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References

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REFLECTIONS ON CONTEMPORARY NORTHERN CANADIAN HISTORY

IN 1984, historian Richard J. Diubaldo noted that the Canadian north "appears to have no history, no deserved uniqueness. It remains a frozen, desolate and barren wilderness in the nation's consciousness" ("North in Canadian History" 187). Perhaps it is true: William R. Morrison stated, in the introduction to "Policing the Boom Town: The Mounted Police as a Social Force in the Klondike," that the gold rush "was so turbulent and so colourful that it hardly seems Canadian" (83). Nevertheless, it seems an odd sort of statement to make, coming as it did only eight years after one of the most publicized and talked about national inquiries in Canadian history--the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry. Robert Page began his study of Northern Development: The Canadian Dilemma by pointing out that the inquiry and the wider debate over the development of the Yukon, the Northwest Territories, and the northern parts of the provinces

provided the sharpest focus for the political issues of the 1970's. The list of components in this debate is long and curiously disparate, and includes environmental protection, native rights, economic nationalism, energy conservation, the limitations of high technology, political sovereignty, public participation, and government regulation. The pipeline proposals mobilized powerful economic interests from the multinational oil companies, banks, steel companies, and North American gas utilities. The projects aroused the widest and most powerful coalition of public interest groups in Canadian history. (x)

One might imagine that this episode and the region in which it took place, representing the clash of positions on issues of great contemporary public and political concern, would linger more solidly in public consciousness and encourage additional interest and scholarship. Yet Diubaldo's comment suggests that this was not the case.

And the Berger Inquiry, as it is also known, is not the only reason for thinking the Canadian north deserves its histories. In the mid-1960s, Canadian historiography turned away from the great political and economic themes that had characterized it from the turn of the century. One prophet of a new Canadian history was Ramsay Cook, a historian at University of Toronto. He, like many Canadians, was concerned with seeking out the Canadian identity. He noted that we had not achieved any success in that direction by looking to our political and economic pasts. He proposed that we might find it in the "limited identities" of "the regional, ethnic, and class identities that we do have" (qtd. in Reid 74).

The time was ripe for such a challenge. In the sixties, large numbers of baby boomers began entering the universities, where their teachers were challenging both the traditional bureaucratic structures of the institutions and the established models and methods of scholarship in many disciplines, history among them. Indeed, in *A Brief History of Canadian Education* (1968), Canadian universities were characterized not as agents of the status quo but as "the new frontier -- the frontier of the mind" (Johnson 181). For historians, particularly those in the United States though not exclusively, the new frontier was social history. The shift to social history was prompted primarily by "two dominant paradigms of [historical] explanation: Marxism on the one hand and the [French] 'Annales' school on the other" (Hunt 1). Studies of groups, such as the working class, traditionally omitted from national histories inspired young historians

to "[turn] from more traditional histories of political leaders and political institutions toward investigations of the social composition and daily life of workers, servants, women, ethnic groups, and the like" (Hunt 2). In history departments all over America, new foci of research emerged as "young scholars,"

[e]quipped with computer skills and excellent eyes,... began poring over long-ignored records of births, marriages, deaths, probate inventories, land titles, slave purchases, city plans, and tax assessments. From these forgotten sources, they ingeniously mapped out the patterns of life and death, marriage and mobility, opportunity and outcome in the American past. They also illuminated the lives of those men and women who had been cast into the shadows by the conventional spotlight thrown on pathbreakers and heroes. (Appleby, Hunt, and Jacob 148)

The revolution in historiography also occurred in Canada. Canadian historiography had traditionally "focussed most on the economic and political origins of the two founding cultures, and on the winning of nationhood. ... Left in the shadows were native peoples, non-charter ethnic groups, geographical areas outside central Canada, the inner lives of Canadians, most members of the working class, and almost all women" (Strong-Boag and Fellman 1). Looking back on the changes, historian Michael Bliss explained in a recent article that young Canadian historians began to reject the nationalist histories, the role of "keeper of the Canadian conscience," and took up their professions as "business historians, labour historians, Western, Maritime, Ontario, Quebec historians, historians of women, education, law, cities, culture, crime, smallpox -- historians of almost anything but Canada. (There were, of course, some important exceptions . . .)" (8). The proliferation of subdisciplines led to a situation in which "the writing of Canadian history became specialized, fragmented and in both substance and audience appeal, privatized" (8). Yet that, to a degree, was what was needed. Regions, occupations, ethnicities, and genders became the limited identities, the tesserae, with which we could assemble a true picture of Canadian history and identity.

