

**A Culture in Transition:  
A Case Study of Eastern  
Arctic Students' Creative Work**

by

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A Thesis

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis is concerned with an examination of the changing culture of today's Eastern Arctic. Ninety two samples of student writing and artwork were collected from Inuit, Inter-racial, and White students in the only high school in the Eastern Arctic. Data from each ethnic group's data were separately analyzed and subsequently compared. Findings showed that students from all three ethnic groups shared values and perceptions characterized by incorporation of an appreciation for traditional Inuit culture. In the written data this was evidenced by shared concerns for the environment, ecology and the preservation of native culture. In the artwork students from all ethnic groups demonstrating strong adherence to stylistic and thematic conventions of Inuit art. The school system is a key factor in the development of a "Northern" identity transcending distinctions between the region's ethnic groups.

## ABREGE

Cette thèse concerne la culture émergée de l'Arctique de l'Est.

Identifiant cette culture en transition de son passé colonial à une culture présentement mélangée, cette recherche analyse le travail créatif des étudiants de la région. Des données ont été amassées dans la seule Ecole Secondaire de la région, et quatre-vingt-douze (92) étudiants ont volontairement soumis leur écriture et/ou travail d'art pour cette étude. Basée sur le contenu de cette analyse de données on a trouvé que la transition culturelle de l'Arctique de l'Est, est caractérisée par les valeurs mutuelles des habitants, et leur propre définition comme Nordiques. Ceci est évident dans les deux sens des données écrites et graphiques, et le rôle de l'Ecole en adoptant cette démonstration de la mutualité, est examiné.

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## INTRODUCTION

This thesis is concerned with the identification and description of characteristics of the culture of the Eastern Arctic as it is experienced by high school students from the region. The media for analysis is their creative writing and their artwork, and the goal is to depict characteristics of the changing culture of today's North. The culture of the Eastern Arctic is usually studied along the colonized-colonizer, Inuit-White paradigm. It is my contention that the polarization of the population inherent in the application of this paradigm fails to represent the shared values that characterize the Eastern Arctic today. The region's population has become one interacting group with a shared identity and common concerns, practices, and beliefs.

Eastern Arctic is a geographic reference to the Canadian Arctic archipelago and the areas bordering Hudson Bay. The Eastern Arctic was the last Arctic region to be influenced by southern Canadian institutions. This is an important factor in understanding not only demographic and cultural changes, but also the role that the educational system has had in transforming Northern society. Specifically, the role of the education system has been that of an agent of change. Eastern Arctic schools are charged with the same responsibilities as schools everywhere; these include the inculcation of a society's values and the preparation of individuals for the assumption of adult roles within a given society (Kimball, 1974). Functioning as both agents and catalysts of cultural transformation, schools

constitute an appropriate setting for conducting research on the present culture of the Eastern Arctic.

For the purposes of this study, the word, culture is viewed, simply, as the way of life of a group of people (Beals, Spindler & Spindler, 1973, 55-58). The applied definition of culture as, "...a shareable body of material," (Mead, 1964, 37) is that which renders creative writing and artwork, the media for analysis herein, appropriate tools for an investigation of characteristics of culture. Cultures are dynamic in nature (Mead, 1964; Ryan, 1969); thus, shareable experience, traditions and ways of life, are always subject to change. Change processes are variably labeled as "acculturation" (Herskovitz, 1937), "cultural reinterpretation", "cultural borrowing" (Beals, Spindler & Spindler 1973, 287-329), and "assimilation" (Kroeber, 1931, 139-42). These concepts implicitly emphasize consequences of cultural change at the individual and societal level as cultural loss, marginality, and individual alienation. They are more powerful in characterizing tensions between old and new than in describing cultures in formation which is the object of this analysis of the writing and artwork of Northern students.

There have been other studies of artwork and writing in the literature pertaining to the North. Notable among these are Jackson's (1985) study of Inuit art across two generations and Gedalof's (1982) anthology of Inuit stories, poems, essays, plays and memoirs. There is also significant literature which studies changes in Inuit life with the advent of southern Canadian influences (Willmott, 1961; Raine, 1980; Honigman & Honigman, 1971). Such works attempt to

capture the disappearing oral and artisan traditions of the Inuit. They constitute an important contribution to an understanding of Northern life but they provide few insights into what Inuit culture has become and fail to acknowledge the fact that the North is no longer a uniquely Inuit region.

There are two dominant tendencies in the literature pertaining to the experience of Whites in the North. The first, exemplified by studies such as McArthur's (1979,1980) and Wesgate & Ross (1973), investigates the acculturation of Whites to Inuit ways or their motives for going North. The second tendency, comprising the greater part of White literature on the North, is to romanticize Whites who have explored, worked, or gone native in the Arctic as uniquely adventurous individuals among the Inuit (Lewis, 1904; Lyall, 1979). While the first tendency in White literature contributes to our knowledge of White culture in today's North, the second, though providing entertainment, has the dangerous drawback of portraying Northern history as the, "...saga of a few heroic individuals" (Brody, 1976,17). Ultimately, both the Inuit cultural maintenance literature and the Qallunaat experiential literature perpetuate a segregated, bi-cultural picture of Northern life while failing to capture the cultural blending which characterizes today's North.

The framework for the interactional focus of this study is found in the work of Brody (1977) and Hamelin (1979). In his landmark ethnography, The People's Land: Eskimos and Whites in the Eastern Arctic, Brody (1977,6) approaches his study of the region stating that, "...it is the present situation of both Eskimos and Whites in the north that deserves

attention." This approach of Brody's represents not only a unique departure from previous research on the North; it also documents the colonial experience from the interactive perspectives of both the Inuit and Whites, and the changes in culture, customs, attitudes, and beliefs that the colonial experience produced. While Brody's work is, "...a way of expressing solidarity with the Eskimo people" (Brody, 1977, 6) and, thus a contribution to the cultural maintenance literature, it is in his work that the concept of Northerner, a concept devoid of racial attribution first appears. Louis-Edmond Hamelin's (1979) concept of Nordicity attempts to remedy some of the previously cited biases in the existing research on the North. As Hamelin points out,

Most of the time, the northern focus as such, lags behind or hardly appears...many scientists do not see the North as a region where things are integrated. In my own bias, monothematic or bithematic approaches cannot solve such broad problems as...better relations between North and South (and) implications of the multicultural situation inside the Northwest Territories... (Hamelin, 1986).

This thesis aspires towards furthering our understanding of both Northerner and Nordicity by applying the intercultural focus which these concepts advocate. Analysis focuses on the creative work of the present generation of high school students in the region. This

generation is experiencing changes which began four decades ago, changes such as schooling, which have resulted in the integration of Inuit and Qallunaat (White) customs and beliefs from three generations which co-exist in today's Arctic. An examination of the aesthetic expression of northern students, as reflected in their written and graphic expression, can yield valuable information about values, belief systems, and culture, in today's North.

#### METHODOLOGY AND ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

The data to be analyzed consists of sixty-one creative writing samples and thirty-one illustrations acquired in a 1983 study conducted at the Gordon Robertson Education Centre, Frobisher Bay, N.W.T. The original research comprised an experimental book-writing project in which all of the students were asked to contribute writings and/or drawings to a book depicting their lives 'in the North (Shapiro, 1987). The ninety-two writings and illustrations will be analyzed for thematic content and subject selection. There were 386 registered high school students at the time that the data was gathered. The age range of the students was between twelve and nineteen. The high school where the research data was gathered is the only secondary school in the Baffin Region; its students come from all parts of the Eastern Arctic. The population of the Eastern Arctic is, according to ethnicity, about two thirds Inuit, one third caucasian or others including Black, Chinese, or Indian peoples. The ninety two students whose creative work is analyzed here were randomly selected to represent ethnic

groups in proportion to their share of student enrollment and in relation to the population of the Eastern Arctic.

The first chapter of the thesis which follows will discuss the historical antecedents of contemporary Eastern Arctic culture as well as the development of the education system and its role in fostering shared values and concerns. Chapters Two and Three begin with a review of related research on children's writing and artwork which is followed by presentation and discussion of the written work of subjects. The final chapter summarizes the findings of this research.

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTERNAL COLONIALISM AND SCHOOLING IN THE EASTERN ARCTIC.**

Colonialism implies a relationship of economic exploitation between colonizer and colonized (Rhodes, 1970). Economic exploitation, once institutionalized through the advent of the colonizer's systems of education, jurisprudence, and government leads to the eventual cultural, social, and political domination of the economically exploited group (Fanon, 1967; Rhodes, 1970). The concept of internal colonialism refers to this phenomena of exploitation and subjugation when this occurs within a nation's borders (Hechter, 1975).

Mannoni (1956) states that a colonial situation begins when the colonizer, "...appears in the midst of a tribe...is thought to be rich and powerful...and has a feeling of his own superiority" (in Brody, 1977, 14). In this perspective, the colonial experience of the Eastern Arctic began in 1576 when Sir Martin Frobisher landed in southern Baffin Island in search of the Northwest passage. This initial contact was not particularly amicable; prisoners were taken on both sides (Davine, 1982). Frobisher attempted the first economic exploitation of the Inuit by attempting to mine gold on Baffin Island. However, Frobisher's gold turned out to be iron pyrite and the settlement he had established for the purpose of mining was abandoned in the late 1570's (Davine, 1981).

The search for a Northwest Passage continued to be the primary reason for contact between Europeans and Eastern Arctic Inuit throughout the seventeenth century. Notable among the explorers who sought to established this

commercial trade route were Henry Hudson in 1610, and William Baffin in 1615 (Davine, 1981). These and later expeditions throughout the next two centuries failed to discover the route; it was not until 1905 that Roald Amundsen's voyage successfully navigated the Northwest Passage. However, the early expeditions did sow the seeds of the colonial exploitation of the Eastern Arctic in their use of Inuit to haul supplies and serve as guides and interpreters (Phillips, 1967; Herbert, 1976; Davine, 1981).

The active period of colonialism began for the Eastern Arctic in the nineteenth century first with the whaling industry and later, with the fur industry. While the early whaling activities did not foster the economic dependence of the subsequent fur trade, whaling vessels operating in Hudson's Bay, Davis Strait, and the Beaufort Sea did initiate cultural change for the Inuit. Whalers brought with them European customs such as square dancing and the concertina. More importantly, they also brought firearms, copper cookware, and cotton cloth, signaling the onset of major alterations in native life. Prior to this, the Inuit fashioned their own weapons from animal bones or stone, produced their own cookware, and made their own clothing from animal skins. The whaling industry thus marked the beginning of the shift from subsistence activities to dependence upon outsiders for the essentials of Inuit life (Freuchen, 1961; Herbert, 1976; Brody, 1977; Davine, 1981). It is also noteworthy that the early whaling expeditions brought diseases which were responsible for the extinction of two Inuit groups, the Karnqmalit and the Salliq (Davine, 1981). This tragedy reinforced the supremacy of Europeans



as people to be feared. This, according to Mannoni (1956), is one aspect of the psychology of colonialism which must be present for subjugation of a people to occur.

The fur trade, which began in the Eastern Arctic in the latter part of the nineteenth century was the industry most directly responsible for intensifying colonial activity in the region. As an ever-increasing number of trappers settled in the Eastern Arctic, missionaries also began to establish themselves in the region. This increased the presence of Whites, and coupled with the fact of Canada's Confederation, brought about the shift from a colonial to an internal colonial situation for the Eastern Arctic.

Before Confederation in 1867, the Northwest Territories was part of a large tract of land called Rupert's Land. Rupert's Land was under British title. However, the Hudson's Bay Company, due to its commercial interests, had applied and received permission from the British government to administer this territory. Three years after Confederation, in 1870, the Canadian government requested a transfer of the Rupert's Land title from the Hudson's Bay Company to the government of Canada. The British government acquiesced, and the internal colonial experience of the Arctic began.

In 1875, five years after the transfer of title from the Hudson's Bay Company, the Canadian government legislated its presence in the Northwest Territories' Act. This legislation asserted not only the Canadian sovereignty of the region, but also designated the RCMP as the administrative authority for the Northwest Territories (Davine, 1981). With

some amendments, this legislation continues to serve as the constitution of the Northwest Territories.

Although the Northwest Territories Act of 1870 signaled the advent of the internal colonial experience of the Eastern Arctic, initially very little changed for the Inuit of that region. The numbers of RCMP officers in the area increased and the Eastern Arctic Inuit continued to trade with trappers and whalers while maintaining their subsistence oriented nomadic tradition (Herbert, 1976). In the Western Arctic, more dramatic ramifications of Canadian sovereignty were being experienced. With the onset of the Yukon gold rush in 1898, the federal government decided to make its presence in the territories felt. In addition to almost doubling the number of RCMP posts, the government also sponsored a number of exploratory and mapping expeditions. These expeditions were meant to demonstrate to both potentially interested foreign powers and the native populations, the fact of Canadian sovereignty of the Northwest Territories.

