

***The Quest for the Other: Ethnie Tourism in San Cristobal, Mexico.* By Pierre Van Den Berghe. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994. 169 p., photos, bibliography, \$24.95 US, 0-295- 973117-X, pbk.)**

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It is tempting to account for the differences between Proulx and Norman in terms of their divergent literary skills: good travel writing, bad anthropology. But such a judgement ultimately concerned with a question of authenticity misses a larger issue: who has the power and authority to represent and interpret a place, its culture and its people? This has been a vexing issue among literary critics and anthropologists for a decade and even though Newfoundlanders may not consider their folklore to be sacred or the property of particular members of the society, the question is still relevant.

It is banal to suggest that these novels appropriate or exploit Newfoundland folk culture. Yet they do signal the emergence of Newfoundland folklore as a textual commodity, a signifier slipping away from its lived context. The lore is not vanishing, but certainly is available as representation beyond the traditional reach of its performances. The question these books pose is not simply who is speaking, or who is spoken, but what/how is folklore complicit in this of representation and simulation.

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***The Quest for the Other: Ethnic Tourism in San Cristobal, Mexico.***

By Pierre Van Den Berghe. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994. 169 p., photos, bibliography, \$24.95 US, 0-295-973117-X, pbk.)

*The Quest for the Other* is a readable examination of the dynamics of ethnic tourism in the city of San Cristobal, on the uplands of Chiapas, in southeastern Mexico. The author defines ethnic tourism as one in which the tourist searches for the authentic, quaint, and pristine in an exotic culture of the host area. He examines the intersection between what he describes as the tourist's extraordinary world and the host's ordinary world (p. 6). The interaction occurs among three groups that have different cultures, class backgrounds and interests: tourists, natives that he labels "tourees", and middlemen. The author presents an analysis of ethnic tourism as a complex system of interactions taking place within a social context of interethnic encounters and exchanges. He points out that ethnic tourism brings together these three groups. The tourist is attracted by the "otherness" of the natives; the

native or "touree" is the spectacle; and the middleman brings the two together (p. 122).

His ethnographic approach, using participant-observation to study the relationships among these three groups in San Cristobal together with 175 interviews of tourists, serves as the basis for his analysis. The author presents twenty-five vignettes of what he considers the most interesting interviews from his fieldwork to show the diversity of travel styles and motivations (p. 100-21). The sketches offer a description of the individuals representing a variety of backgrounds, a wide range of ages (fifteen to seventy-nine), and both genders. The 44 photographs allow the reader to see some of the landscapes, hotels, attractions, markets, as well as frozen moments of the tourist or native in the midst of an interaction, usually related to buying or selling a product.

Van den Berghe points out how tourism has the potential not only to debase and destroy what it touches, but also to renew and transform it in profoundly creative ways to the point of cultural revival. Whether as a reader one agrees with tourism as a form of economic development or not, one must take heed of such a message. Tourism continues to grow as a world-wide industry. The study contains implications for tourism policy in order to ensure a development that will lead to success rather than the many possible pitfalls.

The fine line between debasing and renewing a culture through tourism is a fragile one, and for this reason the author offers suggestions for developers interested in creating healthy and sensitive tourism strategies. He believes that the following conditions must be preserved in order to create a successful experience: 1) tourist traffic must not exceed a crucial saturation point that the author suggests to be 1% of the population; 2) development of facilities must be as invisible as possible; 3) authenticity must be paramount (p. 148-50). Van den Berghe believes that San Cristobal offers an example of a successful tourism development story to date. He believes that in general everyone in the community has benefited to some degree.

The author's plea is clear in his conclusion. He hopes that rather than follow the route of overdevelopment and overinvestment, tourism must be local, small-scale, as invisible as possible, environmentally and culturally sensitive and true to the culture.

Many readers will recognize the name of the city as one of the county seats taken by the Zapatista Army of the National Liberation (EZIN). Several reviewers have criticized the book because the author does not consider the political problems of this Mexican region, and that as a result some of the study is superficial (Stephen 1995; Siemens 1995). Despite these criticisms, I believe

that the book is a useful contribution for researchers trying to understand the relationship between host and tourist.

### References Cited

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***Cork Lines and Canning Lines: The Glory Years of Fishing on the West Coast.*** By Geoff Meggs and Duncan Stacey. (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1992. Pp. vi + 166, ISBN 1-55054-050-5 cloth.)

Great title. Wonderful photos. These were my first impressions of this book, and after setting it aside to reflect for a month, they are still powerful. The volume is approximately half text and half photographs, drawn from an impressive array of archival sources listed in the introduction. Each chapter begins with text and ends with several pages of photographs, a layout I personally enjoyed. Incorporating illustrative matter with a volume of this kind is always problematic, as there is the choice of interspersing photos with text, or of gathering all the photos into one or more signatures, to be grouped together or placed separately. This volume displays a different, and, I think, effective means of illustrating the text.

However, in coming back to the book after a month's rest, the biggest lack by far is an index and a bibliography. The omission was an inconvenience on the first reading, and became a serious problem during subsequent readings when attempting to refer back to specific passages in the book. It is almost inconceivable that a book of this quality would lack both indexing and documentation but such is indeed the case. Not only is there no bibliography, there are no footnotes, and no way to check quotations, assertions or historical