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## New Bearings on Northern Scholarship

ARON SENKPIEL AND N. ALEXANDER EASTON

*The North is more than an area, it is a passion.*  
Louis-Edmond Hamelin

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In the past two decades a significant change has taken place in Canada's North: there has been a pronounced increase in the number of people for whom the North is not only a place to live, but the subject of serious study. We suggest this change can be accounted for by three recent parallel developments: the "devolution" of authority from the federal government to representative territorial governments, the rise of Native activism across the North, and, most recently, the creation of two colleges north of the 60th parallel. Each of these developments has increased the number of people in the North for whom the pursuit and dissemination of new knowledge about it is a major preoccupation if not occupation.

Consider, for example, the changes that have occurred as jobs which required the skills of professionally trained individuals have been transferred from the federal Department of Indian and Northern Affairs to the territorial governments. Often Indian Affairs employees were posted here and, if they were ambitious, there was usually little reason to stay; "head office" was in Ottawa and, consequently, career or professional development more often than not meant leaving the territories. Other things also encouraged them to think of their stay north of the 60th parallel as temporary: typically federal employees have been put up in heavily subsidized housing and given substantial isolated posting allowances as well as other perks to offset the "hardship" of living so far out of the mainstream. Thus, at least with respect to northern service, the federal government seems to have promoted a colonial mindset — an organizational culture — which encouraged its employees to move on, and they almost invariably did, leaving their positions to be filled by other federal civil servants newly posted to the territories.

But we suggest that as these positions have been transferred to the territorial governments a significant change has taken place. Unlike Indian Affairs — which is, after all, a colonial office of sorts

— the territorial governments represent indigenous interests. Consequently, we believe new organizational cultures have begun to emerge: the above positions are no longer at the “end of the line” but, from a northern perspective, at the “centre” of things. Employee benefits, at least in the Yukon, reflect this change in perspective; while it often pays better base salaries, the Yukon Government refuses to subsidize housing, feeling that life in Whitehorse and the other communities is the norm, not life in Ottawa. Furthermore, career advancement in the territorial services does not mean leaving the territories; one’s superior is usually in the next office, not in a distant city. The ambitious civil servant, then, can expect career advancement without leaving the territories. Furthermore, advancement is likely faster in the small, developing territorial services than in the much larger Indian Affairs.

Paralleling the development of responsible territorial governments has been the increasing political activism of the North’s aboriginal peoples. While their primary focus has been the settlement of their claims to the land, Native groups have recognized the importance of supporting their legal claims with substantial evidence of their social, political, and economic traditions. Thus, the North’s oldest residents are responsible for what may be the largest research enterprise in Canada’s North: the attempt to document as fully as possible all aspects of traditional life. Lands needed to be mapped. Pre-contact life had to be documented. And, at least initially, these research activities required skills not commonly found in the territories; as a result, the North’s Native groups began to use “imports” — sympathetic university-trained researchers — to assist with data collection and, more importantly, to train Native researchers. The collective result of these efforts is a truly staggering body of anthropological and sociological knowledge which, as Julie Cruikshank rightly notes in her article in this issue, has a practical basis and which was often collected by northerners and not by outsiders.

Many of these researchers remained in the North, and so have most of the Native people who trained with them. Many have found continuing employment with new northern institutions, not only with Native organizations and the territorial governments but with the North’s first post-secondary institutions.

The creation of Arctic and Yukon Colleges will, we believe, be of particular significance to the ongoing development of a northern-based dialogue about the North. Although principally teaching

institutions, the colleges are already major employers of academically-inclined northerners. Grouped together in environments conducive to debate and reflection, the colleges’ faculties are beginning to pursue their own scholarly interests and projects.

The cumulative effect of these changes has, we suggest, been a decided increase in the number of research-oriented people in the northern territories and an increase in their length of stay. Many are like the authors and now consider themselves permanent residents. Consequently, the territories have a new human resource: their own, albeit modest, academic communities.

