

pending on your preferred means of testing for the presence of reality.

The St. Peter's Festival was both a carry-over from the Old World and an expression of immigrant solidarity and pride. In Gloucester it became the ritual signature of an occupational group as well, the Sicilian fishermen (*padrone* boat-owners and their client-crews) who had taken over when the Yankees had quit. By 1929, when the statue was first carried in procession, the fishermen formed the economic and symbolic nucleus of a prosperous ethnic community. Swiderski includes a brief overview of festival origins and constituencies in the past but he wants to know why, in the absence of those originating and sustaining conditions, the show goes on. Why are these men, who no longer fish as they once did, and no longer speak the language of their fathers, still shouldering the heavy statue of a cash-covered saint through the New English streets of Gloucester? To get a return favor from St. Peter based on how many miles he was hauled? To announce themselves as political actors and bidders for a piece of a pie that looks more and more like a pizza? To reassure the hordes of tourists and themselves that the endearing old ways of patriarchy and patronage are as immune to the Weberian claims of history as Mama's lasagne? Or is the festa yet another version of that hackneyed Freudian tale of a cowardly Peter, a Mediterranean *molimo* designed to keep the men on top and the maternal furies in their proper gravy-making, flower-arranging place? Is the feast a religious exercise in the primary sense of the word? In other words, does it serve to link the fragmented individuals of a spurious culture to that genuine culture of hardy Sicilian fisherfolk who struggled and braved the WASPs and the waves here just a few years back? Or is the procession a mere pretext for the grease pole climbing games, the rides and the boat races, to say nothing of the good eating, drinking and adolescent male cross-dressing that make of the feast a mandate for acting like a Rabelaisian slob and having some good old-fashioned dialectical fun?

Swiderski is especially strong in describing the festa's reorganization of Gloucester into a shifting mosaic of meaning-bearing spaces, maritime and terrestrial, domestic and public, ethnic and civic, male and female, adolescent and adult, sacred, ecclesiastical, and profane. His data again recall Benjamin, as the latter attempted to make sense of his impressions of the streets of Naples by postulating a hidden law of "porosity" to explain the extraordinary commingling there of celebratory and prosaic space and time. Invoking Bakhtin's "great carnival crying to get through and dissipate memory," Swiderski intuits a unity that resides, if only archaeologically, at the core of the festival as an ancient form of cultural knowledge-as-performance. This unity easily overcomes the distance that normally separates church and carnival. For Bakhtin, the terrain of appetite and the paradox of desire as "the word made flesh" was the median and axis of all carnival experience but Swiderski neglects to explore this central opposition. One is prompted nevertheless to recover the origins of the word "carnival," from the Latin *carnem levare*, "to raise up or lay aside the flesh."

Swiderski knows, of course, that he is writing about a hollow ritual, one that is acted out with hypocrisy and grief. The failures of the festival—its bungled and disrupted episodes as well as its deepening financial crisis and its recruitment problems—are the lines in the "festival-text" that he wisely underlines. Nevertheless, subsequent visits in succeeding years prove that, with the generous assistance of McDonald's, the saint-show goes on. The precariousness and lamented artificiality of the ethnic festival become, for Swiderski, new elements in the festival's textual code. Apparently, porosity, like romance, finds a place deep in the foundations of this new anthropology of the text. An attraction to "archetypal" meanings (the epic side of truth) is somehow embarrassing. The genuine and the spurious cannot be told apart.

Chinese Working-Class Lives: Getting by In Taiwan. HILL GATES. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987. xii + 256 pp., references, index. \$37.50 (cloth), \$10.95 (paper).

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Hill Gates is concerned with the world of the working class in contemporary Taiwan, working class here defined as small shopkeepers, factory and service workers, petty clerks, manual laborers, and the demobilized soldiers of the Guomindang armies that arrived in the late 1940s. Their lives, while recognizably and distinctively Chinese, incorporating many traditional features of kinship behavior and belief, business and work practices, and religious activity, clearly reflect the modifications and readjustments stemming from 50 years of Japanese colonial rule, restoration to Chinese rule, and recent rapid economic development.

Gates is also concerned with the continuing tensions between Taiwanese and Mainlanders (the older Hokkien-speaking population and the more recent migrants). Many people still see ethnicity as the dominant form of inequality, Taiwanese and Mainlanders alike ranking the "other" as rich and powerful in comparison to themselves. But as Gates points out, class is emerging as the prime point of reference, particularly among the urban working class where intermarriages are more common.

The text combines Gates's own research in Taipei with that of other scholars on the Taiwan scene. Two introductory chapters review the settlement history and changing political economy. These are followed by chapters on work patterns, family life, gender relations, folk religion, and education. Oral accounts are incorporated into these topical chapters. They are somewhat compressed and recast narratives drawn from many hours of taped interviews with nine informants: four men and five women, a mix of Taiwanese and Mainlanders. Gates seems successful in her attempt to retain the distinctive voice of each and the spirit of the original. Taken together, they represent the shared experiences and perceptions of a larger social class.

