

***The Phantom Gringo Boat : Shamanic Discourse and Development in Panama.* By Stephanie C. Kane. (Washington : Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994. Pp. xx + 221.)**

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De plus, il m'a été possible d'apprécier davantage la richesse des contes franco-ontariens en les situant parmi ceux de divers pays à travers le monde et ce malgré les quelques erreurs que j'ai pu relever chez l'auteure.

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The Phantom Gringo Boat : Shamanic Discourse and Development in Panama. By Stephanie C. Kane. (Washington : Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994. Pp. xx + 221.)

I am always on a quest for books, monographs or ethnographies that I could use in a number of courses ; more often than not this results in an interesting "read" but a "text" that, for a variety of reasons, does not end up being used in any course. Kane's book is truly an exception. In fact, it is exceptional. There have been a plethora of materials that have been written that perform a variety of discourses within the theoretical constructions of postmodernism, but there are few books of ethnographies that extend this perspective to the production of an ethnographic work. Students and faculty alike are often frustrated by endless deconstruction with few or no examples of how to construct a postmodern ethnography. In short, this is what Kane's work achieves.

Kane's performance of a postmodern analysis reveals multiple registers that resonate into polysemy. She uses a variety of presentations and representations of her work with the Embera' people of the Darien. Her "text" is well-marked, making use of transcribed/inscribed dialogues with real people, personal-experience narratives, discussions by Embera' on some of their views and perspectives not only on one particular anthropologist but other anthropologists and "western" Euro-derivative peoples, and sustained reflexive discourses about herself as one particular anthropologist. The author is neither lost from the view of the reader nor is she omnipresent— but engaged in a sustained performance of Self.

One of the greatest strengths of this work is the fact that Kane reveals, in a sustained discourse, that that which is about belief is not separate from the everyday. All too often anthropologists treat belief and its performances in a "Sunday-go-to-meeting" kind of way. What Kane has achieved is the presentation of how a people live not only what is "everyday" but the everyday expression of what anthropologists have distinguished from the bulk of everyday living. Her sustained interest in shamanic discourses of a particular people and particular people reveals a new way to examine processes traditionally relegated to discussions about "development." It is a demonstration that the "traditional" is

alive, influenced by changing dimensions and dynamic and interactive reinterpretations. The reader is shown that people are not the passive recipients of the “west” but “read” it and trope it in a unique manner ; they are autonomous constructors of meaning and action. Kane’s work makes it clear that anthropology does not need to sustain a dual discourse on issues of “development” — one side arguing largely “against” development, with anthropologists viewed as the keepers of the “pristine,” and another side “for” development, seeing it as benevolent gift-giving instead of a new form of imperialism. The procedural feature that I appreciated was that Kane clearly marked the source of her information, i.e., whether it was from a tape-recorded event or not, or in which language the event originally occurred.

In conclusion, Kane’s book is a truly innovative and theoretically sound experiment in ethnography and I will surely use this book in my theory course.

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