Divine Che Neba, "Entry on: Why the Spider Roams between the Earth and the Sky by Veronique Mengue ", peer-reviewed by Daniel A. Nkemleke, Eleanor A. Dasi and Susan Deacy. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2021). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1286. Entry version as of November 07, 2026.

Veronique Mengue

Why the Spider Roams between the Earth and the Sky

Cameroon

TAGS: African Mythologies African Storytelling African Traditions





We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	Why the Spider Roams between the Earth and the Sky
Country of the First Edition	Cameroon
Country/countries of popularity	Cameroon
Original Language	Ewondo
Country of the Recording of the Story for the Database	Cameroon
Full Date of the Recording of the Story for the Databasey	December 22, 2018
More Details of the Recording of the Story for the Database	Soa, Centre Cameroon
Genre	Myths
Target Audience	Crossover
Author of the Entry	Divine Che Neba, University of Yaounde 1, nebankiwang@yahoo.com
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Creators



Veronique Mengue (Storyteller)

Age of narrator: 58 (in 2018)

Social status: Commoner

Profession: farming

Language of narration: Ewondo

Bio prepared by Divine Che Neba, University of Yaoundé 1, nebankiwang@yahoo.com

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Additional information

Origin/Cultural Background/Dating	The Beti people of Cameroon are mainly located in the Centre and Southern Regions of Cameroon. A mythic legend among the Beti reports that the Beti came from the other side of the River Sanaga. They finally crossed the river at the end of the eighteenth century on the back of a snake called Ngan-Medza. They fled Ousman dan Fodio, a Muslim leader from the region of Adamawa in the north of the country, who decided to Islamise all Animist peoples in Cameroon at the time. The Beti are descendants of the Bantu. They attached a lot of evil to women because they believed that evil (Evu) entered their community through the woman. The Beti society, like most African societies, is patriarchal.
Summary	A very long time ago, there was a spider that went to converse with Zobe (the supreme deity in Beti land also called Zambe/Zamba/Zama). In the course of their conversation, the spider told him “God, humans hate you. They blame you for all their misfortunes.” Zobe replied, “It is incredible! I created men and, of course, the world. So how can they hate me?” Then, the spider told him: “Since you do not believe, follow me”. Both started moving towards the earth. They reached a certain swamp, and the spider saw a blind man crossing a river in an awkward manner and asked him: “Why do you cross the river in that awkward manner?” the man replied: “It’s because I’m blind.” “Who made you blind”, the spider pressed on and the blind man said: “It was God’s will.” As they continued walking, they met a woman moving on her buttocks. The spider asked her: “Why are you walking with your buttocks on the ground and your hands?” The woman said: “I’m a cripple, and it is God’s will.” Zobe felt uncomfortable and decided to abandon the spider and other inhabitants of the world to live eternally in the sky. Then, he punished the spider to persistently spin its web as a means of accessing the sky to no avail.
Analysis	The spider has been noted in most world mythologies as being wise and at the same time cunning (trickster). The Ashantis of Ghana view it as an animal that glories in the cunning procurement of his wit by tricking other animals in order to hand them over to the sky God, Nyan-konpon. Other beliefs in Africa related to the spider are that it

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played a great role in the creation of the sun and the introduction of agricultural skills in the world. Other spiders and tricksters related myths among Africans, the Caribbeans, and African Americans include Anansi, Eshu-Elegbara, and myths about the rabbit among the Bantus. Most of the mythological figures, symbolised by the trickster spider and other related animals are capable of exposing the ambivalent relationship, nature and shortcomings of Gods and humanity. For example, the series of questions to the sky God by the spider in the myth also proves that even the Gods are to blame for humanity's predicaments. The spider, in its adventures, also makes a mockery of God, especially in his interrogation exercise.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	African Mythologies African Storytelling African Traditions
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Disability Tricksters

Further Reading

Gates Jr., Henry Louis, *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African American Literary Criticism*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.

Miller, N. K., "Arachnologies: The Woman, the Text, and the Critic" in N. K. Miller, ed., *The Poetics of Gender*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1986, 270–295.

Radin, Paul and James Johnson Sweeney, eds., *African Folktales and Sculpture*, NewYork: Pantheon/Bollingen Foundation,1952.

Addenda

Researcher: Divine Che Neba

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Assistant researcher: Ezimbi Jean Yannick

Method of data collection: Tape recording and note taking

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