

But let me end with a challenge to Abel and Coates, as to the others: produce more northern history. It's time for a biography of Morton. It is also time for my history colleagues to learn from the arts, in addition to the social sciences—Carl Berger has blazed that trail. And finally, it is time to include more of the North. In his concluding remarks, Bruce Hodgins calls for more work on Labrador, Nunavik, and the interior of British Columbia, but I was particularly struck by the complete absence of Labrador in *Northern Visions*. Dear editors and authors, in the next volume please include Labrador. You could start with Marie Wadden, Nympha Byrne and Camille Fouillard, and some of the Innu who give us their histories in *It's Like the Legend*, and don't forget Daniel Ashini who is doing archeological history on-site in Nitassinan. I'll be here, on another Canada Day, eager to learn more about our history and our Norths.

Sherrill Grace is Professor of English at UBC and a Senior Fellow of Green College. Her most recent book is *Canada and the Idea of North* (2002), and she is preparing a new edition of Mina Benson Hubbard's 1908 classic *A Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador*.

Issues in the North, Volume I (1996, ISBN 1-896445-02-0 (pb, 219pp.)), *Issues in the North, Volume II* (1997, ISBN 1-896445-04-07 (pb, 206pp.)), and *Issues in the North, Volume III* (1998, ISBN 1-896445-08-X (pb, 208pp.)), [all] edited by Jill Oakes and Rick Riewe. Edmonton and Winnipeg: Canadian Circumpolar Institute and the Department of Human Ecology, University of Alberta and the Department of Native Studies, University of Manitoba. Tables, graphs, illustrations, photographs, maps, notes, bibliographies., \$25.00. Reviewed by Floyd McCormick.

The idea of the North is central to the Canadian identity. As former Primer Minister Pierre Trudeau told Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh during a trip to Iqaluit (then Frobisher Bay) in 1970, "You have not seen Canada, until you have seen the North." Countless artistic depictions, from Group of Seven landscapes to B-grade Hollywood Mountie films, have described Canada in terms of "northernness"—cold, vast, isolated, pristine and forbidding.

Yet while the idea of the North is central to Canadian identity, the real North as experienced by those who live there has, historically, been peripheral to Canadian consciousness and policy-making. Another Canadian Prime Minister, Louis St. Laurent, once admitted to the House of Commons that Canadian governments had "administered these vast territories of the north in an almost continuing state of absence of mind." This "absence of mind" affected different areas of Canada's North in different ways. Historically, the

northern territories have been administered from Ottawa as colonies. In the provincial Norths individuals and communities have to compete with more populated southern areas for the attention of provincial politicians and senior bureaucrats.

Even without stating this as a goal of their project, the editors of *Issues in the North*, by their selection of topics, show that the negative consequences of the “absence of mind” approach to Northern policy has fallen disproportionately upon the aboriginal population. This series places aboriginal people and their communities at the centre of the analysis.

However, unless the three volumes of *Issues in the North* somehow find a wide southern audience, they are unlikely to alter the Canadian consciousness with regard to Northerners. Targeted at a more select audience, however, they could have greater effect on those who make policy for the North which, given the signing of land claims and self-government agreements, the creation of Nunavut and the devolution of federal powers in the Yukon, now includes more Northerners.

Issues in the North shows very clearly that whoever makes decisions for the North in the future will have to deal with a wide range of issues despite the relatively low population spread over a large area. The table of contents of each volume testifies to the variety of topic areas. Volume One, for example, has sections on Health and Healing, Traditional Aboriginal Education, Culturally Sensitive Methods of Learning and Research, Colonization and Identity, Self-Government and the Northern Cooperatives, Wildlife Management and Environmental Issues, and Research Policy Issues.

Volume Two has sections on Cultural and Economic Benefits of Aboriginal Resource Management, Effects of Contaminants on Aboriginal Lifestyles, Aboriginal Self-Government: Decolonization, Implications of Restructuring on Aboriginal Health and Services, and Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Identity.

Volume Three has sections on Health and Healing, Aboriginal Education and Curriculum; Economic, Environmental, Political and Cultural Issues; and Northern Fisheries.

Not only is a wide range of topic areas covered, the articles in each topic area deal with a broad variety of issues. As a political scientist I was particularly interested in those sections of each volume that deal with aboriginal self-government and political issues. These articles typify the breadth of issues covered and the variety of ways in which they are covered.

Paul Chartrand reflects upon the broad issue of aboriginal, non-aboriginal relations in “Aboriginal Self-Government: Toward a Vision of Canada as a North American Multinational County.” Other broadly themed pieces include Catherine Bell’s article on Alberta’s Métis Settlements and Paul Hue-

bert's piece on the involvement of northern aboriginal peoples on the Arctic Council.

