Northern Nationalisms, Arctic Mythologies, and the Weight of History

A Conference in Memory of Shelagh Grant

Trent University, Peterborough / Nogojiwanong, Ontario

22 October 2022

Conference Report by P. Whitney Lackenbauer, Ph.D.


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As a part of the year-long celebration of fifty years of Canadian Studies at Trent, the School for the Study of Canada hosted this one-day conference in honour of historian and scholar Shelagh Grant, a longstanding adjunct professor of Canadian Studies at Trent. The title "Northern Nationalisms, Arctic Mythologies, and the Weight of History" drew from her extensive scholarship on the histories of the Canadian North, including her distinguished work on sovereignty and security.

Organized by P. Whitney Lackenbauer, co-hosted by the North American and Arctic Defence and Security Network (NAADSN), and partly funded by Lackenbauer's Canada Research Chair in the Study of the Canadian North, the School for the Study of Canada, the Office of the Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences, and the Trent University President's Office, the gathering brought together experts on Northern Canadian issues from diverse perspectives and disciplinary approaches. The all-star cast of participants at the conference was a testament to Shelagh Grant's myriad contributions to our understandings of the history of Northern Canada and to contemporary debates about sovereignty and security. It was an honour to host such a distinguished group of Canadian authors, scholars, leaders, thinkers, and practitioners to share their insights on how the North has been and is narrated, histories and myths about the region, politics and the environment, and education and experiential learning. As Bridget Larocque shared in an email after the conference: "My head is still reeling as I process all the information that was shared and the very insightful and fruitful conversations we had throughout the day and when we were able to chat face-to-face sharing meals. It was a wonderful opportunity to engage with thinkers with such vast knowledges and experiences." Ken Coates noted in a follow-up email that "the participants' list was awe-inspiring – a wonderful mix of old and new. Debate was robust and highly informed – but also polite and urgent." He observed that the conference offered "a wonderful memorialization of Shelagh Grant's work and contributions," with the diverse contributors keeping "her front and centre throughout."

Opening Comments

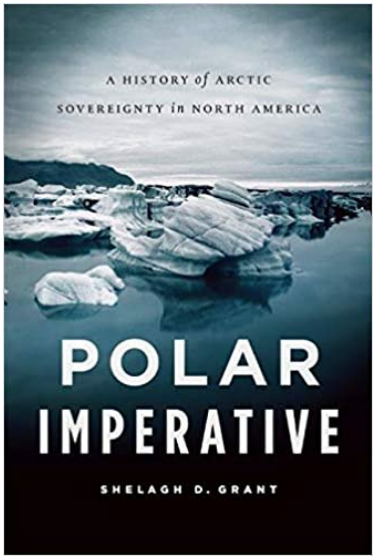
Trent University Provost Michael Khan welcomed the participants to Trent University to celebrate Shelagh Grant's myriad intellectual contributions to Canadian life and her generous spirit and commitment to social justice. He first thanked Jon Grant and other members of the Grant family who came to the event, acknowledging their longstanding and deep connections to Trent. Shelagh was an internationally renowned expert on the Arctic and an award-winning author who was a much-loved member of the Trent community—an alumna of Trent, a professor of Canadian Studies for seventeen years, a former research associate at Trent's School for the Study of Canada, and an honorary degree recipient. At Trent, her legacy lives on through the Shelagh Grant Endowment in Canadian Studies, and her influence reaches far beyond the halls of the university. In her 2014 honorary degree address at Trent, Shelagh said: "Paths are something one follows. Footprints are what we leave behind. Anyone can follow a path and leave footprints; but leaders are the trailblazers who create new pathways for others to follow." Khan described Shelagh as one of those trailblazers.

P. Whitney Lackenbauer, a professor in the School for the Study of Canada and Canada Research Chair in the Study of the Canadian North at Trent University, welcomed everyone to this intellectual exchange inspired by the work of Shelagh Grant. In 1972, Trent established the first-ever program in Canadian Studies, and the study of Canada has been central to its institutional identity ever since. He explained that, to mark this landmark anniversary, the School for the Study of Canada is convening a series of events that pay homage to Trent's rich academic heritage in Canadian Studies and that affirm its commitment to remaining a vibrant hub for meaningful and challenging discussions about what it means to be Canadian. Lackenbauer highlighted that this conference—like Trent's approach to

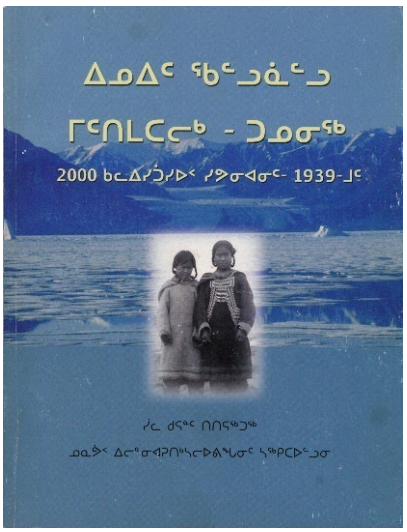
Canadian Studies and Indigenous Studies—was highly interdisciplinary, drawing on scholars from the humanities, social sciences, and various forms of Indigenous knowledge.

Northern Nationalisms, Arctic Mythologies, and the Weight of History was conceived as a sort of spoken festschrift—a collection of learned presentations and reflections—in honour of Shelagh Grant, who was a sage mentor, a generous colleague, a friend, a dedicated member of her community, and an inspiration to so many of us. The diversity of contributors is a tribute to Shelagh's ranging interests, her curiosity, and her commitment to continuous dialogue and learning.

Born in Montreal, Shelagh had completed a degree in nursing and moved to Peterborough in 1974 after her husband, Jon, joined Quaker Oats. Her love of history drew her to Trent, where she completed an undergraduate degree in History and Canadian Studies and went on to complete her master's in History. Expanding her Trent master's thesis, Grant wrote her first book, *Sovereignty or Security? Government Policy in the Canadian North, 1936–1950.* Other esteemed works include *Arctic Justice: On Trial for Murder, Pond Inlet, 1923*, and ultimately her internationally acclaimed *Polar Imperative: A History of Arctic Sovereignty in North America*. It was the culmination of thirty years of research, based on archival materials that fill dozens of binders and a vast personal library of books. *Polar Imperative* won the Lionel Gelber Prize for the best English-language book on global affairs, the J.W. Dafoe Book Prize for non-fiction that contributes to the understanding of Canada and its place in the world, and the Canadian Authors Association Lela Common Award for Canadian History. Lackenbauer noted that it is essential reading for anyone in the field of Northern Canadian history—and he expects it will remain so for generations.



Lackenbauer also explained that Shelagh's other honours are too numerous to recount in full, instead offering a few highlights. In 1997, she was honoured with the Northern Science Award—the first woman historian to be awarded this medal. In 2011, she was appointed Fellow of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society (RCGS). The following year, she was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal. She received an Honorary Doctor of Letters (D.Litt.) from Trent University in 2014, the Royal Canadian Geographical Society HMS Erebus Medal and the Canadian Governor General's Polar Medal in 2015, and the RCGS Bernier Medal two years later.



The accolades were well deserved, and her influence and impact extend beyond the walls of the academy and the research community. Her history of Pond Inlet/Mittimatalik was based on interviews with Elders that she conducted in the Qikiqtani region. It was her response to what she saw as distinctly different histories of the Arctic: one focusing on *qallunaat* experiences, the other on Inuit in which Inuit Elders, following their oral tradition, passed down their history in the form of stories and songs. Shelagh's work sought to bridge this cross-cultural understanding. She wrote that "the best and most comprehensive history of the Inuit people may someday be written by an Inuk, who better understands the cultural nuances and emotional ties that link their present lives to the past. In the interim, academic historians must ask themselves whether they have a responsibility to help bridge the cultural divide by adding an Inuit voice to their writing." This she did.

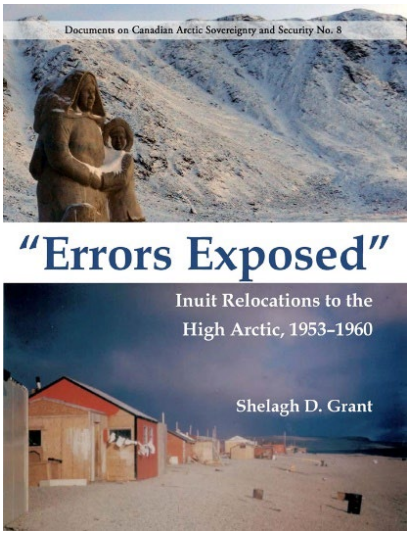
Shelagh also emphasized how important it is that scholars writing about the North actually visit the places and peoples that they are writing about. Recognizing that, for many young scholars, the costs of Northern research can be prohibitive, she established the Shelagh Grant Endowment in Canadian Studies at Trent University. (Amongst the conference audience members were recipients of her generosity.)

