Trick or Re-treat: Towards a new treasure-seeking ethic in Canada's North

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ABSTRACT

Trick or Re-treat: Towards a new treasure-seeking ethic in Canada's North

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This project explores the notion that the summer camping community in Dawson City, Yukon, epitomizes the possibility that the retreat and the quest, often considered distinct forms of travel and discovery, are closely related in the contemporary Canadian context.

The journey North to Dawson City – a town and region famous for the Klondike Gold Rush and treasure-seeking – is akin to a rite of passage and to the questing patterns that are evident in many myths of heroism. Every hero reckons with a threat and saves the day. While boreal "wilderness" has traditionally been depicted as potentially dangerous and challenging terrain, the location of the threat has shifted significantly over the past three or four decades in North America. Pollution and the rat race are the new raging river and pack of wolves. Framed in this way, the hero's quest for adventure and treasure shares a seat with the weakling's retreat.

I believe that what has been referred to as "the Myth of the North" is intact to this day. The symbolic structure of the North is communicated by oral tradition and in text through story, song, slang, and fashion. A limen is a margin and a threshold and discussions of the Canadian North are at home in the field of religious studies when we conceptualize the North as liminal space and place. The North is physically liminal as the end of the road, politically liminal as a colonial state and conceptually liminal as a frontier.

The following writing has been largely inspired by the conversations and scenery that I experienced upon my three-time journey to Dawson City. The ideas presented in this paper have developed from a combination of text-based and primary research, largely informed by the theories of anthropologist Victor Turner and by my friends, colleagues, and acquaintances in Dawson.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

That there is a pull to the North, a sort of mythical magnetism, of which the summer campers speak.

This is all about people traveling north to Dawson City, Yukon. Otherwise known as the Town of the City of Dawson, Yukon Territory, Canada - or simply "Dawson" - this place is the destination for many a roving soul each summer. Indeed, some arrive to the Yukon during the winter, but that's crazy and not really what we're interested in here. Just kidding, not crazy.

Probably brave and curious about dog sledding and darkness - or ignorant, maybe - but not crazy.

It's about people traveling north *from* south. People. Traveling. North. Is it a pilgrimage? Yes, obviously! Great.

<div align="right">The End.</div>

Just kidding, again. That will, however, be my thesis in a nutshell. I herein suggest that the summer campers are having a liminal experience in and around Dawson City, Yukon. I also explore how the journey towards this liminal experience blurs the distinction between traditional accounts of the hero's quest and the weakling's retreat. Also, I maintain that these groups act as a bridge between North and South, a potentially effective community for addressing and perhaps dismantling, the colonialist patterns of our national heritage.

I begin with a discussion of how Dawson City, Yukon Territory, is liminal space by virtue of its location, its polico-economic culture, and its ambiguous representation through paradox and polarity. The second chapter will focus on Dawson City as a site of communitas while individuals and groups display traits of calendrical and life-crisis ritual through their engagement with archetypal structures and patterns. The third chapter will consider how the

journey to Dawson is symbolically structured as the hero's quest, the weakling's retreat, the initiand's rite of passage, and the pilgrim's path.

The first part of the first chapter will outline how Victor Turner's theory on liminality includes careful consideration of the relationship between social structure and communitas.

The second part of the first chapter aims to show that the Yukon is liminal space. The North is a physical margin and the North is a social margin. The North is physically on the edge and has been treated as a frontier. The North is big. It's up there, huge. It's looming. It might be wild and scary and ominous, and it feeds our identity as a northern nation. The North is also politically liminal. Canada began as a colony of the British and the French. And then we turned around and colonized the people indigenous to this land and these waters and we took and we took and we named the north "territories". We guarded ourselves as provinces and we kept it easy to take from them up there. We took and then we turned around and said: "Look at how beautiful OUR timber, and how precious OUR minerals, and how thick OUR furs and how noble OUR native people." And it's not just a part of our past, it's happening here and now. Liminality becomes evident through the descriptions and representations of the North that are often made with reference to paradox and polarity. This flavours our stories with ambiguity and, where neither-here-nor-there meets betwixt-and-between, liminality.

The second chapter emphasizes the following: When people gather in liminal space, we are free to shed our social-structural roles and we enjoy in vivid community, that which Turner calls "communitas". We are ready to learn. We activate archetypes as if we were donning a mask. An archetype is a pattern, a way, a story, a style. When we engage with these symbols, we learn something of ourselves. There is a connection between the individual and the history of a people. This sounds tribal and it is no small co-incidence that these seemingly tribal events are occurring at the place that practically publicizes nordicity, the bush, where cowboy meets Indian. But we are not tribal, we are a modern people. We'll get deeper into that later, but the main distinction to draw for now is that tribal ritual is irreversible, obligatory, and community-oriented.

Our modern commitment to individualism and to keeping our efforts voluntary prevents us from truly participating in the limen as it has been identified in tribal ritual. But we can and do know communitas. And the ritualized behavior, as evidenced by the strength of the archetypes and the power of the underdog, re-enforces the idea that we know communitas in Dawson City.

The wheel is put to spin in the third chapter. In chapter one we see the North, looming. In chapter two, we see the experience of communitas upon the limen. And in chapter three, we see the journey towards that thriving limen in two ways: the hero's quest (running to) and the weakling's retreat (running from). Is it possible that these two distinct styles of travel are closer in character than may be immediately apparent? Even the journey towards symbol structure is symbolically structured. Just as the journey towards the sacred site is a sacred journey.

Sometimes throughout this paper I refer to some theories that link canoe tripping with the hero's quest. I feel that this is relevant because the Dawson camping community of which I write is composed of recreational campers. They camp because they want to, which is much different from camping because you have to.

Shooting the Breeze and Establishing some Ground:

The limen is a threshold, often represented by a gateway or a doorway. It is also recognized as a margin, a social parameter, the fringe. It is also known as "betwixt-and-between", or "neither-here-nor-there". Some people are more thoroughly acquainted with the limen than others. It is possible to occupy a limen as a result of one's demographic position or social role. The down-trodden, by virtue of their social marginalization, are often familiar with the limen. Spiritual leaders, by virtue of their role as (other-) worldly mediators are also familiar with the limen. Liminality is built into the social status and roles of these people.

It was van Gennep and Victor Turner's idea that everyone, at some point in their life, experiences the limen. When liminality is not built into one's social role or status, the experience of the limen is an experience of a social modality other than the norm. Liminal events, also called

"liminality", occur(s) at times of life change. To briefly occupy a limen is to take a break from the every-day. It's a breath of fresh air, it's a rubbing of the eyes, and it can be experienced by individuals or a group.

When liminiality is not built into our social status or role, the event of its occurrence is often exteriorized. Liminal events occur in liminal space (a secluded spot, a specially decorated area, a place that is recognized as special and *design*ated), in liminal time (cyclical, non-linear). The language at the limen is symbolic. Lessons are taught and learned.

Sacred sites are always liminal. They represent the threshold between the normal and the special, the mundane and the sacred. A pilgrimage is a journey towards a sacred site. Because the pilgrim has heart set on that towards which pilgrims journey, and because they are between regular structured life and the sacred site, the pilgrim is also betwixt-and-between and the pilgrim's path is liminal space. The sense of community that is experienced among those who share a liminal experience Turner names "communtias".

Whether all liminal sites are sacred is yet to be determined. It certainly seems that they have the capacity to be experienced as such, especially in this modern situation when the experience of the individual far outweighs any orthodox decree. This topic was born of a habit of mine wherein I tend to identify sacred content in secular forms. More on this soon. It is also born of my interest in language and vocabulary - how we use words, why, and what that means for us and to us as social and communicating beings. William Paden, author of *Interpreting the Sacred: Ways of Viewing Religion* (1992) writes:

> Languages are indeed like habitats, each culture building its value-orientations
> into its vocabularies. (Paden, 1992 7)

It is not uncommon to hear people speak of their journeys as pilgrimage. If people are using that word, I think that question deserves to be asked. Just as, at certain very important and effective levels, Christianity is what people who identify as Christian do, so pilgrimage is what people who identify as pilgrims do. Is it possible, after all, for someone to feel that they are a

pilgrim without actually being one? Conversely and perhaps a more direct concern from my own

research, is it possible for someone to be a pilgrim without realizing it?

So, is going up to the Yukon a sacred journey - a pilgrimage of sorts?

**Maybe people ARE on a pilgrimage
and they don't REALIZE it until they are here?
Yes - the young-ish people all come up each summer
        ANY WAY they can, because they hear it's "cool up there".
        What does "cool" mean to the sayers?
Then they wander around town, meet the people,
sit on the grass by the river, create art and make music,
        learn things, hang out; some days they don't know
        why they're still here! A lot of them do not know when/how/if
they are leaving.   Sounds pretty MODERN DAY spiritual to me!
Cuz nowadays, the "Christian" word has been rejected by a lot of people. Lots of
people don't have NAME for their spirituality and maybe don't realize they're
being spiritual? Hmmm** (Ruby, 2005)

So, is going up to the Yukon a sacred journey - a pilgrimage of sorts?

**Speaking of course only for myself, yes, it was a sacred journey.
However, does a "pilgrimage" imply a conscious choice to journey to a known
destination?
For me, my destination of Whitehorse for a short visit to visit friends was a
known destination. I hadn't any preconceived notions or expectations of what
layed ahead.
Although I set out on my journey long before arriving in Whitehorse without any
conscious goal to seek out a rite of passage etc... I was subject-consciously and
intuitively walking a path that sought a light or positive inner-growth.** (Ben,
2005)

As Wilfred Cantwell Smith suggests in *The Meaning and End of Religion* (1991), language both

creatively conditions and clearly reflects our mindset.   Smith writes:

> Our method will begin with simply a verbal inquiry. For the way that we use
> words is a significant index of how we think. Also, more actively, it is a
> significant factor in determining how we think. To understand the world, and
> ourselves, it is helpful if we become critical of the terms and concepts that we are
> using. Further, to understand other people and other ages, it is requisite that we
> do not presume uncritically that their meanings for words are the same as ours.
> A mature history of ideas must rest on a careful scrutiny of new words, and also
> of new developments in meanings for old words. Once attained, it may further
> our realistic understanding of the world itself.
>   Three levels are here involved. First, there are the words that men use.
> Secondly, there are the concepts in their minds, of which these words are the
> more or less effective expression. Thirdly, there is the real world, of some

aspects of which the concepts are the more or less adequate representation. (Smith, 1991 16-17)

So, is going up to the Yukon a sacred journey - a pilgrimage of sorts?

Not for me. Coming to Dawson was part of a journey across Canada, one stop along the way that lasted four years. Coming here now is to return home. It is and was sacred but in a different way. (Glen, 2005)

I also identify my interest in word-use with the endeavour of Clive Staples Lewis as he introduces

his work in *Mere Christianity* (1952) with the following statement:

> The point is not a theological or moral one. It is only a question of using words
> so that we can all understand what is being said. (Lewis, 1952 11)

The trip to Dawson may simply be traveling, but why are people doing it? What are they out to

find? Why are they going to Dawson, of all places? If people are on a pilgrimage to Dawson

City, then perhaps we ought to pay attention to that. It would mean that Dawson is a sacred site.

And if we don't come to the conclusion that it's Dawson City that people pilgrim to, but maybe

the sort of community that occurs there, a camping-based seasonal community, well then maybe

that sort of gathering would merit being called a sacred event. Given the power and influence of

my own personal experience, I do say it's worth exploring.

The seeds of new traditions are planted every day and William James, an influential

professor during my undergraduate study at Queen's University in Kingston, has most likely

encouraged this train of thought. His own stance on this issue is rendered remarkably clear in his

1998 book *Locations of the Sacred: Essays on Religion, Literature, and Canadian Culture*. The

following passage shows that, at the time of his writing, James was particularly intrigued by the

contemporary Canadian recreational canoe trip and its parallels, in structure and in mood, to the

hero's quest. The insight is, I insist, applicable to other communities and activities. As James

suggests:

> [...] the usual business of religious studies is supposed to be the study of sacred
> texts, of religious communities, and of historical traditions. These are important
> matters to be sure, but at the very least I am suggesting that certain aspects of
> what we normally think of as leisure activities have important religious

implications too. The application of a well-known model from religious studies to canoeing can illuminate its gravity and significance, can enrich our appreciation by making us a little more aware of its hidden meanings, and can unveil for us locations of the sacred in areas frequently thought to be outside the domain of religion traditionally conceived. Alternatively, we find that traditional forms of religion, having undergone at best *an incomplete process of translation or "indigenization,"* [emphasis my own] display a rigidity and inflexibility in their lack of a sufficient degree of correlativity with contemporary culture. In short, examining the canoe trip as a possible religious quest serves not only to alert modern secularized individuals to the sacred dimensions inherent in one of their possible modes of self-transcendence, but also to remind those who are consciously religious of the perils and possibilities of an alliance between their faith and culture. (James, 1998 100)

This "process of translation" to which James refers is, as far as I can tell, along the same lines of Turner's "process of normalization". The event of communitas slows and stiffens as it becomes increasingly structured. More on that later.

Dawson City:

Dawson City epitomizes the North, but it is not at all typical. Dawson City's currency is heavily rooted in its history, which is highly place-specific. As a municipality, the City of Dawson was founded upon the events of Klondike Gold Rush in the late 19th century. At that time, Dawson was the most populated city in North America west of Chicago. People were drawn there on hearsay as they sought gold, adventure, and new beginnings. Treasure-seeking did not end with the Yukon Gold Rush of the late 19th century. Indeed, many tourists and travelers continue to set their resolve towards the northern passage each year. Tent City has been the destination for many people who are seeking something - be it the 'end of the road', serenity, community, love, adventure, or simply a summer job. The journey to Dawson City may be the first for some, and for many it will not be the last.

Why Dawson?

˙To here I am strongly drawn + have much to learn from the place + its people.
(Ben, 2005)

I have found that there is a mythologically-layered social landscape in the North and, in particular, in Dawson City. This landscape is presented orally, largely through storytelling,

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sometimes in song. This whimsically woven narrative representation unravels itself for the seeker as she or he engages in that which is felt to be "typically-Yukon", revealing a richly textured social fabric that at once sustains and relies upon a seasonal cyclic influx of human travelers to the northern territories.

Why Dawson?

From hear to hear ... it sounded JUST right for me, so I had to see it. (Neomie, 2005)

Part of my argument is that the "Myth of the North", as it has been identified by Robert Page, remains intact to this day. Arriving on a shoestring, as it were, trusting what they've heard, risking security and safety, people have gone questing, seeking treasures of all kinds. This hope-filled journey is fueled by some part romanticism, some part greed, and by each seeker's faith in what the North has to offer.

The group discussed here is largely a seasonal group, familiar with transition and transience. Some are students, some are regular workers of seasonal industry. Some are right off the streets of Canada's bigger cities. Some are breaking free of a different sort of mold, having recently quit their job, leaving their home and family for what may be the first time ...

And on their way to Dawson, and indeed while at Dawson, they get all mixed-up together. These people who may otherwise have nothing to do with each other are suddenly seeing each other, calling on each other, asking each other questions - questions about their past, their future, and where's the best place for dinner and a drink tonight?, sharing their tunes and their thoughts, getting to know one another.

Dawson's full of all sorts of characters for residents and the newcomers get to know of them, too. It is odd, in a way, sometimes it's like these people and their lifestyles are on display. ATTRACTION: THE COLORFUL 5%. (There's a historical magazine by Jim Robb which circulates the Yukon under that title.) COME EXPERIENCE THE WILD MEN AND WOMEN OF THE YUKON! And you find that most of these people grew-up somewhere else in Canada,

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the States, Germany or France, and they've gotten into it. *It*. And the message is there for you: that this place and lifestyle are here for you, if only you choose to roll-up your sleeves, burn your hairbrush, and spit on the words "s--th" and "c-ty". People seem to get obsessed with the North and their experiences become both a source of pride and humility.

Of course, this isn't every resident in Dawson, let alone the Yukon. But I'm not talking about every resident. I'm talking about people like me, who are pulled up to Dawson (by what?), and, arriving there, feel that there was more behind that tug than we had realized. We get there and we're reminded of many things: the poems we'd heard, the stories we'd known, the songs we've sung, the photos we've seen, the books we've read. There's a message being generated from the northlands, traveling along the telephone lines, discussed over homecoming dinner tables, dancing on a wink from beneath one bushy brow to another. Yes, this is stereotyped in its way, and that's just the thing: Where do we draw the line between stereotype and archetype? We receive this mythology, this (oral) tradition, when we allow it to sink its wild claws into our domesticated flesh and let it breath into our hearts that we must make that journey, that we must go and see for ourselves. And I think that most of us don't even know what those claws are, who they belong to, but we do understand that it speaks to us and that's what gets us there. Following is a diary entry of mine, which was written after an evening in July, Toronto, 2007...

> I was out to the Concord Café for a folk music show last night. The second performer of the evening was introducing a song of hers and she was saying that she'd heard it once said that people who travel are running from something. She added that she'd heard it once said that people who travel were searching for something. Then she said that she figured it wasn't either one of those things that made people travel. Then she said that, for most, it's a bit of both. This got quite a few approving chuckles from the crowd, then she started singing her song about traveling and running from and searching for.
>
> This is all particularly pertinent to me - not because I'm traveling, I'm not - but because I'm writing my thesis about traveling and maybe even about pilgrimage. I had become convinced that the trip to Dawson City, Yukon Territory could be considered a pilgrimage. And I was of the mind that, if it was a pilgrimage, then it should be recognized as such, the implications could be wide-sweeping. If traveling to Dawson were a pilgrimage then hippies and road tramps, for example, would get a little more respect from the general populace, the type of respect that every spiritual seeker should merit. If traveling to Dawson were a pilgrimage then that which is sought: green places and wide-open

spaces, for example, would need to be protected and maintained in a sustainable manner. This list could go on.

These ideas, of course, reveal my own values. These values are what inspired me with this topic. God only knows why I've stuck with it. It is very difficult to try to prove something you already believe, especially when you drag the process out for two [three] years. Since I started, I've realized that I'm not writing to prove anything anymore. I've also nearly stopped believing that the journey is a pilgrimage.

I don't know why I don't want to prove anything here. It's probably only half true. It certainly would be cool if I could - proving something is such an accomplished thing to do. But it's also way out of fashion to prove these sorts of things, the theorist is not a prover in the 21st, heck! not even in the 20th, century. For me to try to prove something here would be like entering an ultimate fighting championship without a mouth-guard, without even a will to fight. It is in fashion not to want to prove something, but to want to know something through participation and experience, and then to want to talk about it, to create and participate in dialogue. I have done that and I continue to do that. Participation and experience: I went up to Dawson a full year before I enrolled at Concordia and two years before I started studying the phenomenon of me and mine as a potential pilgrimage system. I did it before I thought of reflecting on it, so I figure I've got something going for me, stylistically that is. Dialogue: It's been a long conversation.

As far as nearly not believing that the journey is a pilgrimage, well, that's only half true as well. What I really feel is that I'm just not there anymore. I was there, I really was. I wrote it all down, plain as day, and it shone with the golden light of real religious experience. But then the computer did away with that file, I nearly had a heart attack of rage, but now I'm back to writing and here we go. I'm in Toronto, not far from where I started my journey to the Yukon. (Sedore, 2007)

How It Came To Be (alias) A Bit of My Own Story:

It had been a year since my graduation from my under-grad at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. I was looking for something exciting to do and I'd been talking with my good old friend Julia Whitfield on the telephone. It was March or April of 2002, she was living in London, England and I had been living with my parents at Jackson's Point in southern Ontario. I'd been surfing the internet, desperately seeking employment that would challenge and satisfy my want for summers in the bush. I'd found a job-posting from Outward Bound, they were looking for someone to spearhead their new camp in South Africa. Whitfield had friends in South Africa and had said that she'd be happy to meet me there for a couple weeks of her vacation. Whitfield was also obsessed with "The Arctic", which meant anywhere in the Yukon

and Alaska, due to her love for the television show "Northern Exposure". We had watched many an episode together in Kingston. When she claimed that she would be just as happy to go to "The Arctic", my gaze shifted continents. I had the whole summer ahead of me, a case of wanderlust, and an inkling that I would be able to find work up in Dawson City. I began making plans immediately.

These funny twists and turns can mark the path of a creek that feeds a river that will find the ocean. I had known about Dawson City. My father would recite Robert Service poetry, the classics like "The Cremation of Sam McGee" and "The Shooting of Dan McGrew", around the countless bonfires of my childhood, and he still does. My grandparents had cruised up the west coast and driven through Dawson when I was a teenager. My cousin had paddled the Yukon River and stayed in Tent City for a night. A friend of my parents had lived there for years, performing his theatrics for the tourists, and friends of my own had gone up to camp and work with local youth for the summers just prior to my own journey. Sam Yamada told me that I would love it in the Yukon. She'd gone to Whitehorse with her dad and they'd gotten out into the country and she was really excited to tell me about the quality of the silence of the place. Her stories made me think of thick forests and gravel. Another family friend had spent many summers in Dawson in the 1970's and had told me the wildest and most ridiculous stories about the things that had happened to her while she was there. That was a while ago, but I had a feeling that it was all still going on for those who sought it. In the spring of 2002 I had never been farther west than Quetico Provincial Park, which is just west of Thunder Bay, Ontario. It was time.

I flew to Vancouver, visited with my uncle, and took the ferry to Vancouver Island. After a nice long visit with school friends that were back to Victoria, I took the bus to Courtney and stayed with my great-aunt and uncle. I took the bus "up-island" to Port Hardy and hopped onto the B.C. ferry to Prince Rupert. It is a 30-hour boat trip. I stayed in Prince Rupert for three days and four nights, waiting for the Alaskan ferry to Skagway. I met Shaun Durand in the youth

hostel, he was going to Dawson as well, and we were buddies instantly. I remember signing-out a book from the library, a book on How To Draw. I was using charcoal and I've still got the drawings of my left hand and my face in the mirror. I looked much more haggard than I felt. I felt wonderful in misty Prince Rupert. I was on a real adventure. The third assignment in the book was to draw a friend's face from memory. I tried one of my oldest friends. It turned-out terribly. I blamed my drawing skills more than my memory.

The trip from Prince Rupert to Skagway is also about 30 hours long. Shaun and I met Bonnie and Sam and we were all excited and mesmerized. Bonnie and Sam stayed in a bed and breakfast in Skagway that night. Shaun and I rolled-out our sleeping bags in the park by the water and we could not be sure if we were being visited by stray dogs or wolves throughout the night under that snowy mountain. Shaun and I hitchhiked to Whitehorse the next day, stayed with an old school friend of mine, and hitchhiked to Dawson City the day after that.

Merely describing the route, however, does not do the journey justice. We travel by our minds and by our hearts as well as by our feet and our vessels. I had never been Out West. I had never seen the Prairies or the Rockies. (I still hadn't seen the prairies because I'd flown, but I felt like I knew more about them then than I had before, that's for sure.) I had never seen the Pacific Ocean, the city of Vancouver or the city of Victoria. I was writing poetry in my journal and doing my best to notch-out the memories as they were occurring. I was obsessed with creating a structure for remembering, an effective space for re-visiting these moments that I was eating-up with such a veracious appetite. I had a very strong feeling that I was participating in a quintessential North American tradition and I was proud. I was proud because I was not only going west, I was going north. West is so California, it is coast and surf and ski. West is bikinis and Gore-Tex and smoking pot. Then there is true north. North is the rest of Canada, it is (mostly) inland, it is freshwater and boreal. It is skinny-dipping and army surplus and booze. I was not interested in buying into the culture of "go west and discover Shambhala". I wanted to be in an unlikely place with a familiar feel. I was going to find the bush babies, "the orphaned

earth muffins", as I later heard them (us) called.

I was accustomed to traveling with friends and with family, in groups. This was different, I had met people along the way and, for as long as their route converged with my own, we were companions. As companions, we would care for each other, but the basis of our acquaintance was circumstantial. I was alone in this sense yet I felt myself to be participating in a culture and a community. Having studied religion at Queen's, I could not help but think in terms of the symbolism informing our perception, our actions, and our direction. Why were we going to where? By the time Shaun asked me what I was running from, as we were drinking beer at the bar on the Alaskan ferry, words like "pilgrimage" and "quest" and "treasure-seeking" had already been swirling about in my mind.

When I got to Dawson City for my third summer in 2005, Tent City was closed. It had been shut down for the first summer in decades and the town was different because of it. This was not a surprise to me, I'd known that Tent City would be shut down, but I was surprised by the immediacy of the impact it had on the Dawson summer community. The people who I had thought may be pilgrims simply were not there in the numbers they had been, nor where they there in the numbers I had expected/hoped for. Tent City had closed and the people had not come. I had not returned to the same place.

Surely, that reinforced the idea that the people going to Dawson were there more for the camping community than for anything else. At the same time, if it were really a pilgrimage, could it have died-out that quickly? Turner speaks to this topic. He suggests that pilgrimages may have their own entelechy and way of growing, to be addressed later in this paper, but they

> do not have their own means to defend themselves by force. But they [do] have one immense advantage: unless a pilgrimage center is systematically discredited and destroyed [by representatives of church or state, or even by revolutionary groups who see it as an organ of church or state (Turner, 1978 29)], the believing masses will continue to their way to the shrine. (Turner, 1978 29-30)

There was hope, for old habits and wild spirits die hard. But if the journey to Dawson was a pilgrimage, and if Tent City had been a central shrine of sorts, and since Tent City was no longer

present, had the central shrine not been destroyed?

Methodology:

Throughout this study of an experience, and the experience of a study, I was present as a subject. I was a participant with my own assumptions and preferences. I was a participant-observer. Every participant-observer affects, and is affected by, that which is being studied and experienced. I was aware of that. The other two summers I'd been in Dawson, I was grooving around town like nobody's business. When I went back to Dawson "to study" and "to do field work", things were a little different because I was different. And that was fine, but different.

Here is the history behind my motive: In 1998, the land which had been Tent City for a while was settled as a land claim of the Trond'ek Gwetch'in. At the time of settlement, the band had agreed with the City of Dawson to continue to operate Tent City for seven more years, after which time the land would be re-appropriated, to be used by the band as the band saw fit. Managing Tent City was no treat. Campers would often avoid paying rent, garbage and the wildlife it attracts was often a worry, and fires would blaze during dry times. 2004 was therefore the last season for transient campers on that site.

And here is my motive: There had been a lot of discussion about colonialism in the North and I felt very strongly that, despite a certain level of ignorance on the cultural history and politics of the North, most summer campers were there with a sincere interest and hope to discover more about themselves, their companions, and their physical and social environments. I recognized the colonial traits within myself and my comrades, and this was discomforting to say the least. But I also felt that we were doing something other than perpetuating a pattern and repeating history. I felt that, through the sincerity of the search for, and expression of, identity, these summer campers were behaving more like a bridge than a bulldozer.

I distributed a questionnaire over the course of a week in August of 2005 and I collected

the questionnaire after a month.[1] I did my best to keep my eyes and ears and heart open for any discussion that was related to "the North" as a concept. I tried to be as receptive as possible to the messages I was hearing and I have done my best to represent these messages in this paper. I love going North, and I love going South, and love going North again. I hope to continue the journey with my eyes and ears and heart open. I think that's why I wrote this paper.

The Theory Backing the Method:

Positivists are interested in proving something as valid, reliable, and credible through quantitative and qualitative research. Franz Fanon, on the other hand and otherwise known as the "grandfather of post-colonial theory", wrote *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963), and was not keen on objective accounts of history. According to Fanon, attitudes productive of "objective historical conditions" have been problematic and error-prone, the one-sidedness of which are apparent in the predicament that, "for the native, objectivity is always directed against him." (Fanon 1963 61)

History is creative and stories are powerful representational tools. There is a certain responsibility that comes part and parcel with telling a story, especially if it is someone else's story. To mis-represent a person, a group, a political movement, an era, is to bring the past into the present in a convoluted way. Story-telling is effective. It can influence the condition and identity of the subject. It can alter our understanding and perception of the past and, in that way, it can change the future. It's easy to talk but hard to tell - how can we get the stories straight? And if the tale be crook'd, may it be told justly so.

The thinking of Michel Foucault includes a concept called "ideology critique", which he addressed in "Truth and Power" in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977* (1980). Foucault sees how discourses - which are neither true, nor false - produce

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[1] Please refer to APPENDIX E: The Voices for some more interesting details about the people who responded to the survey, and to APPENDIX F: The Dawson Survey for a copy of the survey itself and the consent form which was attached.

effects of truth. Ideology critique is not concerned with distinguishing between truth and whatever else, but rather studies the history of the production of these effects of truth.

Foucault also had an idea of discourse analysis, of which he writes in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972). Discourse analysis may bring the student to an understanding of language and culture through the analysis of discursive statements. Discursive statements can reveal discontinuity in discourse. These statements thus occur within "systems of dispersion" (Blanchard, 2005 21)[2] Systems of dispersion are different from what Foucault identifies as "the history of ideas", which has been associated with structuralism and "has traditionally charted the past through sequences of unity and continuity." (Blanchard, 2005 21) Discourse analysis looks for the breaks in what has otherwise been presented as continuous, for "moments of 'discontinuity, rupture, threshold, limit, series and transformation.' (Foucault, 1972 23)" (Blanchard, 2005 21)

Discursive statements are the primary units, the building blocks, of discourse. "... an elementary unit of discourse" (Foucault 1972, 90) Groups of statements form "discursive relations", intersections and matrices of statements. Discursive relations obey rules and take-on forms (discursive regularities), which provide the conditions for their existence. (Blanchard, 2005 22) Discursive statements are found within discourse, but they are freer than discourse itself.

> Each element [of discourse] is taken as the expression of totality to which it belongs and whose limit it exceeds. (Foucault, 1972 133)

Discourse is "a process of archiving historical statements". Archaeology, for Foucault, is the process of understanding how some statements come to be included, and even "govern" discourse, while others are marginalized, silenced, over-looked and, in sense, omitted from the story we hear. Discursive formations are specific, they have their own histories, and there are

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[2] Georgina Blanchard is a dear friend of mine who wrote her M.A. thesis through the Queen's University Department of Sociology. We have spent a summer up in Dawson together and have spent many an hour discussing our experiences of the North. Georgina introduced me to Foucault and I refer to her writings quite a bit as she has been my main teacher on this topic.

particular conditions for the rules of their formation, without which the discursive formation would cease to exist. The analysis of dispersions of discursive formation reveals a description of how "certain statements come to be known as fact, and others as something other than fact". (Blanchard, 2005 22) The history of the Yukon, as it is presented in text books, is an example of a discourse.

> If understood as a system of dispersion, a discourse reveals not only its expanse, but also its limits. This occurs because discourse is affected by external conditions which affect its rules of formation. (Blanchard, 2005 23-24)

This is relevant to a study of transient communities in the Yukon because Foucault pays much attention to the margin, the limen, and our social blind-spots. Just how the communities in the Yukon are liminal will be discussed in further detail. May it presently suffice to suggest that the Yukon is a physical limen insofar as the region recognized as the Yukon Territory occupies the northwestern-most area of Canada. Drive, fly, walk, hitchhike, bike or paddle as far north by northwest as you can, and the last town to hit is Dawson City. It is not a dead-end, but it is the end of the road…

Everyone is searching for something wherever they may be, but here is where many a wayward traveler hangs their hat and call home. (Ben, 2005)[3]

The Yukon is also a social and political limen because of the frontier character that was established during the Klondike gold rush and because of the colonialist power structures operating between northern and southern Canada, which have been perpetuated since the gold rush. Focusing on statements often marginalized, either due to ambiguous expression or the silencing effects of dominant culture, may help to volumize the messages from a liminal populace. More on this later.

To discuss the ruptures in, and the limits of, dialogue may be disconcerting at first, but checking our blind spots with Foucault need not be an uncomfortable experience. Foucault is not calling for a complete shift of focus, he's calling for a wider lens. After all, the conditions for

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[3] This is a portion of Ben's comment in response to the *running from something* question in the

continuity may be the same as the conditions for discontinuity. Foucault is not calling for a substitution of disunity for unity, but rather that we "question the presumption that history must *always* reveal itself through a system of continuity." (Blanchard, 2005 23) This allows for the perception that, when something (a dialogue) is considered continuous, it may be glossing over certain incongruous details, events, movements (ruptures) that are deserving of our attention.

