

connections between them, and finally re-abstracting them into some level of generality to identify latent patterns, tendencies and points of conflict. To Ollman, this simply follows how Marx deconstructed the social premises of the key units of bourgeois society, such as the commodity, labour and capital, while still using them as place-holders to expose the many contradictions inherent to capitalism. But Ollman adds considerably to the method he ascribes to Marx, if only in parsing out the many layers of investigation needed to undertake an analysis of such magnitude. He brings new concepts (such as extension, identity, vantage point) in to the fray and invests older ones (such as contradiction, totality and form) with new meanings to build a most applicable arsenal of conceptual tools that will help orient us, probably with greater ease than any of Marx's texts, in unpacking the dense social fields we are prone to find in our sites of research.

By the time we reach the final Steps (four and five) in Ollman's exegesis we find ourselves already partnered with him in the dance. Here, as dialectics are escorted out into the worlds of debate and case study, their movements come to seem somewhat familiar if not altogether repetitive. But even as Ollman's song seems to remain the same, he throws up new melodies to catch our ear. The two gems of the book's latter half are only tangentially related to the themes of the first, a novel essay on Marx's historical method ("Reading History Backwards") that convincingly debunks accusations of its teleology, and a fascinating chapter on the Japanese State that finds the basis of its social legitimacy to be dispersed among a capitalist bureaucracy, the emperor and the country's mafia.

Much of Ollman's charm comes from his unwillingness to relinquish a mode of investigation that, by today's standards, may seem slightly antiquated. The method he advocates is unabashedly structuralist, demands a detailed analysis of grounded social relations, and appears almost oblivious to the directions materialist theory has taken lately via postmodernism, post-structuralism and cultural studies. In a sense, *Dance of the Dialectic* reads as a refreshing antidote to the recent turn in political economy toward studying diffuse forms of power, amorphous rationalities of governance, and discursive modes of subject formation. Readers may wish, however, that Ollman chose to engage more directly with writers of this ilk, rather than debating only fellow dialectical theorists like Roy Bhaskar (chap. 10) and the Systematic Dialectics school (chap. 11), which do nothing to show how instructive his work can be for analysts attempting to construct more grounded and dynamic engagements with power in contemporary class societies, neo-liberal or otherwise. Despite this book's commitment to explaining the nuances of Marx's method and working through concepts traditionally rooted in political economy, it will be compelling for any anthropologist about to enter the field and, particularly with respect to the first half, would make a valuable contribution to a course on research methodology.

Sherry B. Ortner, *New Jersey Dreaming: Capital, Culture, and the Class of '58*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003.

Reviewer: *Thomas Dunk*
Lakehead University

In *New Jersey Dreaming* Sherry Ortner describes and analyzes the life courses of her classmates from Weequahic High School in Newark. The story that is told is for the most part a common American tale of postwar upward mobility and success. With a few exceptions, the children of the mostly Jewish workers and small independent business people that comprised the class of '58 have fared very well. The majority of them are now part of the professional middle class and have moved far beyond their childhood neighbourhood in New Jersey. Raised in a culture that celebrated self-improvement and getting ahead, it appears most students internalized these values and have lived them out. There are a few rebels in the mix who have lived what Ortner refers to as "counterlives," dropping out of the competitive race to success, and not everyone discussed in the book has lived a charmed existence, but the overall picture is one of success.

Ortner explains the upward mobility of her subjects in terms of the interplay of the internalization of relevant values by individuals and the broader social movements (feminism, civil rights) and structural changes in the economy (growth of the service sector, growth of the new middle class) that were part of the postwar American experience. She carefully tries to keep class-based cultural issues in focus without ignoring the ethnic, racial and gendered dimension of social experience. Indeed, she explicitly critiques the tendency to ignore class in favour of race, ethnicity and gender in much social science.

As one of a relatively few efforts to "bring class back in" at a time when class has been abandoned as a useful analytical category by many, this book deserves the high praise which George Marcus bestows in a book jacket quote. But his claim that the book "makes one of the most important sociological arguments in recent years on the dynamics of class in post-World War II American society" is arguable. Perhaps, it is more a statement about the impoverished state of such analysis in the U.S. While the book is certainly an enjoyable and interesting read, the argument itself is rather flat. True to her anthropological roots, Ortner prefers native class categories over those imposed by social scientists. In opting to employ the concepts of her research subjects, Ortner reflects the natives' point of view. This certainly has the advantage of helping us understand the world as they do. This approach, however, also leaves us stuck in middle-class common sense thinking and as such, limits a more critical understanding of American society. Ortner's argument can be summed up as follows: the class of '58 was not homogeneous. Some people had more cultural capital than others and that influenced their experience of school and life after school but for the most part they were very successful because they worked hard, were committed to get-

ting ahead in life, economic changes created new opportunities for them and they both benefited from and to some extent participated in feminist and civil rights movements which opened up opportunities for women and ethnic/racial minorities. This is a very conventional understanding of the American baby boom middle-class experience.