Shelagh's many contributions to scholarship and to the intellectual life of our country, and her many friendships across Inuit Nunangat, ensure a lasting legacy with the many Canadians whom she touched and inspired with her passion, adventurous and generous spirit, and commitment to social justice. Above all else, her proudest legacy is her family—her husband, Jon, their three children, and their six grandchildren, whom she loved and celebrated so much.

Jon Grant, a former chairman and chief executive officer of Quaker Oats Company of Canada and one of the first Canadian business leaders to embrace the concept of environmentally conscious decision making as "the right thing to do," was made an Officer of the Order of Canada in 2002. He expressed his gratitude for the conference and emphasized his wife's love for research and writing. In the course of her career, she became one of Canada's most acclaimed experts on the Arctic, delivering papers and lectures in Canada and internationally. Her main contribution, however, was through her writing, with several of her books winning prestigious awards. Her favourite work, however, might be her least-known book: *Mittimatalik: The History of Pond Inlet*, which she had

translated into Inuktitut for the community. This work reflected her deep commitment to Inuit oral history and her desire to make her work relevant to the people who shared their stories—and with whom she shared friendships. Jon offered particular thanks to Whit Fraser and Mary Simon for attending the conference, recounting stories of some of the adventures that their families enjoyed together, as well as celebrating and highly recommending Fraser's recent novel, *Cold Edge of Heaven*. Jon also noted how much Shelagh would appreciate the diverse expertise of the people who had come together inspired by her work.

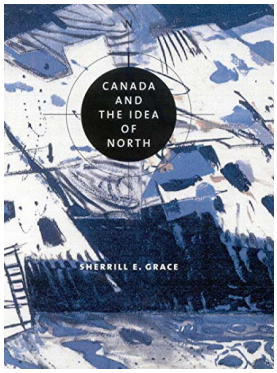
Inuit leader Rosemarie Kuptana, O.C., expressed her fond memories of Shelagh Grant and deep "respect [for] her efforts and her record of respectfully treating Inuit knowledge, expertise, and oral histories as real, and as relevant as anything non-Indigenous people might regard as knowledge or facts in archives or academia." She highlighted Grant's work on the High Arctic exiles (*"Errors Exposed"*) and her book *Polar Imperatives*, but she also stressed that she knew of Grant's respectful approach to Inuit knowledge "from my own conversations with her." Kuptana reiterated how Inuit have their "own laws, knowledge traditions, culture, and language, all of which inform our relationship to the land and waters." She also emphasized how Inuit have their own values respecting the governance of people as well as the land and maritime environments. "Our knowledge traditions and knowledge transmission system inform our governance system and values," Kuptana explained, "and have relevance on the global stage."



Narrating North

The first panel featured a distinguished group of panelists from various academic backgrounds to reflect on narratives and the narrativization of the Canadian North. Canadian Studies Professor Emeritus John Wadland (Trent University), the moderator, recounted how Shelagh first wandered into his office in 1975 and asked if she could take his course. They enjoyed "a great big friendship since that time," and he expressed his amazement at how someone with such a high level of humility eventually went on to be recognized with an honorary doctorate from Trent. "More than any other historian in the past two decades, [Shelagh Grant] has re-invigorated interest in the history of the Arctic through producing gripping narratives as well as powerful syntheses which connect the stories and the lives of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples who have shaped the history of Canada's

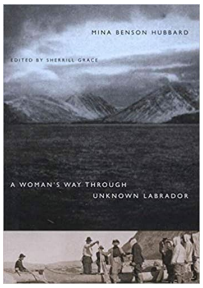
north," Wadland, the previously anonymous nominator of Grant for her D.Litt., noted in 2014.[1] She also provided poignant analyses of narratives that framed Canadian understandings of the region. "Since the time of Confederation, many Canadians have looked upon their north as a symbol of identity and destiny," Shelagh wrote in 1989. "Often referred to collectively as the 'myth of the north,' differing perceptions of the northern wilderness have caused succeeding generations to attach special meaning to the idea of north in relation to national identity."[2]



Joining by Zoom from Victoria, UBC University Killam Professor Emerita Sherrill Grace, who specializes in twentieth-century Canadian literature and the arts, spoke on the "image of North" as a concept of imagination and reflected on how Northern research has taught her, changed her, and made her a better person. Emphasizing how essential it is to travel to the North oneself to understand it as a homeland, she highlighted the diversity of the region, from its soapstone to the languages spoken. She shared stories of first smelling muskox when following in Sir John Franklin's footsteps, blowing four tires on the Dempster Highway, and flying over the labyrinthian Mackenzie Delta, where local people can somehow navigate their way home. She also celebrated how the North is "writing back," spotlighting two "magical gifts": Tomson Highway's

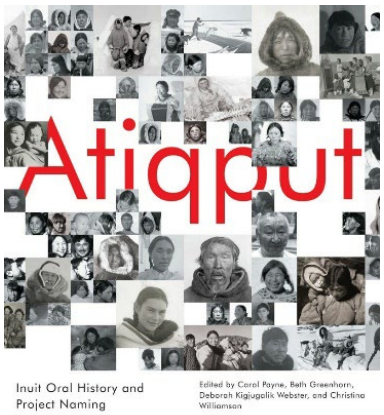
[1] When introducing the session, Wadland admitted that he had written the tribute which he then delivered at convocation.

[2] Shelagh Grant, "Myths of the North in the Canadian Ethos," *Northern Review* 3/4 (Summer/Winter 1989): 15-41.

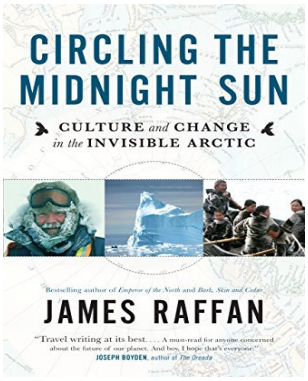


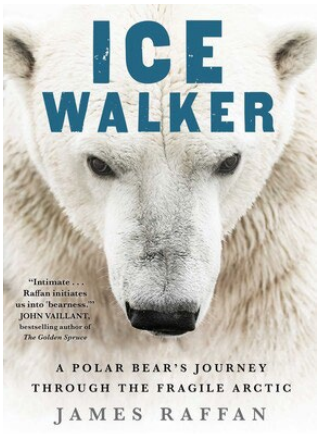
Kiss of the Fur Queen and Mina Benson Hubbard's *A Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador*. She concluded with reflections on how "the North has come South to us," through Governor General Mary Simon, Norma Dunning's works, Tanya Tagaq's songs and poetry, the discovery of Franklin's lost ships, the baby woolly mammoth recently recovered from the permafrost in the Klondike, and Chief of the Defence Staff General Wayne Eyre's recent commentary in the *Globe and Mail* about the complexity of Arctic security.

Archaeologist Deborah Kigjugalik Webster, the curator of heritage collections with the Government of Nunavut and author of two children's books as well as co-editor of the recently released *Atiqput: Inuit Oral History and Project Naming*, highlighted how in the past Inuit were the *objects* of stories, but now there are projects *by* Inuit that are narrating our North. She noted films such as *Atanarjuat* by Zacharias Kunuk (which won six Genie Awards), *Martha of the North* about Martha Flaherty and the High Arctic relocations, and *Angry Inuk* by Alethea Arnaquq-Baril defending the Inuit seal hunt against misrepresentations in the press and by environmental activists. She also spotlighted Inuit TV (an Inuit-language network), isuma.ca, the work of the Qikiqtani Truth Commission, and Inhabit Media (the first Inuit-owned publishing company in the Canadian Arctic). Webster celebrated initiatives through which Inuit are taking back their history and mobilizing the many stories, and many voices, throughout Inuit Nunangat, such as Project Naming through the Library and Archives Canada.