So, we consider the external factors that limit the discourse in order to come to a clearer understanding of how that discourse is maintained. These factors include the institutional, social and cultural powers that inform and limit a certain discourse. One possible method of doing so, applied by Georgina Blanchard, is to use "site-specific experience" and "contextualize it against national narratives of culture and perceptions to imply a multiplicity of forces at work." (Blanchard, 2005 24)

The theorist navigates by the landmarks of their choice and muses back-and-forth, or circles concentrically, moving from "past to present, polemicization to hybridity, institutional rhetoric to everyday commentary." (Blanchard, 2005 24)

This method begins with a certain statement and, in the spirit of Foucault, takes "the uniqueness of the statement" as its "central theme". (Foucault, 1972 128) From there, one may discuss the statement in relation to all other relevant elements of the existing discourse. The statement, uttered clearly from the human heart, becomes the measure of the discourse to which it at once births and belongs. There are not any round pegs and square holes here. Every statement is at home, my task as a student is to put these homes on the map.

I will be referring to a questionnaire, sometimes called "the survey", which I drafted and distributed among the once seasonal folk of Dawson City during the summer of 2005. I handed-out thirty surveys and received twelve in return. Needless to say, this is hardly enough information upon which to establish statistical trends. The documents are gems. Upon reviewing what my friends and acquaintances had written, some of my original suspicions where confirmed

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survey.

and some were challenged. In the spirit of Foucault and the unique and valuable event of human expression, I have decided to disperse the contents of the answered questionnaires throughout the body of the following text. I can only hope that the sincerity of their message illuminates my own attempt to make sense of the given experience.

At the time of questioning my friends and acquaintances, I was primarily interested in knowing whether or not they felt that the journey to Dawson City was a pilgrimage. The possibility that the journey could be considered a pilgrimage continues to be the primary inspiration to this study. However, after reading Victor Turner's work on liminality and studying Marshall McLuan's ideas on communication, globalization, and re-tribalization, I have found that these ways of understanding modern community have been helpful and I am therefore also incorporating these topics into this discussion. As Turner implies in the following statement, our focus is often adjusted by our experiences and observation.

> In moving from experience to social life to conceptualization and intellectual history, I follow the path of anthropologists almost everywhere. Although we take theories into the field with us, these become relevant only if and when they illuminate social reality. Moreover, we tend to find very frequently that it is not a theorist's whole system which so illuminates, but his scattered ideas, his flashes of insight taken out of systematic context and applied to scattered data. Such ideas have a virtue of their own and may generate new hypotheses. They even show how scattered facts may be systematically connected! Randomly distributed through some monstrous logical system, they resemble nourishing raisins in a mass of inedible dough. The intuitions, not the tissue of logic connecting them, are what tend to survive in the field experience. (Turner, 1974)

Over the course of study, one may begin with an idea and end with a very different idea. I began with pilgrimage. Then I got away from pilgrimage, as I was thinking more about rites of passage, apocalyptic communities, road culture and wanderlust and media, individualism and nationalism, retribalization, the hero, identity, and liminality the whole time. The field has been a thicket and of course it should have been. My mother is a beautiful weaver. I grew-up watching the process of bringing many unlikely colours and textures together into a work of wonder, warmth, and love. And I am her daughter.

CHAPTER 1A. TURNER ON THE LIMINAL

In order to discuss the liminal features of Dawson City, we must first establish what is meant by the terms "limen" and "liminal". For this, we turn to Victor Turner.

Introducing Victor Turner:

Victor Turner (b.1920 - d.1983) was an anthropologist and a prolific writer, productive through the second half of the last century. Academically, he was raised in what he refers to as "the orthodox social-structuralist tradition of British anthropology", where society is thought to be a system of segmented hierarchical structure, the units of which are the variety of social positions. To study society within this school is to study the relationships between social statuses, roles, and offices. (Turner, 1969 131)

Victor and his wife, Edith Turner, traveled the world studying ritual in many of its forms. Through his exposure to - and diligent observation of - ritual, Turner encountered expressions of modalities of social relationships that did not fit into the social-structural model. In theory and in deed, these expressions celebrated the very antithesis of the function of social structure. This was something that his previous studies did not leave room for and thus could not account for. Turner became convinced the "social" is not confined to the "social-structural" and he began to seek other sources for a framework better suited to his observations.

Society as a process:

Victor Turner's anthropology became a study of social dynamics. He explained much of what he observed by means of process analysis, wherein social being is understood as always in the process of becoming itself. (Turner, 1974 24) Here, social life is dramatic and unfolds in time. A social event is never isolated, but rather is studied through its relationship to other events. (Turner, 1974 35) Likewise, and in keeping with the popular idiom that "no man is an island", all people exist in a continually unfolding web of relationships with one another. Turner

appreciated Znaniecki's concept of "humanistic co-efficient":

> Cultural systems [...] depend not only for their meaning but also for their existence upon the participation of conscious, volitional human agents and upon men's continuing and potentially changing relations with one another. (Turner, 1974 32)

To consider the humanistic co-efficient is to suggest that a study of the social in its timely context relates to the study of the communication process in goal-driven social behaviour. Turner maintains that this includes the study of "the sources of pressures to communicate within and among groups", which "leads inevitably to the study of symbols, signs, signals, and tokens, verbal and non-verbal, that people employ in order to attain personal and group goals." (Turner, 1974 37) Cultural symbols, as they persist through time, also behave in time because they originate in, and tend to sustain, processes involving changes in social relations. (Turner, 1974 55) In this way, one may posit that cultural symbols are active and maybe even alive insofar as they participate in human life. According to Turner, the drama of human social life is busy, full of "unique and arbitrary happenings", and is therefore a fast process with which to reckon. (Turner, 1974 44)

> One advantage of studying a long-term sociocultural process such as pilgrimage is that one's attention is directed toward the dynamics of ideological change and persistence, rather than committed to analysis of static ideological patterns and cognitive structures. (Turner, 1974 25)

Considering the complexity and diversity that is human life, it seems that it is always helpful for the theorist to have a framework, a model, with which to work. Through studying these phases of communication, Turner identifies gaps in social structure, which he feels have been largely ignored by social structuralists. These gaps are important in defining social structure, much like spaces help to define sentence structure. But Turner finds that these gaps are not nothing, but are really something important to society. Betwixt-and-between, there is an entirely different anti-structural social mode which Turner calls "communitas". To make a sweeping generalization, Turner was most interested in the social process wherein an individual or group moves from structure, to the margins of that structure, experiences the bond of

communitas in this anti-structure, and then returns to structure a bit different for it. This movement is always a social process and is sometimes but not necessarily physical. Turner's ideas stemming from this particular interest were illuminated by Arnold Van Gennep's work on tribal rites of passage.

Arnold van Gennep and *Rites de Passage*:

Victor Turner refers to Arnold van Gennep (b.1873 – d.1957), the French folklorist and ethnographer, as "the father of processual analysis". (Turner, 1978 2) Van Gennep's *Rites de Passage* (1909) focuses on times when we, as social beings, pass from one culturally defined station, status, or state, to another. (Turner, 1969 166) Van Gennep gleaned many an insight from his studies of "ancient and tribal societies" and he found that occasions of transition, initiation, and status elevation are symbolically conceptualized and physically circumscribed by ceremonial ritual. (Turner, 1978 2) Examples of occasions for such ritualized activity include the particular and temporary events of pregnancy, illness, impending danger, journeys, and induction. (Van Gennep, 1909 189) Van Gennep found that, while these rituals may appear to differ between the societies within which they flourish, many are based on like concepts and they all maintain the same basic form.

Van Gennep had noticed that, while some societies are organized in terms of religious associations, totem clans, phrateries, castes, and professional classes - all societies are organized in terms of age group, family, restricted politico-administrative and territorial units such as bands, villages and town. He had also noticed that each society has a notion of "the world preceding life and the one which follows death." (Van Gennep, 1909 189) Conceptually, the ceremony marks the passage of a person - whether that "person" be recognized as a group or as an individual – across, or through, a threshold. The ceremony mimics the passage from birth to death to re-birth. To symbolically act, and to cease acting by waiting and resting, and to begin acting again in a different way outlines this universal pattern of human experience. Our condition changes as we

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pass through series of separation and re-union. (Van Gennep, 1909 189)

Formally, three basic stages of rituals of induction, or passage, are: 1. Separation; 2. Marginalization; and 3. Aggregation. (Turner, 1969 94) These three stages may also be referred to as "pre-liminal", "liminal", and "post-liminal" (Turner, 1969 166) and they will be discussed in turn.

At first, the ritual subject - be that subject individual or corporate - in transition is separated from that which would normally bind him, her, or them, to their previous status in their governing social structure. This first stage signifies "the detachment of the individual or group either from an earlier fixed point in the social structure, from a set of cultural conditions (a "state"), or from both." (Turner, 1969 94) Turner prefers the term "state" over and above the terms "status" and "office" because it includes all and any "stable or recurrent" culturally recognized condition. (Turner, 1969 94)

The margin, also recognized as the threshold or limen, is a phase and a space of ambiguity. The agent undergoing ritualized transition occupies the limen and thereby participates in liminality and the bond of communitas. (Turner, 1969 143) The limen is a "cultural realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state." (Turner, 1969 94) "Liminar", "neo-phyte", and "rookie" are all examples of names for a person or group of people engaged in liminality.

Marginalization may be physical, taking place in a space set apart from the every day social activity. Liminars are also marginalized in the abstract yet literal sense of their social occupation of cultural margins. They are "betwixt-and-between" structurally regular categories. (Turner, 1978 2) Beyond, beside, below, or somehow apart from regular social classification, this marginalization may involve the degradation of the neophyte (the typical treatment of most things, be they objects, experiences, or people, that we can not, no matter how hard we try, quite squeeze into a classification box) but not necessarily and this will be discussed in more detail below. At any rate, movement to the limen is a departure from most structural norms, and the

location of the limen is conducive to allowing for a bird's eye view of social structure. From this perspective, liminars are sometimes able to develop social critique. The expressions of communitas come from without, from a meta-structural perspective, and Turner recognizes the phenomenon as a mode of "anti-structure".

The consummation of the passage occurs in the third and final phase of the ritual, at the time of aggregation. The ritual subject makes the return to a "relatively stable state" and occupies a new position in the social life of structure. At this point, the freshly inducted "has rights and obligations vis-à-vis others of a clearly defined "structural" type; he is expected to behave in accordance with certain customary norms and ethical standards binding on incumbents of social position in a system of such positions." (Turner, 1969 94-95) The person, or group, has passed through the pre-requisite training and has been re-assimilated to a higher status level in the social structure. When I draw this idea of the social, it looks like a sketch of a circle. The whole circle is the society in question. The area inside the circle is the structure of that society, all that it holds as normal, all that it maintains as self-definitive. The parameter, or the line defining the circle, is the margin or limen. That's where the liminars go. That's where communitas happens.
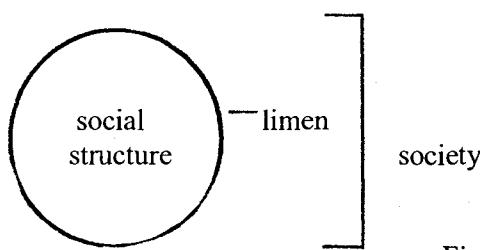
Figure 1: My drawing of Turner's idea

Communitas - with a little help from Martin Buber:

Communitas is the sentiment, the bond, of community that is inspired in liminality. Turner emphasizes that communitas has much to do with the group as a whole, and that it is the sensation of corporate being and existence. Again, communitas is anti-structural insofar as it is undifferentiated, equalitarian, and direct. There are many parallels between Turner's idea of communitas and Martin Buber's quintessential concept of the *I Thou* relationship. (Turner, 1974

47) In the throws of communitas, one is no longer beside, but is with "another of a multitude of persons", everyone "moves towards one goal", and there is "everywhere a turning to", a "dynamic facing of the others", "a flow from *I* to *Thou*". (Turner, 1974 137) Buber, like Turner, also emphasizes the sensation and not the location, or geographical fixation, of communitas when he states that "community is where community happens". (Turner, 1969 127) Highlighting the dimension of collectivity, Turner also mentions Buber's "essential We": "The *We* includes the *Thou*. Only men who are capable of truly saying *Thou to* one another can truly say *We with* one another." (Turner, 1969 137) Communitas is the essential We, the highly potent, socially transient, always unique "experience of mutuality." (Turner, 1969 137) The signs and sentiment of communitas are an indication of liminality.

Three types:

There are three types of communitas. The three include existential, or spontaneous communitas, normative communitas, and ideological communitas and each of these will be outlined in turn.

Existential, or spontaneous, communitas is most readily recognized as "the hippies' happening" and William Blake's concept of "the winged moment as it flies". This is that spice-of-life feeling that people get when they are living in true joyful relation with others in any community. It is a social modality, a way of being social, without the repressive restrictions of social structure. It involves the "mutual forgiveness of each vice." (Turner, 1969 132) As spaces help to punctuate and even define the structure of a sentence, so spontaneous communitas "punctuates the phase structure of social life" in both preliterate and complex societies. (Turner, 1969 137)

Normative communitas occurs when, in time, the group develops a need to mobilize and organize resources and to socially control its members in the interest of achieving its goals. Normative communitas is where "the existential communitas is organized into a perduring social

system". (Turner, 1969 132) This process can be identified in many familiar cases: the institutionalization of Christian groups into churches, and the dissolution of hippy communes, for example.

Normative communitas need not spiral downwards into over-bureaucratization, however. Turner suggests that the communitas of tribal societies is normative and stable. Normative communitas is, after all, the main form of communitas occurring in the liminality of the tribal initiation rituals that have persisted for thousands of years. Tribal initiation rites are governed by "rules that abolish minutiae of structural differentiation in, for example, the domains of kinship, economics, and political structure, [and thereby] liberate the human structural propensity and give it free reign in the cultural realm of myth, ritual, and symbol." (Turner, 1969 133) As distinctions between people are minimized, the structure is simplified. In tribal initiation rituals, the neophytes are not on their own. The ritual elders are present and busy giving instruction and direction. This over-simplified structure Turner names "ideological structure". The ideological in*struct*ions take the form of myth and the variety of sacra relevant to the group. (Turner, 1969 133)

It is from ideological communitas that utopian models for society are produced, models based on the experience of, or some acquaintance with, existential and spontaneous communitas. (Turner, 1969 132) This is a forum for describing the outward form, the external and visible aspects, of communitas. It is an attempt "to spell out the optimal social conditions under which such experiences might be expected to flourish and multiply." (Turner, 1969 132) An instance of ideological communitas looks like a plan for the perfect society. It is a blueprint to be replicated, a map to be navigated, complete with a compass for proper orientation.

Consequently, it may be stated that communitas can exist in theory as an ideal, communitas can exist spontaneously in the thrill of the moment, and communitas can even exist in an altered, normative form. As long as communitas does exist, people are living together and in union. Communitas persists for as long as the group is able to maintain its spirit. As for its

end, Turner suggests that there are two ways to be separated from the bond of communitas:

> The first is to act only in terms of incumbency of office in the social structure.
> The second is to follow one's psychobiological urges at the expense of one's
> fellows. (Turner, 1969 105)

When people are together in the way of spontaneous communitas, they are to gather. This relates to the miners' system of trust, and the unspoken code of the bush which states that the group is only as quick as its slowest member, never leave someone behind. When you're on the edge, you've got to not fall off. Sometimes you need help, sometimes you give it.

Modernity and Volition, liminal and liminoid features:

Arnold van Gennep was a pioneer in his field. Turner recognized the impact that Van Gennep's theories had for developing an understanding of social transformation and innovation. Turner took these theories and started to push the envelope. Van Gennep had recognized a pattern in traditional rites of passage and Turner wanted to apply that insight to "ritual occasions other than initiation in tribal social settings." (Turner, 1969 113) Much of Turner's later studies where committed to locating and describing liminality in the complexity of modern societies.

Turner uncovered a whole new set of questions when he started applying van Gennep's theory to modern, complex societies. First of all, tribal groups are very different from groups that have experienced the Industrial Revolution. Turner had to take this into account as he extended the framework of liminality to the modern setting. When reading Turner, modern, industrial, complex civilizations are thus often defined in relation to the primitive, pre-industrial, tribal societies. The main difference here is that, through the Industrial Revolution, modern societies became complex through the division of labour. Specialization led to fragmented social roles and an increase in leisure time. Leisure time now implies that activity designated as 'religious" and other ritualized activities are no longer obligatory but are, either optional or professional pursuits. When people engage in salvation traditions voluntarily, salvation becomes a choice, a matter of free-will, and ultimately bound-up with the moral condition of the

individual.

This aspect of volition is what marks the leading difference between tribal liminality and modern liminality. The difference is so striking that Turner suggests that liminality may not even be the proper term for describing the parallel phenomenon in modernity and he advances the use of another term, "the liminoid", in its place. This will be explored in greater detail below. In the meantime, may it suffice to suggest that, because leisure time is built-into social structure in modernity, Turner felt that the chances for truly experiencing the limen have been greatly reduced.

> Liminal phenomena are embodied in the collaborative "work" of a tribal or early agrarian society's annual ecological and social structural round, and are obligatory for all. Liminoid phenomena, though present in the simpler societies, prevail in societies of greater scale and complexity, and tend to be generated by the voluntary activity of individuals during their free time. The universal religions, addressed to the salvation of individuals, with a stress on individual choice, establish favorable conditions for the development of liminoid phenomena and processes in the total culture. Liminal features persist, however, in the liturgical structures of the universal religions, and, indeed, in many secular institutions. But the developing, secular leisure domain becomes crowded with liminoid genres such as the fine arts, the folk arts, and critiques of social structure, as well as apologies for it. The voluntaristic character of pilgrimage in the formative centuries of the historical religions places it within the liminoid camp, but the "archaic" category [...] bears clear traces of an antecedent liminality. (Turner, 1974 232)

Victor Turner had become Roman Catholic and had discovered that pilgrimage was one sure manifestation of liminality in modern times. This, too, will later be discussed. At this point, however, I would like to establish an acquaintance with liminality in tribal ritual. We must come to terms with tribal liminality before we can discuss re-tribal liminality or, perhaps more appropriately, re-tribal liminoid events.

There are two types of tribal liminality and they are mutually informative.

Liminality and Reversal:

As people prepare to move up the ladder of social structure, they are humbled at the moment of their transition. As people move along from one role to another in social structure,

they are held back and taught a lesson before assuming their station. In this way, liminality has much to do with the reversal of structural status and the social structural roles one plays. Victor Turner's term for this element of liminal ritual is "status reversal". Status reversal is a re-occurring theme in Turner's writing and may be said to be even more prominent a theme in his thinking than are the rites of passage. The reason for this is that Turner recognizes status reversal in rituals among societies that do, and societies that do not, have much mobility between social structural states.

Among societies with mobility between social structural states, the ritual subject is an individual person undergoing a rite of passage. Among societies that have little mobility between social structural states, the ritual subject is the whole community and the ritual is celebrated at certain points of crisis for the entire society. These later rituals may occur at certain times along the calendar, often at specific times in the hydrological or agricultural cycle. They may also occur at times when the entire society is preparing for a major transition, such as at times of war, draught, famine, or plague. Each of these paradigms will here be examined in even more detail and in turn.

a) Tribal rituals of induction, passage, and life-crisis:

On the grand scale, we are all moving from womb to tomb. Turner brings our attention to the theorist Lloyd Warner (1959), who thought much upon this theme of birth and death in ritual. Each time an individual passes through a distinct phase along this path, the ritual to commemorate this passage is often marked with allusions to that theme. Indeed, as we move from one state to another, we die to our former identities. (Turner, 1969 100) Often referred to as "life-crisis" rituals, these are at once rituals of passage, induction, and status elevation. The ritual subject here is always an individual. (Turner, 1969 168) This happens in societies where social life consists of a series of transitions between high and low, homogeneity and differentiation, equality and inequality, transition and state, social structure and communitas. (Turner, 1969 167)

The entire system encompassing the variety of modes of being is institutionalized and, once a passage has been made, it is irreversible. (Turner, 1969 167) The granting of membership, for example, is almost always a ritual of status elevation. Birth, puberty, marriage, and death are also said to be common occasions for this type of ritual. Interestingly, of these, the experience puberty and marriage are the occasions in our lives upon which we may have a chance to reflect. The neophyte is passing from a lower to a higher status "through a limbo of statuslessness." (Turner, 1969 97) The lessons learned, the ordeals undergone, and the humiliation withstood throughout this ritual process prepare the liminars to cope with their freshly pending responsibilities and privileges. (Turner, 1969 170)

Common features of the neophytes, or liminars, are humility, ambiguity, equality and egalitarianism, homogeneity, near-nakedness, comradeship, and namelessness. (Turner, 1969 96) In the spirit of anonymity, ritual subjects are often disguised in pigments and masks. (Turner, 1969 169) By means of all of this, the neophytes experience "structural invisibility". (Turner, 1969 169) They are subject to ritual humiliation, are stripped of the signs and rights of their pre-liminal status - rights to property, for example - are ritually leveled insofar as they are made equal amongst themselves, and must submit to ordeals and tests of various kinds. (Turner, 1978 53) This type of ritual is almost always done at a place secluded from the sphere of everyday life, a place physically set apart, often on the margins of village life. (Turner, 1969 169) Of these rituals Turner writes:

> [...] rendering them down into some kind of human *prima materia*, divested of
> specific form and reduced to a condition that, although it is still social, is without
> or beneath all accepted forms of status. (Turner, 1969 170)

"Without" or "beneath" hereby denotes the temporary occupation of a marginalized position. This lacking and the experience of such a base-level of human existence is often associated with the earth, for it is lowly and nutritive. Turner reminds his reader that there are many traditions that teach that it is from the earth that we were born and it is to the earth that we will return. The ritual subjects are "shown that in themselves they are clay or dust, mere matter, whose form is

impressed upon them by society." (Turner, 1969 103) Not necessarily contradictorily but in a

different vein, Turner writes:

> The powers that shape the neophytes in liminality for the incumbency of new
> status are felt, in rites all over the world, to be more-than-human powers, though
> they are invoked and channeled by the representatives of the community.
> (Turner, 1969 106)

It may be safe to assume that, by "more-than-human powers", Turner means gods, deities, ghosts,

ancestors, and other spirits. This could go into a discussion on archetypes as models, more on

that later. Granted, as an anthropologist, Turner may consider society itself to be a more-than-

human power. At any rate, these "representatives of the community" are often the elders, those

who have undergone the passage at hand, and who have wisdom to share. Wisdom here has

ontological value. "It fashions the very being of the neophyte" (Turner, 1969 103), and is like

fertilizer in growing-up. Another way to speak of the elders and the neophytes is in terms of

"senior" and "junior", respectively. In these rites of passage, the seniors take the responsibility

and the initiative to establish the customary conditions which the juniors must endure and

overcome. Turner posits that there is a certain satisfaction to be had on the part of the senior for

knowing the context of the ritual. The juniors, on the other hand, understand less of the rationale

for the changes to which they are being subjected. Turner suggests that it is a given that the

juniors operate with "cognitive deficiencies." As he elaborates:

> Thus, while the behavior of the seniors is within the power of that age group -
> and to some extent the structural changes they promote are for them predictable -
> the same behavior and changes are beyond the power of juniors either to grasp or
> to prevent. [...] [The ritual] masks the weak in strength and demands of the
> strong that they be passive and patiently endure the symbolic and eventual
> aggression shown against them by structural inferiors. (Turner, 1969 175-176)

Through the gleaning of the strengths of the elders, or at least the timely demand for

patience from those that would otherwise need not be obligated to spare it, the juniors come to

"mobilize affect-loaded symbols of great power." (Turner, 1969 175) But the liminars are only

play-acting powerful. Everyone involved knows that all that they have has been given to them,

something that is made quite obvious by the act and fact that, in liminality, everything has

effectively been taken away from them. This process is largely based on the conviction that immersion in humility leads to subsequent empowerment, or the acquisition of powers. (Turner, 1969 105) The ritual is composite insofar as status elevation assumes status reversal. As Turner suggests:

> The implication is that for an individual to go higher on the status ladder, he must go lower than the status ladder. (Turner, 169 170)

In summary, the process of growing-up is associated with a series of transitions that carve a path of upwards mobility through a social structure. There is structure and there is communitas and, at times of transition, people flow between the two. If the experience of the life-cycle were drawn as arrows pointing from structure to communitas and back to structure, the image would not be a circle of arrows so much as a spiral growing out.

b) The festival, calendrical rituals and rituals of community-wide life-crisis:

Not every society, however, fosters the potential for upwards mobility between social structural states. In those cases, Turner found that many societies have built-into their calendar a certain time wherein the poor are able to rise-up and take the chance to voice their opinions in public. It is an opportunity to strike a balance among polarized social power relations. This ritual is based largely on the premise that people of higher office tend to abuse their authority and misuse incumbents of lower offices, confusing the person with the position that person may occupy. (Turner, 1969 180)

What Turner calls "rites of status elevation" work for individuals and "rites of status reversal" work for whole societies. Turner's application of this terminology for the phenomenon at hand is more than confusing because, as has been stated earlier, each instance of status elevation includes the experience of status reversal. May it suffice to suggest that, in societies with upwards mobility, the individuals ascending must submit to rites of passage or status elevation, while in societies without upwards mobility there are established moments wherein the members of those societies switch positions of social status and figuratively wear each other's

shoes but only for the duration of the ritual. As Turner writes:

> Briefly put, one might contrast the liminality of the strong (and getting stronger) with that of the permanently weak. The liminality of those going up usually involves a putting down or humbling of the novice as its principal cultural constituent; at the same time, the liminality of the permanently structural inferior contains as its key social element a symbolic or make-believe elevation of the ritual subjects to positions of eminent authority. The stronger are made weaker; the weak act as though they were strong. The liminality of the strong is socially unstructured or simply structured; that of the weak represents a fantasy of structural superiority. (Turner, 1969 168)

Where what Turner names "rituals of status reversal" are cyclical and calendar rituals, they are collective rituals performed at culturally defined points of the seasonal cycle. (Turner, 1969 167) These rituals are associated with the annual productive cycle and celebrate scarcity to plenty, like first fruits and harvest festivals. They are also celebrated at times in the hydrological cycle - addressing monsoon or drought. (Turner, 1978 53) Rituals of status reversal are also performed at times of a collective rite of passage and at times of community-life crisis, like when a whole tribe goes to war or a whole community participates in response to the threat of famine, drought, and plague. (Turner, 1969 169) Emphasis should be placed upon the collective dimension of this ritual. As Turner confirms, these rites "almost always refer to large groups and quite often embrace whole societies." (Turner, 1969 169)

Turner suggests that, among tribal societies, the link between disaster and social sin is tied-up with the notion that the gods and ancestors do inflict harm in form of disease or some other hardship as a consequence of misbehavior. The ritual inevitably involves a "reanimat[ion of] the spirit of communitas [...] by plain speaking". (Turner, 1969 180)   As people switch roles, there is a cleansing, a purging and a purification of the potential imbalances and injustices of social structure. As Turner writes:

> Rituals of status reversal, either placed at strategic points in the annual cycle or generated by disasters conceived of as being the result of grave social sins, are thought of as bringing social structure and communitas into right mutual relation once again. (Turner, 1969 178)

In rituals of status reversal, the group that is perpetually of lower status is temporarily permitted

to behave as structurally superior to those to whom they usually find themselves in servitude.

This is the reversal of status and social roles of the lowly and the mighty. (Turner, 1974 53)

Turner writes:

> [...] groups or categories of persons who habitually occupy low status positions
> in the social structure are positively enjoined to exercise ritual authority over
> their superiors; and they [the superiors], in turn, must accept with good will their
> ritual degradation. [...] They are often accompanied by robust verbal and
> nonverbal behavior, in which inferiors revile and even physically maltreat
> superiors. (Turner, 1969 167)

As will be examined in closer detail below, the bond of communitas is strengthened by

the threat of danger. For the elite to relinquishing control over their everyday power is for them

to allow for a certain element of chaos in the community, and with this comes threat of a danger.

The possibilities of what may come of their submission to whims of the otherwise structurally

inferior are unpredictable. There is bedrock to be found, however, in this type of ritual, and chaos

can only stir so deep. The outward form of the ritual is chaotic, but it confirms cosmos by

negation. (Turner, 1969 177) The social chaos present in these rituals reinforces the otherwise

regular organization of the group's social structure. Among the cyclical seasonal rituals, the chaos

of status reversal is offset by the organization of its timing. As Turner notes:

> Rituals of status reversal make visible in their symbolic and behavioral patterns
> social categories and forms of grouping that are considered to be axiomatic and
> unchanging both in essence and in relationship to [one] another. [...] By making
> the low high and the high low, they reaffirm the hierarchical principle. (Turner,
> 1969 176-177)

At times of community-life crisis, the social categories remain the same while the people

exchange positions, affirming the hierarchical structure of their community. Yet, perhaps more

emphasis should be placed on the community aspect of this ritual and less on the life-crisis part of

it. It becomes a chance for leveling things out because most people in the community are

participating. Yes, there are some times of crisis - like war and famine and drought - where

everybody pitches-in a little more energy. These occasions, however, are unpredictable. The

more predictable occasions for this ritual are calendrical. They are hydrological, agricultural and,

I would like to add, astrological insofar as they are based on regular patterns.

Liminality and the Sacred:

There is a heavy implication that the limen is a location of the sacred. Turner suggests that the experience of communitas may be ecstatic. As communitas is liminal, an experience of the margin, it is an "extra-structural" - or "meta-structural" - modality of social interrelationship. (Turner, 1969 vii) The concept of ecstasy ties-in closely here, for ecstasy is the experience of "standing outside of". To exit one's (regular) stance is to know existence, free of the usually definitive structures. Turner writes:

> Communitas breaks through the interstices of structure, in liminality; at the edges
> of structure, in marginality; and from beneath structure, in inferiority. It is
> almost everywhere held to be sacred or "holy", possible because it transgresses
> or dissolves the norms that govern structured and institutionalized relationships
> and is accompanied by experiences of unprecedented potency. (Turner, 1969
> 128)

Here, liminality, marginality, and inferiority are each outlined as venues for communitas. Also, it is suggested that people occupying those positions are occupying sacred time and sacred space. It is the case that liminality affords for a transient humility and modeless-ness, which may be considered or experienced as sacred. (Turner, 1969 97) However, Turner emphasizes that the distinction between social structure and communitas is not equal to the distinction between the profane and the sacred. In tribal societies, the sacred is not bound to communitas and may be recognized within social structures. As Turner states:

> Certain fixed offices in tribal societies have *many* sacred attributes; indeed every
> social position has *some* sacred characteristics. (Turner, 1969 97)

Conversely, but in the same spirit of thought, individuals and groups that live their lives as socially marginalized, although occupying the limen of mainstream society, do not experience this "ecstatic" feeling simply by virtue of their marginalization. They do, however and through their personal experiences, gather plenty of imperative for cultural critique and, at times of ritualized celebration (parades and festivals, for example), mobilize. This mobility can facilitate

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the expression of critique and the experience of communitas.

The Underdog and The Power Of the Weak:

Memories of life in the schoolyard and on the playground illuminate the discussion of the powers of the weak and the strength that may be derived from submission. Do you remember underdogs at the swing set? To give the best push ever, to get that swinger as high as possible, the pusher heaves from behind and effectively runs forward and under the swinger. High requires low and the principle applies in the abstract to social relationships as well. Turner refers to Iowan Lewis who, on page 111 of his 1963 book, used the term "the power or powers of the weak" when describing what Turner calls "the ritual potency of structural inferiors." (Turner, 1969 99) As Turner wrote:

> The point I would like to stress here is that there is a certain homology between the "weakness" and "passivity" of liminality in diachronic transitions between states and statuses, and the "structural" or synchronic inferiority of certain personae, groups, and social categories in political, legal, and economic systems. (Turner, 1969 99)

The power of the weak most generally belongs to the politically downtrodden. Turner emphasizes the "permanently or transiently sacred attribute of low status and position." (Turner, 1969 109) This is informed by the identity of "the structurally inferior as the morally and ritually superior, and the secular weakness as sacred power." (Turner, 1969 125) Herein lies the power of the underdog. Groups and individuals familiar with the experience of outsider-hood and structural inferiority have a heightened level of experience with the social conditions that are often associated with liminality - namely to be outside of, or beneath, social structure. (Turner, 1969 viii) Historically, these people have been great cultural critics. Structurally small and politically powerless nations within systems of nations, for example, have often behaved as the upholders of religious and moral values in their broader social context. Turner cites the Hebrews of the ancient Near East, the Irish in early medieval Christendom, and the Swiss in modern Europe as exemplary in this sense. (Turner, 1969 109) The First Nations of North America stand

as a pertinent example as well. Turner does acknowledge aboriginality as he writes:

> [...] mystical and moral powers are weilded by subjugated autochtones over the total welfare of societies whose political frame is constituted by the lineage or territorial organization of incoming conquerors. (Turner, 1969 109)

Turner suggests that, among cult associations, membership is a function of common misfortune and debilitating circumstances. Through the communal experience of cult life, people hope for the acquisition of therapeutic powers that relate to the common good of mankind, like bodily and spiritual health and fertility. (Turner, 1969 109)

At the individual level, there are many archetypes that harness the association of the underdog, the outsider, and the power of the weak. Among these, Turner highlights the Stranger, the Shaman, the Prophet, the Artist, and the Clown as mediators.

