m. sp.)
<i>sawa</i> — kin of own generation, opposite sex	<i>henoa</i> — male affine of own generation (w. sp.)
<i>ulu</i> — male kin of descending generations	<i>hizagʔba</i> — affine of 1st descending generation (m. sp.)
<i>tewa</i> — female kin of descending generations	<i>sʔzo</i> — male affine of 1st descending generation (w. sp.)
	<i>sʔzomia</i> — female affine of 1st descending generation (w. sp.)

These are the reference terms for one's own or the listener's relatives. Another set is used to refer to a third person's relatives (cf. Ramos, 1972 : 197-8). There are some additional post-marital terms, such as *suha* (DH), *pusaba* (DH of a third person), *hiliwɨ* (ZH, WB). The terms *pɨzɨsa* (WM) and *pisia* (WF), for first and second persons are used as post-marital; for third person they are equivalent to *saazea* and *soazea*, respectively.

We might call the Sanumá terminology Dravidian (Dumont, 1957) if it were not for the fact that the second ascending and descending generation terms are equated with terms for kin in the first ascending and first descending generations respectively. This is an important feature of the system to which we will return.

The ideal spouse is a *hɨzɨba* for a man and a *henoa* for a woman. These correspond to one's cross-cousins, both matrilineal and patrilineal. There is, however, a great deal of marriage with people in other categories, such as *hizagɨba*. Although considered not to be the ideal, these marriages are not said to be incestuous if the spouses come from different social units, as will be now described.

#### CUMMULATIVE FILIATION.

These social units are named, the names are transmitted from father to children of both sexes (women maintain them after marriage), membership is restricted to kin; they have usually three or more generations, and are not restricted to a single location. In order to simplify description, we shall give a concrete example of how these social units relate to each other.

The *higiadili* unit has its members dispersed throughout a large area (most of the upper Auaris river valley). Informants cannot explain the reason for that name, it is a name that their fathers already used. They do not reckon a common ancestor, but its members simply have a consensus that they are all part of it, and thus call each other by kin terms. As divisions of the *higiadili* unit, there are the following named sub-units known to us: *kadimani*, *azagosi*, *lalawa*, *sobositili*. Each of these has a different spatial distribution. The *kadimani* sub-unit, identified as such through five generations, is mostly concentrated in the village that bears its name, having two branches in different villages in Venezuela, another in the mission station at Auaris about 7 hours' walk from *Kadimani*, and one or two isolated members who live in their wives' villages, according to the uxorilocal rule of post-marital residence. The *azagosi* sub-unit is heavily concentrated in one village, also named after it, with some members dispersed mainly for reasons of marriage. They reckon their identity as *azagosi* people for three generations. The *lalawa* and *sobositili* sub-units were until some 40 or 50 years ago part of the same sub-unit, having drifted apart as the result of the split between two agnatic half-brothers, sons of the original *lalawa*. The *lalawa* are now concentrated in one single village, also named *Lalawa*, and have three to four generations of kinsmen. The *sobositili* sub-unit, living far to the south in Venezuela, is little known.

All of these sub-units are related to each other as kin, and do not marry each other. The names of all the sub-units are explained easily by informants as being the personal names of the founders, those men who began the lines of kinsman who identify themselves and, more often, are identified by others as belonging together in the same unit. These names, as has been demonstrated elsewhere (Ramos, 1973), are extended to the village and not vice-versa.

This belonging together does not necessarily mean corporateness. Although they share a name and a strict exogamy rule, there is no property held in common, nor do the members of a given sub-unit get together for joint action involving the group as a whole. These units and sub-units have been called (Ramos, 1972) : *a*) sibs, the more inclusive units that do not have an acknowledged common ancestor, and *b*) lineages, the smaller of the two kinds, sub-divisions of the sibs. These are groups of people related agnatically, reckoning their membership through cumulative links of paternal filiation<sup>4</sup> to a common ancestor, and, although a given lineage may be dispersed, each one has a localized nucleus. As the sibs, the lineages do not show indications of corporate action, holding no property in common, nor getting together for joint action.

The most striking characteristic of the units here called lineages is their developmental cycle. The emergence of a new unit depends on the co-residence in the same village of a man and his sons for a sufficiently long period of time to allow these sons to marry and have their own children in the same village as their father's. Thus, residence stability and the existence of male children are, as it were, pre-requisites for lineage formation. There are, however, two main factors that counteract this process. Both these factors have to do with spatial dispersal of close kin. One occurs at the death of a man who has sons as co-residents. Following his death, the sons tend to move away from the village, as a manifestation of grief, and very often remain dispersed for the rest of their lives. This factor can prevent the consolidation of a possibly emergent lineage, as residence continuity is interrupted after the father dies. The father is, thus, the focal point of concentration at this stage in the cycle. The other factor has to do with the frequent demographic impossibility for a number of men to marry in the ideal way, i. e., within their own village. The rule of uxorilocality applies both to marriages in or out of one's village, and in both cases there is the obligation of bride-service. Lack of marriageable women lead men to look for spouses elsewhere. The data show that, for 93 marriages in 8 villages, only 31 % of these marriages were, in fact, village endogamous, and 69 % were with women from other villages. In many of these 69 % of marriages outside one's own village, the man remains indefinitely in his wife's village, therefore becoming spatially separated from his brothers and father, if alive. Although they expect to be able to go back after the end of the bride-service phase, which can be as long as 10 or 12 years, their in-laws do not admit of their taking away wife and children. Thus, from the point of view of a man's mother- and father-in-law, he is a permanent resident of their village, from the moment he marries until death or divorce breaks the union.