In the Western Arctic, the Dene tribes resisted this outside presence. The conflict was concluded with the signing of Treaty No. 8 between the Canadian Government and the Dene in 1899 (Fumoleau, 1973). The treaty had little impact on the Eastern Arctic; however, in later years, when land claims and mineral rights of native peoples became concerns, it became apparent that the Inuit of the Eastern Arctic were at a legal disadvantage in negotiating with the federal government. Unlike their Western Arctic counterparts, they had accepted Canadian sovereignty as a fait accompli, and had never contested this.

### COMMERCIAL AND MISSIONARY INFLUENCES

At about the time of World War I, the whaling industry became obsolete in the Eastern Arctic. It was replaced by the white fox trade. The Hudson's Bay Company started to establish trading posts throughout the Eastern Arctic, beginning with the first one in 1914 (Davine, 1981). Commercial expansion was paralleled by the establishment of first, Roman Catholic missions, and, subsequently, Anglican ones. It was also in this period that the romanticization of heroic and rugged Whites began in the literature on the North. The following quotation from, Beaver, the magazine published by the Hudson's Bay Company, exemplifies the Darwinian righteousness with which early White settlers in the Arctic viewed their position in the North in relation to the native population:

The service we have rendered warrant us in holding the position we have today. It has been a case of the survival of the fittest. When we survey the animal world, we see the stronger preying upon the weaker (Beaver, 1924; in Brody, 1977, 17).

The romanticization of Whites in this period is evident in another quotation from the inimitable Beaver, magazine:

Jack Turner was a big man. Although not a tall man, there was a bigness about him that was

inescapable. He was big in character, personality and spirit. The Eskimos called him the 'real man'. There was a non-nonsense determination about Turner that made itself felt...he won the Eskimos completely. Jack Turner was an Englishman...a dedicated Evangelist; a single-minded man who knew what he believed and why he believed; a man who knew he was right (in Price, 1970, 67).

The attitudes of White supremacy and glorification of their mission in the Eastern Arctic, reflect the pattern of racial interactions in the early colonial period of the region.

In 1922, events in the Western Arctic once again signaled changes in the Eastern Arctic. At that time, a second treaty, Treaty No. 11, was signed with the Dene tribes. Again, more RCMP were sent to the Eastern Arctic, this time with additional responsibilities. In addition to serving as the region's police force, the RCMP also became its first social workers, distributing food and clothing to the Inuit (Davine, 1981). With the advent of increased RCMP activity in the Eastern Arctic, more missionaries began to arrive and the Hudson's Bay Company started new trading posts throughout the region. Little by little, the traders convinced the Inuit to shift from hunting animals for food to hunting animals for skins. This change in hunting habits forced reliance upon the traders, not only for new equipment to hunt with, but also for food in exchange for the skins (Brody, 1977). This shift occurred during the years 1925-35. With the

increased trading activity in the region and the Inuit reliance upon the trading posts, there was also an increase in missionary activity around these trading posts. Although the relationship between trappers and traders in this period was based on reciprocity and mutual respect, the relationship between missionaries and Inuit was not. In the following quotation from Eskimo, the magazine of the Catholic order of Oblate missionaries, one priest reflects the attitude which underscored most Inuit-White relations of the period:

Good Lord, help me to instruct these  
poor people, to tear from their hearts  
and souls the pagan beliefs which  
have a tendency to return and  
bother them (in Brody, 1977, 17).

The increased economic subjugation of the Inuit was accompanied by social and ideological domination, necessary components of the colonial, or, in this case, the internal colonial phenomena.

The fur trade, together with the previously discussed shift from hunting for food to hunting for trade, was directly responsible not only for the change from subsistence activity to dependence for the Inuit, it was also responsible for the shift from nomadic existence to living in camps around the trading posts. The change to settlement living increased as the prices for furs decreased. Thus, as the market fell off throughout the 30's, more and more Inuit had come to depend upon the traders and were subject to the will of their colonizers for their livelihood.

...it is no exaggeration to suggest that the economic dependency of the Eskimos upon the Hudson's Bay Company increased in step with the poverty of the 1930's and onwards (resulting in)...economic serfdom (Kleivan, 1966, 7).

The increased camp living of the Inuit also brought them diseases such as tuberculosis, measles, and polio. The spread of these and other diseases led the native population to a ready acceptance of, "the ministrations of missionaries...and other White colonial agents" (Brody, 1977, 23). These epidemics began in the late 1930's and continued throughout the 1950's.

It was World War II and the immediate post war era of building defence installations which brought the Eastern Arctic both into the twentieth century and into its most active period of colonization. The construction of airfields caused an economic boom greater than that of the earlier and lucrative trapping-trading days. With the wage employment that this brought, the economic dependence of the Inuit upon the Whites was solidified (Davine, 1981). The building boom was paralleled by an increase in the federal government's involvement in the area. Throughout the 1950's, it began constructing schools and nursing stations throughout the Eastern Arctic. Those native people who had still been seasonally nomadic gradually moved into communities, staying permanently due to their increasing reliance upon

Southern subsistence and medical supplies. Others were forcibly relocated to settlements due to colonial activities involving government construction projects.

The development of the Baffin Region, the area that is the focus of this study, took place in a similar manner to that described above. However, the transformations which occurred in Baffin were on a much larger scale. In 1942-43, the United States Air Force constructed the largest airbase in the North at Frobisher Bay. The base was turned over to the Canadian Air Force between 1946-50 and the Hudson's Bay Company, which had been located at Ward Inlet, moved to Frobisher Bay. These two events resulted in making the town the commercial center for the Eastern Arctic. The American Air Force became active in Frobisher again between 1951 and 1963, constructing a radar station, sending men and supplies to the eastern part of the DEW line (then under construction), and expanding in-flight refuelling capabilities. This continued activity guaranteed continued wage-employment for the Inuit population and while many Inuit were forced to move due to this development, many others chose to settle in the Frobisher Bay area. By 1959, it became apparent that the U.S. forces would be leaving the area which then comprised the largest settlement in the Eastern Arctic, (approximately 1,700 people). To provide for a stable economic base, and to install itself in the most developed part of the Eastern Arctic, the federal government established its Eastern Arctic Regional Headquarters at Frobisher Bay in 1959. This finalized the colonial subjugation of the Inuit for with it came an expanded police force (the RCMP made Frobisher its Arctic subdivision headquarters), schools, a hospital, and bureaucrats to administer these activities (Brody, 1977; Davine, 1981;

Honigman & Honigman, 1971). By 1970, there was no question that the institutional penetration, the primary requisite of the colonial of internal colonial paradigm, was complete. What had begun as economic dependence upon traders ultimately resulted in the political domination of a group which had become dependent on various government institutions for their altered wage-based economy. Brody (1977), in discussing the colonial phenomenon of the Eastern Arctic, describes the change processes as characterized, paradoxically, by continuity.

...a continuity best explained in terms of incorporation: whereas missionaries and traders desired moral and economic incorporation, the newer institutions aim at incorporation that is ideological (through education) national (through law and medicine) and finally political (through local government) (Brody, 1977, 31-2).

He goes on to characterize Whites who currently live in the North as "agents of the incorporating agencies" (Brody, 1977, 32).

Colonial expansion brought commerce, medicine, and law enforcement to the Inuit of the Eastern Arctic; subsequent to these, developments in communications and industry accelerated social changes. By the 1960's, Inuit arts and crafts industry had been established and the co-operative movement for the marketing of these products had begun. The co-operative movement, one of the first initiatives of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern



Development, resulted in the establishment of Inuit-run co-operatives initially for the marketing of carvings and handicrafts. The co-operatives eventually expanded to provide a wide range of goods and services. Through this movement, the Inuit were able to generate and control an independent income resource (Davine, 1981; Eisemon, Hart & Ongesa, 1988).

The late 1960's and the decade of the 1970's produced other shifts in the relationships between the Whites and Inuit in the North. These are attributable to two influences; the first, telecommunications, and the second, resource agreements with the federal and/or provincial governments. Radio, television, telephone, and air transport systems which were developed in the Arctic during the 1960's put the Inuit population in direct contact with their colonizers. These media offered them greater exposure to the culture which had dominated them and enabled, through direct observation, an intensive, albeit incomplete, education regarding Southern Canadian government and culture. Thus provided with more information and exposure to the dominant White culture, the Inuit became more sophisticated in the ways of government (Davine, 1981). When it came to negotiating resource agreements in the 1970's, the Inuit applied this learning to the rendering of agreements which gave them more control over institutions implanted by the federal government; specifically, the territorial government in Yellowknife, where they gained representation and schools, over which they gained greater control (Colbourne, 1986).

The result of the preceding has been the development of a more symmetrical relationship among all of the inhabitants of the North. Decentralization of government from Ottawa to Yellowknife, and from Yellowknife to various regions of the Arctic has helped the native population to achieve movement towards their goal of self-determination. The federal government has supported these goals with the two most recent ministers for Indian Affairs and Northern Development claiming that they hope to be able to close their ministry and leave administration of the Northwest Territories in the hands of the territorial government (Crombie, 1985; McKnight, 1987). Although considerable progress has been made in the settlement of aboriginal land claims, economic development, self-government, and cultural preservation still constitute outstanding issues which need to be resolved in the Eastern Arctic.

### EDUCATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF FORMAL SCHOOLING IN THE EASTERN ARCTIC

Schools were not established in the Eastern Arctic until the 1930's (Colbourne, 1987). Prior to this time, the Inuit of the region saw to the education of their young through parents or other adults teaching survival skills such as hunting, preparation of food and clothing, customs, beliefs and values (Freuchen, 1961; Herbert, 1976).

The first schools in the Eastern Arctic were mission schools. As such, their primary purpose was that of religious conversion. The active colonial expansion of the Arctic in the post World War II years resulted in the first federal schools established in the region. However, these were created not for the purpose of educating the native population, but rather to provide schooling to the offspring of southern Whites who were employed in the Arctic (Colbourne, 1987). In 1950, out of a population of 9000 Inuit in the Eastern Arctic, only 120 native children were registered in the few mission and federal schools then in existence. In 1955, the Canadian federal government, under the auspices of the two-year old Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, put into action an ambitious six year plan for the building of schools throughout the Arctic (Diubaldo, 1985). As a result of this plan, the attendance of Inuit children in schools rose to 2000 by 1960. By 1967, it was estimated that 90% of all Inuit children were attending federal schools regularly (Stevenson, 1973).

These schools, similar to those established by the federal government for aboriginal peoples elsewhere in

Canada, were responsible for transmitting Anglo-Canadian culture (Wilman, 1976). The primary objective was for them to learn, "...enough English, mathematics, and other things for them to fit into general Canadian life (Crowe, 1974, 276). Federal schools were also charged with the responsibility of improving the Inuits' opportunities for earning a living (Crowe, 1974). Clemens (1985), in her study of Canadian internal colonialism notes in this connection that,

Colonial schooling removed the child from his traditional world and seemed to hold out the promise of his entry into the more desirable world of the colonizer (Clemens, 1985, 45).

However, these goals were rarely achieved by the schools as comments of this Inuit elder indicate:

Personally, I'm not pleased with the idea of sending kids to school. They don't seem to learn anything of value for the future. There is only one person from here that ever got a job as a result of having an education (The Northerners, 1974, 68).

The federal schools of the period were characterized by more than their failure to achieve "mainstreaming" career opportunities for Inuit children. They also helped to create a state of social dislocation between two cultures. This was characterized by an inability to function efficiently in either

culture. One of the reasons was that the language of instruction in the federal schools was English. Inuktitut, the mother tongue of the majority of the children was prohibited in the schools for two reasons: first, the southern teachers could not understand it; and second, teachers felt that the exclusive use of English would better immerse students in Anglo-Canadian culture (Colbourne, 1987). This created serious problems for the students in communicating with their parents and/or grandparents. As regards culture, the curriculum used in the federal schools was borrowed from Ontario or Manitoba and had little relevance to life in the Arctic.

The outcomes of this schooling were, academically, at best mediocre. Some children did make it through; a much greater percentage of students did not. As Clemens (1985) points out, schools in the internal colony of the Canadian Arctic had the effect of alienating students from both their culture of origin and the dominant culture. The cultural irrelevance of federal schooling in the Eastern Arctic is well described by Berger:

...You were more or less told that you couldn't express yourself as an Inuit and you had to adopt a totally different lifestyle...schools were put there to make stereotype images of native people, setting them up to fit into the mainstream of Canadian society...A lot of these students ... couldn't relate to their parents. They couldn't speak the language anymore and when they got back to

the larger town, say in Inuvik, they couldn't fare any better there. They couldn't cope with being just half people (Berger, 1977, 92).