The western stranger, just like in the movies, is typically homeless and mysterious, bearing no wealth and is often nameless. This stranger-mediator-hero "restores ethical and legal equilibrium to a local set of political power relations by eliminating the unjust secular "bosses" who are oppressing the small holders." (Turner, 1969 110) This archetype need not apply solely to individuals but, as with the story of the Good Samaritan, may be found to be working among despised and/or outlawed ethnic or cultural groups. (Turner, 1969 110)

The shaman, the prophet, and the artist are also often playing the role of mediator, not only during times of social conflict in a community, but also during times of spiritual conflict among individuals. To maintain the mediation, these people are not partial to one social group or another. Turner writes:

> The shaman [...] or prophet assumes a status-less status, external to the secular social structure, which gives him the right to criticize all structure-bound personae in terms of a moral order binding on all, and also to mediate between all segments or components of the structured system. (Turner, 1969 116-117)

Spiritually, these people are believed to be connected with another realm, another mode of reality, and are able to speak and teach from extra-ordinary experience. Turner writes:

> Prophets and artists tend to be liminal and marginal people, "edge-men," who strive with passionate sincerity to rid themselves of the cliches associated with

status incumbency and role-playing and to enter into vital relations with other men in fact or imagination. In their productions we may catch glimpses of that unused evolutionary potential in mankind which has not yet been experienced and fixed in structure. (Turner, 1969 128)

The stranger, the shaman, the prophet and the artist are not weak, per se. They are simply betwixt and between. The clown and the court jester, on the other had, often play the same role as these others but by virtue of delinquency, or weakness. Much like the concept feeding the expression "from the mouths of babes", the clown is typically drunk and the jester is typically physically challenged, and, in medieval times, it may not be outrageous to assume that a compromised physical state was often attributed to, or at least closely tied-up with, intellectual deficiencies. Yet, Turner reminds his readers that the jester was not only an entertainer, but often set his mind to reducing the holders of high rank and office to humanity and morality. (Turner, 1969 110) The jester, and like figures, "representing the poor and the deformed, appear to symbolize the moral values of communitas as against the coercive power of supreme political rulers." (Turner, 1969 110) Thus we have the paradigm of truth from purity. As with immaculate conceptions and virgin births, so we have respect for the jibing of the court jester.

The idea of the weak being powerful is largely based on the insight that social conditions are dynamic. The weak become strong. As Wilfred Cantwell Smith suggests, this is not a case of social status, so much as social fluxus, or as Smith writes:

> We are somehow aware, if only through imaginative vision or sensibility or our special capacity for hope, not only what is but also of what ought to be. We have sensed that the *status quo* (nowadays, the *fluxus quo*) is not the final truth about humans or the world. We have felt, to take one example, that social justice and concord, personal righteousness, health and joy stand over against the current observable condition of strife, loneliness, wickedness, poverty, and sorrow not as fancy against truth, wishful and irrational dreaming against reality, but in some fashion *vice versa* - as a norm by which the present imperfect world is judged, in some sense a truth in relation to which empirical actuality is in some sense an error. (Smith, 1997 2)

It is when people are down on their luck, or when they are at odds with their situation at hand, that they start coming up with alternative models for their lives and their life with others. Harkening back to the idea that communitas is evident in situations of conflict, we can read the

following passage from Turner with a mind for the power that people and groups are willing to

harness during times of weakness. Turner writes:

> But in the limina throughout actual history, when sharp divisions begin to appear
> between the root paradigms which have guided social action over long tracts of
> time and the anti-paradigmatic behavior of multitudes responding to totally new
> pressures and incentives, we tend to find the prolific generation of new
> experimental models - utopias, new philosophical systems, scientific hypotheses,
> political programs, art forms, and the like - among which reality-testing will
> result in the cultural "natural selection" of those best fitted to make intelligible
> and give form to, the new contents of social relations. (Turner, 1974 3)

There is also the well-founded notion, tested and proven throughout human history, that

when humanity has been deprived or oppressed, it will fight for freedom and for right. The fight

is fueled by the imperative that when people have got nothing, they have got nothing to loose.

This is a power that threatens the very structure responsible for sustaining oppressive social

relationships. The people who are able to wield the power of the weak do so because of, and by

means of, their social marginalization.

Liminality and the Revolution:

Those who may not otherwise know first-hand the trials of the socially challenged do get

a chance and glimpse at this perspective by engaging in rituals and ritualized occasions that place

them on the margins. Rocking on the same rung, liminality hereby plays host to the potential of

spontaneous communitas. The effect of these experiences may vary, of course. At the very least,

this experience of the liminal may be a frivolous novelty, a source of a good story or two, maybe

the chance to make a new friend out of someone one never may never even have met under

everyday circumstances. On the other hand, the insights gleaned from the experience of

community among outsiders, may spark revolution. Turner writes:

> [...] if liminality is regarded as a time and place of withdrawl from normal modes
> of social action, it can be seen as potentially a period of scrutinization of the
> central values and axioms of the culture in which it occurs. (Turner, 1969 167)

Liminality and Transition:

Turner writes that liminality is transition and it is potentiality. (Turner, 1978 3) Liminality serves as the clutch in the transmission of social transition. Whether the transition is individual or corporate, temporary or irreversible, in liminal ritual there is social movement and change that endures at least as long as the ritual itself. Turner writes:

> [The liminal character is exhibited] in times of social transition, [where "transition" means] moving from one fixed state to another, [...] whether the *terminus ad quem* is believed to be on earth or in heaven. (Turner, 1969 133)

The consideration of movement "from one fixed state to another" acquires a different tone in the modern context. The tone shifts because, as Reginald Wayne Bibby (1943-) suggests in *Fragmented Gods: The poverty and potential of religion in Canada.* (1987, 1990), modernity does not host fixed social roles but, rather, a plethora of social roles between which we move in accordance with the given time of day, the company we keep, the goals we pursue. Our closets house many a hat and modern people often move from one role to another over the course of any given day. It may be that liminality exists for the individual ever more frequently, for as we juggle our social personae, we are betwixt-and-between all the more often. Commuting to and from work, for example, becomes a liminal time and space. As was mentioned earlier, Turner had decided that liminal ritual can not exist in modernity in the same way as it does in tribal situations and opted for the use of the term "liminoid" in like modern situations.

Turner does not spend much time considering liminality for the modern individual for he is ultimately concerned with social groups and societies as a whole. This may be problematic, because individualism is a mark of modernity. However, there is much to be said, and Turner does have a lot to say, for the situations wherein modern individuals band together to form a cohesive group with a unified vision. These groupings, Turner argues, are most visible at times of communal life-crisis, catastrophe and revolution. Upon studying these groups, Turner affirms that liminal rituals do exist among "religions of wider than tribal scope, especially during periods of rapid and unprecedented social change." (Turner, 1969 189) Especially during periods of rapid and unprecedented social change... Isn't that us? Now?

CHAPTER 1B. THE MYTH OF THE NORTH

Getting more specific about how Dawson and the North are liminal - physically and conceptually. Introducing the concept of the Myth of the North.

> *What do you make of the statement: "Everyone who comes up here is running from <u>something</u>..."? And can you relate to this at a personal level? Please elaborate.*
>
> **I reckon anyone who travels anywhere is running from something. I don't really think Dawson is special in this regard. Maybe just in the way that it's sort of a dead-end; this is where people have to stop running. End of the line.** (Zoe, 2005)

Living On the Edge and In the Corner:

North-west, as shall be discussed shortly, has traditionally been the direction of economic development in Canada. North-west is also traditionally associated with spiritual development. Turner mentions this in *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* (1978) during his discussion of Irish monasteries during the medieval period. Many cultures associate westerly directions with enlightenment and the life of the spirit. It has something to do with the sun traveling all day long and eventually setting in the West. But Canadians don't just stop at the West, they must go north. It was been ingrained into our national psyche to identify with the North. The water flows that way. So do the mountains.

Dawson City is the last town along the most north-westerly highway in the Yukon, the Yukon is the most north-westerly region in Canada, and Canada is the most north-westerly region in a Euro-centric understanding of the planet. Dawson is on the edge.

A limen occurs upon a margin and behaves as a threshold, a gateway. We often think of margins as boundaries. It may be more helpful to think of the limen as a frontier. What is the difference between a boundary and a frontier? With the help of *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* (1964), we come to the following postulation: A boundary binds. It implies a limit, it is

restrictive. One lives *within* boundaries. It seems that a boundary is something that imposes itself upon a person or a group. It is an edge that says "Stop here, you can not go any farther in this direction." A frontier, on the other hand, is a border that suggests that which exists beyond itself. One lives on or beyond a frontier, often by virtue of pushing one's limits and one's luck. Frontiers are challenged.

Dawson City has been a frontier. Challenge is a relationship, both challenger and the challenged are required for the recipe. Dawson City has been pressed for that which is believed to exist beyond. Dawson City has been a focal point, often representing northern-ness as a whole. The northern treasures that are sought are material, personal, and cultural - private and shared.

Material treasures of the North have included fur, oil, gold and other precious and semi-precious minerals. Farther north, whalers have combed the Artic Ocean. Cultural treasures have included knowledge of aboriginal lifestyles, knowledge of the biology and climate of the area, the use of the North for communication (telegraph line in the early years, defense (the Alaska Highway and Star Wars more recently)) and transportation (the North-west Passage). Personal treasures include hermitage and community, more space and more time, beautiful scenery, adventure, and love.

Please describe the Yukon with a few choice words:

Beautiful, wild and spacious, traveling without moving! (Neomie, 2005)

Different, accepting of differences, beautiful. (Glen, 2005)

Majestic. Aurora Borealis, Not many people. Smokey. (The Boss, 2005)

God's Country (Fee, 2005)

POWERFUL (Ben, 2005)

[how about a quote?] I love all waste and solitary places, where we taste the freedom to believe what we see is as boundless

as we wish our souls to be. [Unknown] (Zoe, 2005)

FREEDOM (Brian, 2005)

Why Dawson?

Dawson is more "home" than anywhere else right now. (Glen, 2005)

Peer-pressure. (The Boss, 2005)

Money [with a huge dollar sign and a drawing of a face with dollar signs for eyes and a small mouth]. (Wynn, 2005)

What do you make of the statement "Everyone who comes up here is searching for something..."? Again, can you personally relate? Please elaborate.

This one's more for me,
I found friend, good adventure, lots of fun
verry powerful energie. (Neomie, 2005)

Possibly more to this one. I was very much in a state of flux over a "career". A job in my undergraduate degree field, 9-5 or more, all year, office bound wasn't calling me at all. I was and still am looking for a fun, meaningful challenge. (Glen, 2005)

Yep ... I was searching for a place with neat thought, with people doing fun things ... an inspiring place where I could re-define myself - to myself. (Ruby, 2005)

Love, hate, or whatever, but poesy of life. Looking for keep the faith. (Linda, 2005)

... searching for something that I didn't find in VAN and I'm still searching, for what I don't know. (Brian, 2005)

What do you value most about Dawson, the Yukon, and/or northern Canada?

Trails, mountains, hikes, rivers, camping trips, biking trips,
The sun rotation
A lot of support as a pregnant woman
wild Animals
All the space. (Neomie, 2005)

The WAY people live,
legends ARE close by
woodstoves + little cabins
music + art

trails to hike + boat down. (Ruby, 2005)

It's historical ambiance.
Geographical local and transient summer population (Will, 2005)

THE PEOPLE (Linda, 2005)

Daylight, activities, sports, wilderness, cabins to sleep in, space is more available, community/lack of people. (The Boss, 2005)

Dawson is the perfect size for me - socially. I love how you get to know everyone, yet it's not "small-townish" in that small minded sort of way. It has a good yearly/seasonal influx of new blood + therefore creativity + innovation. I love that it's in the middle of butt-fuck nowhere and that it's surrounded by so much Beauty. I love the way you feel you've escaped the world when you're here.
(Zoe, 2005)

Finding treasure can be hard to do. What's difficult: The distance, away from home, just getting there. Many travelers hitchhike. The landscape can be tough to navigate and the climate can be harsh. Finding basic security can be hard to do. Trusting that one will find a job, shelter, and friends involves risk. Potentially threatening animals in combination with physical isolation is enough to make a person nervous.

> Danger is one of the chief ingredients in the production of existential
> communitas. (Turner, 1969 154)

Risk and trust go hand in hand.

Going North used to be all about the hero, questing.

The Arctic Imperative:

> The North, as a general concept, and ideas of what it is to be a northern nation, have

fuelled Canadian identity since the beginning.

> Canada, which lacked martyrs of a revolutionary war of independence, had to
> create a national mythology in other directions. The early and later phases of
> Arctic exploration helped to fill this gap. Through their school system and
> popular literature, Canadians gradually acquired what Farley Mowat has termed
> the Polar Passion and Richard Rohmer, the Arctic Imperative. (Page, 1986 3)

This is an interesting passage in part because of the implication that the concept of the North was

created in response to a need. It assumes that a "national mythology" is simply always necessary

and in order, yet it does not ask why some stories, ideas, and myths are more readily accepted

over others. The Polar Passion and the Arctic Imperative are largely informed by the explorer

archetype, which is fuelled by the idea of "man versus nature". Man versus nature is a

competition and a test - often fought to the death.

Vilhjamur Stefansson may be the most famous explorer-scientist of the post-World War

One Era. He was "a great publicist of the potential of the North" and he sounds to be a rugged

mix of wilderness savvy and urban distinction. He traveled 20,000 miles across the Arctic by

sled and dog team (Page, 1986 8) and was a policy advisor to both Washington and Ottawa. He

wrote *The Northward Course of the Empire* which suggests that the great centers of political

power have been moving northwards, beginning with Greece and moving to Rome then Paris

then Washington then London then Berlin and, as he suggests, now Canada and perhaps the

Soviet Union. (Page, 1986 8) This he named "the Path of Supremacy".[4] This type of thinking

leads people to approach the north as a particular arena for the trial and proving of greatness

through displays of strength, craftiness, leadership, discovery, and survival.

Stefansson was not inventing but was participating in a long-standing tradition. Even

earlier, the details of Franklin's expedition and other stories of the hardship of arctic exploration,

like the race for the Northwest Passage and the first to the North Pole, have made the North a sort

of battle zone and testing ground. As Page suggests:

> In the Arctic without modern technology, the explorers pitted their fragile
> wooden ships and stubborn willpower against the iron grip of Arctic ice and
> weather. It appeared to be *the* classic example of man versus nature. [...] The
> Arctic obviously held strange powers to bring men down, and as such it was the
> ultimate test not only of courage and technology but of civilization as well.
> (Page, 1986 3-5)

"Cold Weather Determinism" is the idea that certain character traits - vigor, endurance,

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[4] Vilhjamur Stefansson, and his "Path of Supremacy", have been linked with agendas of white supremacy.
Notions of Cold Weather Determinism and "racial Darwinism", to be discussed shortly, are associated with
a similar racism.

and stamina - are prominent among people who weather the cooler climates. The idea is that, by

virtue of living in challenging cold conditions, northern people "have acquired energy, courage,

integrity, and those characteristic qualities of social efficiency." (Page, 1986 7) As Joyce

Hayden, author of *Victoria Faulkner, Lady of the Golden North: A Biography* (2002) suggests:

> Since only the energetic venture far from home, and not the dullards nor the
> ignorant come into such a field, the population of the Northland is made up of the
> salt of the earth. (Hayden, 2002 34)

> **Here it seems necessary to describe the class of people who chose to be here.
> This is to say in general people who emigrate here are characters, chances are
> they haven't fully intergrated or assimilated socially elsewhere. Statistically,
> there are more left-handed people than anywhere else in CANADA. We are
> Majority of ODD-BALLS in an un-intentional community. Everyone is searching for
> something wherever they may be, but here is where many a wayward travelers
> hangs their hat and call home.**
>   **Many "flakes" or non-hearty fearful souls find their way here, and more
> often than not, they are regurgitated from the Yukon. Apparently they seek to
> find themselves while here, but all they really need is a Best selling self-help
> book to tell them how they feel + where they are.**
>   **The question is begged as to why so many similarly "dys-functional" folk
> make the sojourn here? It is not, I believe, that folk are at all dissimilar in our
> needs as a species, those of us with gypsy souls, however, seem to find our way
> here to a magnetic power spot (if I may) on our planet, perhaps so that we may
> confront ourselves in a healing environment full of space + be far removed from
> the demand of an overbearing, overburdened tyrannous CIVILIZATION that lives
> on the clock. - TICK-TOCK-TICK-...** (Ben, 2005)

The Canada First movement of the 1870's, headed by R.G. Haliburton, was invested in

the idea that racial characteristics were a product of climate. (Page, 1986 6) Haliburton had

wondered:

> If climate has not had the effect of molding races, how is it that southern nations
> have almost always been inferior to and subjected by the men of the north?
> (Page, 1986 6)

Associated with "racial Darwinism", this type of thinking gave "a pseudo-scientific basis

for elements in the Canadian northern myth." (Page, 1986 7)

> Cold weather determinism provided a convenient rationalization for Canadian
> assumptions of superiority over southern cousins in the United States. In
> practical terms, the Canada Firster advocated the speedy absorption of the
> Northwest into the new Dominion. In the era of British imperial expansion these
> new territories provided Canada with its own imperial vision. (Page, 1986 7)

Page suggests that, even as twentieth century Canadians became increasingly sedentary through their urbanization, "the attractions of the northern mythology [...] in no way diminished." (Page, 1986 3) Page refers to the humourist, economist, and writer Stephen Leacock, who sensed of the spirit of escapism in exploration among his Canadians contemporaries. Page quotes Leacock in writing:

> "Arctic exploration, in so far as it can be carried out from an armchair before a winter fire, has long been for me a pursuit that verges on a passion." (quoted by Page, 1986 3)

The Myth of the North:

We, as Canadians, appear to be both proud and shy of our nordicity. In "The Vision and the Need: The Myth of the North" (1986) Robert Page has suggested that there is a "historic mythology" of the north which has "conditioned Canadian assumptions" that are "lurking within Canadian identity." As Edith Fowke has suggested, myth belongs to folk group. The Myth of the North helps to define Canada as a group.

> [...] the North has played a substantial and continuous role in Canadians' image of themselves and their country. In the twentieth century northern events have continually fuelled Canadian nationalism. As we approach the present the importance of the North increases as a result of technology, resource scarcity, and the strategic defense needs of the continent. The old concept of isolation and distance is breaking down with television, new transmission via satellite, air travel, and even our highway system now penetrating the Arctic Circle. *Yet, with all the wonders of modern technology, Canada retains much of the traditional mythology, including its basic split between materialist development goals and idealism.* [emphasis my own] This historic struggle is the Canadian dilemma over northern development. (Page, 1986 23)

Imagination ...

Romanticism of the north is represented in the legends and lore of the North, often inspired by a rose-tinted understanding of the intimidating wildlife, human and otherwise. These are what whet the southern appetite for the north. The stories are gathered and shared by the people living there. They are boggling and harrowing. They often involve as much comradery as they do isolation. They involve many close calls and sometimes death. They are wrapped with

mystery and seethe with a most raw form of the hero. They are archetypal. As Berton suggests:

> The scientific problems presented by the north [...] are "literally innumerable".
> So are its legends. The Canadian north has a fabric of mythology all its own.
> Since Alexander Mackenzie, the great northern explorer, was warned by Slavey
> Indians of "monsters of horrid shapes and destructive powers," it has been a land
> of folklore. Here, where the caribou drift like specters across the tundra, and the
> aurora sweeps magically across the dark sky, and the sleigh dogs howl in
> melancholy choir to the cold moon, it is easy to believe many things. The north is
> bestrewn with the myths of lost gold mines and tropical valleys and ghostly tribes
> of devouring Indians. I once went seeking some of these myths myself and I can
> testify to their durability. (Berton, 1956 10)

I specifically remember cooking dinner with a friend of mine one fine evening in Dawson. She was living in a boarding house that used to be a brothel. We were cooking dinner on the back porch, over a one-burner propane stove. We had company: a girl who'd just arrived to Dawson for the first time (18 years old, Quebecer, hitchhiker) and Dylan. Dylan told us all sorts of stories of tropical valleys, saber-toothed mammoths living today, a tribe of very short, strong natives who were steadfast in their refusal to enter modern society. Dylan was a trapper and a crypto-zoologist (studying hidden and unknown species). We took the bait and believed it all. I walked around town with an extra layer of amazement for at least a day before I began to doubt the veracity of his stories.

I do, however, wish to be clear: I am not writing about the myths of the North, I am writing about *the* Myth of the North. Most plainly stated -

> Southern attitudes to the North have traditionally been based on a mixture of romanticism
> and greed. (Page, 1986 2)

As with many concepts that condition our understanding, the Myth of the North is difficult to define with precision. It is a chicken-and-the-egg scenario yet, however ambiguous, the Myth of the North informs assumptions about the North - assumptions that create and re-create the identity of the North, the relationship between northern and southern Canada, and Canadian identity as a whole.

Myths are usually transmitted in the form of a story. How does this attitude, this mix of romanticism and greed, qualify as a myth? The Myth of the North is the governing structure of

assumptions, beliefs, and habits that continually condition our understanding of the North in Canada. And not only the North as a place but as a type of space. It is the way that we let this understanding of the North influence our understanding of ourselves and others.

What I care to argue is that the Myth of the North remains intact to this day. We receive the message of the Myth through story, we engage in the Myth through participation in a journey northwards, and we perpetuate the Myth with our storytelling. The myths of the North, some of which have been outlined by Berton (above), factor into the Myth of the North as romantic ingredients. These are apparent and festively celebrated in art and in commerce. More disconcerting and definitely important, what about the greed part? How is greed communicated and perpetuated?

... and desire.

> From the time of the Yukon gold rush, the northern development ethic has
> appealed to the southern sense of greed. (Page, 1986 22)

The frontier-bourgeoning attitude that has inspired the Myth of the North is not a new development. Page claims that the Myth of the North has been developing in Canada since the mid-1800's but mentions W.L. Morton who suggests that the Myth of North was intact even as the first European settlers arrived to the North American shores. Edith Fowke writes that Europe had developed a northern maritime frontier of its own and that, as a-story-an-attitude-a-myth can travel with the people, the notion of the frontier crossed the cultural and commercial highway of the North Atlantic with "the pilgrims" we remember each Thanksgiving. (Fowke, 1988 5)

Betwixt and Between: Polarity and Paradox Make For Elbow Room

The liminality of the North becomes apparent as it is often represented through its polarity and as paradoxical. The North is elusive.

> Like the Aurora glowing greenly in the August night, the north continues to elude
> us. (Berton, 1956 8)

Despite his discussion of the varieties of the north, Berton also seems to fall victim to the

tendency to name, identify, distinguish, and symbolically represent "The North". Of all "its"

characteristics, however, he chose elusiveness, which leaves much room for the diversity that he

has experienced and emphasizes. In *The Mysterious North* (1956), he writes:

> I have never quite been able to escape the memory of those lonely hills.
> In the winter nights, when the roar of the river was hushed by a mantle of ice,
> when the frost-racked timbers cracked like pistol-shots in the cold, when the
> ghostly bars of the northern lights shifted across the black sky, we would
> sometimes hear the chill call of the wolf, drifting down from the wilderness
> behind us. It is an eerie sound, plaintive, mournful, mysterious. The wolf is like
> the husky and the malemute: his vocal cords are so constructed that he cannot
> bark, but only howl across the endless hills. If the north has a theme song, it is
> this haunting cry, which seems to echo all the loneliness and then wonder of the
> land at the top of the continent.
>   When I was a small boy, it used to fascinate and terrify me, perhaps
> because in all my years in the north I never actually saw a wolf alive. To me he
> was only a footprint in the snow and a sound in the night, an unseen creature who
> lurked in the shadow of the nameless hills. (Berton, 1956 3-4)

(Hybrid lifestyles in Dawson....)

Dawson is home to wild meat eating vegans and it is not uncommon to spot a digital

video camera at a bonfire. Betwixt and between, the North is difficult to define.

Please describe the Yukon with a few choice words:

Land of Extremes:
          (summer - winter
Lots of people - NO people
Hot - so cold
SUN - DARK]
New thought ... BIG wilderness ... elements in your face. (Ruby, 2005)

It's like we don't know which way is up. North is a direction and a destination, but rarely

a location. You "are north of *x*", or you are "in the North" but you are rarely "at The North"

(the North Pole being one possible exception). "The North" can be as relative and as contrived as

"the East". Ask someone from Toronto "What's north?" and they will most likely speak of

Collingwood and the Muskokas, maybe James Bay. Ask someone from Dawson and they will

most likely speak of the Tombstone Mountains, Old Crow, maybe Inuvik, the Mackenzie, and the

Arctic Ocean. As Pierre Berton suggests:

The fact is that nobody can say where "the north" actually starts. [...] Part of the
reason for this is that the north does not follow a parallel of latitude, but dips and
rises across the map with the tree-line and the permafrost-line and the lake-line
and the edge of the Precambrian shield. It is, at best, an arbitrary area,
distinguished as much by its contradictions as by its uniformities. (Berton, 1956
13)

Also, northern Canada is expansive. There are 1.5 million square miles north of 60. To

try to assign a single identity to the North, as if it can exist as congruous and singular fact, would

be a mistake. There is a popular saying: To not see the forest for the trees. When we generalize,

we experience the opposite case of not seeing the trees for the forest. It is therefore important to

be location-specific when discussing the North. Northern Canada is physically, historically, and

therefore culturally, diverse.

The greatest misconception, of course, is that "the north" is all a piece from
Alaska to Ungava. You might as well lump Scotland and Serbia together
because they both belong in Europe. (It is almost twice as far from Dawson City
to Fort Chino on Ungava Bay as it is from Edinburgh to Sarajevo.) There is no
single *north*, in fact, but several, each quite distinct in climate, topography,
economic and social structure. (Berton, 1956 12-13)

Ambiguity is a sign of liminality because being neither-here-nor-there is very much like

being betwixt-and-between. Paradox inspires ambiguity because it requires a thinker to consider

two extremes at once. This can be a challenging negotiation. It brings us out of our regular

sequential thinking patterns and allows for a both-and mindset.

CHAPTER 2. COMMUNITAS NORTH OF 60

Dawson City as a venue for communitas, displaying traits of calendrical community ritual, and individual life-crisis ritual, in Turner's sense of the terms. Getting into the symbolic structure of the North and the way people engage in archetypes like one might don a mask.

What do you make of the statement "The Yukon, she gets into your blood and you fall in love."?

**YA. Or you get in her blood + rivers + streets
you get trapped in a good way.
Once you fall in LOVE, it feels familiar and you have a connection which is DAMN
hard to leave and not come back to!** (Ruby, 2005)

Communitas is evident in the homogeneity and under-dogging among season folk in

Dawson, visible in communal meals and communal property and anti-authoritarian attitudes. It is

also evident in the great festival occasions that occur on an annual cycle.

Festive life in Dawson:

Many of the community-wide festivals around Dawson City have to do with light, be the

source of light the sun, the northern lights, or fire. Said festivals include Summer Solstice and

Winter Solstice, and St. Jean Baptist. Also heavily celebrated by the summer community are Ice

Breaking, Canada Day, Dawson City Music Festival, Discovery Days.

Ice breaking happens sometime in May. There's a contest every year to see who will

come closest to guessing when the ice will go. A pole is set out on the ice and it is attached to a

trigger on a clock on the shore. It is also attached to a very loud alarm bell. When the ice finally

breaks and moves enough to pull the trigger, the clock stops and the alarm sounds. Everyone

gets up and goes down to the dyke to celebrate one of the first sure signs of spring.

Summer Solstice happens every year on June 21st. It is the longest day of the year and,

consequently, the shortest night. It is the very height of light. It seems like everyone in town, but

it's not really everyone in town, climbs the Midnight Dome Hill for the party. Some drive. A big

HUGE fire is lit and I've roasted hot dogs there on sticks that are over 8 feet long. The fire is that

big and hot. People stay there all night, but it's not night - it's bright as day the whole time. The sun doesn't circle around so much as it "es-s" around the sky. It's gorgeous. There are lots of hand drums and other acoustic instruments up there. People love to make noise and most of the summer people have gotten to know each other well by this point. It's a blast.

St. Jean Baptiste, June 21st to the 24th. The French-Canadians set this one up, across the river and behind Tent City on one the ranches in Sunnydale. Sunnydale used to be were all the French-Canadians lived but it's not as franco-centric anymore. This fire is even bigger. The logs we threw on this fire in 2003 were whole trees. It would take three of us just to lift them up. Again, acoustic instruments. Traditional songs are sung in French. Everyone welcome. Bar-b-que chicken and corn on the cob!

I think that Canada Day is important to Dawson City because people do like to remember, every once in a while, that they are part of a larger political phenomenon called Canada.

The Dawson City Music Festival is a folk music festival that happens mid-July every summer. People come from far and wide. It's a big party that marks the end of the summer for most of the campers.

Discovery Days happens mid-August. It's the celebration of the discovery of gold on Bonanza Creek in 1895. There's a parade and lots of theatrics hosted by Parks Canada. Regatta games and picnics abound. If people have stayed long enough to celebrate the discovery of gold, they tend to make tracks shortly thereafter.

Camping life in Dawson:

I camped-out for my first two summers in and around Dawson City. Tent City was home to 150+ campers from mid-May until mid-August. Everyone had their own little spot. Most lived in tents and some had little campers or vans that they'd converted into bedrooms. None of us had running water or electricity. We would cook over one-, or two-, burner propane stoves

and campfires. It's always an event to cook under these conditions and, by the time enough wood and water were gathered, you'd hope that you'd also found a friend or two to share in a meal. Pot-latch-style dining was most common for that reason. And we'd all be riding the ferry across the Yukon River and into town everyday to look for a job or to work at a job. Few people had cars and we'd all be chatting and you get know one another pretty quickly in these sorts of situations. In the evenings we'd either drink and dance and smoke together at the bars or we'd have big dinners and bonfires and drink and dance and smoke together there. It was quite a community and it was lovely. I was very sad when Tent City shut down.

The other neat thing about those days is that there was a really great group of people who were between five and fifteen years older than most of us Tent City kids and they quickly became our Yukon role-models. They'd done what we were doing and they'd loved it too and they'd stuck around. They had tonnes of stories and they gave us meat to chew on, both literally and figuratively! They were hunters and prospectors and occasional hermits. They ran inns that used to be brothels and they employed us and took us under their wings. They gave us nicknames and teased us and dreamt with us. They showed us another way.

Archetypes are symbolic and they function as models. Archetypes are informative patterns that help us through moments of life-crisis as their symbolism becomes integrated into the life of the individual or group through the power of ritual. When an archetype resonates with us, we engage in its story. We put it on, like a mask.

The masking function:

Masks allow for identity play, often through anonymity. Turner brings his readers' attention to Anna Freud and her theory that masks also facilitate the assumption of the identity of that which is represented by the mask. The mask may represent something threatening, but the figure can represent any given type of power. Freud suggests that when we wear a mask, the ego of the wearer, motivated by "unconscious fear" and by means of an "effective defense

mechanism", identifies with the subject of the mask. We are somehow able to "rob", or strip, that which is represented by the mask of its power, thereby gleaning that power of that which it represents for ourselves. (Turner, 1969 174) As Turner elaborates, the ritual subjects

> [...by] unconsciously identifying themselves with the very powers that deeply threaten them, and by a species of jujitsu - enhanc[e] their own powers by the very power that threatens to enfeeble them (Turner, 1969 174)

The ritual subject thereby grows stronger through the weakening of what was once an externally threatening, yet powerful, entity. Inevitably, this process involves what Turner names a "traitor-like quality", by which we "kill the thing one loves". (Turner, 1969 174) This process may be observed in many religious traditions as it fits into many sacrificial paradigms.

To take-on a new identity, even fleetingly, one must be willing to let go of the previous identity. Masks facilitate this process by first establishing anonymity (covering or hiding the face) and then introducing a new, deliberate, identity.

Masks need not be physical face masks. Our voices and vocabularies reveal much about our identity. I suggest that masking devices among seasonal folk in Dawson include slang and accents.