Even as the loci of historical research were expanding, the conventional Canadian interpretive paradigms--such as the Laurentian thesis, which posits that Canada's development has occurred along transportation corridors, such as the St. Lawrence River, and is related to our staples export -- were also being reconsidered. Historian W.L. Morton proposed, in 1970, that despite the fragmentation of Canadian history to which Bliss and others were contributing, Canadian history could be and could only be satisfactorily and accurately written if historians considered the effects of the overwhelming and constant influence of the North on Canadian development and history:

the North is and has been a constant, if largely unrecognized factor in Canadian history, a factor even as a void, a factor as a breeder of weather, as a source of treasure, perhaps as a reservoir of clean air in a globe polluted, the last pillar of the biosphere. As such it will enter the consciousness of Canadians. ... As it does, we shall come to see that the historiography of Canada includes not only the advance by the St Lawrence but also the unfolding of the permanent frontier, clear as the line between the desert and the sower on the plain of Damascus, beyond which all conventional institutions break down, beyond which life and wealth are possible, but only on the North's conditions.

In that I see the symbolic meaning of Canadian history. Not only in the North, but in nearly all Canada, life and wealth are possible only on the North's conditions. ...

I conclude, therefore, with a paradox: the ultimate and the comprehensive meaning of Canadian history is to be found where there has been no Canadian history, in the North. (40)

Morton's call should have led to a surge of interest in, and investigation of, the history of the Canadian north. He had pointed out that the region offered an early pristine slate for the keen young historian. Yet in 1985, in "Northern Visions: Recent Writing in Northern Canadian History," historians Ken Coates and William Morrison noted that "writing on the North by the historical profession...has been far from impressive" (2). Morrison also noted this lack in the introduction to his *Showing the Flag: The Mounted Police and Canadian Sovereignty in the North, 1894-1925*: "Even now, most accounts published are stories of northern explorers, gold seekers, and frontiersmen issued to satisfy an apparently endless demand for thrilling tales from the high latitudes. ... [N]ew methodologies and interpretive approaches are still almost in their infancy in the study of the north" (xiii). Not all northern historians were so gloomy. Bruce W. Hodgins and Shelagh D. Grant, writing in 1986 in "The Canadian North: Trends in Recent Historiography," pronounced that the pipeline inquiry had, indeed, been a watershed: "The long winter in northern historiography is coming to a close. ... [S]ince the appearance in 1977 of Mr. Justice [Thomas] Berger's brilliant, incisive and controversial *Northern Frontier: Northern Homeland*, the outpouring of historical writings on Canada's diverse North has almost resembled the rapid run-off of a northern springtime. ... Undoubtedly, within the last decade northern

historiography has entered a period of accelerated growth and change" (173). They concluded, however, that greater integration of "the outpouring of historical writings" into Canadian history was needed, that "the North in Canadian historiography is only beginning to show its potential" (188). Coates and Morrison agreed and felt that, while the preliminary narratives had begun to appear, historians needed to "adopt the methodologies and interpretive approaches that now dominate their profession and ... to explore the internal dynamics and character of northern society" (8).

Some ten years after the historiographical articles, almost thirty years after Cook's exhortation to examine the nation's limited identities, and twenty-five years after Morton's admonition to seek the essence of Canadian history in the North, the North, and here I mean the territorial Norths, has only begun to develop a body of professional history. Certainly, the region's history is more widely discussed in journals, books, and textbooks than it was in 1967 or even in 1977. Journal articles are exploring aspects of northern life and experience in close and analytical fashion, which may clearly be seen in the indexes of such publications as *Arctic* and *The Northern Review*. Although the recent work of Coates and Morrison has significantly increased the number of studies of northern Canadian history, a large number of the books published continue to be what they call "tales of adventure, courage and fortitude" (2), and many historians believe that academic history is still being overwhelmed by the sheer quantity of tales.

