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Breathing out “the songs that want to be sung”<sup>1</sup>: A dialogue on research, colonization  
and pedagogy focused on the Canadian Arctic

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of PhD

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<sup>1</sup> Excerpt from Ipellie (in Ipellie, 1997, p. 101)

Let us write passages that will sway the centuries-old impressions that others have about our true colours. Let us put, without a moment's hesitation, a voice in the mouth of our silent mind. Let us help breathe out the songs that want to be sung. Let us free ourselves from the chains that shackle our imagination and explore the unknown world that is within us. Let us help our silent mind speak through the beauty of the written word. Let us help to release it from Hell's world of pure silence. Let us dream forever and write  
(Ipellie, in Ipellie, 1997, p. 101).

## **Abstract**

This thesis considers questioning of rigid conceptions of identity with regards the parallel and integrated contexts of the Canadian Arctic and academia. The text has been written as a conversation between texts written by Inuit (the source literature) and non-Inuit. I have searched and analyzed these sources on the broad themes of research, colonization and pedagogy.

The theme of research is a guide for the first section of this thesis where I locate the research by detailing my rationales and methodologies. My objective to conduct this research ethically, responsible to writings by Inuit and others represented within this thesis, led me to use a literary approach considered by some as non-standard within the social sciences. Drawing only on secondary texts for this research, reading and writing are my methodologies and I utilize intertextuality as a theoretical and methodological guide.

The theme of colonization in the Canadian Arctic provides a main focus for the second and third sections of the thesis. I review perspectives both on colonization in the Canadian Arctic, and contemporary social health challenges, and consider these in relation to the educational sphere most specifically. Colonization is discussed as something that has incurred trauma for Inuit, and as something that Inuit seek to be resilient to, but I emphasize a need to recognize diversities within the colonization and contemporary experiences of Inuit. I discuss that narratives can be misleading and potentially harmful, particularly when there is an overreliance on rigid externally-defined narratives which conflict with internal conceptions of identity. And I discuss how narratives can also be affirming, particularly when an individual has agency over the construction and the sharing processes. I consider the writings within the source literature as enactments of resilience through inherent questioning of hegemonic 'truths'.

Pedagogy is a thematic guide for the fourth section of the thesis. I suggest that under the intangible terminologies of 'overcoming trauma' or 'resilience over colonization' sit pedagogies that Inuit discuss whereby such ideals may be pursued. Learning theorists focussed more broadly promote critiques of mainstream pedagogies and ideal pedagogies similar to those discussed by Inuit. Considering these connections leads to an articulation of five characteristics of ideal pedagogies for coming to new understandings on difference: 1) a need to revalue diversities and 'soft' skills such as imagination; 2) a tolerance of an individual's need for freedom to define one's own identity; 3) a conceptualization of pedagogy as a contextualized way of living rather than a decontextualized activity; 4) the importance of a dialogic pedagogy and humility of both teacher/learner; and 5) the promotion of a cognizance, through pedagogy, that essentialisms are necessary but also potentially misleading and damaging. Such an articulation of ideal pedagogies has also guided my own learning within this research.

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## CHAPTER 1: Introduction

### **Aim and objectives**

I originally began this research with a broad aim to better understand resilience of the Canadian Arctic in the face of colonization with regards adult education. My choice of research topic had come out of my past experience living and working within one particular community on Baffin Island and my time working at Inuit representative organizations in Canada, the Ajunnginiq Centre<sup>2</sup> at the National Aboriginal Health Organization (NAHO) and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK)<sup>3</sup>. In the Arctic, I conducted graduate research on Inuit women's perceptions of adult education programs and community realities which involved listening to stories from Inuit women on experiences of violence, substance abuse and suicide, realizing that above all I was being told about hope and resilience. I also participated as a researcher at ITK and NAHO on a project looking at Inuit experiences of climate and environmental change where resilience was discussed in relation to these and other aspects of change in Inuit communities.

Hegemonic narratives – at times what I call formal terminologies, formalized by academic or other institutional discourses – inherently taken for granted as true, can marginalize and devalue certain viewpoints. This devaluing can lead to a crisis of self, which can manifest in the body concretely as health problems, substance abuse and even suicide, to list some examples. Discourses, as defined by Foucault (quoted in Ball, 1990, p. 2), are “practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak [ . . . ] Discourses are not about objects; they do not identify objects, they constitute them and in the practice of doing so conceal their own invention.” With a focus on the Canadian Arctic and drawing largely on writings by Inuit within this thesis, rigid conceptualizations made hegemonic through discourse is discussed as impacting some Inuit to experience challenges with self-identity constructions and health problems (see Appendix 1 for a summary of social health challenges in the Canadian Arctic). In the first year of my doctoral degree, I attended a conference where I encountered questioning on being a researcher of a group of which I am not a part, which was also an encounter with rigid conceptions of identity through discourse. This experience caused me to reconfigure my research so that the context of academia has become a parallel

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<sup>2</sup> Renamed Inuit Tuttarvingat

<sup>3</sup> Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami is the national representative organization for Inuit in Canada.

and integrated focus. The mirroring of these encountered challenges due to promotion of rigid conceptions of identity and reliance on discourse – encountered in my own research and as a factor within high levels of social health challenges for Inuit more broadly – provides a framework within this thesis to question these dominantly considered ‘truths’. In the first section of this thesis, I consider methodological arguments with an aim of establishing the rationale for why such questioning is useful. Throughout the thesis I engage with these arguments more indirectly as I portray a performance of the claim that ideal pedagogy involves tolerance for ‘alternative’ ways of engaging and methodologies which trouble rigid conceptions of ‘truth’ and difference, and better allow for connections to be made across differences.<sup>4</sup>

The presence and, when relied upon in a rigid sense, potential danger of essentialist understandings of identity within academia and the Canadian Arctic have become recurring and parallel themes of this research. My research question has become:

How have Inuit responded to colonization through writing and what do themes from these writings, and corresponding themes in writings by non-Inuit, convey regarding ideal pedagogies for overcoming challenges stemming from reliance on rigid conceptions of identity?

Behind this research question, sit three objectives:

1) Considering the long history of exploitative research on Inuit, and considering questioning and reflection on my own positionality as a non-Indigenous researcher, one objective has been to conduct this research in an ethical and respectful manner, considering the facets of such an approach.

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<sup>4</sup> Evident within this discussion is the use of inverted commas to problematize certain terminologies which is a convention typically employed in writing which highlights and accents accounts considered as different or counter to hegemonic accounts. I wish to problematize hegemonic definitions, to use terms in alternate fashions and to communicate these understandings to the reader (i.e. I question truth as absolute and the west as a coherent and non-hybrid culture). As this can become distracting, however, I do not draw upon the convention throughout the thesis. Instead, I use inverted commas when obviously required, but in most cases I allow the convention to fall away so as to not overstate or distract.

2) A second objective has been to place different texts regarding colonization, research and pedagogy – in relation to the particular context of the Canadian Arctic – in conversation with each other and to write a text accordingly.<sup>5</sup>

3) After recognizing similarities between pedagogies deemed as ideal for overcoming challenges from the perspectives of Inuit and perspectives more broadly, a third objective has been to characterize these pedagogies, highlighting the crossover of these perspectives.