Nicknaming is another mode of identity-play. Namelessness is a trait of the neophyte in rites of passage. Nicknames are related to this activity because when a person is re-named, he or she is re-claimed by himself, herself, or by the group prescribing the name. It is to be recognized on chosen terms. Dawson is a place where last names aren't normally used. There are nicknames for some. Also, there aren't street numbers in Dawson. Addresses are relative, but not abstract. (ie. I live in the red log cabin, next to the one with the antlers over the door on sixth. Or, I live in West Dawson, near Adam.)

Yukon Symbolism:

Symbols do work. They are functional entities. They interact with a sense of identity for individuals, for groups, and for organizations. They can re-enforce a pre-existing concept, they

provoke change and inspire development, and through symbolism new concepts can be introduced.

In 2005, the Brand Yukon ad campaign was "Yukon, Canada's True North". Now the Yukon tourism website is splashed with the words "Yukon, Larger than Life!" The sub-captions that take their turns appearing to the viewer include "Expand you horizons", "Kick up you heels", "Reflect on your journey", "Explore through adventure", "Dance to your own drum", and "Illuminate your dreams". The Yukon license plate bears the image of a gold-panner, busy at work. In 1990, the Ministry of Transportation was considering changing the image to that of the raven, which provoked a huge uproar and debate over which symbol was more representative of the Yukon. The gold-panner remained, but in the winter of 2006, CBC aired the question once again: Is the raven not a better symbol for the spirit and history of the Yukon? The speed at which these slogans and symbols are changing suggests that the Yukon continues to search for its identity. This, in its way, implies adolescence. The irony is that, although the Yukon *has* been treated like a child by Canada's federal government, it is debatably the oldest host to human life in North America (re: Bering Straight Crossing theory) - another paradox.

Is the search for identity - be it personal, national, geographical, social - a religious quest? James suggests that "the religious form of the [hero's] journey is the pilgrimage, with the pilgrim as an image of the transitory human situation". (James, 1998 83) Those who engage in a quest are likewise engaged in "participation in a primitive reality, or the reenactment of an archetypal event".

**The WAY people live,
Legends ARE close by.** (Ruby, 2005)

A legend is a type story which is illuminating and potentially a source of guidance. But a person can be a legend. When we call a person a legend, we usually mean that the stories of that person are legendary. This has something to do with symbols and archetypes. Could it be that a person becomes a legend when they fit an archetypal mold? Or when they break that mold and present

new patterns?

Storytelling:

Edith Fowke - author of *Canadian Folklore: Perspectives on Canadian Culture* (1988) is an expert on folkore, its history, and its relationship to myth and to storytelling. Fowke refers to Archer Taylor who suggests:

> Folkore is the material that is handed on by tradition, either by word of mouth or by custom and practice. (Fowke, 1988 1)

Folklore is learned and practiced. It is re-creative insofar as it is repeated and it is historical insofar as it has, and is part of, a lineage. History is like folklore in that it tells the story of a people and an event, and is capable of creating and affirming the identity of a person and a group both at times of peace and at times of crisis. As Gerald Friesen, author of *Citizens and Nation: An Essay on History, Communication, and Canada*, suggests:

> Works of history are supposed to offer us a sense of perspective in just these circumstances. They remind us of past realities and illuminate the significance of today's novelties. In an ideal world, they also build bridges between present and past. (Friesen, 2000 4)

Fowke refers to William Wilson, who suggests that folklore is a way of "dealing with recurring human problems in traditional human ways." (Fowke, 1988 116) Folk tales have a life and a truth for the communities amongst which they circulate. (Fowke, 1988 28) Myth is therefore and here not to be associated with the concept of misconception. Fowke also refers to Alan Dundes, author of *The Study of Folklore*, who suggests that folklore can educate the young, promote a feeling of solidarity within a group, act as a vehicle for social protest, provide enjoyable escapism, and convert dull work into play. A folk group is such by virtue of a common identifying feature, be that feature age, occupation, region inhabited, or otherwise. (Fowke, 1988 3) Folk, meaning "a people, nation, race; people in general, people of specified class", is a social being.

Some stories have been known to live for thousands of years. Because they live through

the people who tell them, folktales, legends, and myths can be re-created as they re-create. The form of the story may change as it moves and ages through its tellers. Its features and some details will shift with the times and with its environment but the main thrust will remain the same. Fowke suggests that Old World folklore adapts as it adopts local references in the New World. (Fowke, 1988 5) The story continues to serve its traditional function. Conversely, when a tale is isolated, be that isolation physical or cultural, it is incubated and thus preserved. Fowke suggests that Newfoundland, as physically isolated it is, and Quebec as culturally isolated as *it* is, are arguably "the richest" folk regions in Canada. (Fowke, 1988 5)

Northern Canada, and the Yukon in particular, are also isolated and, perhaps as a consequence, also rich folk regions. Also and perhaps this being one of the reasons, it may not be a great coincidence that there are many French Canadians and Newfoundlanders living in the Yukon.

Info in:

To which kind of narratives where people paying attention while in Dawson? I asked those surveyed if they were reading any books and, if so, which ones.

Neomie was reading pregnancy books. Glen was reading *The Skeptical Environmentalist*. Fee was reading *The Ethical Slut* and *The Art of Pilgrimage: A seeker's guide to making travel sacred*. (Can I draw a star next to that?) Ben was reading *Sirens of Titan* by Kurt Vonnecut and *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* by Robert Tressell. Ben specified that the later was "a gift from Ian", which is a nice detail to add. Ben also noted that he was "flipping occasionally" through *Alcoholics Anonymous*, which belongs to the man who owns the cabin he'd been staying in (and renovating) for the summer. Ruby was reading *Colony Girl*. (Can I draw a star next to that, too??) Will was reading *Paradise Lost* (Stars! Stars!) Zoe was reading *Sometimes a Great Nation* by Ken Kesey, *History of Sex*, *Like Water for Chocolate*, *Quantum Leap*, and claimed to have become "and avid reader of *Up Here* magazine and *Yukon News*." Zoe is the only person who wrote that she'd been reading the newspaper. Linda was reading *Les*

Tribulations d'un chinois en Chine by Jules Verne. Wynn was reading *The Secret of Shambala.*
Of course.

Info out:

I was also interested in the form that people were using to express and record themselves. It had been noted in a class taught by Dr. Despland that diary keeping began as a distinctly Protestant tradition, satisfying the need to confess one's most private concerns by replacing priest with paper and voice with pen. Journal-keeping is ever popular for memory-keeping and for therapy. Dawsonites keep track of their personal narratives through journaling, e-mailing, postcard and letter writing, photography, voice recordings, even digital video recordings.

Neomie was mostly taking pictures. But she was keeping in touch, "of course". Glen was taking photos. He was in a "so-so" state of communication with friends and family in the south. Fee was taking pictures, journaling, and writing letters to "some" family and friends. Ben had just got a journal, but had yet to write in it. He said that he sometimes records his voice and guitar playing onto his mini-disc. He didn't mention if he'd been in touch with friends and family in the south. Ruby is "ALWAYS journaling". She has also filmed, photographed and e-mailed. When it comes to communicating with friends and family in the south, she wrote: "As close as possible – never close enough". Will said that he was "just logging it in the brain". He's in touch with southern friends and family "only in [his] heart". Zoe "always keep[s] a written journal, whether in Dawson or not." Linda was journaling and taking photos. Brian wrote something I can't decipher and is not in touch with friends or family in the south. Wynn writes that he has sent "a few group emails ... Describing mostly my enternal feeling, but not so much about the Yukon atmosphere." This may be another incident of accidental poetry: "enternal feeling" is a mix of internal and eternal. I like it. Wynn is the opposite of Ruby when it comes to communicating with friends and family in the south, he writes: "Yes but not too close!"

Multi-vocal Symbols and Root Metaphors:

The anti-structure and counter-culture related to liminal communitas are only "anti-" and "counter-" from the standpoint of structure and dominant culture. These modes of social being are positively productive insofar as they are the forum for the production of "root metaphors, conceptual archetypes, paradigms, models for, and the rest." (Turner, 1974 50) Turner writes:

> Liminality, marginality, and structural inferiority are conditions in which are
> frequently generated myths, symbols, rituals, philosophical systems, and works
> of art. [Providing people with a set of templates and models which,] at one level,
> [inspire] periodical reclassifications of reality and man's relationship to society,
> nature, and culture. [... and which] incite men to action as well as to thought.
> (Turner, 1969 128-129)

Archetypes are symbols. Multi-vocal symbols and metaphors condense and unify many references into one, single, cognitive field that is susceptible to many meanings. (Turner, 1974 55) Metaphors are models that bring us from the known to the unknown. A good metaphor inspires metamorphisis and transformation. (Turner, 1974 25) If chosen carefully, metaphors can be illuminating.

Turner bases much of his explanation of metaphors upon Tom Black's analysis. Black suggests that in order to give a

> detailed account of a particular archetype, we require a list of key words and
> expressions, with statements of their interconnections and their paradigmatic
> meanings in the field from which they were originally drawn. This should then
> be supplemented by analysis of the ways in which the original meanings become
> extended in their analogical use. (Turner, 1974 26-27)

A metaphor is one name for two subjects: the principal subject and the subsidiary subject. The metaphor takes the name of the subsidiary subject. Multi-vocal symbols have whole semantic systems implied (ideas, images, sentiments, values, stereotypes) and "components of one system enter into dynamic relations with components of the other". (Turner, 1974 29) The system of "associated implications" that are characteristic of the subsidiary subject are applied to the principal subject. Usually, the implications about the subsidiary subject are commonplace, but it is possible for "deviant implications" to be "established ad hoc by the author". (Turner,

1974 30) That is how the metaphor works, it "selects, emphasizes, suppresses, and organizes features of the principal subject by implying statements about it that normally apply to the subsidiary subject." (Turner, 1974 30)

One's understanding of the primary subject is tempered by impressions and assumptions of the subsidiary subject. Root metaphors are symbolic and they also perform the important function of polarizing meaning between the primary and subsidiary subjects, the unknown and the known. The subsidiary subject "acquires new and surprising contours and valences from its dark companion." (Turner, 1974 51) The primary subject becomes a little more known itself and the subjects actively inform each other. (Turner, 1974 51) As Turner recalls of I.A. Richards' "interaction view", the metaphor interacts with that which it may illuminate.

Rich-u-all:

A story gains life through ritual. Ritual symbols are included among cultural symbols. They are not timeless entities, but they do "sustain processes involving temporal changes in social relations" (Turner, 1974 55) Symbols instigate social action by condensing many references and "uniting them in a single cognitive and affective field." (Turner, 1974 55)

Please describe the Yukon with a few choice words:

POWERFUL
Beautiful
Magnetic
Bi-POLAR
Left-handed (Ben, 2005)

Small.
Large.
Distracting. (Wynn, 2005)

The last chapter closed with a discussion of paradox and its relation to ambiguity. Ambiguity is a form of liminality which is not so much betwixt-and-between, but rather neither-here-nor-there. In a both-and mindset, opposites do not need to be thought of as canceling each other out, but could be considered mutually supportive and co-dependently informative. There is

an exchange between the poles during the "drama of ritual action" (re: "singing, dancing, feasting, wearing of bizarre dress, body painting, use of alcohol or hallucinogens, etc.) They inform each other and "biological referents are ennobled and the normative referents are charged with emotional significance." (Turner, 1974 55) The physiological/biological, or "orectic pole" happens to have a lot to do with "desire", "appetite", "willing and feeling", but not so much for the physical anymore ... the appetite is for the symbolic.

There is a symbolic interpretation of the relationship between the individual and society (these could be considered poles as well) which operates in the minds of those undergoing the ritual process. The sense of conflict between themselves, as individuals, and society disappears in this milieu. (Turner, 1974 56) Under optimal conditions, the symbols to which those undergoing the ritual are exposed will reinforce the peoples' will to "obey moral commandments, maintain covenants, repay debts, keep up obligations, avoid illicit behavior." (Turner, 1974 55)

What I'm getting at here is that, when we engage in the activity of an archetype, we are, at some point, engaging in a form of ritualized activity. We are participating in cultural patterns that relate to the exploration and development of identity. Land is sculpted by the flow of water in the long run. The flow of water is channeled by land in the short run. There are many archetypes that seem to have developed as specifically northern. Was it the Myth of the North that created the archetypes? Or was it the archetypes that created the Myth of the North?

Northern Archetypes:

> **Brian: Wimps go to Whitehorse for the winter.** (September 2005 at the coffee shop)

Northern archetypes include the Perfect Indian, the Explorer and the Civilizing Hero, the Treasure-Seeker, the Rebel and the Hermit. Northerners and visitors to the north help to perpetuate these images through their stories and their art. Robert Page suggests that the *National Geographic Magazine*, the National Film Board of Canada, and the painters of the Group of Seven have all had a hand to play in showing the north as "the aesthetic heartland of Canada."

(Page, 1986 16) The aesthetic includes shades of muck, dirt, blood, loneliness, scandal, trustworthiness, fortitude and glory.

Much of the information that follows has been drawn from Catherine McClellan's *Part of the Land, Part of the Water: A History of the Yukon Indians* (1987), Kenneth Coates and William Morrison's *Land of the Midnight Sun* (2005) and Julie Cruikshank's oral histories as I found them recorded on audio cassette at the Yukon Archives in Whitehorse. What I appreciate most about Julie Cruikshank's work is that the teller of the story and the subject of the story are one and the same.

I focus on the earlier years of European presence in the Yukon because I feel that an exploration of the events occurring in those times highlights the main themes that have shaped the gold rush society. The gold rush set the stage for all that has followed in the Yukon and, consequently, the experience of the transient summer community in Dawson City today.

The Perfect Indian:

A personal observation: There's something about the First Nations around here that really captures peoples' imaginations. Like in that old book I had out from the Concordia Library, all about the Athapaskan people. The book was talking about how they really are the "ideal Indians" and here, a quote beside a drawing by Frederick Whymper (1865) of a Tanana Man:

> [Whymper] said that these people reminded him "of the ideal North American
> Indian I had read of but never seen." (Coates and Morrison, 2005 32)

I'm tempted to ask, *is* the "ideal North American Indian"? The answer to that question would be the description of one of the Yukon's greatest archetypes.

The archetype of the Perfect Indian is rooted in the era recognized as pre-contact. Cultural traits of this era that continue to be celebrated today are identified in generalizations about the kinship system and generalizations about shaman(ism) and anim(ism). The heroism and grace required for the lifestyle of the hunter-gatherer with its daily hardships and victories, kinship society, personal flexibility and a high capacity for adaptation certainly commands

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respect.

Kinship. In *An Oral History of Moosehide* (1996) Arthur ("Archie") Roberts remembers

how, at Christmas, people would come to Moosehide from Fort McPherson and Blackstone.

They would bring dry meat and sleep on the floor. In the summer, they would stay in tents while

they visited.

> AR: Oh, look like tent town down Moosehide. Sometime hundred Indians
> together.
> TL: Did they stay there most of the summer?
> AR: Yes, some they just ... soon as fall coming, they all take-off back to their
> country.
> TL: They usually walk?
> AR: Yes, they walk, I tell you dog pack! Dog pack, then soon snow come they
> make their own toboggan.
> After a funeral, for example, there would be a huge pot latch feast.
> AR: After the potlach, they ask one another, 'Well, tomorrow we going to make
> party, we gonna make dance.' They forget everything then. They gonna make
> dance, depends on who it is. Next day big party goin' on, dance." (Roberts, 1994
> 69)

Another good example of kinship and community among the First Nations is found in

one of Archie's stories about the night a kid knocked over a lamp in a cabin at Moosehide. The

cabin, a family's home, burned to the ground, despite efforts of all in the village to douse the fire

with buckets of water from the Yukon River. Archie says:

> AR: And people like that they collect money. Whether they want clothing,
> blanket or berries or something, we just give it to them. Some people tell them to
> come to the house, maybe summer or when they got on their feet again, they're
> going to build another house. (Roberts, 1994 70)

Building is a community-wide project and remains so around Dawson. A good friend of

mine was living with a trapper who was well established in the Dawson community at the time.

Their cabin burned to the ground one morning in February and the town hosted an auction for

them. They raised ten thousand dollars and helped them build a new cabin.

Shaminism. The shaman is a mediator, communicating with this world, communicating

with that other world. The archetype of the shaman includes the wisdom and intuition of the

healer, spontaneity, bravery, solitude, boundless energy and insight. I have written more about

the shaman in the sense of the mediator as liminal personae, in the last chapter.

Animism. Northrope Frye has suggested that there are two ways to look at the world in North America. One perspective is informed by what he calls "the indigenous mentality". The other perspective is informed by what he calls "the immigrant mentality". Based on the assumption that all North American aboriginal groups are pantheistic, the "indigenous mentality" indicates that the natural world is considered not only a location of the sacred, but as sacred in and of itself. The indigenous mentality sees the forest not only as a location of the sacred, but as sacred itself.

Many non-indigenous people and groups have been inspired from the teachings of indigenous wisdom. These ways are ancient but occur as news to many and have thus been embraced as an alternative approach that bears the promise of bettering our relationship with our community, both human and non-human. Interest in these philosophies has spurred developments in the feminist theory on our connection to the natural world, informing movements such as eco-feminism, goddess religions and neo-paganism. (James, 1998 63) Also included are "New Age spiritualities" which emphasize "a harmonious interconnectedness with nature" as evidenced in Green politics, Matthew Fox's Creation Spirituality and Kingsley's Ecological Spirituality. (James, 1998 64) These modern spiritualities perceive a created world in a "more positive light" than what Northrope Frye considers the "dim" view of nature that is traditionally espoused by Christian theology. (James, 1998 63) Romanticism abounds, as do reservations.

The Explorer and The Civilizing Hero: Build it and they will come.

The Explorer: traveling along, making contact, taking their fur and giving them a blanket. These were mainly men, known to be tough and wily. Their era: the early stages of colonialism in Canada...

There two different companies working the fur trade in the high north west: The

Russian-American Fur Company and the North West Company, the later of which eventually

joined the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC). The main furs traded were beaver, then marten, fox,

and mink. (Coates and Morrison, 2005 36) Missionary activity was slow to start in the Yukon.

In the eastern regions, the missionaries were often the first to communicate with the natives. It

was the fur traders who had first contact with the Yukon natives. (Coates and Morrison, 2005 34)

Robert Campbell (1808-1894) was one of the first Hudson's Bay Traders in the southern

Yukon. There is a highway named after him. But he disliked the north, its people, and its

climate. He was thought a wimp, a constant Bible-totter and

> [...] he did not, to use the language of later adventurers into the unknown, have
> the "right stuff". (Coates and Morrison, 2005 27)

Again, what *is* the "right stuff"? What is it that makes a person a suitable explorer, a proper

adventurer? The answer to that question would be the description of another of the Yukon's

greatest archetypes.

Robert Page points-out the irony that, given the glorified image of the Yukon as home to

wild anti-establishmentarianism, many of the northern icons and "folk heroes" were actually

active in "civilizing the North." Such figures include the "noble trinity" of the missionaries, the

Mounties, and the trappers of the Hudson's Bay Company. Bush pilots, fire fighters and

wilderness rescue technicians have also had their images galvanized in popular books about

Canada's northlands, occupying a similar folk status to the archetype of the American cowboy.

(Page, 1986 16) The mediator-hero relates to Turner's underdog and the mediator as social

reformer.

Exploring requires curiosity and a certain amount of drive. Exploring also involves

representation. The American explorers of the 1860's have also been depicted as inquisitive and

respectful. The 1860's marked the advance of the Europeans, more fur traders, the missionaries,

and the early prospectors. The Yukon of the 1860's also saw the advent of the American

scientist-adventurer. These people explored the Yukon River Valley and published travelogues

and scientific articles "describing one of North America's last unknown frontiers." (Coates and

Morrison, 2005 36) Dr. Dawson was one of these characters and it is after him that the Town of

the City of Dawson has been named. He was tireless on the trail despite his hunched back and he

was well-respected by many of the natives. He took the time to try and learn the "Indian names"

for the rivers and mountains wherever he went. (McClellan, 1987 11) Acknowledging

indigenous names was rare as Arthur Roberts testifies:

> AR: Oh yes, I see the fish trap. They used to do it over here in Klondike.
> Klondike ... they used to call it Tl'o-ndek that means ... lots of grass in that creek.
> That's where they fish. Fish can't see trap, they call Tl'o-ndek, then the white
> man come, "What's this creek name?" "Tl'o-ndek", they say. "Oh, you mean
> Klondike!" That's why it got Klondike name.
> PS: Umhmmm
> TL: Oh yeah, I heard of that!
> AR: Yeah, that's where it got the name Klondike. They can't pronounce Tl'o-
> ndek, that's Indian language.
> PS: Uh-huh. (Roberts, 1994 67)

Most of the fur traders pined for their European culture. Robert Kennicott, a zoologist

from New Orleans, capitalized on the wish of the fur-traders for the respect and admiration of

those among the "best intellectual and social circles". He mobilized their passions and abilities

and got them contributing to his zoological records of the Yukon. (Coates and Morrison, 2005 37)

Perry McDonough Collins had won a fortune in the California gold rush and funded the

Overland Telegraph Company in 1864. A telegraph line was to be established between the

U.S.A. and Russia. (Coates and Morrison, 2005 37) In 1866, a crew working in the Atlantic

Ocean made it evident that a telegraph line could run under water. Plans for the Overland

Telegraph Company were subsequently ditched, but the workers were not informed of the

changes for a year after that. (Coates and Morrison, 2005 38) Word travels slow. The telegraph

line, although incomplete, had a major impact. There had been a considerable amount of press

concerning the achievements and progress of the work crew. Also and meanwhile, William Dall,

a physician and naturalist, and Robert Whymper had been busy taking samples, drawing, and

making illustrated travelogues. Dall wrote *Alaska and its Resources* (1870). Whymper wrote

Travels in America and on the Yukon (1869.) Their production, along with Kennicott's articles in journals such as *Transactions of the Chicago Academy of Sciences*, had the south "waking up" to the potential of the Yukon River Valley. (Coates and Morrison, 2005 39)

When we explore, we bring ourselves to that which was previously unknown or unfamiliar. By engaging in exploration, we inevitably change that which is being explored. There are consequences that stem from these changes.

> The HBC left in the Yukon a First Nations population that was very different from the one it had encountered half a century earlier. The population had been severely depleted by a seemingly endless series of epidemics. Native society had undergone substantial change, based on the new European technology and the commercial imperatives of the fur trade. The aboriginal people had held their own against everything but disease, from which there was little protection.
> (Coates and Morrison, 2005 47)

Despite having written this, Coates and Morrison suggest that impact of the first Europeans in the Yukon, the explorers, the fur traders, and the missionaries, "was a gentle and largely unobtrusive one (save the impact of disease), for they amended but did not radically alter its economy, appearance, or cultural balance." (Coates and Morrison, 2005 49) The prospectors and the miners, however, did introduce radical changes. They write:

> It was the miners who changed the face of the land irrevocably, bringing it firmly into the orbit of the modern world of development and technology. (Coates and Morrison, 2005 49)

The Treasure-Seeker:

The gold rush popularized the Yukon and Dawson City at an international level. As Page suggests:

> The discovery of gold along the creeks near Dawson in the Yukon triggered the wildest stampede of population in Canadian history and made Yukon a household word around the globe. (Page, 1986 11)

Mobility, lawlessness, and trust - the gold miner is obviously one of the quintessential Yukon archetypes. Toiling away out there on the creeks, dark and dirty from the sunshine and the dust. Taking the gamble and risking it all, needing a neighbour and fighting a neighbour

(sometimes in the same day) the miner is the root of the interdependent individualism that has come to define much of contemporary Yukon society.

There is an irony to the interdependent individualism of gold mining culture. The terminology is paradoxical. Shades of a limen? The prospectors and miners of the 1860's are remembered as lucky and persistent. Advancing by the sweat of one's brow, they were thrifty by necessity. But when pay dirt was struck, the extravagance of the party knew no limit.

The miners brought the individualism that is the mark of the modern socialization. Now it was all about the gold. From Mexico in the early 16th century, through California in mid-19th century, and up to the Yukon in the late-19th century, gold and its discovery had become a major motivator of men. Coates and Morrison write:

> Perhaps nothing in the history of the Western Hemisphere has been so disruptive
> to aboriginal societies or has acted as so powerful a magnet to lure men into new
> and strange territory as the possibility of a gold strike. (Coates and Morrison,
> 2005 49)

Rumours about the possibility of gold in the Yukon had been started by the fur traders and had been circulating since the 1850's. 1872 saw the arrival of three prospectors to the Yukon: Jack McQuesten of New England, Arthur Harper or Northern Ireland, and Alfred Mayo of the circus in Kentucky. McQuesten and Harper had been following the California gold rush and all three were hungry for discovery and adventure. (Coates and Morrision, 2005 49) McQuesten, Moise Mercier of the Alaska Commercial Company, and Frank Bonfield their assistant, established Fort Reliance in 1874 in order to shorten the trade route for the Tron'dek Gwetch'in.

The mining population grew slowly but steadily at first. Most people in North America had never heard tell of the Yukon and those who had made it up there in the early prospecting years were veteran miners with lots of practice and lots of patience. As Coates and Morrison relate:

> They were not greenhorns or idealists, and they did not take foolish chances if
> they could avoid doing so; very few traveled in the winter months and they
> wintered close to a trading post whenever possible, to avoid the risk of starvation.
> (Coates and Morrison, 2005 52-53)

They were patient but mobile, they searched and waited, searched and waited, for the big strike.

The early mining society was fluid and individualistic. Partnerships in mining were flexible and informal. As Coates and Morrison have suggested, "the only laws the miners obeyed were those they drafted for themselves." (Coates and Morrison, 2005 56) The miner's societies were isolated and colorful. As Coates and Morrison note:

> There were, of course, the colourful characters who seemed to gravitate to gold mining communities, their nicknames reading like a list of characters from a boy's novel: Salt Water Jack, Big Dick, Squaw Cameron, Jimmy the Pirate, Buckskin Miller, Pete the Pig. (Coates and Morrision, 2005 59)

Miners often worked on their own, but sometimes their needs and interests led them to join-up with others. The working model for these early Yukon mining communities is what Coates and Morrison call "personal community". (Coates and Morrison, 2005 60) Despite these personal communities, however, it should be emphasized that mining society was essentially a solo task.

In 1886, Harry Madison and Howard Franklin struck it rich up the Forty-Mile River, a tributary to the Yukon River forty miles downstream from Fort Reliance. The strike was so far up Forty-Mile that it was actually in Alaska. (Coates and Morrison, 2005 54) The grubstakes of Forty-Mile and Sixty-Mile were established and were named in relation to their distance from Fort Reliance, downstream and upstream respectively. (Coates and Morrision, 2005 50) Forty-Mile became the first permanent town in Canada's part of the Yukon Valley, with a population near 500 in the winter of 1886/1887. The traders would supply miners with the what they would need to operate in exchange for a season's work on credit. The miners, of course, had to be good to their word. Coates and Morrison write:

> The trust involved in this arrangement was an essential feature of the Yukon society of this era. (Coates and Morrison, 2005 50)

The town of Forty-Mile was well within the Canadian border and the residents of Forty-Mile would have been expected to operate under the Canadian law. However, the first Mounted

Policeman arrived to Forty-Mile no sooner than 1894, eight full years after the town was established. (Coates and Morrison, 2005 57) There was no way that a miner working close to the Yukon/Alaska border would be able to tell which country was being mined. There was no requirement, or even infra-structure, to pay taxes, royalties, or customs duties. The Yukon before the Klondike Gold Rush was a Yukon sans North West Mounted Police. It was essentially a lawless society.

The main form of government among miners was the "miners' meeting". The tradition began in the Yukon sometime around 1885 and lasted until well after the North West Mounted Police appeared on the scene. All the miners would attend. By-laws would be passed with the vote of the majority. Criminal cases, mining disputes, and personal grievances and other social issues were all addressed at miner's meetings. (Coates and Morrison, 2005 60) Miners' meetings were thus the forum for dispensing justice and preventing conflict. (Coates and Morrison, 2005 62)

What constituted serious crime was lifestyle-specific. Petty theft, for example, as a terrible thing to do. Miners needed to trust that their things and their work would be left alone if they were away from their camp for any length of time. (Coates and Morrison, 2005 61) Although individualistic, miners could not be selfish. As Coates and Morrison suggest:

> The selfish man, the loner, the man who pursued his own interests in disregard of [an]other's rights and interest was more than a nuisance; he was a threat to the whole community. (Coates and Morrison, 2005 61)

Allowing someone's cache to be destroyed, for example, was on par with murder. Utter selfishness was a threat because charity was sometimes necessary. A person's success, and even survival, depended on the goodwill and reliability of strangers. As Coates and Morrison write:

> For instance, it was essential that travelers in the country be sure that they could call on anyone at any time for food and shelter; to refuse aid to a stranger in need was unthinkable. (Coates and Morrison, 2005 61)

At the time of judgment in a miners' meeting, the person's deed and their character were both taken into consideration. Because there weren't any jails, a guilty verdict meant that the

convicted would either be hanged, or would be banished from the region. The later was most common.

These last few paragraphs have been focusing on the history of seeking material treasure. Indeed, many people do go to Dawson expecting to make some money:

Why Dawson?

money [with a huge dollar sign and a drawing of a face with dollar signs for eyes and a small mouth] (Wynn, 2005)

This treasure-seeking attitude is perpetual but I would like to emphasize that the treasure sought are various.

The Rebel - Anti-Establishment and Scandalous Affairs:

The Mad Trapper of Rat River, alias Albert Johnson, could be called a cult-hero for this group and his type of thinking. Drive a full tank of gas north of Dawson along the Dempster Highway and you'll find yourself at Eagle Plains. Eagle Plains has a gas station, a restaurant and rooms to let. The restaurant walls are covered with pictures of the Mad Trapper and framed printings of his story. There had been trouble over his trap line and the RCMP had gone out to his cabin to resolve the dispute. He shot one of the officers, strapped-on his cross-country skis, and made his escape. The story of the RCMP chasing him for 48 days over 150 miles of mountainous terrain south-west of the Mackenzie Delta in the winter of 1932 is widely celebrated throughout the Yukon and especially in the northern part of the Territory. He had shot an RCMP officer and led the first chase to involve the use of aircraft to locate a fugitive. The Dene and the RCMP were hot on his trail and "his exploits have become part of the folklore of the North", a testament to his "skill, cunning, ingenuity and endurance." (Page, 1986 15) He was eventually shot, but the story does not end with is death.

An old hermit died in his cabin not so long ago and, as the meager estate was being assessed, a confession that had been written on a calendar was found hanging on the cabin wall. The hermit claimed to have been the Mad Trapper. Apparently, at one point during the chase, the

Trapper had come across another man in the forest. The Trapper exchanged his skis for the man's snowshoes and went on from there. The RCMP, hot on the ski-track trail, had shot the wrong man. The Trapper had lived the rest of his days in the secret solitude of his hermitage. Wild and crazy. The Yukon has a history of, and a reputation for, a laissez-faire attitude and the tradition continues.

Please feel free to use this space to add whatever you'd like:

**Keep the Pit open,
the mining on the creeks.
Let time take care of the old buildings,
never pave the roads or cement the walks,
no more development on the Dome.
The music fest in July
and I shall always return!** (Will, 2005)

The Pit, short for The Snake Pit, is a bar and a landmark in Dawson City. Mid-town, it is the first floor of the Westminster Hotel. One side of the bar is saloon-style and it is not uncommon, even today, to hear rag-time music hurtling out of the piano as the regulars drink their beers as early as 11, 10, 9 in the morning. The other side of the bar is busier at night. It is dark in The Pit, even at the height of the sun in the summer months, and smoky as all get out but nobody gets out. There are pool tables to one side and the walls are lined with odd portraits of people who have spent a good deal of time in the bar. The bands that play The Pit are rowdy and so are the clientele. The dancing used to be in front of the stage, but the floor bounced so much the microphones would hit the singers in the teeth, so the dance floor was moved to the back corner. Late on a wild night, the dancers still take-over the space in front of the stage and no amount of discipline from the bar staff can change that. The floor bounces because, like all buildings in Dawson, the place is built over permafrost and basements are impossible. Legend has it that D, the owner and operator of The Pit, took to mining the land underneath the hotel. He'd sneak down there and bring-up the gold. You're not supposed to do that in Dawson proper, the whole town has been declared a heritage site and mining within city limits is against the law.

Duncan took-up a good deal of gold, was caught, and fined millions of dollars. Apparently, he was able to pay his fine without any trouble at all. The Yukon has a history of, and a reputation for, the scandalous and the tradition continues.

Grahme McElheran reports the findings from "Portraits of Canada 2005" in a February 2005 issue of the *Yukon News*. The survey was conducted by the Centre for Research and Information on Canada and suggests that Yukon residents do not trust their political leaders to be honest or ethical.

