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**Paper:** *Things as they are. New Directions in Phenomenological Anthropology*  
**Year:** 1996  
**Published:** Indiana University Press, Bloomington

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The 70s and the 80s marked a turning point in anthropology. Very important works like *Writing Culture*, edited by James Clifford and *Anthropology as Cultural Critique* edited by George Marcus and Michael Fischer brought to the stage interpretative anthropology. Anthropology no longer pays tribute to exact sciences and positivism is rejected. Human sciences begin to play an increasing role in anthropology.

Michael Jackson, the editor of *Things As They Are - New Directions in Phenomenological Anthropology* intends to emphasize the changes that have occurred due to the new trend. He is an anthropologist from New Zealand, author of many ethnologies of African populations and professor at Bloomington University, Indiana. The book is intended as a collection of essays (thirteen), trying to underline the importance of phenomenology for the anthropological project, to explore the relationship between phenomenology and other theories such as existentialism, pragmatism and cultural critique. Focusing on social and cultural patterns of human experience the essays approach from a different perspective, a critical one, the methodology, the very structure of experience and ethics of ethnography. They also appeal to a more close to people anthropology, sensitive to the imperatives and priorities of people in the fieldwork.

Michael Jackson considers this essays are a proof of the potential of contemporary anthropology and of its capacity of encouraging and supporting trans-cultural dialogue. The editor asserts that from the beginning, the character of contemporary anthropology was influenced by phenomenology, developing a pragmatic anthropology, anti-theoretical and anti-intellectualist as phenomenology supposes a conception that integrates philosophies and theories as parts of the world we live in and not concepts that transcend social interests, cultural customs or personal ideals. Phenomenology clarifies things, experiences bringing them to the common knowledge. Jackson rejects the idea that phenomenology is an introspective philosophy, based on intuition that rejects science. Phenomenological method is one of direct understanding and „thick” description, a way of putting to balance the diverse human experiences and to deconstruct ideological traps that experiences would become if theorized.

The point of the anti-theoretical attitude is that the variety of human experience cannot be comprised in a body of enumerable theorems, like Adorno said. The spirit of Adorno’s critique identity of thought is however detectable in the essays of this book, together with an important existentialist touch. The thirteen essays are moreover an attempt to overcome the intellectuals’ attitude to exaggerate the importance of their theoretical knowledge. In this respect phenomenological anthropology brings back the critical sense of the vision of fieldwork..

This anti-theoretical attitude, anti-intellectualist and pragmatic is clearly visible in all the essays of this volume. Lila Abu-Lughod's, *Honor and Shame* presents the story of a young Bedouin woman that questions the status and authority of traditional concepts like honour and shame.

*Struggling Along*, Robert Desjarlais' essay describes the life of a shelter of Boston. The author argues that experience and its categories that we consider universal, natural and authentic are not an existential fact but a cultural and historical process, influenced by social, political and cultural forces.

Rene Devisch's *The Cosmology of Life Transmission* is primarily a moral and esthetic, based on participative observation, friendship and mutual understanding along Yaka population of Zair. The nature of tabu is the main theme of Alfred Gell's essay, *Reflections on a Cut Finger- Taboo in the Umeda Conception of the Self*. Christine Halliwell, in her essay *Space and Sociality in a Dayak Longhouse* talks about the tendency of anthropologists to ignore their own fieldwork experiences in order to produce acceptable ethnographic work. The result of such self censorship is nothing but an endless reproducing of western categories in stories about non-western people, and an incapacity of depicting experiences of social life in communities that are different from the western ones.

Michael Herzfeld's text, *In Defiance of Destiny – The Management of Time and Gender at a Cretan Funeral*, analyzes the text of mourning songs from Crete, in a manner different from that of traditional ethnographers, aiming to emphasize the process of constituting a feminine solidarity. The essay *Suffering and Its Professional Transformation – Toward an Ethnograph of Interpersonal Experience* of Arthur Kleiman and Joan Kleiman shows that suffering and transcendence are the most frequent forms of daily life experience, therefore they should be research subjects. Jim Wafer's *After the Field* is a critique of the notion of „field“. The author believes that field should not be clearly defined in time and space.

The skeptical attitude of anthropology towards systematic understanding, global explanations can be traced in the book, whose style proves that the object of research can never be „possessed“ or „captured“ by progressive interrogations. To conclude, we might say that there is a consensus among the authors in their refusal to produce theoretical works and assert paradigmas.