The speakers are residents of an outlying area of Taipei, here called "Prosperity Settlement." It is, as one informant comments, "a very below-average

place to live." Formerly the site of a squatter settlement, now torn down for urban renewal, it continues in part as an area of crowded housing, small shops, and workshops serving the urban poor. These are the respectable poor, some of whose children have moved into better occupations and out of the neighborhood. Some have themselves risen from poorer peasant status and hold an optimistic view about the possibilities of economic advance. Others have fallen in the social scale, defeated in great part by historical circumstance.

In this latter category is Mrs. Lim, owner-operator of a tiny housefront snackbar, and "landlady" over several small rooms in an overcrowded house. Her husband does manual labor in a factory packing room. Prior to Restoration, the Lims held higher status; Mrs. Lim was a teacher, and Mr. Lim was a civil-service accountant. They represent the emergent modern intelligentsia nurtured under the Japanese and displaced by the incoming Mainlander refugees. Mrs. Lim is understandably cautious about expressing political views: several tens of thousands of persons similar to the Lims were executed in 1947.

But the Mainlanders living in Prosperity Settlement are not those who moved into the better jobs, whether trained for them or not. Rather, they are representative of the half million or more ordinary soldiers who arrived in the wake of the Guomindang defeat. There is Mr. Kang, a low-salaried library custodian, living a lonely bachelor life and worrying about the fate of his family back in China. Others, mentioned in the oral accounts, were demobilized by the end of the 1950s and left to survive on tiny pensions or set to work as street sweepers, cleaners of public toilets, carters, and trishaw pedalers. Their wives take in sewing and laundry, hire out as servants, or like Mrs. Lim operate housefront restaurants and small shops.

For this class, women's earnings are crucial and there are few full-time housewives or leisured young ladies. Their views on women's work and abilities differ from those expressed and acted out in the middle class and provincial elites. One Taiwanese woman in the sample lives happily and openly with her Mainland "lover" in a relationship that has lasted several decades. A cheerful optimist who has done hard unskilled labor all her life, she takes pride in the fact that working together they have managed to save the \$2000 needed to buy a small house, a more important symbol of respectability than a formal marriage document.

Others presenting themselves in the oral accounts include the local temple manager who doubles as ward-healer for the Guomindang, dispensing patronage through his contacts with the local police and city administration. There is the dissenting religious voice of a follower of the (Japanese) Soka Gakkai sect. And there is the determined young woman, bound to a wheelchair by polio, who runs her own small business copying photographs, and is also a wife and mother. The values of family, however defined, and of frugality and hard work run through the narratives. So too does the resilience and toughness of these people.

Gates does not claim this to be a totally representative sample. The selection is built on ties of friendship developed over several field trips. They

are people who trust the anthropologist and are eager to talk about their lives. The result is rich interviews, with people speaking openly about their childhoods, their current situations, and the intervening events that have brought them into their present circumstances.

The book concludes with a brief critical review of the English-language literature on Taiwan, and a list of references that will be of value to students. This is a useful text for a variety of courses—Asian Studies, urban anthropology, women's studies—and a book many will read for pleasure as well as for information. It is a clear and lively piece of work, refreshingly free of jargon, and aimed at a broader audience than just ethnologists or China specialists.

Fisher Folk: Two Communities on Chesapeake Bay. CAROLYN ELLIS. Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1986. xi + 202 pp., notes, references, index. \$20.00 (cloth).

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Carolyn Ellis' book about two isolated maritime settlements along the Chesapeake addresses an important set of questions: what conditions enable communities to resist social and cultural assimilation into the fabric of a modern nation-state? What do people gain from such resistance and what do they sacrifice? The efflorescence of such issues for marginal communities and groups in modern society signifies a great need for close, fine-grained analysis. We don't know enough about how social groups respond to the hegemony of modern society. Anthropologists and many others are beginning to link macro- and micro-perspectives and thereby to understand the relations among history, social structure, and practice.

Ellis did fieldwork among the "watermen" of two pseudonymous communities: the very isolated marsh-dwellers of the "Fishneck" peninsula and the more prosperous residents of "Crab Reef" Island. She introduces the study by stressing the importance of conjoining ecology and political economy to explain marginalization. Unfortunately, the book does not live up to this promise. Rather, she offers a welter of detail about the work (particularly men's work), values, and material culture of the people of "Fishneck" and "Crab Reef" without convincing the reader that the information means very much. The Fishnecker's stubborn adherence to "deviant" social patterns and the contrasting willingness of Crab Neckers to begin to embrace mainland standards are not explained, nor, indeed, made very interesting.

Two general problems account for this. First, Ellis does not make sufficient use of a theoretical framework but relies instead upon descriptive contrasts: Fishneck versus Crab Reef, isolation versus "deisolation," "tight" versus "loose" communities, "deviant" versus, by implication, nondeviant. In relying uncritically upon such characterizations, she fails to address the context of power in which they have been constructed. Thus the potential significance of external, bureaucratic, or wage-and-market control remains substantially underexplored.