Historians are concerned by this trend because they seem to think that such popular literature serves to reinforce the stereotypes of the region and does little to account for the structures and societies that have developed in the North. The tales of adventure, standing in stead of scholarly history, also demonstrate the public's apparent lack of concern for fact or interpretation: "Fascination with the real-life melodramas played out on the frozen wastes of the final frontier continues to generate a seemingly endless array of popular history pieces designed to satisfy an inexhaustible demand for northern ephemera. . . . The material understandably seldom addresses questions of professional concern; its sheer bulk, as yet not made meaningful by extensive academic work, reinforces the image of northern historical scholarship as antiquarian and largely irrelevant" (Coates and Morrison 4). There are two things at issue here. One is the contrast between what the nonhistorian and the historian believe to be history. From the point of view of the historian, academic histories need to be written so that other historians will take them seriously and integrate the material and the interpretations into their works (which is what Morton was urging). The other is the difficulty the nonhistorian has in separating the mythology that has developed around the North from the history.

British historian Michael Stanford discusses the public's use of, and need for, academic history in his study *The Nature of Historical Knowledge*. Part of his thesis is that people must know history so they, in their daily lives, may "make practical decisions on the basis of the fullest, most objective knowledge" (163). Stanford focuses clearly on why academic history is necessary. Everyone is his or her own historian, he says, because people need to know the past. People acquire knowledge of the past "from memory, from records and, above all, from history" (175), and often "by the accidents of where they go, whom they meet, what they see" (156). Often information falls around us "like snowflakes in a blizzard" (156), and making sense of the blizzard of information is difficult. Therefore, people rely on historians to help them make sense of the past. Professional historians "show the meaning or significance of what they relate" in their books (187), and, taken to a bit of an extreme perhaps, what they write "can ... give some reassurance that rational sense can be made of this mad world, that cosmos can be made out of chaos" (171).

An academic historian might add that academic studies are important because they map the historical ground. They provide the framework into which article-length studies and narrative accounts may be fitted, creating a solid base of information on which individuals may build their understanding of their lives and of the social and political conditions in which they live. Another academic reason, as Diubaldo noted in "The North: Bibliographical and Research Considerations," is that in the broad national scheme, the appearance of the academic regional history indicates the integration of the region into the nation. It signals its maturation or necessity (493).

So why do the thrilling tales still hold so much appeal for the public? Why is there "an inexhaustible demand for northern ephemera"? Is there indeed an overwhelming number of tales being published? To answer the last question first, I examined the book reviews published to date in *The Northern Review*. The results do not substantiate the conjecture that the quantity of northern history published lags behind that of the tales. The journal's reviews do not, of course, provide an unbiased sample of books on northern subjects; the focus of the journal excludes certain kinds of books and overrepresents others. Its interest in northern topics means that it often reviews histories and tales. The results of this examination, although not conclusive, provide some indication of recent trends.

From the publication of its first issue in 1988 to the release of issue 12-13 in February 1995, the Review carried 154 reviews of books, videos, and occasional papers the editors thought would be of interest to its readers. Of these, ninety-two dealt with northern Canadian subjects and were published later than 1985, the year of the Coates and Morrison essay on northern historiography. Fifty-two (56.5%) fell into the scholarly history, popular history, personal narrative and biography, and First Nations history and traditions categories. Of those, scholarly works accounted for nineteen titles (of which eleven were by Coates and/or Morrison). An additional five were popular histories. Twenty-three titles were personal narratives, biography or autobiography, or exploration journals. Five books were of First Nations oral histories or traditions.