The older Inuit who had not experienced the educational system of southern Canada were confused by what was happening to their children. They were no longer called upon to pass on survival skills and values; their children were away at school all day or, in the case of children in residential schools, for up to two years at a time with little or no contact with their families. The Inuit were not consulted in matters related to the education of their children. One senior federal official characterized the attitude of the day by explaining that the absence of Inuit at school meetings was due to the fact that the Inuit, "...were not at a stage where they could take a responsible part in such meetings" (Colbourne, 1987, 5).

In 1967, the federal government decentralized its control of the Northwest Territories' educational system with the passing of the Northwest Territories Act. With the signing of this legislation into law, control of the educational system of both the Western and Eastern Arctic became the responsibility of Yellowknife, the town which the new legislation designated as the territorial capital (Government of the Northwest Territories, 1985).

With the expansion of the education system in the Northwest Territories, there was an influx of southerners coming to live in the North. These newcomers were used to, and demanded, representative government at the Territorial

and municipal levels. The native population was quick to become involved in the various local pressure groups that were started by southern Whites to force Ottawa into yielding greater municipal and territorial sovereignty. The first local elections in the Northwest Territories were held in the Mackenzie District in the early 1950's. These elections served to send the first elected representatives to the Territorial Council, the federal government's local governing body for the Northwest Territories. The first elected representatives were southern Whites.

By the 1960's, there was native representation on the Council as well. It was this council which advocated the formation of the federal government's Advisory Commission on the Development of Government in the Northwest Territories. The commission traveled all over the Northwest Territories to solicit residents' views on the issue of local government. It ultimately recommended the passing of Section 13 of the Northwest Territories Act, the amendment whereby the Northwest Territories obtained a resident Commissioner and control of their own education system (Davine, 1981).

One of the first moves of the new territorial government was to decentralize education from Yellowknife and delegate this responsibility to regions and municipal councils (Farrow, 1985). By 1975, the Northwest Territories Department of Education established educational advisory boards (EABs) in most Eastern Arctic communities. These EABs were made up of committees of parents, elected in each community, to advise the principal on the operation of the

school. The advent of the EABs signaled the end of federal schooling.

The Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC), a national organization of Inuit in the Northwest Territories, Northern Quebec, and Labrador, was formed in 1971 (Colbourne, 1987). The ITC enabled the Inuit to speak to government with a united voice. It proved an effective lobby for educational change particularly as regards instruction in Inuktitut in the primary grades and offering of Inuktitut and cultural maintenance programs in secondary schools. Another influence on Northern education in the early 1970's was the launching of the Anik satellites in 1972. With the expanded telecommunications network that these allowed, local radio stations were established in most Eastern Arctic communities. They became an effective medium for the airing of grievances and the discussion of educational issues (Colbourne, 1987). The satellites also brought television to the Eastern Arctic, thus expanding the informal education of the native population vis à vis southern Canadian culture and political processes.

The Northwest Territories Education Act designated local education authorities (LEAs) for all communities in the territory. The LEAs were established, but education authorities from Yellowknife had the responsibility of assessing each community's level of readiness to control their schools. Those LEAs which were perceived by Yellowknife to be at an advanced stage of development were redesignated as Education Societies with authority over such areas as local education budgets, appointment of principals and other staff, and setting of the local school year calendar.



LEAs at lesser stages of development were designated Education Committees and functioned with advisory rather than administrative powers (Government of the Northwest Territories, 1977). In theory, the 1977 Northwest Territories Education Act was a major step towards the shifting of power to the communities, a goal of both parents and the ITC. In practice, regional superintendents, appointed by Yellowknife, had the power to decide which LEAs should be designated as Societies and no plan was put forth by the legislation or the regional and territorial administrators for preparing LEA members for the increased responsibilities (Colbourne, 1987). By 1980, only one LEA, in the community of Eskimo Point, had been granted Society status. This occurred only after intense political pressure was applied on the Department of Education in Yellowknife (Colbourne, 1987).

What happened in the Baffin Region in response to this legislation better reflected the changing times than the legislation itself. In 1976, prior to the signing of the Legislation Act, a group calling itself the Baffin Region Education Committee (BREC) was formed to serve as an advisory board to the regional high school and hostel in Frobisher Bay. The committee was made up of seven members (BREC Minutes, 1977). From the beginning, the BREC saw itself as having broader responsibilities and requested that Yellowknife recognize it as the Education Authority for the Baffin Region (Colbourne, 1987). Yellowknife did not respond to this request. The BREC opened its September 1978 meeting by passing a motion to ask for retroactive recognition of BREC as the official LEA of

the Baffin Region (BREC Minutes, 1978). This time, BREC submitted its request to the regional authorities, the Baffin Region Council, made up of mayors from all of the Baffin communities. BREC asked the Council to represent their claims for recognition to Yellowknife. While they waited, BREC expanded its membership and continued to hold meetings which dealt with cultural programs, school years, education budgets, hiring of principals and high school programs (Colbourne, 1987). In 1979, the Baffin Region Council endorsed the previous year's request; in addition, they also endorsed BREC's request to become the Baffin Regional Education Society (BRES). This action legitimized the existence of a citizen's organization with legal responsibilities for education (Colbourne, 1987). The federal government, and Yellowknife administration initially ignored the council's endorsement until one LEA from Baffin, Igloolik (also recognized by the Baffin Region Council), threatened to take the Yellowknife Education Department to the Territorial Supreme Court to gain control of the school year calendar (GNWT, 1979). Rather than face this legal action, the Department of Education stepped back and granted Igloolik society status (Colbourne, 1979).

This case focussed the attention of the federal government on local issues in the Northwest Territories and, finally, the native-controlled 1980 Northwest Territories' Assembly was able to endorse the formation of a special committee to enquire into educational problems of the region. This committee held forty-three public hearings across the Northwest Territories and heard testimony from some 1500 witnesses. Local concerns included student

dropout rates, the role of native languages in instruction, native teacher training, student attendance, curriculum with native content, and provision for special education. Most important among the concerns which surfaced were the issues of parental involvement in, and local control of, education.

The independent action on the part of the Baffin Regional Council can be explained in part by its geographic isolation from Yellowknife. The residents of the Eastern Arctic did not experience a ready identification with the Western Arctic. Their development by southern Canadian government had occurred later and more intensively. No negotiations or treaties were involved in their colonial experience. The general feeling in the Eastern Arctic was (and is), that their concerns and needs were different, their native population more homogeneous, and, the distance and cost of travel to Yellowknife prohibitive for getting quick and/or appropriate responses to their concerns. Western Arctic communities, with their proximity to Yellowknife had little need for LEA status since their needs were already represented in Yellowknife, the regional as well as the territorial capital. Eastern Arctic residents did not have this same access and influence.

The Eastern Arctic Inuit shared a common ancestry with the West Greenlanders and a common language. Travel and marriage between these two groups of Inuit, separated by only their differing colonial histories and a two hour flight, were frequent. Greenlandic parents, however, had a great deal of influence over their children's education. In all aspects of life, they had a greater degree of political

autonomy. Increased communications made this more apparent to the Eastern Arctic Inuit (interviews with Baffin Island residents and school officials, June, 1988).

Awareness of the lack of autonomy was the first catalyst in the Baffin Region's move for educational autonomy; the presence of southern Whites as the local education authorities was the second. The superintendent of schools, the assistant superintendent, and the high school principal in the Baffin Region in the late 1970's were the individuals most directly responsible for the formation of the BREC. They were White Canadians who had chosen to remain in the Arctic. They emerged as the self-appointed vanguards of the movement for local autonomy. It was the school leaders who advocated formation of the BREC, taught the natives about agendas, motions, resolutions, and taking minutes. Whether the native population would have pursued the independent action which resulted in the designation of BREC without this southern leadership championing the cause is not known. Nothing has been written on the uniqueness of the Baffin Region's independent action. But there is little question that the Inuit parents did rally to the cause and the opportunity for autonomy it afforded them.

## CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed the colonial experience of the Arctic and the development of the formal education in the region. Particular attention has been given to the Baffin Region of the Eastern Arctic not only because of its relevance to this study, but more importantly because of the independent action towards self determination. The issue of greater regional control over education was one which evoked concern which was shared by two groups of parents; Whites and parents of native children; the incorporated. Faced with a common concern such as their children's education, they formed a united front against a commonly perceived adversary; the Yellowknife administration, and functioned as Northerners with a common cause. The cause of local control was learned and became one in which the Inuit and the Whites were involved with equal energy and concern. The shared experience of frustration with Yellowknife and feelings of success when Society status was achieved, set a precedent for further interaction and integration of the two cultures.

## **CHAPTER II: THE WRITTEN WORK OF EASTERN ARCTIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter comprises an analysis of sixty-one essays written by Eastern Arctic high school students. The purpose for analyzing these writings is to obtain a better understanding of the culture in which they originated. Writing, its functions and purposes, and its role in both transmitting culture and organizing perceptions of culture, have received much attention. The research on writing as both a result and a reflection of socio-cultural influences provides a framework for the analysis presented below.

The Russian psychologist, Vygotsky, considered writing (and art) as reflections and representations of the social and historical experience of a group or a culture. Writing, he said, reflects culture in its "product form," and the act of writing involves an interactive process of cultural interpretation (Vygotsky, 1916; Vygotsky, 1925). Influenced by Vygotsky, several British and American researchers have emphasized interactive processes occurring between the writer, text, and the cultural context (Emig, 1973; Flower & Hayes, 1977; Cooper & Odell, 1978; Harste, 1980). Writing is inextricably embedded in a social context and involves negotiating meanings between the writer and the audience (Heath, 1983; Harste, 1983; Kroll & Wells, 1983).

### The Development of Inuit Writing and the Teaching of Writing in the Eastern Arctic Today

Writing was not a part of traditional Inuit culture. Rather, the system of syllabics, used in writing Inuktitut, the native language, was developed by missionaries and incorporated the use of geometric shapes to represent phonemes. This system was developed about 100 years ago (Gedalof, 1982).

Writing for Inuit and non-native students in the Eastern Arctic today is taught in the schools. The curriculum for the Baffin Region education system follows that of the province of Ontario, with a few additions pertaining to Inuit cultural content. English is no longer required as the language of instruction in the primary schools for the early grades. As a result, Inuit children do not begin writing in English until the fourth grade although they have been exposed to it in the early primary years. The language of instruction in the high school is English and it is in language arts classes that writing is taught. Inuktitut instruction is available; both Inuit and non-Inuit students enroll for optional instruction in this language.

#### Gordon Robertson Education Centre

Gordon Robertson Education Centre, GREC, as the secondary school is commonly referred to, is a two story, X-shaped, white, prefabricated structure. Situated at the crest of a large hill, its porthole windows provide a dramatic view of the bay from which the town of Frobisher takes its name.

The interior of the school is bright and colorful; each of the corridors is painted a different color so, English classes are on two-yellow, math in one-blue, etc. The intersection of the corridors forms the gymnasium floor. The three steps descending to this are carpeted and used as seating for assemblies, or by students as a meeting place during free periods.

In April of 1983, there were 386 students attending GREC. Their ages ranged from twelve to nineteen. Two-thirds of the students were Inuit; one-third were caucasian or other (Black, Chinese, Indian). Students who have one Inuit and one non-Inuit parent identify themselves as Inuit. The staff of GREC is made up of a principal, an assistant principal (who also acts as the guidance counselor and chief disciplinarian), twenty-two teachers from southern Canada, two Inuktitut language teachers, and four cultural instructors who are Inuit. In addition to the Inuit language teachers and the cultural instructors, other Inuit on the staff include eight classroom assistants, all women. The majority of the full time teaching staff are men (sixteen); the southern teachers and administrators had resided in the Arctic from one to twelve years at the time of this research. The principal and the art teacher, both longer term residents of the Arctic, had achieved a working knowledge of Inuktitut.

As the only high school in the Eastern Arctic, GREC receives students from the entire region. A little more than one third of the school's population consists of boarding students who are housed in a dormitory about one mile from the school.



The school's curriculum is offered with a wide range of educational options. Students can pursue a college preparatory track; however, for grade thirteen, they must study in Ontario. Students can also follow technical-vocational tracks which prepare them for careers in business, industrial arts, or home economics. Of the forty-six Inuit students enrolled in the college preparatory track, six interviews indicated that only three wanted to pursue further education after graduating from high school.

When students enter GREC, they are placed in A (college preparatory) or B stream classes for their appropriate grade levels. Placement is based upon staff perceptions of student ability and academic performance. The A stream courses are demanding; the B stream, less so. At all grade levels, the A stream classes had few, and in some cases, no Inuit students.

The average class size at GREC is thirty students: B stream classes are consistently larger. According to the principal, there are fewer Inuit students in the upper grades. Many of the Inuit students leave school because of homesickness or because they wish to marry. Most of these marriages involve a student pregnancy. The guidance counselor at GREC said that discontented or homesick female Inuit students saw this as a viable and acceptable way to terminate their schooling.