These three objectives frame my research which considers the themes of research, colonization and pedagogy in relation to the parallel and integrated contexts of academia and the Canadian Arctic.

## **Section summaries**

### *Section 1: Locating the research*

In the first section of this thesis (chapters 2-6), I locate my research. In chapter 2, I discuss and reflect on the experience at the academic conference early on in my studies which left me feeling disconnected from the Arctic context and searching out alternative ways of researching. This experience caused me to reconceptualise the research and led to a decision to listen to context within this research which I discuss in chapter 3. I present a literature review in this chapter where I consciously present Inuit perspectives speaking to an initial text I had written on research, which facilitates a researching of research along with the initial aim to research colonization within the Canadian Arctic. In the latter part of chapter 3, I discuss my rationale for searching out accounts of reality which were alternative or counter to dominant or hegemonic stories. Such a perspective led me to begin with writings authored by Inuit which leads into chapter 4. In this chapter, I critically question the formal or academic categorizations of such writings. In conceptualising truth as partial and in seeking to use a research methodology which allowed me to listen to context and critically question throughout, I relied on an understanding of intertextuality which I explore at length in chapter

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<sup>5</sup> Hoy (2001, p. 25) emphasizing partiality, notes that in her writing she “meet[s] [her]self again, hiking on in the opposite direction, a little higher up, a little lower down.” I have tried to keep repetition to a minimum within this text but, like Hoy, there are places I repeat the same terrain approaching from different directions and looking at different meeting points. This is a characteristic of conversation and I have considered this to be part of the conversational nature of this text.

5. Contemplating such a concept allows me to address the questioning I encountered initially at the conference. In chapter 6, the final chapter of this section, I discuss the methodologies of this thesis, namely my methodologies of reading and writing. First, I discuss my process of identifying these methodologies, and I encounter and address misgivings on textual research. Next, I situate the methodologies within the wider literature, I outline the theory I have drawn on for the reading and writing methodologies respectively and I discuss my selection of texts in more detail.

### *Section 2: Reaffirmation of context*

In the second section of this research, chapters 7 and 8, I reaffirm the focal context, the Canadian Arctic, drawing largely from sources authored by Inuit for both chapters. In chapter 7, I detail colonization within the Canadian Arctic. I discuss how Inuit conceptualizations of colonization tend to highlight the transformative, painful and violent aspects, before considering impacts of colonization, including high levels of social health challenges, generational experiences of colonization and aspects maintaining such high levels of challenges. In chapter 8, I focus more specifically on schooling and education within the Canadian Arctic. I review that a historical colonial ideology, which many link to subsequent changes from a nomadic lifestyle to settlements and challenges with identity constructions for some Inuit, has been described as impacting Inuit in tangible ways through the forcible introduction of new or mainstream forms of education and schooling in the Canadian Arctic. I conclude this chapter discussing how, in the contemporary Arctic, education is described by most as being in crisis at primary through to higher levels of education, though many point towards transformations in contemporary education for empowerment of individuals and communities.

### *Section 3: "Being Inuit is just a story"<sup>6</sup>*

In chapters 9 and 10, I consider that 'being Inuit is just a story' and therefore the fluidity of narratives. In chapter 9, I begin by highlighting that through colonization, particularly contemporary forms, Inuit discuss losing aspects of ideological freedoms, such as an ability to form one's own identity or to name oneself. After reviewing the relevance and

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<sup>6</sup> A quote by a suicide counsellor from Pangnirtung as quoted in Stevenson (2006, p. 176) and used as a title for section 3 and chapters 9 and 10 throughout.

applicability of formal or clinically diagnostic terminologies of trauma and both the relevance and potential harm of essentialist understandings of culture, I come to an understanding that narratives – particularly those that we draw on from outside our selves and particularly when considered as rigidly true – can be misleading or even harmful. In chapter 10, continuing on with this focus on narratives, I discuss that narratives can also be affirmative in that they also offer ways to foster resilience to challenges in life. In this chapter, I discuss how narratives can foster resiliencies through processes of construction and sharing. I then discuss my realizations, through reading the source literature, that Inuit tend to question hegemonic accounts on the Canadian Arctic in four general ways, which I discuss as enactments of resilience: deconstruction, offering alternative ‘truths’, reversing the gaze and reactionary humour.

#### *Section 4 (Chapter 11): Conversations on pedagogy*

In chapter 11, I tie together the different threads of the thesis thus far and move the discussion forward by bringing together different perspectives on pedagogy. I begin by reviewing pedagogies discussed by Inuit (within the source literature) as ideal for empowerment of individuals and communities. After recognizing similarities between wider critiques on mainstream pedagogies with those offered by Inuit, I trace my path to what I have come to term ideal pedagogies and illustrate this notion through five different characterizations. Reviewing the understanding that narratives can be both harmful, misleading but also potentially affirmative, I explore pedagogies which are ideal in the sense that they help one to face and rise above challenges in life which stem from over-reliance on fixed conceptions of identity. Finally, I re-examine the link between Inuit ideal pedagogies and ideal pedagogies more broadly.

#### *Chapter 12: Conclusion*

In chapter 12, I conclude by returning to discuss the addressing of my main aim and objectives. I then offer brief summaries of the different sections of the thesis, I discuss my conceptualizations of ideal pedagogies and crossovers of perspectives on pedagogy as conclusions of this thesis and I offer a reflection on these conclusions.

## A note on sources

For this research, I draw on writings by Inuit which have been published in English as my source literature and I use this term to describe this literature throughout. Petrone (1988a, p. xiii) explains that despite the growing number of Inuit writing in English since the 1970s, “more recently [in the late 1980s], however, there has been a revival of interest in the preservation and use of Inuktitut as well as attempts to standardize the various regional dialects and orthographies. And in 1988 almost all material is published bilingually (English and Inuktitut) or trilingually (English, Inuktitut, and French)” (Petrone, 1988a, p. xiii). In 2010, the same is often true, with many sources translated into both Inuktitut syllabics and orthography versions. Many of the sources I include in this research (especially advocacy documents and documents from newspapers) exist in both Inuktitut and English versions, while some also exist in other Inuit languages. The Inuit languages<sup>7</sup> are a diverse grouping of distinct languages and dialects which are, in many areas of the Canadian Arctic, still very much in use as the dominant languages for communication. References to Inuit language words and terminologies as included within English texts have been maintained as is throughout the source literature reviewed in this thesis.