Drawing conclusions from these data depends largely upon one's definition of history, and that may be one of the more difficult tasks. Part of the problem lies in the word history itself. It means the events that happened in the past, all of them, whether or not they were recorded. It also means a written account of those events. So whether the account was written by a trained historian, an amateur, or a contemporary is a distinction that matters only in some instances. Academic historians, heirs to a scholarly tradition that has emphasized the rigorous assessment of documentary evidence and its thoughtful interpretation, generally do not consider personal narratives and thrilling tales to be history, because their definition of a historical account is "a clear, coherent and penetrating vision of the past" (Stanford 144). Nonhistorians are far less explicit in their definition; most will agree that anything written about life and events in the past is history. Indeed, most will reach across disciplinary boundaries, earnestly staked out in the academy, and include the writings of anthropologists and political scientists in their definition of history; history is anything having to do with the human past. First Nations material is especially difficult to classify, both in the context of this little study and in the larger scheme, because its categorization depends, in large measure, on one's disciplinary or cultural affiliation or on one's personal interests. First Nations material is at once history and personal narrative and much else besides.

Depending on which way one counts them, histories of northern Canada account for between a quarter and a third of the books reviewed in *The Northern Review*, but the actual number is small. This is not a trend evident in other regions of the country. As a result of the fragmentation of Canadian history over the last twenty-five years, full-length studies and collections of essays on Canada's other "limited identities" have been numerous, significantly more so than the North's thirty or so books. This discrepancy is, I suspect, connected to the way in which the region is thought of nationally and to problems created by its small and scattered population.

The North has played an ambiguous role throughout Canadian history. This ambiguity is, in part, the reason that the thrilling tales and northern ephemera are in such demand. More recently, this ambiguous role was illustrated by the way in which the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline episode faded so completely from public awareness. Its lack of importance may also be seen in the fact that, although the North has been a part of Canada for between 115 and 125 years, many people still confuse Yellowknife and Whitehorse. Acquired by the government of Canada in two separate transactions -- the transfer of Rupert's Land in 1870 and of the Arctic Islands in 1880 -- the region was initially of little importance or consequence; national concerns lay elsewhere, to the south and on the Prairies. Government attention flicked north of the sixtieth parallel in the late nineteenth century when gold was discovered in the Yukon District and, again, for political and military reasons during World War II. After the war, Cold War exigencies prompted the construction of the Distant Early Warning system of stations in the Arctic, a project that had the psychological effect of linking all lands behind that protective barrier. Yet the realities of North American defence did not actually draw the North into the national whole; the North remained essentially apart. It remained there. Development projects attracted southern attention and researchers to the North, but only sporadically, at distinct times, and to specific places.

The discovery of oil off the north coast of Alaska in 1968 and in the Beaufort Sea in 1969 sparked greater public interest in the North. It was an interest, however, that revolved primarily around meeting national demands for a secure domestic oil supply. That interest "generated a scramble of scientific activity on all fronts. ... The result has been a rapid expansion of knowledge of the north and the potential problems attending large-scale resource development" (Larkin 19). This nearly "hysterical" scientific interest, however, did not seem to broaden into a general desire to understand the history and society of the North better (Larkin 19). The Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry brought the concerns and hopes of northern residents into the living rooms of the nation. Most scholars of the North seem agreed that one of the more important results of the inquiry was to inspire a new desire in the southern public for real knowledge about the lands and people of the North. Yet the impetus was not maintained. As a media phenomenon, the inquiry was soon overshadowed by more newsworthy events; the public's interest was diverted to

other issues. In some ways, the inquiry, headed by Justice Thomas Berger, was more a northern event than a national one, despite the amount of national airtime it received. Historians Ken Coates and Judith Powell use the inquiry as the starting point for their analysis of the people and politics of "the modern North." They argue that the period since the inquiry has been characterized by northern rejection of the colonial relationship between the federal government and the territories.

Events of northern significance, such as the fifteenth anniversary of the "Epp letter," which essentially gave the Yukon self-government by severely limiting the role of the commissioner in day-to-day legislative affairs, or the hundredth anniversary of the British transfer of the Arctic Islands to Canada, the second to last territorial acquisition Canada made (Newfoundland was the last), tend not to come to the attention of most Canadians or to become a part of the public's understanding of Canadian history. Diubaldo pointed this tendency out in his article in the first issue of *Fram*: "On the whole," he wrote, "the events [celebrating the transfer of the Arctic Islands] went unnoticed in the south, which takes the northern reaches of Canada and its people, native and white alike, for granted" ("North in Canadian History" 187). Thus, while specific events in the North have, indeed, trespassed on the national awareness, southern Canadians do not seem to have realized that those events have taken place in people's lives, that the events have been part of something bigger and more eternal. This may be because the North is remote and scantily populated and because of the powerful hold the myth of the North has had, and continues to have, on Canadians and on their conception of the region.