> "Yukon residents are least likely, by far, to give a high rating of honesty and ethical standards to their local or municipal political leaders," says the report [...] Only 23 per cent give a high rating [of honesty and ethical standards] to municipal leaders, and only 16 per cent give the same rating to provincial political leaders. (McElheran, *Yukon News* February 17, 2006.)

This distrust, it seems, is well founded. Dawson City, for example, was recently hoodwinked by its own mayor. The *Report of Forensic Audit and Financial Review of The Town of the City of Dawson, Yukon (2005)*, which was prepared by Ian Doddington, CA, CMC of Doddington Advisors Inc., makes clear Dawson's current and terrible financial predicament. The Mayor and Council basically swindled the town. Many of the projects would have benefited the whole community, but they were poorly planned, engineered, and budgeted, and therefore did not work-out. These projects include Cable TV/Internet for $1,527,549, new fire hall/city offices / public works building for $2,687,501, a new recreation complex for $10,535,787, a new swimming pool for $2,301,026, new infrastructure for town water and sewer for $3,302,849, and other miscellaneous projects including soccer; softball; mobile and general equipment for $1,248,440. The total investment equalled $21,603,152 over six years. For a population of approximately 1300, that is quite a bit of money. Needless to say, the town has amassed a considerable debt.

> In our view, Dawson was given far too much latitude in managing, or rather inappropriately not managing, its financial obligations to the point where it was exposed to financial chaos. (Doddington, 2005 11)

On top that loss to the community, the mayor has been accused of stealing hundreds of

thousands of dollars, erasing entire hard drives, unauthorized shredding of documents, and "paying it back" with bouncing checks.

> Based on the information we have seen, the documents apparently relied on, do not appear to provide an adequate basis for Dawson to make informed decisions. (Doddington, 2005 15)

Over the winter of 2004/2005, the Yukon Territorial Government effectively removed the Mayor and Council from their duties and appointed a city trustee to take their place until the town gained a sense of stability. In the summer of 2005, the citizens of Dawson had grown restless and had begun a campaign for an election. For a town in contemporary Canada to be without democratic electoral power is striking.

The Hermit:

There is something to this idea of a village of hermits. What *is* that? The bottom line is that humans are a communal species and need other humans to not only survive in the long run, but to be human at all. But so many people are drawn to the Yukon for its spaces, for its lack of humanity and human impression on the land. They love the wild and want more of it. As it turns out, they find like-minded people living there already. These are the "people" referred to in the surveys. Not just people in general, they were what was left behind, but "real" people, like-minded people, community oriented individuals. People you can get to know and enjoy the process of doing so. One of the reasons you get to know them is that the towns are so darned small, with huge distances between them. In this sense, there is little of the anonymity of the southern cities. In this sense there is actually very little space, socially.

> **Dawson is the perfect size for me - socially. I love that you get to know everyone, yet it's not "small-townish" in that small minded sort of way. It has a good yearly/seasonal influx of new blood + therefore creativity + innovation. I love that it's in the middle of butt-fuck nowhere and that it's surrounded by so much Beauty. I love the way you feel you've escaped the world when you're here.**
> (Zoe, 2005)

But there's tonnes of physical space and still lots of room to create an identity and a life

for yourself. Robert Page suggests that "for Whites, the Arctic was the ultimate Darwinian challenge." (Page, 1986 15)

John Hornby is an example of such an escapist. Born in England, he was up north in the Thenlon area in the early 1900's. The Great War (World War I) had led him to think society evil and social man diseased.

> He was seeking release from the degenerate materialism of the modern world as he saw it. (Page, 1986 15)

He developed a "brooding introspection" through his lonely pursuit of hunting and fishing but eventually recruited two others to join him. Pierre Berton shares that Hornby referred to the Barrens as "a land of feast and famine". (Berton, 1956 19) He and his companions died of starvation in 1927. We find the following in Page:

> Hornby's protest, however, took on greater glory with his martyrdom. (Page, 1986 15)

To suggest martyrdom is to imply a sacrifice motivated by an intense faith and religious devotion. Sometimes, when living on the edge, what looks like piety may be mere physical survival. Then again, while on the edge, piety and mere survival may just be one and the same thing. Pierre Berton recalls the following bit, as he was told it by trapper and trader Jack LaFlaire, while he was investigating the rumours of a tropical valley in along the South Nahanni River in the North West Territory:

> "There's nothing tropical about the Nahanni. Hell, a fella name O'Brian was froze to death in there, about twenty miles from here at what they call the Splits. I remember it all. We found him crouched over his fire trying to light it. He'd froze right there, kneeling down, It looked like he was praying, but he wasn't. Just trying to keep warm, poor fella." (Berton, quoting LaFlaire1956 68)

William Cantwell Smith shows that Lucretius, an old poet, identified "true piety not as the traditional rigmarole of Roman ritual but as an almost mystic quietude in nature." (Smith, 1991 22) My participants placed heavy emphasis on the quantity and quality of space and time (more physical space and less social space, slower pace = more time) in the Yukon. The following is good-looking quote from Gary Paulsen, to be found in *Pilgrimage on a Steel Ride: a*

memoir about men and motorcycles. (1997) It's all about getting away from it all...

Away.

That's what they meant to me then. Not to a place, not from a place, but just away. Gone. In and out of myself, away from what I was in danger of becoming, and I got out of the car and went to the Softail and sat on it and let it talk to me. [...] Thoreau was right. If a man builds a barn, the barn becomes his prison. (Paulson, 1997 19-21)

I had to run long. I had learned that from the dogs. Whether it's love or work or laughter or pain or hate you cannot know it unless you run long, stay with it past the first flush, get over the mountain range and learn what it's truly like. The dogs taught me to wait - always to wait and go long and you will know, will learn.

I ran through the night, hot summer wind over the windshield into my face, the helmet off now and tied to sissy-bar backrest and to hell with the law; with hot wind in my face and over my head and the vibration of the motor coming up through the frame and slamming into my ass and the lights out ahead, I ran home because I knew what I was going to do.

I would make the longest run I could from where I lived in southern New Mexico, where I had moved when my heart blew and forced me to stop running dogs - the only way I could stop running them.

I visualized a map of North America as I rumbled through the night and thought that the farthest I could go to learn this thing was perhaps east, up into Nova Scotia and back, but I knew instantly that I would not go east. There were too many distractions there, too many people, too many problems. I could go north.

I could go to Alaska.

It was perhaps always there, the idea. I had run the Alaska Highway twice, carrying dogs up from Minnesota for the Iditarod, but both those runs had been a particular kind of horror. I'd done it in winter when the road was solid packed ice, the semi trucks were constantly coming blind around the corners, and it was always dark and

I couldn't honestly remember a single bit of the drive except for the endless routine of taking dogs out to let them piss and feeding them and watering them and then driving another three hours and doing it all again.

I had done it twice but I had never really seen it and most certainly I had never seen it in the summer, when it is supposed to be the most beautiful.

I would make a run to Alaska and, I thought - maybe even come back. (Paulson, 1997 37-39)

Humanity is different when there's less of it. I wrote this next bit in red ink on the back

of some Turner photocopies (*Blazing the Trail*, 1992) while riding the Greyhound south from

Whitehorse for Christmas in Jasper with Mom, Dad, Rob, and Blake...

There's a certain quality to the isolation here that may be unique -

there are so few people here that there are times when we can find ourselves quite alone. The "human" is emphasized because we are more aware of it in the face of all the other things that surround us. I think that people take

themselves less for granted here
           -and it's v. obvious what we are.
In the bush - we may come across an other person, but there's no such thing as
simply coming across another person.

HUMANITY IS DIFFERENT WHEN THERE'S LESS OF IT.

Pulled into Watson Lake on the Greyhound bus
Felt late - but it wasn't … not even 7 o'clock
Dinnertime.
We'd passed UpperLiard about an hour earlier - taking me back to my time with
Georgie …
'k…so-
  pulling into Watson Lake. Dinnertime. Boxing Day.
Christmas Lights. More snow than Whitehorse.
I see the restaurant we're going to up ahead
and to my left : Signpost Forest.

For some reason, I've never been here
45 minutes
I go to buy a disposable camera at the gas station next to the hotel restaurant and
it costs $20 so I don't.
Bundled-up, I walk back down the highway to the Signpost Forest.
           It's cold and I'm not wearing the best boots for this, but then again, I'm
only sleeping?sfuming?sttoming?sttwing?slfuuing?
so whatever
           I stop to look around along the way
           I'm looking at a building across the highway - The Northern Lights
Centre -
and I'm wondering what it's used for
in a town where the "department store"
looks a lot like a bungalow home.

           HOly it quiet around here -
I'm imagining who lives here

Signpost forest is lit-up with a couple street lights
           it's gorgeous, colourful stacked
           complicated with frost and
           snow.
There's a gateway by which one may enter. The entrance has
been plowed-over with
snow. No one seems to come in here
in the winter.
The signs are from everywhere
  so many places I've never even
heard of
some signs have peoples' names on them
-they're grouped to one side.
  most signs are from places.

It's weird to have so many names of other places in one spot.

And this spot really does seem isolated.
It's so quiet.

I go through the snow in the wrong
  shoes.
I get up close, look around, see
the car in the park tucked behind some rows of signs.
I see the bull dozers tucked in there
and I'm not sure if they're for show or for work.
I'm done looking,
        start heading back for the road
and run into some people I know from Dawson. They're headed
south for January, they're
smoking a joint, and we're riding
the same bus.

To camp or not to camp:

Tent City was closed to campers in the summer of 2005 for the first time since its

inception. I had to ask people a) if they knew about Tent City before arriving and if they'd lived

there, and b) how they found Dawson life was different without it.

Neomie had been aware of the existence of Tent City before her arrival. She lived there

her first summer in Dawson and spent her second and third summer (2002, 2003) camping in a

friend's backyard. She was happy to be living in a cabin on the Dome the summer she filled-out

my questionnaire. Upon asking if she would be camping in Tent City, if it were an option, she

wrote: "No, I have done it a lot and wanted a cabin this time." Neomie was pregnant that

summer of 2005. When asked if she found that things were different without Tent City, she

writes:

> **For sure ... there is less people, less party. Everybody is looking for place to stay.
> There ain't any. It seem to take longer between people to connect ... before, they
> all had something in common: Tent City.** (Neomie, 2005)

Glen was aware of Tent City before he arrived to Dawson. He stayed there his first summer and

now lives in a trailer in Callison because he has a business and tools to store. He finds that the

mood and atmosphere of Tent City disappeared as soon as it was closed to campers.

Fee knew about Tent City prior to his arrival as well. He camped there all summer of 2000 and left his van there 2001, although he lived elsewhere that second summer. Now he lives on his mining claims at Sawmill Gulch. Fee feels that, without Tent City,

the Dawson experience is not as great so people go back talk it up less than before and then less people come up. (Fee, 2005)

Ben did not know about Tent City. He has, however, spent a summer camping around Dawson. He pitched a tent in 2002 "at the North end of town, where the Bluff meets the river on the OLDE TOWNE DUMP. NO FERRY. NO NOISE. NO PEOPLE. NO bear BAIT campers. All around good." If Tent City were open to campers, he would stay there "only as a last resort." He is living in a friend's cabin "who is away. The cabin is 11km from town, just off the highway on the Klondike River. "I stay here in exchange for taking care of his six Dogs + finishing his cabin.", he writes. Now that Tent City has closed,

There seems to be less comraderie + community amongst the summer workers in Guggieville. Living on a gravel pit vs. Green seclusion with fire pits. Folks seem [...] (Ben, 2005)

Ruby says "Yeppahs!" she knew about Tent City before she got there. She camped there the summers of 2002 and 2003. She "called [her] home Chipmunk Chase Base. It was closer to the hostel ... right beside the SAUNA!" We used to call the hostel "the hostile" because the owner was so strict. I'm glad Ruby has mentioned the sauna as a landmark. Building the sauna was a Tent City community event in the summer of 2002. Now, Ruby lives in "a hobbit hole cabin in the north end of town" and doesn't think that she'd be camping in Tent City, even if it were an option. Now that Tent City is closed, Ruby finds that things are different in Dawson

like this: 17 kids camping in my back YARD against my wishes ... Also, I find the main hangout spot to be the bars now. Summer people den't know eachother as well this year. (Ruby, 2005)

Will knew about Tent City before he got to Dawson for the first time but has never lived there. He currently lives in a tent in Whitehorse and doesn't have anything to say about how things are different in Dawson without Tent City.

Zoe was aware of Tent City prior to her arrival to Dawson and states that it was "one of the things I was looking forward to in fact." She has never stayed there, but has camped every summer in Dawson. The first summer of 2001, she was at the hostel, "chez Dieter", and the next two summers were spent "squatting on the edge of town." She finds that things are different without Tent City, that

it seems to have slightly modified the transient-labour crowd; a little less hippy. I think the lack of Tent City encourages more of a university crowd than the wanderers. (Zoe, 2005)

Linda doesn't have much to say about Tent City. She has never lived there.

Brian knew about Tent City before he got to Dawson. He has been living in a cave year-round, right next to Tent City, since he arrived 7 years ago.

Wynn was not aware of Tent City before he got to Dawson. He is "couch surfing", camping in "friends' backyards" and occasionally sleeping in an "abandoned log cabin". If Tent City was still up and running, he would "most definitely" have camped there this summer. He hears that, when Tent City was open to campers, there was "more community, more young people, friendlier atmosphere."

I don't want to make it sound like I'm fighting to have Tent City re-opened in its current location. It has been settled as a Tron'dek Gwetch'in land claim and I respect the band's decision to manage the land as they feel fit. I just wanted to point-out the impact of the changes and how hard it can be to re-locate a site-based tradition.

Clutch:

What is happening when people work towards getting away from it all by going north? When this dream is pursued, an archetype is donned and the Myth is activated. There really isn't that much of a difference between the hero's quest and the weaklings retreat.

CHAPTER 3. A QUEST-ION OF IDENTITY

Exploring the notion of pilgrimage and considering how the shift in the location of a threat affects the explorer and hermit archetypes. The consequences of this change present a challenge to the traditional understanding of the difference between the hero's quest and the weakling's retreat.

> In societies with few economic opportunities for movement away from limited circles of friends, neighbours, and local authorities, all rooted alike in the soil, the only journey possible for those not merchants, peddlers, minstrels, jugglers, tumblers, wandering friars, or outlaws, or their modern equivalents, is a holy journey, a pilgrimage or a crusade. On such a journey one gets away from the reiterated "occasions of sin" which make up so much of the human experience of social structure. If one is tied by blood or edict to a given set of people in daily intercourse over the whole gamut of human activities - domestic, economic, jural, ritual, recreational, affinal, neighbourly - small grievances over trivial issues tend to accumulate through the years, until they become major disputes over property, office, or prestige which factionalize the group. One piles up a store of nagging guilts, not all of which can be relieved in the parish confessional, especially when the priest himself may be party to some of the conflicts. When such a load can no longer be borne, it is time to take the road as a pilgrim. (Turner, 1978 7)

The variety of paths and the location of the limen:

The experience of approaching and then occupying the limen involves movement. Mystics may suggest that the necessary movement is of the spirit, heart, and mind - the location and condition of which are wrapped in mystery. Other thresholds are less esoteric, at least at one level, and require a physical journey. Should each journey to the limen be considered a pilgrimage?

As has been discussed in the first chapter, there were several significant differences between the ritual life of pre-literate tribal societies and more complex societies. In major initiation rituals of tribal societies, for example, the initiands are secluded. They are brought to a "sacralized enclosure, or *temenos* [separate from] the villages, markets, pasture, and gardens of everyday usage and trafficking." (Turner, 1978 4) Conversely, the coming-of-age ceremonies of, for example, medieval and modern Roman Catholicism - namely Mass, baptism, female purification, confirmation, nuptials, ordination, extreme unction, and funerary rituals - occur in

the cathedral, at home, and well within the physical fold of the organized Church. (Turner, 1978 4) Contemplative seclusion had become a professional pursuit, available in the main to those who were willing and able to commit their lives to the monastic order.

Turner wondered: Where was liminality for the lay people, for the ordinary worshippers? And notes that as Christianity developed, the get-away afforded by travel to a sacred site or holy shrine - the pilgrim's path - became the medieval, and eventually the modern, equivalent to the tribal liminal seclusion. (Turner, 1978 4) Victor and Edith Turner's *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* (1978) is an application of the insights gleaned from their studies of pre-industrial societies as they are addressed in *The Ritual Process* (1969), to pilgrimage among Roman Catholic Christian traditions. Turner considers pilgrimage to be "one characteristic type of liminality in cultures ideologically dominated by the "historical", or "salvation," religions." (Turner, 1978 3) As Turner suggests:

> For the majority, pilgrimage was the great liminal experience of the religious life.
> If mysticism is an interior pilgrimage, pilgrimage is exteriorized mysticism.
> (Turner, 1978 7)

Historical and Archaic Humanity Compared:

Historical traditions, and pilgrimages that are linked to historical traditions, are so named because they "have beginnings traceable in historical time. [...] the beginnings of most pilgrimages can fairly confidently be ascribed to a particular historical period, and even, in many instances, to a precise date." (Turner, 1978 17) Time is perceived and experienced as linear. Pilgrimage is born in history, influences, and is influenced by, historical events. Turner writes:

> [...] pilgrimage should be regarded not merely as an ideal model but an
> institution with a history. Each pilgrimage, of any length, is vulnerable to the
> history of its period and must come to terms with shifts of political geography.
> Pilgrimage is more responsive to social change and popular moods than liturgical
> ritual, fixed by rubric. (Turner, 1974 231)

In contrast, ritual in most tribal, Eliade's "primitive", societies "cannot be traced to any

demonstrable historical foundation. Tribal societies were "highly structured, cyclical, and repetitive." (Turner, 1969 188) Mircea Eliade explains that accounts of the origin of a given ritual are given *in illo tempore*, which is the timeless, undatable, mythical, time of cultural beginnings. *In illo tempore*, the gods, demigods, and semi divine heroes walked the earth and initiated the central cultural institutions. (Eliade 1971: 4, 21). (Turner, 1978 17)

When pilgrimages of "historical world religions" are "established on the sites of pilgrimages belonging to earlier religions which, though more than tribal in theological scope and territorial range, did not yet possess the strain toward universality of their historical supplanters" (Turner, 1974 17), there's give and there's take. The supplanter will acquire and display some of the traits of the older traditions established in that land. A living tradition may never be fully supplanted as long as its adherents survive the meeting and grey does exist. Both parties will change through a process of hybridization or syncretism.

The Nuclear Paradigm:

Since pilgrimages are essentially historical institutions that may mix with traditions that honour a cyclical - rather than a linear - concept of time, it is important to distinguish the type when describing a particular system. Although a pilgrimage may have many types, features, and influences, one type will still give it its main character. That one main informing type is called "the nuclear paradigm."

Four types of pilgrimage: Prototypical, Archaic, Medieval, and Modern:

Turner identifies four distinct yet intermingling categories of pilgrimage. They are the prototypical pilgrimage, the archaic pilgrimage, the medieval pilgrimage, and modern pilgrimage. Because the pilgrim's path travels through many different lands and times, pilgrimage might never be of a single type and may be forever hybrid. (Turner, 1978 21)

Prototypical pilgrimage is the kind established by the founder, by his disciples, or "important national evangelists of his faith". (Turner, 1974 18) Prototypical pilgrimage may be

founded on ancient pilgrimage routes and sites, but it is through symbolism, charter narratives, ecclesiastical structure, and general reputation, that the prototypical pilgrimage manifests the orthodoxy of its own parent faith. (Turner, 1974 18) Examples include the journey to Jerusalem and Rome for Christians, Mecca for Islam Benares and Mount Kailas for Hindu groups, and Kandy for Buddhist groups. (Turner, 1974 18) In Christianity, and many other salvation traditions, the seeker is brought to the limen by imitating the life and journey of the founder of the tradition. (Turner, 1974 33)

Archaic pilgrimages are often syncretic and bear traces of older religious beliefs and symbols. (Turner, 1974 18) According to Eliade, meaning exists for archaic people when their actions reproduce a mythical archetype. And every action has a mythical archetype. There may be a link to be drawn between these mythical archetypes and the putting on of "the paradigmatic mask" in prototypical pilgrimage.

Medieval pilgrimages, for Turner, are of a particular area and era. They are Christian pilgrimages originating during the European Middle Ages, spanning from 500 through 1400 C.E. They assume the tone of the theological and philosophical emphases of that period. (Turner, 1974 18)

Turner's characterization of modern pilgrimages includes those Roman Catholic pilgrimages occurring after the medieval period in Europe. They are modern in their timing, but anti-modern in tone as they are often initially inspired by the view of an apparition and they support a belief in miracles. (Turner, 1974 19) Modern pilgrims harbour a "fervent personal piety" and tend to be highly devout. The modern pilgrimage is often a vehicle that flies in the face of an increasingly secular world as there is a tension existing between modernity and the very root concept of pilgrimage.

Pilgrimage as liminoid:

> Pilgrimage systems are more "liminoid" (open, optational, not conceptualized as religious routine) than "liminal" (belonging to the mid-stage in a religious

processual structure consisting of rites of separation, limen or margin, and reaggregation - as discussed by Arnold van Gennep). (Turner, 1978 231)

The distinguishing mark of the modern, institutional pilgrimage is that it is undergone voluntarily. This element of voluntarism differs markedly from the obligatoriness of many rituals in tribal societies and sets pilgrimage, and all other voluntary yet communitas-oriented events, apart from liminality as we know it through Turner's studies of tribal ritual. Turner relates that, in tribal settings, nearly everyone must undergo certain rituals. It is the initiation rituals that have the more extensive liminal phases. Some choice is allowed to the inductee, like the precise timing of the ritual and the "placement of corporate performance" (re: when and where), but even those details are most often determined by divinatory procedures. (Turner, 1978 8) The pilgrimage may be motivated by a promise to a saint, but the time for pilgrimage is always freely chosen. To make the choice to take the pilgrim's path is to exercise a freedom that "negates the obligatoriness of a life embedded in social structure." (Turner, 1978 8)

So, is going up to the Yukon a sacred journey - a pilgrimage of sorts?

This is way too elaborate for me...
I choose to go up to the Yukon for adventure.
I end up staying,
It felt like traveling, without moving. (Neomie, 2005)

Geo-challenge and The Immigrant Mentality:

Based on the idea that you've got to know where you are before you know who you are, William James refers to Frye's suggestion that - given the national obsession with where we are (re: "Where is here?") - we are having an identity crisis. (James, 1998 69)

> Interrogation of the immediate environment and surroundings shows that the questioner is not at home, does not know his or her place, is uncertain about the environing situation. Given that, the question of identity cannot be settled until one is "in place" - located and knowledgeable about one's surroundings. (James quoting Frye, 1998 69)

Another way to look at it: If, as James has indicated, "the primary fact of the Canadian experience is a geographical one" (James, 1998 82), then going into unknown places is a form of identity

search, or at least identity exploration.

James suggests that we, as Canadians, both identify with, and are challenged by, our relationship to our environment. We are a geographically-identified, and a geographically-challenged, people.

> Rather than attempting to discover a plot in our sacred story we should search more instead for its character and setting [...] (James, 1998 70)

The reasons for this are largely historical and are rooted in our cultural heritage. We have a history, we are conditioned, and these conditions affect our relationship with our environment. As Alfred Korzybski implies with the phrase "the map is not the territory", our understanding of a place does not come from a representation of that place, but from our experience of that place. James refers to John Moss who wrote *Enduring Dreams: An Exploration of Arctic Landscape* (1994), and who suggests that geography

> [...] is the imposition of knowledge and experience in a specified landscape. (James, 1998 70 quoting Moss 1994, 1)

Of course, in the diversity that is contemporary Canada, the details of heritage are various. James chooses to focus on the European Christian influence on the Canadian langescape (a term coined by Gail McGregor (James, 1998 66) and the role played by British and French theologies upon our conscience. There is an emphasis upon the acknowledgment that ethical, political, economic, and religious standards were imposed by the British Crown and Empire and by the Roman Catholic Church, from "the outside".

Frye's notion of the indigenous mentality was outlined in the previous chapter. The immigrant mentality, more familiar to most Canadians and informed by the Christian theologies of the British and the French, conceives of the natural world as separate from both us and the sacred.

> This "immigrant mentality" makes rationality the essential human power. Derived from Cartesian egocentric consciousness, this mentality results in turning away from nature. (James, 1988 93)

Here it is believed that nature should not be worshiped as sacred in and of itself. The closest that

creation comes to the sacred is as a site of revelation of a transcendent sacra. It is believed that

Christianity has had something to do with this by virtue of its teachings on idolatry. But is it

really all about Christianity?

This is an overly-simple overview of Christianity. I'm keeping it here because I think

that there are a lot of people on this planet and in this country who relate to it. I also think that

there are a lot of people in this country who have turned away from their experience of

Christianity because that overview was not satisfying their needs. Given that, while 4.8 million

Canadians claimed no religious affiliation in 2001, but more than seven in ten think of themselves

as "spiritual". (Bob Jones, *Edmonton Journal*, Saturday, September 17, 2005.), I thought it

would be helpful to ask people directly whether they subscribe to any religious organizations or

traditions.

Do you consider yourself a religious or spiritual person? How so?

Not really, I am very simple, I like when things are just simple.(Neomie, 2005)

Yes but I have no idea how anymore. (Glen, 2005)

religious – NO. spiritual – YES. (Fee, 2005)

In as much as we all are. I believe as our physical selves had to develop in the womb of our mother, our spiritual selves have to develop to have the stuff to transcend this dimension to the next, through death. I consider myself in a modern context as spiritual. I am in a sense religious. I understand religion by most of its meaning to pertain to the re-alignment of self + spirit. In this context I seek to find religion and to exist within it when need be. I despise organized religion. I see it as a system of control that breeds division, FEAR, DEATH, WAR, HATRED, OPPRESSION, DARKNESS, CULTRUAL IMPERIALIMS IN THE GUISE OF LOVE. For this reason I do not subscribe to any preconceived archetypes or dogma as though it were some disposable shitty magazine that tells me how to think + feel, what to value + how to be. I do not use the empty term "GOD". If there were some supposed OMNIPOTENT POWER, it surely doesn't care, "he" is apathetic. (Ben, 2005)

yes, I believe in LOVE. I try to do what love would do and have faith in LOVE. I don't not believe in any of the religions, I think they are all different perspectives of the same thing – LOVE! (Ruby, 2005)

very much so. Strong presence of soul, emotion, magic, wonder (Will, 2005)

What a question ... everyone's a spiritual person. I guess I'll say yes, seeing as I think about these issues n'such. (Zoe, 2005)

YES, the vibration. NON, are your vibrations. (Linda, 2005)

don't trust organized religions as it is all about political control, no spirituality. (Brian, 2005)

I am very spiritual, couldn't describe it in a few sentences!! (Wynn, 2005)

The answers span a spectrum but I do feel that it's safe to say that these people are not interested in institutionalized forms of religious tradition.

Survival:

If Christianity is no longer all that relevant to the "immigrant mentality", then what is? Margaret Atwood has shown how the immigrant mentality worked itself out in modern Canadian literature. James refers to Atwood and her essay "Survival" (1972) where she suggests that, in Canadian literature, nature is often portrayed as "dead, or alive but indifferent, or alive and actively hostile" towards the individual. Many characters die by "drowning, freezing, or getting themselves bushed." (James, 1998 64-65 quoting Atwood, 1972 54)

I remember Tom coming out to visit The Boss, Sue and I upon his return to Whitehorse. We were all glad to see him back and he was excited to be back, too. He'd had a hard Christmas working around Quebec and was feeling very sure of his decision to have returned to the Yukon - apparently a much better place for him than Quebec. He was out at the tents to borrow money from Sue. He told us this story: That he'd been talking with a friend about the Yukon and friend had asked "What the hell would I do up there?" and Tom had replied "Get lost in the bush, starve and die! - hahaha!" Tom had learned how to operate a chainsaw and no doubt shoot a gun since he'd arrived to the Yukon a year earlier. He was very proud of his (self-proclaimed) ability to survive in the wilds of the Yukon.

In this way, survival is a huge theme for Canada, for the North and for those exploring the North. To survive involves the overcoming of a threat. The location of threat in Canadian

landscape has been shifting and, coincidently, so have perspectives on what we need to do in order to survive.

Islolation unwanted:

First, the wilderness was considered a threat and a test. If a society did well in the bush, it reflected well upon their kind - such is the root concept of Cold Weather Determinism. The way that we manage (in the) wilderness becomes an expression of civilization.

Historian W.L. Morton figures that the Canadian Shield is central to Canadian history, geography, and identity. Fur traders, lumberjacks, prospectors, and miners had all wrestled from the Canadian Shield the life staples for their communities at home in Southern Ontario, the St. Lawrence Valley, and the prairies.

> Morton claims that this "alternate penetration of the wilderness and return to civilization is the basic rhythm of Canadian life" (Morton 1961 5). This rhythm, of course, parallels the rites of passage in the nuclear unit of Campbell's monomyth (separation, initiation, return). (James, 1998 84)

It is a fear of isolation, Coates suggests, that continues to nurture the regular yet unstable rhythm whereby southern seekers sway from harvest to neglect of northern resources.

> Despite pious claims to their special status as citizens of a "Northern Nation," the Canadian people has shied away from their northlands. [...] Canadians exhibit a curious lack of faith in the land that supposedly informs their character, demonstrating a continuing fear of frozen isolation that has shaped the pattern of development. (Coates, 1985 12-13)

This is the journey to the edge (margin, limen) *and back again*. It is the hero's quest. The regular quest pattern is circular according to Joseph Campbell in *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* (1956)[5]. The hero's monomyth involves a quest in three parts: 1. Separation/Departure, 2. Trials and Victories of Initiation, and 3. Return and Reintegration back into Society. The hero brings something back. This is a pattern of going, acquiring, and returning. Turner identifies a similar pattern, very much inspired by his study of Arnold van Gennep, but he insists that the

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[5] Campbell's *Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1956) is a foundation piece in the study of the function and location of myth in the human experience. Campbell illuminated the pattern of the hero's quest as a pan-

journey is elliptical because the return road is never the same as the approach.

The solitude and individualism of the quest is striking. It certainly fits with analyses like that of Anthony Giddens, who focuses on the alienation inherent to the modern context. We may journey alone, and dream alone...

> Thus, mythologies formerly socially based and visibly expressed through various formal rites have their modern counterpart within the individual, expressed in dreams. (James, 1998 82-83)

And we may dream someone else's dreams alone ...

Why Dawson?

A friend said it was her dream to go to Dawson to fight forest fires. I didn't have a dream at the time so I decided to live her dream. (Fee, 2005)

But solitude and alienation need not go hand in hand. One often quests for another.

To we:

The hero's quest is relational.

> The archetypal narrative of romance (distinguished from tragedy, comedy, or irony) is the form of the myth closed to the quest. (James, 1998 83 quoting Frye 1957, 186-203)

Laura Beatrice Berton, mother of Pierre Berton, is believed to have written *I Married the Klondike* (1961). This book was penned as a memoir of her time in Dawson City and the title is perfectly intriguing in the context of the following thought: Frye associates Campbell's hero's quest with romance and the search for identity. James relates:

> [...] adventure, death, disappearance and marriage or resurrection are the focal points of what later become romance and tragedy and satire and comedy in fiction. (James quoting Frye, 1998 83)

In this quotation, marriage and resurrection are mentioned in place of return and re-integration. The implication is that a new identity is discovered through the process of alienation, marginalization and separation. This new identity can be discovered through love and the exploration of new relationships. In this way, identity and romance are connected. The return is

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cultural monomyth.

made, perhaps not as a different person, but as a person in a different capacity of socialization.

James refers to Maurice Hodgson, author of "The Exploration Journal as Literature" (1967). She writes about explorers' journals and how they reveal archetypal questing patterns. The realms identified by Hodgson are "the quest, self-preservation, alienation, and the search for identification" (James, 1998 83 quoting Hodgson 1967, 12)

To be identified means to be recognized as someone *by someone else*. This is very much a social process. Going north used to be a hero's quest. The explorer through and through: Benefiting family, society as a whole (gathering information, pushing the frontier). The hero does something for someone else.

Shift - A change in the location of a threat:

And then there was a shift. When town-life becomes more threatening than the country, the wilderness moves from being an expression *of* civilization to an escape *from* civilization.