These two factors, death of father and necessity to marry out, inhibit the formation of new lineages and even the continuity for many generations of those already in existence. The result is that about half of the population studied is not, at the present time, affiliated to any particular lineage, although sib membership is universal. Dispersal of kinsmen is thus the main responsible factor for the non-affiliation of people in lineage units. Once a group of brothers separate, it is very unlikely that they will have conditions to re-group again, especially if they settle down in their wives' villages. If they succeed in raising a family and keep their sons together after they marry, they are very likely to become the founders of a new lineage. From their conditions of agnatic nucleus<sup>5</sup> they may become a larger and more stable group. A lineage unit that has become well established and widely recognized has the following characteristics: 1) it is a group of agnates, 2) has a well known common ancestor, 3) has a common name, 4) has a strict rule of exogamy, 5) has a generation depth of at least three generations, 6) is or was until recently localized in a specific village, 7) has a politically important nucleus.

Lineages may grow quite large, especially after the third generation from the founder. For ecological and demographic reasons, large lineages segment, with some or all collateral branches separating from the main core and establishing themselves elsewhere. When this is the case, fission seems always to occur when the senior member of the lineage, very often the headman of the village, dies and headmanship is passed on to his sons' generation. If the deceased has living brothers, these tend to compete for leadership with their brother's sons. Sets of agnatic half-siblings also tend to separate into groups of uterine siblings. In other words, the children of a polygynous family, after their father's death, may split, the children of the senior wife remaining together, and the children of the junior wife or wives moving away. For some time these are identified as members of their father's lineage, but their children will either disperse further and lose lineage affiliation altogether, or will form new lineages.

This is thus a very dynamic process in which some people are included in the lineage sub-divisions of the society, and others stay outside of it, having lost their affiliation by dispersal, and possibly being in the process of producing new units through the formation of co-resident agnatic nuclei.

The two main kinds of patrilineal units among the Sanumá, i. e., sibs and lineages, represent mechanisms of classification of the population which encompass not only the aspect of group identity, but also establish different modes of acting and interpreting experience, such as food prohibitions, use of personal names, shamanistic and bellicose activities (Taylor, 1974, 1976 a, 1976 b; Ramos, 1973, 1974) which are treated by each lineage and sib in a specific manner, different in arrangement and even content from all the others. The Sanumá are an example of the use of the concept of patrilineality as a native ideology, manifested in forms of classification and modes of internal social differentiation, without corporate implications. It is the family groups and the village as a residential unit which constitute the Sanumá corporate groups, either holding property in common, or coming together for joint action, especially for purposes of attack and defense.

## MARRIAGE RULES.

To marry outside the preferred category of *hiziba* (cross-cousin on both sides) does not necessarily mean to marry incestuously, for over and above the two-section system rule of marrying a cross-cousin, there is the social unit exogamy rule, which may but not always coincide with the former. By marrying a cross-cousin a man is automatically obeying the exogamy rule. But when he contracts marriage with a woman of another category, although it may not be considered very proper, it is, nevertheless, generally accepted, so long as the spouses belong to different lineages and sibs. A native model establishes further which social units are marriageable to which, following the idiom of the kinship terminology. It is thus acceptable for a man to marry a woman he used to call, for example, *nawa* ('mother'), if she is in a different group from his and, of course, remotely related. The terminological adjustments that result from such unions affect only the individuals immediately involved in them. Incest occurs when man and woman are of the same sib and/or lineage. Thus, the notion of incest is applied essentially to people related as close kin. To marry a sister's daughter is not infrequent, is considered rather improper, but easily tolerated, since this category of woman is not kin, but affine belonging to a different social unit.

The incidence of marriages outside the *hiziba* category is the main factor responsible for the blurring of the distinction between the two sections, i. e., kin and affines. If all men married into that category, reckoning of anyone's kin and affines would be entirely predictable. Thus, two people who are kin to each other, whether close or distant, would call their respective relatives in a uniform way. For instance, in a chain of consecutive marriages, as in the diagram below, A, B, and C are considered to be brothers. A is a brother to B and B is a brother to C, therefore, A is also a brother to C.

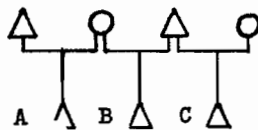


FIG. 2.

Marriages outside the *hiziba* category affect the reckoning of kin but only for those directly involved in the marriage. Thus, if two men A and B are brothers and both call a certain woman mother, by A marrying her, he will apply different terms to her and her immediate kin from those applied by B to the same people. This, therefore, creates a certain discrepancy in the pattern of nomenclature usage by blocs of relatives who are in a similar genealogical position<sup>6</sup>. But by and large, if we know what any A is to B, and what B is to C, the relationship between A and C is quite predictable.

Extra-marital relations, including adultery, are relatively frequent. The degree of protest that adulterous liaisons may produce, usually on the part of

the offended husband, varies essentially with the relationship between him and the lover. In most cases the adulterous man is a real or classificatory brother of the husband, with whom relations are close and friendly. But if the second man is not closely related then a dueling type confrontation is demanded, in which the husband hits the offender who, if admitting guilt, will not strike back.

