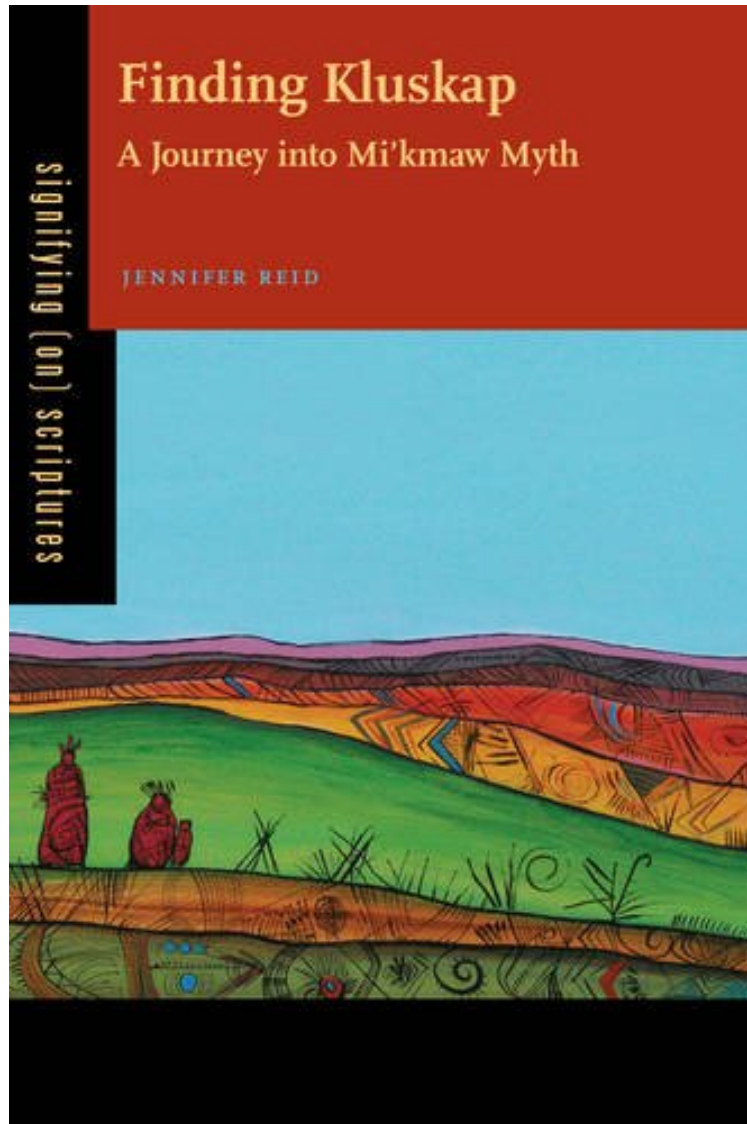


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## Finding Kluskap: A Journey into Mi'kmaw Myth (Signifying (on) Scriptures)

*Jennifer Reid*

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**Jennifer Reid : Finding Kluskap: A Journey into Mi'kmaw Myth (Signifying (on) Scriptures)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Finding Kluskap: A Journey into Mi'kmaw Myth (Signifying (on) Scriptures):

The Mikmaq of eastern Canada were among the first indigenous North Americans to encounter colonial Europeans. As early as the mid-sixteenth century, they were trading with French fishers, and by the mid-seventeenth century, large numbers of Mikmaq had converted to Catholicism. Mikmaq Catholicism is perhaps best exemplified by the community's regard for the figure of Saint Anne, the grandmother of Jesus. Every year for a week, coinciding with the saint's feast day of July 26, Mikmaq peoples from communities throughout Quebec and eastern Canada gather on the small island of Potlotek, off the coast of Nova Scotia. It is, however, far from a conventional Catholic celebration. In fact, it expresses a complex relationship between the Mikmaq, Saint Anne, a series of eighteenth-century treaties, and a cultural hero named Kluskap. *Finding Kluskap* brings together years of historical research and learning among Mikmaq peoples on Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia. The authors' long-term relationship with Mikmaq friends and colleagues provides a unique vantage point for scholarship, one shaped not only by personal relationships but also by the cultural, intellectual, and historical situations that inform postcolonial peoples. The picture that emerges when Saint Anne, Kluskap, and the mission are considered in concert with one another is one of the sacred life as a site of adjudication for both the meaning and efficacy of religion and the impact of modern history on contemporary indigenous religion.

Jennifer Reid presents truly original material—previously unknown stories that she recorded with Mikmaq friends. She also ties existing sources together in new ways. *Finding Kluskap* thus succeeds in presenting both new material and new interpretation while still synthesizing existing literature in meaningful ways. Jace Weaver, Franklin Professor of Native American Studies and Religion, University of Georgia: *Finding Kluskap* weaves a distinctive way of understanding New World religious phenomena that takes seriously the mythological consequences of European presence in Native American territories. It is a scholarly engagement with the mythic dimensions of the New World and colonialism that can be seen as an indigenous critique of a settler culture through the captivating story of Kluskap and Mi'kmaq cultural survival. Philip P. Arnold, Syracuse University: Jennifer Reid's well-written text examines several interconnected stories arising from the lives of the Mi'kmaq people of Nova Scotia. Reid describes how, with the arrival of Europeans in the seventeenth century, Mi'kmaq customs of reciprocity were transformed into the language of treaties and the land of origin, habitation, and sustenance became property that could be bought and sold. These stories are told against a backdrop evoked by the presence of the primordial Mi'kmaq culture hero Kluskap as well as Saint Anne, the matriarch of the Holy Family in the Roman Catholic tradition. Reid demonstrates how the Mi'kmaq creatively responded to ambiguous and dangerous contact with European cultures. The Mi'kmaq, she shows, were able to maintain relationships with their own traditions and, through a careful deciphering of the contact zone, create new modes of being human. Charles H. Long, University of California, Santa Barbara: [*Finding Kluskap*] shows how the fixed nature of the sacredness of place (particularly the island Potlotek) is the axis mundi that runs through the metamorphosis of cultural transformation into Mikmaq Christianity. Kluskap's relationship to this place continues to provide a sacred orienting narrative that grounds not just the sacred nature of Mikmaq land, but also the sacred nature of legal agreements about that land. . . . [The book] will be of interest to a wide array of scholars in religious studies, Native American Studies, historiography, and anthropology. Kimberly Jenkins Marshall, AnthroCyBib: There is much in the book that is of great interest to folklorists including the connection among Mikmaq belief, stories of treaties, stories of broken promises and Mikmaq experience of the sacred. It is fascinating also that the treaties, perceived as sacred agreements to Mikmaq people, remain at the center of religious ritual even when ignored by the Canadian government. In the end, the book is well worth reading, especially as a starting point for additional folklore and historical research. Pauleena MacDougall, Western Folklore: About the Author: Jennifer Reid is Professor of Religion at the University of Maine at Farmington.