I draw from both formal and informal sources by Inuit for this research. Of the formal published sources, there are single-authored publications, inclusion in wider Native literature anthologies, inclusion in wider literature anthologies, inclusion in wider Inuit literature and Arctic writing publications, specific research pieces co-authored with non-Inuit, academic journal articles, newspaper articles and two films where I have drawn on excerpts. Non-formal published sources I have drawn on include ‘Letters to the Editor’ from *Nunatsiaq*

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<sup>7</sup> Inuktitut is the name given to the language of the Inuit of the Eastern Arctic and is often referred to as a language base for Inuit, although as Harper (2000, p. 155) explains, globally, “[l]inguists generally divide the Inuit language into 4 groupings of dialects (Alaskan Inupiaq, Western Canadian Inuktitun, Eastern Canadian Inuktitut, and Greenlandic).” Inuktitut is a well-preserved and well used language in the eastern Arctic particularly. But it is important to note that within Canada many different Inuit languages and dialects are used both between and within the four Inuit land-claim regions. As French (in Watson & French, 2000, p. 37) states, “[a]ny little settlement has its own dialect so it’s very hard to say that everybody has the same language, because they don’t” and she goes on to discuss different dialects, speaking of the main language base in the Western Arctic as Inuvialuit, which is also referred to as Inuvialuktun, language of the Inuvialuit. Harper (2000, p. 155-156) explains the Inuit languages in Canada as follows: “Those spoken in Nunavut are Eastern Canadian Inuktitut (North Baffin, South Baffin, Aivilik, Kivalliq, and Arctic Quebec dialects) and Western Canadian Inuktitun (Inuinnaqtun and Natsilingmiut dialects).”

*News* which, due to the vast number of letters, I arbitrarily narrowed for inclusion those published in May of each available year.

The selection of texts for inclusion in this thesis was accomplished in an organic manner as consistent with my methodological perspective. Though I discuss this in more depth in chapter 6, I wish to briefly highlight the nature of my text selection here. As I read texts authored by Inuit and non-Inuit, I came to see that the manner in which these texts fit together around developing themes resembled a conversation. I selected texts which contributed to this developing conversation. Reflecting back on my selection of texts when it came to writing my final thesis draft, I realized that I had selected sources which fit within the three broad themes of this thesis: ‘Research’, ‘colonization’ and ‘pedagogy’.

The terms Inuit versus non-Inuit which I have used throughout this thesis, particularly as applied to sources, are not always clear categories that one can assign. I have had difficulties categorizing the literature but also felt it necessary to privilege sources that, because of the authors’ greater experience of the Arctic context, achieve and relay a different ‘truth’ than those not derived out of this experience. To privilege such writings, within this text I have relied on and applied over-simplistic binary terminologies, such as Inuit versus non-Inuit, despite cognizance that this binary is overly simplistic.

I have used three categories within the references section. These are ‘primary sources’, ‘secondary sources’ and ‘bibliography’. The over-simplistic nature of labels becomes apparent when we look more closely at the contents of these categories. The primary sources are those that have largely been authored by Inuit. In this category, I have also, however, included sources written by non-Inuit that were published in sites where it was likely that the author is a northerner, whether Inuk or not (i.e. in the magazine *Inuktitut* or in *Nunatsiaq News*). I have also included sources written by Inuit that were published in academic journals, as academic theses, anthologies edited by non-Inuit or books co-authored with non-Inuit. The category entitled ‘secondary sources’ includes all literature that I have drawn from non-northern newspapers and institutional reports. I have included reports written by organizations that represent Inuit (and have staff members who are both Inuit and non-Inuit) in this second category. In the third category, I have included all writings that I have drawn on from academic journals, books, conference papers or theses that were not included in the

first category which have spoken to the broad themes of research, colonization and pedagogy and were found to be relevant to the developing text of my thesis.

## SECTION 1: Locating the research

### CHAPTER 2: Locating the research: A change in direction

#### Introduction

In this chapter, I detail a conference presentation where I encountered questioning on researcher positionality and representation. The main theme of the questioning centred on how I could research a cultural group of which I was not a part. I reflect on the questioning and discuss how, when applied acontextually, it can lead to over-intellectualizing, a fostering of divisionary thinking regarding identity and a sidetracking from practical concerns. I explain how a choice towards, what I consider, a freer methodology allowed me to research in a way which felt more respectful and to return to practical issues which prompted this research initially while it also allowed me to better understand and develop my personal sense of ethics.

#### Conference presentation: How can you speak for?

I began my doctoral study with an aim to conduct qualitative research examining resilience of Inuit in relation to adult education in the Canadian Arctic context. I was not a new researcher to this context and was already aware of the questioning I would encounter as a non-Indigenous researcher examining Indigenous issues. Knowing this, I decided to approach a presentation I made during my first year of my doctoral work with an aim to better understand literature on cross-cultural communication and experiences of researchers who have conducted research with groups of which they are not a part.

This approach to my presentation led to amplified questioning on positionality. The questioning from the audience was predominantly on if I can or should be doing this work. I was asked to justify my positionality. Where was my voice? What was the experience which justified this research (or allowed me to speak for others in this regard)? I felt that my academic naiveté was highlighted in that I was not able to relate what ‘real’ experience justified my wish to do this research. One of the gentler questions allowed that my experience might better exemplify a justification for me to do this research than I articulated at the

conference. But there was a general undercurrent questioning whether I should be doing this research as a non-Indigenous researcher.

The manner in which I structured and presented my paper played a role in leading to this reaction from the audience. I purposely did not include previous practical research experience within my paper as my goal had been to explore how others within the literature define cross-cultural space and communication. But in this decision, I did not make it sufficiently clear that this paper was a contemplation piece before undertaking new research. With the paper being extremely literature heavy, I used the literature as a screen to hide behind. With few experiences at academic conferences to go on and my own misunderstanding of the allowance for voice within papers presented at conferences, I purposely excluded my own.

When writing my paper, I had considered including my voice. I resisted the over-cautiousness exhibited in some of the language within this field of study and wrote a short passage on cross-cultural interaction: *We interact as people and know within ourselves whether or not we can trust each other in interaction. We often have a sense intrinsically of the motivations, values, beliefs, understandings and wisdoms that people are bringing to the table of interaction.* But I deleted this and forced myself to re-approach the writing better integrating what I heard in the literature. I excluded my voice because I felt unsure of it and unsure whether it would be appropriate to include in my presentation, particularly as I was a non-Indigenous researcher of an Indigenous context.

During the question period after my presentation, I returned to these thoughts as the audience asked directly for a better articulation of my subjectivity. But my impression of the main thread of the question/answer period was for me to justify how I could be allowed to study a group I was not a part of. I was asked for my subjectivity but I was also left with a sense that it could not justify my conducting this research. At one point during the questioning, I attempted to explain that I had researched third space and hybridity with an aim to respond to the audience of academics and that I felt the Inuit I knew and had worked with would not have expected me to justify myself in this manner. There was a particular questioning, one that I had expected from the audience but had not known how to prepare for, which was an acontextual questioning where there seemed to be no 'good enough' rationale for my wanting to research this context as a non-Indigenous researcher. After this experience I also questioned whether or not I, as a non-Indigenous researcher in a position of class and racial

privilege, should conduct this research. It has taken me the full course of my doctoral research to arrive at a response.