These northern academics differ in a number of very important ways from traditional northern researchers and scholars. For example, while many have strong scholarly interests, they are relatively inexperienced. Also, as already noted, they have chosen to live here as well as pursue their studies here. Secondly, not only are many Native but, as a group, they take their direction, at least in part, from the Native community. Thus, many are not just committed to scholarship, but show a sensitivity to northern issues that outsiders often lack. In short, as a group they share unique characteristics that are inextricably tied to this place. We suggest, therefore, that we can say an indigenous scholarly community is beginning to emerge in the North, one which is still seeking its own voice.

#### *“Here” versus “There”*

As the foregoing discussion suggests, there are a number of differences between the concerns of southern-based northern specialists and those of us who live here. In the following sections we wish to explore, however tentatively, some of the more significant ones, paying particular attention to ways in which a new northern scholarship can add to our overall knowledge and understanding of the North.

One simple but profound difference is in language. Consider the difference between “there” and “here.” It is a matter of perspective. As one of us has noted elsewhere (Senkpiel, 1987), this distinction has been carefully documented in Canadian literary criticism if not in our science journals. Atwood, taking the cue from Frye, says in her classic thematic study of Canadian literature, *Survival*:

... in Canada... the answer to the question "Who am I?" is at least partly the same as the answer to another question: "Where is here?" "Who am I?" is a question appropriate in countries where the environment, the "here," is already well-defined. . . . "Where is here?" is a different kind of question. It is what a man asks when he finds himself in unknown territory. . . . (1972, p. 17).

Although Atwood was writing about Canada as she saw it over fifteen years ago — which was in the midst of a crisis of identity we seem to have now addressed — we think it is an accurate description of "where" we are in the North.

We are seeking co-ordinates for this place "here." This is a fundamentally different task from mapping "there." The former involves finding out who we are by finding out where we are. It is an introspective exercise, one that "suffers from the same methodological problems as its psychological next-of-kin does" (Senkpiel, 1987). But at the same time it creates problems that do not hamper more empirical studies, it allows one to cross a terrain where the scientist's tools are often so much excess baggage. The terrain, however, is most definitely "here" waiting to be mapped. We just have to dress a bit differently.

#### *Making Room for "Other Truths"*

In the world today, there is a commonly held belief that, thousands of years ago, as the world today counts time, Mongolian nomads crossed a land bridge to enter the western hemisphere, and became the people now known as the American Indians.

The truth, of course, is that the Raven found our forefathers in a clamshell on the beach at Naikun. At his bidding they entered a world peopled by birds, beasts and creatures of great power and stature, and, with them, gave rise to the powerful families and their way of life.

At least, that's a little bit of the truth.

Another small part of it is that, after the flood, the Great Halibut was stranded near the mouth of the Nimkish River where he shed his tails and fins and skin, and became the first man. Thunderbird then took off his wings and beak and feathers to become the second man, and helped Halibut build the first house in which mankind spent his infancy.

And the Swai-huay rose out of the Fraser. Needing a wife, he created a woman from the hemlock on the bank, and she, in time, gave birth to the children who became the parents of all men.

There is, it can be said, some scanty evidence to support the myth of the land bridge. But there is an enormous wealth of proof to confirm the other truths are all valid. (Reid, 1975, p. 7)

Bill Reid's ironic, but gentle rebuke of those of us who put too much faith in the western research tradition not only serves as an excellent introduction to his dialogue with Bill Holm, *Indian Art of the Northwest Coast* (1975), but it is also sound advice for us as we set about publishing a journal that hopes to document "human experience in and thought about the North." Put very simply, it reminds us that in the North there are many schools of thought about how people first got here. For example, there is the long-held view — in the southwest Yukon at least — that Crow, eager to find the sun and always devious, played a critical role in the creation of the world (Sidney, *et al.*, 1977). That Crow was involved seems clear, at least to the Haida of B.C. and the Tutchone of the southern Yukon. Others, of course, subscribe to the notion that Asiatic people crossed over Beringia to North America sometime between 10,000 and 20,000 years Before Present. Reid's statement, then draws attention to the gulf which exists between the Amerindian and European traditions.

