

# THE QUEST FOR AUTHENTICITY IN NARRATIVES OF NORTHERN BORDERLANDS

Urban Wråkberg

“Our understanding of landscape is influenced by what we know of its past, what we perceive of its continuing evolution and our emotional response to our experience of place. Often, we only see what we know is there.”

*Alison Grant*

## **The Travelling Library**

Most travellers, tourists, businessmen or field researchers rely on the advice of native guides, and recognise their expertise in matters of logistics and certain geographical details. But in terms of the motives of anyone undertaking travels to distant territories, into borderlands of the unfamiliar, the preferences regarding what to look for and what to experience is based on something to do with the traveller himself rather than the local guide. It is easy to underestimate the influence on any traveller of the narratives of previous voyagers in the same area. Everyone tends to read about a distant location as a preparation before visiting it. This straightforward observation is worth keeping in mind while interpreting field experiences as well as narratives of any territories unfamiliar to the traveller under scrutiny.

Behold one archetypal Western voyager: the 19th century colonial explorer. His dependence, in the planning and in the results of his journeys, on earlier published information about his area of interest is obvious in most cases when we look systematically at the relevant literature. The classic heroic image of the explorer in the field, mastering wilderness, should thus for the sake of interpretation be transformed into the seldom seen portrait of the reading explorer sitting unglamorously in the library, busy extracting information from

his predecessors while being biased by their assessments and prejudice.

The standard historiographical mistake is to focus on one explorer in a narrow biographical study. One way to recognise the dependence of any field study on previous research is to focus on a single geographical place, and perhaps some issue connected to it, and study the succession of accounts about it in chronological order. Then new patterns should appear as we realise that field researchers tend to visit those same places that are already mentioned in the literature, to study the same things and often to observe and report similar interpretations and emotions. This pattern repeats itself in tourism.<sup>1</sup>

In studying accounts of travels in the northern regions it is crucial to notice that ever since the early 19th century, when a popular literary genre on the far north was born in Britain, all influential published accounts, regardless of what claims they have made on authenticity, have been modified in one way or another by a culturally specific editorial process. Through this process the text has been put in line with contemporary aesthetical taste and political mind-sets. In exceptional cases the explorer has been eloquent and well-oriented enough in the culture of his times to produce such a manuscript himself, but more often ghost-writers and in-house editors have had to process the accounts to their final shape in order to maximise the market for the book.

Cuts and improvements have expanded on the right kind of drama and censored those eccentric or too personal reflections that are sometimes produced by encounters with “the other,” the non-Western and uncontrollable nature. This applies to the seminal collaboration between Sir John Barrow, Second Secretary of the Admiralty, and the London publisher John Murray in the editing and publishing in 1838 of Captain George Back's account of his voyage to Hudson Bay: *Narrative of an Expedition in H.M.S. Terror Undertaken with a View to Geographical Discovery on the Arctic Shores in the Years 1836-1837*, as well

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<sup>1</sup> Urban Wråkberg, “Ruiner i förfallande landskap: Arktiska spår av kultur, vetenskap och industri,” in: *Arbetets avtryck: Perspektiv på ett forskningsfält*, eds. Dag Avango & Brita Lundström (Stockholm: Brutus Östlings förlag, 2003), pp. 337-365; Urban Wråkberg, “The Politics of Naming: Contested Observations and the Shaping of Geographical Knowledge,” in *Narrating the Arctic: Collective Memory, Science, and the Nordic Nations, 1800-1940*, eds. Michael Bravo & Sverker Sörlin (Canton, Mass: Science History Publications, 2002), pp. 155-197.

as to the skilfully edited version of the sledging journal of Robert F. Scott's ill-fated expedition to the South Pole of 1911, published in 1913, which contributed decisively to the legend of Scott.<sup>2</sup>



The 18th century cross and remains of the Pomor hut on Russian Island, NE Svalbard. This place has been visited by various people: archaeologists of different nationalities, trappers, tourists and scientists. In comparison their reports sometimes exhibit interesting disparities. Under certain light and weather conditions the site also lends itself to sublime interpretations. Photo: Urban Wråkberg.