### **Always define: A reflection on questioning**

Moving away from repetitive questioning over positionality meant a return to my own values or personal ethics. I found my way out of this cycle of questioning through reflecting on my response to it, through externalizing the issue by reading about a similar experience encountered by another researcher and by arriving at a realization that acontextual questioning cannot make for ethical research. The questioning at the conference led me to a crossroads: To look for a different research topic where I could choose a more comfortable path not involving such questioning or continue on with my chosen topic. I decided to continue on with my original topic of research but the sting of the questions on my consideration of the context pushed me into a clear decision that I would only conduct research that felt to be respectful and I would be open to different or non-standard ways of researching especially if useful for these purposes.

Such questioning has been encountered by other non-Indigenous researchers working with Indigenous groups. Questioning which O'Connor (2008, p. 67) encountered is strikingly similar: "I began to encounter sometimes subtle and sometimes blatant warnings from concerned colleagues of my positionality as a "white guy" interested in Indigenous issues. The more extreme responses were: "You can't do this work, you're not Indigenous."'" O'Connor (2008, p. 67) also discusses a similar initial response when faced with such questioning: "My initial reaction to these questions was one of puzzlement – in my teaching positions up north my motives had never been questioned before and, while my work had not been unchallenged, no one before had questioned my motives." The similarities with O'Connor (2008, p. 76) run consistently to the crossroads he also encountered:

I was warned of a possible lack of publications and employment and the constant scrutiny that surrounded a non-Indigenous academic in the field of Indigenous education. I was even offered other fully-funded research projects that did not involve Indigenous issues to pursue in my doctoral studies. It was positioned as having to make a choice between two paths: taking a simple more straightforward non-Indigenous path or taking a more difficult path that would have me directly involved in Indigenous education. Again, frustrated but determined, I chose the latter.

O'Connor (2008, p. 78) goes on to discuss that there are benefits from being asked these questions. I have also come to see how such questioning has been useful for my research. It forced me to better understand my values and allowed for my voice and opinions to come through better in my work.

But it is in the reconciliation of the questioning where I differ from O'Connor (2008). Where O'Connor (2008, p. 78) explains that these questions are meant to force new researchers to better examine epistemological issues and are not meant to create walls of division between identity constructs, I worry that sometimes such questioning on positionality, in neglecting that identities are hybrid, dismisses real experiences that justify some contextual knowledge. Though the intent is not to create divisionary walls, these walls – though imaginary and often ironic – do get constructed.

Binary or rigid conceptualizations of identity or culture inevitably exist and can prove useful in conceptualizing reality but I have concerns that in practice our recognition of such binaries does not always extend to the corresponding recognition that they can prove harmful and misleading when discussed as fixed.<sup>8</sup> A theoretical perspective on binaries is well-rooted in Derridean<sup>9</sup> deconstructionist theory which implies that binaries invariably exist through the “the longing for a center” whereby “one term of the opposition [is] central and the other marginal” and “centers want to fix, or freeze the play of binary opposites” (Powell, 1997, p. 23). Though there is recognition of these Derridean claims within academia, there are aspects of academia, even within qualitative spheres, which still rely on positivist notions of reality where essentialist claims are still very much relied upon, for example in the creation and imposition of standards within research.<sup>10</sup> As Picart (2004, p. 11) discusses, “[c]ontemporary debates concerning race, gender, and class often seem to treat these categories as though they are monolithic binaries, rather than porous synapses.”

I have worked at understanding why questioning on positionality is often where I get returned to in my conversations on my research. This questioning can stem from a genuine concern for participants or participant communities involved in research. It is important to critically

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<sup>8</sup> See further discussion on this in chapter 9 in ‘Essentialisms’ and in chapter 11 in ‘Tracing my path to ideal pedagogies: False binaries, not false difference’.

<sup>9</sup> See Derrida’s discussions on binary oppositions (i.e. Derrida, 1981, p. 4, p. 97).

<sup>10</sup> Refer to a discussion of standards versus alternatives in ‘Situating methodologies’ in chapter 6.

question each other within academia and we need to openly question and interrogate each other if we are to create new and useful knowledge. Questions like ‘how can you speak for’ when used to critically question research relationships and impacts from research, out of a genuine concern for those who do experience injustice, is an important and necessary questioning.

At other times, however, I feel that such questioning can be an acontextual questioning performed as a reaction to well-documented histories of exploitation of Indigenous peoples by non-Indigenous. The subject of a non-Indigenous researcher working in an Indigenous context is contentious due to this history. But non-Indigenous researchers working with Indigenous groups, as with any researcher working in any research context, is not one issue, but a multitude of issues – complex, complicated and messy. As Picart (2008, p. 11) argues, “everyone lives the insider-outsider perspective, because given the complex fluctuations of power, no single group is so privileged that it is completely immune from an outsider perspective, and no single group is so utterly alienated that it is robbed of its own “insider” perspective.” Each relationship a researcher forms with her participants is a specific relationship that is accompanied by the complexity and myriad identity constructs that interplay any relationship. When a researcher is encountered within academia, especially when the context being studied is one with a history of exploitation accompanying it, I think there is a tendency to return to well-trodden paths of questioning over positionality that do rely on identity constructs as there is a sense that if the researcher is questioned sufficiently and correctly, the research that results will inevitably be ethical and respectful. Discussing the modernist belief that one is capable of being objective as still very prominent within academia, which he discusses predominantly in relation to the notion of criteria, Bochner (2000, p. 267) explains that “we hide behind the terminology of the academic language games” which come out of the “illusion that eventually we will unanimously agree on the culture-free standards to which all evidence must appeal, so that we won’t have to rely on our own “subjectivity” to decide.” But, as it is with all research, there is no standard, acontextual questioning which can be used in encountering a non-Indigenous researcher researching an Indigenous context which will ensure that the research which results will be ethical and respectful. Our subjectivities have a much greater influence than we might like to admit.

Acontextual questioning on positionality can help to hold up a facade that standardization guarantees research will be ethical. In conversations where we question according to

acontextual standards, we are doing ourselves a disservice because we are allowing for academic conversations to resemble well-rehearsed theatrical productions, where spontaneity, creativity and uniqueness get dismissed to hold up this facade, portrayed as protecting a 'marginalized' context, when actually protecting an intellectual fissure. Such questions or areas of discussion can also be trends or academic fashions which have become decontextualized from the experiences of those who first asked these questions and from social and political contexts 'beyond' the academy. In such a disservice, I think, we "delimit by ourselves the realm of the possible" (Thrift, quoting Ginsborg, 2008, p. 3). Similarly, Bochner (2000, p. 267) expresses concern "that criteria are the very means we ourselves created to contain our desire for freedom and experience, a way of limiting our own possibilities and stifling our creative energy." Such statements highlighting how we ourselves can act to stifle research(er) creativity also point towards Foucault's (1989, p. 39) assertions on the ability of discourse to perpetuate itself. For example, he states that "the gaze that sees is a gaze that dominates and although it also knows how to subject itself, it dominates its masters." When we put weight on rigidity of binaries in this manner, the field itself could be said to be over-sanitizing or being overly political correct as we perform acontextual questioning which, on the surface, may appear to have aims to protect marginalized contexts but which can actually be protecting – and holding up – the illusion that standard acontextual questioning can ensure research is ethical.