Children born of these liaisons, though considered illegitimate, do not suffer any noticeable kind of stigma. Their illegitimacy is registered in the fact that they are usually given personal names that reveal their genitor's identity, but in terms of group affiliation and recognition these children are identified with their pater, not with their genitor. In the case of a woman having a child without being married, her child is identified with the genitor, even if the mother marries somebody else. If a woman re-marries after divorce or death of the husband, her children from the previous marriage maintain their membership in their father's social unit, although they normally call her new husband by the term 'father' and acknowledge the offspring of the second marriage as their siblings. Thus, though filiation is reckoned equally through mother and father, membership in social units is always agnatic. Two men having the same mother and different fathers call each other brother but if their respective fathers belong to different units, these men will have different unit affiliations.

According to the ideology of conception, a woman may have intercourse with more than one man around the time she becomes pregnant and all these men are said to contribute to the formation of the foetus. This fact is known and remembered mainly through gossip. But it is only the pater who goes through *couvade* and the naming ritual hunt that often takes place after birth (Ramos, 1974). The child may get to know about his multiple genitors, but his social identity follows that of his pater.

#### ATTITUDES, INTERACTION, AND ACTIVITIES.

The attitudes and the kind of interaction between people related as kin differ considerably from those related as affines. Co-resident brothers usually cooperate, although they act to each other with some reserve. Cooperation varies, of course, with genealogical and spatial distance. Classificatory brothers whose genealogical connection is unknown can be friendly, but do not engage in regular joint action. On the other hand, fights over thefts or slander may occur between remotely related brothers. Siblings of opposite sex play together as children, but relate in a reserved, though solidary way, as adults. Parents and children are usually friendly and interact freely. Brothers-in-law can also be friendly, but there is always the notion that in-laws are not 'our people', but 'others'. It is frequent for a man to have a fight with his sister's husband when the latter mistreats his wife. Thus, brother-sister solidarity is manifested primarily in the context of in-law antagonism. It is said that a woman should not leave her village to marry because then she would lose the protection of her brothers against a possibly aggressive husband.

Although interaction between brothers-in-law, real or classificatory, can involve extrovert behavior, it does not reach the intensity of the kind known as joking relationships. A man who comes from elsewhere to marry in a given village is often exploited by his wife's brothers who take advantage of his absence during working hours in the fields or on a hunt, to take away possessions of his, without their actions demanding retaliation or strong protest by the brother-in-law; it is as if his bride-service obligations were extended to all the members of his wife's nuclear family.

Affines of ascending generation are always avoided by both sexes, but more so by men, whether or not these affines become in-laws. Thus, from childhood, a person learns to avoid his mother's brothers and father's sisters, even when they are classificatory. One does not address a *soazea* or a *saazea*, nor is it proper to mention them by their names. A real father-in-law, *p̄isia*, and mother-in-law, *p̄zisa*, are also avoided, only more so. One does not get close to them, should have absolutely no direct communication with them, except at the break of marriage, when mother-in-law and son-in-law usually attack each other verbally and physically. Marrying a woman in one's own village does not diminish in any way this avoidance, as there was never a relation of familiarity with her parents, if they were in the category of potential in-laws.

Grandparents are essentially treated with affection. If a man marries a real cross-cousin, either MBD or FZD, naturally husband and wife share one set of grandparents. But, when their parents did not themselves marry a cross-cousin, his wife's other grandparents are avoided by the husband, for they are equated with the wife's parents, but not to his own.

In the performance of economic activities both kin and affines may cooperate, for instance, on a hunting or fishing party, going to the fields together, getting firewood, building a new house. But in field clearing cooperation between brothers is by far more important than between brothers-in-law. People have the right to claim the services of their sons-in-law in field making, but in-laws, actual or potential, of the same generation, do not usually participate in the making of a new field.

In the context of ritual, particularly during the most important ceremony of the Sanumá, the death festival, kin and affines are joined for celebration. On these occasions, the burnt bones that result from cremating the dead are powdered and mixed with banana soup to be drunk by the close relatives of the deceased. These relatives are primarily his or her parents, siblings, children (when adult), but also include spouses and those who associated closely with him or her. It is wrong for a father or mother not to drink their child's bone ashes, for the deceased's spirit may get angry. Only those who are friendly drink the ashes, not the enemies. If a man dies away from his kin, his ashes are returned to them, will not be drunk by people distantly related to him or not related at all.

Previous to the festival, some weeks or even months earlier, the body is cremated a few hours after the death, usually by an affine of the same generation, if the deceased is an adult, of the father's generation, if it is a child. Informants say that people do not cremate their own brothers because of their grief; being sad at the loss of a close kin prevents them from doing the cremation.



The dead are not immediately forgotten. The intensity of name secrecy that is applied to the dead is no greater than that for the living. Once initial resistance to mention personal names is reduced by familiarity with the anthropologist, it is quite normal to refer to people recently or long dead by name. Indeed, lineage founders, who become the group's eponym, have their names widely known once these names enter the public domain in the form of patronyms (Ramos, 1973). There is, therefore, a temporal continuity between the dead and the living, which is perfectly compatible with the concept of patrilineality found among the Sanumá.

#### THE YANOMAM 7.

The Yanomam are located in the central and southern portion of Yanoama territory in Brazil in the upper valleys of the Catrimani, Demini, Toototobi and Parima rivers. A rough estimate of their population would be around 3 800. The data presented here were collected among the Catrimani river Yanomam (8 in Fig. 1).