The school administration is responsible for discipline not only in the school but in the dormitory as well. Much of the work with students in gathering the data was conducted at the dormitory. The dormitory, called Ukkivik, is staffed twenty-four hours a day by a series of surrogate mothers. The "mothers", were girlfriends or wives of teachers,

Hudson Bay, or bank employees. They were all from the south. However, there were two male supervisors (White), and one male janitor, (Inuit). The resident director was a White southern male.

Life at Ukkivik is governed by many rules and regulations. There is a mandatory one hour study period after dinner every night. Students are supposed to sit in the cafeteria and do their homework. If they do not come to the cafeteria, they have to stay in their rooms and study. Since rooms are shared by two people, most students stay in their rooms and talk or listen to music. Only students who need help with assignments go to the cafeteria. A bus takes the students to and from GREC. However, if they wish to leave the dormitory at night after the mandatory study period, they have to go by taxi. They are expected to respect an eleven o'clock curfew, but very few do. Usually, after the study hour, there is a mass exodus to meet up with classmates who live in town. Since the classmates who live in town often have no curfew, most students returned to Ukkivik when they felt like it. Ukkivik students often complain about how little freedom they have compared to their town classmates.

Most of the residential students resent rules and supervision which they feel to be excessive. The students ignore the rules that they believe are inappropriate. At the time when this research was conducted, there were only three non-Inuit students residing at Ukkivik. They adopted a similar disregard for rules and regulations. The GREC assistant principal, responsible for the punishment of the curfew breaking students, rarely administered any.

explaining that Inuit families have less rigid system of discipline and believe that children sleep when they get tired.

The Data: A Content Analysis of Student's Written Work:  
Themes Which Emerge as Reflections of Northern Culture

The sixty one samples of student writing that will be analyzed in this section were obtained by asking students to write about their lives in the North. No guidelines as to subject or content were given to the students; thus, the following writings reflect student subject choice based on individual perceptions of an unstructured task. Students were told that there were no restrictions as to what to write about and how their essays could be presented. They were also told that their work would not be altered that it was the goal of the writing project to have their words represent their thoughts and feelings.

The subject and various topics discussed in each of the essays were coded. The essays were grouped according to ethnicity of individual authors. Although this study is concerned with identification of characteristics of Northern culture along interactional lines, it was necessary to separate the students ethnically to identify those characteristics, perceptions, and values which are shared across groups. Similarities in subject analysis of the student essays led to the identification of four distinct themes. All of the sixty-one samples fell into one of these theme groups:

1. Traditions and Traditional Inuit Culture.
  2. Social-Environmental Changes and Problems.
  3. Race Relations and prejudice; and
  4. North-South Attitudes and relations.
- Although some of the essays dealt with more than

one theme, where crossover occurred, these essays were grouped according to the dominant subject. A discussion of each theme follows.

Theme I: Traditions and Traditional Inuit Culture

Theme I writings constituted the largest number of writing samples. A total of twenty-three students submitted essays pertaining to this theme. Table 1, below, shows the ethnic distribution for writings included in this theme group:

**Table I**

Ethnic distribution of Theme I writings: Inuit Traditions

	<u>No. of essays</u>	<u>No. of students</u>
<u>Inuit students</u>	<u>(34)</u>	<u>15</u>
<u>Inter-racial students</u>	<u>(9)</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>White students</u>	<u>(18)</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>Totals</u>	<u>(61)</u>	<u>23</u>

Table 1 demonstrates that this theme received greater attention from the Inuit and Inter-racial students than it did from the White students. Half (50%) of the Inuit students and approximately one fourth (22%) of the White students wrote about Inuit traditions. This difference might be attributable to the length of time students had lived in the Arctic. Of the

forty-three Inuit and Inter-racial students, all were born and raised in the Arctic. Among White students, only six of the eighteen had been there since birth. The other twelve had been in the Arctic from periods of nine years to four months, with the average length of residence being about three years. The four White students' essays were written by students who had lived in the Arctic since birth or early childhood.

Theme I was approached in different ways by the students. The three approaches to this theme were: (1) recounting stories from Inuit mythology; (2) describing the exploits of a well-known family member or telling family stories; and, (3) relating general cultural traditions in journalistic, fact-filled accounts which contained some assessment of the value of these traditions. An example of the third approach is found in the following essay, written by a sixteen year old female student:

My ancestors had to harmonize with nature to survive. They had to build their own dwellings. They had to hunt...(they survived on the land or died...My ancestors were superstitious. They had a set of taboos which they rigidly followed. In my ancestors' times, there were shamans who healed the sick and communicated with spirits...I take pride in my heritage and culture, (but), I would not want to be subjected to all of the hardship that my ancestors had to endure (Shapiro, 1987, 6).

Another example of this approach comes from an essay by a thirteen year old Inuit boy and concludes with a different perspective on tradition.

...Schools are just one example of how our traditions are going...We now use guns, skidoos...I hope that in the near future we can find a way to go back to the old days (Shapiro, 1987, 20).

The White students' writings often dealt with Northern traditions in an ingratiating manner which seemed to seek Inuit approval by demonstrating successful acculturation to the Inuit way of life. White students consistently praised Inuit traditions in a way which demonstrated their own knowledge and awareness of Inuit culture. The following essay by a thirteen year old White girl exemplifies this:

It is a tradition to enjoy the company of close relatives and play Inuit games after a good day of hunting. The games that the Inuit play are open to every member of the family, both old and young. Everyone is congratulated and encouraged (Shapiro, 1987, 34).

This student's assessment of openness and warmth in Inuit culture was typical of the attitudes of many White students. A sixteen year old White boy drew attention to the fact that:

(My sister and I) both speak the Inuit language fluently...(We) are still firmly attached and more comfortable with the Inuit culture and the people we have grown up with. When I go home to Pond Inlet in the summer, I hunt and fish and go out on the land just as everyone in the community does (1987, 46).

The importance of learning Inuktitut was mentioned in three out of the four White students' essays and fourteen out of the nineteen Inuit and Inter-racial students' essays. Most of the Inuit and Inter-racial students' essays pointed out the centrality of language to maintaining tradition as is shown in the following essay by a fifteen year old girl of inter-racial Inuit-White parentage:

Language is one example of a tradition. When children today decide that new ways are better, they forget their native language. When you forget your language, you can no longer understand your own people. Language is one of our most important traditions. If we lose our language to French and English, we lose ourselves (Shapiro, 1987, 4).

Some of the Inuit essays were angrier in tone. One student, a fourteen year old, emphasized that Inuktitut should be learned by anyone living in the North:



I think that it would be fair to us if the non-Northern Canadians could speak our language. I think it is unfair for them to not give us a choice about studying English when they don't have to study Inuktitut. Since they want us to communicate with them, why shouldn't they communicate with us in our own language (1987, 64)?

The dominant tone of these essays was pride in traditions and traditional Inuit culture. The appreciation of Inuit culture was a sentiment shared across all three ethnic groups. Although Inuit and inter-racial students evidenced a higher degree of interest in this theme than White students, traditions, with a particular emphasis on language maintenance were valued by all segments of the student population.

Theme II: Social-Environment Changes and Problems.

Theme II writings made up the second largest group of essays, with a total of eighteen students submitting work which pertained to this theme. Table 2, below, shows the ethnic distribution of writings for Theme II:

**Table 2**

Ethnic distribution of Theme II writings: Social-Environmental Changes

	No. of <u>essays</u>	No. of <u>students</u>
<u>Inuit students</u>	(34)	11
<u>Inter-racial students</u>	(9)	1
<u>White students</u>	(18)	5
<u>Totals</u>	(61)	18

Approximately 32% of the Inuit students, 22% of the Inter-racial students, and 28% of the White students' essays dealt with subjects related to the second theme.

Most essays discussed various aspects of the colonial legacy of the region, and the changes which resulted. The following excerpts from essays written by an Inuit, an inter-racial, and White student, reflect a common tendency to critically judge the changes that have occurred in Northern society:

...The white people have changed the way that the Inuit live. Some of the changes are good; others are bad...The changes which I don't like are alcohol, cigarettes and drugs...The changes which I like are snowmobiles, sports, and prizes for

competitions. I also like dances but you have to pay money for these. Money is another change. It is good to have money instead of being poor, but, items become more and more expensive. (Shapiro, 1987, 36).

A total of seven essays pertaining to this theme approached the subject in the general way described above; of the four essays not quoted three were done by Inuit students and one, by a White student.

Eleven student essays drew attention to: (1) ecological concerns; (2) social problems; and, (3) the importance of formal education. The following excerpt from the White student's essay illustrates the strong concern for the land that is shared by Northerners today.

Southern oil companies have moved up here to look for oil. They lay huge pipelines on the tundra. This will stop the wildlife from migrating here for the summer...the tundra will be damaged and it will take many years to regenerate. This greatly affects all forms of life in the North...Our North is a big and beautiful place. We must protect it (Shapiro, 1987, 10).

The last two lines of the essay are particularly significant with the use of words, "we" and "our". These words reflect the mutuality of the concern for the land among ethnic groups. In this, one sees the incorporation of the traditional Inuit value for the land by others who have come to live in the

region. Length of residence in the Arctic does not seem to be a factor affecting expression of value since the essay cited was written by a young man who had lived in the Arctic for slightly less than two years.

The six essays which discussed social problems all referred to the legacy of abusing substances brought by southern Whites. The substances which got the most attention in the writings were alcohol and drugs. Cigarettes and junk food were also mentioned. Three of the essays which dealt with social problems were done by Inuit students. The following quotation, taken from an essay by a fourteen year old Inuit reflects the sentiments expressed in all three of these essays:

Some of the entertainment that white people have brought causes problems. I am speaking about alcohol as a kind of entertainment...A lot of Inuit children are living with a houseful of drinkers. Their parents go out...get drunk...and bring other drunks home with them. Some children have harder lives than others (Shapiro, 1987, 12).

The White students' essays acknowledged the harm resulting from contact with southerners.

I think that the Inuit would have been better off if they had been left alone...We have brought drugs and illness. The Inuit would have been

better off without us (Shapiro, 1987, 58).

The idea that the Inuit would be happier or better off if white man had never come to the Arctic is, however, a notion expressed only by White students. The Inuit and Inter-racial race students are more accepting of White influences upon their culture. It is seen as something which cannot be changed and which has brought benefits as well as social disruption.

The importance of schooling for acquiring the skills needed to cope with the social and economic changes that have occurred in the Canadian Arctic was mentioned in the writings of seven Inuit students, two Inter-racial race students, and three White students. Inuit students were particularly sensitive to the importance of schooling. Some drew attention to the intergenerational changes in attitudes toward schooling.

Most of the older Inuit are not (formally) educated so they really don't care whether or not their children go to school. Some do understand that it is going to be harder for children who did not go to school since white mans' ways seem to be taking over (Shapiro, 1987, 46).

Another Inuit student said,

Now we have schools. You have to have an education to survive because

our culture is fading (Shapiro, 1987, 2).

In a similar vein, a third remarked that,

We have to have schooling now.  
This is the only way that we can  
have better futures (Shapiro, 1987,  
22).

What Inuit students understand about the purpose of schooling is somewhat unclear. Certainly it is valued and seen as necessary but how schooling will benefit them is not evident to many Inuit.

#### Theme III: Race Relations and Prejudice

There were eleven essays which dealt with the subjects of race relations and/or prejudice. Table 3, below, shows the ethnic distribution of students writing on this theme.

**Table 3**

Ethnic Distribution of Theme III Essays: Race Relations and Prejudice

	<u>No. of Essays</u>	<u>No. of Students</u>
<u>Inuit students</u>	<u>(3)</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>Inter-racial students</u>	<u>(9)</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>White students</u>	<u>(18)</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>Totals</u>	<u>(6)</u>	<u>11</u>

A third (33%) of the White and Inter-racial students wrote on race relations and prejudice while only 6% of the Inuit students chose to do so. A possible explanation is that the Inuit view themselves as the dominant culture in terms of

population in the North and are secure in their identity. The Inuit do not feel particularly oppressed by the presence of Whites in the North. In contrast, White students who are a racial minority are the most attuned to the importance of race in social relations, for example:

...I'm not going to say that everything about the North is great; it isn't. The people here are not the same as people in the south of Canada. They are different; they are Inuit. (Whites) think that the Inuit are bad just because they are different...The only thing that is different is their looks. (Shapiro, 1987, 68).

This student, a thirteen-year old girl, had lived in the Arctic for only one year. White students who had lived in the Arctic for less than four years were somewhat more interested in the subject of prejudice. Their writings seek to justify Inuit prejudice against Whites as is shown in this quotation.