Acontextual questioning can also create division where none existed and can cause us to become bogged down in circles of questioning which can be irrelevant to contexts outside academia. When I encountered such questions, I began to see myself first and foremost under the construct of a non-Indigenous researcher looking to research an Indigenous context. All of the real experiences I had working within the context began to fall away as this perspective took centre stage. I began to see the relationships I had with Inuit and my experiences within the Canadian Arctic as over-wrought with this view. In this way, these identity constructions, which I had encountered outside of the context and which were triggered from people unfamiliar with the Arctic, divided me from my 'real' experiences.

Bochner (2000, p. 267) asks "what is it we are not talking about when we are talking about criteria?" When I encountered this particular questioning, I entered into endless interior questioning and guilt over constructed identities so that finding my way back to issues of practical concern became difficult. In its repetitive nature, this questioning felt to have

similarities with the traumatic aspects of colonization I was considering in my research. Encountering such questioning, my own personal ethics – developed through interaction in the world, and which can get refined through research in social settings – was being neglected and overruled. What was potentially lost was the principality of the practical issues which had motivated my research initially, my concerns stemming from experiences of social problems in the Arctic. I found my way out of circles of abstract questioning by returning to my personal ethics, and listening to accounts from Inuit and from the Arctic.

### **Personal ethics and care-full research**

My personal ethics have been developed through past experience working with Inuit. Making the choice to approach this research with an “epistemological diffidence” (Appadurai, 2001, p. 4) where I slowly, hesitantly and carefully conducted this research meant that I could follow a way of researching which was in line with my inherent values regarding research. I also consider this approach a freer methodology as, in not following a set methodology, I had a freedom to choose one in line with my values.

Before the conference during my first year, I had been planning to conduct fieldwork in the Canadian Arctic considering Inuit perceptions of adult education programs with regards resilience in the face of colonization. Consistently throughout the first year, I was asked to solidify my research topic into a research question. I was finding this difficult as I felt unsure how to contextualize my research. Strong-Wilson (2008, p. 58) discusses how research on Indigenous peoples has come to be judged on “whether it directly benefits actual rather than mythical Indigenous communities and individuals” and I hold a similar perspective which led me to question the validity of my own potential fieldwork. Studying in Glasgow, Scotland for a year after having lived both in southern and northern Canada working directly with Inuit, I felt disconnected from the context and was having difficulty conceptualizing a question that I felt sure would be relevant and ‘valid’ enough for me to conduct fieldwork in this context.

Because of the disconnection, which made it unclear if my research would be beneficial to research participants, I decided against sourcing my material from fieldwork or interview derived narratives which felt to be intrusive methodologies for this research. I am not denying the potential usefulness of interviewing for qualitative research. As Mohatt and Rasmus (2004) explain, interviews allow for the power of voice to shine through. The

collection of qualitative data in an interview can, however, cause inappropriate crossover of something private into a public realm. As Berger (1986, p. 1445) explains, sometimes interview conversations and settings influence and create responses: “[A] solicited opinion is one that may not have existed previously and is therefore a reified artefact of the question or interview situation.” Inuk writer, Rojas (2000, p. 32), echoes this concern, highlighting how the interviewer holds the control in an interview situation: “When authors ask the ‘non-civilized’ informants to provide information, the author is in the position of control and she or he can easily be selective about what she or he would prefer to inform the reader.” In addition, there is a naturalness of some situations/locales for sharing and a non-naturalness to others. An anecdote of a conversation I had with a colleague when I worked at ITK serves to highlight this:

*Sitting together with a group of women in a workplace kitchen over a lunch break, one woman mentioned that, as an Inuktitut translator, she was planning on attending a formal meeting examining the status of women in the Arctic. Having decided I was going to research challenges and resiliencies in the Canadian Arctic the following year, I asked if it would be alright if I came along to the meeting. She thought it would be fine to come along but cautioned that nothing (of importance) would be mentioned, explaining that this is not where stories get told, going on to say that it is in kitchens, or during informal times like our informal lunch-break, where things of meaning actually get discussed.*

Though fieldwork is not necessarily an intrusive methodology, when, as was the case for this research, the researcher does not see a clear direction for the research to take, it can feel to be intrusive, inappropriate and potentially a waste of people’s time. It felt like I was forcing a stage for my own research agenda that was not clear and potentially lacking in significance. Though I could have gone to the ‘field’ which would have allowed for aspects particular to the Arctic to guide the research and make a significance more concrete and clear, I felt a strong pull to try something different with this research.

I tried to devise a more organic approach. With the accessibility to the contemporary writings by many Inuit available to me in Glasgow through the internet and through books that I had brought with me, it began to occur to me that I was already receiving contextual knowledge and guidance to concretize my research. And with many of these writings expressing urgency to be heard and teaching me about Inuit and the Canadian Arctic, I realized that I was already listening to issues relevant and meaningful to Inuit. As my

research developed, it became obvious that the sheer quantity of these writings as well as the extent, diversities and vastness of what the authors were writing about were more than enough for me to draw upon. By conducting research only drawing on these sources, my research was non-invasive which felt to be more in line with my personal ethics of not drawing individuals into research framed by an unclear research agenda.

Moving away from the primary questioning I encountered at the conference, and with a goal to conduct ethical, respectful and meaningful research, I made a decision to attempt careful research. This decision meant listening to the context which formally became my reading methodology. Directly after the conference, I read an excerpt by Carpenter (1997, p. 226) that – although speaking of the Arctic context, and resilience to challenges therein – I heard as equally essential for my understanding of how to go about research and the need to follow my own values. “The poorest bargain of our lives is the one we make when we forfeit our deep knowing life for one that is far more frail [ . . . ] We make this bargain without realizing the sorrow, the pain, and the dislocation it will cause us. If we listen to our dream voices, to images, to stories, to our art, to those who have gone before, and to each other, something will be handed to us.” This piece of writing helped me to understand the enormity of what I felt I would be giving up if I decided to go ahead with fieldwork in the Arctic and affirmed the value which I felt to be inherent in my different choice in methodology.

Following a more literary route – drawing on and analyzing written sources versus those derived from speech – is considered by some as an atypical approach in the social sciences and has had its challenges. As Milner (1952, p. 19) states, “what is really easy, as I found, is to blind one’s eyes to what one really likes, to drift into accepting one’s wants ready-made from other people, and to evade the continual day to day sifting of values.” But the research process, though challenging, has been driven by a genuine care for the context which Qitsualik (2001b) explains is “[a]ctual research (I mean more than reading a couple of library collections of Inuit myths) [which] requires a lot of work. [ . . . ] One has to care about the culture before one can present it properly.” Undertaking this decision to change the direction of my research and draw on a more literary methodology meant that I became free to follow a methodology more in line with my personal ethics and listen to Inuit and others discussing the Arctic – those who were already expressing their thoughts and ‘speaking’ themselves in public spaces which they had chosen. In this way, therefore, reading as listening to context became a main methodology for this research.