The power of the preconceptions and preferences of the armchair travellers over the shape and content of published testimonies from the field is as profound today as it ever was. The degree of ideological and political correctness expected from any author, as opposed to the precise composition of that correctness, has changed much less than most readers would like to believe. Most readers or spectators of northern narratives seem to dislike being thrown into disbelief and anxiety by accounts which are too original in their depictions of that which may be truly new and alien both to the author and to the reader.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ian S. MacLaren, "From Exploration to Publication: The Evolution of a 19th-Century Arctic Narrative," *Arctic [Canada]* 47 (1994) 1, pp. 43-45; Dave Burnham, "Cooling Memories? Why We Still Remember Scott and Shackleton," *Historian: The Magazine of the Historical Association* 65 (2000), pp. 17-22; Max Jones, *The Last Great Quest: Captain Scott's Antarctic Sacrifice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

<sup>3</sup> Rudolph Beck, "»The-Region-of-Beauty-and-Delight« – Walton's Polar Fantasies in Mary Shelley's »Frankenstein», *Keats-Shelley Journal* 49 (2000), pp. 24-29. Cf. Karl Eibl, "Abgrund mit Gelande: Bemerkungen zur Soziologie der Melancholie

The sublime experience that I will discuss briefly below is characterized by the fact that there is a firm limit set to the amount of wilderness the protagonists and the readers are exposed to. By this the right kind of pleasure is attained and our will to read on is maintained. This feature of the sublime makes it useful in explaining why social control, civilisation and cultural hegemony should be kept in place in any successful narrative on northern borderlands aiming for a broad audience.

### **The Northern Sublime**

One unwavering component in the fascination of urban visitors with the far north is their search and enthusiasm for the sublime experience of nature. Its persistent role as a motive force not only in wilderness tourism but also in modern environmentalism and scientific field research would, however, be denied by most. I will dwell on it here in order to argue that it is still a useful interpretational concept, e.g. of the phenomena just mentioned, provided we allow for some adjustment to its initial colonial set up.

The sublime is philosophically and historically constructed and could be conceived of as an emotional state, or rather a characteristic sequence of events and reactions. These are produced by a typical series of actions and emotions of an individual to a place, a view or a journey in “wild” nature. But the sublime is of different kinds and can also result from listening to a moving story or from viewing a drama or painting. The sublime is an individual experience but also a collective cultural construct about which it is possible to generalise. It seems to have certain stability and to be part of the class of ideas and collective conscious and unconscious processes that the *Annales*-school in the social sciences once termed “la longue durée.”<sup>4</sup>

In discussing contemporary Western attitudes toward nature there is often a tendency to be overly reductionistic and divest all phenomena of their enchantment either by referring to modernism in too general a way or by applying sociobiological and quasi-Darwinist reasoning. Adherents to these traditions would deny the relevance of

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und des »angenehmen Grauens« im 18. Jahrhundert,” *Aufklärung* 8 (1993) 1, pp. 3-14.

<sup>4</sup> Urban Wråkberg, “Arctic Sublime,” *Merge* 14-15 (2005), p. 28. & CD recording; Peter DeBolla, *The Discourse of the Sublime: Readings in History, Aesthetics, and the Subject* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1989).

the northern or arctic sublime to explaining anything to do with today's Western attitudes to the far north. The arctic sublime emerged and was influential only during the first half of the 19th century.<sup>5</sup> I would argue instead that it has changed over time but in essence it is still here with us. In fact its field of application seems to be expanding if we are to make sense of today's growth in various kinds of northern wilderness tourism.

To grasp the continual attraction and fascination of sub-polar and polar regions to Western culture and media we need to try to generalise about the complexity of the individual experience of places in the far north and in Antarctica to the images of these regions and to the stories told about them. The arctic sublime is fruitful in this context also for epistemological reasons because culture will always be part of any human interaction and experience with nature.



Aerial view from the west coast of Svalbard towards Prince Charles Forland, not far from the mountain on Mitra Peninsula that William Scoresby Jr. climbed in the early 19th century. Photo: Urban Wråkberg.

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<sup>5</sup> Chauncey C. Loomis, "The Arctic Sublime," in: *Nature and the Victorian Imagination*, eds. U.C. Knoepfelmacher & G. B. Tennyson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), pp. 95-112.

There is seldom “pure” experience of “empty” or unfamiliar space; interpretations based on previous knowledge and experience are necessary in order to understand or at least describe anything new.