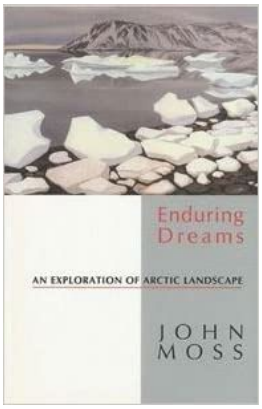


Acclaimed author and speaker James Raffan, who Canadian Geographic identified in 2020 as one of the "90 most influential explorers in the nation's recorded history," has travelled the Circumpolar North by seemingly every mode of transportation, from canoe, to dog team, to nuclear-powered icebreaker. His stories evoke a brilliant sense of place and people—as well as non-human beings. Raffan's spellbinding multimedia presentation on his creative non-fiction book *Ice Walker: A Polar Bear's Journey Through the Fragile Arctic*, based upon his field observations, explained his own path from marine biologist to someone who, learning through the soles of his feet and the work of his hands, has come to appreciate how science is a powerful tool but really represents only one way of appreciating the world. He explained several dimensions of "bearness"—narrative, nutritional, cultural, psychological, visual, aural, olfactory, spiritual, experiential, linguistic, functional, and geographic—that have inspired him to ask whether bears and humans might represent two sides of the same ontological coin. By portraying the life cycle of a female polar bear in southwestern Hudson Bay, he narrated the natural and cultural histories of the bear, the oceanography of the vast inland sea she inhabits, the

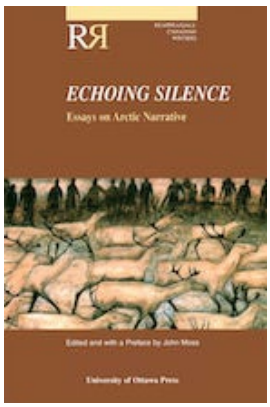




morphology and behaviour of the ice, and the seasonal cycle. Based on his four decades of Arctic learning and experience, Raffan noted that what counts as "truth" differs from what he learned in the academy. We are "the bear," he observed, living "in a cone of light as we are driving down the road of our lives." It is not about Southerners taking their light to the North, he reflected, but about "basking in the light of the people in the North."

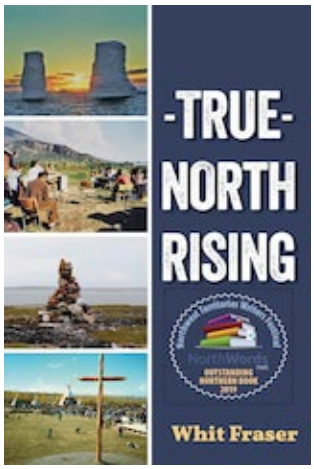


John Moss, a professor emeritus at the University of Ottawa, is the author of more than twenty books spanning Canadian culture, Arctic exploration, experimental literature—and now crime novels. Reflecting on *Enduring Dreams: An Exploration of Arctic Landscape* and his edited collection *Echoing Silence: Essays on Arctic Narrative,* he demonstrated how the discipline of geography and representations of landscape are culturally mediated and therefore biased. He suggested that history is geography in Canada, and that geography "defines the Arctic relative to Greenwich." Encouraging us to acknowledge our subjectivity in characteristically poetic language, he explained how even "before it was 'Arctic' it was there—there before words." Narrative



defies time and tries to make "present" in our minds. As anthropologist Diamond Jenness observed a century ago, Inuit mark time by the changing seasons, not days or months. Moss also reflected on the different words for and meanings of "North" in different languages—and how, "from Toronto, everything is 'north' in Canada." He quoted various definitions of "Arctic" and of "igloo," and how Victorian descriptions of the latter reveal bias about what constitutes a house or a home. In this sense, language and narrative is the problem, with outsiders often describing the Inuit homeland in terms of what it is not, rather than what it is, and writing themselves into the landscape while omitting the people who live there.

Canadian journalist, broadcaster, and author His Excellency Whit Fraser, the viceregal consort of Canada, began with the idea that "we live in a changed Canada." Starting with a moment of silence to think about how the narrative of our country has changed since the discovery of unmarked graves near the Kamloops residential school in 2020, Fraser suggested that Canadians have received a "wake-up call" with respect to Indigenous peoples and the country's colonial legacies. He reminisced about his experiences with the famous Berger Inquiry in the 1970s, as well as the four Indigenous broadcasters (who were "ahead of many [people with] Ph.D.s in their knowledge of the land") with whom he worked at the CBC in covering its proceedings—stories about whom he recounts in vibrant detail in his book *True North Rising: My Fifty-year Journey with the Inuit and Dene Leaders who Transformed Canada's North*. He lamented how, even today, there is little about the North in our history books, despite the Berger Inquiry, dramatic constitutional developments, the acknowledgement of Indigenous rights, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and the Truth and Reconciliation

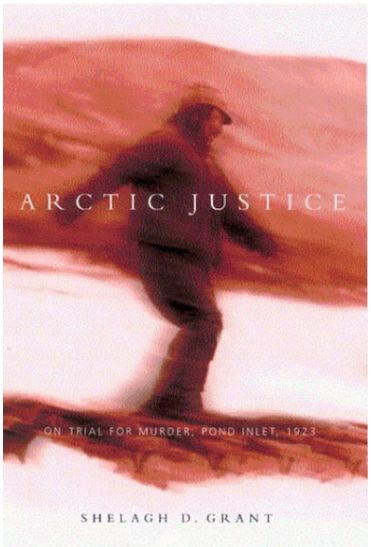


Commission of Canada's ninety-four calls to action. There is still much to document about Indigenous treaties, the people who signed them, and what they meant and mean. "We are all treaty people," Fraser emphasized, because they were signed on behalf of all of us. He told the audience that he believes us to be on the verge of reconciliation, which will come through education. He ended with a reflection on his many discussions with his friend Shelagh Grant over the years, and her commitment to research and teaching.

Histories of the Canadian North

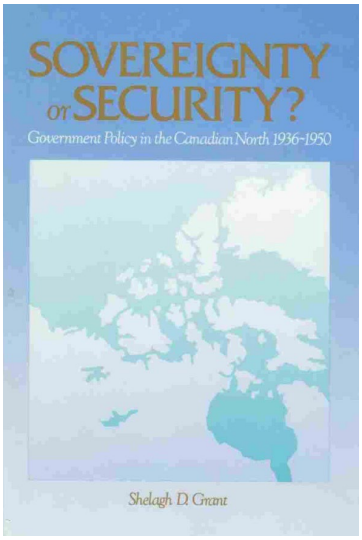
Participants in the second panel, moderated by Deborah Kigjugalik Webster, were asked to reflect on Shelagh Grant's contributions to our understanding of the history and historiography of the Canadian North. In addition to her award-winning books, Grant published many articles and book chapters on historiography and Northern identities, government practices, and the interplay between sovereignty and nationalism, as well as written narratives and oral traditions. "Canadian academic historians must seriously consider what role they wish to play, if any, in the writing of Inuit history," Grant wrote in 2001. "Without an Inuit voice telling their story, there can be no true representation of Inuit history. Yet without the active participation of the Canadian historical profession, it will be difficult to incorporate Inuit history into the fabric of Canadian social history. The challenges are many—as are the opportunities and rewards."[3]

P. Whitney Lackenbauer, Professor of Canadian Studies and Canada Research Chair (Tier 1) in the Study of the Canadian North at Trent University, dedicated his talk to "Shelagh Grant and the Historiography of the Canadian North," focusing on three particular themes in her work: sovereignty, security, and state practice; colonial justice and multi-vocality; and myths of the North. He framed the debate on sovereignty and/or security that Grant launched with her landmark 1989 book *Sovereignty or Security?*, which alleged that Canada sacrificed sovereignty in the interests of continental security. Subsequent generations of scholars have taken different sides in this debate, but Grant's arguments remain central. He also noted Grant's important contributions to the debate over the High Arctic relocations, with her work laying the groundwork for the Government of Canada's 2010 official apology. Lackenbauer emphasized that Grant insisted on the primacy of evidence and critiqued those who arrived at different conclusions on the basis of what she described as their flawed "methodology, limited research, misrepresentations, and errors in interpretation" (to quote a letter that she wrote in 1992). He also celebrated her book *Arctic Justice* for its innovative approach to



[3] Shelagh Grant, "Inuit History in the Next Millennium: Challenges and Rewards," in *Northern Visions: New Perspectives on the North in Canadian History*, eds. Kerry Abel and Ken S. Coates (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2001).

incorporating critical readings of archival material alongside Inuit oral history, with the latter factoring heavily into her assessment of colonial legal proceedings—and serving as a model for subsequent historians seeking to bring Inuit voices into their analysis and writing. Finally, he spoke to the pervasiveness of myths about Canada as a Northern nation, as well as the continuing political rhetoric about the Arctic as "the next frontier" (Prime Minister Stephen Harper in 2007) and Canada's "northern soul" (Parliamentary Secretary Pamela Goldsmith-Jones in 2016).



