

The Changing Landscape of Northern Scholarship

Seven years ago, three individuals met at Yukon College to talk about publishing a scholarly journal about the North. While there were other journals about the region, the would-be editors imagined something new. *The Northern Review*, which they began to call their idea, would not only be about the region but published in the region. Such a journal would, they hoped, encourage northerners to participate more fully in northern scholarship. In other words, they envisaged a publication that would not only be *about* the North, but would be published *in* and *for* the North.

In the summer of 1988, after more than a year's work, the first issue of *The Northern Review* was published. That first issue was, in many ways, a solid effort, one reflecting many of the goals that the editors outlined in the issue's lead article, "New Bearings on Northern Scholarship." The future of the journal seemed promising. But the production of the second issue was laborious and troubled and when it finally appeared, more than a year late, it was messy. Gone was much of the promise of the premiere issue. Regrouping was needed. Several changes, including the hiring of a managing editor, were made and work began on the next issue.

Those early difficulties now seem happily distant. Mr. Friis-Baastad's excellent work as managing editor has been continued and expanded by Ms. Amanda Graham. The *Review* has also benefitted greatly from the contributions of Dr. Judith Kleinfeld who now serves as one of the three senior editors. With the recent publication of its tenth issue, a special literary number, *The Northern Review* seems to be accomplishing most of the goals outlined in that first article. It is multidisciplinary. Northerners regularly contribute to the journal. It has a committed international readership. Many articles appear on course reading lists and at least two issues, the social work issue and the literary issue, have been adopted as textbooks.

Given the modest but real accomplishments of producing the first ten issues and the impending demands of getting out the next

the *Review* do to help insure the continued development of northern scholarship? What should its goals be as it proceeds with the publication of its next ten issues? Where should it focus its resources?

First and foremost, its fundamental interest must remain the scholarly examination of human activity in the North and its fundamental goal must remain increasing the quality and quantity of northern involvement in this important area of learning. In other words, the development of a scholarly capability within the Canadian North must remain our focus. To be "about, for and in the North" seems as worthy a mission today as it did ten issues ago.

Just as the *Review* must remain committed to publishing scholarship about human endeavour in the North, it must continue to seek a readership that includes but is not limited to scholars. Only in this way will the journal be able not just to disseminate factual information about the North but to promote informed discussion about issues and developments of importance to northerners. Consequently, the *Review* will continue to strive to publish *readable* scholarship and to provide, through its review and northern notes sections, opportunities for more informal discussion and exchange. Indeed, in future issues the *Review* is going to further emphasize its conviction that its readers are important contributors and, as such, their needs and interests merit careful, continuous attention.

Two other major, intersecting interests of *The Review* need to be mentioned here. As recent discussions of global warming and aboriginal rights show, northern issues have a marvellous capacity to ignore political and disciplinary boundaries. The study of the North must, we believe, be both international and interdisciplinary. Interdisciplinarity, or whatever one chooses to call informed discussion across the traditional boundaries of discipline, seems more important now than it did seven years ago when it was emphasized in "New Bearings on Northern Scholarship." Similarly, bringing together, if only in print, scholars from Finland and Norway and Sweden and Russia and Canada and the United States and Greenland so they can share their understandings of the North and its peoples seems more necessary than ever. As Dr. Marianne Stenbaek, the past president of the Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies, liked to note, the North still welcomes the "generalist." To too narrowly adhere to the traditional boundaries imposed by discipline and state is to destine the northern scholar to a lonely and, quite possibly, ineffectual life.

Given this, the *Review* is going to devote more attention to topics of common rather than special interest, of broad rather than