While some researchers (Cruikshank, 1977; Lotz, 1970; Hamelin, 1978; Gamble, 1986) have suggested that there are many different perceptions — many different mythologies — of the North, we think Berger (1977) was right to take the cue from one of the speakers before the MacKenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry and name his report, *Northern Frontier, Northern Homeland*, and, thus, suggest there are two principal shaping images, two "gestalts" of the North. First, there is that of the Aboriginal peoples of the North: of a homeland. It is an image enriched by the millenia spent learning to live here. Secondly, there is the European view of the North as a frontier. It too is a rich image, but it has grown, not from generation upon generation of habitation of the North, but out of the centuries-long search for the North that began with the western imaginings of St. Brendan and Leif Erickson. It is an image which is undergoing substantial modification as we try to synthesize it with the hard data we have collected in our relatively short time here. We think, therefore, that it is useful and appropriate to speak broadly of the North's two traditions, recognizing of course that, on closer inspection, there are many distinct Aboriginal peoples here, each with its own culturally specific bodies of tradition.

This distinction allows us then to note that the "evidences" of these two traditions are provided by fundamentally different sources. To document the northern "frontier" we instinctively turn to the "literature" — to novels and monographs and pamphlets and vital

statistics and government reports. But how do we document the North as an Aboriginal homeland? Again we may instinctively turn to our libraries and archives, but we soon discover that much of the data has been organized to reinforce the image of the North as a frontier at the tenuous edge of European society rather than the centre of distinctive northern cultures.

For information about the latter we must follow the lead of such researchers as Hugh Brody, Catharine McClellan, Julie Cruikshank, and Thomas Berger and look elsewhere, to the oral records which still tie many Aboriginal people in the North to traditions of thought and activity that extend back to before the first note-taker arrived here.

Our point here is simple: we do not want to cut the *Review* off from one tradition out of a misdirected commitment to the other. To do so would be to fail outright in our task — to elucidate, as broadly as possible, human thought about and action in the North. That is, were we to represent only the empirical tradition of the West, we would simply extend rather than critically examine the frontier image of the North and thereby continue the colonialism that has characterized the development of the North.

This brings us to the Achilles' heel of this project. The *Review* can be considered a recent manifestation of the colonialism that has characterized the European exploration and settlement of the North (Coates, 1986); having taken its whales, trapped its furs, dug its gold and searched out its oil, we now want to talk about it. The pattern is a familiar one: historically, intellectual colonization lags behind economic exploitation, but follow it nevertheless does. In colonial terms, there is little difference between an oil rig and *The Northern Review*. Neither is indigenous. Both express the values of the colonizer and not colonized. Both depend on northern resources. And both have ramifications for the North's Native peoples as they struggle to maintain the integrity of their cultures in the face of the ever-increasing entrenchment of European culture in the North.

Why, then, would we engage in such an activity? The answer to this lies in what may be the two most significant differences between the oil rig and the *Review*. First, while the former is an unconscious manifestation of the colonization of the North, the *Review* is a very conscious and controlled one. A truly northern review is needed precisely because there are oil rigs and seismic tracks and McDonald's here. Such activity must be scrutinized.

The second difference that needs to be noted is that unlike so

much of the economic activity in the North, our efforts will be directed in large part at increasing the opportunities for northerners to participate in, even to direct, the critical discussion of such issues as northern economic development. And in that discussion we hope to be faithful not only to scholarship but to the place we write about and make our home.

The issues raised here can be restated in very practical terms; we must find ways to represent in print, in text, the North's oral traditions, ways which will minimize the damage to these and which give credit not to the transcribers of the words but to the rightful owners of the knowledge those traditions offer. What follows, then, is an examination of how some of the North's oral traditions have been represented in print, beginning with traditional anthropological practice and then continuing with more recent innovations, and our own necessarily tentative thoughts on how the *Review* might address this problem. We hope our comments will initiate an ongoing discussion that will lead to more informed, less biased ways of representing oral materials in print.