Shelagh D. Grant explored the issue of the myth of the North in a 1989 article, "Myths of the North in the Canadian Ethos." Tracing the manifestation of the myths in the Canadian ethos, from the earliest French occupation of this country to the present, she noted that "most Canadians believe the North has somehow imparted a unique quality to the character of the nation" (15). This idea, of course, is not new, but Grant's essay on the subject is certainly the most complete; Morton presented the same idea, and Page introduced it to explain why there was such vigorous opposition to the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline. But Grant pursued the myths into art, song, and poetry; she picked away at the layers, exposing the many versions and facets of the myth. "Most northern myths," she wrote, "were based on images of land and climate that varied according to the cultural traditions of the observers" (17). Myths of the North were created successively by the fur trade, British explorers and aesthetes, federal politicians, Canadian nationalists, American wilderness advocates, conservationists, gold rush stampeders, resource exploiters, and the middle class. "In each myth," said Grant, "the north is measured in terms of value," and each "has had its period of ascendancy," but often the myths have not been separate:

Some have been moulded into a distinctly Canadian mosaic, abstract yet revered. The British aesthetic myth blended with the American wilderness myth to reinforce a romantic image of north as expressed first in literature and art, then incorporated into the environmental movement of the 1970s. ...[A] version of the resource myth is still actively promoted by the multinational oil companies, completely and irreconcilably at odds with the wilderness myths. Meanwhile, the spiritual-orientation [sic] of the north as homeland has only just begun to impact on the southern conscience. Overriding all the variants is the "core" myth, with an enduring quality that suggests the vast wilderness regions still impart a distinct character to the Canadian nation, its people, and its institutions. (37)

In 1949, Hugh L. Keenleyside, a federal civil servant with administrative responsibilities for northern affairs, captured the essence of the "core" myth when he said, "The North has been referred to as the frontier. But the frontier is more than a geographical area; it is a way of life, a habit of mind. As such it plays a most significant role in the national life" (qtd. in Grant 35). He went on to call it "a bastion of freedom, and...a permanent frontier" (36). The idea seems to have outlived Keenleyside. It still influences national thought today because it "explains how the North has affected the nation's identity and ethos" (qtd. in Grant 15). The North is too remote, too cold, too difficult to become civilized or urbanized. We believe, therefore, that our frontier is permanent; it will remain forever our "true north strong and free." In this myth, it is permanent, unvarying, unchangeable (and uninhabited). Despite the realities, such as those outlined in the Berger Inquiry, that mythic region has become a national symbol, has sunk deeply into our consciousness, and has, I suspect, obstructed our understanding of its history.

The collective fabrication that has impeded scholarly historical work in the North is not simply that which Grant has outlined, although the fabrication has contributed to it. I think the effect has been created by something deeper even than complex visionary or explanatory myths. It has to do with how we understand the idea of frontier. A frontier, defined by *The Concise Oxford English Dictionary* as "part of a country that borders on another country," is only a line. It may have a location, but it has no actual substance. That line may be a historical artifact and can contribute to

history by its very existence, by influencing the way people act in time, but it is a creation of human perceptions and ordering. So it is real in that sense, yet it does not really exist. One cannot see it, only representations of it on a map or in writing. A further complication is that a frontier is also the "borders of civilization," the outward edges of here. The roads are not maintained beyond this point, the word implies; use at your own risk. The word, we may begin to see, lies burdened with meanings, cultural and social fictions, mental images, suppositions and errors.

Frontiers are also places; we use the term to mean the unknown land masses on the other side, away from the known. Frontiers, as places, are not yet civilized (i.e., we have not yet made them our own), not yet understood (or not yet known). They do not carry our history. They are, in a sense, pre-historic. A passage in C.S. Lewis's *The Magician's Nephew* puts it clearly:

"I wish we had someone to tell us what all those places are," said Digory.