### **The History of the Sublime**

In his two volume account on the whaling and natural history of the Arctic, published in 1820, the learned Scottish captain William Scoresby Jr. described the mountains and sceneries of Spitsbergen, a group of islands in the Barents Sea far to the north of Europe and Scandinavia. In a narrative of an ascent he made of a mountain on the Mitra Peninsula of Western Spitsbergen he conveyed a very typical experience of the arctic sublime while contemplating his position on the mountain and the view over the surrounding landscape:

as far as the eye could reach; mountain rising above mountain, until by distance they dwindled into insignificancy; the whole contrasted by a cloudless canopy of deepest azure, and enlightened by the rays of a blazing sun, and the effect aided by a feeling of danger, seated as we were on the pinnacle of a rock, almost surrounded by tremendous precipices, – all united to constitute a picture singularly sublime. Here we seemed elevated into the very heavens; and though in an hazardous situation, I was sensible only of pleasing emotions, heightened by the persuasion, that, from experience in these kinds of adventures, I was superior to the dangers with which I was surrounded.<sup>6</sup>

The northern sublime consists of the fear, vertigo, and feelings of insignificance and frailty experienced when exposed to open, seemingly immense, northern landscapes. This tension is turned into satisfaction and awe when the individual is able to control and protect himself, either by distancing himself as reader or spectator and/or, as in the previous quote, by being told of the protagonist’s successful management of danger.

To experience the sublime in nature you would often have to travel far, always beyond civilisation and sometimes into the unknown. The sublime experience is strong, bewildering and positive but balances on the verge of horror. To reach it the individual, or the members of a group, may need to be resolute enough to challenge

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<sup>6</sup> William Scoresby Jr., *An Account of the Arctic Regions: With a History and Description of the Northern Whale-fishery*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1820), I, p. 128.

conventional wisdom, travel in innovative ways, dismissing the advice of established experts and institutions, master their own fears, break taboos, let go of the familiar and normal in order to enter the indefinite and nameless. This is all in line with experiences of the sublime described in other contexts by those who have been exposed to extreme natural or social settings of catastrophes, chaos or war. The gratifying feeling of the sublime is the non-verbal reward in the euphoria experienced when the challenge is met, plans work, self-discipline proves to be sufficient and goals are reached. While in this state there is the opportunity of experiencing higher meaning and insight, as well as transcendence also of a religious kind when contemplating the greatness of the Creator of nature from a vantage point never before visited.

The sublime originated as an aesthetics concept towards the end of the 18th century foremost in the writings of Edmund Burke, Immanuel Kant and William Gilpin. Burke and Kant focused mainly on the philosophical aspects of aesthetics while Gilpin concerned himself with the more applied questions of gardening and landscape painting. The sublime became the new extreme third experience beside the aesthetic categories of the beautiful and the picturesque. Chaos, decay and destruction were entered as interesting and satisfying components in sceneries as put by Gilpin while commenting on the picturesque:

A piece of Palladian architecture may be elegant in the last degree. The proportion of its parts – the propriety of its ornaments – and the symmetry of the whole may be highly pleasing. But if we introduce it in a picture, it immediately becomes a formal object, and ceases to please. Should we wish to give it picturesque beauty, we must use the mallet, instead of the chisel, we must beat down one half of it, deface the other, and throw the mutilated members around in heaps. In short, from a smooth building we must turn it into a rough ruin.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> William Gilpin, *Three Essays: On Picturesque Beauty, On Picturesque Travel, and On Sketching Landscape* (London, 1792), p. 7, quoted from David Punter, "The Picturesque and the Sublime: Two Worldscapes," in: *The Politics of the Picturesque: Literature, Landscape and Aesthetics since 1770*, eds. Stephen Copley & Peter Garside (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) on p. 235.

Beauty was found in that which was ordered, symmetric and cultivated: the Arcadian landscape; the picturesque, on the other hand, was typically found in primitive or crumbling man-made structures such as ruins. The sublime experience was often made in the encounter with virgin boundless nature, the wilderness beyond the control of Western civilization.



Gothic ruin in a Teutonic landscape. “Die Ruinen von Haldenstein & Lichtenstein” in: *The Upper Rhine: Illustrating its Finest Cities, Castles, Ruins and Landscapes from Drawings by Messrs Rohbock, Louis & Julius Lange*, ed. Dr. Gaspey (London, 1855).