Some of the Inuit also have prejudices against the Whites. I think that they have good reasons for being prejudiced because, in a way, the White people took over the Inuit's land. I don't think that the White people meant to do any harm; but, to the Inuit, it just seems that they have (Shapiro, 1987, 68).

Only two Inuit students wrote on the subject of prejudice; both of them saw prejudice as something originating outside of the Arctic as this student's writing indicates:

Most people think about the Arctic and the Inuit in a negative way. If they would come here, they could revise their opinions (Shapiro, 1987, 50).

"They," in the above, refers to southern Canadians. The region and its aboriginal people are seen as the objects of prejudice, but the White minority, apparently, is not the source of this.

Another topic which emerged in the Theme III writings was that of intermarriage. It is not surprising that all of the three writings on this subject were done by students who were children of inter-racial marriages. Most of the inter-racial marriages in the Arctic take place between White males and Inuit females. Not surprisingly, the three essays pertaining to this subject were written by children of inter-racial marriages and portrayed the subject in a positive light:

I see a lot of White men with Inuit women and I think that this is a good thing. They share their cultures. The children that have English fathers and Inuit mothers have an advantage because they can grow up to be bi-or even triilingual. I am bilingual and I am studying French...(Shapiro, 1987, 66).

In sum, the Theme III writings contained the greatest among-groups differences in the amount of interest evidenced by all subject groups. Inuit submissions accounted for only 6% of the Inuit student sample while 33% of the Inter-racial and White students wrote on this theme. This finding suggests that the Inuit do not feel particularly



concerned with issues of prejudice; or, if they are, this concern is not a dominant one. It is the White students who are most concerned with prejudice, and their concern seems to be mitigated by the length of residence in the Arctic, with shorter residency appearing to raise interest in, and sensitivity to, the subject.

#### Theme IV: North-South Comparisons

North-South comparisons were dealt with in nine essays, six written by Inuit students and three by White students (see Table 4 below).

**Table 4**

#### Theme IV writings: North-South Comparisons

	<u>No. of essays</u>	<u>No. of Students</u>
<u>Inuit students</u>	(34)	6
<u>Inter-racial students</u>	(9)	0
<u>White students</u>	(18)	3
<u>Totals:</u>	(61)	9

Theme IV contained the fewest number of essays. An almost equal proportion of Inuit and White students wrote on this theme. Approximately 18% of the Inuit and 17% of the White students discussed subjects having to do with North-South relations. The writings themselves evidenced the development of an emerging Northern cultural consciousness, a polarization of thinking along a North-South continuum rather than a racial one.

One of the subjects discussed in the Theme IV essays which well reflects North-South thinking was the role of government. Without exception, the essays from both Inuit and White students which dealt with the topic of government were written in angry tones as reflected in the following passage from an essay written by a sixteen year old White boy.

I work hard to adjust and become part of the North only to find that I will never be accepted as part of our land by the government who originally sent us here, (Shapiro, 1987, 46).

The use of the word "our" signals the emergence of this student's self identification as a Northerner. A similar attitude towards government is found in the writing of the following sixteen year old Inuit boy. He also refers to the government as an alien institution:

Government has been created for us. It has its rules...The government has laws...They made these laws and rules even though they don't know exactly who we are and what life is like in the North. This is not fair, (Shapiro, 1987, 8).

More important than the specific complaints and dissatisfaction with government expressed in the preceeding is the similarity of expression and thinking made evident in these quotations. The usage of the words "our" and "we" support the assertion that a Northern consciousness, based on regional thinking, is

emerging. While government emerged in the writings as the common enemy of Northerners, it might well be that it has served as a catalyst in fostering Northern thinking by providing the region's inhabitants with causes around which they could rally and concerns for greater autonomy which could be shared.

Several essays compared North and South pointing out either differences or similarities between the two regions. The White students seemed more concerned with differences; and in their essays the North was invariably presented as superior to the South. A thirteen year old White student who had lived in the North for five years commented:

I like it better up here than down South. Almost all of my friends are Inuit, and I have found that they open up their homes to you more readily than Southerners do. Many people here don't lock their doors; in the North, we don't live in fear of crime. Our life is somehow simpler and happier than the life in the South (Shapiro, 1987, 64).

While White students' identification with the North often involved rejection of the South, Inuit students emphasized the continuities of Northern and Southern cultures. Rather than stressing what is unique about Northern life, they pointed out similarities between Northern and Southern culture. One male Inuit student, fifteen years old, expressed this 'we're like you' attitude in the following way:

...Now, we live in the same houses as you live in. We wear the same clothes

(as you)...The North has changed a lot  
(Shapiro, 1987, 54).

Another noted that:

Living in the North, we have pretty  
much the same things as you have in  
the South. We have movies, dances,  
restaurants, television, and sports  
(Shapiro, 1987, 42).

While the White students express a 'we're different and a little better than southerners' attitude in their writings and the Inuit students give a 'we're like you' message. However, all of the writings in the Theme IV group use the word, "we". The "we" does not refer to a racial group; it refers to a regional group, Northerners, a definition of self which was shared among the students' groups who had inhabited the region for all or a major part of their lives. Again, the White students who wrote on this topic had lived in the Arctic for more than four years.

### Conclusion

The data presented in this chapter leads to the identification of three characteristics of Northern culture today:

1. Identification with and high value for Inuit traditions and culture.,
2. Shared concerns for the environment, ecology, and social stability of the region.and,
3. Self-definition as "Northerners" along regional rather than ethnic lines.

These characteristics represent a dramatic shift away from the Inuit-White paradigm which, until the late 1950's, was reflective of a bi-cultural, segregated society. Whereas the White colonizers of the region once viewed their own culture with superiority, today's Eastern Arctic Whites seem to have placed Inuit culture in a pre-eminent position. It is the White students who point out the advantages of living in the North and portray the Inuit as having a superior culture. The Inuit, in turn, though they are concerned with the preservation of their customs, culture, and language also value, or at least accept, schooling and many features of Southern life.

There is little question that schooling has provided a setting wherein these characteristics of Northern culture can emerge. By forcing young people of different cultural origins to share an experience, the school becomes a catalyst as well as an agent in the emergence of the shared Northern identity and values illustrated in this chapter.

### **CHAPTER III: THE ARTWORK OF EASTERN ARCTIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

#### Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis of thirty one examples of student artwork. Children's art has received the attention of many researchers. The most comprehensive developmental study of children's art is Fein's (1976) longitudinal study of one autistic child's drawings of a horse, obtained over a period of fifteen years, and analyzed as to the representation of the development of a child's motor and perceptual skills and their relationship to the decline of autism. Recognition that children's art is a mirror of cultural experiences is a relatively recent trend in multi-disciplinary research in art education, although it has long been a subject of anthropological investigations. Characteristic of this synthesis of disciplines in research related to children's art is Alland's (1983) comparison of artwork from children of six cultures. This study focuses on the examination of consistencies/inconsistencies of form and symbolic expression in children's artwork from Bali, Ponape, China, Japan, France and the United States. Alland found

...that certain principles of attack are held in common by children everywhere and that these general principles interact with specific conscious and unconscious culturally based rules to govern what kind of pictures children will make (Alland, 1983, 215).

This chapter focuses on the effects of ethnicity on conventions of representation in student artwork. Specific attention is given to the importance of ethnicity and shared cultural experience. It is shown that shared cultural experience is the dominant influence on representation.

### The Development of Art in the Eastern Arctic

Throughout the prehistoric and historic eras, the Inuit made their own clothing, hunting, and domestic utensils. Although these objects had utilitarian functions, they were often enhanced with design work that speaks to an early appreciation of aesthetics. The utensils as well as objects, presumed to be religious or spiritual, represent the first examples of Inuit art. These objects were produced over three distinct periods, summarized below:

**The Arctic Small Tool Culture:** The name of this period in the Arctic's artistic history is derived from the artifacts which are its legacy. These artifacts include stone scrapers, arrow points, harpoon heads, and microblades, all of which rarely exceed one inch in size. The origins of the Arctic Small Tool culture are obscure, but archeology attests to Inuit migration to the Canadian Arctic around the year 2000 B.C. Once in Canada, this culture gave rise to what is referred to as the Pre-Dorset culture in the territory that is now the Eastern Arctic. There is evidence to suggest that the

Pre-Dorset phase of the Small Tool tradition persisted until C. 800 B.C. (Jackson 1985).

**The Dorset Culture:** This period in Eastern Arctic art history was first identified by Jenness (1925) and characterized by a more complex use of tools and materials than its predecessor made evident in the first examples of soapstone lamps, man-hauled sledges, and the development of the toggle harpoon. It is also believed that the Dorset people first developed igloos, snow houses, which were dome shaped as they are often depicted today. Dorset Culture, which lasted from c. 800 B.C. to c. 1000 A.D. was characterized, in its last 500 years, by artifacts which signify the beginning of the sculptural period of Eastern Arctic art. Its artifacts include three dimensional human figures (full length, with appendages, secondary sexual characteristics, and modelled faces), and carvings of a variety of Arctic animals.

**The Thule Culture:** This period of Eastern Arctic art history began in Greenland around 1000 A.D. The Thules were coastal dwelling whale hunters, and their artifacts include soapstone cooking pots, innovative animal traps, and the first dogsleds. There were also hunting and domestic utensils made of bone and ivory, many of them with repeated patterns of surface decorations such as Xs, Ts, or circles, and frequent single or parallel border lines which retraced the shape of the outer edge of the object. This culture was also characterized by faceless ivory or wood figurines and ivory birds as its cultural legacy. The literature suggests that in all aspects of carving and sculpture, the Dorset Culture was more sophisticated than the Thule (Jackson 1985). The Thule



Culture continued throughout the early years of contact with Europeans, and the Thule people were the direct ancestors of the present Eastern Arctic Inuit.

Contact with Europeans coincided with both the disappearance of Thule culture and the arrival of drawing in the Eastern Arctic. Explorers hastened this development by employing Inuit to serve as guides. The Inuit were not only exposed to European writing utensils through daily contact with the explorers; they were also asked to employ them in making maps. The pioneering work of Franz Boas in the 1880's and the Fifth Thule Expedition of Knud Rasmussen (1921-24) are also significant in the development of Inuit drawing; they brought paper and pencils to the Inuit and pioneered graphic expression of the Inuit with this media (Jackson, 1985).

Lithography and soapstone carving started somewhat later in the Eastern Arctic during the active internal colonial period of the post World War II years. The person credited with the advent of these developments is James Houston, a Toronto-trained artist who was responsible for bringing soapstone carving and Inuit prints to the attention of Southern Canadians. In 1956, Houston was hired by the newly created Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to be its first regional administrator on Baffin Island. Houston and his wife located themselves in Cape Dorset where they devoted their efforts to improving the economic conditions of the Inuit through the development of commercial markets for their art. The Houstons also encouraged the development of marketable arts in media other than soapstone; they experimented with skin sewing

and fabric block printing and printmaking. The Houstons provided technical advice and tried not to influence individual artistic styles. By 1957, a small group of carvers in Cape Dorset became increasingly interested in printmaking and Houston adapted basic relief printing techniques to local soapstone, showing the interested carvers how to carve and pull block prints from flattened pieces of stone. This same group of carvers also learned stencil techniques. Houston tried to adapt stencil to local materials using seal skin. However, this innovation proved unsuccessful and waxed stencil paper was used. The early prints from Houston's group of carver apprentices were based on pencil drawings from other local artists.

Inspired by the growing native interest in printmaking, Houston went to Japan in late 1958 and spent five months studying workshop methods of printmaking under the tutelage of a Japanese master printmaker. He returned to Cape Dorset in 1959 with a supply of inks, brushes, and Japanese papers and initiated the first Cape Dorset print collections. These have continued to appear annually since 1960 and the Japanese influence is still in evidence in Eastern Arctic printmaking (Jackson, 1985).

Houston's impact on Eastern Arctic art was significant in two ways; first, he brought new media to the Inuit; second, he encouraged the development of art as a means of financial independence. His efforts resulted in one of the unique examples of transferring a traditional Inuit skill, carving, to an appropriate means of subsistence in their changing culture. Print makers and carvers hold a highly esteemed

position in Eastern Arctic society today because they are able to earn a good living through a traditional skill.

### Art Education in the Eastern Arctic

In traditional Inuit society, art was not created for aesthetic appreciation; rather, that which individuals from outside of this society labelled as art was, in fact, created for utilitarian purposes. Designs on utilitarian implements served the purpose of distinguishing ownership. The concept of art as it exists in Western society did not exist for the Inuit. Thus, the idea of art education was foreign to them as well.

Traditionally, Inuit carving was learned from observation followed by imitative activity on the part of children. This education was informal; there were no specific verbal instructions or formalized presentations made to young people. The setting for learning was also nonspecific; it might have been a corner of an igloo or outside. With the advent of the Houstons, carving and printmaking came to be done in workshops. Thus, with a group of artisans working together, carving and printmaking became social activities.

