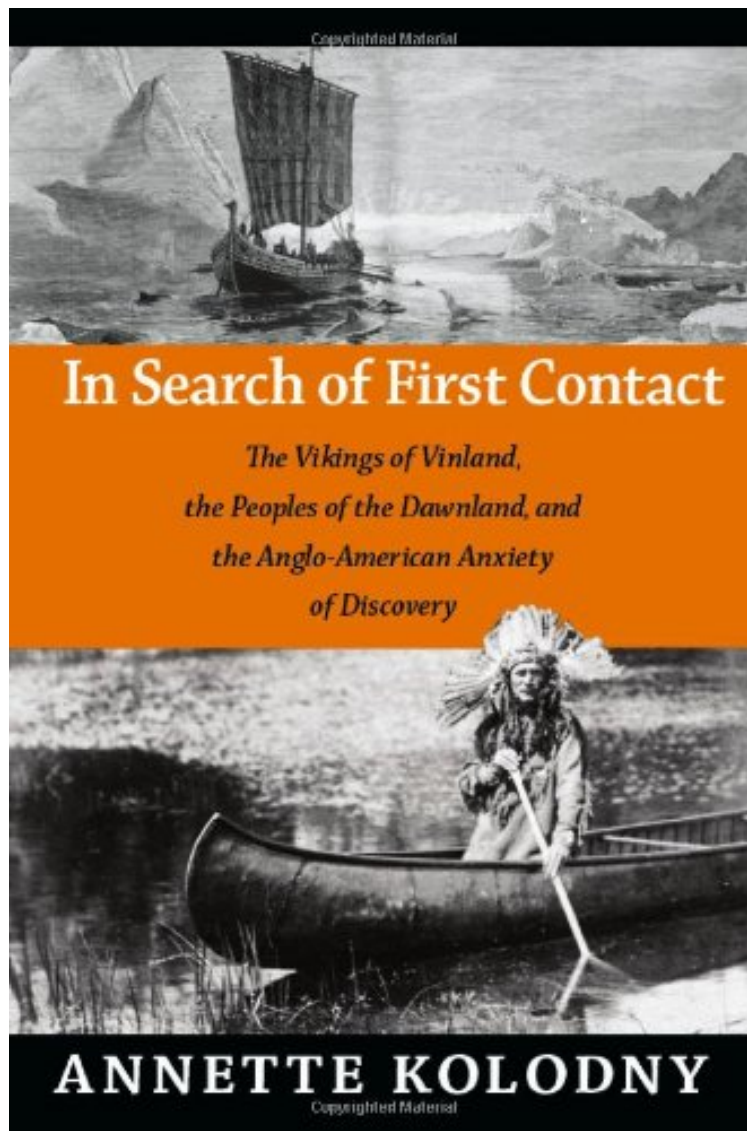


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In Search of First Contact: The Vikings of Vinland, the Peoples of the Dawnland, and the Anglo-American Anxiety of Discovery

Annette Kolodny

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Annette Kolodny : In Search of First Contact: The Vikings of Vinland, the Peoples of the Dawnland, and the Anglo-American Anxiety of Discovery before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised In Search of First Contact: The Vikings of Vinland, the Peoples of the Dawnland, and the Anglo-American Anxiety of Discovery:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I'm going to use this in a classBy Kindle CustomerI'll be teaching an Early-American Lit class and I think the students will find this book's questions and solid scholarship very helpful in understanding the American frontier myths.7 of 10 people found the following review helpful. A lot of interesting material buried in a lot of leaden proseBy UrsiformThere are a lot of reasons why I really wanted to like this book. It contains a wealth of historical information, from the Icelandic Sagas reporting Norse landings in the Atlantic Northeast, to suggestions that between the landings of the Norse and Columbus Basque and Portuguese fishermen fished the seas off the northeast coast, probably landing from time to time, to hints in Native legends of the region of contacts with Europeans. Then there is the sociology of Americans learning that the Sagas suggested that the Norse may have preceded the Spanish, which appealed to the descendents of northern Europeans. False archeological discoveries in New England fueled this trend of thinking, and were the foundation for a thread in nineteenth century American literature. Protestants used the Sagas to counter the idea of a Catholic discovery of the new world, and Catholics responded by representing Norse landings as the first Christian--and Catholic--spreading of Christianity to the new world. So much to like about the book. But ... The author is an Emerita Professor of literature, not an historian. She seems better at taking stories apart than telling them. She spends too many words on how poets of the nineteenth century were influenced by the Sagas, the false archeological discoveries, and the biases of the time. The Native stories are almost lost in her deconstruction of them; you almost end up thinking they have no historical content. Kolodny obviously did a lot of research for this book, and thought a lot about many topics relating to contact between Natives and Europeans, and about American views of history. But she failed to settle on a narrative thread to tie her book together. For all its merits, it strikes me as disjointed and prolix; I found it a slog to finish.0 of 3 people found the following review helpful. In Search of First ContactBy Carol L. NavarreteGood information that explains why John Gunn was determined to attribute the origin of the Laguna to somewhere like Polynesia. The data is interesting but it could have been summarized down a little.

In *In Search of First Contact* is a monumental achievement by the influential literary critic Annette Kolodny. In this book, she offers a radically new interpretation of two medieval Icelandic tales, known as the Vinland sagas. She contends that they are the first known European narratives about contact with North America. After carefully explaining the evidence for that conclusion, Kolodny examines what happened after 1837, when English translations of the two sagas became widely available and enormously popular in the United States. She assesses their impact on literature, immigration policy, and concepts of masculinity. Kolodny considers what the sagas reveal about the Native peoples encountered by the Norse in Vinland around the year A.D. 1000, and she recovers Native American stories of first contacts with Europeans, including one that has never before been shared outside of Native communities. These stories contradict the dominant narrative of "first contact" between Europeans and the New World. Kolodny rethinks the lingering power of a mythic American Viking heritage and the long-standing debate over whether Leif Eiriksson or Christopher Columbus should be credited as the first discoverer. With this paradigm-shattering work, Kolodny shows what literary criticism can bring to historical and social scientific endeavors.

"In *In Search of First Contact* contributes a great deal to scholarly knowledge of the Vinland narratives. Annette Kolodny explains what those stories help us to comprehend about the indigenous peoples of the northern Atlantic coast, and she illuminates the process by which people in Anglo-America have come to understand their own history on this continent. Her exposition of the sagas is absolutely superb. This is an outstanding and important work." Robert Warrior, Director of the American Indian Studies Program, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, and author of *The People and the Word: Reading Native Nonfiction*