Perhaps no other work of anthropology which deals with the southwest Yukon commands as much respect as Catharine McClellan's *My Old People Say* (1977). It is a comprehensive, balanced, and non-evaluative analysis of traditional Tutchone and Tlingit life. Quite significantly, Professor McClellan is highly regarded by native elders and anthropologists alike. Perhaps this high regard can be explained in part by a particular feature of the study; it is the work of "someone who listens well." Embedded in her text are many carefully transcribed quotes which give the reader a sense of what the elders — the "my old people" of the title — have said. In short, it is good listening and good anthropology.

But the careful reader cannot help but detect a contradiction of sorts that is first announced on the cover. The title suggests that the person writing or speaking is the "my" of "my old people say." Rather, the "I" which is identified on the cover and which is developed in the text is Catharine McClellan's. Consequently, the very fascinating "story" that is told is Professor McClellan's; in it are embedded the quotations of the people she interviewed. The work is, therefore, unquestionably hers. On only one occasion do we forget this; in Part Two Professor McClellan quotes the story of a powerful shaman as told by a "Southern Tutchone." Briefly we leave the anthropologist's narrative and enter the shaman's world.

The "problem" — we use the word in its scientific sense — is that

the oral traditions recounted here are the *subjects* of the study. The very structure of the research does not permit its native participants to play a role greater than that of "subject." This is implicit in McClellan's opening statement: "In order to protect the identities of the individuals concerned I have not used the English names of any of my informants" (p. xxv). This work is very much a part of the western scholarly tradition, and, while we hope the *Review* will be fortunate enough to publish such solid work, we are after something else as well.

What that "something else" is, is clearly hinted at by McClellan herself in the relatively early *The Girl Who Married the Bear* (1970). The proportion between expository comment by McClellan and oral narrative by her subjects changes dramatically; our sense of the working anthropologist completely vanishes as we are caught up in the story that is told over and over again. Each version carries the imprint of its teller; we seem to be listening rather than reading. Finally, the reader wonders if it would not be more accurate to call this slim volume an anthology rather than a monograph.

We believe that Julie Cruikshank can take much of the credit for taking the next step. In 1977 she worked with the Council for Yukon Indians to publish an anthology of stories by Mrs. Kitty Smith, Mrs. Angela Sidney and Mrs. Rachel Dawson. *My Stories are My Wealth* is their book. About this the cover is quite explicit. Cruikshank, who is also the author of a more scholarly version of *My Stories*, is here given credit as a kind of intermediary; the oral narratives have been recorded "as told to Julie Cruikshank." We don't want to make too much of semantics but the change here is significant; the "I's" of the anthology are the women's.

In subsequent Yukon Native publications this has become the norm. For example, the Yukon Native Languages Project has, with the assistance of Native elders, been able to diminish further the "distance" between speaking elder and the "listening" reader while, at the same time, improving the quality of the printing and design of its texts. *Tagish Tlaagu* (1982), for example, is unquestionably Mrs. Angela Sidney's book. So is *Place Names of the Tagish Region* (1980) which is, at least in the context of this rather academic discussion, a more important work. Unlike *Tagish Tlaagu*, the latter is the definitive work on place names in the Tagish region of the Yukon. That is, Mrs. Sidney's work further diminishes the gulf we have suggested lies between the two traditions of knowledge. And it is delightful to know that articles have

already been written which parenthetically cite—in good reference style—Mrs. Sidney (Cruikshank, 1988).

Other recent publications of the Native Languages Project have further entrenched this new set of conventions. Tom's *My Country: Big Salmon River* (1987) is the most recent. And the recent publication of *Kenjouak* (1986) indicates that similar developments are taking place in the Northwest Territories.

What does this mean for *The Northern Review*? It now seems entirely reasonable and quite practical to include between its covers "articles" spoken, that is authored, by Native elders within the North. And we would like to do it without lengthy introductory explanations or justifications and without relegating them to the appendices of more "scholarly" articles, but as legitimate contributions to a single dialogue about thinking and living in the North.