The idea of formalized art education is a southern concept which came to the North with schooling. As such, the teaching of art is viewed as important to the development of motor skills, perceptual ability, individuality, uniqueness and creativity. This represents a cultural intrusion into traditional Inuit values which are oriented towards community and sharing rather than individualistic expressions.

Art education in the Baffin region begins in the primary grades with the introduction of southern materials including crayons, finger paints, and playdough. Since many of the Inuit and Inter-racial students are being taught in their own language by Inuit teachers and classroom assistants who are also Inuit, traditional subjects for composition are frequently suggested by teachers. These include igloos, traditional clothing, children playing traditional games, and Arctic animals. Thus, there is a strong Inuit influence on art education in the early primary years for many children who are native to the Arctic.

At the high school level, the art teacher at GREC has a strong background in printmaking. He had studied printmaking with some of the Cape Dorset printmakers. He has been responsible for the acquisition of a well-equipped printmaking facility in the art department and was the person most directly responsible for teaching it to the students. This art teacher was a southern Canadian who had lived in the Arctic for twelve years and spoke Inuktitut quite well. In addition to promoting printmaking as part of the art curriculum, the art teacher also hired three cultural instructors who are well known carvers. They came to the large art room at GREC and carved throughout the school day. Thus, the atmosphere of the art department at GREC was one of the traditional workshops.

Students were free to do what they wanted with their art class hours. They could sit with the carvers and just observe or talk, or both as they attempted to whittle stone or

bone in the way that the professional carvers did. Or students could work with the teacher on the various tasks related to printmaking. There was no lecturing, instruction on how to use the equipment, or slide shows characteristic of southern art education. Rather, the art room had a studio ambience with a high level of sociability. It was here that all of the data to be presented in this chapter was collected. The art department was a popular place at the school. Many students, both native and non-native spent their free periods there working on a print or carving they had started, or just watched the carvers or their fellow students work.

Although the teacher's biases leaned towards printmaking and carving, students were free to select any medium for expression in producing artwork. Thus, magic markers, ink, charcoal, crayons, lead and colored pencils were available for drawing while clay, wood, soapstone, and bone were available for sculpting.

As was the case with the writing samples, students were asked to submit any drawings or prints which they would like to appear in a book. Participation was voluntary and no direction was given to the students regarding subject selection or media selection for the artwork. The twenty nine samples of artwork selected for analysis here are those which appeared in the eventual publication of the book; sixteen of these are reproduced in the following analysis.

### The Data

This analysis of twenty nine samples of student artwork will be divided into two parts: the first is concerned

with thematic content and subjects chosen; and the second, with structural aspects of the artwork such as form, balance, composition, use of color, and stylized representations. Table 5, on the following page, shows the distribution of drawings by subject and the ethnicity of the students.

**Table 5****Drawings: Ethnicity and Thematic Content**

Theme	Inuit N=	*Inter-racial N=	White N=	Total N=
1. Traditional activities, symbols, or utensils	8	2	5	15
2. Arctic animals	6	3	5	14
TOTAL	14	5	10	29

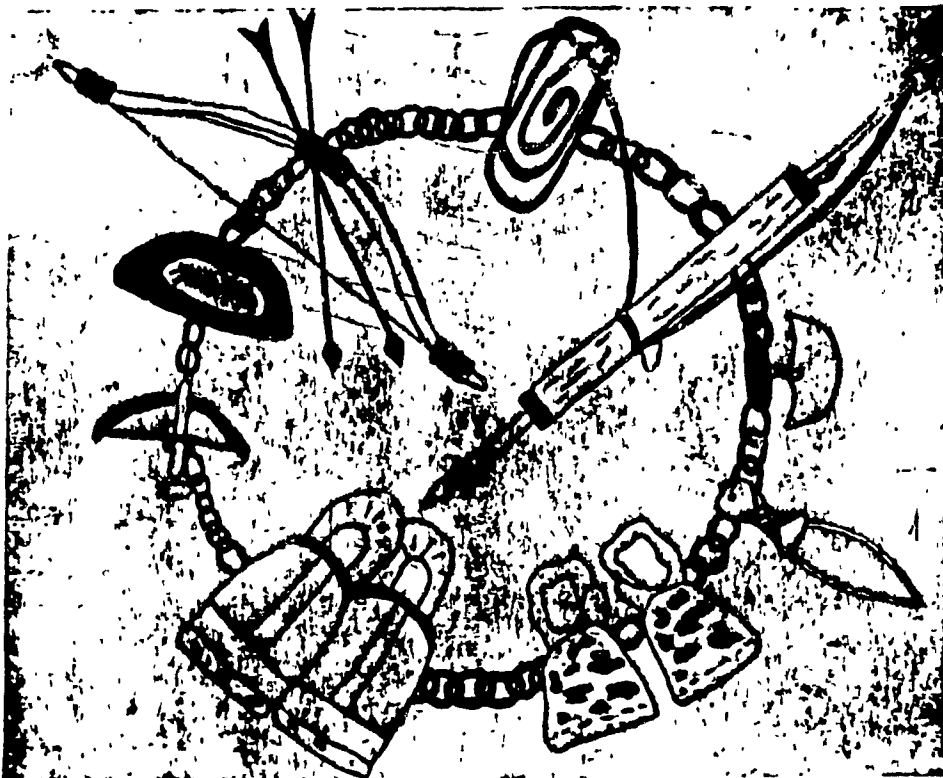
Approximately 50% of the students wrote on each theme.

\*Students with one Inuit and one caucasian parent, with the exception of one student, the Inuit parent was the mother and the caucasian, the father.

**Theme 1: Traditional activities, symbols or utensils.**

Artwork pertaining to Theme 1 depicted activities such as: skinning a seal (2), an Inuit drum dance, a jumping rope game, finger pulling, hunting and hunting-related activities (3), dogs pulling a sled, camping on the land, and building igloos (2). The artwork shows evidence of a strong concern for the preservation of Inuit traditions. The fact that 50% of the White and Inuit students and 40% of the Inter-racial students selected subjects related to this theme reinforces the finding from the written work that these traditions have importance for all of the ethnic groups in the region. A drawing of traditional hunting equipment below (Fig. 1) includes a harpoon, scrapers, a bow and arrow, kamiks (boots), and mittens.

Figure 1: Hunting Equipment (Inuit student print)





This picture was done by a fifteen year old Inuit student and although it utilizes more space than is traditional in Inuit art, utensils are depicted with the simplicity characteristic of this tradition. With subtle variations, all of the artwork samples in this section reflect a similarity in visual imagery, technique, and style which adheres to the representational conventions of Inuit art. Figures 2 and 3 on the following page show this. The first was done by a White student; the second, by an Inuit student. Both of these lithographs have, as their subject, building an igloo. There is a remarkable similarity in the simplicity of the form and the attention to detail in the clothing. The blade, the way in which it is held, the position of the builder in relation to the igloo (knees slightly bent, one hand resting on the structure), and the differing dimensions of the snow blocks are similar. The only stylistic difference between the two prints is found in their proportions with the igloo dominant in figure 2 and the man dominant in figure 3, and the greater attention to detail in the first drawing with the addition of the dog, and another person, using a knife to fashion the blocks.

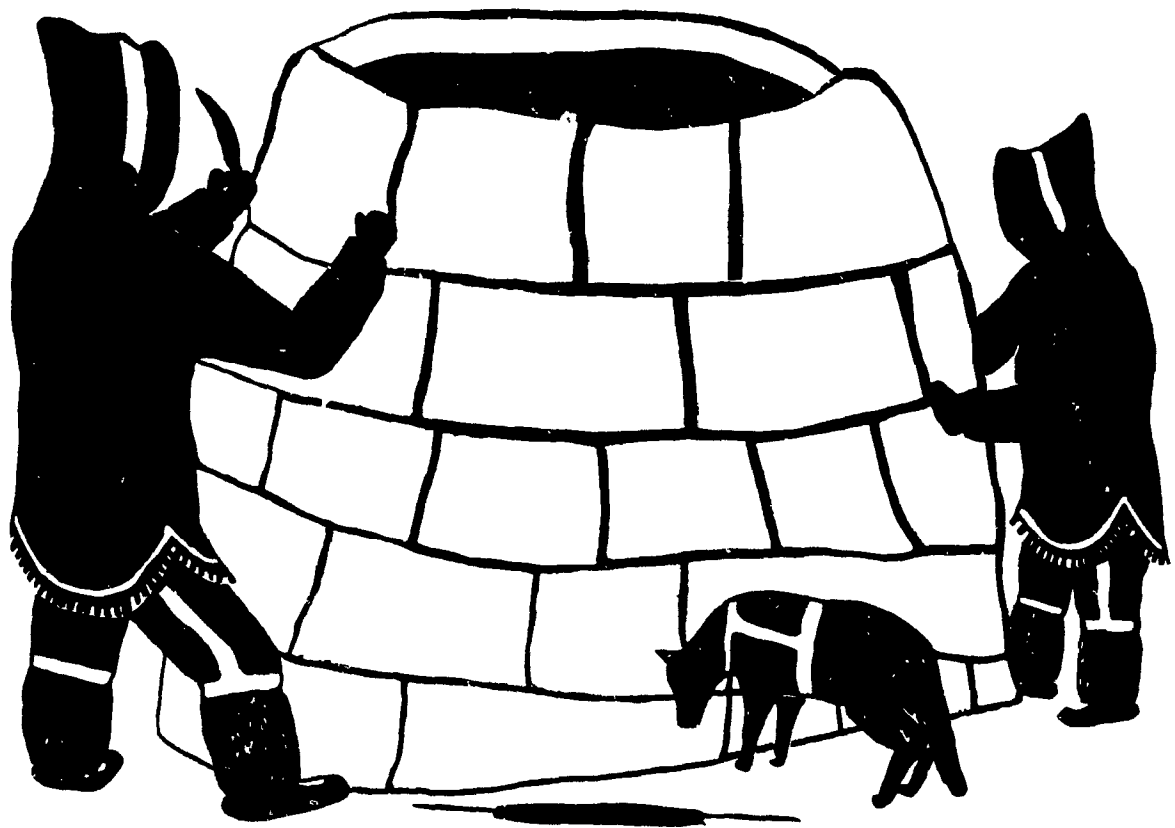
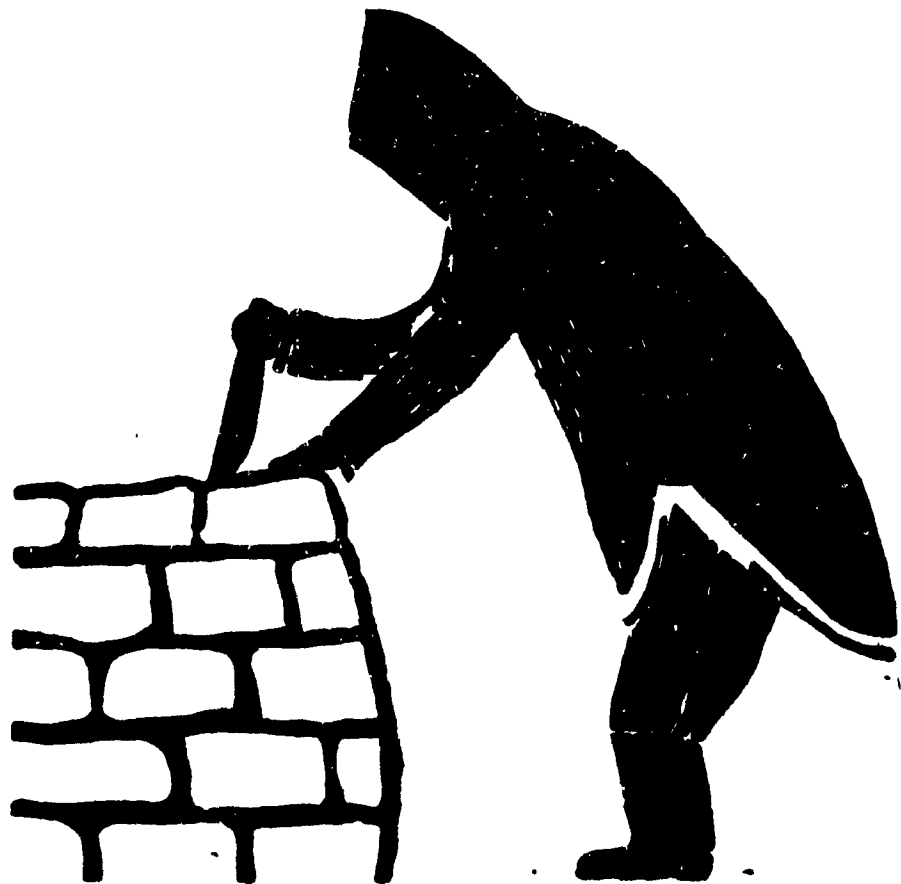


Figure 3: Building an Igloo II (Inuit student print)



The overriding similarities between these two igloo drawings underscores the blending of cultures that is taking place in the Eastern Arctic. It could be argued that similarities in these prints are attributable to the fact that students at GREC learn printmaking from one person, and they all work in the same environment. But that person is a Southern Canadian. Biographical information on these students reveals that the White student is a fifteen year old girl who has been in the Arctic for three years. However, the Inuit student is a sixteen year old boy who had been at GREC for only six months at the time when his print was produced.