"I don't suppose they're anywhere yet," said Polly. "I mean, there's no one there, and nothing happening. The world only began today."

"No, but people will get there," said Digory. "And then they'll have histories, you know."

"Well, it's a jolly good thing they haven't now," said Polly. "Because nobody can be made to learn it. Battles and dates and all that rot." (160)

History, for scholars on this side of the border, begins only with our naming of that other place: "through the act of naming...a space was delineated as having a character, something that could be referred to" (Carter and Malouf 173). Once that was done, then history could begin, the namer's history, the "battles and dates." The space's history develops when our people write about their experiences there, when someone is there and something is happening. Even then, there is no guarantee that the events of the frontier society will be thought of any national consequence until, as Diubaldo pointed out in *"The North: Bibliographical and Research Considerations,"* the society or the region becomes "older and more integrated or essential" (493). In this way, too, the Canadian north may be thought not to have history. If people do not know that a place in the North has a name, it is not a place to them, so it can have no history. If a person's conception of the region is based on myth, the region has no real substance, no reality, so again it can seem not to have history. In the mythic North, history is still beginning, still unfolding; there is no reason to investigate its past, for its past is its present. As a mythic, permanent frontier, then, the actual region may be easily ignored. Its reality is moot: it is not entirely integrated into the rest of Canada, nor is it currently essential (unless the world prices of oil, gas, and minerals increase). Disparate northern events, most played out by nonresidents for external reasons or benefit, have not yet been linked to the national history that is, nevertheless, incomplete without them. This lack restricts our understanding of Canada and how the country came to be.

A myth as tenacious as this, then, must function as a powerful deterrent to historical inquiry, because it seems that while symbols arise from historical events and circumstances and may represent actual historical events, they must not have history because that would make them real. The tricky aspect of all this is that when we talk about the North, we are actually talking about many different things. The symbolic, mythic, national North is not the same as the physical, geographic North where people live and have lived. The first is the creation of belief, a mental construct in our minds. Historians writing the history of the actual Norths -- the Yukon, the northern parts of the provinces, the Northwest Territories -- must therefore write to do more than inform or entertain; they must also write to overcome and replace the myth. New representations must supersede the old.

Thus, the mythology surrounding and attached to the North operates as both a powerful interpretive framework and an enormous obstacle to historical inquiry. An Alaskan historian, Stephen Haycox, has demonstrated how myth has interfered with the writing of Alaska history. In *"Truth and Expectation: Myth in Alaska History,"* he presents three instances in which what the public tenaciously believes to have occurred is false. It is important for Alaskans to hold onto those beliefs because they create the conditions that allow them to feel they are special for living in Alaska. Haycox points out that historians have attempted to break the myths by writing truthful accounts, yet Alaskans are most reluctant to reform their notions: "myth and identity are closely interwoven, and people do not like to be disabused of self-images upon which they have based their lives and activities" (61). The same phenomenon seems to be at work in the Canadian context. The North -- as region, as breeder of weather, as myth -- plays an exceedingly important role in Canadian identity; our northern landscape has made us not-Americans, has distinguished us from

them, and has imparted something special to us. This belief obstructs historical understanding by creating a psychological unwillingness to expose the myth to critical scholarship. Historians in particular -- as professional "myth-breakers" (Haycox 61), as writers of what Leopold von Ranke, the founder of modern historical scholarship, called "what actually happened" (57) -- must be unwelcome. To examine the myth too closely might be to destroy it altogether and, with it, the identity it supports.

The myths of the North and of the permanent frontier have hindered historical investigation, but they are not the only obstacles. Other specifically northern impediments to investigating the region's past include the historical and contemporary ethnic composition, size, dispersion, and transient nature of the northern population and the lack of a university in the territorial North.