They live in conical communal houses, each community consisting of one or two houses. The size of the community is, in average, about 40 people. These groups originate from the upper Parima river (13 in Fig. 1) where their near ancestors migrated from at the beginning of this century. Their subsistence production is similar to that of other Yanoama sub-groups: slash and burn horticulture supplemented by hunting, gathering and fishing.

#### THE RELATIONSHIP SYSTEM.

Like the Sanumá, the Yanomam also classify their relatives along the lines of a two-section system. But the specific characteristics of its particular manifestation in this society differ radically from those of the Sanumá.

For presentation's sake, each person's social universe can be described as being conceptually divided into two implicit and symmetrical classes of relatives — kin and affines — both of which are distributed into six categories in accordance with principles of gender and generation.

The set of reference terms and some of their derivative denotata (male ego) will be given first, followed by  $G \pm 2$  and  $G \pm 3$  equivalences.

	KIN		AFFINES	
	male	female	male	female
G + 1	<i>hayə a</i>	<i>nayə a</i>	<i>shoayə a</i>	<i>yayə a</i>
G 0	<i>hepara a</i>	<i>yahu a</i>	<i>shori a</i> ( <i>hearoyə a/♀ ego</i> )	<i>thuwə a</i> ( <i>natihi a/♀ ego</i> )
G — 1	<i>ihiru a</i>	<i>thəeyə a</i>	<i>thani a</i>	<i>thathe a</i>

*hayə a* : F = FB = MZH = FFBS = FMZS = MFZS = MMBS

*hepara a* : B = FBS = MZS = FS = MS

*ihiru a* : S = BS = FBSS = MZSS = MBDS = FZDS

*nayə a* : M = MZ = FBW = FFZD = FMBD = MFBD = MMZD

*yahu a* : Z = FBD = MZD = FD = MD

*thəeyə a* : D = BD = FBSD = MZSD = MBDD = FZDD

*shoayə a* : MB = WF = FZH = FFZS = FMBS = MFBS = MMZS

*shori a* : FZS = MBS = ZH = WB

*thani a* : ZS = DH = MBSS = FZSS = FBDS = MZDS

*yayə a* : FZ = WM = MBW = FFBD = FMZD = MFZD = MMBD

*thuwə a* : FZD = MBD = W = BW

*thathe a* : ZD = SW = MBSD = FZSD = FBDD = MZDD

The specific characteristic of this terminological system lies in its merging, outside of the middle three generations, of all genealogical positions in affinal categories :

— *G* + 2 with first ascending generation :

*shoayə a* = FF = FZF = FFB = MMB = MF = MFB = MBF = FMB...

*yayə a* FM = FZM = FMZ = MFZ = MM = MMZ = MBM = FFZ...

— *G* — 2 with first descending generation :

*thani a* = DS = SS = BSS = BDS

(and = MBSSS = FZSSS = MBSDS = FZSDS = ZSS = ZDS...)

*thathe a* = DD = SD = BDD = BSD

(and = MBSSD = FZSSD = MBSDD = FZSDD = ZSD = ZDD...)

(The specifications between brackets works only if marriages with actual cross cousins are realized : FZSS/MBSS = DH, MBSD/FZSD = SW, ZS = DH, ZD = SW. If not, which is often the case in concrete situations, these types are placed within affinal categories of ego's generation : *shori a*/*thuwə a*).

— *G* + 3 with ego's generation : *shori a*/*thuwə a* given for all positions.

— *G* — 3 the distribution of terms in this generation, mostly collected in hypothetical cases, follows such category alternations as :

male : *shori's* son = *thani a*, *thani's* son = *shori a*

female : *shori's* daughter = *thathe a*, *thani's* daughter = *thuwə a*.

#### MARRIAGE AND FILIATION.

For the Yanomam, marriage is prescribed with women of the *thuwə a* category which corresponds to the position of real or classificatory female bilateral cross-collateral of ego's generation (W = MBD = FZD). Nevertheless, due to the intergenerational equivalences described above, the range of denotata of

this category is larger as it includes women of  $G \pm 3$  and even in particular cases women of  $G + 2$  (at least some of whom may be of marriageable — i. e., pubescent — age).

Any marriage contracted outside of the *thuwa a* category, even followed by an individual terminological adjustment, is considered as incestuous and meets with strong opposition within the community. In adulterous unions incest is not so much taken into account.

Complexity in marriage practices (i. e., the multiplicity of consecutive marriages, some instances of polygyny and a high number of children of adulterous unions) constitutes an important parameter in the concrete application of relationship categories among the members of Yanomam society (cf. Shapiro, 1972 : 74-75). Indeed, matri- and patrification being equally the roots of siblingship (as reflected in terminological use as well as in the biological beliefs), half siblings, either uterine or agnatic, resulting from consecutive, simultaneous or adulterous unions are included in the kin categories of  $G 0$ . Such cases clearly illustrate the fact that all siblings of any ego are not systematically classified as siblings among themselves (as his uterine and agnatic siblings). Borrowing a term from mathematics, we will call this property intransitivity. But before developing further the implications of this property, we must present two complementary factors which influence in the same direction the application of kinship terms in adjacent generations with regard to genitors and step-parents :

a) the relationship of an ego to the person with whom one of his parents re-marry is not modified by this marriage. Rather, it is always traced through ego's father. Step-parents are not equated with parents whereas step-siblings are equated with siblings ;

b) children of adulterous unions refer both to their genitor and their mother's husband as male kin of  $G + 1$ , regardless of the relationship between these two men, whereas ego's relationships to the other members of the society are reckoned basically through his genitor.