Elizabeth (Betsy) Elliot-Meisel, an associate professor of history at Creighton University and the inaugural Trent University Fulbright Research Chair in Canadian Studies in 2022, also reflected on the balance between sovereignty and security through a continental lens. She highlighted how Grant wrote *Sovereignty or Security?* "as a *Canadian* in the Cold War era of US president Ronald Reagan, seen by many Canadians—and many Americans—as dangerously escalating Cold War tensions," reminding the audience that "we are all part-and-parcel of the era we live in, and no matter how dispassionate we hope to be, we cannot erase that context." By contrast, Elliot-Meisel wrote her book *Arctic Diplomacy* "as an *American* in the post-Cold War era of US president Bill Clinton," framing how the two North American allies worked together "to effect continental security for *both* the US and

Canada … within the perceived and extant threats of the Cold War." She considered the panel theme to be "as much a look to the past as a blueprint for the future," calling for a more nuanced assessment of the history of Canadian-American Arctic relations. In contrast to Shelagh's work on "Northern nationalists" who tended to have anti-American viewpoints, Elliot-Meisel's current research focuses on "Canadian nationalists who worked with the Americans during the Cold War to secure both Canadian and continental interests and security." She highlighted Captain Thomas C. Pullen (1918-1990), who, "in and out of uniform, … exhibited a fair and balanced appraisal of the US in the waters of Canada's High Arctic during the Cold War while at the same time ceaselessly lobbying the Canadian government to take its rightful place in the world as an Arctic power and decrease its reliance on the US in the North." Pullen encouraged Canada to assume a leadership role as a pre-eminent Arctic power, but he never had "the time or patience for empty rhetoric or blaming other countries" for Canada's lack of progress in this direction. Through this story and others, Elliot-Meisel seeks to "redefine Canadian nationalism as pro-Canadian, avoiding facile anti-Americanism, and plac[ing] the responsibility for Canada's role in the Arctic squarely where it belongs—on Canada."

Ken Coates, Professor and Canada Research Chair (Tier 1) in Regional Innovation with the Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy at the University of Saskatchewan, emphasized an urgent need for scholars to reconsider how they engage with the Canadian public and frame Northern issues. For a long time, Coates observed, Northern history was marginal to national debates. Although the scholarship is now more Northern-centric, public audiences in Southern Canada include a lot of "armchair explorers" and people more interested in nationalist discourses than what is actually happening in the North. Are Northerners paying attention to our scholarship? Do our current lines of scholarly production make sense? Coates noted that while the number of academic publications has increased, readership has declined and few policymakers pay attention to academics. How can we increase Canadian interest in our histories (beyond the explorer narratives)? He pointed to the need for more work on North-South and rural-urban divides, historical and contemporary developments in the provincial norths and subarctic regions (such as the Yukon), and distinct regional histories. He also promoted new formats of disseminating our research findings. The challenge is profound, Coates concluded, but requires "good scholarship and good outreach"—and Shelagh Grant offers insights into what this looks like through her hard fights to secure grants for her Arctic research and her concerted efforts to gather and promote Northern voices.

Peter Kikkert, the Irving Shipbuilding Chair in Arctic Policy at the Brian Mulroney Institute of Government and an assistant professor in the Public Policy and Governance program at St. Francis Xavier University, held up Shelagh Grant as an example of how a scholar can make their work accessible to a broad audience and "embrace public history." He first engaged with Grant's work as a senior undergraduate and then graduate student. "We spent a lot of time reading her work and exploring her ideas in Whitney's class: her community-collaborative research, her engagement with oral history and Inuit knowledge, how she brought this information into dialogue with government records, and, of course, we debated *Sovereignty or Security?*, and how this work fit with the findings of Coates and [William] Morrison, Betsy, and others," Kikkert noted. "Moving forward, her ideas, questions, conclusions, approach continued to intrigue and guide me, and form a foundation to my study of Northern history and, in particular, Canadian-American relations in the Arctic. What is sovereignty? What is security? What is stewardship? How do we get at them? How do historic understandings of these questions shape present policies?" These core questions informed the work of many of the scholars at the conference, and the approach that Grant took in *Polar Imperative* to comparing government policy across the North American Arctic helped to inspire Kikkert's "own exploration of sovereignty in a bi-polar context." She encouraged him to embrace comparative history, to think broadly, and to understand how different states approached polar sovereignty. Although his current research program focuses on how to strengthen search and rescue, disaster and emergency management capabilities, and community disaster resilience in rural, remote, and Northern communities through a contemporary public policy lens, he explained how Grant's questions still guide him. "What does sovereignty, security, stewardship mean in the context of increasing human-made and natural hazards facing Northern communities? How do community understandings of safety and security intersect and diverge from legal and international relations definitions? These questions have highlighted for me just how profoundly important Shelagh's questions are—they matter and not just academically—our answers to them shape policy, investments, people's lives."

Throughout his presentation, Kikkert paid tribute to Shelagh Grant's ideas, the debates in which she engaged, her approaches to scholarship, and her commitment to mentoring the next generation of historians working on Northern Canadian topics. "I received the invitation to participate in this conference just as I was boarding a Coast Guard Auxiliary boat in Cambridge Bay to participate in a search and rescue exercise," Kikkert

told the audience. "During this exercise I was struck by the quiet mentorship given out by Elders and senior members of the crew—quiet, kind, sometimes gently cajoling. It got me thinking about Shelagh's mentorship—the quiet, kind way she guided my studies, my learning—and the other ways she shaped me as an early career scholar." Although he only met her on three occasions at conferences and workshops, she "bolstered my confidence," each time sharing "a kind, supportive word of encouragement, which meant the world to a young, nervous grad student." She also generously shared her boxes and binders of archival material, and "[s]he told me to 'go North.' If you are going to write about the North, you must experience the North. Time in the North was an absolute requirement." The Shelagh Grant Endowment in Canadian Studies at Trent University helps to enable expensive but essential experiential learning in the North. "I didn't agree with everything Grant argued—in fact, my master's thesis was a critique of some of her findings," Kikkert explained, "but she still encouraged me and was always generous in discussion and debate when others would have gone on the offensive."

> "I believe the 'heart and soul' of what it means to be Canadian lies in the far corners of this great nation. Canada is a vast, multicultural and multilingual country that cannot be studied solely through books, documents or multimedia formats. Archival research is important, but so is the ability to visit the location of one's research, to talk to the people who live there and learn first-hand their views and experiences."
>
> Shelagh Grant, May 2010

Amanda Graham, an instructor of Northern and circumpolar studies and the chair of the School of Liberal Arts at Yukon University, ended the session with a reflection on her own journey into Northern studies and her engagements with Shelagh Grant. Graham was not an historian when she initially ventured to Whitehorse in 1985 as "a curious visitor from Ontario who somehow never quite got around to leaving the Yukon." After completing history degrees at the University of Toronto and Lakehead University, she began teaching Northern Studies and history at Yukon College in 1992, as well as working as the managing editor of *The Northern Review*. Through the Northern Studies program at Yukon College, she developed a personal, professional, and academic interest in the story of post-secondary education and research in the Yukon and in the North. It was through the Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies (ACUNS) that she met Shelagh Grant, who was "kind and encouraging at a time when Northern Studies was nascent and there were few women doing these things." Since that time, Graham has witnessed how historians have begun to incorporate the views of Indigenous peoples into their work, and she has promoted more "gap filling" research that brings history down to the family and community levels. "The North of 1985 is not the North of today," Graham noted, which has been reshaped by land claim agreements and co-management regimes. She also highlighted that the capacity and ability of First Nations governments in the Yukon to deal with COVID-19 was "astounding."

