

Kwe (gway) which means hello, I come in peace. My name is Anita Jean Abram, from Millbrook Mi'kmaq First Nation. My parents are Cyril and Elder Dr. Jane (Young) Abram. My mother is a residential school survivor of the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School. I am the mother of one son, 27, Mise'l. I am a student at Cape Breton University, finishing my B.A in Mi'kmaq studies, so I thought that I may enlighten people about some

I will show that from elders; Dr. Stephen Augustine, Murdena Marshall, Albert Marshall, and Dr. Mary Janet (Young) Abram that oral tradition is still strong in Indigenous knowledge.

Compiled by Anita Jean Abram

The Mi'kmaq Creation Story generates an uplifting discussion/conversation that depicts a debate between epistemology and ontology; philosophical views of study that helps us to understand the world.

Epistemology is the theory of knowledge, especially regarding its methods, validity, and scope. Epistemology is the investigation of what distinguishes justified belief from opinion. Dr. Stephen Augustine conveys the Mi'kmaq Creation story in a way that stimulates a form of spirituality and how we should behave in society.

The Mi'kmaq Creation story begins with translations of the Giver of life or K'isulk, this is the first level of creation. The second level of creation is Grandfather Sun or Ni'skam who gives us our shadows that carry our ancestors that will follow us through our lifetime. This gives me a calming feeling knowing that those who have passed on are always with us. He also goes on to explain how we belong to the land; we don't own it. This is the Third level of creation: Mother Earth. Augustine describes it as Wu'sit'kamu (area that is flat)

The fourth level of creation is the first bolt of lightning which creates the shape of a person (Glooscap), the second bolt of lightning creates the fingers and toes and the 7 parts of the head; 2 ears to listen with the goodness of our heart; 2 eyes to see with the goodness of our heart; 2 holes in the nose to take the sacred breath when we come into the world. Which gives us our sense of smell, to smell the animals, plants, and fish; it is also a natural physiological safety sensory that determines the distance we keep between people we know, and don't know. And finally, the mouth where we take the water, medicine, and food from Mother Earth. And what comes out of our mouths are words, where we speak from the heart and we share the words. Our Elders teach us the principles of moral values. We listen first, we look first, we sense our place; our distance with others and then we share the words. The third bolt of lightning, Glooscap stood up and looked around and said, "K'i'sulk, Wela'lin. "Thank you, Grandfather Sun, for giving me my shadow allowing me to carry my ancestors with me. Mother Earth, I belong to you, you are my mother." Glooscap goes on to travel in all the four directions; starting in the east, he goes west, south, north, and back east again.

The sparks left over from the three bolts of lightning cause the sparks to fly and they land in a circle and Glooscap is standing in the middle of the circle and he's looking up at Grandfather Sun. Before he can ask a question of, "Why am I here," he sees a bird flying; the Bald Eagle lands in front of him. The eagle tells him, "I am the bird that flies the highest, I can see the furthest and I have been given the job as messenger from the Creator (Kisulk), Grandfather Sun (Ni'skam) and Mother Earth. I am here to tell you that you will be joined by your family to help you understand why you are in this world.

Glooscap discovers his Grandmother that is the Fifth level of Creation who was given life by a rock. Augustine describes her with shiny glistening hair. Grandmother tells Glooscap "I come from the stone of the Mother Earth. I come as an old woman already wise and knowledgeable. I can teach you about the stars, the moon, the sun, the earth, the animals, the plants and the fish. I can teach you how to obtain medicine, food and how to build shelter and how to travel by land and water. Your clothing, your tools of survival, how you live your life, and how to walk on the snow." Glooscap is happy to have his Grandmother with him. For Grandmother to exist, Glooscap must ask for the life of a marten (apistanu'). Augustine describes, "My brother, can you come over here? He gives him a gift of tobacco. Here, I want to as a favor of you." (When someone gives you a gift of tobacco, you have to say, yes) "Grandmother and I have to ask you, can you give us your life because we need to continue to exist. The animal says, "yes, take my life." Glooscap snaps his neck and lays the animal down. With an eagle feather, "Oh Giver of life, I am sorry to take the life of my brother. Grandfather, I am sorry to take the shadow of my brother. Mother Earth, I am sorry to take an element of yourself for my survival."

