

Anne-Christine Hornborg, *Mi'kmaq Landscapes: From Animism to Sacred Ecology* (Hampshire, England: Ashgate Publishing, 2008), xi + 202 pp., £55.00 (cloth), ISBN: 978-0-7546-6371-3. Review doi: 10.1558/jsrnc.v4i4.506.

The Mi'kmaq people today live on two dozen reserves scattered around the Maritime provinces of eastern Canada. They have contended with various European powers since the early sixteenth century, and possibly as far back as the Vinland voyages five centuries before that. Anne-Christine Hornborg first encountered a Mi'kmaq reserve in 1984, when she and her husband interviewed Band Chief Ryan Googoo about an environmental conflict; a Cape Breton pulp mill owned by a Sweden-based multinational was spraying toxic herbicides on a nearby forest, and the Hornborgs were part of a Swedish group supporting the Mi'kmaq protest. In the early 1990s, as a doctoral student in the history of religions, the author returned to Mi'kmaq country in the midst of another environmental crisis: a local corporation was planning to quarry granite from 'Kelly's Mountain', a landmark that many modern Mi'kmaq consider to be the home of Kluskap, a mythic figure of great importance. *Mi'kmaq Landscapes* collects Hornborg's varied studies of 'Indian Romanticism', Mi'kmaq ethnography, and the recent resurgence of certain Mi'kmaq traditions amid environmental struggle.

The book is framed by Mi'kmaq epigraphs that dramatize the meanings of homeland and colonization. A brief introductory chapter outlines the personal and social contexts for this project. 'My work is an attempt to describe the Mi'kmaq relation to their land and their way of being-in-the-world, both contemporary and historical, and how they have formulated this in their tradition', Hornborg writes. 'Kluskap is a key persona in my work in order to discuss larger issues such as animism, tradition, changing conceptions of land, and human-environmental relations' (p. 2). The second chapter is the longest, 'On the Phenomenological Foundation of Indian Romanticism'. Hornborg is particularly concerned about the way that Romantic images of Indians have affected Western understandings of Native American religious traditions. Thus begins her review of the scholarly literature on concepts of nature, models of human-environmental relations, environmental ethics, and theories of personhood in American Indian worldviews. Wanting to 'embed' her discussion of Mi'kmaq folklore 'solely in the Mi'kmaq cosmology' (p. 30), Hornborg deploys Eduardo Viveiros de Castro's notion of cosmological deixis and his concept of perspectivism in analyzing the six worlds of Mi'kmaq tradition. This yields a provisional critique of shamanism and animism as interpretive categories, and she then returns to the problem of Romanticism and the phenomenology of place.

Chapter 3 surveys ethnographic writings on Mi'kmaq culture during the 'classical' period, 1850-1930, focusing especially on Kluskap narratives. The author wants to historicize representations of Mi'kmaq 'lifeworlds' because, not surprisingly, 'this will give a far more complex picture of Mi'kmaq cosmology than merely as an "Indian" way of viewing nature' (p. 67). Mi'kmaq storytelling is documented from the seventeenth century, and Kluskap appears in the earliest transcriptions of Mi'kmaq oral tradition during the mid-nineteenth century. Hornborg deconstructs the work of Silas Rand, Charles Leland, Wilson Wallis, Elsie Parsons, Frank Speck, and other 'classical scholars', concluding that 'although the early Kluskap stories are imbued with Romantic ideas, it is still possible to reveal how the Mi'kmaq experienced the world they inhabited. From the stories, the readers may learn how the Mi'kmaq make bows and arrows', for example. These Mi'kmaq 'little' stories 'can be discerned in the

“grand” stories of the classical scholars’, and she proceeds by using various Kluskap narratives to explicate Mi’kmaq perceptions of their homeland and of the colonial encounter (p. 79). In the context of reserve life, Kluskap transformed into a messianic figure who will someday redeem the present suffering. The fourth chapter briefly recounts the forces of modernization affecting Mi’kmaq reserves between 1930 and 1970, a period of dormancy for the Kluskap corpus.

The fifth and final chapter documents ‘The Return of Kluskap (1970–2000)’, based largely on the author’s own field research. ‘My examination of the Kluskap character and of Mi’kmaq environmental activism in modern times led me to a different methodological problem than when I worked on the historical material’, Hornborg admits, though she is still less interested in mapping Mi’kmaq landscapes than in parsing Mi’kmaq identities (pp. 136–37). This chapter is more anecdotal and impressionistic than the others, with a greater emphasis on Mi’kmaq perspective and voice. The recent defense of Kelly’s/Kluskap’s Mountain is cross-cultural terrain for an examination of the interplay between tradition and politics. ‘The Mi’kmaq contribution to what may be called a “sacred ecology” thus stems from how the Mi’kmaq today engage themselves in environmental problems, employing both scientific disciplines (for example, ecology) and the Mi’kmaq (sacred) tradition’ (p. 179). Hornborg cites the work of David Suzuki and Peter Knudtson and of Howard Harrod in her discussion of sacred ecology, but overlooks ecologist Fikret Berkes’s important text *Sacred Ecology* (2008), now in a second edition. Two maps appear in the back matter like an afterthought, adding little to the presentation. *Mi’kmaq Landscapes* is one volume in a monograph series titled ‘Vitality of Indigenous Religions’. Not recommended for classroom use.

Reference

Berkes, Fikret. 2008. *Sacred Ecology* (London: Continuum, 2nd edn).

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