The consequences of all these processes of reckoning are to break systematically the isomorphism of kin relationship sets. Indeed, a principle of unity which holds in a transitive equivalence relation (where  $A : B :: B : C$ , then  $C : A :: A : B$ ) does not underlie the application of Yanomam kin terms (cf. Radcliffe-Brown, 1950 : 24). This has important implications for the way in which the two-section system works in Yanomam society. Thus, for example, in the situation given below :

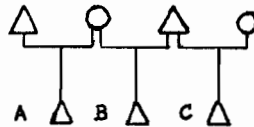


FIG. 3.

A is brother to B and B is brother to C, but A is not necessarily brother to C (he is in fact almost always affine to C in concrete situations).

This aspect of Yanomam relationship reckoning is radically at variance with a characteristic which has been taken as almost distinctive of two-section systems. In most such systems, if we know that A is brother to B and that B is brother to C, we can predict that A is brother to C. That is, the two sections have a clearly defined membership : relationship sets of people of same section are isomorphic while those of people of opposite sections are mutually exclusive. Among the Yanomam, by contrast, relationships are highly intransitive in application ; thus, people who are both in the same relationship *vis à vis* an ego may perfectly belong to opposite sections.

This intransitivity, generalized at the level of the largest Yanomam social space — i. e., the cluster of communities where lineage segments are described as existing in other sub-groups such as the Sanumá — leads to record a systematic discrepancy between the few lines which can in fact be obtained by the genealogical method and the actual distribution of kinship categories as operative in this society.

Many pairs of kin may have very few kin in common, many pairs of affines may have many kin in common and therefore most of the kin of any ego may not be related as kin among themselves. In other words, a large number of people classified as kin to one another may find themselves in totally divergent positions in regard to matrimonial strategy and to relationship reckoning in general.

As noticed previously, Yanomam kinship terminology restricts lineal conceptualisations in its affinal merging of all ascending and descending genealogical positions outside of the three medial generations (Cf. Shapiro, 1972 : 97). This feature must be correlated also with a similar limitation occurring in the parallel kin range. Indeed, one last property of this kinship terminology will be presented here : its distinction between 'real' (*yay*) and 'mere' (*bja*) parallel collateral kin and the tendency for the latter to be reclassified as potential affines. This process is not assimilated to individual terminological manipulations to justify incestuous unions (Cf. Shapiro, 1972 : 78). Rather, systematic remote (*bja*) parallel collateral reclassifications bear only indirectly on ego's generation. They are applied to the children of *bja* siblings thereby classified as potential affines of  $G - 1$  and to the children of *bja* children thereby classified (with a generational jump expanding the number of potential spouses at  $G - 2$ ) as potential affines of ego's generation. Parallel collateral kin who are considered as *bja* kin are those whose linking truncal sibling set in the common genealogical space is more remote than the second ascending generation and therefore forgotten. The permanent parallel collateral kin range of any ego is limited to his father's parallel collaterals and their descendants.

To sum up what we hold as the specific properties of the Yanomam kinship terminology, which is in this society the salient operative social classification, it can be said that :

a) The lineal and parallel collateral space of genealogical positions covered by kin categories is limited to three medial generations and two degrees of collaterality. Outside of this conceptual nucleus of relatives the kin/affine opposition is obliterated, and there is a merging of categories which has the

effect of equating all distant relatives with cross collaterals (affines). The range of potential affinal relationships and the field of matrimonial strategies are in consequence considerably expanded if compared with kin relationships.

b) The application of kin terms by the members of Yanomam society is highly intransitive. Marriage fluidity and the correlated complexity in the reckoning of near relatives combine to give the present picture of highly idiosyncratic kin relationship networks.

These two aspects of Yanomam kinship terminology make it hardly compatible with any superordinate system of social categorization which might be based on extended genealogical lines. Consistently, among the Yanomam, neither socio-centric category nor formal grouping subordinates the network of social identities posited by the individual partitions of the social space through the kinship terminology. The only named and culturally recognized unit is the residential unit ideally constituted by a semi-endogamous and bilaterally extended core of relatives. All other differentiations in the yanomam social world ordering are contextual or ego-centered. Using the distinction between filiation and descent, one has to underlie the fact that Yanomam social classification does not acknowledge either any sort of cumulative sequence of filiation links or any correlated biological symbolisation of an extended lineal continuum; this holds for regulation of matrimonial transactions or in actions relevant to any other cultural domain.

The Yanomam use a limited genealogical space which seldom extends further than the grandparents of the oldest living adults. Beyond this generation mythological humanity is mentioned without reference to any focal ancestor. The constriction of genealogical distance is directly related to a systematic obliteration of any type onomastic transmission. The names of the dead are strictly prohibited and must be forgotten when their possessions are destroyed. Mentioning the name of the dead exposes one to sorcery revenge from the dead man's kin. Genealogical knowledge is therefore, for any ego, systematically reduced to the direct and personal knowledge of the ascendants of the group, a knowledge spanning no more than two generations and always very contingent.