> *What do you make of the statement: "Everyone who comes up here is running from __something...?"__ And can you relate to this at a personal level? Please elaborate.*

Freedom to leave civilization behind. (Brian, 2005)

> The North has always provided another attraction for those seeking to get away from it all. Anti-establishment rebels from the days of the Hudson's Bay Company in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to The Company of Young Canadians in the 1960's and early 1970's have sought escape in the northern wilds. (Page, 1986 14)

The story of Christopher Johnson McCandless is relevant here. The story of Chris McCandless is recent, popular, tragic and true. It is the epic tale of a young American man who wished to shed the burdens of his upper middle-class North American society. He burnt his identification and his money. He wanted to go into unmapped territory and knew that that was impossible, so he simply did not bring a map with him when he entered the Alaskan bush after three years of hitchhiking around North America. The tale is now a major motion picture titled *Into the Wild* (2007).

Many summer kids in Dawson are also decidedly ignorant, which makes the trip that much more of a learning experience. A lot of them don't even know about the gold rush!

Please describe the way you imagined Dawson before you got here for the first time:

A Place of
Creative
Radical
Thought.

A lot
Less
Touristy

Didn't know
It was the Goldrush capital of da Freakin world! (Wynn, 2005)

Frontiers need not be physical or exteriorized. They can be encountered personally, can they be encountered privately? Contemporary accounts agree that the major change experienced by the recreational camper is an inner one, the exploration of the wilderness becoming the exploration of self. (James, 1998 90) It's about saving ourselves, dis-covering ourselves. The condition of the hero's quest changes when nature is no longer seen as threatening but as a place to which we may retreat and find solace.

What do you make of the statement: "Everyone who comes up here is running from something..."? And can you relate to this at a personal level? Please elaborate.

The industry, the suburban growth of S. Ontario was a huge impetus in my movement. (Will, 2005)

We just won't let go of that romanticized notion of man and nature. Romanticism is alive and well BUT it has become a retreat. A withdrawl. Power of the weak. Back to the earth. The heroism of the drop-out.

Communitas of crisis and catastrophe:

The communitas of millenarian movements is rooted in, and productive of, visions and theories of catastrophe. When society is in transition and it looks like the sky may be falling and

the world may be ending, we get manifestations of what Turner calls "instant communitas" in the form of millenarian movements. The tone is apocalyptic. The type of communitas present among these groups Turner names "communitas of crisis and catastrophe", and the form of the movement Turner names "revivalist movements". (Turner, 1974 53) Millenarian movements are "phenomena of transition", occupying

> a phase of history where a major group or social category is passing from one
> cultural state to another. [...] This is perhaps why in so many of these
> movements much of their mythology and symbolism is borrowed from those of
> traditional rites of passage, either in the cultures in which they originate or in the
> cultures in which they are in dramatic contact. (Turner, 1969 112)

Because these groups are formed in crisis situations, it may be fair to suggest that the people involved are experiencing life itself as a liminal phase in a broader frame of existence. (Turner, 1969 189) The link between passage and initiation is strong. In rituals of life-crisis, the neophyte is not only leaving something behind, but entering something new. Millenarian movements are formed by people who feel that the ways of the world are no longer sustainable and movement is therefore focused on the creation of a new social order.

It is curious that, while focused on the building of a new world, these groups mimic some of the oldest known traditions. Where these groups emphasize the unimportance of distinctions of status, property, age, sex, and other "natural and cultural differentiations" - where they emphasize mystical union, luminosity, humility, patience, and undifferentiated communitas - these groups are keeping with the spirit of liminal ritual in tribal rites of passage. (Turner, 1969 189) Millenarian movements stress homogeneity, equality, anonymity, same status level, and uniform apparel. The absence and/or destruction of property is important here because ownership, and lack thereof, is tied to structural distinctions, both horizontal and vertical, and these people are preparing for common ground. For the same reasons, these groups tend to espouse sexual continence or its antithesis - sexual communitas - among its members. Turner reminds his readers that the institutions of marriage and family legitimate structural status and he maintains that both sexual continence and sexual community liquidate those institutions. Sex

becomes a religious force.

> The undifferentiated character of liminality is reflected by the discontinuance of sexual relations and the absence of marked sexual polarity. (Turner, 1969 104)

Androgeneity tends to reign supreme among these groups, as does the abolition of rank in the name of humility and unselfishness, and ageneral disregard for personal appearance. There is a suspension of kinship rights and obligations for the duration of the event. There asimplicity of speech and manner, sacred folly, and acceptance of pain and suffering. (Turner, 1969 111)

Members are expected to heed total obedience to the prophet or leader and his or her sacred instruction. These movements tend to exhibit a characteristic polarization between "rigorous simplicity and poverty of elected behaviour" and an "almost ferbile, visionary, and prophetic poetry as their main genre of cultural utterance." (Turner, 1969 153) These people know how to sing the blues. The initial momentum of millenarian movements can "cut across tribal/national divisions" and the philosophy of the movement is potentially and ideally "extensible to the limits of humanity". (Turner, 1969 112)

There are communities like this in the Yukon. They are small yet vocal. I would postulate that, insofar as some of these philosophies consider the human experience to be part of a bigger picture, the limits of these groups indentities lie beyond humanity itself and include the broader ecological communities among which they circulate. Millenarianism in the Yukon is very much about up-with-environmentalism and down-with-the-rat-race.

Expiry dates:

The sky may be perforated - the stark literal reality of which is apparent in recent exploration of outer-space and our discovery of holes in the ozone layer - but it has not yet fallen. In due time, millenarian movements must come to terms with their broader social context and their fate. If, in even more due time, the impetus becomes exhausted, the "movement" becomes an institution "often one more fanatical and militant than the rest, for the reason that it feels itself to be the unique bearer of universal human truths." (Turner, 1969 112) Spontaneous communitas

develops into normative communitas, and the literal becomes figurative. As Turner suggests:

> Often, what was once seen as a literal and universal immanence of catastrophe
> becomes interpreted allegorically or mystically as the drama of the individual
> soul or as the spiritual fate of the true church on earth or as postponed to the
> remotest future. (Turner, 1969 154)

Where prophecy fails, there is a return to structure through institutionalization and there is

disintegration through the reintegration of members into the ambient social structure.

I'd like to suggest that millenarian movements are related to calendrical ritual. Usually,

calendrical phenomena occur in short cycles. What of the idea of one big movement, from

beginning to end? It's a circle, not a spiral. Big bang to the big collapse.

Communitas of withdrawl and retreat:

Traditional liminality serves as a means to another end - namely that tribal initiation

rituals reinforce structure insofar as they educate and prepare the initiated to best occupy their

new-found elevated social structural status. Modern liminality associated with the communitas of

millenarian movements is set-up to serve as an end in and of itself. Tribal rites of passage are

symbiotically related to structure, re-enforcing structural relations and working with structure,

while millenarian movements are antagonistically related to structure as they are based on the

idea that structured society is disasterous, thereby attempting to present an alternative social

modality.

Turner goes on the draw a distinction between what he calls "communitas of crisis",

namely the millenarian forms discussed above, and "communias of withdrawl and retreat".

Turner admits that the two sometimes overlap, but he insists that their styles are distinct. One of

the main differences is that communitas of withdrawl and retreat is not so much based on the

belief that the world is ending, as it is based on the belief that the world is a "permanent disaster

area" . This form of communitas "involves a total or partial withdrawl from participation in the

structural relation of the world" and tends to admit a more exclusive membership with

disciplined, secretive, sometimes even esoteric practices. (Turner, 1969 155)

In his writings, Turner considers the American Beat generation of the 1950's and the hippies of the 1960's in light of these categories. For the modern beats and hippies, invoking the depth of spontaneous communitas experience was the end sought. (Turner, 1969 139) Turner suggests that they, "like yesterday's Franciscans, assume the attributes of the structurally inferior in order to achieve communitas." (Turner, 1969 133) Turner describes the hippies in the following terms: a general attitude of opting-out, embodying the stigmata of the lowly, assuming menial employment, enjoying folk music and personal relationships over social obligation, frequently using religious terms, and emphasizing spontaneity, immediacy, and existence. When it comes to sexuality, they "regard sexuality as a polymorphic instrument of immediate communitas rather then as a basis for enduring structure social ties." (Turner, 1969 112-113)

I don't quite agree with Turner on the idea that the hippies "assume the attributes of the structurally inferior". (Turner, 1969 133) I get the impression that the "flower children" of the nineteen sixties in North American did not think that wearing homemade clothes and walking barefoot was inferior at all. It was a completely different value system. This becomes complex, however, because that was a different generation, it is my parents' generation. Because my authority figures were anti-authoritarian, the whole down-to-the-roots thing was part of structure, in a way, for me. Funny how it all twists around.

Danger and communitas:

There is a hint of danger present in liminality of insofar as there is emphasis placed on poverty and the corresponding ordeals and necessary discipline for the initiated. Danger is addressed among initiation rituals in the form of story-telling and the re-enactment of myths that are linked with notions of catastrophe and crisis. An example of such would be stories of the slaying and self-immolation of important deities, often for the good of the human community. (Turner, 1969 154)

There is a distinction to be drawn, however, between the danger among millenarian

movements and danger as it is found and experienced in the liminality of initiation rites. That

distinction lies in the temporal location of danger and its threat. For millenarian movements,

crisis is believed to be looming in the imminent future and millenarian communities strive to

prepare themselves for the onset of disaster. Conversely, for those involved in the liminality of

tribal initiation, crisis is located in the past. (Turner, 1969 154) As Turner suggests:

> But, when crisis tends to get placed before rather than after or with contemporary
> social experience, we have already begun to move into the order of structure and
> to regard communitas as a moment of transition rather than an established mode
> of being or an ideal soon to be permanently attained. (Turner, 1969 154)

Shift -Isolation wanted:

And then there was another shift. Wilderness meant not only an escape *from* civilization,

but a fertile host for an *even better* civilization. It's a fine line. Is it the difference between

running from and running to?

> *What do you make of the statement: "Everyone who comes up here is*
> *searching for something..."? Again, can you personally relate? Please*
> *elaborate.*

> **Yes**
> **I was seeking a pure landscape, a land of no pollution, pristine**
> **(non-existent)** (Will, 2005)

> *What do you value the most about Dawson, the Yukon, and/or northern*
> *Canada?*

> **People live a simpler way of life eg. People that use wood stoves and shitters no**
> **electricity or running water ... It's wicked good.** (Wynn, 2005)

Small towns are traditionally associated with homogeneous, stagnant social atmospheres. But

towns like Dawson have a lot of flow and, because Dawson is a small town, people actually end-

up meeting each other, whether they have a bunch in common or not.

> *Have you been spending time with any people that you wouldn't normally*
> *associate with? How so?*

> **Definitely. There are all kinds here. Small town. Crossing paths, people are**
> **more likely to talk. All ages.** (The Boss, 2005)

Isolation, it seems, is a valuable commodity these days.

> *What do you value most about Dawson, the Yukon, and/or northern Canada?*

> **The "Lack of Progress," Pristine SPACE, The NATURE of the North ie. DARK COLD LONG winters / HOT Bright Short SUMMERS + subsequently the ISOLATION. People (community) + the way we all interact.** (Ben, 2005)

The search is on. It is Frye's idea that Canadians often find themselves caught between the immigrant and the indigenous perspectives. William James identifies a "contemporary trend [...] to find religious meanings within the world rather then beyond it, in immanence rather than otherworldly transcendence," (James, 1998 77) and refers to Frye in this passage:

> Northrope Frye's claim is that our national mythology actually employs two complementary versions of a pastoral myth. In the one considered so far, we recoil before, or attempt to conquer, an indifferent and hostile nature. The other more positive aspect represents our kinship and rapport with the animal and vegetable world. According to the prevailing Western religious view, regarding nature as numinous is idolatry. Nature should be dominated, not worshiped or loved. Yet that conviction has been challenged by an opposite one, that the immanent natural world has a spiritual force (Frye 1971, 245), creating a "meditative shock" in the Canadian imagination (Frye 1982, 49). Frequently, for example, instead of a conflict between the human individual and nature, an individual makes an alliance with nature against society. (James, 1998 67)

Born to this middle-ground, the argument stands that many Canadians are experiencing the process of indigenization. This is what Richard Nelson shares in his *The Island Within* (1989) after spending 25 years with the Koyakon people: Nelson agrees with Margaret Atwood and Northrope Frye insofar as he believes that some Canadians are

> undergoing an imaginative and spiritual rebirth - though without necessarily surrendering or repudiating all of the aspects of their predominantly European religious heritage - as they are converted to a more indigenous comprehension of the natural world. (James, 1998 76)

Frye insists that Canadian poets, "in their imaginations, are no longer immigrants but are becoming indigenous." (James quoting Frye, 1998 76)

> In some Canadian poetry, according to Frye, Indians symbolize a primitive mythological imagination that may be reborn in non-natives, resulting in an "indigenous mentality" replacing the "immigrant mentality." If former "immigrants" are to make this territory a home, they must form attitudes appropriate to those who belong here, by descending into the self to be reborn.

> Significantly, the legacy or tutelage of native peoples (our "true ancestors") in a
> wilderness setting brings about the transformations of the female protagonists in
> *Surfacing* and *Bear*.
>> Something like this, it seems to me, is one significance of the canoe trip
> seen as religious quest. In enabling us to encounter our geographical uniqueness,
> in making possible a completion of that circuit of separation, initiation, and
> return, and bequeathed to us by those people who were here before we were, the
> canoe may well be an effective vehicle, not only for the exploration of the
> wilderness of the Shield, but also for exploring that inner frontier, and perhaps
> for effecting an appropriate transformation of attitudes through a kind of
> indigenization. (James, 1988 93-94)

There are valuable lessons to be learned from our experience of bleak and harsh landscapes.

James suggests that there is a link between harsh landscapes and strong beautiful souls, a link

forged deep in the Canadian psyche. That's what Barry Lopez, author of *Arctic Dreams:*

Imagination and Desire in a Northern Landscape (1986) thinks is so attractive about Inuit

culture. And then there is the fact that people are getting disenchanted with their surroundings

(urban, sub-urban), so the theory is that they're looking to these northern people to discover what

kind of thinkings, ideas and imagination have helped to provide the metaphors that shape the

landscape into something more palatable.

Re-tribalization:

To be indigenous is to be of a place. To be tribal is to be of a people, a people with tribal

structure. An aspect of re-indigenization in North America has also involved this concept of re-

tribalization. People have looked around and are picking-up on new ways to relate to each other.

This process is called *re*-tribalization because it is necessarily born of a modern context. In

response to the materialism of the era, some people have been placing more emphasis on anti-

modern elements of their faith. They may come to hold in increasing reverence the archaic forms

of the "relics, ritualistic acts, and the "miraculous" properties of wells, trees, places where saints

stood or rested, and other concrete objects associated with holy individuals." (Turner, 1978 232)

Re-tribalization occurs wherever and whenever a modern society, or one of its sub-groups, begins

to adopt certain tribal features. These features are most readily discernable in ritualized activity.

Re-tribal groups tend to honour "pseudo-tribal initiatory institutions" and they pay homage to the tribal rites of affliction as well, which are revealed in traditions of penance and the penitential.

Despite our uncertainties, we increasingly seem to want to escape into our greater environment for personal healing. There tends to be a strong association between the concept of society and the concept of social structure. When communitas is directly associated with the vision of escaping into nature, communitas and nature become cognitively separate from structure and the equation implies that communitas and natural-living exist without social boundaries.

> Some southern middle-class Canadians with their neon advertising, their urban high-rise apartments, and their post-Christian agnosticism found new attractions in the historic values of Dene and Inuit society. As pollution mounted in the cities, the cause of protecting the pristine northern wilderness became a symbolic means of avoiding the full implication of the overwhelming materialism of Canadian life. In this sense, the North provided a spiritual escape and a new idealism for middle-class southern Canadians. (Page, 1986 22-23)

Meditating on Bill...

Big Biker Dude, rides a Harley Davidson swing back. The whole bit: long brown hair, bit of a beard, fu-man-chu. Tough looking: one rotten tooth, tired skin, smoking Colt Milds all the time, even while riding the bike on the highway (no hands). Leather everything always, except for the happy-face bandana on his head, worn upside-down. Used to drill for diamonds in the Barren Lands. Big money, big stories. Due to wear and tear, cannot do hard labour for a living any more. Now: a healer. First Nations background. Vocabulary for his healing techniques: pan-cultural. Chinese, Indian, Wicca, First Nations traditional. Acupressure mostly. Unexpectedly gentle. His own healing at one point (after breaking with his partner and "losing" his son to that) began with eight months in the bush, solid. Supplies every two months. Conversations with trees. Visions from trees. "Everything you'll ever need is right here." After talking about the Barren Lands for a bit: "Lots of people think that this is roughing it," gesturing around the Rock Creek area we're sitting in one sunny holiday Monday afternoon, on the couch by the fire pit in the front yard. "This is paradise. Everything you'll ever need is right here." (He

repeats that quite a bit).

His theory on why people come here: We're at the turning of an age. Yang to yin.

Humans have reached their lowest point. (morals, everything) Some have an instinct to cultivate

the spiritual. And this is the place to do it. These people will be the foremothers and fathers of

the next civilization. This has something to do with how one has more ample opportunity to

cultivate a healthy spirituality here. Bill doesn't drink booze anymore.

> *What do you make of the statement: "Everyone who comes up here is searching for something…" Again, can you personally relate? Please elaborate.*
>
> **Again, I think this just as true as traveling anywhere. Perhaps the expectation of finding something in Dawson is stronger because it has the reputation of being A-Different-Sort-of-Place.**
> **Can't say I relate personally. Dawson's an ideal location to do personal/spiritual journeys, but in that case, I'm searching <u>myself</u>, and Dawson is just a backdrop.** (Zoe, 2005)

Sacred time:

> The cycles of nature have a remedy for that finality not evident within the linearity of human time. (James, 1998 68)

Travelers entering the Yukon by road see colorful flags waving in the wind which read

"On Yukon Time". The Boss noticed them and comments on her survey. Some of those

surveyed commented on having more time in the Yukon, or a different sense of time.

> **Here it seems necessary to describe the class of people who chose to be here. This is to say in *general* people who emigrate here are characters, chances are they haven't fully integrated or assimilated socially elsewhere. Statistically, there are more left-handed people than anywhere else in CANADA. We are Majority of ODD-BALLS in an un-intentional community. Everyone is searching for something wherever they may be, but here is where many a wayward travelers hangs their hat and call home.**
> **Many "flakes" or non-hearty fearful souls find their way here, and more often than not, they are regurgitated from the Yukon. Apparently they seek to find themselves while here, but all they really need is a Best selling self-help book to tell them how they feel + where they are.**
> **The question is begged as to why so many similarly "dys-functional" folk make the sojourn here? It is not, I believe, that folk are at all dissimilar in our needs as a species, those of us with gypsy souls, however, seem to find our way**

here to a magnetic power spot (if I may) on our planet, perhaps to that we may confont ourselves in a healing environment full of space + be far removed form the demand of an overbearing, overburdened tyrannous CIVILIZATION that lives on the clock. - TICK-TOCK-TICK-... (Ben, 2005)

Yukon Time is slower. The implication is that we can take our time getting to where we need to go. It is the territory-wide excuse for tardiness. It means that the rat race simply is not on in the Yukon.

Wanderlust:

Friesen says it's history that does it, but James - with Frye and Atwood - emphasizes that geography is so important to our Canadian identity (as indicated above). What does this mean and how can the difference be explained, resolved, accepted? People in the survey want Yukon Time and space and I remember Friesen writing about how physical travel, because it takes time and involves space, reaffirms these dimensions of our reality. This gradually means that Dawson people are reclaiming time and space... and life, really.

Time and space, history and geography, together:

Figuring on space and place involves considering the historical context of that space and place. How did it come to be? Gerald Friesen, author of *Citizens and Nation: An Essay on History, Communication, and Canada* (2000) writes about the union of time and space, history and geography, and focuses on communication as the creative link between the two. He writes:

> A familiar saying declares 'history is what people make of their geography.' R. Cole Harris, the Canadian geographer, has rephrased it: 'A society and its setting cannot be conceptualized separately.' Although I agree, I would add that what is significant in 'setting' changes. The phrases 'dominant communication system' and 'perceptions of time and space,' which recur often in this book, underline my conviction that the way in which a society communicates shapes popular assumptions about how the world works. (Friesen, 2000 5)

Communication is active, creating and shaping social contexts not only through its content but often by virtue of its form. (Friesen, 2000 3) The style by which we communicate inadvertently highlights certain aspects of that which is being stated. The form by which we tell

our stories both reflects and influences the way that we receive the content of those very stories.

Friesen has identified four major phases of communication that have swept northern North America. These include oral-traditional, textual-settler, print-capitalism, and screen-capitalism. (Friesen, 2000 5) It is possible to indicate the original era for each of these forms of communication and Friesen maintains that they all currently persist.

> Each advance in communication technology therefore contributes to the reconstruction of perception of time and space; each supplements and compliments, but does not erase, its predecessor. There is at any one time only one place, one evolving community within an international communication process. (Friesen, 2000 5)

Friesen compares the oral-traditional narratives of the North American natives with the long-distance communication structure employed by the European newcomers. The introduction of church, law, foreign government, and trade capital was at once an introduction to new types of community, generated and maintained through new "currents of information" (Friesen, 2000 221) However, although the newcomers were part of the more abstract "textual communities" that had been developing in Europe (Friesen, 2000 221), they continue to inhabit a "limited, local world". Friesen elaborates:

> The perceptions of time and space in their Europe-descended social order found their source in natural dimensions, just as did those of their Aboriginal neighbours. Needs determined work, the sun and the seasons were the measure of time, and the physical effort of humans or animals bridged space. (Friesen, 2000 221)

Ideas, knowledge, and dialogue develop in time and travel with people. Communication is temporal and spatial. Method of travel influences communication because it will inevitably influence the amount, type, and quality of information we gather. Method of travel influences the way that one receives information and therefore our experience of the information itself. Machinery like the car, the train, and plane shrink space by allowing us to pass through it at greater speeds. As Friesen writes:

> The railroad actually seemed to diminish distance, the newspaper to shrink time, and the political boundary to reconstruct community. Because the dominant culture redrew the dimensions in which they lived, ordinary people had to adjust

to a new version of reality. (Friesen, 2000 222)

As technology develops, information becomes increasing accessible due to broader yet more abstract communication networks. The internet allows us to see and know with the click of a button. We can travel, in a sense without even moving much (eyes scan a computer screen, a hand moves slightly to the right). Some believe that time and space may even have been annihilated by our recent achievements in communication. Community has been redefined, affecting all the identities by which we are both affirmed and alienated. (Friesen, 2000 223)

The quantity of communication we experience has increased with the speed of the interactions. We are communicating, but the style and the sense of community has shifted. Communication can happen over much greater spaces in significantly less time. People have friends and foes that they have never met in the flesh. Relationships that had long since deteriorated with neglect can be re-kindled with a quick message and click of the button. To communicate ideas without bodily presence is to participate in a way that is entirely different from that of the pre-electrical ages.

Virtually friends:

In his anthology, *Home Territories: Media, Mobility, and Identity*, David Morley refers to James Carey, author of *Culture as Communication*, who suggests that modern communication technology has created communities that exist in space rather than in place. People are "connected across vast distances by appropriate symbols, forms and interests." (Carey, 1989 160) Anthony Giddens speaks to the same effect in his work *The Consequences of Modernity* as he writes:

> [...] the advent of modernity increasingly tears space away from place, by
> fostering relations between 'absent' others, locationally distant from any given
> situation of face-to-face interaction. (Giddens, 1990 18)

Therefore and conversely, moving from cyber spaces to real places is a move away from electronica. Journey is influenced by shape of route and the mode of transportation.

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Travel by jet is hardly comparable to travel in a pre-industrial age, when journeys were by boat or foot or horse, daily destinations were variable, and food and lodging were less certain. While a canoe trip may bear parallels to a bicycle trip, a backpacking expedition, or a cross-country ski tour by virtue of the traveler being self-propelled and traveling light, it has several unique features too - its adaptation to Canadian conditions and its historical significance. Further, to travel by water in a canoe represents a more radical departure from the known into the unknown than any form of land travel could be. (James, 1998 84)

Roads facilitate the migration of people and their information. For example, Turner saw how the medieval Roman Catholic pilgrimage to Rome was a conduit for cultural transmission:

The arterial pilgrim routes became conduits of cultural transmission. Some scholars have held that the great roads extending from Germany and the low Countries through France to Santiago de Compostela in Northern Spain did more to spread knowledge and appreciation of the Romanesque style of architecture than any other mode of communication. (Turner, 1978 26)

What is implied is that to physically travel these roads and to witness first-hand the architecture and cultures of distant lands, to travel bodily is, in itself and simply by virtue of the raw and direct sensory experience with one's environs, to communicate. It is therefore an interesting thought that the more slowly we move and more the immediately our energies are personally expended in our bridging of space, the older is the tradition in which we participate. When people move towards a place to experience it bodily, they move away from the idea that we can know a place by reading all about it and gazing upon photographs. That is, I argue, what the diary-keeping hitchhikers are doing.

What works and what doesn't work:

This next section has to do with the condition of our understanding of the symbolic structures of our lives. I was thinking about religious symbols the other day as I prepared to enter the neighborhood library to study. I was looking at an old church across the street. It reminded me of a recent conversation I had had with an old friend. She has grown completely disenchanted with Christianity and every form of organized religion, blaming religion for all the strife in the world. If only we could get along and not disagree on such trivial things as religious stories and heritage. William Paden seems to have had similar conversations:

> Popular uses of the word *religion* tend to be loaded with either positive or
> negative judgment. For the average person it still means their own religion - or
> the one they have rejected. [...] In ordinary linguistic contexts the term carries
> decidedly local applications and associations. (Paden, 1992 6)

My friend and I had been discussing symbols and the danger of getting caught up in the signifier.

She is a canoe tripper and I was trying to use the canoe as an example of a symbol. You can draw

a picture of a canoe and say that it is a symbol for canoe trip, community in appreciation of nature

and the wild, self-, and group-, powered travel, and so on. But it's not the canoe itself that is so

great, it is the associations we have with the canoe, the things the canoe allows us to do.

Part of the trouble with Christianity for my generation is that the symbols are not

working. They have grown stagnant. The cross is sacrifice and love and forgiveness, new life

and trust, but I think most people associate the cross with brutality, suffering, and death. The

heart: Sure, but so what? We all have one, and we are all working on it. Same thing with the

fish: Yes, there are many us but no, we do not all want to be missionaries. Buddhist and Taoist

traditions, on the other hand, have got it going on for these groups. Many of the Asian traditions

are popular among Dawson folk. I think it is because their symbols are dynamic. The yin yang

spirals and spins and teaches flow and flux. The Buddhist wheel turns and implies a phased

process in life. "Way" and "path" are immediately manifest in these symbols. Pilgrimage seems

to be the most obvious thing in the Christian tradition that involves movement in this way.

Back to the church by the library: Sitting there, something in my peripheral view caught

my attention. The shadow that it cast on the church wall made it look like something dark was

falling quickly from the sky. I looked up and saw a bird passing safely overhead. The eagle is a

symbol of the U.S.A.. The beaver is a symbol for Canada. Flight and freedom, intensity,

independence and industry embodied by wild animals as we become increasingly urban. How

does that work for us? The street in front of me is busy and the bus shelter to my right is empty.

The car is a major North American symbol. It is a vehicle, literally and symbolically. Only we

have come to realize that our vehicles are polluting our planet and choking not only us, but life

itself, out of a bright future - how does *that* work for us?

As has been suggested above, much of modern travel is virtual. Even when we do travel physically, we do so in a way that is increasingly disconnected from the world around us. According to S. Moores, Arnheim, and Raymond Williams, modern travel can be characterized by its "mobile privatization". It is not simply the "retreating privatization", living in a "cut-off way" with television as the window to the world - rather, it is a turtle-like approach to travel where we move

> with a shell which you can take with you, which you can fly with, to places that previous generations could never imagine visiting. (Morley, 129 or 149)

We see this phenomenon of mobile privatization, or perhaps at times more appropriately "privatized mobility", whenever we see someone in a car listening to their own tunes and with the heat or AC cranked nice and high, someone listening to their i-pod on the subway, or even earlier when people would read books in transit and in public places. It is a way to control your environment by consciously adding a chosen stimulus.

Hitchhiking, on the other hand, flies in the face of both mobile privatization and privatized mobility. It is putting oneself out there, on the road, ready to be picked-up by whatever and whoever drives your way. Beyond the assumption of freedom to decline a ride if the conditions do not appear agreeable, there is very little control in the hitchhiking situation. The hitchhiker knows not who will pick them up, nor can they necessarily predict where they are going and which stops they will make along the way. It is to trust and to be trusted.

A few of the people I spoke with formally had listed hitchhiking as one of, if not their main, mode of transportation helping them get to the Yukon. In spite of having promised my loving mother that I would not do it, I also hitchhiked to Dawson from Skagway, Alaska my first summer up in the Yukon. With all the bad news and gruesome stories about what happens to hitchhikers in this day and age, I felt that it was significant that so many young travelers continue to do it. Highways and roads can behave as symbols. They are our physical paths and gateways

to new lands. Hitchhiking is dangerous, requires trust and promises adventure. Road culture

becomes a way.

> The journey, with its image of the road, forms a familiar analogue, bearing
> possibilities for narrative, closely corresponding to our subjective experience of
> life as historical (Auden 1968, 40-61). As well as the end or destinations, the
> journey has, like life, a beginning, and a middle too: obstacles to overcome along
> the way; forks in the road where choices are made; and, parallel to this spatial
> journey, is the awareness of time as an irreversible process. (James, 1998 83)

Aaaaaaaah

> **Running from? What about running to? Maybe. I was done with the place I was
> before.** (Fee, 2005)

In "Phobic spaces and liminal panics", Hamid Naficy considers the relationship between

wanderlust and its opposite: nostalgia for the lost homeland. For those unhappy in their

homeland,

> this wanderlust for other places can be just as insatiable and unrealizable as is the
> desire for return to the homeland for those who are in exile. (Naficy, 1996 124)

aaaaaaaah

> **I reckon anyone who travels *anywhere* is running from something. I don't really
> think Dawson is special in this regard. Maybe just in the way that it's sort of a
> dead-end; this is where people have to stop running. End of the line**. (Zoe, 2005)

End of the line. The final frontier. The encounter, where the self running from and the self

running towards meet.

> *What do you make of the statement "Everyone who comes to the Yukon
> is running from <u>something</u>..."? And can you relate to this at a personal
> level? Please elaborate.*

> **It's fair to say that the Ukon is the End of the road, so to speak, and here many
> seek refuge from something external. However, mostly people are running from
> themselves. This would and does happen to folk wherever they may be.**
> **It was here where I had the revelation , 'That wherever I AM, There I am.'**
> (Ben, 2005)

At that point, what is there left to do? Heal baby heal.

> *So, is going up to the Yukon a sacred journey - a pilgrimage of sorts?*

> **I would definitely consider the Journey to the Yukon** [the words "**for some**" have

been written here and deliberately crossed-out with a simple X] **a movement to a place of Healing. In fact, anytime that someone travels for Reasons unknown to them** [the words "**besides wanderlust**" have been added with an arrow], **it (by the Above definitions) could be considered a pilgrimage. The past two years of my life have been a pilgrimage. Always searching out knowledge and expressing my gratitude for this planet by seeing it, dipping my feet in it's cool waters, climbing its mountains, tasting it's fragrant air.** [Plus a drawing of a wild and crazy looking furry, two-legged, one-eared animal with a forked tongue, two antler, a fuzzy tail and webbed feet with a tattoo of a spiral and words "**Diversity**" on its side.] (Wynn, 2005)

Does journey to the source of healing mean that you have to be healthy along the way? These are the sources of my hesitation and a reality check: People drink and smoke more in Dawson. They admitted it in their questionnaires. People penetrate the bush less deeply due to fear of bears and other wildlife. The Dawson City Department of Recreation is actually not doing so hot. There wasn't a gym or even a weight room in Dawson in 2005. The swimming pool is not open year-round. The rivers are near-freezing and it's rare for someone to dip right in. Less people seem to go to church here. Or do the yoga or Pilates they'd been doing at home. The air doesn't seem to be as polluted by commercial sources, and there are fewer cars but pedestrian travel is much lower here per capita than in urban centers and there's no public transportation. Some produce is locally grown and it's delish, and there's plenty of wild meat to eat, but other than that, the food prices are through the roof and food quality is very low. Squatters are routinely kicked-out of their temporary abodes. The Hostel is "hostile" and, since the original was shut down in 2004, Tent City is now located on a gravel bed in the back corner of an RV campground, about 15 minute bicycle ride/40 minute walk from town. The most accessible entertainment for visitors is found in smoky-pants barrooms. Many (like myself) don't have running water and take their sewage to the dump in buckets. Town sewage is dumped directly into the Yukon River. But it's freedom, man. And freedom is what it's all about.