It is also possible that similarities in figures 2 and 3 are a function of students working in the same medium, lithography. However, figures 4 through 7 on the following pages indicate that stylistic similarities occur across different media. The media represented in the following four examples are crayons, colored pencils, and ink pen.

Figure 4: Drum Dance (Inuit student drawing)



Figure 5: Hunting Scene (Inter-racial student drawing)

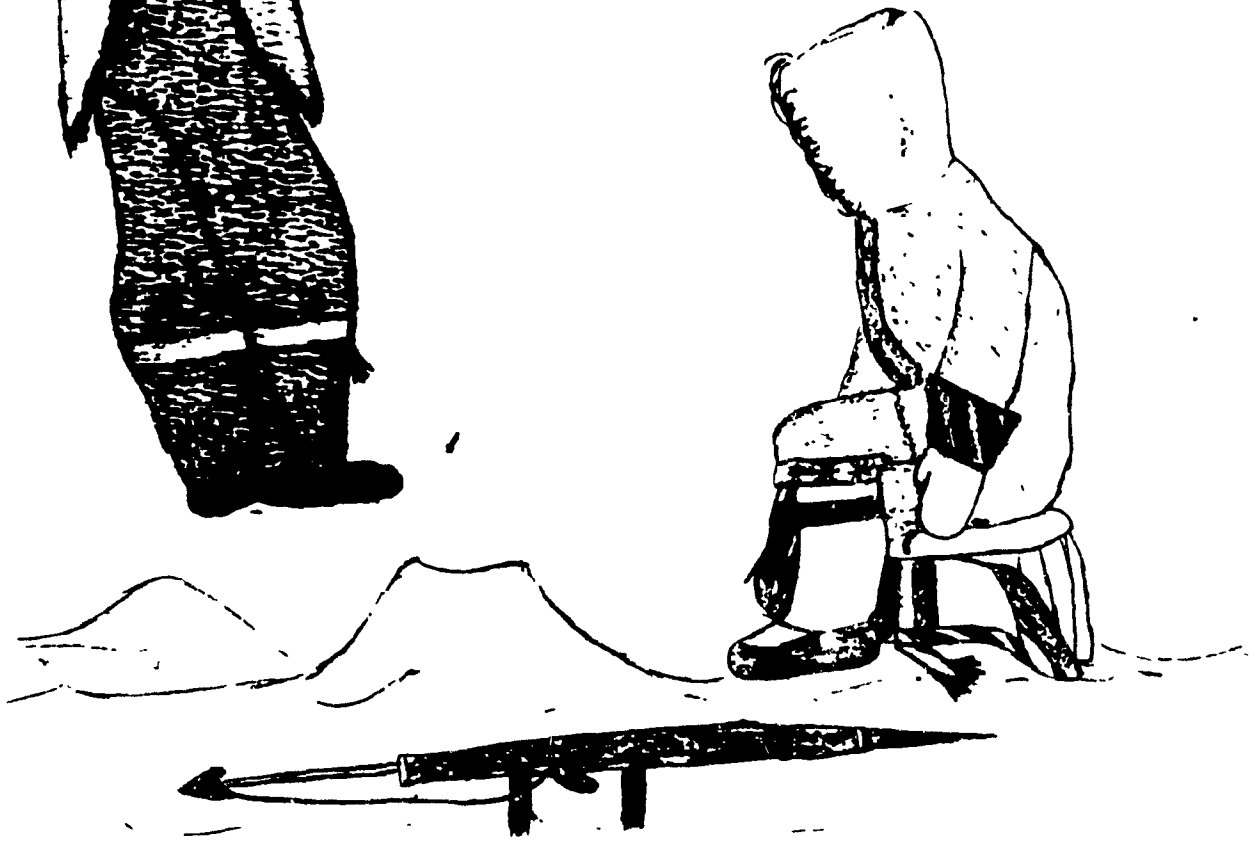


Figure 6: Traditional Jumping Rope Game (Inuit student drawing)

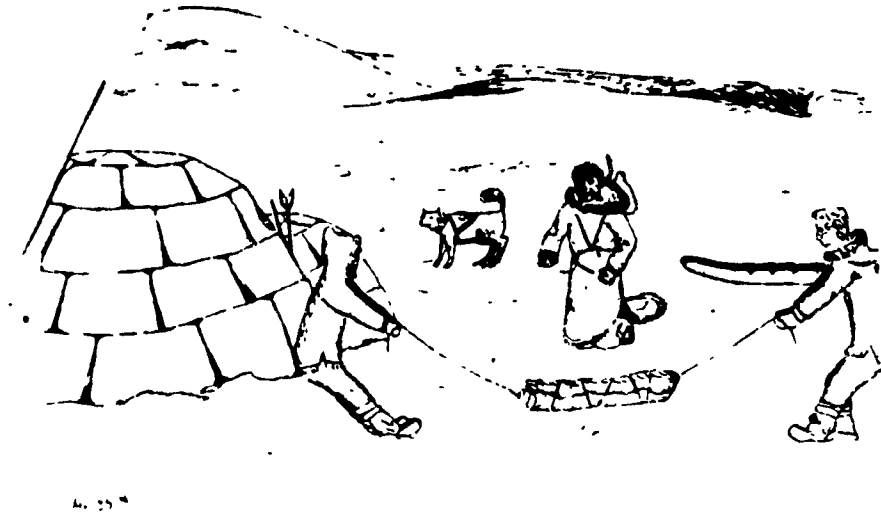
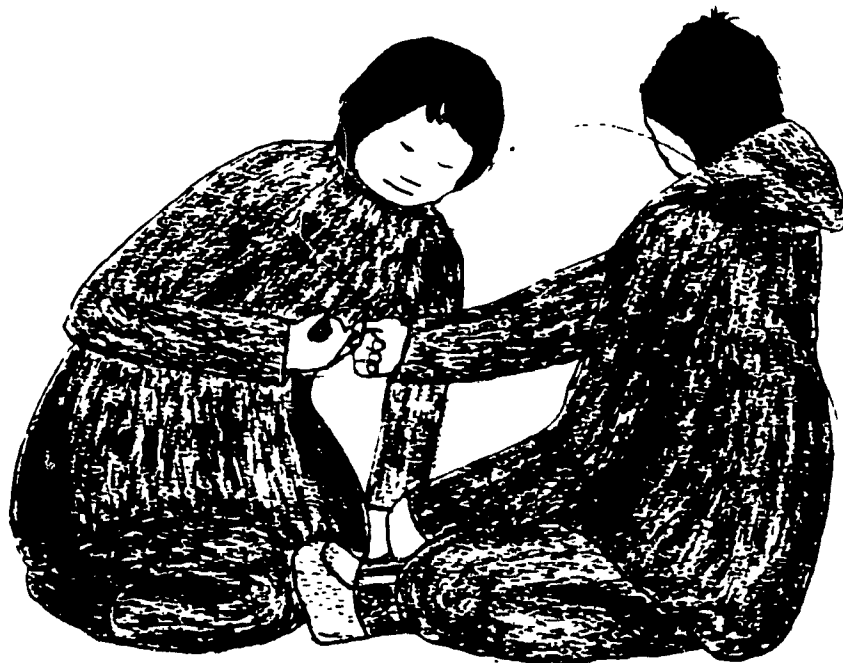


Figure 7: Finger Pulling game (White student drawing)

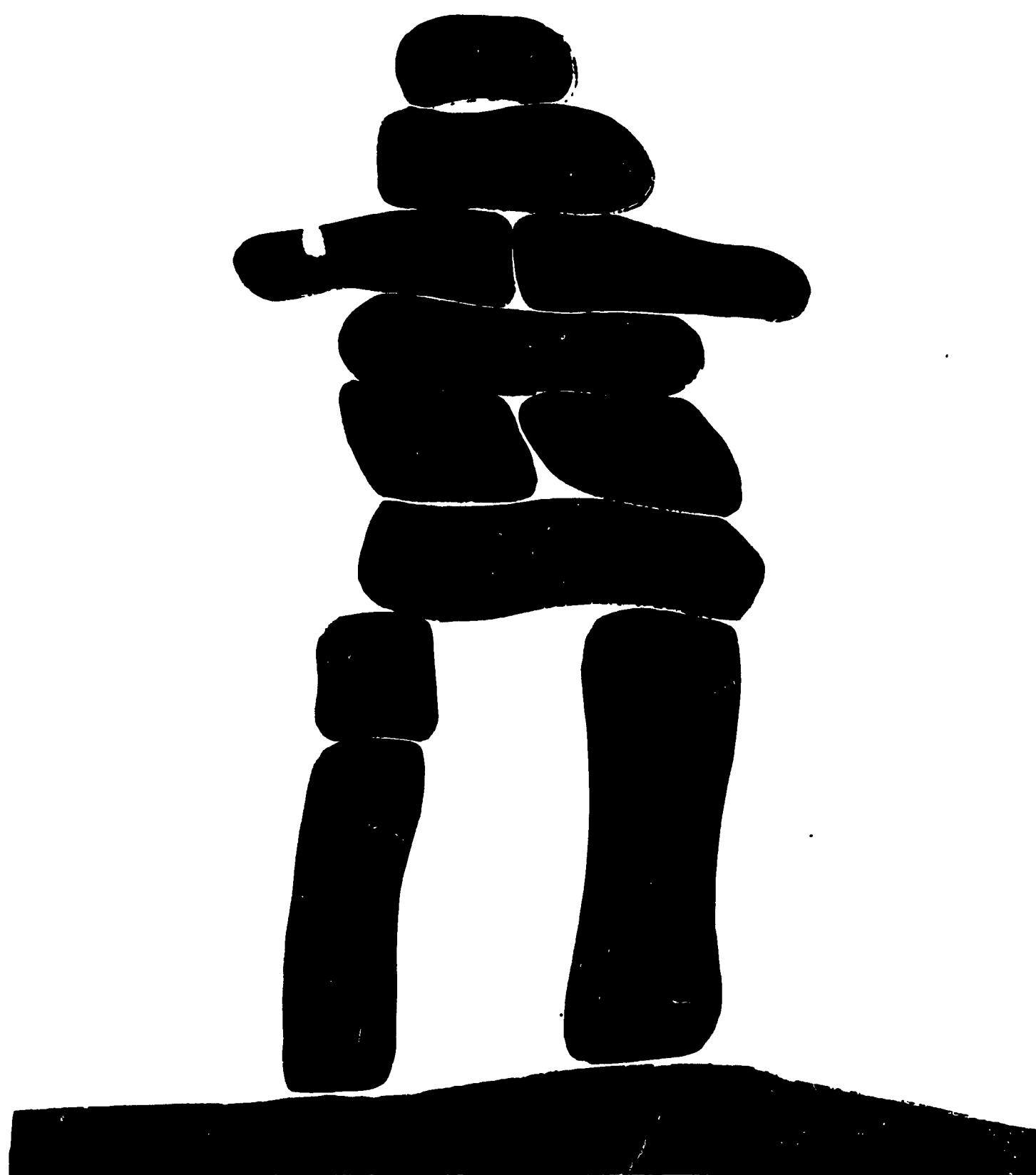


The previous examples reflect work from all three ethnic groups. The consistencies in the simplicity of the human form, attention to detail and adornment on clothing, and especially the fluidity of line in representing movement are characteristic of "Eskimo Art." The similarity of expression in this genre which occurs in these four artwork samples might well be attributed to students' desire to imitate stylistics of the traditionally, highly valued artisanry of the Inuit. This is particularly interesting when one considers the fact that "Eskimo Art" as we know it today is a White innovation on traditional artisanry.

Figures 2 through 7 depict the human form. In addition to the previously discussed between-groups stylistic similarities, these representations reflect the pre-eminent position of the Inuit in today's Eastern Arctic in that the twelve examples of activities, representing the work of Inuit, White and Inter-racial race students, depict Inuit people in their drawings.

The suggested pre-eminence of Inuit culture is again reflected in Figure 8 on the following page which depicts an Inukshuk, a figure of a man made from stones.

Figure 8: Inukshuk (White student print)



This print constituted the only example of symbol depiction and was done by a fourteen year old White boy who had lived in the Arctic for six years. It is the fact of his selection of this traditional subject matter as well as the traditional representation of it which speaks to the cross-cultural importance of Inuit traditions in today's North.