We will now show that the stress upon affinal relationships on the conceptual level is congruent with Yanomam ideas about social and ritual actions.

#### RESIDENCE.

Whenever possible, the Yanomam prefer to marry a person in their own village. About half of the marriages studied were of this type. When a man is unable to find a wife in his own village, the next best alternative is to marry a woman who is a refugee from some other community. Such a woman will be willing to reside virilocally, permitting her husband to go on living in his own village. When this alternative is not available, a man will marry a woman in another village, and take up uxorilocal residence at least for the time required by the marital service for the benefit of a father-in-law. Finally, half of the village-exogamous marriages are virilocal, and half uxorilocal. The

village-exogamous definitively uxorilocal marriages are generally contracted by men marginal to their community of origin for lack of close relatives in the dominant alliance network. The village-exogamous virilocal marriages are mainly contracted by women married to headmen.

From the perspective of a diachronic model of residence one notices that the Yanomam prefer to live with affines rather than with brothers. When brothers who reside in the same village reach the age when their children are to be married one of the brothers usually goes off with his brother-in-law and their extended families to form a new residential unit, where they become headmen.

Moreover, marriages in the — 1 generation will tend to replicate those of the older generation. This new social unit, sustained by a criss-crossing network of goods and services, an attribute of affinal relationships, will have the tendency to fission, by first establishing itself in a new, small communal house usually adjacent to the original one. Conflictual splits are very rare in the history of Yanomam groups of the upper Catrimani valley. The setting up of new residential units is therefore basically determined by the demographic and economic feasibility of the establishment of serial affinity networks which work to the detriment of the acting out of a principle of agnatic solidarity which, at any rate, is a difficult principle to maintain over time because of the variability manifested in the matrimonial destiny of male siblings. Among the Yanomam clusters of communities that resulted from successive fissions and that have become politically allied and linked by intermarriages, are recognized as such by the name of the community which once was comprised of the co-resident ascendants of the present members of the separated groups. On the other hand, no complementary opposition of agnatic segments is culturally operative in any kind of context.

#### ATTITUDES, INTERACTION AND ACTIVITIES.

To describe the system of attitudes that the Yanomam have toward their relatives, it is necessary to point out that the distinction between *bja* and *yay* applies to affines as well as to kin; potential and realized affinity being thereby distinguished.

In one's own generation the *yay* kin are treated with restraint. Two brothers, whether they live in the same community or not, treat each other with sobriety, never call attention to their interaction, which should be kept to a minimum and restricted to the private domain. Relations with a *bja* kin of the same generation are slightly more restrained than between *yay* kin, and their activities in common are even more reduced.

Affines of the same generation, on the other hand, treat each other with demonstrative gestures and attitudes, characteristic of joking relationships. A *shori yay* is treated with explicit demonstrations of generosity and familiarity. A *shori bja* is treated with less easiness, although a public character of joking and physical interplay is still present. Relations tend to be tense and more ambiguous with a *bja* than with a *yay* brother-in-law; conflicts due to adultery

or sorcery accusations occur in fact mainly with visiting *bja* brothers-in-law.

In the first ascending generation attitudes toward relatives can be described as follows: a *yay* father relates to his children with affection; their interaction is close but not publicly displayed. A *bja* father is treated in a less affectionate manner and ego's relation to him is markedly more distant than with the real father.

The *yay* affine of first ascending generation, i. e., one's real father-in-law, is completely avoided. If a man happens to be near a *shoayə yay*, i. e., his wife's father, he will find some way to bring a physical barrier between the two, for example, a banana leaf used to screen him from his father-in-law. To get very close to a father-in-law, to touch him, or ask him for something is considered to be as strongly offensive as incest. The same word — *shim̄mu* — indicates both sexual incest and improper behavior toward one's parents-in-law. In fact, prototype of incest behavior is sexual intercourse with one's mother-in-law. This avoidance is explicit, ostensive, public. A *shoayə bja* is treated with less obvious avoidance, the social distance in this kind of relation being much less pronounced than with a real father-in-law.

The figure of the grandfather, although called by the affinal term *shoayə* is, like the father, treated with affection. At this generational level the *yay/bja* distinction is devoid of significance, as personal knowledge of a classificatory 'grandfather' is practically non-existent. The Yanomam 'grandfather' differs significantly from the Sanumá grandfather. Terminologically he is associated with the 'father-in-law' with whom there is social distance. Yet, in terms of interaction, he is treated affectionately, as one treats one's father. This contradiction between terminology and behavior reflects his double position as the father of a father-in-law or a mother-in-law and, therefore, an affine, but also as the father of a father or mother. While the Sanumá grandfather also has this double position, he is equated with kin, rather than affines, and there is no contradiction between terminology and behaviour.

It should be clarified that the attitudes presented here are basically the same for male as well as for female relatives. A sister is treated with restraint, a mother with affection, a mother-in-law with avoidance, a grandmother with affection, and women of the marriageable category (*thuwə a*) with showy familiarity, either affectionate or violent.

The differences that mark the relations between a person and his *yay* kin (restraint or affection) and *yay* affines (demonstrativeness or avoidance) are blurred when extended to *bja* kin and *bja* affines. Thus, there is an approximation of *bja* kin and *bja* affines, in terms of actual interaction, which facilitates the practice of classifying the children of *bja* kin as affines.

