



Victims and Warriors: Violence, History, and Memory in Amazonia (Interpretations of Culture in the New Millennium)

Casey High

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In 1956, a group of Waorani men killed five North American missionaries in Ecuador. The event cemented the Waorani's reputation as "wild Amazonian Indians" in the eyes of the outside world. It also added to the myth of the violent Amazon created by colonial writers and still found from academia to the state development agendas across the region.

Victims and Warriors examines contemporary violence in the context of political and economic processes that transcend local events. Casey High explores how popular imagery of Amazonian violence has become part of Waorani social memory in oral histories, folklore performances, and indigenous political activism. As Amazonian forms of social memory merge with constructions of masculinity and other intercultural processes, the Waorani absorb missionaries, oil development, and logging depredations into their legacy of revenge killings and narratives of victimhood. High shows that these memories of past violence form sites of negotiation and cultural innovation, and thus violence comes to constitute a central part of Amazonian sociality, identity, and memory.

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