

***American Hooked and Sewn Rugs: Folk Art Underfoot.* By Joël KOPP, and Kate KOPP. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995. Pp. 141, 233 colour and black and white illustrations, endnotes, bibliography, index.)**

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Part 5, "The Story of Kintu," presents and analyzes the "Story of Kintu" from structural, cultural, and philosophical points of view. The analysis shows that the "Story of Kintu" (*Olugero Iwa Kintu*) is a mythological narrative text which embodies the origin, history, religious belief, philosophy, world view, and social and cultural values and attitudes of the Buganda. The central issue in the "Story of Kintu" appears to be attempts by the Buganda to provide their own answers to the universal question of human *thanatology* or mortality. Why and how did death (*Walumbe*) enter into the human condition?

In short, Mugalu's study is a useful contribution to the study of African oral traditions and to the discourse concerning the existence and nature of philosophy in Africa.

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American Hooked and Sewn Rugs: Folk Art Underfoot. By Joel KOPP, and Kate KOPP. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995. Pp. 141, 233 colour and black and white illustrations, endnotes, bibliography, index.)

Anyone who has ever been intrigued by material history and culture will delight in *American Hooked and Sewn Rugs* by Joel and Kate Kopp. Those of us desiring a copy of earlier editions no longer in print are now fortunate to obtain the most recent publication of the book by the University of New Mexico Press.

While this latest edition (the book was originally published by Dutton in 1975, with a revised second edition in 1985) is a welcome boon to hooked-rug aficionados, neither the authors nor the recent publishers had the hindsight to include new developments and recent scholarship in the field of hooked-rug research. Specifically these would include the outstanding contribution by Paula Laverty on the history and documentation of Grenfell mats (Laverty 1994).

Leaving such criticisms aside, however, the book is rich in detail, covering hooked rugs from their very beginnings in the form of bed rugs, yarn-sewn and shirred rugs. The latter portion

of the book devotes itself to two issues: hooked rugs of the 19th century; hooked rugs of the 20th century, including a barebones discussion of Grenfell rugs. From a practical point of view, the authors have provided instructions for the cleaning, storage, and display of hooked rugs in a clear, concise up-to-date manner. Yet, readers interested in conserving particularly fragile rugs from their own personal collections should seek the advice of a textile conservator before following the Kopps' directions; conservation is not covered in the book. Lovely black-and-white illustrations by contributor Kay Hines depict methods of hooking, shirring, or pleating rugs. This is an excellent guide to readers as they browse through the more than two hundred colour photographs of beautiful rugs.

The Kopps' fascination with North American hooked rugs is most evident in the well-researched descriptions found in the captions underneath individual illustrations. The format of interspersing illustrations throughout the limited text works splendidly since, as the Kopps reiterate from the beginning of the book, rugs are individual artifacts that carry unique motifs and embellishments reflective of "the emotions and sensibilities of the maker" (p. 7). An example of the Kopps' subjective yet delightful opinion concerning one bed rug made by Mary Comstock of Vermont is stated: "The design is simple, bold, and direct, and we conjecture that these were qualities that Mary Comstock possessed herself" (fig. 2, p. 11).

On a few finer points, the Kopps provide historical information about materials from which hooked rugs were made such as the not-often-mentioned availability of jute or burlap for backing. Burlap became widely used in North America after 1850 and helps accurately date some hooked rugs (p. 37). While the depiction of a few examples in the Grenfell rug-making tradition are poor, the Kopps report on a number of other missionary societies that had rugs as a cottage industry, such as the Maine Seacoast Missionary Society of the 1920s. This information would be of interest to future researchers wishing to compare rugs made for societies from different sides of the Atlantic.

While the Kopps have provided an excellent representation of the production of American (and, in some cases, Canadian) hooked and sewn rugs, their overall opinion with regard to the use of manufactured hooked-rug patterns as stifling the "originality and spontaneity... essential to great hooked rugs... and in folk art in general" (p. 80) is highly reflective of the authors as

folk-art collectors only. They have obviously neglected to consult recent scholarship, especially that focused on Newfoundland hooked-mat making (Lynch 1980; Pocius 1979). These studies describe past and present rug makers who have often applied motifs on their rugs from a great number of combined design sources, such as patterns available by mail order or from their next-door neighbour. One has only to gaze at the biblical passages amidst wildflowers found on the hooked rugs of Sister Ann Ameen of Bay Roberts, Newfoundland, to realize the potential of spontaneous folk art in the 1990s (Gard 1994; Johnson 1995).

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Passing Strange and Wonderful: Aesthetics, Nature, and Culture.
By Yi-Fu TUAN. (Washington: Shearwater, 1993. Pp. xii + 289, notes, acknowledgments, index.)

Passing Strange and Wonderful is one more example of how Yi-Fu Tuan, a cultural geographer, has consistently dealt with issues that are at the heart of what folklorists also investigate. Over twenty years ago, the publication of Tuan's *Topophilia* (1974) and, soon after, his *Space and Place* (1977) revolutionized the way