The sublime is thus part of early 19th century romanticism. The definition of the emotion was then expanded from the rather limited meaning it had had during the preceding century. It was earlier identified with a feeling of compassion or delight experienced while seeing some endearing or noble act in a play. From this the sublime was turned into a highly individual and forceful emotion generated in the face of life-threatening danger or chaos.<sup>8</sup> It can be related to a series of developments in European art, science and philosophy during the age of romanticism. Individual feelings were ascribed increased value and significance. The creative genius was a characteristic product of

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<sup>8</sup> Francis Ferguson, *Solitude and the Sublime: Romanticism and the Aesthetics of Individuation* (New York: Routledge, 1992).



the period that was made central in art, music, politics and war; the polar hero could accordingly be seen as an appropriation of the standing of the creative genius in romanticism by naval officers in Arctic service and northern explorers.

The humanities went through a very productive period in the first half of the 19th century, developing theory and methods and expanding the scope of study. Historical research made progress by the critique of the reliability of sources, discerning their primary or secondary nature. Historicism was developed as a mind transforming hermeneutical technique of reviving the past by entering into its moods of thought while trying to interpret it. To some this seems to bring mysticism into historical narratives, but it really concerns how to counter the ever present tendency in such accounts to pass anachronistic judgements and commit hindsight fallacies; undeniably it brings enchantment and sublime qualities into the writing of history.<sup>9</sup>

The interest and development in linguistics and the study of folklore is also distinctive of romanticism and here the classic folktale telling of the mysteries and horrors encountered in the vast primeval forest can be related to the experience of the northern sublime. Linguistics, geography and ethnography were of course all part of the colonial desire to intrude into and explore the interior of the large continents of the World. In doing that the explorer could find himself beyond Western law and order or, by flipping the coin, could experience freedom and natural manliness in the critique of civilisation. This kind of adventure could also take place in the open landscape of the far north. At halfway north the British Lake District was “discovered” and found to be a fascinating northern Arcadia.<sup>10</sup>

But the northern sublime is most closely related to the mountain gloom and glory of the Central European wilderness of the Alps. Here all three aesthetic categories of the beautiful or pastoral, the picturesque and the sublime could be traced among the dazzling sceneries of the mountains and glaciers and the simple but supposedly good life of the Swiss freeholders. In the tracks of romantic poets and

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<sup>9</sup> Jerzy Topolski, “The Sublime and Historical Narrative,” *Storia della Storiografia* 32 (1997), pp. 3-16.

<sup>10</sup> John Murdoch, *The Discovery of the Lake District: A Northern Arcadia and Its Uses* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1984); Peter Womack, *Improvement and Romance: Constructing the Myth of the Highlands* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989).

upper class youth of the Alpine Club followed the first wave of wilderness tourism.<sup>11</sup>

The Polar Regions were also mystified directly by some seminal literary works starting in 1798 by Samuel T. Coleridge's classic poem *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. It consists in the story of an enchanted and frightening voyage to Antarctica. In Coleridge's days Antarctica was almost unknown, but through the influence of his poem it was no longer just distant and unfamiliar, it became fascinatingly, horrifically, sublimely unknown. The relationship of man to nature is central also in Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, another classic of English literature. Its plot includes whaling in polar seas. Literary research has demonstrated that both Coleridge and Melville based their art on a wide knowledge of the Polar Regions from contemporary scientific and literary sources.<sup>12</sup>

### **Making Landscapes Visible**

In scrutinising northern narratives it is thus necessary to acknowledge the continual influence of romantic Western ideas such as the northern sublime. This continuing collective enthusiasm has produced a lasting interest in travels and narratives of the north. On the other hand, there is also the need to think of models that are useful to illustrate the flexible and transient character of the knowledge and experiences of fields, borders and places. As already observed, most travellers read and are influenced by the accounts of previous visitors to a region; but not all travellers read everything relevant to their area of interest and thus it may be worthwhile to discuss perceptions of places in terms of "knowledge layers." This concept paraphrases the spatial methods applied in contemporary Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and satellite remotely sensed imagery that create area-specific knowledge by compiling data layers over a geographical area. The method of

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<sup>11</sup> David Knight, "Higher Pantheism," *Zygon* 35 (2000) 3, pp. 603-612; Marjorie Hope Nicolson, *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory: The Development of the Aesthetics of the Infinite* (1959; Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997); Monika Wagner, "Das Gletschererlebnis: Visuelle Naturaneignung im frühen Tourismus," in: *Natur als Gegenwelt: Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte der Natur*, eds. Götz Großklaus & Ernst Oldemeyer (Karlruhe: von Loeper, 1983), pp. 235-263.