We would, then, like to invite you, as Bill Reid and Bill Holm do in the opening pages of their dialogue, to explore not just the empirical results of western scholarship and research but the profoundly rich oral traditions of the North. In future issues of the *Review* we will do our best to provide—with care and respect—some sense of this wealth.

#### *New Bearings*

Very early in this enterprise one of our advisory editors asked if it wouldn't be wise to define what we meant by "the North." He noted that such a definition would help the *Review* avoid a lot of problems, a lot of debate, in future issues. No doubt he is right; such an exercise would save time and could result in conceptual integrity. But, as right as he is, we have quite consciously decided not to be too precise about what we mean by "the North," at least for the time being. This decision is based on the following observations.

In our less than exhaustive efforts to discover how others have defined the North, we have found a plethora of definitions. First of all, from Hamelin (1978) we discovered that no fewer than twenty different physical criteria have been used by scientists to define this place. The presence or absence of certain flora and fauna; the number of days in a year in which the temperature does not go above a certain point; a measure of latitude such as 60 degrees north or, as the hardier or more romantic sometimes prefer, 90 degrees north—all these have been used independently and in combination to demarcate the North.

But they are all less than satisfactory in a journal which is more interested in the landscape as a background for human thought and activity than it is in the independent or objective physical environment. Each to varying degrees attempts to disentangle the notion of "nordicity" from the person or persons whose notion it is and, consequently, each obscures the very subject in which we are most interested, namely how various people have thought about and behaved here. We hope to undertake a search not for the single objective reality of the North — but rather for its many subjective realities.

But, of all the definitions of the North we have encountered so far, Hamelin's own (1978) strikes us as one of most useful. His system of assigning *valeurs polaires* (polar values or VAPOS) on ten scales of "nordicity" — ranging from latitude to degree of economic activity — has the merit of blending the objective and subjective, of including both physical and human factors. In so far as his definition is based on physical factors — Hamelin points out that temperature is an absolute indicator — it encompasses within itself both the notion of a relatively static physical environment and, at the same time, of a dynamic human context subject to change. Indeed, he notes that the North has contracted significantly, that the southernmost edge of the North has retracted several hundreds of miles, largely because of the east-west expansion across Canada since 1840. In short, his North has receded — like an icefield — northward.

Clearly, Hamelin sees the North at least in part as a dynamic human concept, an ever-changing region starting at and extending from the shifting periphery of European settlement of North America.

While we value Hamelin's definition for taking into account various human dimensions of the North — its perceptual and cultural relativity — its usefulness to us here is limited because it not only describes a cultural relativity, it embraces it. This is most clearly reflected in the language he employs. Consider his notions of the "Far North," "Middle North," and "Near North." We are most familiar with his first term in its absolute geographical sense as the greatest possible distance one can go north without going "over the top" and heading back south. Used in this way, the "Far North" signifies a geographical absolute. It makes little reference to human habitation. But Hamelin seems to use the term somewhat differently; we understand how only by referring to his

"Middle North" and "Near North." Near what? we ask. His answer is near to "Base Canada." That is, it is near where the bulk of Canada's population lives. By extension, therefore, the "Far North" is far from that supportive base. Consequently, despite his qualification that temperature is an absolute criterion, his notions imply a southern perspective, one quite different from that shared by people who live here. Here, the "Far North" is just as apt to be Greenland or Siberia — a place a great distance east or west — as it is to be "here" or some point even further north.

Also, given Hamelin's emphasis on population density, his notion is empirically attached to the old notion of the North as the "last frontier," that last uninhabited or least inhabited region of the world that is so intrinsic a part of the European sense of the world. In this sense, Hamelin's "North" is not unlike the European concept of the West which, while having a kind of absolute geographical base, is a highly charged symbol of the "land beyond." Thus, his now classic study is perhaps best read as impassioned polemic, an epic attempt to validate one perspective of the North — of a romantic last place where Nature reigns supreme.

Thus, at best, Hamelin's co-ordinates allow us, by a kind of conceptual triangulation, to establish our starting point but they give us little information about where we are going.

