it figured in post-Cold War constructions of democratic citizenship. She observes that neurobiological and other biomedical understandings of addiction lead to new forms of self-identification at the same time as they categorize individuals in ways that will doubtless color their future experiences. Susan J. Shaw

Reid, Jennifer: Finding Kluskap. A Journey into Mi'kmaw Myth. Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013. 122 pp. ISBN 978-0-271-06068-2. Price: $ 64.95

Jennifer Reid has attempted to trace the historical context of Mi'kmaq stories of Kluskap (popularly spelled Glooscap), that were first recorded by Europeans in the 19th century. The many legends of Kluskap's supernatural adventures transcribed by Silas Rand and Charles Leland suggest that he was a kind of "culture hero" creating various features of the maritime landscape as he travelled through what is now Nova Scotia. Reid decided in 2002 to find out what role this mythological figure plays in modern Mi'kmaq consciousness, but strangely fails to retrieve a single mention of him. Although the circumstances and extent of her field research are not revealed, she seems to have spent much of her time in Nova Scotia with the academic couple in Eskasoni to which the book is dedicated. Whenever she asks her Mi'kmaq acquaintances about Kluskap, the conversation meanders into diverse topics such as Mi'kmaq studies programs at the local university college, parasites afflicting oysters in the Bras d'Or Lakes, court cases negotiating Mi'kmaq hunting rights, or the annually celebrated Saint Anne's Mission at Chapel Island (Potlotek). Reid turns her frustration into enlightenment as she concludes, as so many of her predecessors have done, that the role of Kluskap in Mi'kmaq consciousness encapsulates their historical dissatisfaction with European encroachment and their own disempowerment. Kluskap, in other words, symbolizes everything from aboriginal treaty rights and a pious Catholic faith in Christ's grandmother to resentment over residential schools and sick oysters. This is the tired and rather trivial essence of Reid's message.

It is quite surprising to find a university press in the United States publishing this 97-page essay in hard covers. In her eagerness to suggest that her own investigations have revealed something new, Reid dismisses previous research by first misrepresenting it and then basically reiterating it as if the conclusions were her own. She provides no evidence of pursuing serious fieldwork or historical research, nor have her interviews in Eskasoni been conducted in accordance with elementary ethical codes established for anthropological fieldwork. Rather than really listen to the various discordant voices within Eskasoni, she has not hesitated to automatically align herself with those of her hosts, representing a faction referred to by others as the "Catholics" or the "academics," and endorsing their rejection of (named) Mi'kmaq activists from the same community. But the most serious problem with this book is its inability to deliver a coherent response to the question she set out to answer. Finding Kluskap more or less forgotten among modern Mi'kmaq, she nevertheless remains determined to make him the fulcrum of her inquiries into 21st-century Eskasoni lifeworlds. The result is an incoherent mixture of fragments of legal battles, environmental concerns, Catholic liturgy, and frequently irrelevant (if not misunderstood) postmodern and postcolonial theory. It is not that she is wrong to repeat that Kluskap represented the historically subdued and subaltern Mi'kmaq opposition to British colonialism, drawing both on Catholic symbolism and memories of aboriginal access to a bountiful landscape, but that it has all been said before, and much better. This book would pass as a Master's thesis, but hardly deserves publication by a university press.

Even the book jacket is replete with misleading information. We are told that this scant volume is based on "years of historical research and learning among Mi'kmaw peoples on Cape Breton Island," but nowhere is the extent and nature of her fieldwork specified. One of the endorsements claims that Reid presents "truly original material – previously unknown stories that she recorded with Mi'kmaw friends," but nowhere is there any original material on Kluskap. The jacket reiterates the book's statement that Chapel Island (Potlotek) lies "off the coast of Nova Scotia," but it is in fact an island in the Bras d'Or Lakes on Cape Breton. Tord Larsen's name is consistently misspelled (59, 114, 120). And so on.

As most anthropologists who have conducted fieldwork in indigenous communities will recognize, it would be naïve to expect linear conversations delivering the sought information in any straightforward way. The challenge is to make theoretical sense of what is being said, and to rephrase one's questions upon discovery that the kind of information envisaged is not that easily retrieved. This challenge is central to the very craft of fieldwork, and the success of such research reflects the measure with which the researcher is able to provide a coherent, sensitive, and convincing framework for interpreting native voices. Reid admits struggling to "find the way in which illness, suicide, diseased oysters, new science, the sale of fish, and the Milky Way related to one another" (24), but her task of concluding that struggle, rather than just handing it over to the reader, must be characterized as an abysmal failure. An illustration of the unrefined state of her impressions is her haphazard way of introducing, *for the first time*, the environmental problems at Boat Harbour, mainland Nova Scotia, on the *penultimate* page of this disjointed book.

Another central challenge is to avoid being too flattered by recurrent assurances that your own particular relation to and understanding of these voices has provided, as the jacket claims, "a unique vantage point for scholarship." Unfortunately, this is a conceit which Reid frequently communicates (see p. 3). Even more unfortunately, it is very difficult to reconcile with her postmodern lip service, a few lines later, to the creed that her book is "at heart an essay in self-understanding." Not only is the book completely silent on Reid's "self-understanding," but it also fails to persuade the reader that she has enjoyed "a unique vantage point for scholarship."

