

Warriors of the Amazon

Yanomami

Warriors of the Amazon

- Editorial comment on selling sciences to the masses:
 - Although NOVA produces excellent science documentaries, in this case they succumb to sensational advertising to lure viewers by noting:
 - Warning: scenes of nudity and drug taking
 - Introduction which claims film is about:
 - War
 - Drugs
 - Cannibalism
 - Genocide

Reality of the Film

- The film deals with the following and very little with the lurid bullets on the previous slide
 - Alliance or peace making in the context of war
 - The political ends of religious beliefs
 - Reciprocity in:
 - War
 - Trade
 - Feasting
 - Marriage (in-law relationships)

Problem with the film

- The motivation for peace making is not clearly elaborated but suggests that it has to do with one family seeking to reunite with their daughter who had fled to the enemy because of an abusive husband
- This explanation is unreasonable: villages members don't make political policy on the basis of one family's personal needs for reunion
- Most likely the enemy villages had a common enemy or enemies and figured an alliance would be in their best strategic interests
- In the beginning and the end the film claims that the Yanomamö are the victims of genocide. This claim is essentially false.

The Importance of Reciprocity

- ◉ Food exchange.
- ◉ Vengeance which leads to prolonged warfare.
- ◉ Trading and feasting between allies.
- ◉ Shamanistic rituals between allies.
- ◉ Joint raids.

The Importance of Kinship

- Build power base through in-laws.
- Brother-in-laws cooperate in raids.
- Groom service (the unwilling groom is featured).

Yanomamö Spiritual Warfare

- Drug use to contact the spirit world.
- Shamanistic activities in healing allies and friends and sorcery against enemies.
- Warfare and the introduction of disease.
- Funeral ceremonies to focus grief, honor the deceased, and insure the ghost does not harm.
- Funerals do not end the formal grieving process. It occurs on a near-daily basis during sunset many years after death especially if the deceased is unavenged.

Alliance Making

- Village Level: reciprocal hosting of feasts which includes:
 - Preparation of the best food
 - Dancing by the guests
 - Ritual dialog (*himo*) between leaders
- Individual Level:
 - Trade of valuable goods
 - Symbolic trade (e.g., arrow points)

Elements of Curing

- Use of sympathetic magic (like produces like)
 - Pulling spirit out of body
 - Entering the body to the fight spirit
 - Spitting out of spirit after extraction from patient
- Magic is like science
 - Theory of causation
 - Logical set of manipulations to achieve a particular end

Warfare

- Secular causes
 - accusation of adultery
 - abduction of women
 - any previous conflict that has gone unavenged
 - failure to cede a woman promised in marriage
 - insults
- Spiritual causes – accusations of sorcery.