

affaiblis. Dans les familles toutefois, le principe égalitaire semble s'être accentué notamment au profit des filles.

Ce compte rendu trop bref ne saurait rendre justice à l'apport méthodologique et théorique important de cet ouvrage. Cette étude a le mérite d'accorder une place importante à la culture au côté de l'économie, de la structure sociale et des données démographiques. Si cette vaste enquête a bien rempli son objectif premier qui consistait à mettre en lumière les mécanismes de la reproduction sociale, elle nous laisse quelque peu sur notre faim concernant le rôle social et symbolique des femmes dans et au dehors de la dynamique familiale. Elle se fait aussi peu loquace au sujet des rapports de sexe et de pouvoir au sein des familles. Mais Gérard Bouchard promet de donner une voix aux acteurs (et aux actrices doit-on espérer) dans «un deuxième livre qui fera place aux perceptions, aux émotions, aux péripéties, au décor» (p. 483).

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**Thomas W. Dunk**, *It's a Working Man's Town: Male Working-Class Culture*, Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994 (orig. 1991), 191 pages (paper).

Reviewer: *Stanley R. Barrett*  
*University of Guelph*

One of the criticisms sometimes levelled against "anthropology at home" is that it searches for the unique and the exotic on the periphery of society and promotes a vague notion of culture, while ignoring social class and attendant economic and political issues. Such a criticism clearly does not apply to this well-written study, which focusses upon male working-class culture in Thunder Bay, Ontario. In a solid chapter that explores theoretical and conceptual problems in the literature pertinent to the concept of the working class, the author plausibly steers a middle course between economic and cultural reductionism, arguing for a model that relates culture to class.

The author penetrates the world of the male working class in its pursuit of leisure activities, particularly lob ball (a variant of baseball). On the surface, lob ball brings "the boys" together in an atmosphere of casual competition, social drinking, male bonding and sheer fun. But in the author's view, there is much more to the game than meets the eye. Lob ball is an expression of class rebellion. The alienating experience of the work place is countered in the leisure world by the celebration of pleasure, ties of friendship and group solidarity, and by the promotion of the values of mass culture, notably anti-intellectualism and the ideal of the "real" northerner: hardy, practical, reliable and willing to stand up for one's rights.

However, the seeds of class rebellion germinated within lob ball wither on the vine. Indeed, the counter-hegemonic values and attitudes associated with lob ball actually reproduce some of the conditions that encapsulate the lives of the boys. For example, the patriarchal thrust of working-class society is re-enacted in the context of the game (and afterwards in the bar), as issues of masculinity and female ineptitude are profiled. Similarly, working-class racist attitudes,

particularly concerning Native people, are rehashed. The author insightfully spells out the contradictory impact of Native people on working-class males. On the one hand, armed with prevailing negative stereotypes, the boys derive a sense of their own superiority in comparison to their image of "the Indian." On the other hand, Native people are seen as partners of the despised southerner-bureaucrats ignorant of the north and bleeding-heart liberals who champion Native people while condemning the xenophobia of the working class. In this sense, Native people indirectly symbolize the inferiority and subordination of the boys within White society.

There is much worthy of praise in this study. First, the argument that the leisure activities of the boys constitutes an expression of class rebellion, but one that in the long run is ineffectual, is plausible. As the author states: "Lob ball is ritual rebellion on a minor scale" (p. 94). Second, the author, who grew up in a working-class environment in Thunder Bay, obviously enjoyed excellent rapport with the boys (he joined one of the lob ball teams), and his account of their daily lives rings true. If this study is to be criticized, then, it is not because of the quality of the data presented, but because of insufficient data on issues and topics beyond the boys at play. In particular, the study would have been strengthened had more attention been paid to the boys in the work setting, to working-class women, and perhaps to the Native people and bureaucrats and politicians (especially the despised southerner) against whom the boys rebel.

We also might have expected more reflection regarding methodological issues. In a study such as this one, carried out in the field-worker's home town, the anthropologist is his own informant. In what way was this an asset or a liability? Occasionally we are made aware that the boys were sometimes confused, and even stunned, by some of the author's questions. Here the issue of over-rapport is germane, a situation in which the investigator may be stifled in raising analytic questions considered inappropriate to an insider. Finally, one wonders whether the experience of doing research at home resulted in the author "going stranger" (rather than "going native"), a concern especially relevant to insider anthropology.

*It's a Working Man's Town* has already gained a reputation as an important contribution to the literature on working-class culture. From the point of view of the importance of the topic, the sophistication of the argument, the quality of the data and the clarity of the prose, that reputation is undoubtedly deserved.

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**Johannes Wilbert**, *Mindful of Famine: Religious Climatology of the Warao Indians*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996, 375 pages, 19,95\$ U.S. (broché), 29,95\$ U.S. (relié).

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Il y a déjà près de 50 ans que Johannes Wilbert poursuit une carrière particulièrement productive en ethnologie sud-américaine. Tour à tour organisateur de colloques et respon-