Neo-Colonialism in Therapeutic Landscape:

Is the camping culture in the Yukon experiencing sacred land? Well, this is hot water

and tricky territory. It smacks of cultural appropriation and neo-colonialism. After all, resource acquisition does not only occur on the physical level of raw material resources. There is a hunger for the cultural treasures of the North, the "romantic or spiritual ingredients in the mythology." (Page, 1986 22)

The following section examines a) the difference between the "western" concept of Therapeutic Landscape and the aboriginal concept of Sacred Land, and b) the way that these concepts have been getting mixed-up and the anti-colonial concerns that spring from this very mix-up.

In "Therapeutic Landscape As Sacred Land: Wolf In Sheep's Clothing?" (2004), Castleden and Garvin argue that the "western academic" notion of therapeutic landscapes is appropriating the "indigenous" notion of "sacred land" in its habitually neo-colonial fashion. The seven fundamental characteristics of Therapeutic Landscapes indicate that they tend to:

1. contribute to a sense of well-being;
2. include nature and natural surroundings;
3. have stories associated with them;
4. have customary processes associated with their use;
5. be culturally rooted;
6. have a feeling of equality in interactions;
7. contain human constructions. (Castledon and Garvin, 2004 87)

Western traditions have associated health with land on and off throughout its history. (Castledon and Garvin, 87) There are many examples of particular sites and landscapes that are believed to be rich with therapeutic qualities. Current examples of Therapeutic Landscapes in academic literature include places such as Bath, England (Gesler, 1998), the hot springs of Iceland and the North American West (Geores, 1998), and the Red Sea. It has been suggested, however, that the association between land and therapy was severed in the West with the emergence of the perception of the body as a machine that is dissociated from its environment.

> However the healing properties of land and landscape fell into disfavour in the
> early part of the 20th century with the advent of science-based, western medicine
> (Williams 1999a, Hudson-Rodd 1995) and its focus on treating the body as a
> machine to be 'fixed' regardless of its context (Jones and Moon 1987).
> (Casteldon and Garvin, 2004 88)

"The distancing of human health from space, place and the natural environment." is the
"biomedical model" for health. An exception to this is visible in the approach to treatment for
tuberculosis - rest at an institution in a rural setting. Land becomes a resource, an idea supported
by "an objective, science-based" society influenced by Kantian dualism. (Castledon and Garvin,
2004 88)

There has been an increase of interest in Therapeutic Landscapes, especially in
"mainstream social science literature" that addresses "the intersections between place, space, and
health." Influences of space and place have long been examined, but more recently the twist is its
effect on health, physical, psychological, and spiritual. Yet, despite a resurgence of an
understanding of land as a directly affecting health, the hierarchical human-over-space
relationship continued to be perceived by, and inform, the western medical tradition. (Castledon
and Garvin, 2004 87)

Meanwhile, indigenous understanding of place, space, and health has been consistent
over the eons. (Castledon and Garvin, 2004 86) Western European-based society does not
perceive the world the same way that indigenous societies do.

> [...] the integration of multiple knowledges [integration into "dominant",
> "western, academic and intellectual framework"], including Indigenous
> knowledge, is no simple task because concepts as attractive and seemingly
> straightforward as co-management, TK [traditional knowledge], and TEK
> [traditional ecological knowledge] are themselves imbued with ideological,
> cultural, and practical differences. (Castledon and Garvin, 2004 86)

Now we're getting back to the distinction between indigenous and immigrant mentalities. Here,
Castledon and Garvin give us some meat to chew on when it comes to considering the indigenous
understanding of sacred land:

> While there are many Indigenous world views, most share some common
> underlying principles that espouse the philosophy that all living things are
> related, including the earth, animals, plants, rocks, and people (Oakes *et al. 1998,
> CarWill et al.* 1994). Accordingly, in many Indigenous traditions, all things are
> seen as animate and related to one another (Little Bear 1998). Further,
> Indigenous concepts of Sacred Land consider all land is respected and honoured,
> thus it should not be exploited, damaged, or used carelessly (Oakes *et al.* 1998).

> Because of its many roots and traditions, Sacred Land has multiple and overlapping meanings and may, for example, include healing sites, burial grounds, places with abundant resources, or places that should be left untouched (Kulchyski 1998, Cummins and Whiteduck 1998). (Castledon and Garvin, 2004 89)

The notion of the sacred is associated with a concept of "a religious or spiritual connection" that is "ambiguous, subjective, and non-measurable". (Castledon and Garvin, 2004 91)

> Sacred places are not necessarily recognized by signs or symbols, rather they are often mapped through stories, songs, and ceremonies. (Little Bear, 1998). Most importantly, and unlike Therapeutic Landscapes, Sacred Lands do not need authentication from outside sources nor do they need to be identified in a written text; they need only to be recognized as such by an individual, community, or cultural group (Cummins and Whiteduck 1998). (Castledon and Garvin, 2004 89)

According to Castledon and Garvin, this un-quantifiability renders Sacred Land unpalatable to western audiences that have been steeped in a tradition of 'science-based' and hierarchical thinking. (Castledon and Garvin, 2004 91) In Sacred Land, equality is recognized between all animate beings present. The philosophy of Therapeutic Landscapes recognizes the power of nature, not as an inherent quality, but as contingent upon its ability to work as a healing power for humans. In Therapeutic Landscape, the quality of equality is present between humans. Because western concepts of nature are based on assumptions of hierarchy, there is born a need to control and manipulate.

> Indigenous cultures generally see the relationships between humans and nature as a series of interconnections based on mutual trust and respect. By comparison, western perspectives remain imbued with a fundamentally hierarchical human-nature relationship that positions humans at the top and relegates nature to a submissive and passive role. Thus it is both the role and responsibility of humans to manipulate and control nature to meet human needs. From this hierarchy emanates the characteristic distinguishing Therapeutic Landscapes from Sacred Lands: the need for human control and power over, as well as validation of, the landscape. (Castledon and Garvin, 2004 90)

> Thinking on survival: Sur-vie. To live by overcoming. There's got to be a threat of danger, and then an overcoming of that threat and re-entering or a recreation of a safe space. We can overcome a threat by either modifying our environment and doing-away with the threat. A threat can also be overcome by modifying ourselves and thereby changing our relationship to the

threat. What if the identity of the person changes through the process of survival? What if, by

virtue of mere exposure, the set of threats shift and some no longer need to be overcome? Is that

survival? It certainly is adaptation and as long as the person persists, that person survives. Look:

> *What do you make of the statement: "The Yukon, she gets into your blood and you fall in love."?*
>
> **This is true for me. The Yukon is powerful environment. Like all things powerful one must be prepared to conduct and/or transform them or risk being consumed by them. ESCAPE + Denial through alcohol + Drugs are common VICE in the North, for example.** (Ben, 2005)

Owing to such drastically different perceptions, the concept of Sacred Land gets transformed in

translation.

> The implicit horizontal relationship that characterizes Sacred Land - equality, interconnection, mutual respect and trust - dissolves in the transformation into the vertical concept of Therapeutic Landscape where human construction becomes part of what determines whether a landscape is 'therapeutic'. (Castledon and Garvin, 2004 92)

Why and how this is another instance of the neo-colonial relationships of power? Wherever

Sacred Land is more palatable a concept owing to its translation and transformation into

Therapeutic Landscape, academics continue to serve as actors in the neo-colonization of

Indigenous peoples throught their perpetuation of the marginalization of Indigenous concepts."

(Castelden and Garvin, 2004 93)

> [...] by using Therapeutic Landscapes, scholars have not taken Indigenous knowledges into consideration. Instead, they have created a concept within their tradition without looking beyond the mainstream discourse. Second, there is now evidence that this concept is being applied back onto Indigenous worldviews rather than recognized a pre-existing concept that has persisted in many Indigenous cultures (Wilson In Press, Palka 1999, Madge 1998). This application serves not only to legitimate Therapeutic Landscapes as a universal concept applicable beyond the western world, but also to de-value Sacred Land as a valid explanatory framework. (Castledon and Garvin, 2004 91)

James shares that George Grant, author of *Technology and Empire* suggests that there is

> [...] a limit to non-native adaptation of a native understanding of nature. [...] that the historical legacy of European immigration to North America dooms non-native Canadians to continuing alienation from the natural environment, to a lack of spiritual connection with the landscape. (James, 1998 75)

James suggests that there is a massive polarity between "a romantic or pantheistic idealization of a beneficent nature and a theistic revulsion of horror before a nature regarded as largely demonic." (James, 1998 77) This benevolent versus horrific is close to the romanticism and greed of the Myth of the North. However, we can't just ditch the theology that has shaped the immigrant mentality. It runs too deep in the Canadian psyche. (James, 1998 77) James considers the possibility of resolution in the middle ground between indigeneity and immigrant mentality.

> This broad-brushed sketch of differences between native and Christian attitudes towards nature remains relevant because many Canadians live in some middle ground between the two, characterized by a kind of ambivalence towards nature as they find themselves betwixt wonder and terror, veneration and revulsion, respect and loathing. (James, 1998 63)

... Like Annie Dillard, author of *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* (1974), who ponders cruelty *and* grace in nature. James suggests that we may all benefit by acknowledging the beauty and the terror that exist in nature. Nature is as much a domain of death as it is of life, which as James emphasizes challenges both a) Western theologies of the natural world and b) too optimistic contemporary spiritualities of nature. (James, 1998 80) The sacred and divine need not be exclusively relegated to the realm of the good and beautiful. As James writes:

> The intrinsic sacrality of nature does not imply that nature must be seen as without exception beautiful and benevolent. Canadians must know well that human endeavors do not always conform with the purposes and conditions of our natural environment. Perhaps our difficulty in comprehending the negative manifestations of the sacred comes from the theistic tendency to identify the good with the divine, while leaving evil out of the model of ultimate reality, either unpersonified or relegated to some inherent quality of humanity alone. To experience nature as one of the locations of the sacred might mean embracing its negative and positive dipolar aspects as components of a comprehensive view of the world. (James, 1998 80)

Towards both and, that's where this is going. What I suggest is that the summer camping communities that form in places like that which was once Tent City are bridging the colonial, and even the neo-colonial divide by sincerely engaging in the journey through Canada's space and time.

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CONCLUSION

What just happened?

These were my main points:

1. That Dawson is liminal space, physically and conceptually.

2. That this liminality is reinforced by the Myth of the North and is evidenced by the site-specific

    communitas that happens in the Turnerian sense. Like in tribal rites of passage and life-

    crisis (individual and communal), these re-tribal (modern and therefore liminoid)

    seasonal camping communities engage in a) under-dogging, and b) the activation of

    archetypes.

3. That the journey towards this liminal/liminoid site of communitas is part of a search for

    identity. In this particular case, this pattern is not only the hero's quest, but also the

    weakling's retreat.

So What?

So we're seeking treasure, but the difference between special and mundane has so much

to do with our perspective. They say that it's all in the eye of the beholder.

> ... there is an intimate relationship between the *way* we look at the world and
> *what* we see going on there. As an axiom has it, "the scale created the
> phenomenon". [axiom from Henri Poincare, cited often by Mircea Eliade] ... By
> changing lenses, we change objects. (Paden, 1992 4)

There are so many ways to relate to our surroundings, but sometimes it seems like we do

not have much of a choice in the matter. Who we are, our associations from the past and our

anticipations for the future, conditions our perceptions. The Dawson tailing piles are a good case

in point. The view for the majority of the 575 km northbound drive to Dawson from Whitehorse

is breathtaking. The valleys are deep and wide, the bright purple fireweed flower strikes a sharp

contrast to the charred earth of the burn areas. The lakes can be placid or choppy, with few

cabins on their shores. The determined driver need only make two, maybe three stops for fuel

along the six or seven hour drive. Other than the mere existence of the highway and the hydro lines along its shoulder, there is little evidence (to the untrained eye) of human habitation . Then, just as the traveler nears their destination, the famous Dawson City, the landscape changes dramatically.

The Dawson gold mining industry went through some major changes in the 1930's. What had once been, and continues to be on a much smaller scale, an individual's quest for gold became a high-priced, heavily mechanized, corporate undertaking. The change was spurred by the introduction of the dredge. The dredges are no longer in operation around Dawson, but they still sit at the site of their last day's work and each summer Parks Canada offers tours of the hotel-sized machines. The dredges altered the landscape of the Klondike and Bonanza River Valleys. Gold only runs so deep and these machines, moving mere meters each day, would effectively lift the gold-bearing layer of earth, wash it out to retrieve the gold, and spit it out the back, like a worm. What was spat-out are called "tailings" - smooth grey rocks ranging in size from a fist to a small boulder.

The last thirty kilometers of the drive into Dawson follow the Klondike Valley and the highway is lined, sometimes a kilometer deep on both sides, with these tailing piles. The few trees that grow among the tailing piles have sprouted their leaves by mid-June and by that time, people new to the area have grown accustomed to the look of the piles. However, in the spring, before the leaves are out, and after such a breath-taking drive, it all looks so grey, flattened, and industrial. For people who are going to Dawson for the untamed experience of the true northern wilderness and wilder-folk, these tailing piles can be nothing less than disconcerting.

> **I remember coming into town as it got dark through the tailings and ATCO trailers and wondered what the hell was I thinking when I decided to come here.**
> (Brian, 2005)

That's what "Brian", wrote in reply to the section of the survey which asks the participant to share the thoughts they remember having when first gazing upon the Yukon landscape. Brian is by far the bushiest looking guy around Dawson. Born in Orillia, Ontario, he had been living in

Dawson for ten years when he answered my questionnaire. He heard about Dawson from friends and drove his Volkswagon Van all the way. He has been living in a cave year-round since he arrived. He loves Dawson and the Yukon for "the freedom to leave civilization behind".

Another angle on the tailings: Gerard Curtis. The October 7, 2005 edition of *What's Up Yukon* features Gerard Curtis, an artist in residence at the Klondike Institute of Art and Culture Macauley House in Dawson. Curtis drove to Dawson from Cornerbrook, Newfoundland and, upon approaching town, he was "taken by the large snakelike tailings left by the dredges." He immediately thought of Sisyphus. The Greek myth of "the sly and evil" Sisyphus is of a man who cheated death twice and who was thus punished by Hades. The punishment consisted of Sisyphus being forced to roll a block of stone up a steep hill. As soon as he reaches the top, the rock falls back down the hill and Sisyphus must begin the toilsome task again and again, for eternity. Curtis chose a rock from Guggieville, formerly the Guggenheim Mining Camp. The man who had owned the mining camp had donated his mining fortune to found the Guggenheim Museums which are dedicated to modern art. Curtis pushed the rock nearly thirteen kilometers up the Dome Hill Road. This is a performance piece to emphasize the labour of making art. It was also Curtis' intention to create a forum for discussing art outside the walls of the gallery. (Sokolowski, *What's Up Yukon*, October 7, 2005.)

Allen Carlson, author of "Aesthetic Appreciation of the Natural Environment" (1997), is troubled by how we appreciate nature, aesthetically. Either things are out of context, or we loose ourselves to the environment. He mentions one guy who says that, because there is no designer of nature, it's impossible to consider nature as art and to have an aesthetic experience thereof. This, I think, assumes that the person has no belief in a creator God. But I think that people do aesthetically appreciate nature. And so does Carlson. Carlson's final thesis is that we appreciate nature through "the nature environmental model", and our experience of the aesthetic is grounded in common sense and in scientific/ecological knowledge. This knowledge helps us classify the experience, something that he thinks is important in the experience of art.

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I also really enjoyed his critique of how we experience landscapes as scenery and he had an interesting point about scenic look-outs and how they reinforce this notion. It made me think of the look-outs along the highway going on up to Dawson.

Carlson didn't address the following, but his essay got me back to thinking about the role of faith in ecology, and also simply in the mere appreciation of natural environments as beautiful. The idea that we can experience nature as art certainly does lend itself to the idea of a creator-artist in nature.

It's okay that one person sees the magic while another does not. That's normal and necessary for a stable yet creative society. Indeed, Turner's got a broader perspective on society. He saw how communitas and structure need each other, always. He saw that "societas" is a human process - not an atemporal, nor an eternal system - which lets us focus on the relationships of structure and communitas. This relationship "exists at every point, and on every level in complex and subtle ways." (Turner, 1974 d 52)

Turner argues that communitas has been forever present in human society. There have been many who have glorified the spirit of communitas, over and above structure, romanticizing the concept and thinking of a golden age, whether it was in the past or lies in the future. Turner suggests that Lewis Morgan (1877), Rousseau and Marx, for example, were all confusing communitas, "which is a dimension of all societies, past and present" with archaic or primitive society. (Turner, 1969 130)

Turner shares that "even in the simplest societies, the distinction between structure and communitas exist and obtains symbolic expression in the cultural attributes of liminality, marginality, and inferiority." (Turner, 1969 130) The main difference between tribal and modern communitas is the modern stress on individuality. Turner reminds us that, among pre-literate societies, there was actually very little room for individuality in the customary norms, and that "the individualist was often regarded as a witch." (Turner, 1969 130) And we all know what happened to the witches.

Turner shows that, regardless of this oversight, there have been many existentialist

philosophers who have thought of society itself as hostile to the nature of the individual, that "to

find and become himself, the individual must struggle to liberate himself from the yoke of

society." (Turner, 1974 54) This type of thinking lends itself to the notion of society as captor of

the individual just as, in some Greek philosophies, the body is captor of the soul. Turner suggests

that these philosophers would be better to scrutinize upon the faults of social structure, and not so

much the whole of society. (Turner, 1974 54)

It was through his studies of the Franciscan Order that Turner concluded that, while

communitas is present in the moment, social structure is rooted in historicity and persistence. As

Turner suggests:

> [...] structure is rooted in the past and extends into the future through language,
> law, and custom. (Turner, 1969 113)

Structure is "intimately" associated with history, because it is through structure that every group

maintains itself formally and doctrinally through time. (Turner, 1969 153) It is thus the case that

the founder of a tradition, and the successors of the founder - should they hope that the seeds they

have planted flourish - must address theological definition and strategies for continuity of the

tradition. The charisma of leaders becomes routine, which is an element of structure, which is

pragmatic and this-worldly. (Turner, 1969 133) To study the developmental structure of the

relationship between ideal and praxis is to study the relations of existential and normative

communitas. (Turner, 1969 140) A phase becomes a state.

What appears to have happened is that with the increasing specialization of society and

culture, with progressive complexity in the social division of labour, what was in tribal society

principally a set of transitional qualities "betwixt and between" defined states of culture, and

society, has become itself an institutionalized state. This is the process of normalization. Large

numbers of people need to be organized. As the "structurally inferior masses" are bent-down-

towards, they rise up in mock hierarchy and, if it is the hope of the humble servant leaders to

dismantle, or re-configure, the structure from whence they came, they are inevitably placed in a position that requires that they affirm an alternative structure as it is being animated. Something similar to the original structural hierarchy returns once more as the ceremonial group gets more popular. As Turner writes:

> In fact, as we have seen, the regular course of such movements is to reduce communitas from a state to a phase between incumbencies of positions in an ever developing structure. (Turner, 1969 199)

Transition here becomes a permanent condition. Nowhere has this institutionalization of liminality been more clearly marked and defined than in the monastic and mendicant states in the great world religions. (Turner, 1969 107)

Communitas "can, through brief revelation, "burn out" or "wash away" - whatever metaphor of purification is used - the accumulated sins and sundering of social structure." (Turner, 1969 132) But communitas is spontaneous, immediate, and not jural-political like structure, so it's short-lived. (Turner, 1969 132) "Communitas cannot manipulate resources or exercise social control without changing its own nature and ceasing to be communitas." (Turner, 1969 55) That is because communitas can only exist in the moment, it is "of the now". (Turner, 1969 113) As soon as people must have their material and organizational needs met, they simultaneously have a need for structure. (Turner, 1969 129) Turner writes:

> The moment a digging stick is set in the earth, a colt broken in, a pack of wolves defended against, or a human enemy set by his heels, we have the germs of a social structure. This is not merely the set of chains in which men everywhere are, but the very cultural means that preserve the dignity and liberty, as well as the bodily existence of every man, woman, and child. (Turner, 1969 140)

Turner insists that healthy culture requires that communitas and structure necessarily co-exist. Turner suggests that there is a dialectic between the immediacy of communitas and mediacy of structure. (Turner, 1969 129) We are released from structure, refreshed by communitas, and we re-enter structure. It is only in relation to structure that we can adequately grasp the mood of communitas, whether that relationship is a hybridization (tribal) or a juxtaposition (modern) (Turner, 1969 127), the ties of communitas counter the cleavage of

structure. (Turner, 169 118)

Of course we are never satisfied. Communitas is the dawn of structure and structure heralds a resurgence of communitas. As Turner, suggests, the maximization of structure leads to the revolutionary strivings for renewed communitas, which leads to the maximization of communitas, which leads to the maximization of structure. (Turner, 1969 129) The exaggeration of either communitas or structure necessarily calls for its extreme opposite. As Turner has written:

> Exaggeration of structure may well lead to pathological manifestations of communitas outside or against "the law". Exaggeration of communitas, in certain religious or political movements of the leveling type, may be followed by depotism, over-bureaucratization, or to other modes of structural rigidification. [...] Those living in community seem to require, sooner or later, an absolute authority, whether this be a religious commandment, a divinely inspired leader, or a dictator. (Turner, 1969 129)

In light of this insight, if we care not to freak-out at the extremes of the pendulum swing, it comes down to recognizing the dynamics of the social process. Whatever the source of the model for ideological communitas, anti-structure can never, by definition, replace structure. It may critique and even undermine structure, but the two actually and really need each other. (Turner, 1969 134) It is one thing, however, to meditate on social equanimity and wholly other to experience it. Sometimes structured lives get to be too much, or not enough. Where the aim is to run-away home, the path is the pilgrim's route.

When we get out there, we find that it's homier than we'd expected...

> Since only the energetic venture far from home, and not the dullards nor the ignorant come into such a field, the population of the Northland is made up of the salt of the earth. (Hayden, 2002 34)

This implies that Hayden considers the Northland to be populated by people who have ventured there from elsewhere. In this way, the North is seen as a homeland to settlers. Robert Page is of a like mind when generalizing about "northerners". He suggests that, although few plan on it, the North is populated by men and women who stay a lifetime. (Page, 1986 19)

How does the frontier relate to identity? The frontier is visited, but is rarely thought-of as home. However, much of North American history has been about settling the frontier, making a home, building a nest. Building, is *that* why the beaver is our totem? Industry, perseverance, modifying the environment to meet needs as a beaver dams rivers to flood a lake for safe passage and alder-gathering - this is the settler's mentality.

Staying implies having arrived from elsewhere. Staying, however, does not mean keeping still. Page draws attention to the limitation on agriculture yielded by northern landscape and climate.

> Nobody, expects to stay very long in the north - or very long in one spot. [...]
> Like the caribou and the lemmings and the nomadic Indians, northerners are opt
> to rove the land like gypsies. (Page, 1986 19)

It's more about the searching and the finding than it is about the getting and the having. That is what separates the hero's quest from the pilgrim's path. The hero gets it. The pilgrim carries on, their pie is in the sky. Robert Service's famous poem *Spell of the Yukon* (please refer to APPENDIX D), is a wonderful illustration of the love for the trail - the journey itself being the destination. This Service poem is that it makes no pretense to be about anything but the materialistic quest for gold in its raw form. But it *still* works to show how there's more to the search than the end gain (or loss, as many did experience). It works for searchers of gold, and heck! it works for the searchers of more esoteric treasures as well. It's read every day by hundreds dining on Kate's patio.

That's what keeps the flow (structure → communitas → structure) going. It's a process.

The Frontier is a Rainbow:

To occupy the limen is to participate in a tribal social structure with all its obligations and irreversibilities. But we are not a tribal people. We are modern, we are liminoid, and perhaps therefore re-tribal. As modernity is associated with movement, with approaching but not occupying, we are bound to the search for home, the longing for belonging. As we look to the

future for a place to create a past, it may be that the western settler will forever be approaching - yet never quite occupying - the limen?

The odd thing about a frontier is that it recedes as quickly as it is embarked-upon. As the north is developed into something useful and familiar by southern industrial standards, it is translated into something palatable by southern cultural standards and the frontierity of it skips like a rainbow just beyond one's grasp. But, akin to the fable of the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, if there be a chance that it exists, there be a seeker.

> The more I see of the country, the less I feel I know about it. There is a saying that after five years in the north every man is an expert; after ten years, a novice. No man can hope or expect to absorb it all in a lifetime, and fifteen generations of explorers, whalers, fur traders, missionaries, scientists, policemen, trappers, prospectors, adventurers, and tourists have failed to solve all its riddles. To me, as to most northerners, the country is still an unknown quantity, as elusive as the wolf, howling just beyond the rim of the hills. Perhaps that is why it holds its fascination. (Berton, 1956 4)

There's always room for more.

The concepts of homeland and frontier are polar, but they are not opposites. Materialist development goals and idealism - this is a dynamic polarity. Romanticism and greed, although sometimes but not necessarily dipolar, are capable of supporting one another. The treasure-chest entices the explorer who may be an individualist or a recluse. Perhaps the exploits of the explorer bring benefit to a large corporation established in a southern city. Resources are harvested and carried away. People local to the region of the discovery may be supplied with jobs for the short time of the booming economy and then feel the sting of the bust. Meanwhile, the explorer may have discovered the beauties of the North, of the people, a love for the space and pace of the more remote regions of this planet. Stories are made and told and heard and shared and, somewhere among the new generation, a new explorer is born. These are the stories of the frontier.

There is a tie between Robert Page's association of the North with romanticism and greed and Justice Berger's association of the North with homeland and frontier. Romantics, even by celebrating the far-and-away-ness of the North, are doing so through by virtue of identifying a

part of themselves with that remoteness. Considering these four elements together is illuminating because it can show how they are related. It is not the case that some people are romantic and some people are greedy. Most people are both. It is not the case that some people think of the North as home in some capacity and some people think of it as a frontier. Many experience it as both. Greed is what brings us to the frontier. Romance is what we bring home.

The main apprehension is that these re-tribal communities are engaged in cultural appropriation. I argue that it is more inquisitive than it is acquisitive. James would seem to agree as he writes:

> By means of a canoe trip, interpreted through the quest pattern, the Canadian Shield becomes the setting for a less materialistic version of the fairy tale romance. (James, 1998 85)

We are not talking about canoe trips specifically here, but the link between the canoeists and the northern wanderers is strong - it is the comradery of the recreational camping community

There is the idea of North as a frontier and there is the idea of north as homeland. So far, these two concepts/perspectives have also been set-up as both a polarity and a paradox. "Frontier" could mean worthy of exploration, but not necessarily exploitation. Even the Minister of Tourism and Culture, the Honourable Elaine Taylor, is using the word with this positive spin. I would love to suggest that seasonal camping communities have the capacity to bridge that gap. Yes, we have colonial roots, but there is something else going on where we let ourselves see the journey north not only as a quest but also as a retreat. Travelers are appreciative as they recognize and acknowledge that there is benefit from fostering an understanding of one's environment.

> If you talk to the animals,
>   they will talk with you,
>   and you will know each other.
> If you do not talk to them,
>   You will not know them,
> And what you do not know
>   You will fear.
> What one fears one destroys. (Chief Dan George, 1974)

Take only photographs, leave only footprints. Promoting low-impact and socially/historically aware camping communities gets people in touch with each other and with their environment. This contributes to a treasure-seeking culture that is much more stable than the boom/bust pattern.

I guess any place that's unique has that quality of - "if ya like it, ya love it.". Any place, too, that presents as many joys as hardships/challenges. These are the qualities that make one fall in love (with place or person). (Zoe, 2005)

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APPENDIX A: Things to consider when studying a given pilgrimage system

Gauging the Current Condition:

a. Checking the shrines:

As with every living thing, all traditions shift and change as they mature. How does one come to know which phase of development is a pilgrimage occupying? Turner suggests that studying the shrines, their type, their condition, and their popularity, is one approach. Turner reminds the reader thus:

> In the early stages of a religion's development, the prototypical shrines tend to predominate. Later, the places where saints and martyrs lived and died may become pilgrim shrines. Later still, places where visions, or apparitions, of the founder and those close to him - or of some manifestation of God or divine power - presented themselves to a believer, may become pilgrim shrines. All these types of shrines provide evidence for the faithful that their religion is still instinct with supernatural power and grace; that it has objective efficacy derived from the founder's god or gods and transmitted by means of miracles, wonders, and signs through saints, martyrs, and holy men, often through the medium of their relics. (Turner, 1978 34)

As time marches on, the people capable of convincing the masses of the sanctity of a shrine may hold increasingly distant relations to the founder tradition celebrated at the shrine. This does not seem to compromise the efficacy of what that shrine has to offer to the devout. The shrine, once proven, is believed to operate as a vehicle of the divine.

b. Mapping the route, or, Thinking about the broader geography, the Organism-Environment Field:

It is difficult to discuss a shrine without considering its location. Luckily, it is possible map the pilgrim's route. Turner's apt metaphor for the pilgrim's approach and return from the central site is that of the ellipse. For every pilgrimage there is an approach, a centering, and a return. The journey is a two-way road and the scenery is always different on the way home. (Turner, 1974 23) But there is even more than the path to consider. People do not walk through a forest simply to see the dirt path laid-out before them. What's the scenery like? Turner defends his suggestion for applying a broader lens with a concept he calls "the Organism-Environment

Field". This is a descriptive method of locating space and place of pilgrimage. Describing the

whole field that a pilgrimage inhabits requires that the student take the periphery details into

account. Turner writes:

> Some will doubt that propriety of extending the notion of a pilgrimage system to
> embrace the entire complex of behavior focused on the sacred shrine. But we
> insist, as anthropologists, that we must regard the pilgrimage system, whenever
> the data permit us so to do, as comprising all the interactions and transactions,
> formal or informal, institutionalized or improvised, sacred or profane, orthodox
> or eccentric, which owe their existence to the pilgrimage itself. We are dealing
> with something analogous to an organism-environment field. Here the
> "organism" comprises all the sacred aspects of the pilgrimage, its religious goals,
> personnel, relationships, rituals, values and value-orientations, rules and customs;
> while the "environment" is the network of mundane "servicing mechanisms" -
> markets, hospices, hospitals, military supports, legal devices (such as passports),
> systems of communication and transportation, and so on - as well as antagonistic
> agencies, such as official or unofficial representatives of hostile faiths, bandits,
> thieves, confidence men, and even backsliders within the pilgrim ranks. (Turner,
> 1978 22)

Pilgrimage systems have a life of their own that encourage busy-ness in spheres broader

than the pilgrimage itself. Pilgrimage systems are not only affected by, but indeed affect, the

secular institutions with which it comes into contact. Pilgrimage brings interest and therefore

energy into, cities, marketing systems, and roads. Turner quotes Simson for suggesting that, in

the case of Chartres, Canterbury, Toledo, and Compostela, this "religious impulse", this interest,

has been enough to sustain the energy to help these systems grow. (Turner, 1974 234) Indeed,

Turner chalks mercantile and industrial capitalism, at the national and international level, up to

the "pilgrimage ethic". The pilgrimage ethic, emphasizing "holy travel", created communication

networks that have changed the world. (Turner, 1974 234) The logical extension of this, of

course, is to suggest that pilgrimage paved the road to modernity. In Turner's own words:

> If the Protestant ethic - with its stress on diligence, thrift, virtue, and fair-dealing
> in one's secular vocation, and its belief that one's place in the world is a God-
> given sign of faith or election - was, indeed, as Tom Weber thought, a
> precondition (a necessary if not sufficient cause) of capitalism, then the
> "pilgrimage ethic," with its emphasis on "holy travel" and the benefits flowing
> from such travel, may very well have helped to create the communications
> networks that later made mercantile and industrial capitalism a viable national
> and international system. At the very least, Jusserand's point that pilgrimage was
> the main type of mobility in the locally fixated feudal system of landholding and

production, is well taken. It may not be too fanciful even to see medieval pilgrimage as a prototype, under different socioeconomic conditions, of more egalitarian, voluntaristic, contractual types of secular social relationships, as a ludic and liminoid preenactment of significant later modalities in the work domain. (Turner, 1974 234)

In this way, the organism-environment field is to pilgrimage what Foucault's "limits" are to

dialogue. If the main institution of study is that of pilgrimage, then the periphery institutions are

all that affects and is affected by the pilgrimage system. The organism is the pilgrimage. The

environment is its habitat.

c. Thinking about the broader history, the Diachronic Profile:

Turner applies a similar method, one of honouring details that may appear periphreal to

the heart of the matter, to figuring on time and history. Understanding the climate of genesis of a

pilgrimage tradition is very important to the development of an understanding of the pilgrimage

and pilgrim's mind-set, hopes, aspirations, and the motives fueling their behavior, yet that is only

the beginning. Neither does it suffice to study only present-day interactions along the pilgrim's

journey. Time-passing plays its part in every pilgrimage, for pilgrimage systems are constantly

becoming themselves. Whether liminal, liminoid, or pseudo-liminoid, pilgrimage may thrive on

the margins but would never survive in an incubator. Every pilgrimage both depends upon, and is

sensitive to, a complex of intermingling developments. The pilgrimage will reflect changes in

"modes of thought and politics, patterns of trade, military developments, and ecological changes."