We propose therefore to adopt at the outset what may be the least satisfactory definition of all, out of the hope that one of the useful things the *Review* can do in the issues ahead is try to establish more precise co-ordinates to the many norths which seem to exist without making the mistake of saying that any one of them is the definitive North. We propose therefore to focus on Alaska, the Yukon, the Northwest Territories and the northern extremities of the provinces.

While there is some basis for this — the boundaries humans define for themselves or have defined for them are of great consequence — we are already aware of the inadequacy of the definition. We only hope, however, that we do not become so preoccupied with checking our southern boundary that we forget to travel to the East and West.

### *The Problem of the South*

Some time ago several of us at Yukon College were sitting around and trying to think of ways to get financial support for a number of research projects in which we were interested. It was ground we had covered before, and new ideas were as slow as a northern spring in coming.

"I know," said one, "it's perfect; let's create ACCESS!"

"ACCESS?" queried another, "What is ACCESS?"

"What we need in the North, of course, the Association of Canadian Colleges Engaged in Southern Studies."

"Southern Studies?"

"Yes, Southern Studies. Look, even Hamelin admits that the South is the North's number one problem — didn't he ask, 'Is it an exaggeration to suggest that one of the major problems of the North is the South?' and argue that any effort to understand the North's past, present, or future requires reference to what people in Base Canada are thinking and doing about 'their' north? As territories, as colonies, as Coates suggests, we are subject to decisions made elsewhere. Doesn't it follow then that in order to understand what's going on here, we have to know what is happening elsewhere, in the South, in Ottawa?"

In the next hour or so we engaged in a fanciful, tongue-in-cheek "romp" about ACCESS which, admittedly, better suited college freshmen than college faculty. We talked about the great funding possibilities. We would approach the federal government for money to set the association up. We could hold Southern Studies conferences in the North each year, alternating between Iqaluit, Yellowknife, Whitehorse and Fairbanks. We would set up scholarships so that promising students could come north to study the South. And, of course, we would have to set up research stations in the Near, Middle and Far South. These would help offset the enormous costs of conducting southern research — travel expenses alone could be crippling — and thus insure that our southern specialists could manage to spend at least a month or two each winter in the South. Oh, and we would have to undertake a major educational campaign to familiarize Southerners with our plans; after all, they should be fully apprised of what we were doing and even be given an opportunity to participate in our activities. And that reminded us that we would have to give some thought to developing a code of ethics to which members engaged in southern research would have to subscribe.

As fanciful as this discussion was it was useful, not only because it reminded us of some of the problems of northern research but of the perceptiveness and wisdom of Hamelin's remark: anyone who wishes to understand the development of the North must study the South (1978, p. xii). Stated declaratively, it becomes perhaps the one axiom of northern scholarship.

Despite the fact that the truthfulness of Hamelin's remark has been amply documented in the literature, a number of recent developments in Southern Canada have reminded us in a grotesquely comic fashion of it. For example, that the North can be as easily ignored as praised has been painfully brought home to us in the North by the Meech Lake Accord. Most of us here can shrug off the exclusion of our government leaders from the first ministers' meetings about the constitution as the neglect bred of indifference. Most of us can even understand, if not support, the new amending formula (but we wonder why the country paid so little attention to that to which it so often refers when talking about its future). But these developments were not nearly as difficult to grasp — intellectually or emotionally — as was the position adopted by federal lawyers when they first attempted to block the Yukon's court action against the Accord: quite simply, they argued that we in the North — specifically, our legislatures and our laws — do not exist or, at best, exist at the whim of Ottawa. Despite the fact that this particular argument was later retracted, it nonetheless illustrated that if one is to study the human dimensions of the North, then one must be willing to spend time grappling with the South's perplexing and self-serving views of and plans for those of us who live north of the 60th parallel.

### *Why Another Northern Journal?*

This question and the corresponding "Aren't there already quite a number of northern journals?" are the two we've been asked most frequently since we decided to proceed with the *Review* over a year ago. Indeed, we began this project by asking these two questions ourselves; given the pressures on our own time and given the limited money available for such projects, we felt they had to be satisfactorily answered. Here, then, are our reasons for "going to print."

