Killing the Hidden Waters

2. Stick

Charles Bowden

1977

http://nmai.si.edu/exhibitions/infinityofnations/southwest.html
From now on ...

• I’ll call on someone to summarize the current reading at the beginning of class – you can use notes, if needed.

• I’ll call on someone else to state (or restate) one or two prominent themes
Summary: 2. Stick

- Sonora:
- People:
- Food:
- Way:
- Dreams: “The land determined the food, the food fashioned the way, the way became the mind.”
Sonora

• Water is not distributed evenly: “a 1” rainfall does not mean 1” everywhere”
• 44 aboriginal watering holes, rock tanks
• El Camino Diablo
• Survival Strategies:
  – live near water – flood irrigation
  – Rancheria: summer/winter villages; mixed diet
  – Nomadic raiders: Apache
  – non-agricultural: Seri

• Secret Knowledge of Water, Craig Childs
People

- Akimel O’odham – river people, 20k
- Tohono O’odham – desert people, 10k
- Hia C-ed O’odham – sand dune people
- Seri
Seri

• All Seri’s: 30 k gal/day across 1500 mi^2.
• Diet: 90 lbs or 720 cactus fruits/yr
• Tribe sustainable on 600 ac, ~ 1 mi^2.
Papago:
“Their calendar reads like a menu”

- May – “Painful moon”
- June – black seed moon – Saguaro fruit
- July-Aug – monsoon
- Oct-Nov – harvest
- Jan – “animals thin”
- Feb – smelling
- Mar – green moon
- Apr – yellow moon
Food

• They would eat anything; Rats:
• Through their flesh ... man extended his abilities
• Agriculture: “This garden was not Eden”
  – grew only what they needed
  – 60 day growing season after the monsoon
  – Yields: Tepary beans – 500-800 lbs/ac
  – Papagos: 25% diet; Pima > 50% diet
• Mesquite – nature’s pump; beans highly nutr.
Way

• “b/c nature was not regular, the ways of man had to be”, Do not be idle
• Parents drilled “unquestioned rules”
• “Boys must run, run; girls must grind corn”
• Endurance, survival, not triumph, was goal
• “There was no victory over the land, just a desperate truce”
• “Fetching water took much of a women’s time”
• “To be left alone in the desert was to be left for dead”
• Sharing of food, of excess was expected, necessary
Dream

• “Ordeals brought information into a world largely closed to innovation”

• “The knot of discipline could be loosened, perhaps cut, by dreams.”

• Humans lived only by toil, deprivation ... the grace of nature. In such a world, dreams were not dismissed.
Prominent Themes/Questions

• Life required a delicate balance and never ending struggle to find food and water.
• Together they survived; Alone – death
• Safety for the aborigines lay in the deserts sheer size
• Indians were trapped into exploiting renewable resources ... by lack of conc. reso.
• “Power came from toil ... that could only be stored in other human beings”
Possible Paper Topic

• Explore some of the primary and stark assertions made by Bowden. Why does he make them? How do they contribute to his primary thesis and our education? What can we learn from his approach?