More narrowly focussed, however, are Phil Fontaine's contributions (in Volumes I and II) that deal with the practicalities of dismantling DIAND in Manitoba and the mechanisms for transferring authority to First Nations. Fontaine takes a case-study approach, rather than focussing on the larger picture of federal policy. Even more sharply focussed is Ann Charter's aptly titled "A Personal Journey in Decolonization," which links personal experience to broad political developments.

In addition to a variety of subject areas and specific topics, the authors take different methodological approaches to the issues. Bell and Huebert, for example, take a conventional academic approach to their subjects and their articles are replete with citations and references. Charter and Bill Lyall ("Sharing the Business Wealth—Inuit Style") offer shorter, more personal approaches.

This variety—of approaches and topics—is, as mentioned, typical of all subject areas covered in these volumes. While this broad topical and stylistic approach shows the wide range of relevant issues that northerners face, it also raises the question for whom is this collection intended. The wide range of topics suggests the generalist is the audience. Yet some of the more academic articles are too specialized for the casual reader (or even one specialized in another field). While the series would make a valuable addition to a college or university library I wonder if there is any institution that offers a Northern Studies course so general that it could use this series as a text.

Unfortunately the editors provide few clues as to whom their target audience is or how they see this series being used. There are short prefaces that outline the content and context of each volume. These prefaces reveal that the first two volumes were the result of lecture series in 1995 and 1996, while the preface to the third volume makes no reference to a lecture series. A full introduction to each volume (and perhaps a summation) to explain the rationale for each conference and volume would have helped the reader see the coherence in the project, assuming some overarching coherence was meant to exist.

Problems of eclecticism aside, the picture of the North presented by these volumes certainly deserves attention. It is cold, vast, isolated, pristine and forbidding, but the focus on the people of the North, rather than the landscape, means it is not the mythical or stereotypical North. It is a region where people and communities struggle to understand their environment and find solutions to the problems that plague them daily. Such a depiction may be too prosaic to serve as a cornerstone for national identity but is a more realistic one upon which to build public policy.

Floyd McCormick, PhD, teaches Political Science 221, Introduction to Land Claims and Self-Government of Yukon First Nations at Yukon College, Whitehorse.

Kiss of the Fur Queen by Tomson Highway. Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 1999. 310pp. ISBN 0-385-25880-1 (pb), \$19.95. Reviewed by Jerome Stueart.

Tomson Highway is best known as a playwright, having brought *The Rez Sisters* and *Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing* to the stage. Through his plays he has brought the aboriginal voice to the forefront of Canadian arts and literature. He turns his hand to novel writing in *The Kiss of the Fur Queen*, a book that is perhaps his most autobiographical work. That's a dangerous thing to say in a book review, but if you've read interviews with Highway or read biographical profiles scattered in magazines and on the web, you'll recognize the plot of the novel as the life of Highway in a fictionalized form. I don't think it's a stretch to call the work part memoir and part fiction. It is also set in the North, a North we don't often see, through eyes with which we rarely view the North. It's refreshing.

A little plot: In the novel two brothers grow up in the richly spiritual world of non-westernized northern Manitoba living the nomadic Cree life as trappers until, abruptly, the boys are placed in a residential school run by Catholics. They are renamed Jeremiah and Gabriel, denied the use of their native language and are handed a new religion to believe in. Both boys are abused by priests, something that affects both of them for the rest of their lives, but they take interestingly different pathways. Jeremiah takes a life of the mind, a life of perfection, erasing the abuse and torture of the residential schools; he concentrates on playing the piano and at one point becomes a concert pianist. Gabriel takes the life of the body, entering into the world of homosexual pleasure; he devotes himself to ballet. The novel chronicles their move between worlds—between the world of their ancestral home and ways, and the world of white Canada, the fast-track of fame, the arts, the cities and performances.

The figure of the Fur Queen, a woman who kissed their father and handed him a trophy at the end of the greatest dogsled mush of his life, appears in both worlds, haunting both boys. She is an interesting figure—half Trickster, half Weetigo (a female mythological creature who eats living flesh)—and as a reader, you really get the sense that she is there to amuse herself with these boys, not there for their good or protection, but neither there to destroy them completely. She plays with them. When we meet the Fur Queen, she is giving a trophy to their father, and becomes, in a way, the trophy of worldly success. Both boys later envision that trophy and the kiss of the Fur Queen in the pursuit of their own fame. Does she want them to escape their mem-