In most everyday hunting and gathering activities, kin and affines collaborate in an informal way. On the other hand, in the distribution of the products of these activities, while gifts to kin are as frequent as those to affines, the latter exchanges are bound to a culturally valued commensality and must be therefore generally more abundant and of a better quality. Reproaches (among co-residents) and sorcery accusations (among non co-residents) due to affines' stinginess are a fundamental feature of Yanomam social interactions. But there

are also other kinds of interaction that are culturally recognized as being the realm of affines. The most outstanding of these are mobilization for conflict, field-making and death festivals.

The recruitment of allies for a raid is made within the cluster of historically linked communities. The affines of the dead to be revenged in the war play a leading part in the raid<sup>8</sup>. During a raid carried out in July 1975, all the warriors who went through the post-killing ritual (*ʔnokaimu*) were affines, real or classificatory, of the dead. No agnatic solidarity was therefore involved and on the contrary, informants underlined the fact that on the way to the enemy village, it gives one a sense of security to be followed by a brother-in-law.

The making of fields is one of the most important economic activities. An individual who does not work regularly in the fields is considered lazy, no matter how good a hunter he may be. Laziness in garden work on the part of a potential son-in-law is, for example, a decisive reason for a father-in-law to refuse his daughter in marriage. Thus if, before they marry, young people work with their brothers in their father's garden, as soon as they plan to marry, they slowly give up this agnatic cooperation in order to clear their own gardens cooperating with future brothers-in-law and to work according to the exigencies of marital service for the benefit of the future father-in-law. The Yanomam declare usually that the gardens of brothers-in-law must be adjacent and some of them go as far as to say that they would be embarrassed (*kiri*) to work side by side with an adult brother. Obligations and cooperation in the Yanomam society are articulated by the matrimonial network; a brother-in-law is the only person who is fairly reliable to collaborate with, a son-in-law being the only one of whom something can be demanded.

The most important ritual event in Yanomam social life is the death festival at which members of several allied communities are gathered. It closes with the consumption, real or symbolic, of the bone ashes of the dead. Note that this custom differs from other Yanoama sub-groups: among the Yanomam bone ashes of children are drunk in a plantain soup while those of adults are buried under the hearth of a close kin of the deceased. The steps in the funeral treatment, exposure of the corpse to decay in the jungle, the burning and consumption of the bones, are invariably and strictly carried out by affines of the dead, generally of same generation. Participation in the funerals of kin is considered as improper and dangerous apart from ritual lamentations to be carried out at a certain distance. Absorption or manipulation of the bone ashes of kin are said to cause inevitable death. The final step, the "consumption" of the ashes is preceded by a ceremonial dialogue (*hiimu*) between a kin and an affine of the dead which is a formal invitation that precedes the ritual. It is said that the person who use to give meat to the deceased's father (in bride service) must bury under the cooking fire (*ushibʔ yapi*) or drink (*ushibʔ koaʔ*) the bone ashes. Refusal to do so is a serious offense and makes the person who refuses liable to revenge by sorcery.

In summary: the ideal type of the Yanomam community is comprised of a bilateral and semi-endogamous core of relatives, articulated by a two section



system of relationship categories, bound by residence and a principle of repetitive affinity on two generations. This unit constitutes a basic social frame of interaction in which individually centered and affinally oriented networks are situationally selected. In politico-ceremonial gatherings, action networks of the same kind are operative at the level of the cluster of communities that resulted from successive fissions.

#### THE SANUMÁ/YANOMAM CONTRAST.

From the above account it is clear that, although there are characteristics in common, many of the features of Sanumá and Yanomam social organization differ considerably. In order to point out more concisely what these differences are, we list them below, with the caution that the list by no means exhausts the reality.

#### CONTRASTING FEATURES.

SANUMÁ	YANOMAM
1. Named social units other than the community	1. No named social units other than the community
2. Group membership transmitted through agnatic kin	2. No unilineal units, membership restricted to residential units
3. Grandparents and grandchildren terminologically equated with kin	3. Grandparents and grandchildren terminologically equated with affines
4. Pater more important than genitor	4. Genitor more important than pater
5. Kin solidarity	5. Affine solidarity
6. Transitivity of kin term usage	6. Intransitivity of kin term usage
7. Distant classificatory kin remain kin	7. Distant classificatory kin equated with affines
8. Incest beliefs prototypically with kin	8. Incest beliefs prototypically with affines
9. Kin drink bone ashes	9. Affines drink/bury bone ashes
10. No special name secrecy for dead	10. Names of dead are banned
11. Ideology of conception consistent with agnation	11. Ideology of conception consistent with bilaterality

The variables contrasted in this table are by no means limited to the Sanumá and the Yanomam systems. We believe that other Yanoama sub-groups could be similarly compared.