(Turner, 1978 19) These changes may be reflected in the location of the route itself, in the

number of people participating in the pilgrimage, or in the reasons people take-up the pilgrim's

path. As Turner writes:

> There are certain crucial moments, key points, when the data themselves insist
> that we arrest our time machine, to examine the synchronic connections between
> economic, political, legal, religious, social, and ecological factors, and analyze
> them in terms of sociological theories. (Turner, 1978 19)

The process of relating "its consecutive phases to the larger histories by which it is

encompassed" (Turner, 1974 23) is to delineate the "diachronic profile" of a given

pilgrimage. This task is one of contextualizing the pilgrimage among the local and regional, national and international histories affecting it. (Turner, 1974 23)

d. Catchment area is a watershed:

Just as a major river system cannot be studied without accounting for the watershed that feeds it, a study of pilgrimage is well-informed by a study of its catchment area. Pilgrimages have many spatial dimensions insofar as they draw from many geographical strata. Turner focuses on S.H. Bhardwaj's work on stratification. Bhardwaj suggests that each strata displays "its own type of religiosity, style of veneration, symbolic emphases, and appeal to certain groups of individuals." (Turner, 1974 237) Bhardwaj studied Hindu pilgrimage to the "twelve sacred places in Himachal Pradesh and the Himalayan districts of Uttar Pradesh" and he came to distinguish between high-level and low-level shrines.

High-level shrines draw pilgrims from the widest physical ranges. They "integrate the Hindu population of diverse cultural regions of India." The higher level shrines are usually incorporated into a system merit gain and transfer and they are least materialistic insofar as pilgrims "least likely to seek material benefits". (Turner, 1974 238). Because people journey far a-field to arrive to these shrines, high level shrines attract affluent pilgrims of high caste, the "religiously oriented elite [travel to] famous shrines eulogized in the traditional Sanskritic literature, maintain[ing] the vitality of a pan-Indian Hindu holy place." (Turner quoting Bhardaj 1973 173, 1974 238)

Low-level shrines are more localized. Because they are nearby, they are accessible to lower castes. These pilgrims solicit specific deities "at a climactic religious occasion" and for a "tangible purpose". (Turner, 1974 238) Turner quotes Bhardaj (1973 174): "It is also within the framework of this religious circulation that elements of the "little tradition" may become parts of the "great tradition" - a local goddess may be transformed to Durga, or a local male deity may eventually become Siva." (Turner, 1974 238)

This data can be compared with Turner's studies of Roman Catholic Christian pilgrimages. Among Christian pilgrimage traditions, pilgrimage centers can be seen to be stratified in hierarchical order by comparing the size of their "catchment areas; that is, the areas form which they draw their pilgrims." (Turner, 1974 238) Turner develops this idea in *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors* (1974). Instead of using the terminology of high-, and low-, level shrines, however, Turner's categories for pilgrimage according to geographical pull are: 1) international; 2) national; 3) regional; and 4) intervillage pilgrimages. (Turner, 1974 239) Also, and as with Turner's study of Catholic Christian pilgrimage, low-level pilgrimages shrines have liminal characteristics, while high-level shrines have liminoid characteristics. (Turner, 1974 239-240)

There are differences between Turner's study of Catholic Christian pilgrimage and Bhardaj's study of Hindu pilgrimage. Christian pilgrims to shrines international and national, which Bhardaj would call "high level", do ask for favours and miraculous cures and they also perform meritous devotional deeds. Also, where Hindus worship mother deities only at local, low level, or "domestic" shrines, Christian pilgrims revere the "supreme maternal prototype" of the Virgin Mary at every level. This, according to Turner, is related to the theological location of the female. Mary the Virgin and the Mother cannot be separated from Roman Catholic theology. (Turner, 1974 239)

e. Identifying the goal, centered or poly-centered?:

It may be best to get back to asking why the journey exists at all, towards what does the pilgrim progress? Shrines can be organized hierarchically and attention must be paid to their position on a scale of priorities and in relation to their status. Different linguistic or ethnic groups, for example, may favor different pilgrimage places along the way. As long as they converge at a specific site, there is a central shine. (Turner, 1974 6) Wherever a given group of pilgrims journeys towards a central shrine, it may be safe to suggest that it is that shrine which is most highly revered. The sentiment of communitas is high at the pilgrim center. Through "the

power ascribed by all to ritual", "likeness of lot and intention is converted into commonness of

feeling." (Turner, 1974 13) Symbols, charged through ritual and by emotion, provide the frame

through which communitas flows. (Turner, 1974 14)

Sometimes, there is not one central shrine, but many. This is called poly-centrism.

When there are multiple shrines, a field affected by the pilgrimage broadens. As Turner

elaborates:

> Polycentrism had an important, but much neglected, impact on future economic
> and political, as well as religious, developments. A multitude of pilgrim routes
> converge on a great shrine, each route lined with sacred way stations (chapels,
> abbeys, shrines, etc.) and such service institutions as hospices, hospitals, inns,
> markets, and taverns. The major shrines exert a magnetic effect on the whole
> communications and transportation system, charging with sacredness many of its
> features, and fostering the construction of sacred and secular edifices to serve the
> needs of the human stream passing through it. Pilgrimage centers in fact
> generate a socioeconomic "field"; they have a kind of social "entelechy."
> (Turner, 1974 233-234)

Psychology of symbolism:

> Pilgrimages are like cultural magnets, attracting symbols of many kinds, both
> verbal and nonverbal, multivocal and univocal. (Turner, 1974 27)

The pilgrim's experience is said to be informed by the root paradigms of their faith. Root

paradigms, drawing on the images derived from the sacred narrative of the founder's life, "clothe

abstract patterns of relationships in vivid forms". Symbolization, wherein the abstract takes a

palatable form which is popularly agreed upon, renders the abstract "accessible" to all believers.

(Turner, 1974 10) Here, "sets of relationships [...] compose a message about the central values

of the religious system." (Turner, 1974 10) Later, dogmatists and theologians systematically

formulate these root paradigms, eventually molding "an institutional shape to the spontaneous

insights and inspired actions of the founder." (Turner, 1974 10) The "deposit of faith" is made-up

of these ideological structures, these structures of thought and feeling, these "root-paradigms"

which, in turn, are made-up of "the seminal words and works of the religion's founder, his

disciples or companions, and their immediate followers." (Turner, 1974 10) Root paradigms are

sub-liminal to "sensorily perceptible symbol-vehicles". (Turner, 1974 10) If the symbol were a boat, the river would be the root paradigm. Turner's root paradigm and Foucault's discursive formation seem to work in similar ways.

Examples of symbolic forms and systems include "ecclesiastical architecture, sculpture, paintings, abstract ornamentation, stained glass, and music, as well as the folk symbolism of dress, gesture, object, site, song, and dance." (Turner, 1974 27) They can also include "sacralized features of the topography, often described and defined in sacred tales and legend." (Turner, 1974 10)

For the pilgrim, symbols increase and work along the journey. They hedge and hem, as they do in the experience of that which is taboo. Only, the hedges are not established in order to keep something out as much as they keep something in by defining sacred space. The "symbolic structures" that "circumscribe" the pilgrim's new-found freedom from mundane or profane structures increase near the end of the pilgrimage. Here the "end of the pilgrimage" is actually the center site or shrine, the goal of the pilgrim.

In summary, there is an ideological structure to pilgrimage, made-up of root paradigms, which both inspire and reflect the faith of the pilgrim. This structure is transmitted to the pilgrim by the vehicle of the symbol. It becomes perceptible in pathways, monuments, ritualized activity, and lore. The pilgrim is a pilgrim for participating in this discursive formulation. Symbols work by "cleansing of the doors of perception", and thereby providing optimal conditions for transformative experience. (Turner, 1974 11) The experience of pilgrimage can be powerful, mind-altering and heart-changing. However, in keeping with Foucault and with the idea that pilgrimage would not exist without the people, one must bear in mind that the person, and not the system, comes first.

Pilgrimage, Death, and the Dead:

Death, is in a way, the final form of bodily weakness, and yet it is also the definitive

display of the strength of spirit. Pilgrimages are very much connected with dead and with

salvation. (Turner, 1993/73 29)

> The dead may include the founder of a religion; his kin, disciples, or
> companions; saints and martyrs of the faith; and the souls of the ordinary faithful.
> (Turner, 1993/73 29)

Pilgrimages are riddled with symbols and metaphors of death. Partly because people are

separated from their regular social structure "and are passing into a liminal or threshold phase and

condition for which none of the rules and few of the experiences of their previous existence have

prepared them. "In this sense, they are "dying" to what was and passing into an equivocal

domain occupied by those who are (in various ways) "dead" to quotidian existence in social

systems." (Turner, 1992/73 29) But it's not just the dying and death of the pilgrims that's at

hand, it's also the reverence for ancestors who have gone before, as well as the now-dead

founders of the tradition.

APPENDIX B: Earlier History of The Yukon

It is possible that there was human life on the Old Crow Flats 25,000 years ago, maybe even 30,000 years ago. (McClellan, 1987 17) Bone was a popular material to use for tools and some bone tools have been carbon-dated to be 25 000 years old. It is possible, however, that the bones, but not the tools, are that ancient. The people hunted wooly mammoths with spears. Some of the animals in the region at that time were larger and more fierce than grizzly bears. Bones of giant beaver, short-faced deer, and caribou have also been found and dated to those times. (McClellan, 1987 3) Most of the land was covered with grassy tundra, and their were glaciers to east and to the south of the flats. Trees grew only in the sheltered river valleys. (McClellan, 1987 17)

There was human life on the Porcupine River 11,000 years ago. The mammoths were disappearing by then, but the effects of the ice age were still prominent and there were few trees growing in the area at the time. Clothes were made of caribou and elk hide, some items were woven with the skin of the hare. In the summer, bison would be herded with the help of dogs and driven over the edge of a cliff or up a narrow canyon. Diet consisted of that bison meat, fish and hare, dried berries. (McClellan, 1987 4) Musk-ox and bison horns were used for ladles and as bowls. (McClellan, 1987 5) The climate has changed drastically since then. Much of the glacial ice, tundra, grass, and shrubs have been replaced with spruce, birch, cottonwood, and willow. The tundra that remains is found in the mountains, especially in the Brooks Range, and on the coastal plains to the north of Brooks Range. (McClellan, 1987 5)

Each summer, the caribou would make their migration north to the arctic slope to calve and borrow. In the late summer season, the caribou hunters would paddle out into the river as the herd was crossing and, with antler-tipped spears, they would make their kill in the water. They would also hunt caribou on land mixing methods of corral, snare, neat, spear, and arrows. Fish was anther staple.

The river and the life-style it afforded was of utmost importance to the Athapaskan people. The people living along the Yukon River between Dawson and Eagle, Alaska are named "Han", which means "people of the river." The river was a source of life. Also, the river would separate the living from the dead. For example, there are reports from 1825 C.E. of the people at Neskatchin who would store the ashes of the dead in little houses on the one bank of the river while the living community went about its business on the other side. (McClellan, 1987 6)

The Inuit of the north-eastern arctic, near Greenland, met with the European Norsemen over 1,000 years ago, but the natives of the Porcupine River continued life without contact with Europeans for another 800 years. The caribou used to cross the Yukon River at Carcross and that is why it is named so, "Caribou Crossing". but the caribou have not crossed that river on their migration since the early 1900's.

Change was a near-constant for the native peoples living in the Yukon. A harsh winter with more snowfall than usual or a dry and fire-smoky summer would affect not only the health and size of a herd, but also the route and timing of its migration. The people have had a history of adapting to these changes, sometimes needing to resort to hunting squirrels, martin, and other small game to prepare for the long winter. Sometimes the group would have to relocate because the animals they depended on had localized cycles. There may be plenty hare in one valley and none in the next, for example. (McClellan, 1987 31) Famine was not unheard of. Their ability to adapt was "the key to their survival" in many ways. (Cruikshank, SR 14-4)

The economy, social organization, and religion of the people were so closely woven that you could not possibly abstract one of these elements from the others. The kinship system was "the central core of the culture" and was revealed through family functions and obligations. (Cruikshank, SR 14-4)

APPENDIX C: History of Colonial Details in the Yukon

Business is business:

The arrival of the Europeans marked changes in the hunting patterns of the Athapaskans. Moose, for example, were rare around Fort Selkirk in the 1830's and the people living along the Aishihik Trail had grown accustomed to hunting caribou and sheep. By 1889, there were considerably more moose than caribou in the same area. It is difficult to say if the relationship is direct, some say that the Europeans may have over-hunted various species. Others suggest that it was the forest fires of the late 19th century that had an impact, and others believe the changes where due to the anger of Animal Mother. The forest fires may have been naturally occurring, or they may have been caused by carelessness on the part of the newcomers to the region. (McClellan, 1987 33) Fire destroys the lichen that the caribou depend upon for food, but produces a healthy harvest of browse for the moose. Generally speaking, when the caribou population dwindles in the mid-Yukon regions, the moose population is on the rise. (McClellan, 1987 11)

The onset of the Europeans brought completely different power structures to the land and the people. The economy had shifted and the natives, although using their leverage wherever they could, had considerably less control over the factors that governed the terms of their trade. By the 1850's, they were suddenly reckoning with "outside economic forces" and therefore participating in the colonial situation which has persisted ever since. (Cruikshank, SR 14-4)

The Gwech'in bands encouraged the advance of the fur traders. Aboriginal groups in the region had been trading amongst themselves since time immemorial and the concept was not new. (Cruikshank, SR 14-4) The Americans had already been trading through Alaska for some time and the inland groups had become dependent on the coastal groups east of the Richardson Mountains. With the HBC coming straight to them, the inland groups no longer needed the middle men by whom they had grown accustomed to getting fleeced. (Coates and Morrison, 2005

29) They could negotiate even closer to their own terms. Contrary to popular belief, the natives were not bull-dozed in the early stages of European trade. The natives had bargaining power and usually took only what they wanted. Much of their bargaining power was rooted in their ability to guard important information and thereby using it as leverage in their relations with the traders. On another topic, but to highlight the point, Arthur Roberts maintains that "the slide thing" - a striking geomorphologic feature of the Dawson City landscape - is "an Indian secret." (67) The natives were often in control of both the pace and the direction of the trade. (Coates and Morrison, 2005 30) They had their secrets, which they often used to their advantage. At first, the goods that were traded supplemented but did not replace their traditional life-style. The natives were, however, bull-dozed by the gold rush. More details to follow.

Through trade, the Europeans introduced rifles, woven blankets, tobacco, metals, toboggans and pull-dogs (before that, the meat and other goods would be pulled along by hand on a drag made of caribou skins (McClellan, 1987 12)) fish nets, and the "virgin soil epidemics" such as measles, influenza, small pox, chicken pox, and whooping cough. (Coates and Morrison, 2005 33) Of these, the epidemics may have had the greatest, and the worst, impact on the natives because they could not be explained, cured or healed, by traditional methods. It has been estimated that up to five sixths of the Gwech'in Nation perished from these illnesses within the first fifty years of contact with European people. (Coates and Morrison, 2005 33) The winter of 1942-43 was also particularly harsh. "People just never got well, they'd revive and something else would happen." (Cruikshank, SR 14-4)

Eventually, there were several challenges to the traditional social structure of the Yukon natives, which was based upon the kinship system. Rifles had a fairly large impact on native life because they changed the hunting patterns that were so central to survival and the structure of their communities. Before rifles, at least ten men were needed to scout, herd and corral, kill, and bring home the caribou. The rifle meant less of a need for group-based hunting and, as social relationships changed, traditional family and group life based on a system of kinship began to

erode. This was re-enforced by the availability of seasonal work at wood camps and the establishment of various schools that would have the children separated from their parents and their entire home community. (Cruikshank, SR 14-4)

The United States bought Alaska from the Russians in 1867 for $7.2 million. The border between the Yukon and Alaska was not evident, so American interest in Alaska flowed into the Yukon as well. Up until then, the Russian American Fur Company and the Hudson's Bay Company had been the only commercial operators in the Yukon River Valley. But shortly after the American purchase of Alaska, Hutchinson, Kohland and Co. bought the Russian American Fur Company. Thus began an era of "commercial migration". (Coates and Morrison, 2005 39) People in the United States were "curious about this huge and apparently useless land, which was now theirs." (Coates and Morrison, 2005)

The Americans brought the "values of the American frontier" with them. This means that they were competitive economically and quite unsympathetic to the natives. The natives, however, kept their secrets. Much of the Yukon remained unknown to the newcomers and the natives proved themselves adept at negotiating with the new economic and social forces. (Coates and Morrison, 2005 41) For example, the eastern Gwetch'in neglected to share their knowledge of the quicker route that came to be known as McDougall's Pass. By keeping this secret, and keeping trade running along the longer Stony Creek Pass, they were able to satisfy a higher demand for work as carriers. (Coates and Morrison, 2005 45)

In the late 1860's, the Hudson's Bay Company was in full retreat (Coates and Morrison, 2005 41), struggling to compete with the Americans who were trading repeating rifles, booze, and other commodities that had been strictly prohibited by the HBC and the Canadian government. Much of these goods were coming through the American whaling ships at Herschel Island up in the Arctic Ocean, and the Porcupine Nation had re-oriented its routes to accommodate this new stream of trade. (Coates and Morrison, 2005 55) The introduction of alcohol by the American whalers, and later by the gold miners, had a debilitating effect on the Aboriginal populations.

North America had been one of the only areas of the world were the native people did not consume intoxicating beverages. There has been some documentation of a drink made from fermented berries, a traditional brew made around Old Crow and in some Inuit communities, but this was used only ceremoniously and there is no evidence that the drink was made or consumed in the southern regions of the Yukon. (Cruikshank, SR 14-4)

Forts moved and moved and moved. By 1870, the HBC was more interested in retail opportunities in the Prairies and the company surrendered most of its northern holdings to the Canadian government. (Coates and Morrison, 2005 44)

Of the four nations that had invested in the North, namely Russia, England, Canada, and the United States, it was the Americans who did the most to benefit commercially from the northlands in the early years. (Coates and Morrison, 2005 48)

George Holt was the first to find gold and he did so in 1878. Holt was the first white man to cross the Chilkoot Pass. The Chilkoot Pass had been closely guarded by the Tlinglit (sometimes known as "Chilkat") people who had become accustomed to their role as the middle-men in the trade structure of the Yukon at the time. They would use the pass as they mediated between the coastal and the inland groups. Now that Holt had broken precedent and had used the pass for his own purposes, everything changed. The Chilkoot Pass and its parallel, the White Pass, became known as "the poor man's route", the shortest and cheapest way into the gold fields. (Coates and Morrison, 2005 51)

In 1882, there were about fifty prospectors wintering in the region. Joseph Ladue showed-up in the winter of 1882-1883, tried to melt the earth for gold and did not succeed, and busied himself with writing mining laws for the gold rush he felt was certain to occur. (Coates and Morrison, 2005 52) In 1885, several thousands of dollars worth of gold were panned on the banks of Stewert River and within one year there were 200 men, and some women, wintering in the upper Yukon Valley. McQuesten saw a chance for profit and convinced the directors of the Alaska Commercial Company in San Francisco to cater to the miners instead of the fur traders.

He succeeded with his campaign and imported fifty tonnes of mining gear to Fort Nelson on the

Stewart River. Harper helped. (Coates and Morrison, 2005 52)

Mining techniques developed from skim digging (gold panning), to the rocker box

(shaking the pay-dirt to separate the gold), to the sluice box (washing the pay-dirt to separate the

gold). Hydraulic mining, a Californian technique of blasting the river bank off with a high-

pressure water hose, was in effect in the Yukon by 1890. (Coates and Morrison, 2005 57)

By 1894, a thousand people had moved to the Yukon. The impact of mining on the First

Nations communities was disastrous. As mining activity increased, business in the fur trade

decreased. A foreign economic structure had been imported and the natives were suddenly the

"powerless outsiders". The natives were sometimes hired as day-laborers on the mines, for less

pay due to prejudiced attitudes. They would also sell their meat and furs to the miners and the

trading posts, although they now had competition from the newcomers even in that endeavor, as

those who were not successful at mining would often turn to hunting and trapping to supplement

their income. (Coates and Morrison, 2005 54-55) Times had changed with the people. Coates

and Morrison write:

> Now the skills of the hunter took second or third place to the skills of the
> geologist and the prospector. Also, the men who worked for the Hudson's Bay
> Company had come north for years at a time and had often become deeply
> committed to the long-term development and prosperity of the region. By
> contrast, most of the miners were transients, who sought only to strike it rich and
> make enough money to leave the region forever. For them, and for many others
> who followed them to the North, the Yukon was not a home but an opportunity.
> (Coates and Morrison, 2005 55)

It was the American Army that built the Alaska Highway. The original claim was that it

was built for defense against the threat of an Arctic attack by the Japanese (Second World War).

They ran the highway from one airport to another. It has since become clear that highway was

built to facilitate access to Alaskan oil fields. The impact was harsh on the native communities,

some of which had had very little contact with European and American culture. It made travel in

the Yukon and Alaska much easier. It changed everything. This is another case of the power not

being with the people - colonial if you will...

The impact of all this on the Yukon Territory went far beyond the provision of a new road, airfields, a pipeline, and a telephone line. The Yukon had had fewer than 5,000 people in 1941, 30 per cent of whom were Natives. The white population lived in a few communities - Whitehorse, Dawson, Mayo - with only a few missionaries, police officers, and fur traders in the outlying areas. Almost overnight, 10,000 American military and an equally large number of civilian workers (some Canadian but mostly American) flooded into the Northwest. By the end of 1942, the Whitehorse area alone had a population four times that of the prewar Yukon. The American invasion affected all aspects of Yukon life, created the greatest boom since the Klondike gold rush, and set the territory on a markedly different course.

It was not a course that Yukoners directed or even influenced. [... M]ore than a few expressed severe disappointment with the selected southern route, which entirely missed the heavily mineralized Mayo area and ran far south of Dawson City. Only the residents of Whitehorse could be pleased with this highway, which ignored the social and economic realities of the territory. (Coates and Morrison, 2005 241-242)

APPENDIX D: "Spell of the Yukon" by Robert Service

This poem is like an anthem in Dawson. It is painted as a mural on an old old building across the street from Klondike Kate's Restaurant. Everyday of the summer, people fill Kate's to eat and they stare at that poem.

I wanted the gold, and I sought it,
I scrabbled and mucked like a slave.
Was it famine or scurvy — I fought it;
I hurled my youth into a grave.
I wanted the gold, and I got it —
Came out with a fortune last fall, —
Yet somehow life's not what I thought it,
And somehow the gold isn't all.

No! There's the land. (Have you seen it?)
It's the cussedest land that I know,
From the big, dizzy mountains that screen it
To the deep, deathlike valleys below.
Some say God was tired when He made it;
Some say it's a fine land to shun;
Maybe; but there's some as would trade it
For no land on earth — and I'm one.

You come to get rich (damned good reason);
You feel like an exile at first;
You hate it like hell for a season,
And then you are worse than the worst.
It grips you like some kinds of sinning;
It twists you from foe to a friend;
It seems it's been since the beginning;
It seems it will be to the end.

I've stood in some mighty-mouthed hollow
That's plumb-full of hush to the brim;
I've watched the big, husky sun wallow
In crimson and gold, and grow dim,
Till the moon set the pearly peaks gleaming,
And the stars tumbled out, neck and crop;
And I've thought that I surely was dreaming,
With the peace o' the world piled on top.

The summer — no sweeter was ever;
The sunshiny woods all athrill;
The grayling aleap in the river,
The bighorn asleep on the hill.
The strong life that never knows harness;
The wilds where the caribou call;

The freshness, the freedom, the farness —
O God! how I'm stuck on it all.

The winter! the brightness that blinds you,
The white land locked tight as a drum,
The cold fear that follows and finds you,
The silence that bludgeons you dumb.
The snows that are older than history,
The woods where the weird shadows slant;
The stillness, the moonlight, the mystery,
I've bade 'em good-by — but I can't.

There's a land where the mountains are nameless,
And the rivers all run God knows where;
There are lives that are erring and aimless,
And deaths that just hang by a hair;
There are hardships that nobody reckons;
There are valleys unpeopled and still;
There's a land — oh, it beckons and beckons,
And I want to go back — and I will.

They're making my money diminish;
I'm sick of the taste of champagne.
Thank God! when I'm skinned to a finish
I'll pike to the Yukon again.
I'll fight — and you bet it's no sham-fight;
It's hell! — but I've been there before;
And it's better than this by a damsite —
So me for the Yukon once more.

There's gold, and it's haunting and haunting;
It's luring me on as of old;
Yet it isn't the gold that I'm wanting
So much as just finding the gold.
It's the great, big, broad land 'way up yonder,
It's the forests where silence has lease;
It's the beauty that thrills me with wonder,
It's the stillness that fills me with peace. (Service, 1916)

APPENDIX E: The Dawson Survey

Some Forewords

Please note: This survey has been designed by Kim Sedore who, while running this survey, is conducting research towards her master's thesis in The History and Philosophy of Religion at Concordia University in Montreal, Canada. She is wondering if the journey to the Yukon could be understood as a (post-?) modern pilgrimage.

> *Please answer these questions to the best of your ability. Questions pertaining to the meaning of any part of this survey may be directed towards the researcher. Your contributions will remain anonymous and, at every stage of publication (which is possible), your identity will remain confidential, known only be she, the researcher. You may withdraw your participation at any time. And you may re-commence your participation at any time after that, should you so desire. If you have any questions pertaining to your rights as a participant, you may contact Adela Reid, Compliance Officer, at Concordia University, at 514.848.2424, x.7461.*

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD.

Name (please print):
Autograph:
Date:
Contact info:

<center>***</center>

Mircea Eliade's *Encyclopedia of Religion* defines "pilgrimage" as the following:

> **Pilgrimage.** The literal or metaphorical movement to a condition or place of holiness or healing. Pilgrimage may be interior or exterior.
>
> Interior pilgrimage is the movement of a life from a relatively abject condition to the goal in a particular religion.
>
> Exterior pilgrimage is a journey to some place which is either itself associated with the resources or goals of a religion, or which is the location of objects which may assist the pilgrim - e.g. *relics.
>
> The reasons for pilgrimage are extremely varied. They may, for example, be for healing, holiness, cleansing, penance, education, gratitude, in response to a vow, to recapitulate an event which occurred at the pilgrimage center.
>
> Pilgrimage frequently, and not surprisingly, takes on the character of a *rite of passage; and as such, the stage of liminality exhibits the inversion of values and status; pilgrimages may then take on the character of a holiday, in which everyday life and its values are suspended.

So, is going up to Dawson a sacred journey - a pilgrimage of sorts?

Please use this space to elaborate, question, and muse...

[Feel free to write on the back of the pages for more space]

Please describe the Yukon with a few choice words:

How long have you been in Dawson?

Where's home? I) Where were you born?
                   II) Where are you coming from now?

Why Dawson?

How did you hear about Dawson?

Please describe the way you imagined Dawson before you got here for the first time:

Do you travel much?

When did you get here?

How did you get to Dawson the first time you came into town? (method of travel)

Did you take any rest -stops at the scenic look-outs? What did you do there?

Please share any thoughts you remember having when you first gazed upon the Yukon's landscape:

What do you make of the statement: "Everyone who comes up here is running from *some*thing..."? And can you relate to this at a personal level? Please elaborate.

What do you make of the statement: "Everyone who comes up here is searching for something..."? Again, can you relate to this at a personal level? Please elaborate.

Were you aware of a tent-based community in Dawson before coming here?

Have you spent a summer camping here? If yes, when? Where?

Where are you living this summer?

If you aren't camping, would you have if the old Tent City was still happening?

Do you find/hear that things are different here without Tent City up and running? How so?

Have you spent time with any people that you wouldn't normally associate with? How so?

Are you working here? If yes, in which industry?

What do you make of your diet here in Dawson?

Do you drink more alcohol in Dawson that you would otherwise?

Do you smoke more tobacco or marijuana here in Dawson that you would otherwise?

What books are you reading now?

Are you keeping a journal, or documenting your journal in any way? (ie. Photographs, film, voice-recording, group e-mails...) Please say how, if so:

What do you value most about Dawson, the Yukon, and/or northern Canada?

Do you consider yourself a religious or spiritual person? How so?

Are you keeping close contact with family and friends down south?

What do you make of the statement: "The Yukon, she gets into your blood and you fall in love."?

Would you recommend this trip to someone else?

Are you staying or leaving?

If leaving, do you plan a return to the northlands?

[Please use this space to add more of whatever you'd like...]

APPENDIX F: The Voices

So - the surveyed people to whom these voices belong – who are they?

Ruby was born a farm girl in Saskatchewan. She is one of the most whimsical, surprising, and

delightful people I know. She is a true artist of life - the type of person who burns Nag

Champa incense in her tent and who eats artichoke dip while on a lemon juice clense.

She had a dog that she took-over from a hitchhiker, an old dog who hasn't been the same

since the walk that took too long in 40 below temps. Ruby always knows the best music

and is constantly enjoying the next best thing in slang but keeps on talking like a pixie

and reminds me of the Old World.

Ben has lots of piercings and is a teddy bear of a guy. He smokes and takes you off guard with

his passion for team sports, like baseball and soccer. He has the air of having been

through this already, yet he'll partake in the conversation.

Glen is very fair and uptight. He's in good shape and was balding early. He always seems so

grown up. He makes me into a nervous person.

Neomie was one of the most beautiful women I had ever met. She is French Canadian and loves

life. She loves doing and chilling and she loves her friends and everything is rich around

her. Neomie listens to reggae music and has this golden glow around her all the time.

She is so soothing.

Zoe is peppy, active, totally positive and organized and seems to have a plan. I don't know her

that well – it may be a disguise.

The Boss was my lover for 3 years. She is a great lover. She feels so much and she shines and

suffers like the sun. She knows a tone about how to do things. She knows who her

teachers are and she howls and she rips. She's a great driver and we broke each others'

hearts. She taught me how to cry and move at the same time.

Fee is so gentle. I'm surprised he dislikes anything, let alone the South (where he's from) so much. He sustains a wood-craft lifestyle around Dawson that is to be envied. He makes birch syrup and drives a little pick-up truck and, with his whispy hair and big eyes, he looks like a little boy wearing rainboots all the time.

Wynn was a leather tramp, without the leather. He was bare foot and wore a huge patched skirt and I thought he was 21 years old when I met him. Then I thought he was 18. Then I found out he was 15 so I invited him to the Youth Center where I worked and I'd cook him dinner in the evenings. He'd been exposed to a bunch and saw magic in everything. I remember watching him eat about twelve bananas one day. I also remember that he had found a stamp collection in an abandoned cabin and he was hoping he'd get enough money for the stamps to make it to Montreal. I hope he's okay.

Linda, also French Canadian. I didn't know much about her even then, but I knew that she was out for a good time, that's for sure.

Will was older than everyone else who was hanging out. He wore big bandanas and smoked Drum hand-rolling tobacco with the rest of us and he longed for the days gone by. I met Will at the tables outside the coffee shop one sunny morning or one sunny afternoon.

Tom, French Canadian, was dating Neomie and is the father of their daughter. He is bush punk assed. He'd lived on the streets for a while in Montreal and has African tattoos and homemade tattoos and a mohawk hairstyle. He can break dance and talk in entertaining voices and is always coming home from the craziest stunt. Tom is not risk averse and he does things that make you hold your head in your hands, just in case it were to explode with the thought that he'd invoked. Tom has an appetite for the epic.

Sue is The Boss' best friend in the world. They are sisters like I know few. Sue is a nurse and is warm and wonderfully caring and nurturing. She takes care of everybody. She was town punk assed when I met her. Then she became bush punk assed. Then she just got bushed. She's interested in bettering herself, her environment, and the world.

Brian had been living in a cave near Tent City, on the west shores of the Yukon River, for seven

years. He looks like Animal from the Muppets. He drinks tea at the bars now and knows

a lot about the woods and about the people in Dawson. He gets interviewed all the time.