Class here is understood, as I have said, in terms of the three category model—lower, middle, upper—that is common in U.S. and Canadian popular culture. The discussion of other theoretical models of class is thin. Marxist models are mistakenly said to be based only on a binary opposition—something that was true neither for Marx himself, nor for the various neo-Marxists. For Ortner class is not understood as sets of relationships involving conflict and struggle. Class is treated as an economic category with accompanying cultural values that contribute to (or presumably potentially inhibit) one's ability to succeed in the system. There are stories of high school and familial difficulties and disappointment but the overall discussion is about upward mobility. This may be both the strength and weakness of the book. In telling this story Ortner is doing what we do need more of; more studies of the powerful and the successful—studying up so to speak. But in many ways, because it is a story of success as understood by the successful it is an analysis with which everyone raised in Canada and the United States is deeply familiar. It is the one communicated via the mass media regularly. The book thus does not move beyond a superficial understanding of the post-war boom and how the social and economic rewards of the largest economic expansion in world history have been distributed. Marx's famous statement in the Preface to *A Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy*—"Just as our opinion of an individual is not based on what he [*sic*] thinks of himself, so can we not judge of such a period of transformation by its own consciousness..."—is very relevant here. The principle value of Ortner's book is as a representation of the consciousness of the American middle class. If the reader is searching for an explanation of that consciousness, she or he will have to look elsewhere.

Gregory Forth (ed.), *Guardians of the Land in Kelimado: Louis Fontijne's Study of a Colonial District in Eastern Indonesia*, 2004, 266 pages.

Reviewer: Sheri Gibbings
University of Toronto

In *Guardians of the land of Kelimado*, Gregory Forth offers commentary on a previously unpublished and largely unknown report by a colonial administrator, Louis Fontijne. Fontijne was stationed in the Timor region of the Netherlands East Indies between 1939 and 1942. The focus of the book is specifically on the Kelimado, a region in the Nage district of central Flores, Indonesia. Because Forth has conducted extensive

research in the area, the book is centred on a comparison between Fontijne's and Forth's precolonial data regarding the beliefs, practices and organization of settlements, as well as the impacts of colonialism on the Nage region.

The Introduction of the book provides detailed information about the life and profession of Fontijne, the conditions of Fontijne's study and the process of translating the report. Fontijne joined the colonial service in Indonesia first as district officer in Sumatra, and following a series of stints in other parts of Indonesia, he became assistant commissioner in Kupang in 1942. Forth believes that Fontijne was interested in doing a doctoral degree at the University of Leiden, which could explain why the report produced by Fontijne resembles an anthropological study (p. 9). Forth provides at least three reasons why the colonial report is important today: (1) it is similar to ethnographic studies done by anthropologists at the time, (2) it is one of the only comprehensive studies on the Nage region during the colonial period, and (3) it describes the effects of Dutch colonialism on the practices and beliefs of the society (p. 4).

The main body of the book is the translation of Fontijne's report, which encompasses nine chapters describing topics ranging from sacrificial posts to land rights, from public worship to the impact of the Dutch authority on the region of Kelimado. The Resident of Timor authorized Fontijne to look into the "position of the landed guardian and his activities as they influence indigenous societies in the Residency" (p. 15). The land guardian was a leadership role associated with "ensuring the general well-being of the land" (p. 15). In the report, Fontijne draws three conclusions about the land guardians. First, the guardian leaders were all-purpose leaders. Second, these leaders were looking out for the best interest of the community as a whole and land was just one of the issues they addressed. Finally, the leaders addressed both "worldly affairs" as well as "religious affairs" (p. 165).

In general Fontijne is concerned with determining the origins and significance of "traditional" authority, ritual beliefs and practices and how they have been affected by Christianity and colonialism. For instance, he is discouraged by the fact that local descriptions of Ga'e Déwa (the Supreme Being) were tainted by Christian influence (p. 154). He states, "The real Nage region offers richer data than Kelimado proper for testing these hypotheses. There one finds more authentic and perhaps even purer pagan religion, including myths and legends among which appear creation stories of the sort that are entirely lacking here" (p. 155).

In the Editor's afterword, Forth examines Fontijne's report based on his own fieldwork in the region (p. 201). Forth and Fontijne share an interest in reconstructing the precolonial history of Kelimado, a political entity constituted after the arrival of the Dutch administration. However, they disagree about the organization of political groups in the area. Fontijne argues that the Kelimado territory was dominated by three different groups (So'a, Bamo, and Doa) that were