## **Summary**

In this chapter, I have reviewed and reflected upon an experience at a conference in the first year of my doctoral studies where I was questioned on researcher positionality. Upon reflection, I have considered that such questioning can be performed acontextually out of a belief that standardized questioning can make for ethical research. In my experience, however, such questioning can act to hold up binaries of identity constructs which can create divisions that had not previously existed, getting in the way of real interactions and being a distraction from challenges of real concern. I have discussed how a freedom in methodology in this research has allowed me to move beyond such circles of questioning. I discussed how, in moving away from this experience, I felt it necessary to approach my research carefully, where I slowly and tentatively followed a more respectful research path. This route meant undertaking a literary approach in this research as opposed to undertaking fieldwork, which meant considering reading as 'listening to context' by drawing on and analyzing sources written by Inuit. In the next chapter, I discuss listening to context in more detail, and consider how such an approach has allowed me to research the research(ers) and brought me to new understandings of truth.

## CHAPTER 3: Locating the research: Listening to context

### **Introduction**

The concept of listening has helped frame my approach to this research. In reading or ‘listening’ to the source literature for this thesis, I began to see that these writings speak to and back to research in/on the Arctic. In this chapter, under an aim to research the research, I first present a literature review on exploitative versus ethical research within the Canadian Arctic, with the source literature speaking to and back to this text. This review leads into a questioning of stereotypical narratives regarding Aboriginal peoples and communities and a brief consideration on the nature of truth. Truth in the Arctic context is more often derived from first-hand experience and memory rather than factual accuracy. In the final section of this chapter, I consider how beginning with writings by Inuit for this research has meant that I begin with truths of this kind as chosen and crafted by the authors, not framed primarily for research purposes.

### **Researching the research(ers)**

Slowly and carefully listening to context allowed me to research research itself, along with researching a context outside academia, which has similarities to Appadurai’s (2001, p. 4; p. 18) discussion of “epistemological diffidence” whereby “academics from the privileged institutions of the West [. . .] must be prepared to reconsider [. . .] their conventions about world knowledge and about the protocols of inquiry (“research”) that they too often take for granted.” As part of researching the research, after conducting a literature review on exploitative versus ethical research in the Canadian Arctic, I then placed excerpts from the source literature in conversation with this review. The following text where I draw largely from Inuit authors is the result.

Research on Inuit has been copious. As Kaukjak Katsak (in Wachowich et al, 1999, p. 176) explains: “In Igloolik there was lots of research going on about the “Eskimo”. There was study after study after study about us. I don’t even remember all of them. It was like they couldn’t get enough!” Carpenter (2000a, p. 11) expresses this bluntly: “We have been scrutinized to death!” Freeman (1988, p. 242) explains that with such a

large amount of research on Inuit, researchers were often welcomed into Inuit families and communities. “Over the years scientists have always been very welcome in Inuit communities. Some have been adopted by Inuit [ . . . ] It has been said that the ideal family in the arctic consists of a husband and wife, four children and an anthropologist.” As Freeman goes on to explain (1988, p. 242) part of this welcoming has meant that Inuit have felt responsible for scientists. “As scientists are often willing to admit, Inuit have clothed them, fed them, taken them to wherever they wanted to go to do their studies. Often Inuit have taken chances, in matters of life and death, because they felt responsible for a particular scientist.” And just as Inuit have been studied by Qallunaat, so have Inuit been scrutinizing researchers. Freeman (1988, p. 242) states, “[w]e have studied them while they studied us.”

Some of the research on Inuit has been useful and ethical research, and some of it has been unethical, exploitative or colonizing research. Freeman (1988, p. 242) explains that “[s]cientists from the south I know have been working in the arctic for a long time, but only a few have made some southerners understand Inuit culture.” Joanasie and Akulukjuk (2005, p. 70) also discuss ethical versus unethical research stressing that the amount of research on Inuit has not abated in recent years.

Some researchers, we understand, help Inuit and are well-intentioned with the work that they do. Many thanks for your dedication and the history you have uncovered. However, there are others who tend to be pesky and persistent in the eyes of Inuit, and ask stupid or almost completely useless questions, which only makes them seem to be studying Inuit through a microscope, dissecting organs and making conclusions from Qallunaat perspectives, giving suggestions and recommendations on how to go about doing things better for their lives.

Kaukjak Katsak (in Wachowich et al, 1999, p. 176-177) explains that some Inuit have not resisted being researched: “Sometimes I wonder why people agreed all the time even when they didn’t want to. I guess what it comes down to is that the Qallunaat have always been the people with the authority. I learned that in school [ . . . ] So if a study was being done in a particular way, I guess we didn’t question it.” Though there has been much research on Inuit, only some is felt to have been respectful research.

Research based on racist assumptions of researchers, or “old order research” has been an arm of colonization historically and has often worked to facilitate, validate and substantiate state hegemonic policies and processes (Ermine et al, 2004, p. 24). Though many identify positivist research as most prone to be colonizing, Smith (1999, p. 1), a researcher who is Maori, explains that a long history of exploitative research ‘on’ Indigenous peoples has meant that research as colonizing is much broader from the perspectives of Indigenous groups. “From the vantage point of the colonized, a position from which I write, and choose to privilege, the term ‘research’ is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism.” Research carries such links due to a long history of it being carried out unethically and for hegemonic purposes exploitative to Indigenous groups.

State colonial processes have often been justified in terms of belief in stereotypical images of Aboriginals created and maintained through academic research as well as through ‘documentary’ photography and film. Strong-Wilson (2008, p. 54) speaks of the prevalence and influence of these constructed images of Indigenous peoples which she explains as “imaginary” or “storied memories [that] have been influenced by colonialism.” Robertson (2006, p. 20), notes the tendency of those academic studies that draw on and maintain such images to be anthropological in nature, and states that the stereotypical images promoted by them tend to vary between “noble savage” or “superstitious savage.” In the context of the Canadian Arctic, stereotypical images of Inuit have tended to vary between the ‘noble savage’ and “happy-go-lucky sporting folk” a phrase Binney (in Nungak, 2005) uses to describe Inuit in a book entitled *The Eskimo Book of Knowledge* published in 1931. Nungak (2005) speaks directly back to this book stating how it was promoted as “a great store of truth” while essentially it was a manual trying to instruct Inuit “on how to be better Eskimos than they already were.” Other stereotypical images of Inuit were created and promoted through missionary work which tended to present “photos of criminal looking ‘heathen’ Inuit alongside photos of smiling Inuit who had been ‘saved’” (Tippett, 1994, p. 8-10). Creation of images of Inuit through anthropological studies or missionary work purposefully objectified Inuit. “All of these photographers looked for sameness not difference, types not individuals. By so doing they put their Inuit subjects firmly into the sub-category of ‘the other’” (Tippett, 1994, p. 8).

Such stereotypical images of Inuit created and maintained through colonizing research have been used to justify exploitative treatment of Inuit and their intellectual property rights. Nungak (2002, p. 92) explains that material goods were stolen from Inuit as “Eskimologists have carted off Inuit traditional clothing, artefacts, hunting implements, tools, ancient stories and legends, and human remains for display in museums, bartering such things for very little.” Inuit were also made to participate in scientific experiments and in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, some individuals were even taken from the Arctic to museums as living ‘artefacts’ of a different way of life.<sup>11</sup> Remembering how she participated in a skin graft experiment “in 1971 or 1972”, Kaukjak Katsak (in Wachowich et al, 1999, p. 175; p. 177) explains “[w]e figured that we didn’t have any sort of scientific knowledge, so there was no way we could disagree [. . .] I remember with my skin grafts they told us that they were trying to find out if a person got burned if they could get a graft from a sibling’s skin [. . .] I was happy that I disproved their theory. I have had the scars ever since. They don’t go away.”