The very nature of northern society and its population is a major obstacle to the writing of northern history. The "limited identity" of the North, itself not a homogeneous region, is composed of an almost infinite number of even more limited identities. And the number of people living in the territories, a land mass one-third of Canada, is fewer than 100,000. Historically it has been far fewer. Historians investigating specific groups of people -- seamstresses, miners, First Nations, prospectors, Chinese, union members, domestics, military personnel, police officers, et cetera -- are necessarily focusing on tiny groups. The work involved in studying societies, labour organizations, urban residents, postsecondary education, museums, women, and the like is increased simply because the number of individuals involved is extremely small. I suspect that this is part of the reason why historians have focused on the large episodes in northern history, the gold rush, exploration, wartime projects, and government policy: the sources, evidence, and effects are that much more extensive.

Transiency, too, interferes with the writing of northern history. In 1981 in the Yukon, for example, only about ten percent of private households had been occupied for more than ten years; in contrast, almost thirty-three percent had been occupied for less than a year (Yukon Statistical Profile table 11.19). Some longtime Whitehorse residents say that transiency is now less obvious than before, perhaps because of the devolution of federal government powers to the territorial governments and other innovations that have made life in the North easier, more convenient, and less temporary. Declining transiency may make it easier to study certain episodes in northern history, because northern settlers have begun to develop what Aron Senkpiel and N. Alexander Easton have called an "indigenous northern scholarship" (22), the work of a cadre of resident researchers who "show a sensitivity to northern issues that outsiders often lack" (11). These researchers have the advantage of living close to the events or evidence they are studying. They are able to investigate events and phenomena that would be prohibitively expensive for a southern academic to study firsthand. Perhaps, too, they bring new and useful perspectives to their work. Yet resident scholars are not the whole answer. In some ways, these scholars are both less and more entangled in the northern mythology. Some of the more fanciful aspects of the southern version of the myth are tempered by experience but new myths -- such as the myth of the resident expert ("I-live-here-so-know-and-understand-it-better"), or the myth of the unique northerner ("We-don't-give-a-damn-how-they-do-it-Outside," or "This-is-the-land-of-the-individual") -- are also grafted on.

The most commonly cited obstacle is the lack of a university located in the Yukon or the Northwest Territories. Coates and Morrison raised this issue in their 1985 paper, and Coates elaborated it in a 1990 article, "Northern Research: A Proposal for a Northern Social Science Research Station." The North's lack of a cadre of scholars engaged in independent study, wrote Coates, denies the North "the independent thought, critical analysis, and open debate that are so central to the development of any modern society" (188). This argument is not new. As early as the 1960s, there had been calls for the creation of some kind of research coordination centre or a northern university. Proponents of the latter course thought local postsecondary opportunities would help to stabilize northern society, attract new long-term residents, improve it economically, and reduce the exodus of young people. A university/or research centre) located in the North would be committed to examining northern problems and would be a catalyst for academic discussion and criticism of northern society. Many felt the North had matured sufficiently to be able to support and benefit from close scrutiny. A university in the territorial North would signify maturity, one of the prerequisites for academic attention from outside the region.

The problem of the still limited corpus of northern history does not arise from any one obstacle. A number of elements have interfered with or prevented sustained discussion and study of the North's past. And while the situation seems to be improving, the whole issue is complex and has tangled roots, and there will be no simple answer. We may look with some hope to the continuing fragmentation of Canadian history and to the changes occurring in history departments across the country. History is currently agonizing over a rapprochement with postmodern literary

criticism. The scholars of postcolonial literatures may have much to lend to northern historians. Women's historians, too, may be able to teach us much about methodologies that will allow us to capture the voices of those people most cast into the shadows. There are histories in many places that will need sensitive and creative methods if they are to be pieced together. The North will be an excellent adventure for the right historians. And as the North becomes more integrated into the national fabric and more essential to it, greater attention will be paid to it, and the demand for its histories will increase. Canadians will come to realize, as did Morton, that they need to understand the North's past to understand its present and its future, to understand its role in Canada's history and in the historical actions of its people. We must name the space to permit the history. We must understand. Jules Michelet put it more poetically when he said, in the introduction to *The People*,

I have comprehended. Why? Because I was able to trace it to its historical origin, and see it issue from the depths of time. Whoever will confine himself to the present, the actual, will not understand them. He who is satisfied with seeing the exterior, and painting the form, will not even be able to see it. To see it accurately, and translate it faithfully, he must know what it covers: there is no painting without anatomy. (113)

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