They use the seven sparks leftover from the three bolts of lightning. And Grandmother tells Glooscap to bring seven pieces of dry wood and she asks to call on our cousin, Whirlwind (Wa'jowsin). Whirlwind comes and the fire is started, called Great Spirit Fire (J'i'puk'tow). And on that fire, they cook their first meal to feast in celebration of the arrival of Grandmother to the earth. Augustine describes, "Grandmother creates clothing from the fur, tools from the bones and medicine from the internal organs."

The sixth level of creation describes the creation of Glooscap's nephew, created by Whirlwind. Augustine's description of this



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level says, "I am your sister's son (Nata want sum). I was created after Whirlwind passed; he caused the waters to make big waves that blew the foam ashore until it landed in the grass. And with the help of the Giver of life, Grandfather Sun and Mother Earth gave me the body of a young man." The young man goes on to explain, "I am here to keep an eye on you, I have the gift of vision because as a young person, I have to follow the way of life that you show me." This is an important level for our youth because our Elders teach us that we must watch how we behave in front of our children because what you do, they will do.

Since the young man came from the ocean Glooscap calls upon the fish of the ocean to come ashore and offer themselves and again he offered an eagle feather. He apologized for taking the life of his brothers and sisters, the fish. Grandfather Sun, I am sorry for taking their shadows. Mother Earth I am sorry for taking a part of your creation as my subsistence. After that they cooked a feast of fish to celebrate the young person's arrival to the world.

The seventh level is the creation of Glooscap's mother. She comes from a leaf of a tree early in the morning that fell to the ground and the dew formed on this leaf. She brings gifts that include the colors of the world, understanding and love so that her children will know how to share and care for one another.

Augustine goes on to explain how our prayers are centered around the Mi'kmaq Creation story and how our terms of negotiation with the land, Mother Earth, is that we always ask for things before we take them. We don't chase the animals; we ask them to come to us before we go hunting or fishing. We dream about them asking them to come back, we dance and drum in ceremonies sometimes pretending to be a deer. You honor the deer by wearing the hide of a deer and its antlers and dance like a deer showing respect for the animal.

"Indigenous elders have transmitted the functions and knowledge inherent to their living on the land and made clear that what the land reveals is that all things are interconnected, it is sacred, and our people must be stewards of its continued protection." (Marie Battiste: Decolonizing Education; Nourishing the learning spirit) p.33.

of our Indigenous knowledge. My beliefs and practices are passed down by generation to generation. These lessons were not available when I went to school in Truro, Nova Scotia. I am grateful for my mother's courage in surviving but at the same time I feel her pain. I can see now that Mi'kmaq history is coming to light within the education system. If you have any questions my email is jeanabram@hotmail.com.



Drawing of Kisiusuk Kluskap aq Mi'kmaq: The Creation of Kluskap and the Mi'kmaq by Gerald R. Gloade. The image shows Kluskap creating harmony and balance with all our relations at the floor of the Minas Basin. Image courtesy of the artist. (www.mikmaweydebert.ca)

Mi'kmaq History Month

Treaty Day, (October 1st) marks the beginning of Mi'kmaq History Month in Nova Scotia as proclaimed in 1993 by then Premier John Savage and Mi'kmaq Grand Chief Ben Sylliboy.

Its purpose is to promote public awareness about the Mi'kmaw culture and heritage for all citizens of Nova Scotia.

For more information visit the Mi'kmaq History Month Committee's website:
<http://mikmakhistorymonth.com>

PHOTO FEATURE

Members of Heather O'Brien's family were busy installing a gazebo on Saturday, Sept. 25th at her Memorial on Plains Road, Debert. Darcy Dobson, daughter of Heather O'Brien who was a victim of last year's mass shooting, says the lands between Heather's and Kristen Beaton's Memorials will be turned into a Memorial Park with walking trails, bridge and a playground. The gazebo was moved from Riverview, NB and painted with the same colors as Heather's house. There will be 23 glass hearts hung inside the gazebo, one for each victim. Logan Green, Dustin Dobson, Isaiah O'Brien, Andrew O'Brien and Teddy O'Brien were helping out onsite installing the building and weather vane. (Harrington Photos)



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