Keynote: H.E. the Rt. Hon. Mary May Simon

Her Excellency the Rt. Hon. Mary Simon, a former Trent University chancellor, former president of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC), Canada's first circumpolar ambassador (1994-2004), and a renowned advocate for Inuit rights, youth, education, and culture, delivered the lunchtime keynote address. She reflected on her close relationship and friendship with Shelagh Grant, as well as the work that they did, and she called upon the next generation of researchers to drive forward conversations surrounding the Arctic. "Here in this room is Shelagh's legacy. You are contemporaries of Shelagh's. And you are newcomers to this field of study. A new generation, a new type of Arctic explorer, focusing on preserving the Arctic and promoting new opportunities in Canada's North," Simon noted. The full text of her speech is as follows:

> Hello.
>
> I'd like to first acknowledge that we are on the traditional territory of the Mississauga Anishinaabeg. I thank them for welcoming us and for sharing their knowledge with us.
>
> And I thank all of you for being here today to honour and recognize Shelagh Grant. Whit and I are grateful to take part in this conference.
>
> Let me begin with Shelagh's own words—her own vision—from the preface to her book *Sovereignty or Security?*

> "Canada's north provides an infinite challenge for historians who attempt to explain its mystique… In my own experience, historical research and associated travel stimulated an even deeper appreciation and concern for what most Canadians describe as 'our north.' While the related myth continues to have a powerful influence on public perception, only through broader knowledge and understanding of the past can we hope to improve on the present…"

Shelagh was more than a historian. She was a visionary who understood that in order to look to a brighter future and in order to improve lives today, we need to have a good grasp of history.

But Shelagh was much more than that. She was a loving wife, mother, and grandmother. And Shelagh was a dear friend.

Shelagh and I worked closely for years, particularly here at Trent University during my days as chancellor.

But even before my days at Trent, we worked together on a series of lectures, which were eventually published. It was called *Inuit: One Future, One Arctic*, and Shelagh was kind enough to write the foreword.

I remember our trips together, alongside her husband, Jon, in Scotland, and, memorably, near my parent's camp at Pyramid Mountain on the George River, catching trout and salmon. Or spending hours in a rich blueberry patch just talking.

Her passion is what brings us all together today: the Arctic.

Shelagh was an exception, and exceptional—one of the first Canadians, and one of the first women, to learn, understand, and record important elements of Canada's Arctic history. Shelagh was influential in so many ways:

> She got people to pay attention to the Arctic;
>
> She gave Canadians a complete picture of how Canada has engaged in Northern development and with the people who live there;
>
> She inspired experts and decision makers to put their ideas about the Arctic on the table.

She travelled extensively in the North and formed relationships with Northern communities and Inuit. She was an advocate and ally who took to heart the adage "Nothing about us without us."

Shelagh listened and recorded the stories Inuit have told through the ages, passed down from generation to generation. Our history, our truth.

In this way, she helped us see the importance of the Arctic as more than just a vaguely defined region.

The Arctic, she understood, is a homeland. It's vital to Inuit culture, spirituality, and identity.

As you know, her books—*Arctic Justice* and *Polar Imperative*, among others—are staples in post-secondary studies on the Arctic and Northern peoples. Many, if not all, of you here today have studied her research and been inspired by her writing.

But as Whit and I travel and talk to kids at schools across the country, we have noticed a shared thirst for knowledge among educators and students, no matter how young. They yearn for knowledge about the Arctic and about Indigenous peoples—their stories, cultures, and histories.

This is reconciliation in action, something that Shelagh understood. Her actions throughout her life were consistent with reconciliation, and her writing has always led us in that direction.

Education and reconciliation go hand in hand, after all. Neither can be achieved without the other. And educators have a vital role to play.

Educators, and by extension researchers and historians, have a unique relationship with reconciliation. They are responsible for teaching us the true history of our nation, including our neglectful treatment of Indigenous peoples. Educators help shape our minds and our stories, and what we know of Indigenous peoples past and present.

When we talk about the Arctic, Shelagh did this better than most.

Now that responsibility falls to you. Here in this room is Shelagh's legacy. You are contemporaries of Shelagh's. And you are newcomers to this field of study. A new generation, a new type, of Arctic explorer, focusing on preserving the Arctic and promoting new opportunities in Canada's North.

Trent University is a good place for these conversations. Here, we find the Chanie Wenjack School for Indigenous Studies, as well as the opportunity for in-field work and hands-on Arctic research with the Indigenous and Environmental Studies and Sciences program.

Elsewhere in Canada, there are Indigenous legal programs, including at the universities of Saskatchewan, Ottawa, and Victoria, and at northern education institutions, such as community colleges based in the North.

But as valuable as these programs are, we need to start education even earlier. It's clear that our schools are the foundation for the long road that we're trying to build.

Exciting and progressive work is already happening in curriculum development across the country. I often see innovative, dedicated, and committed teachers who are leading the development of Indigenous programs, courses, and classroom projects.

Yet, we can still do more, from kindergarten through to university.

I challenge all of us, in this room and across the country, to see the Arctic as Shelagh saw it. To see Canada through the eyes of the Arctic.

You have a great role to play in passing on the knowledge you've learned from Shelagh, here at Trent and throughout the Arctic during your travels.

And to the young researchers here with us, we have so much to learn from you as well. Your generation, after all, is the most diverse in the history of Canada. You need to be sitting at the table, participating in discussions in your own right, alongside other Canadians.

The road ahead—the big shoes Shelagh left behind—is daunting. But we must forge ahead in promoting Arctic knowledge and its peoples. This is hard, but necessary work. And so rewarding.

Rather than deny the truth of Canada's history, including in the Arctic, we must be prepared to accept it and teach it.

Indigenous peoples are relying on you to meet this important moment in history. Continue to educate yourselves and others on Inuit and, more broadly, Indigenous and Arctic history. Listen to their stories. Embed reconciliation in your work.

There is a word in Inuktitut, my mother tongue: *ajuinnata*. It means to never give up, to keep going, no matter how difficult the cause may be.

Ajuinnata is a beautiful word, and it reminds me of Shelagh.

I remember her taking every step possible to ensure she had the complete story, from the people who were there. She faced barriers in language, terrain, and even policy, yet at every turn she persevered. She was happy to travel in any condition, sleep anywhere, and talk openly with everyone.

I'm proud to say she was a great friend and one who made a difference.

Just as I started with Shelagh's words, I want to end with the same, to inspire us as leaders of Arctic knowledge:

"Leadership is an attribute sought by so many, yet attained by far too few… The test of a true leader lies not in title or power, but in the ability to place the needs of others ahead of one's own—and to convince others to do the same."

Let's all continue Shelagh's legacy of leadership, education, reconciliation, and Arctic pride.

Thank you.

His Excellency Whit Fraser; Jon Grant; Her Excellency the Right Honourable Mary Simon, Governor General of Canada; and Whitney Lackenbauer

Polar Imperatives: Politics and the Environment

Participants in the third panel, moderated by Clive Tesar (who has worked all over the Canadian and Circumpolar North as a journalist, radio host, editor, and communications director, and who was heavily involved in drafting the Arctic and Northern Policy Framework for the federal government that was released in September 2019), considered various aspects of Arctic politics and the environment. "Canada, the Russian Federation, Norway, Denmark and to a lesser extent the United States have been firm in their commitment to protect their sovereign rights in the Arctic against outside intervention," Grant wrote in 2016. "But will current military surveillance by the Arctic countries be sufficient to protect the fragile environment? Will Canada's belief in its unique northern identity strengthen its commitment to protect its Arctic lands and waters, or has increasing urbanization and multiculturalism weakened the resolve? Will the Arctic lose its allure as a unique, sparsely populated wilderness and become prey for the mega-corporations who view the region as an under-utilized wasteland, rich in resources, and a potential source for global prosperity?"[4]

John English, Distinguished Professor Emeritus at the University of Waterloo and the founding director of the Centre for International Governance Innovation and the Bill Graham Centre for Contemporary International History, was a Liberal member of parliament when the Arctic Council was created in 1996. He began with a tribute to Shelagh Grant, framed with the idea that "individuals matter." English first met her in the 1970s through John Holmes, "a man marked by moderation—except on the matter of Shelagh Grant," whom Holmes considered "an extraordinary human being" with insatiable curiosity. Her footprint—"unique, large, deep, and enduring"—remains.

English then reflected on the origins of the Arctic Council and the pivotal roles that Franklyn Griffiths and Rosemarie Kuptana played in its creation. In October 1987, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev called for joint action by the Arctic nations to deal with the sensitive Arctic environment and for the creation of a "zone of peace" in the Circumpolar North. Although the Government of Canada (which had just released a hawkish White Paper on defence) was cool to Gorbachev's proposals, Canadian peace activists, Arctic scholars, and Indigenous activists found his ideas attractive. With funding from the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation, several leading political and academic figures organized an Arctic Council Panel to promote an Arctic nuclear-free zone and to create a consultative and cooperative body among Arctic states. Griffiths and Kuptana became the panel's co-chairs, and they began to articulate a central role for Arctic Indigenous peoples. Prime Minister Brian Mulroney travelled to Leningrad and proposed the formation of an Arctic Council in November 1989, but the

[4] Shelagh D. Grant, "Arctic Governance and the Relevance of History," in *Governing the North American Arctic: Sovereignty, Security, and Institutions,* eds. Dawn Alexandrea Berry, Nigel Bowles, and Halbert Jones (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 29-50.