We would like to call attention especially to the implications of features 3 and 7 for the characterization of the two systems of relationships. Among the Yanomam, the equation of second ascending and descending generation terms with affinal terms of first ascending and descending generations, respectively, and the classification of remote kin as affines, contribute to the seemingly ever-expandable category of affines, with the result that a concept of unilineal descent would not be viable. Intransitivity of kin term usage is

not compatible with the presence of discrete, mutually exclusive units, such as lineages and sibs. The Yanomam emphasis is on affinal ties. For the Sanumá, on the other hand, the same features, 3 and 7 show a completely different picture. Grandparents and grandchildren are equated with kin in first ascending and descending generations, and classificatory kin, no matter how remote, remain in the kin category, except in individual cases of marriage outside the preferred *hʒzʒba* marriage class, which result in reclassification of terms only for those immediately involved. We might say that, due primarily to feature 3, the Sanumá tend to expand their kin categories, at the expense of affinal ties. This correlates with the fact that Sanumá men can marry outside the *hʒzʒba* class much more easily than can the Yanomam, without contracting an incestuous union. Whereas the Yanomam consider incestuous any marriage outside the *thuwa* a class, and concomitantly expand this class to include women outside the cross-cousin category, the Sanumá apply another criterion to legitimate such marriages. This criterion is the rule of lineage and sib exogamy, which, superseding the two-section system rule, permits marriage with other categories that, though not preferred, are perfectly acceptable.

#### CONCLUSIONS.

We hope to have demonstrated our two basic points : 1) that sub-groups of the Yanoama language family are far from being socially uniform, despite many culturally common features, and 2) that sub-group variation can be so extreme that one sub-group has unilineal descent ideology and units, while another does not ; one emphasizes kin relations, and the other, affinal relations.

We also hope that the present comparison between these two Yanoama sub-groups will encourage similar efforts by students of other sub-groups, as an attempt to improve our understanding of the transformations of social structure that characterize the Yanoama family. As revealed by studies of the Gê-speaking peoples of Central Brazil, the application of controlled comparison can be highly rewarding. The Yanoama family presents nearly ideal conditions for this kind of comparative effort.

#### NOTES

1. The Sanumá material presented here was collected and analysed by Alcida Ramos, whose experience with this society is the outcome of 26 months of fieldwork among them. She is responsible for the Sanumá part and the comparative parts of the paper. Bruce Albert is responsible for the Yanomam part, the content of which is the result of a 10-month fieldwork among the Catrimani valley Yanomam. Ramos' research was financed, at its three stages, by the National Science Foundation, Ford Foundation, and the Brazilian Ministry of the Interior. Albert's research was done as a requirement for a Doctorat de troisième cycle at the Université de Paris X and was financed by a 10-month grant from the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Relations, with an additional 3-month grant for the elaboration of the manuscript on which the present analysis of Yanomam is based (Albert, n.d.). We would like to express our unreserved appreciation to Dr. P. David Price for his interest in the content of this paper and for the many hours he spent in the painstaking task of improving its form. We are also thankful to Dr. Kenneth Taylor for his valuable com-

ments. For generous and helpful suggestions for a revision of the first draft of the Yanomam part of this article Bruce Albert is indebted to Dr. Joanna O. Kaplan and Patrick Menget.

2. We would like to clarify our position as to the cover term for the language family as a whole. As Ramos would not find adequate to call the 15,000 or so speakers of the four main languages of this family by the auto-denomination of the Sanumá, nor would Albert think it appropriate to label them as the Yanomam label themselves, we find it equally inadequate to apply other auto-denominations, such as Yanóinami (LIZOT, 1970, and all his other publications), Yanomamö (CHAGNON, 1968, and all his other publications), in this general way. Shapiro suggests Yanomama, after Migliazza (1972), but to non-specialists' ears this can be easily confused with Yanomam, or Yənomamö. Therefore, we adopt the term Yanoama (BARANDIARAN, 1967; BIOCCA, 1971; TAYLOR, 1974), since it is similar to most auto-denominations, but sufficiently different not to be confused with any particular one of them.

3. A more extensive treatment of the Sanumá material can be found in Ramos, 1972.

4. On this point Ramos entirely agrees with R. Keesing to whom cumulative filiation or, as he puts it "chains of parent-child links", means in fact descent (KEESING, 1975 : 17). Whereas the distinction between filiation and descent is clear and useful enough, she does not find it structurally significant to differentiate between cumulative filiation and descent.

5. The expression 'agnatic nucleus' is used here after P. David Price (n. d.) to mean a co-resident group of agnates, father and children or a group of brothers and their children.

6. The incidence of marriages with a relative other than a cross cousin, of a total of 82 marriages for which the genealogical connection between the spouses is known, is only 15 (18 %), 43 (52 %) were contracted with a *hiziba*, and 24 (30 %) between people with no genealogical connection, and considered to be unrelated. The latter situation, of unrelated spouses, represents the beginning of a new network of relationships, to which the kin-affine distinction is automatically applied.

7. This analysis is based on a more detailed presentation of Yanomam data by Albert (n. d.). Some data analysed here come partly to terms with judicious notations made by Dr. Judith R. Shapiro who did a three month fieldwork in the Catrimani area (1972 : 22). In her thesis, otherwise concerned with sex roles in "Yanomama" social structure, unfortunately no attempt is made to formulate a clear cut conclusion of the issues raised by her observations, which lead her to adopt often contradictory statements about the relative importance of agnatic bonds in Yanoama sub-groups (1972 : 9-81-99 and 105 ; 1974 : 305-306).

8. Although raids are reported historically, including the quite recent past, at present they seem to be relatively rare. During Albert's fieldwork one raid took place against an isolated group. After he left the field, there was news of another raid against a group of contacted Yanoama who live near the recently opened Perimetral Norte Highway. Both group are called *Moshahatetemtibi* or *Yawaribi* by the Catrimani Yanomam ; they are said to speak a different Yanoama language (cf. MIGLIAZZA, 1972 : 35). Both raids represented retaliation for deaths considered to have been the result of sorcery.

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