

tensions between principles of rank and equality are resolved, produce a social organisation of much greater dimensionality than is easily conveyed by the reserved description. While this mode of presentation is no significant defect – and certainly reveals the rigid formal features of the system in a clear light – it does not always serve well in terms of relating the case study to the more general issues invoked.

While the example of the Wanano is frequently contextualised in relation to regional ethnography (and there are several useful comparative tables, p. 61), the implications of the Wanano resolution of the seeming contradiction between hierarchy and egalitarianism is significantly underplayed. The broad theoretical markers are broad indeed – and mainly typological via Malinowski, Fried, Sahlins, Murphy. The Wanano case study is circumscribed, and while a clear case is made for a strong correlation between status and control of privileged resources (mollified by redistributive mechanisms which cross-cut hierarchy), the implications beyond the study area itself are held in abeyance. Perhaps a further volume will push the discussion beyond the Northwest Amazon (and perhaps take greater account of the Makú who seem destined to lurk as mysteriously suborned forest others), but until then, this is a welcome contribution, lucid, authoritative and accessible.

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Michael F. Brown, *Tsewa's Gift: Magic and Meaning in an Amazonian Society* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1986 and 1993 in pb), pp. 220.

First published in 1986, *Tsewa's Gift* makes a welcome reappearance in paperback with a new (albeit brief) preface. The Aguaruna – whose magical practices are the main focus of the book – are a large group of Jivaro-speakers unique in the anthropological literature: well-known 'for the now abandoned practice of shrinking the severed heads of slain enemies' (p. 27), they are now examined for the contents of their own heads (in the work of Brown himself as well as that of Brent Berlin).

In the introduction, Brown sets the scene for the Aguaruna ethnography by observing that anthropological discussions of magic have relied on a small number of key texts (Evans-Pritchard's *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic* and Malinowski's *Coral Gardens and Their Magic*) for their inspiration, and he (far too briefly) surveys key discussions which have followed, noting in particular Sperber's engagement and the prospect of a more cognitivist approach to anthropological studies of symbolism and magic. Brown's position – which he characterises as 'literalist' – is that both instrumental and expressive acts (the propositional and the semi-propositional) are – for the Aguaruna, and one assumes others – accommodated within one general framework of causality (p. 26). On the one hand, this is an argument which has a long history; on the other hand, it is an argument to which lip-service is paid, but which is typically riven by commitment to a logic/magic distinction.

Brown writes in an unmannered and comfortable style which allows quick generalisation as well as insightful feel. Commenting on the residues of

Aguaruna/Jivaro reputation for ferocity he notes that a senior man asked if Brown could, upon returning from the States 'bring him a cannon... so that he and his sons could finish off their enemies on the Rio Cahuapanas without having to go to the trouble of walking there to do the killing in person' (p. 44). Similar comments throughout the text provide an immediacy and engagement which is too often missing from ethnographic texts.

Although providing much detail about the conceptual universe of the Aguaruna, far from making claims to a comprehensive mapping, Brown acknowledges both the partiality of his account (based on changing historical circumstances) and the variability of the Aguaruna situation ('Majority opinion has it that all human beings possess two souls...' p. 55). Once the scene is set, however, the core material (Chapters 3-5) is not often directly engaged with the broader theoretical issues. Chapter 6 attempts to synthesise the preceding material in line with the critical guidelines of the introduction, but does so in a somewhat desultory manner. The critique of the 'performative' (Tambiah-via-Austin) is well put, but unnecessarily defensive, and is actually delivered through a sociological argument rather than the cognitivist one promised. The 'general framework' to which the discussion aspires is not fully realised, but in his evocative portrayal of Aguaruna ratiocination, Brown lays the groundwork.

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Eric Selbin, *Modern Latin American Revolutions* (Boulder and Oxford: Westview Press, 1993), pp. viii + 244.

Eric Selbin has produced the first English-language, book-length comparative study of the consequences of social revolutions in Latin America and the Caribbean. For this reason alone, it deserves careful scrutiny by Latin Americanists. Selbin adds his distinctive voice to the growing chorus of scholars who believe that 'structuralist' accounts of revolutions have underemphasised the role of revolutionary leadership and popular beliefs.

The major theoretical and polemical point of Selbin's study is certainly well taken: scholars interested in revolutionary outcomes, he suggests, have generally focused on the 'institutionalisation' of revolutions and have neglected their 'consolidation'. By this, Selbin means that social scientists have concentrated on 'the reestablishment and reorganization of state structures' following the political victory of a revolutionary movement (p. 3); they have directed relatively little attention, by contrast, to the success or failure of revolutionary governments in generating widespread popular 'commitment to the social revolutionary process' (p. 24). Understanding revolutionary 'consolidation' in this sense requires a close analysis of popular beliefs, including popular acceptance or rejection of the projects of revolutionary leaders.

Selbin argues that the historical 'path' or trajectory of a particular social revolution depends upon the success or failure of both institutionalisation and consolidation. There are thus four logically possible revolutionary paths, and Selbin claims that each is illustrated by one of the four cases that he has selected for examination: Bolivia (institutionalised but not consolidated); Cuba (consolidated but not institutionalised, at least before 1970); Grenada (neither