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There is an embarrassing tension running through Reid's book between her aspiration to appear to be uniquely conversant with local Mi'kmaq on their own terms and her aspiration to engage in lofty discourse with the most sophisticated and inaccessible of Western philosophers. Among the many impressive names dropped in these few pages are Luther, Hegel, Kierkegaard, Eliade, Lévi-Strauss, Derrida, and Bhabha. However, Reid's deliberations on postmodernity, postcolonialism, and deconstruction (particularly chap. 4) have no recognizable connection to the empirical sections on Mi'kmaq folklore, legal cases, and the Saint Anne's Day Mission. Nor does she seem intellectually equipped to (critically) assess the contributions of Walter Mignolo, Homi Bhabha, or Jacques Derrida, whose central concept of *différance* is, incidentally, misspelled (73). Her conversations with Mark Taylor, Robert Bellah, and other theorists similarly indicate that her analytical aspirations far transcend her caliber.

Nobody who has spent any time among Mi'kmaq can avoid registering their multiple and very valid reasons for resenting centuries of marginalization. The conclusion that Kluskap in the late 19th century embodied such resentment, as well as a Messianistic prophecy of redemption, has been obvious to folklorists and anthropologists for more than a century. To present such reflections in 2013 as the privileged understanding of one who has finally made the requisite journey to find Kluskap is simply irritating.

Anne-Christine Hornborg

Roberts, Allen F.: A Dance of Assassins. Performing Early Colonial Hegemony in the Congo. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013. 311 pp. ISBN 978-0-253-00743-8. Price: $ 25.99

"This is a book about a beheading." So begins "A Dance of Assassins," a historical ethnography in which Allen Roberts examines the shifting social and political contexts of the early colonial period in what became the Democratic Republic of Congo. Roberts focuses on an ultimately transformational encounter between Émile Storms, a Belgian explorer, and Lusinga, an ambitious local chief with a settlement near the village of Lubanda on the western bank of Lake Tanganyika. By doing an extensive microanalysis of a single event in the early years of the colonial encounter, Roberts highlights the negotiations and struggles for power that defined everyday life in the late 19th century (with European dominance in no way predetermined). He also privileges a "contrapuntal perspective" (6) in which there are competing narratives of Africans and Europeans, and individuals within and across these larger groupings. Roberts, trained as a sociocultural anthropologist, draws on several years of ethnographic research conducted in the 1970s in Lubanda, however, most of his material comes from archival sources and museum holdings analyzed over the course of forty years of research.

Chapter 1 lays out the historical context both in Belgium and Lubanda, and the events, politics, aspirations, and trajectories that lead to the conflict between Storms and Lusinga. Chapter 2 explores conflicting narratives of Lusinga's beheading and the circumstances surrounding the event, using oral histories of several elderly Congolese men in Lubanda, placed in conversation with Storms' diary. Here, Roberts examines the nuances and richness of Tabwa oral narratives called *milandu*, illuminating Tabwa-centered interpretations of Storms' presence, physical body, and his encounter with Lusinga. Chapter 3 focuses on "Histories Made by Bodies" by investigating dance and performance culture of the Tabwa, and how dance and song were used by Storms' local soldiers to trick Lusinga into letting his guard down. Again privileging Tabwa perspectives on performance, Roberts notes that the dance of the soldier was "magically and spiritually efficacious" (89), resulting in the triumph of Storms' soldiers over Lusinga and his forces. Chapter 4 focuses on Storms' attempts to transform Lubanda by constructing and trying to impose European ideas of time, value, place, and natural order (109). Through daily routine, organization, dress, and even the playing of European instruments, Storms also performed "European-ness" for the residents of Lubanda. Chapters 5 and 6 outlined many problematic choices that Storms made, from owning slaves, to being connected to the beheading of several chiefs, to contributing to racist pseudoscience that classified Africans as inferior.

Chapter 7 examines how Storms represented his colonial experience in his own home, with figurines, arrows, and other objects from Lubanda on display, including a wooden figure representing Lusinga's title and matrilineage. Chapter 8 focuses on Lusinga, pointing out that he was intentionally incorporating and using Luba practices and discourse (originating among peoples living further to the west), to justify and define his own conquests in Lubanda and surrounding areas. In a sense, he was performing being Luba, and thus redefining himself as such (175). After Lusinga was killed, another man was selected to take his place and was also called Lusinga. Storms reacted to this development with a violent campaign against the new Lusinga and Kansabala, another chief who he also saw as subversive. The result, however, was not what Storms expected – one or more of his adversaries burned his prized fortress to the ground, just two months before Storms left for Belgium. Chapter 9 investigates the funeral rites surrounding the death of a local chief who dies after Storms' departure in order to emphasize the importance of the skull of deceased chiefs in Tabwa political succession and the use of other bodily fluids and parts as activating agents in local medicines (204). This brings the reader back to the beheading of Lusinga because his skull, even today, is among others in a drawer at the Tervuren Museum in Belgium, sent there by Storms. The last chapter juxtaposes several material objects on display at the Tervuren Museum that are connected to this colonial encounter; a bust and a watercolor portrait of Émile Storms are interpreted with and against a sculpture of an armed African standing in a defiant pose and the wooden Lusinga figure that Storms had confiscated.

There are many strengths in Roberts' monograph. First, he focuses on the colonial encounter as a process,

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