

Turnerian progress, as desert, and as Big Rock Candy Mountain. This book should be thought-provoking to anyone interested in the relationship between landscape and environmental perception and folk culture.

Finally, I urge all folklorists to read a new book by Sally Price (*Primitive Art in Civilized Places*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1989. Pp. xi + 145, photographs, notes, bibliography, illustration credits. \$19.95 cloth), a provocative look at the ideological foundations of our public attention to "primitive art." Drawing upon numerous examples from her own fieldwork in the Amazon and from modern, everyday Western public culture, Price portrays the relationship between "civilized" viewers and "primitive" art objects, and explores questions of appropriation, anonymity and "authorship," and the "universality" of aesthetic response. This brief and eminently readable treatment of art and the conceptualization of the Exotic Other would be a good complement to another recent and related work, Henry Glassie's magisterial *The Spirit of Folk Art*. Both have the potential to change forever the ways in which we look at art.

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Michael Jackson. *Paths Toward a Clearing: Radical Empiricism and Ethnographic Inquiry*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989. Pp. xi + 239, notes, bibliography, index. \$35.00, cloth; \$12.95, paper.

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In recent years, questions about the nature and quality of ethnography have pervaded the journals, libraries, and syllabi of folklorists and anthropologists alike. Michael Jackson has added his voice to this often-heated discussion: *Paths Toward a Clearing* speaks clearly and profoundly to the issues at hand.

The book outlines a program of "epistemological openness" based on experience and an absence of abstraction (184). Anthropological concepts can never contain the fullness and complexity of reality as it is lived by real people. Jackson skillfully employs various philosophical traditions to create the foundation for a rejuvenated anthropology of experience. William James' radical empiricism acknowledges both structure and agency but refuses to give primacy to either; stuck between the granite of social norms and hard independent action, existential experiences of *thrownness*, *finitude*, and *ambiguity* come to the fore, and Jackson invokes Sartre and Heidegger to clarify them. He argues that it is from context, need, and desire that individuals create meaning; it is performed by people, and later perhaps discovered by analysts.

Jackson grounds his argument in examples from years of fieldwork among the Kuranko of Sierra Leone. For example, in Chapter Six, he compares the category of witch with the experience of those women who confess to witchcraft on their deathbeds. Witchcraft among the Kuranko implies a negation of

traditional morality (90). However, the women who claim to have attacked their male family members with witchcraft confess as they lie ill or dying; by confessing to witchcraft, they can make their illness into a punishment and, moreover, find some meaning in it. They reclaim "autonomy in a hopeless situation" (100). Setting aside the traditional debates about *shame* and *guilt* cultures, Jackson searches for the experience of the confessing women and therein discovers a complex range of emotions, kinship stresses, and ideological conditioning. The specific oddities of Kuranko witchcraft beliefs seem less foreign when explained as the expression of "the realities of human distress" (101).

Chapter Three compares Freud's theory of the unconscious with the West African notion of the unknown; Jackson concludes that these concepts are best compared in the context of lived experience, "the limits within which our praxis is confined" (50). Chapters Eight and Nine examine the social construction of the body. Culture does influence the body and its actions, but because these actions mediate the personal and the social, their multivocality creates "common truths" (131). The metaphoric use of the body as an image of society and of geography allows a symbolic manipulation of all three at once; more importantly, this metaphor unifies the disparate experiences of society, landscape, and individuality. These provocative essays exemplify Jackson's innovative, incisive style and thought. He approaches old problems in new ways.

Although the book is filled with detail, methodological suggestions appear also throughout. Jackson argues for the inclusion of all five senses in ethnographic perception and reportage. Furthermore, he includes his own reflections, dreams, and experiences as primary data; in Chapter Ten, which traces a narrative theme through cultural and historical changes, he includes a poem that he wrote about the tale's hero. He suggests that ethnographers actively debate and exchange points of view with informants, and thereby create a true dialogue; Jackson uses this technique in several places in the text to great effect. Both implicitly, with examples in the book, and explicitly, Jackson argues for a dialectic understanding of culture and the use of narrative as an embodiment of lived experience. He focuses on specific examples and opens many chapters with narrative descriptions. "There is no determinate system of meaning to be uncovered, since meanings are given anew in the context" (16); here, method merges with philosophy.

Ending with an historical analysis of ethnographic discourse that considers different ways of knowing and the role of power in anthropological inquiry, Jackson has created an impressive text that addresses the most important and current issues in ethnography. For folklorists, the book represents an important step towards refining the notion of performance. Exemplifying a new genre in anthropological writing, *Paths Toward a Clearing* is at once a philosophical treatise, an ethnography, and a methodological primer.