United States had no appetite for a council that would wade into security questions. Instead, the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS), created in 1991, focused on the environment and involved the participation of Indigenous peoples, who were declared to be "permanent participants." Although the idea of an Arctic Council continued to meet resistance, especially from the United States, which wanted to limit the role of the Indigenous Permanent Participants of the AEPS and to exclude any discussion of security, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien finally persuaded President Bill Clinton to give American support for the council, and it was officially created in Ottawa in September 1996.

These developments occurred during a transformational period, English explained. In the early 1990s, a new concept of human security emerged, which encouraged a reimagining of security beyond state-centric visions, thus limiting what states could do within their own boundaries and in the treatment of their own people. While much political and academic attention in the 1990s and early 2000s focused on Canada's leadership role in spearheading the push for the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction (the Ottawa Treaty or Mine Ban Treaty), centring on that initiative the prime example of Canada's success in advancing a human security agenda, English suggested in his talk that, "looking back, the formation of the Arctic Council and the concepts and ideas developed by Indigenous peoples are even more significant." The Arctic Council has achieved a tremendous amount, both directly through its working groups and indirectly; by contrast, where is the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) agenda today? English emphasized that the Arctic Council initiative and the role of Permanent Participants has led to fundamental changes in the way that the North is perceived and has laid a "fairly direct path" to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

Franklyn Griffiths, a professor emeritus of international politics and the George Ignatieff Chair Emeritus of Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Toronto, has dedicated his professional life to policy analysis and advocacy. His presentation reflected on global warming, climate change, and what Canada might or should be doing about it. He began by reflecting on who we consider to be "we" or "us" when contemplating these issues. Canada, the second largest country in the world, is governed by a majority that lives in Southern Canada and that is responsible for what happens throughout the country. In turn, the South is still governing the North from a colonial perspective, with the territories still being run as "semi-colonies" of Ottawa, and the South has a poor record in terms of decarbonization and adaptation to climate change. A more perceptive North-South dialogue

is needed to guide pathways forward, with too much attention still being dedicated to the extraction of non-renewable resources from the North for the benefit of the South. Towards that end, he proposed the creation of a committee of Elders to advise Canadian political leaders on our responses to climate change.

Transitioning to a decarbonized economy will be a complex process, Griffiths emphasized, and will mean short-term trade-offs (such as the development of the Ring of Fire to produce the lithium for electric car batteries). The burden of history makes this difficult, with our individualist and competition-oriented society (in which we tend to "other" one another) often being ill-suited to collective action. The South has the potential to do things better, however, based on an ethos of civility: the respect, care, and consideration of others. This extends to humans but also to fauna and the land itself. In the South, we are increasingly aware of quantum physics, which is changing our view of reality by encouraging us to see life almost from the atomic level—a way of seeing, Griffiths argued, that is akin to Indigenous worldviews in terms of the extent and veracity of life that exists. We need to develop and embrace a new language and framework to deal with the most pressing issues facing humanity, moving away from competitive negotiations and instead pursuing collective action with civility in the way we live with one another and with nature. Inuit know something about this, Griffiths emphasized, and we have much to learn from them.

University of Calgary associate professor of political science Rob Huebert framed his discussion around three ways that his interactions with Shelagh Grant had shaped him. First, she embraced mentorship, inviting anyone to join in a discussion with her "if they were willing to do their homework." Second, she insisted that a scholar had to go where the evidence took them. In her own work, she introduced the possibility of a divergence between sovereignty and security priorities—something that she captured in *Sovereignty or Security?* (1988), which Huebert identified as one of the two essential books on the topic when he started exploring Arctic issues in the late 1980s.[5] Third, when Grant "softened" his dichotomy between sovereignty and security in her 2010 magnum opus *Polar Imperative* "because her evidence took her there," she amplified the concept of stewardship. These ideas continue to inform discussions and debates about what Huebert considers to be the two existential threats facing the North today: climate change and the threat of nuclear war. Grant's work articulated the importance of the Arctic, demonstrated the value of a long-term commitment to researching the region and continuously engaging with verifiable evidence, and revealed the dynamic processes driving regional change.

Rosemarie Kuptana, former president of both the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), was a highly influential leader in the creation of the Arctic Council and has been a tireless advocate for Inuit rights since joining the CBC Northern Service as a radio broadcaster in 1979. She began her presentation by noting that "progress to better respect Indigenous peoples' rights can get blocked by the unhelpful dichotomies of thought that tend to plague the politics of Western

[5] The other was Franklyn Griffiths's edited collection *Politics of the Northwest Passage* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987).

democracies—in debates about where the collective good lies." European knowledge traditions tend to gravitate to "either-or" thinking—examples include oil and gas development, or what constitutes a "State" (which played out in the power dynamics that shaped the membership structure and voting rights of the Arctic Council, to the disadvantage of Arctic Indigenous peoples.) "Concepts like sustainable development and human rights principles are supposed to help us all mitigate this type of dichotomous thinking," Kuptana explained, "but world politics and Canadian politics still struggle with how to talk to each other about what sustainable development means and what climate action to take—without tearing each other apart—figuratively or literally." Dichotomous thinking is also evident in Western legal systems, which seek to define Indigenous peoples "from the outside," replacing the problems that such legal systems aim to solve with new problems. Another example is the Western, non-Indigenous tendency to compartmentalize when problem solving. For example, she encouraged us to not "hive off" military security from discussions about human security and environmental security—despite the obvious connections. "It is evident that the old way of thinking about both sovereignty and security has made the Arctic, and the world, less safe for everyone on the planet," Kuptana observed.

Kuptana also provided salient insights into power systems and how they shape and constrain our approach to identifying and solving problems. Reflecting on the urgency for "rational climate action," she explained how Inuit have their "own politics and disagreements," but how "our culture highly values rational discussion, devoid of expressions of anger. Displaying anger publicly is not considered

adult behaviour in Inuit culture. I am not saying Inuit never display anger. I am saying that it is a cultural value to not do that." In turn, "White people[6] sometimes mistake the very measured, non-angry communication style of Inuit as a sign of weakness or vulnerability—when, actually, Inuit are demonstrating our values on how political and policy debate and decision making should take place among adults." She noted how "disinformation wars," fuelled by social media manipulation, have amplified the adversarial nature of "Western" political systems, suggesting that "we all need to ask ourselves—are those who are whipping up populist anger and misinformation fearful of losing policy debates on merit?" She called for more respect for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous expertise "and less self-serving name calling," criticizing political leadership focused on political games of "gotcha" while "the world is literally burning and melting." In a present reality where "populist misinformation, combined with xenophobia," is mobilized to "manipulate emotions," the challenge of rational problem solving on complex issues is truly difficult. Kuptana also applauded the stance taken by Canada, the United States, and the Nordic states "to oppose the Russian invasion of Ukraine and call it out as a threat to global security and to cooperation in the Arctic." While emphasizing that she did not "want to see militarization of the Arctic," she understood "the need to take action to sanction rogue leadership threatening human rights and human security—whether that occurs in Russia, in the United States, or elsewhere." She closed with the idea that "perhaps we need an expanded and new concept of territorial integrity—one that articulates our collective obligation as humans to protect the integrity of the earth, the sea, and the air—if only to protect ourselves from self-destruction."

