

Joubert

The Power of Performance

Linking Past and Present in Hananwa and Lobedu Oral Literature

In *The Power of Performance*, Annekie Joubert uncompromisingly challenges the textmaker's biggest problem, namely to understand the limitation of print as a receptor medium for performance. She re-examines the problems facing the textmaker in transforming a performance event (oral-physical sign system) to a transcribed text (visual-written sign system) without losing visual and auditive aspects of performance events. The author has practised this principle by using a multimedia approach in the transcription and interpretation of oral art. With this approach she has affirmed the fact that multimedia recordings of performance events become irreplaceable instruments in the documentation and preservation of oral art. In her analysis, the author uses a collection of invaluable data pertaining to Hananwa and Lobedu oral art, history and culture that has never been filmed, recorded or published before. The display of performance events gives the reader/listener a profound experience of the rich and resilient forms of oral art which, deploy not only the art of verbal utterance, but also mime, music, dance, dramatic enactment, drumming, display of costume, special effects, and ambience. Both groups are quite unique in particular respects. The Hananwa with regard to the brutal war of 1894 in their mountain abode. The bravery and pragmatic leadership of their chief Kgalushi Leboho, made the forces of the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek regard him as the most fearsome and dangerous chief of his time in South Africa. The Lobedu on the other hand, represents the greatest female authority in South Africa with regard to their famous female ruler "Modjadji" the rain Queen. In *The Power of Performance*, the author has combined her literary, linguistic, cultural, and historical insight to link performers in context, with their past and present through the power of performance. The study reveals a long overdue "insider" view on the oral art of these two communities in its totality. It gives for the first time, the opportunity to the performers of oral art to share their thoughts, and speak for themselves, and in this way salvage, document, audit and promote their own heritage and oral history. The author engages with her display, discussion and interpretation of performance-directed texts into a total process of transmitting life in a given culture: its pride and fear, myths and rites, creed and guidance and its honour and admiration.



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