terminology of a Western educated scholar which I assume are quite different from the language Zenani used when she originally presented the analyses in Xhosa. It is not always clear whether the analyses are Zenani's or Scheub's. Despite this problem, the book is a valuable contribution to scholarship on Xhosa ethnography and oral literature as well as a nice example of ethnographic writing which privileges the informant's or performer's words and ideas rather than the ethnographer's.


Gregory Hansen
Indiana University

Although researchers interested in studying Native American narratives have access to numerous collections and compilations containing countless texts, scholars may find few reference materials useful for examining the texts of particular cultural groups or the texts of various neighboring peoples. John Bierhorst wrote this guide to assist researchers with accessing folktales of the Lenape, and his guide should serve as a useful tool for researchers interested in the traditional literature of this Algonquian people.

Bierhorst states that the purpose of his guide is to provide an overview of Lenape mythology, place it in its Northeast context, and publish currently unavailable archival material. He opens with a brief history of the Lenape and a discussion of the genres of folk narratives. The book is then divided into two major sections: the guide itself and previously unpublished texts. The first section is organized into four parts, each with scholarly annotations and commentary. The second section consists of eighteen stories which are transcriptions of archival material from the M.R. Harrington and Truman Michelson collections.

The guide begins with a thematic outline of the texts. The stories are classified into basic themes such as creation and transformation tales, and Bierhorst develops a useful system for cross-referencing the themes within the three other parts of the guide. The second component of his guide contains abstracts of the stories. His abstracts are succinct, yet readable, and are presented with a wealth of reference materials that should allow researchers easy access to original sources. The third part of the guide consists of eight stories of uncertain origin, while the final section consists of extensive comparative notes. A well-researched bibliography completes the book.

One significant problem with the guide, however, is Bierhorst's loose definition of the term "mythology." Although the terms "folktale" and "myth"
have a history of problematic usage when applied to Native American stories, some of the texts presented are clearly legends and folktales rather than myths. Furthermore, although Bierhorst accounts for two hundred eighteen texts, it would be problematic to assume that these texts comprise the whole of recorded Lenape mythology as implied by the book’s promotional materials. Bierhorst’s work, however, provides a solid model for developing future reference sources for Native American folklore, and his guide should serve as an excellent starting point for the study of northeastern American narratives.


Judith S. Neulander
Indiana University

Combining the efforts of an anthropologist, an epidemiologist, and a Navajo translator, this work presents a wide range of multidisciplinary findings on the incidence and etiology of seizure disorders among the Navajo, including the documentation of seizure-related beliefs and their behavioral expression on the reservation. Specifically, the authors focus on three types of seizure disorders: organic epilepsy, described as incest-driven “Moth Madness” by the Navajo; and two types of hysterical or pseudo-seizure, classified as lust-driven “Frenzy Witchcraft” and as shamanistic “Hand Trembling” in Navajo tradition. The volume also explains culturally determined behavior according to ethnic “personality types,” which may distract readers whose scholarly expectations are based on folkloristic explanations of collective behavior.

The strength of the work lies in its extensive coverage of seizure-related information, particularly on the historical ways in which seizures have been understood and treated. The authors explain the Navajo connection between incest and epilepsy according to myth and metaphor in Navajo tradition, and according to culture contact with neighboring peoples. The work also offers important insights into incest and seizure-related attitudes as shaped by kinship structures, pastoral life, and social controls. In Navajo tradition, for example, a diagnosis of epilepsy is synonymous with an indictment of incest. The authors argue that such immutable indictments weaken social controls and contribute to the neglect of children afflicted with epilepsy, avoidance of treatment, and sexual abuse of women. The implications and issues which the authors raise create valuable directions