Yes, there are a quite a number — some would even say too many — scholarly periodicals that deal with the North. And some

have truly distinguished records—in 1986, for example, *Arctic* celebrated its fortieth year of publishing northern research, some of the very best in the entire North. Similarly, the University of Wisconsin's *Arctic Anthropology* has done a great deal to further our understanding of traditional northern cultures. To the west, in Alaska, the University of Alaska's publications have justly won a great deal of acclaim. So, again, why bother?

First, there is tremendous competition for "spots" within these fine journals; while this insures high standards, it also means, as in the case of *Arctic* (Hodgson, 1986) that twelve to eighteen months can pass between acceptance and publication of an article and, more significantly, a decrease in the likelihood of publishing first-time work by long-time inhabitants of the North.

Second, existing northern journals tend to focus on specific disciplines or aspects of the North. None seems devoted to looking broadly at human thought about and activity in the North. And, despite the recent efforts to re-focus *Arctic* to include:

... significant numbers of research papers on sovereignty, native government, renewable resource management, communications, international militarism, housing, linguistics, government, and all those other topics of prime concern at this time in the Arctic both in Canada and beyond (Hodgson, 1986, p. 1),

we think it unlikely that *Arctic* will resist the temptation to continue focussing largely on its first interest, namely hard science. Thus, while the journal has increased significantly the number of articles it publishes that deal with the social sciences, only one third of the articles published by *Arctic* since the first issue of Volume 39 have dealt with the social sciences, and most reflect a strong empirical orientation.

Third, no scholarly journal of which we are aware is published in Canada north of the 60th parallel. Nor are we aware of any journal in Canada whose stated purpose is to develop what we call "indigenous northern scholarship." As we have mentioned, this is our principal goal. Indeed, if it does not take precedence over contributing original knowledge, it is as important to us, because we believe that new knowledge will necessarily follow as we articulate new northern perspectives.

Only in Canadian terms are we covering new ground. To the west, the University of Alaska provides us with examples of that for which we here can strive. Its fine publications are not only

important to Alaskans but contribute significantly to circumpolar discussions.

Fourth, and very much related to the last point, because of the distance between the northern scholarly community—which is, quite simply, situated in the South—from its subject of study, we feel it has been relatively ineffectual in developing the scholarly potential of northerners. For example, despite the heroic efforts of organizations such as the Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies (ACUNS) to increase the access of northerners to a variety of research and educational resources, access remains very limited. Consider the following. Faculty of the two post-secondary institutions in the North—Arctic College and the Yukon College—are largely excluded from obtaining research grants from many government sources because they do not work for a university, and many lack doctorates. Similarly, southern-based northern specialists can get travel assistance to attend conferences situated in the North more easily than northerners can. And, perhaps most ironic, promising northerners can qualify for a variety of studentships but, as far as we know, only by attending southern institutions. We believe that the *Review*, by assuming the responsibility of publishing northern scholarship and by demonstrating the scholarly abilities of northerners, can help change this and, thus, contribute in a modest but significant way to this very special part of the world.

#### *Editorial Policies*

What shape, then, should a publication which hopes to address these issues take? At least initially, we propose to publish the *Review* two times each year, winter and summer. Although we considered publishing quarterly, three things dictated a more modest schedule. First, we thought it important to get a "handle" on just how much good northern research in the social sciences and the arts is available. Secondly, the review is in addition to our primary duties as lecturers and administrators, not part of them. Time is a very real constraint. Thirdly, we have yet to determine whether or not we can afford to publish more frequently. We thought it better to commit ourselves to publishing two good issues a year rather than four meagre ones, or say we will publish four issues a year and then publish only two or three.



Each issue will consist of three sections. The first will be devoted to articles from a broad range of disciplines. Thus, in this first issue there are articles about northern history, archaeology, ethnography, and painting. While some have been written by northerners, others have not. While publishing the scholarship of northerners is a major objective, we are also eager to establish a "benchmark" against which we here can compare our own research. Consequently, the *Review's* advisory editorial board includes people not only from across the North but from across southern Canada. Also, their scholarly interests are as various as their places of residence.