In the adherence to conventions of representation regarding use of space, color, the human form, and fluidity of lines, which characterizes the artwork samples for this theme, it is possible to conclude that Eastern Arctic inhabitants place a high value on not only the traditional subject matter in the artwork, but also on the style of art which has come to characterize their region. It is significant that these students received no formal instruction in these modes of expression.

#### Theme 2: Arctic Animals

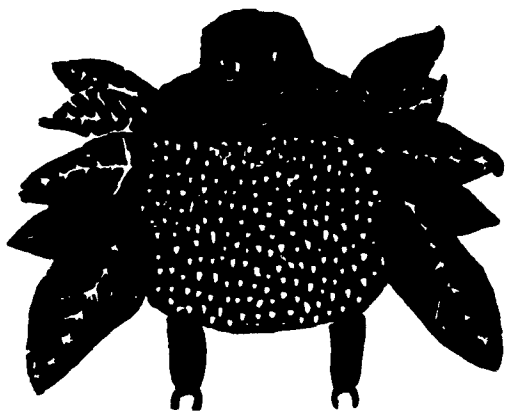
A third (33%) of the Inuit students selected Arctic animals as a subject for their artwork, while more than half (60%) of the inter-racial students and half (50%) of the White students also did, reflecting higher interest in this theme in the latter two groups. Animals as a subject for composition are, again, a convention of Inuit art. The way in which they are represented is, characteristically, with great linear fluidity expressing motion, heavy body masses and attention to detail to show skin or fur. All students adhered to these conventions.

The artwork depicted birds, sea animals, and land animals. The birds included three owls, an Arctic tern, (Figures 11, 12, and 13) as well as a loon, not pictured here.



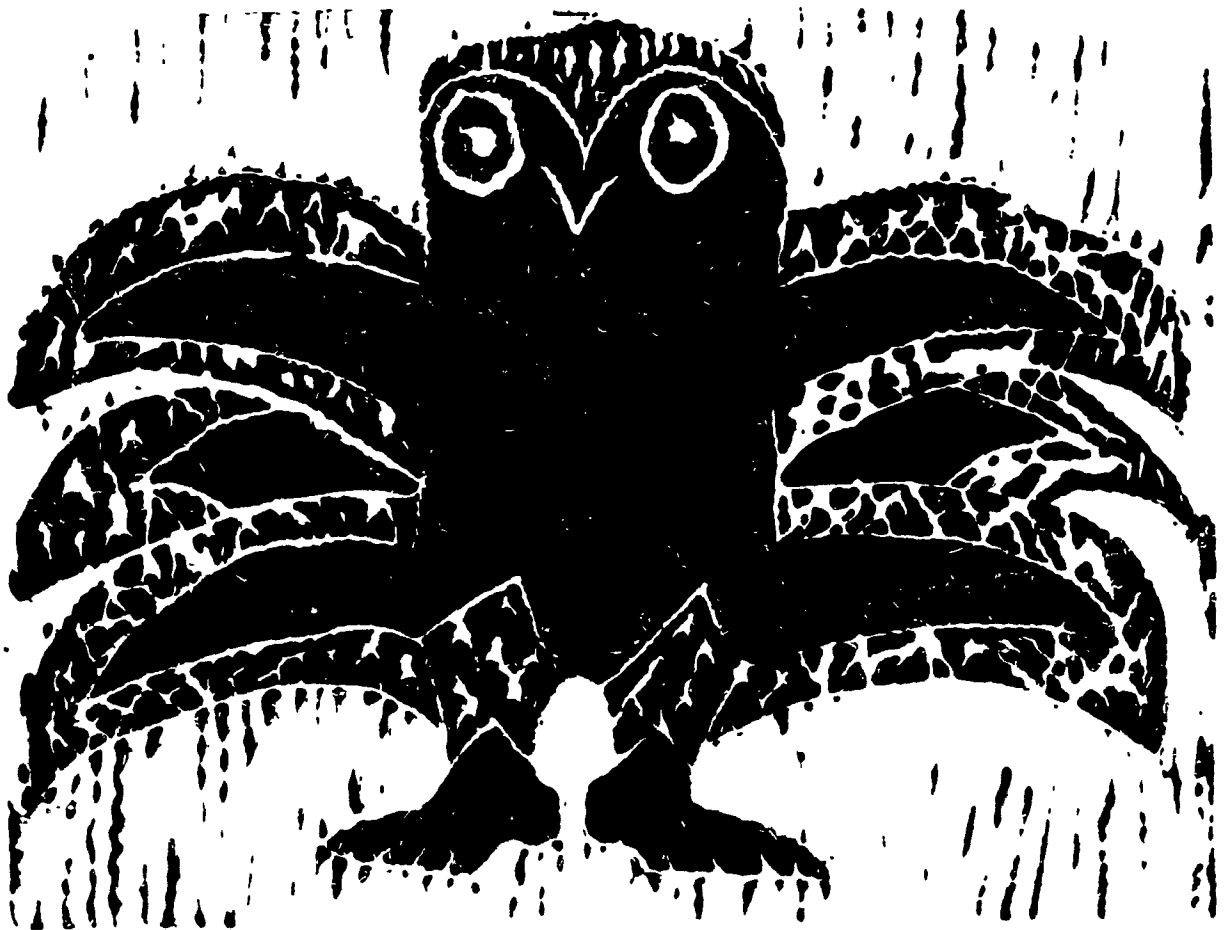
The owls in Figures 11 and 12 are remarkably similar in their wing detail, proportions, facial characteristics, and perspective. The Arctic tern (Figure 13) depicts a different bird in a different perspective; however, the stylistic similarities to the owls are apparent. These three birds were created by an Inter-racial, an Inuit, and a White student, respectively. The mastery of conventional modes of expression regarding animals in Inuit art is evident among all three subject groups. Particularly noticeable are the solid body masses of the three birds, the characteristically simple, the geometric, repeated patterns of the wing detail, and the prominence of the eyes and beak.

Figure 9: Young Owl (Inter-racial student print)



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Figure 10: Owl (Inuit student print)



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Two sets of tiny open beaks

Figure 11: Arctic Tern (White student print)



The second animal group, sea animals, included pictures of narwhales, seals, and an avatuq. As the following prints show, representations of these animals follow conventions of Inuit art which are shared by all students.

Figure 12: Two Seals and Avatuq (White student print)



Figure 12 is by a White student who had lived in the Arctic for four years, and Figure 13, on the next page, by an Inuit student. These show similarities in form, and most noticeably, in fluidity of movement.

What is particularly interesting in these prints is the use of contrast. The first uses dark objects against a white background while the second inverts this use of space to highlight light against dark. A sense of movement is created in opposite ways. the use of three animal subjects outlined with fluid lines creates a similar feeling of motion between these two prints even though they deal with different animal subjects.

Figure 13: Dancing Narwhales (Inuit student print)



The last of the three animals groups, land animals, is the subject of Figure 14 see below. Done by a fifteen year old inter-racial student, this lithograph is similar to Figures 12 and 13, preceding.

Figure 14: Walruses, Caribou, and Bear (Inter-racial student print)



Three objects again dominate the composition. The composition of these light, fluid, simple shapes against a dark background again demonstrates student adherence to conventional Inuit modes of expression.

### Media

While students shared conventions of representations, they differed in their use of art media. Table 6 shows these differences:

Table 6: Media Selection.

<u>Media</u>	<u>Inuit</u>	<u>Inter-racial</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Totals</u>
<u>Pencil</u>	1	0	0	1
<u>Crayon</u>	3	2	4	9
<u>Coloured pencil</u>	0	0	1	1
<u>Ink</u>	1	0	0	1
<u>Printmaking</u>	11	3	5	19
Totals	16	5	10	31

The biggest between-groups difference illustrated in the preceding table is that White students preferred southern materials, crayon and coloured pencil. Half (50%) of their artwork used these media. Although there was a preference for printmaking in the total sample, 33% of the Inuit students also used crayons and pencils.

The strong preference for printmaking is exhibited to a slightly greater degree in the Inuit and inter-racial groups.

The five White students who made prints had been in the Arctic for at least two years. Features of the artwork were characterized by a great degree of similarity between the groups and reflect the influence of printmaking on visual expression in various media:

**Colour:** Colour use, was limited to bi- or tricolour schemes.

These schemes were predominantly black/white, black/gray/white, or brown/brown tones/white. Where other colours were used, these were limited to blue for the sea and sky, and yellow for the sun. Of the thirty one samples, only five used these . This, limited use of colour reflects the physical environment which is absent of greenery and many dramatic colours.

**Composition:** Whether mass was used negatively with dark background highlighting light subject matter or positively, with light background emphasizing dark subjects, the artwork samples were similar in their density of visual stimuli. Light and tone were expressed without the colours or shading characteristic of southern art, but rather through the use of vast, uncoloured spaces representative of the Arctic landscape.

**Linearity:** The use of flowing, curved lines, and the absence of angles, except in geometric designs in clothing for representing feathers, etc., is another stylistic



convention of Inuit prints which was emulated by most of the students.

### Conclusions

The major findings regarding the artwork can be summarized as follows: 1) Students from all ethnic groups selected subjects which are frequently represented in Inuit art; and, 2) most followed stylistic conventions of Inuit art and did so in a variety of media.

The findings presented in this analysis of the artwork serve to underscore the characteristics of emerging Eastern Arctic culture identified in the analysis of the written data. The fact that adherence to conventions of traditional "Inuit" art transcended ethnicity in the study can be attributed to similar perceptual filtering of the Arctic environment as well as to the training that the art department in the school provides. The art department has been set up as a print workshop with a carvers' corner. Although stylistic conventions of Inuit art are not formally taught in the school, the workshop ambience, enhanced by the presence of the cultural instructors might account for the thematic and stylistic similarities made evident in the students' artwork. In this informal setting, students talk, advise one another, share their work, and are exposed to forms of representation associated with Inuit carving and printmaking.

#### CHAPTER IV: SUMMARY

This research has examined the changing culture of today's North. The guiding premise of the study has been that the racial characteristics of the society of the Eastern Arctic are a legacy of the colonial period of the region, a legacy which fails to accurately represent the integrated culture of today's North. Eastern Arctic culture is one in which traditional Inuit culture, traditions, and values have been incorporated by all segments of the region's population. This integration was demonstrated in the preceding analyses by an affirmation of Inuit culture and values in the student essays, as well as the emulation of conventions of Inuit art in the student's prints and drawings.

The emergence of this Northern identity with its basic tenet of identification with traditional Inuit culture shows that the Eastern Arctic is transcending the internal colonial experience of its recent past wherein two distinct ethnic groups, Inuit and White, co-existed and interacted in an asymmetrical relationship dictated by the colonial paradigm. The White colonizers were the dominant partners in these interactions. The literature of the Eastern Arctic's colonial history well reflects this imbalance in its characterizations of White explorers as adventurers and soul savers, and denigration of the Inuit as ignoble savages. Such literature laid the groundwork, both within and beyond the Arctic, for thinking of the North along the polarized constructs of Inuit-White.

Contemporary literature on the North continues to emphasize either Inuit or White segments of the population, thus perpetuating the divisive colonial paradigm while failing to recognize the integration of cultures which has taken place in the Eastern Arctic. Inuit culture, once treated as inferior, has emerged as pre-eminent and identification with this culture has contributed to the development of a Northern identity.

This Northern identity is characterized by a mutuality of concerns about the need for greater political autonomy, attachment to the environment, and anxiety over the future resulting from pervasive social and economic changes. These concerns are shared by all segments of the population.

The school system of the Eastern Arctic has been a factor in the emergence of this regional Northern identity. Formal education, which once represented a cultural intrusion, has evolved as an instrument of integration of Northern society. The early federal schools of the Eastern Arctic primarily served the children of Whites. While the schools purported to serve the native population as well, the fact was that few Inuit attended these schools. The period of the 1960s with its expansion of telecommunications and decentralization of the government of the North-West Territories from Ottawa to Yellowknife brought an end to the federal schooling and provided Eastern Arctic residents with an opportunity for limited self government and local control of schooling. Arctic schools now teach and use Inuktitut for instruction, and there are an increasing number of Inuit teachers and

cultural instructors. These changes have allowed the schools to become, for the first time, agents of cultural exchange rather than cultural domination.

Schooling has come to be accepted, if not similarly valued, by the different ethnic groups in today's North. Schooling promotes extensive interaction between Inuits and Whites and has contributed to the development of Northern identity not only among the young people of the region, but also in their parents through their participation in the governance of the educational system. In conclusion, today's Eastern Arctic schools are inculcating the values of an integrated Northern culture, a culture which is geographically determined and manifests a strong identification with the aboriginal traditions of the region.

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