<sup>12</sup> J. Lasley Dameron, "Melville and Scoresby on Whiteness," *English Studies* 74 (1993) 1 Feb., pp. 96-104; Mark Lussier, "The Rime of Physics," *Wordsworth Circle* 29 (1998) 1, pp. 84-88; Eric G. Wilson, *The Spiritual History of Ice: Romanticism, Science, and the Imagination* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

combining and layering data from remote sensing, in situ measurements and textual sources is of course also used in social sciences such as archaeology. Historical information is often entered into the spatial computerised presentations of the natural field sciences, in the various layers of knowledge applied to the geodetic model of an area.

Returning to epistemology it could be argued that what anyone experiences in the field is nothing but culturally specific layers of knowledge imposed on the land through the observer and to some extent developed by him. Their appliance is based on an intellectual claim of relevance to the specific place made by the authority on the site that the observer is referring to — explicitly or not — provided of course that the account is known to him; thus in sum the contingent and flexible meaning of places to different visitors at different times.



The western facade of the mountain named “The Temple” by Swedish northern explorers on a map first published in 1867. Photo: Urban Wråkberg.

Illustrations of this and the continuing influence of the northern sublime could be found in toponomy, the study of place-names, not least in the early cartography of the Arctic. If we brush aside all the many cases of naming and re-naming of places in the north that were based on the discrimination of indigenous people or on various quasi-scientific, personal or chauvinistic ideas, there remains a class of names given to pristine bays, fjords and mountains, which had sometimes never before been charted and described, where all other codes of naming for some reason seem to have been used up or ruled out at the moment of baptism. In these cases, the field geographer

instead resorted to the principle of naming based on the apparent similarity of the natural feature, in his eyes, to something which was, even just remotely, familiar to him.

Thus we find in Franz Josef Fjord on eastern Greenland a mountain named Devil's Castle, Teufelsschloss, by the cartographers of the Second German Polar Expedition to Greenland in 1869-70. According to one of the leaders of the expedition, Julius Payer, the mountain's strange banded coloration and its many peculiar protrusions and shapes, which reminded the viewer of demolished turrets and decaying fortifications, made it resemble the ruin of an enormous ancient castle. On Spitsbergen 19th century Swedish geographers named mountains: The Temple, Mt Sphinx, Mt Capitol and Mt Colosseum, based on their supposed similarity to gothic or classical buildings. This demonstrates the dependence of perception on identification: the observer's practice of seeing, recognising and naming what is new by its resemblance to something familiar even including fantasy and the imagined.<sup>13</sup>

We are all accustomed with the control of observations exercised over travellers participating in any well-organised tourist tour. Most of this may just be practical, timesaving and harmless – and often fun. Another class of journeys “the study trip” as a rule aspires to convey more multi-faceted and even neutral see-for-yourself experiences. But there are grounds for remaining sceptical about such claims to provide authenticity. Official study visits have much more in common with the standard tourist sightseeing journey than most would like to acknowledge. It is likely that the temptation to manipulate the minds of others increases with the improved chances of doing this successfully that is created by staging acts of authentic eye-witnessing of certain phenomena. In such cases the visibility of various knowledge layers is very much controlled by the tour operator. The selection of sites to visit, views to contemplate, direction in which to take photos, as well as the choice and phrasing of the interpretations delivered by the expert along the way are more similar to narratives in

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<sup>13</sup> Wråkberg, “Ruiner i förfallande landskap,” pp. 364-365; Wråkberg, “The Politics of Naming,” pp. 175f. The idea that mountains quite literally are ancient ruins from antediluvian times is part of older biblical geological theory, cf. Heather I. Sullivan, “Ruins and the Construction of Time: Geological and Literary Perspectives in the Age of Goethe,” *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 30 (2001), pp. 1-30.

which someone simply tells you what to think than to empirical investigations.



Opening a gate in the Russian security fence at Rayakoski during an excursion of the 2006 Connection Barents cultural workshop. By kind permission of the Border Guard Service of Russia. Photo: Urban Wråkberg.