Before any article is published in the *Review* it must be evaluated by at least three reviewers who, as a rule, are chosen from our advisory editorial board. However, several other rules govern the choice of reviewers. Only one of the three may be an editor. At least one must be a recognized expert from the discipline covered in the article. And at least one must reside in the North. In this way we hope to maintain a decidedly northern perspective and high standards of scholarship.

The second section will be devoted to reviews of northern books, films, art exhibits, and the like. Although not achieved in this first issue, we hope as quickly as possible to have only people who actually live in the North serve as reviewers. Because so much of what is considered northern is written, published, and reviewed by people living outside the North, we think that one of the contributions we can make is to offer "indigenous" perspectives on these. If nothing else, our reviews will provide useful measures of validity that might not otherwise be made. Compare for example the two reviews of ACUNS' recent *Education, Research, Information Systems and the North* included in this issue. While the reviewer from the Northwest Territories speaks favourably about it, the Yukon reviewer draws attention to the scanty coverage of developments within the Yukon, developments which were often precedent-setting in the North. But more importantly, taken together, these two reviews draw attention to the fact that there is, in the minds of many northern specialists, an implicit equation of the North with the NWT.

The third section will be one of the most practical. "Northern Notes" is a bulletin board of sorts where those interested in northern research can post announcements about research projects, grants, publications, showings, and similar subjects, and short notes about new discoveries, equipment, issues, and other topics.

Also, while the editors will retain some control over the contents of this section, items for it will not undergo formal review. In short, it is a place where we can describe our projects, opinions, and ideas without having to prepare them as rigorously as we would if they were destined for a major article.

One final note about the editorial policies of the *Review* is needed here. Some readers may notice (even be dismayed by) the bibliographical styles which are incorporated in the journal. But we have decided to follow the lead of such multidisciplinary publications as *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* and ask only that contributors adhere to the dominant reference style of their discipline.

### Conclusion

This then is the fragile beginning of a new expedition of sorts, an attempt to map the bewildering topography of this place here. Quite frankly, we're nervous; as numerous previous expeditions have proven, it's easy for things to go awry, particularly when one must wander so far off the well-established routes. But, perhaps, if we're lucky, and if enough people think our destination worthwhile, they will help us out, especially when we go astray and need to be put kindly back on course.

N. Alexander Easton lectures in Anthropology at Yukon College. Aron Senkpiel is the Co-ordinator of the University Transfer Division at Yukon College.

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## Telling about Culture: Changing Traditions in Subarctic Anthropology'

JULIE CRUIKSHANK

*Where do these people come from? Outside?  
You tell different stories from us people.  
You people talk from paper.  
Me, I want to talk from Grandpa.  
Mrs. Annie Ned, Takhini Crossing?*

One of the liveliest areas of discussion in contemporary anthropology centres on how to convey authentically, in words, the experience of another culture. Anthropology's claims to provide authoritative interpretations of cultural experience are being challenged from both inside and outside the discipline (Rabinow 1977, Said 1979, Rosaldo 1980, Clifford 1983, Ellen 1984, Clifford and Marcus 1986, Marcus and Fisher 1986). The issue of how culture can be "told" is also a subject of considerable discussion in the communities where ethnographers have done their research. In fact, the development of a critical and articulate local audience for ethnographic writing is changing the shape and direction of ethnographic research and writing, particularly in northern Canada and Alaska.

The cultural context of fieldwork is changing in ways that may seem disconcerting to some researchers who worked in the North a generation ago. Organizers of a symposium on subarctic research at the 1986 meetings of the American Anthropological Association, for example, expressed concern about a diminishing contribution of Arctic and subarctic ethnography to cultural anthropology in recent years, suggesting that northern studies have been consigned to "oblivion" (Balicki and Myers 1987). Yet from the perspective of researchers based in the North during the 1970s and 1980s, there has actually been a recent explosion of critical local interest in ethnographic research in the North, generating a new audience for ethnographic writing and lively discussion about research questions and methods. There are a number of reasons for this —