Stereotypical images of Inuit have been further amplified through the geographical and physical divide between northern and southern Canada (and the rest of the western world). This divide necessarily means the Arctic is often thought of as unknown or mysterious and considered as the last frontier. From a southern perspective, Grace (2001, p. 267) explains that within Canada, north “symbolize[s] future hopes for purity, freedom, wealth, fame and regional and national identity” and she (2001, p. 268) explains that the “the magnetism of North can attract (is even irresistible to) everyone who lives, or comes to live, in Canada.” Cournoyea (1988, p. 286) explains how romantic stereotypical images of the Inuit serve to promote a unique national identity construct of Canada. “Canadians like to talk about us eating frozen meat and living in the cold. It gives Canada something that other countries don’t have. Everybody likes the Inuit.” The geographical divide has meant that realities within the Arctic were historically, and in many ways currently still, necessarily filtered through media where representation of chosen images was left to the discretion of the photographer or film-maker and often were shot with the goal of radiating a positive image of the photographer or film-maker rather than a realistic portrayal of the Inuit or

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<sup>11</sup> i.e. See Harper, K. (2000). *Give Me My Father’s Body: The Story of Minik, the New York Eskimo*. South Royalton: Steerforth.

the Arctic. “[T]o present the indigenous peoples of the Arctic as superb cartographers, navigators and hunters rather than in line with conventional thinking, as “happy-go-lucky,” sporting folk, affectionate to their families [. . .] would have diminished the author’s own heroic accomplishment” (Tippett, 1994, p. 6).

Interestingly, Hulan (2002, p. 14) recognizes a spatial dimension to difference within the wider field of ‘Northern studies’ as a whole. “[N]orthern studies tends to spatialize difference by comparing oppositional terms: inside and outside, north and south, northerners and southerners, us and them.” Highlighted within much of the source literature is the actual spatial difference that tends to exist between fieldwork and collection of research data in the Arctic, and the dissemination and discussion of the results in and to the south. As Ipellie (1996a) states, in reference to 1993, “[i]t was the first time an Inuit Studies Conference had actually been held in an Inuit community. This was never so until the originators of the previous conference finally had the good fortune to have a premonition that they “ought to” take their conference to (and be amongst) the very people they had been studying for many decades.” Inuit Studies conferences are still not consistently held in the Arctic, and many have few Inuit in attendance as Joanasie and Akulukjuk (2005, p. 70) explain regarding the 2004 conference. “Some people might think it ironic that the theme of the gathering was “Bringing Knowledge Home: Communicating research results to the Inuit,” since the odd thing about it was that barely a handful of Inuit attended the conference! And it did not help that the meeting was held in Calgary, home to relatively few Inuit.” A suggestion for more ethical research and research partnerships is “to hold such conferences in Inuit communities and work more closely with the Inuit” (Joanasie & Akulukjuk, 2005, p. 70). This theme of community exclusion is not something of note only for Inuit communities but is a theme commonly raised at academic conferences and this theme, highlighting questions of access, also highlights questions of belonging which, in conceptualizing identity in rigid terms can return us to challenges discussed in chapter 2.

Exclusion of community from conferences particularly resounds for some Inuit, however, as there has been a long history of this exclusion which has perpetuated misrepresentations of Inuit. There are concerns that what is circulated at these conferences can be and oftentimes is taken as representative of all Inuit. Akulukjuk

(2004, p. 212) explains this: “I guess what I don’t like about having Inuit Studies is because it misrepresents Inuit values and customs; a single research project in one community is not likely going to have the same voice as another community.” Research on Inuit and Arctic issues can maintain colonizing aspects if misrepresentations or stereotypical images get circulated through referencing circles whereby the uninformed reference the uninformed. Spatial distance is a factor as the removal of ‘material’ from the geographic Arctic can mean that once reinterpreted into research results or findings down south, there is sometimes a loss of meaning as it is understood in the Arctic or by Inuit. “Inuit intellectual property rights are treated with dishonour and taken away. Taken away so that universities, largely inaccessible to Inuit, can widely teach, and constantly reinterpret, research results. Reinterpreted, maybe, to the point where their true meanings and place of origin become unknown” (Joanasie & Akulukjuk, 2005, p. 70).

Continuing reliance on old texts that contain and promote these images as realistic are of concern to those looking to change the ‘old order’ of research. As Deloria (in Ermine et al, 2004, p. 24) states regarding First Nations groups, “the book remains in the library where naive and uninformed people will read it for decades to come so they take the content of the book as proven and derive their knowledge of Indians from it.” In her thesis running into academically held ‘truths’ about Inuit for the first time when studying at university, Rojas (2000, p. 1) works at deconstructing some of these old texts that she does not recognize in the reality of the Arctic that she is familiar with. “It was not until I was studying at the university level that I began to consciously learn many interesting things about the Inuit. I read that Inuit practiced wife exchange and that Inuit practiced female infanticide. I read that Inuit women were dirty and could not or did not make decisions [. . .] I had many questions about the validity of what was written. To me it seemed so different from the Inuit I knew.”

Despite the concern regarding unethical research on Inuit exhibited in much of the texts written by Inuit, there are also some discussions that point towards research becoming more ethical. Nungak (2002, p. 92) feels that there is more research now that better integrates Inuit traditional knowledge. “Previously, Qallunaat seemed to hold a monopoly on being the only ones who knew what to do. This has changed and their previously-held appearance of invincibility has been cut down a few notches.

Qaujimajualuit, those of them who 'know a great deal', with strings of academic degrees attached to their names, are more often seeking guidance from the reservoir of traditional knowledge possessed by Inuit." With a greater number of researchers looking to conduct ethical research with Inuit, Joanasie and Akulukjuk (2005, p. 70) explain that ethical research involves researchers "exercis[ing] caution with their subjects" of research.

The movement towards more ethical research in the Arctic has been facilitated by an increase in the need to follow ethical guidelines and licensing that have been created by the communities or land-claim regions. Freeman (1988, p. 242) explains that such ethical guidelines have been needed to ensure that researchers were not being dishonest and unethical with Inuit but also with each other.

There are some communities now that have begun to screen scientists before they get to the community. One of the reasons for this was because in some places scientists who came to study community stayed in a hostel, hotel or in a qallunaat house, and got their information from the qallunaat who have never really been involved themselves with households, then went back south and wrote their reports based on hearsay. Inuit consider these scientists not only dishonest with the Inuit, but also dishonest to their superiors in the south.

Ermine, et al (2004, p. 14) have referred to the trend towards ethical guidelines and licensing procedures being increasingly the norm as the "post-1996 trend toward guidelines and research agreements in any research pertaining to Indigenous Peoples." In the Canadian Arctic, licensing procedures for research involving Inuit have been established for all four Inuit land-claim regions and a guide has been published for researchers (ITK & NRI, 2006).