Stephen Bocking, a professor emeritus of environmental policy and history at Trent University, offered a powerful reflection on environmentalists and their role in Arctic environmental politics. Environmental protection often serves as a pretext for states to assert sovereignty, he observed, while the Arctic also represents a "hotspot" for global environmental justice. Environmentalists often mobilize images of the Arctic as a symbol of global environmental change, drawing on the well-entrenched idea of an "Arctic sublime," connections between the Cold War and science, and the conceptualization of the region as a "hotspot of energy development" during the 1960s and 1970s—all ways of "accessing the Arctic" through Southern views of the region. This, in turn, frames our ideas about wilderness, technology (as a threat to the Northern environment), and society. Citing Northern contaminants as an example of the politics of knowledge in the Arctic, Bocking recalled the "shock, confusion, and rage" over the discovery in the 1980s of high levels of dioxins and other industrial chemicals in Inuit breast milk. He also contrasted common

[6] Kuptana emphasized that she did not invent this term, as "self-identifying white people created it and define its boundaries."

maps showing the extent (and decline) of Arctic sea ice with Inuit stories about how people travel on the sea ice. Recalling William Cronon's reflections on how people speak about a place that is not their own, Bocking cautioned against environmentalists "getting to the wrong nature" and absolving themselves of responsibility for the places in which they actually live. He ended by affirming how Shelagh Grant's work demonstrated that she understood "the North as a process of engagement," and that scholars need to be more like her in working in partnership with Northern peoples.

Education and Experiential Learning

The fourth panel discussed myriad forms of education and experiential learning in and about Northern Canada and the circumpolar world. "As well as her international recognition as a scholar, Prof. Grant has made significant contributions to Trent University as a teacher, serving as an adjunct professor as well as a mentor to students interested in the history of Canada's north and its peoples," a Trent profile noted when she was presented with an honorary doctorate in 2014. "Recently, her legacy as an educator in the fields of Canadian and Arctic studies were recognized through the creation of the Shelagh Grant Endowment Award, supporting long distance travel for graduate student research and translation of dialogues with members of Aboriginal communities." Even when Grant retired from regular teaching, she remained active as an adjunct professor in Trent's Canadian Studies department and as a research associate of the Frost Centre for Canadian Studies and Indigenous Studies. In all of these roles, Shelagh embraced forms of knowledge that cut across disciplinary and cultural boundaries. Panel moderator Amanda Graham highlighted how teaching the Canadian North requires interdisciplinary approaches to understand what the North is and what it represents, both for those living in the region and for people learning about it. The field of Northern studies has evolved considerably in the last few decades, becoming more broadly circumpolar and more diverse. Northern institutions reflect these changes, having developed a stronger capacity for knowledge production and dissemination.

Lynda Brown, the Alumni Team Lead at the Students on Ice Foundation (SOI) and an alumna of Trent with an Honours B.A. in psychology and a minor in Native Studies, highlighted experiential opportunities for youth to see the people, the land, and the effects of climate change firsthand. In 2019, Brown took a job with SOI, an organization that organizes and facilitates expeditions, engagement, and leadership training for international youth. That year, half of the participants were Indigenous youth, up from about one-third twenty years earlier, a statistic that attracted Brown to the organization. Born and raised in Pangnirtung, Nunavut, Brown noted that an Inuk in Southern Canada "always has to be in teacher mode." She explained the guiding principles for Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ), rooted in stories and practice, as set out by the Government of Nunavut:

- *ᐃᑲᔪᖅᑎᒌᓐᓂᖅ - Ikajuqtigiinniq*
  Working together for a common cause—something that Students on Ice does well, she emphasized.

- ᐃᓄᖅᑎᑦᓯᐊᕐᓂᖅ - *Inuuqatigiitsiarniq*
  Respecting others, relationships, and caring for people. SOI is a community emphasizing interconnectedness.
- ᑐᖏᓚᓐᓂᖅ - *Tunnganarniq*
  Fostering good spirit by being open, welcoming, and inclusive. It is important to keep an open dialogue and to avoid anger, even when in difficult conversations, to create safe spaces.
- ᐱᔪᓯᕐᓂᖅ - *Pijitsirniq*
  Serving and providing for family and/or community.
- ᐊᔾᖅᑎᑦᓱᓂᖅ - *Aajiiqatigiinniq*
  Decision making through discussion and consensus.
- ᐱᓕᒪᓴᕐᓂᖅ - *Pilimmaksarniq*
  Development of skills through observation, mentoring, practice, and effort. Mentoring has been built into SOI right from the beginning, with activities allowing lots of room and time to ask questions.
- ᖃᓄᖅᑐᕐᓂᖅ - *Qanuqtuurniq*
  Being innovative and resourceful. This allows a person to pivot and respond to things encountered on the land.

- ᐊᕙᑎᑦᑎᓐᓂᒃ ᑲᒪᑦᓯᐊᕐᓂᖅ - *Avatittinnik Kamatsiarniq*
  Respect and care for the land, animals, and the environment.

Brown emphasized that when she thinks of the North, she thinks of the people before the land, ending with the sentiment: "The Arctic is, at its heart, about the people."

Clive Tesar, who recently served as the secretary for the federal Task Force on Northern Post-Secondary Education, went to school and worked in the Northwest Territories. In his talk, he provided an overview of the work of the Task Force and its report *A Shared Responsibility: Northern Voices, Northern Solutions*, which stressed the urgent need for post-secondary education in the North, by the North, and for the North. Tesar noted how, in light of decades of ineffective policies, the academic gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians continues to widen. Although this has begun to change as decision makers have started to listen to what Indigenous peoples have been saying for years—that we need to make significant changes to the education system in order to have our children succeed, such as recommendations found in the *First Canadians, Canadians First: National Strategy on Inuit Education* released in 2011 by Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami—implementation and funding remains an ongoing struggle. Post-secondary institutions across the North have demonstrated their strength in providing high-quality education that is both responsive to the needs and priorities of diverse Northern populations and embedded in, and responsive and committed to, the peoples and cultures of the North (such as Yukon University, the Labrador campus of Memorial University, and the ITK-led planning that is well underway for an Inuit Nunangat University). People living in the North, however, still face large inequities in access to post-secondary programming compared to Canadians living in other parts of the country. Tesar also highlighted the need for Northern-focused and Indigenous-led post-secondary educational opportunities in Northern communities that meet the needs and priorities of Northern Indigenous Peoples and reflect the lands, waters, and cultures of each region.

Mark Stoller, an assistant professor of geography at Queen's University and the Roberta Bondar Postdoctoral Fellow in Northern and Polar Studies at Trent from 2019-2022, observed that young adults (eighteen into their early twenties) represent a category of skilled people who are often overlooked in the North. After completing a master's thesis on the *Manhattan* crisis at McMaster University, he pursued doctoral research at the University of British Columbia on postwar Northern Canadian history, with an emphasis on Dene political history and the division of the Northwest Territories. Inspired by Inuit oral historian Louie Kamookak's message on the importance of knowing oneself through a knowledge of history and heritage, and the sense of empowerment that comes from feeling strong and proud of where you are from, Stoller became engaged in facilitating the learning and sharing of Inuit histories in Gjoa Haven/Uqshuqtuuq, Nunavut. He is a former director of the Nanivara Oral History Project (2015-2017), in which youth collected stories from Elders about the transition from land-based living to settlement life and then compiled them in a digital display at the local museum. He is also a co-founder of the Gjoa Haven Film Society, which has facilitated training for Inuit youth in recording historical documentaries. He continues to work with Inuit youth to

document local perspectives and stories from the community, animated by the core question: "What is it that young people like to see coming out of these projects?" Next summer, he will be launching a digital oral history archive in partnership with the Nattilik Historical Society.

> "Aside from field research as a means of acquiring first-hand experience, partnership and collaboration with Inuit educators at the Arctic colleges could lead to new opportunities for direct involvement. History professors might also join with those in other disciplines to develop interdisciplinary team projects. … [I]ncreased funding will not guarantee the cooperation of Inuit communities. Researchers must be able to offer something in return, perhaps by offering to give talks to school children and adult gatherings, by showing videos made of early film clips of the Eastern Arctic Patrol, or perhaps by donating copies of pertinent photographs from collections in southern archives. As historians, we are inclined to think in terms of the past. Perhaps now is the time to think of the past in terms of the future, and what knowledge we might be able to share with the Inuit people."
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> Shelagh Grant, "Inuit History in the Next Millennium: Challenges and Rewards," in *Northern Visions*, eds. Kerry Abel and Ken S. Coates (2001)

Heather Nicol, a professor of geography and the director of the School for the Study of Canada at Trent University, spoke about international education, the University of the Arctic (UArctic), and how UArctic capacity building can become more inclusive of Indigenous viewpoints. Reaffirming the foundational principles of Circumpolar Studies (academic interdisciplinarity; a holistic perspective on the Circumpolar North; a commitment to connectivity and collaboration between UArctic members; and the integral place of Indigenous scholarship in the curriculum), Nicol highlighted the importance of regionalizing outcomes through heightened interconnectivity between members. She provided an overview of the new UArctic Læra Institute for Circumpolar Education (the Læra Institute), co-led by Trent University and the University of Northern British Columbia, which seeks to restore this borderless community dedicated to teaching and learning about the Circumpolar North without compromising members' local academic flexibility. She explained that the institute will develop curriculum specifications, exemplar courses, and pedagogical resources to support Circumpolar Studies teaching at UArctic member universities, as well as holding regular workshops and educational symposia for faculty members and students. It will pay special attention to varied perspectives on "circumpolarity" across the Circumpolar North, particularly Indigenous perspectives, in advancing the UArctic as an educational community in the North, by the North, and for the North.

