

Hsiang-Shui Chen. *Chinatown No More: Taiwan Immigrants in Contemporary New York*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992) xi, 281 pp., \$37.95 cloth, \$14.95 paper.

This book is a recent addition to the Anthropology of Contemporary Issues series edited by Roger Sanjek. The author, now an Associate Professor of Anthropology at the National Tsing Hua University in Taiwan, worked as a research assistant on Sanjek's New Immigrants and Old Americans Project in Elmhurst-Corona during the mid-1980s. This was the pilot study for what later became the Ford Foundation's Changing Relations Project, a national study of the impact of post-1965 immigration on American society. Chen, a graduate student from Taiwan himself, noticed a sudden increase in Chinese immigration to New York City after 1982. He chose to conduct his field work in this emerging overseas Chinese community. As an observer who shares the newcomers' broad cultural and linguistic traditions, and who is a recent immigrant himself, Chen presents a fresh and valuable perspective.

Chen's book focuses on two multi-ethnic neighborhoods, Flushing and Elmhurst, in Queens, New York City. He divides his presentation into three parts: Chinese immigration and theoretical models, Chinese households of three classes (working class, small business class, and professional class), and community activities, including social services and Chinese churches. The author's data includes a 100-household sample drawn more or less equally from each of the three classes mentioned above. He also participated in numerous public events, assisted newcomer Chinese in various ways, and closely followed the activities of several new Chinese voluntary associations.

Chen argues that the Chinatown image of Chinese American life is outmoded and misleading. Perpetuated in scholarly accounts as well as recent popular films (*Dragon*) and literature, this characterization suggests that Chinese Americans live in "isolated, homogeneous, and hierarchically organized communities" (viii-ix). While the stereotype may have been reasonably accurate before the mid-sixties, when Chinese Americans were barred from many occupations and residential segregation was common, it no longer describes current life in localities such as Flushing and Elmhurst. For one thing, the new Chinese immigrants are very diverse in terms of class, ethnicity, language, and education. Some are highly trained professionals who interact freely with established Americans, live in middle-class neighborhoods, and rarely shop in Chinese stores. Others are wealthy investors who bring capital from Taiwan, renovate houses in run-down neighborhoods, and start small businesses. Many others work as poorly paid employees in restaurants or garment factories. No

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single hierarchy or institution represents them all. Chinese Christian churches and the new voluntary associations discussed by Chen empower a small group of emerging political entrepreneurs, but in no sense “organize” Chinese immigrants as a whole.

Chen also opposes the Chinatown image because it can fuel anti-Chinese sentiment. He argues that Chinese immigrants have made very real economic and social contributions to Queens, which he calls a “world town.” Chen’s discussions of the Queens Festival and the emergence of women leaders are particularly interesting. In addition, his portraits of immigrant families vividly document the variety of newcomer experience. This book is a fascinating contribution to the rapidly growing ethnographic literature on the new immigration.

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Stephen Clingman. *The Novels of Nadine Gordimer: History from the Inside.* 2nd ed. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992) xxxvii, 276 pp., \$13.95 paper.

Nadine Gordimer received the Nobel Prize for Literature in October 1991, celebrating nearly half a century of her writing of her homeland, South Africa. The prize-giving precipitated the reissue of this survey of Gordimer’s work by Stephen Clingman, also a South African. His book was written as a doctoral dissertation for Oxford University. The second edition, under review in this article, is unaltered except for a “Prologue” in which Clingman examines Gordimer’s two novels that followed changes in South Africa: the release of Nelson Mandela and other African National Party leaders and the apparent breakdown of apartheid.

Clingman acknowledges the assistance of Gordimer in the writing of his book, and indeed, he seems blessed with intelligent insight. Particularly memorable are Clingman’s discussions on the writer’s art. How may great writing come out of conflict? Should a writer separate political belief and commitment to one’s craft? How does a writer deal with the shifting nature of history, and where in all of this is Beauty, Truth?

Clingman discusses each of the novels in turn in the light of Gordimer’s personal search. Issues such as feminism, sexuality and politics, black consciousness, language, and social structure are well-indexed and may be followed throughout Gordimer’s work. One may also extract references to historical events from the excellent index.

Clingman’s book also has an extensive “Bibliography and Sources” of Gordimer’s writing, fiction as well as non-fiction, and