

“bias,” “truth,” “actual history” and “real history,” among others. While he is aware of the problems of glosses and is able to show the kinds of productions they can engender (such as the glosses of “power” and “status”), the reader is seldom clear about how the historical materials he uses for his own critique are actually constructed. There are some problems, therefore, with the lack of reflexivity, or the selective reflexivity, in parts of the book. The work is uninformed by the postmodernist agenda now under consideration. Thus it is without a close awareness of deconstruction, certainly as that appears in the radical Derridean sense, and is innocent of questions of reification.

Such criticism aside, Thomas has forced us to look once more at the epistemological problems of our discipline. He makes a strong case for the inclusion of history in the elucidation of ethnographic issues. His work could be seen as suggesting the virtues of more interdisciplinary attention in the discipline in general. One could ask, equally readily, what anthropological analysis could gain by considering the discourse of economics, of geography, and so on. Works of this genre, therefore, can only continue to be intellectually satisfying.

Cultural Theory

Michael Thompson, Richard Ellis and Aaron Wildavsky

Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1990. xvi + 296 pp. \$49.95 (cloth), \$16.95 (paper)

Reviewer: Stephen M. Fjellman

Florida International University

This book (part of Westview's Political Culture Series) is organized into three parts, and is fronted by an introduction which presents the authors' general argument, a spirited defense of functional analysis. They claim that functional analysis is centrally useful to the social sciences but has been applied to the wrong unit of analysis, the society as a whole, a level that abstracts from context, assumes systemic teleology, and ignores sociocultural variability. Suggesting smaller analytical units, the current authors return variability to the social sciences.

The organizing metaphor here is “way of life,” the viability of which “is constrained by the need for congruence between social relations and cultural biases” (p. 3). There are five ways of life—hierarchy, egalitarianism, fatalism, individualism and autonomy. Each comes with a set of understandings about the world, including nature. Each is in competition with the others while relying on them in a kind of systemic codependency. Much of *Culture Theory* is the working out of the implications of this pentagonal organizational scheme.

Part One, “The Theory,” weaves together the authors' elements of culture (values, symbols and ideologies) and their constituents of social life (social relations, modes of organizing and institutions). Employing a constrained relativism, the authors begin by presenting five myths of nature called: caricious, benign, perverse/tolerant, ephemeral and the hermit's myth. Each, along with its corresponding story about human nature, forms a cultural legitimation for the authors' “ways of life.” These typological categories are then applied to brief analyses of peoples'

styles of reconciling needs and resources, of having tastes and preferences and of engaging in personal change. "Ringing the Changes" (Chapter 4) allows the authors to present two expanded typologies, a 12-cell typology of surprises and a list of the microchanges available from one "way of life" to another. Part One is capped by a discussion of the pluralism generated by the coexistence and interdependence of these types. I found Part One pretty exciting; but then I like the typologies created when sociocultural variability is taken seriously.

Part Two, "The Masters," addresses the past use of functional explanation. Here are brief discussions of Montesquieu, Comte, Spencer, Durkheim, Marx, Weber, Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown, Parsons, Merton, Stinchcombe and Elster. Here also is where the argument is made that functional analysis, though indispensable, has not yet been done correctly. This is a rather boiler-plate review, but as such would be useful to someone teaching a social theory course.

Part Three, "Political Cultures" was less compelling. A case for the model is made in discussions of Banfield's *The Moral Basis of a Backward Society*, Pye's *The Mandarin and the Cadre: China's Political Cultures*, and Almond and Verba's *The Civic Culture Revisited*. While these treatments might appeal to a political sociologist, I felt that the model lost its rigor in these applications.

Anatomy of the Amazon Gold Rush

David Cleary

Iowa City, Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 1990. xxvi + 245 pp. \$17.95 (paper)

Reviewer: Bernard von Graeve

Trent University

Cleary's *Anatomy of the Amazon Gold Rush* is a timely, well-written book on a subject which has received little anthropological attention. The author had intended to do a study on rural-urban migration in Imperatriz, near one of Brazil's largest gold fields, but, once there, "the scale and the importance of the gold rush came as a revelation" (p. xvii). The book deals with the gold rush throughout the Brazilian Amazon, and the research combines archival work, structured interviews, conversations and participant observation undertaken between April 1984 and March 1986. It begins with a descriptive account of the massive scale of production and employment generated by the gold rush in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and it includes a brief description of the technology associated with prospecting or *garimpagem*. The simplicity of the technology, its portability and easy accessibility make it eminently suitable for the small operator and the realities of Amazonian conditions.

Following a short historical introduction to *garimpagem* in Maranhao, Cleary launches into an ethnographic description of the boom. The central chapters describe the phases and pattern of the rush, the social structure and economic and social relations within the gold fields. Much of his argument responds to official and popular misconceptions of this type of economic activity. The analysis of eastern Amazonian mining camps demonstrates that the stereotypes of lawlessness, exploitation and violence among the "desperate and goldcrazed multitudes" (p. 222)