Geoff Green, a global leader in polar education and youth engagement and the founder and president of the award-winning Students on Ice (SOI) Foundation, provided captivating insights into how experiential learning instills values—in his case, by focusing on "the greatest classroom on earth: mother nature." During an Antarctic expedition that Green led for adults in the early 1990s, he realized what an important impact this kind of experience could have on youth in their formative years to shape their perspectives and to motivate and inspire them as globally minded leaders and polar ambassadors. He celebrated Mary Simon (then Canada's Arctic ambassador), as well as Whit Fraser and Jon Grant (both members of the Canadian Polar Commission), as being "instrumental" in getting SOI started. Since 2000, the foundation has been leading educational expeditions to the Arctic and to

the Antarctic, which Green described as cornerstones of our global ecosystem. More than four thousand students from fifty-seven countries—the vast majority funded by scholarships—have now participated. To Green, it is all about *connections* and *relationships*: immersing youth in nature and connecting them to the land, to the ocean, to peers and mentors, and to challenges and opportunities facing our planet. "Flexibility is the key" has become his mantra, and as youth and the world change, so must the foundation. This includes the introduction of mental health into the curriculum and a mental health team that proactively supports participants—and continues to support them after they return to their home communities. Green also provided examples of how SOI has inspired a diverse array of young leaders, innovators, and global citizens, who have gone on to pursue Indigenous-led research and ocean conservation programs, engage in the sustainable blue economy, and participate in youth delegations at Arctic policy conferences and global climate change meetings. By facilitating North-South connections and east-west interactions amongst Arctic peoples, SOI serves as a profoundly Canadian example of how inspired leadership can help to bridge the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous educational opportunities and also stimulate action for a healthy and sustainable future at all levels.

Further Reflections

His Excellency Whit Fraser, an author and a storyteller who has had a front-row seat to many of the historic events in the last half century in the Canadian Arctic, was the "speedy moderator" for the final panel. He noted that, during the conference, "we eulogized Shelagh Grant, we honoured her, we respected her, and we have learned from her—and will continue to learn from her."

Bridget Larocque, a Métis leader from the Northwest Territories, focused her reflections on an Indigenous thinking perspective. When she thinks about what needs to be done in the North, for the North, and by the North—and by Indigenous peoples specifically—she thinks about a holistic, One Health approach that can be used to address core issues, such as mental health and the intergenerational trauma to which all Northern Indigenous peoples have been exposed. This One Health approach encourages a deeper conversation about cooperation, collaboration, and co-responsibility. A sense of responsibility must be incorporated into all of our

systems if we are going to bring about effective change. Themes of interdisciplinarity, multidisciplinarity, mentorship, and the co-production of knowledge require balance and a spirit of equality. Western scientific research should not be considered hierarchically, as if it is above Indigenous science and knowledge. She promoted decolonization, reconciliation through relationship building, and knowledge transfer—rooted in respect—between Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers, between Elders and youth, and between Northerners and Southerners. "We do a lot of this," Larocque highlighted, "so if we can just continue this into the future that would be great." To bring about systemic change and create policy space for Indigenous perspectives and distinct needs, Indigenous peoples need to develop their internal operations while taking up and sustaining their Indigenous governance systems. These governance systems "must be decolonized and Indigenized," she emphasized, "because Southern systems do not work in Indigenous communities," which explains the low levels of education, the high suicide rates, the prevalence of mental health issues, the disproportionately high cancer incidence, and the pervasiveness of stresses that create anxiety.

Larocque explained how stewardship responsibilities mean that we must embrace Indigenous values and ways of knowing, doing, and being when it comes to protecting the lands, seas, waters, and animals. The belief that everything has a spirit must be protected, as it "provides for Indigenous peoples' health, culture, and physical wellbeing," as well as resilience and adaptation. She drew a strong link between self-esteem and education, which "needs to come from our own Indigenous ways of seeing, knowing, and being." Respectful knowledge transfer between North and South allow us to build "allyships and relationships" in the spirit of reconciliation. Efforts to co-create curricula must be Indigenous-led, and "community programs and services must be supported from own-source revenue to ensure autonomy that leads to self esteem and self determination." She ended with the idea that indigenization is about human behaviour and responsibility/stewardship. "If we can all think about how our great-grandparents and ancestors protected and worked with the land and animals" before colonization, Larocque encouraged, this can help to inspire us to move back to a respectful, holistic approach without hierarchies or racism.

Franklyn Griffiths said he came away from the meeting feeling encouraged. The tone and nature of the discussion did not evoke an overarching sense of "crisis" or "emergency," he observed. He noted a stronger sense of confidence and self-determination in the North, as well as progress with respect to reconciliation and education, the recovery of language, and the proliferation of Northern-led research.

Ken Coates marvelled at the achievements of the last thirty years in the North. But are things getting better in the Canadian North? "Yes and no," he answered, "in equal measure." Is scholarship contributing as much as it can? "No and yes," he replied. "There are individuals who are doing phenomenal work, many of them in this room," but major questions remain. We know little about contemporary social dynamics in the North, the (often transient) civil servants who have changed the Northern bureaucracy, or the hierarchy and decision-making processes in Ottawa. More research is needed on devolution, how land claims are actually playing out in both empowering and constraining Indigenous peoples, and the thousands of "permanent non-Indigenous people in the North" who have made it their home. Turning to his "pragmatic element," Coates predicted that "federal largesse" in terms of funding for the North is going to run out in the next five to ten years, so it is imperative that money be spent properly. "We lack courage as a country," he asserted, preventing the bold action required to empower Indigenous rightsholders and set the conditions for meaningful co-production of knowledge and for co-development. "We lack confidence, we lack a Northern vision, [and] we lack a sense of responsibility," so while he shared Griffiths's sentiments about the positive spirit in the room, he would be worried if participants did "not leave here shaken by what [Canadians] are not doing, and upset about what we are leaving behind." His parting comments were: "We need to do it better, and we need to do it fast."

In his concluding remarks, Whitney Lackenbauer expressed how truly remarkable it was to have this calibre of thinkers all in one room. The conference brought together tremendous academic knowledge as well as the lived experiences of people who were present at the birth of the Arctic Council, who have led the Inuit Circumpolar Council, who were raised in Northern communities, and who have advocated for the rights of Northern Indigenous people. "It's a testament to Shelagh Grant's

"In recent years, discussion about the Arctic has taken centre stage as politicians, resource developers, environmentalists and indigenous peoples square off with competing visions of a future circumpolar world. When mapping long-term strategies and objectives, we often fail to give due consideration to the importance of history. We must ask ourselves if the history of the Arctic is relevant to today's debates over the future of the Arctic, and if so, why?"

Shelagh Grant, "The Weight of History in the Arctic," OpenCanada,

contribution to Trent and to the study of Canada's North that we're able to host an event like this," Lackenbauer explained. He also thanked the Grant family, the conference's participants, Trent University staff, and the various funding agencies who made the conference possible, as well as doctoral student Ryan Dean for his instrumental role in coordinating travel, accommodations, and logistics for the event.

The conference ended with a throat song by Lynda Brown and Heidi Langille, Inuit cultural ambassadors who perform under the name Siqniup Qilautu.

Other sources on the conference:

"Trent University Hosts Historic Gathering of Influential Arctic Scholars," 24 October 2022, https://www.trentu.ca/news/story/34663.

Sebastian Johnston-Lindsay, "Trent Hosts Conference in Honour of Shelagh Grant Featuring Keynote by Governor General," *The Arthur* [Peterborough], 31 October 2022, https://www.trentarthur.ca/news/trent-hosts-conference-in-honour-of-shelagh-grant-featuring-keynote-by-governor-general.

"A journey through life inspired by
– a passion for writing and history
– a love of Canada and its northern wilderness
– and a deep appreciation for the Arctic and the Inuit"

From Shelagh Grant's website

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