

Nongenile Masithathu Zenani. **The World and the Word: Tales and Observations from the Xhosa Oral Tradition**, ed. Harold Scheub. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992. Pp. xii + 499, black and white photographs, appendix. \$39.95 cloth.

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The World and the Word: Tales and Observations from the Xhosa Oral Tradition is a collaboration between Nongenile Masithathu Zenani, a skilled and knowledgeable Xhosa storyteller, and Harold Scheub, a scholar of African literature. Scheub worked with Zenani between 1969–73, taping and filming her repertoire of stories and discussions of cultural practices as well as holding many informal conversations with her about her life and Xhosa culture. The result is this book, a rich compilation of ethnographic data, Xhosa oral narratives, and autobiographical information about Zenani.

The book is organized into four parts—Birth, Puberty, Marriage, and Maturity. Each part includes an “Introduction” entitled “Masithathu Zenani on Storytelling,” “Commentaries,” and “Tales.” In the introductions, Scheub presents some of Zenani’s ideas about the nature of storytelling including details about plot development, imagery, the relationship between narratives and history, the role of the storyteller, audience participation, rhythm, gestures, and concepts of time and space. The “Commentaries” are segments of Zenani’s rich descriptions and analyses of cultural practices—such as important ceremonies, rituals, games, social interactions, and dances—relating to the topic of the particular section. In “Tales,” Scheub includes oral narratives told by Zenani which relate to the topics discussed in the commentaries as well as a short section of analysis in which Zenani discusses the meanings and significance of the stories. By including commentaries and analyses as well as narratives, Scheub and Zenani provide the reader with several different perspectives, providing a rich source of information about important phases in Xhosa life.

It is highly commendable that Scheub gives Zenani the authorship of the book and that he presents her voice as the primary voice responsible for the majority of ideas and analyses. In his attempt to give credit where credit is due, however, Scheub minimizes the significance of his role in the presentation of both the material and Zenani’s ideas. In the preface he writes, “I have taken care not to interfere with her words and thoughts: I have not altered the material in any way” (xi). However, in the very organization of the book—the choice of what to include as well as the order of presentation—he influences how the material is presented, thus how it will be understood. Moreover, in presenting Zenani’s analyses, he uses the terms, concepts, and

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.

John Bierhorst. **Mythology of the Lenape: Guide and Texts**. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1995. Pp. x + 123, bibliography, notes, index. \$36.00 cloth, \$18.95 paper.

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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"