Contemporary study-trips in the borderland of sub-arctic Norway and Russia can provide illustrations of some of this. Already, when waiting in line for visa control and luggage inspection at the Russian custom station there invariably evolves a narrative on whose fault the delay in doing this is, and whose interests could possibly be served by this slow process. Maintaining rigorous control of private luggage keeps e.g. arms and explosives from moving across the border and this is of course a major concern to both countries. The crucial inspection of all individual luggages is carried out only by the Russian customs but they are invariably blamed for being slow and for going about their tasks in an antiquated Soviet fashion.

While driving along the Russian side of the border much irony is likewise part of most “expert”-reflections on the old Soviet cold-war security fence. A condescending and simplistic story is often told that omits to mention that since this is a Schengen-border both Norway and Finland are obliged as Schengen member-states to invest a lot in modern surveillance and detection equipment on their side of the border to Russia and that the need for such investments would only be raised if the old cold-war fences on the Russian side were to be dismantled or just less well retained and inspected.

Let's finally consider a sometimes underestimated source of authenticity in any field research: the visitor himself. Often layers of knowledge of a landscape, including its human traces, place-names and constructions, are very specific to certain observers. To such visitors landscapes may have special meanings that will not be obvious to others. When human traces in the field have been lost or eradicated some may want to restore old marks in the terrain, perhaps erect monuments, thereby recreating the cultural heritage of a vanished layer of knowledge and memory. The claim to restore a site or countryside, in order to enable new authentic observations by future visitors, is of course a process of very active manipulation. The same can sometimes be said about the actions or the neglect that has brought erosion and oblivion to certain features in a landscape. As proved by the everyday experiences of many, and in a lot of solid research on the meaning of ruins and other cultural remains, demands for the restitution of sites are often controversial to other stake-holders who do not share the activists' political, historical or ethnic heritage.<sup>14</sup>



German war memorial at Pechenga, NW Russia. Photo: Urban Wråkberg.

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<sup>14</sup> Hugh Clout, *After the Ruins: Restoring the Countryside of Northern France after the Great War* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1996); Ulrich Linse, "Die Wiedergefundene Erinnerung: Zur Archaologie Der Zeitgeschichte," *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 39 (1988) 7, pp. 427-430.

The restoration of the war cemetery of the 19th German Mountain Corps at Parkkina/Pechenga, in the northern borderland of Finland, Norway and Russia, is one result of the transfer of authenticity from visitor to landscape. The war on the Eismeer or Litza front in 1941-44 took a heavy toll among the armies involved from Russia, Germany-Austria and Finland. As the German mountain divisions retreated from Petsamo and into northeast Norway in October 1944 they left 8000 men buried at Parkkina and 4000 more lost on the tundra of the then still Finnish Petsamo territory. Parkkina is the Finnish name of the village that is today Pechenga in Russia. The Petsamo territory was part of Finland from 1920 until 1945. Sentiments after the war were such that the German cemetery at Pechenga was destroyed and levelled to the ground, and houses were erected on the site. It was only after the fall of the Soviet Union that bilateral cooperation was established in order to find and identify the remains of all soldiers killed on the Litza front. The Parkkina cemetery could be recreated beside a Russian burial ground, and in August 1994 an inauguration ceremony was held with many German and Soviet veterans participating.<sup>15</sup>

Thus some distant visitors may have strong ties to a site that sometimes are easy to understand and possible for all to accept. Indigenous peoples have on occasion had the bond to their traditional land acknowledged successfully and reasonably. But as history creates new political realities it also tells us that the revival of any ethnical and national claim to old territories or homelands is notoriously volatile. Most often these layers of knowledge are among the burdens of the past that we should put to rest and leave behind.

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<sup>15</sup> Alf R. Jacobsen, *Nikkel, jern og blod: Krisen i nord 1939-1945* (Oslo: Aschehoug, 2006); James F. Gebhardt, *The Petsamo-Kirkenes Operation: Soviet Breakthrough and Pursuit in the Arctic, October 1944*, Leavenworth papers no. 17 (Fort Leavenworth: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1990); [http://freenet-homepage.de/petschenga-parkkina/006Parkkina\\_Petschenga03.htm](http://freenet-homepage.de/petschenga-parkkina/006Parkkina_Petschenga03.htm)

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