

invoked: "[G]iven [aboriginal peoples'] unstructured form of pre-contact beliefs, the missionaries' message provided a framework and ritualistic form for dealing with religious matters" (p. 134). Scholars of subarctic world view, including Robin Ridington, Catharine McClellan and others, have advanced quite the opposite perspective, that Athapaskan belief systems provided a systematic framework within which missionaries' rather programmatic teachings could be incorporated and evaluated.

What this book lacks most is some sense of historical consciousness of indigenous actors. Increasingly, historians working in areas where history has been compiled exclusively from colonial documents are questioning the rules and conventions that govern the production of knowledge about the past. The widely discussed issue of voice — which voices get included in history and which ones get left out — is not trivial. Coates does a service by laying out such a complete and annotated record of colonial documents, but his sometimes uncritical use of that record — leaving his reader to guess whether he concurs or disagrees with the statements he cites — is extremely problematic. Advancing the cultural, ideological and gender biases in those accounts presents a teleological outcome and thwarts his stated objective of documenting a *relationship*. As aboriginal people continue to record their own oral traditions about these same events, their stories may redress the imbalance in the written record by complicating our views about how northern history is to be understood.

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THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE CANADIAN NORTH. By ROBERT M. BONE. Toronto: Oxford University Press Canada, 1992. xi+284 p., 30 figs. and maps, 42 tables, index. Softbound. Cdn\$19.95.

The Geography of the Canadian North is an admirable volume, the clarity, sensitivity and balance of which recommend it highly to both lay readers and instructors of courses on northern Canada.

In the author's words, "The main thrust of the text is the matter of northern development and its impact on the environment and Native people." Four concepts organize the analysis. The first is the distinction between the arctic and subarctic regions of Canada's North. This distinction assists the author to avoid overgeneralization while covering both the provincial and territorial Norths. Also, the causal relationships that he identifies in each region, for example between the availability of transportation systems and the type of non-renewable resource development that appears, help the reader to understand patterns of development in the other region and to appreciate the basic principles of social and economic geography that underlie the text. The second concept restates the basic thrust of the book: the process of development is the fundamental determinant of the social geography of the North. Unfortunately given the centrality of the concept for the book, the author fails to define development or to explore at the conceptual level the complexities that arise when an attempt is made to weigh the costs and benefits or to assess the level of development of structurally very different economies, such as are found in the North. Third, the book relies heavily on a core-periphery analysis to gain insights into the direction of northern development. The fourth premise from which the book proceeds is that "frontier dualism" — the presence of Native and non-Native peoples with distinctive but interacting economies and cultures — constitutes the major social and economic distinction and poses the most fundamental policy issues in the North.

The book opens with concise and highly informative discussions of the climate, geomorphology, history and demography of the North. It then examines what might be termed the "industrial resource development" economy, encompassing both non-renewable resource extraction and the exploitation of forest and hydro-electricity resources.

The book then describes the Native population of the North, its economic patterns and the problems and choices that confront it.

The handling of the two economies is comprehensive and balanced. Throughout, the argument draws effectively on a rich base of very recent research. This currency and depth both make the book a useful reference work for the present and suggest that it will retain its relevance well into the future. The author treats each of the economies and the difficult economic prospects facing the North frankly. In reporting egregious examples of environmental degradation caused by industrial resource development, he extends his analysis beyond impersonal abstraction to demonstrate that these projects usually profoundly victimize aboriginal people. He also fully documents the failure of these projects to contribute to the lasting strength of the northern economy and to offer either long-term or abundant short-term employment for Native workers.

At the same time, while recognizing the economic, social and cultural importance of wildlife harvesting for Native people, he notes the inability of this economy to provide them the cash income they need. He also anticipates that anti-fur agitation, a high rate of Native population growth and the concentration of Native people into communities are likely in the future to reduce, not so much northern Natives' involvement in the traditional economy, but the role it can play in their overall personal economic strategies. In this context he provides one of the clearest statements of the options among which native people can choose, including the traditional economy, fly-in employment on resource projects, transfer payments, community-based economic development and employment with public and aboriginal governments and agencies. In discussing employment prospects, he repeatedly returns to the theme of the urgent need to increase the level of educational attainment of Native students.

The Geography of the Canadian North does suffer from one serious deficiency — its treatment of the evolving pattern of northern governmental and quasi-governmental institutions. The discussion of land claims is generally skimpy. Aside from one opaque reference, there is no examination of Native participation in agencies established by land claims settlements to regulate wildlife harvesting and land uses incompatible with the traditional economy. This is a critical topic because these agencies are intended to be the means by which land claims will secure the future of the traditional economy. The discussion also fails to report the resistance of the federal government to fully empowering these agencies. The reader is left unclear about the real ability that claims might and actually do give northern Natives to protect the traditional economy, but with the mistaken impression that this ability is greater than is truly the case.

The reader is incorrectly informed at several points that land claims create regional aboriginal governments. While this did result in the James Bay and northern Quebec case, the northern claims settlements currently being contemplated and the Inuvialuit settlement of 1984 do not create regional governments. Indeed, the categorical refusal of the federal government to negotiate the creation of such governments as part of the claims settlements has significantly delayed and complicated the claims process. In general, the treatment of the ways in which northern political institutions are evolving and the future impact of this evolution on the dual economies of the North stands out for its vagueness and superficiality, particularly when contrasted with the deft and thoughtful treatment of so many other topics in the book.

With this exception, *The Geography of the Canadian North* compares most favorably to any of the books written in the last decade on the subject of northern development. It is a judicious and insightful discussion of this important subject, valuable reading for both newcomers to this important subject and readers well versed in it.

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