An ethical concern mentioned often in the source literature is that research results are not always made accessible to Inuit and Arctic communities. As Carpenter (2000a, p. 11) expresses, "[w]e rarely see these reports. I suspect many of them are irrelevant." Freeman (1988, p. 242) explains the necessity to also have this information translated so that a greater number of Inuit can benefit from it. "My question is, when are you scientists going to start to include in your budgets funds to have the information you gather translated into Inuktitut and sent back north?"

An understanding afforded me from writing the above literature review on the history of exploitative research and factors to consider for research to be ethical in the Canadian Arctic led me to search out non-standard forms of researching in the social sciences or more literary forms of researching where I was cautious and respectful to the Arctic context and subjects of my research. This work helped me to come to a decision to use narratives written by Inuit which were already published as my primary ‘data’ for this research.

### **Questioning stereotypes and returning to the real**

In research regarding colonization and Aboriginal peoples, many sources make reference to formal terminologies that serve to categorize experiences of Aboriginal peoples under labels, such as ‘historic trauma’ which mask individual experiences as well as assumptions of researchers.<sup>12</sup> This can act to further the common “underlying assumption of widespread dysfunction” (Waldram, 2004, p. 304) in research regarding Aboriginal peoples and contexts. As Denham (2008, p. 394) found when conducting an ethnographic study with a Coeur D’Alene family, there is a tendency within academia to assume that those who have experienced ‘historic trauma’ or colonization must exhibit a wounded or dysfunctional response. “[T]he assumptions of historical trauma research are often presented and accepted as if all social groups experiencing historical trauma, particularly American Indian people, would become prone to dysfunction or exhibit other signs of psychological or social distress.” Further there is an assumption that behaviours such as alcoholism, drug addiction or violence within Aboriginal communities are always symptoms or fall-outs from colonization. As Waldram (2004, p. 166) states, such assumptions “demonstrate the quickness with which we researchers are prepared to assume that Aboriginal peoples are dysfunctional.” Ermine et al (quoting Wax, 2004, p. 23) explain that competition for research funds often acts to maintain the perpetuation of a problem-centered view within research focused on Aboriginal contexts within academia. “The outcome of such intentions is the overt misrepresentation of Indigenous Peoples because ‘in the effort to secure grants for research or for services and programs, writers are driven toward magnifying and dramatizing the problems of the local community.’” Generalized and constructed views of particular groups as predominantly

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<sup>12</sup> See chapter 9 for a more in-depth discussion on the relevance of formal or clinical terminologies of trauma.

dysfunctional serve to maintain dependency relationships between marginalized and hegemonic groups in society.<sup>13</sup>

When researchers listen to individual accounts and experiences of historical and ongoing colonization within Aboriginal communities within North America, it becomes obvious, however, that traumatic events can also be met with a response or reaction alternative to a wounded response. As Denham (2008, p. 396) states, “[i]t is important to recognize that traumatic events do not always result in psychiatric distress; individuals, as well as societies, differ in the manner in which they experience, process, and remember events.” Stamm, et al (2003, p. 92), also express this potential: “It is important to note that some people may have no reaction or [may] even be strengthened by the troubles they experience.”

This realization is often triggered for researchers when they begin to face anomalies within the response to events of colonization, or contemporary social health challenges, than that which has come to be expected. Tester and McNicoll (1999, p. 11), in their research attempting to get behind some of the statistics on suicide by Inuit, found anomalies through listening to individual stories and experiences, and this led to their arguing for a break-down of the “rapid change” explanation behind traumatic response in Inuit. Denham (2008, p. 410) found that the family he was working with responded to significantly traumatic events, experienced through past and current colonization events, with narratives that stressed learning and positive outcomes. “If a descendant does not manifest an emotional wound or dysphoric response to historical trauma, can we consider her as being affected by historical trauma and her reaction, or lack thereof, a historical trauma response” (Denham, 2008, p. 410)? As Denham (2008, p. 393) explains, the traumatic experience of the family he studied was a “textbook” case of historical trauma, yet he was not observing the textbook response:

I expected the Si John family to be experiencing what could be considered a textbook example of historical trauma. However, resultant “dysfunction,” a characteristic central to the literature on historical trauma, was not present. If there was no obvious wounding or dysphoric reaction to the trauma, in the Western diagnostic sense, could I describe the family as being impacted by historical trauma?

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<sup>13</sup> See chapter 9, ‘Essentialisms’ for further discussion on constructed dependencies.

Most significantly for my study, after explaining how most researchers linking Aboriginal peoples and the historic trauma complex, are not typically exploring the alternative response, one of resilience, Denham (2008, p. 410-411) calls for new conceptualizations of the terms ‘historical trauma’ and ‘historical trauma response’ to reflect the potential of these alternative responses.

A more accurate conceptualization or definition of historical trauma would refer only to the conditions, experiences, and events that have the *potential* to contribute to or trigger a response, rather than referring to both the events and the response. Accordingly, the subsequent manifestation of or reaction to historical trauma, which I posit varies from expressions of suffering to expressions of resilience and resistance, are appropriately recognized as the historical trauma response.

These new conceptualizations set the scene for looking into alternative responses to colonization.

Such a desire to look beyond trauma or dysfunctional responses is also promoted by Indigenous political leaders and researchers. Simon (2007b, p. 3), the current president of ITK, explains that portrayals focused only on hopelessness and dysfunction are unhelpful in addressing contemporary social health challenges within the Inuit context: “I am not denying the statistics. They are sadly accurate, and worthy of reporting. But there is tremendous hope among many of our young people.” Smith (1999, p. 92) has identified that responses such as these are common within the wider Indigenous community when encountering media accounts focused only on hopelessness: “For indigenous communities the issue is not just that they are blamed for their own failures but that it is also communicated to them, explicitly or implicitly, that they themselves have no solutions to their own problems.” As Simon (2007b, p. 3) goes on to explain, alternative perspectives to dysfunction come from listening to counter stories to dark portrayals and sharing these positive portrayals with others can help to promote greater understanding leading to more genuine partnerships and effective change.

In the recognition that much research studying the experiences of Aboriginal peoples in North America does stem from a problem-centered perspective, there are obvious benefits to searching out alternative stories or resilience responses to colonization and ongoing contemporary challenges. As Denham (2008, p. 409) expresses it: “[A]ttempting to redirect, focus on or narrate what went right has merit.” Mohatt and Rasmus (2004, p. 212) who led a

participatory research project on sobriety processes among Alaska Natives, call such approaches within research “innovative” in their “move away from studying the reasons for [. . .] social dysfunction and despair.” Research looking for alternative perspectives to social dysfunction are a step toward what Smith (1999, p. 142; p. 92) terms “indigenous projects” within her explanation of decolonizing methodologies through the rejection of the “legacy of what has come to be taken for granted as a natural link between ‘indigenous’ (or its substitutes) and ‘problem’.”

I also see a caution from the other side of the coin, however, namely the predisposition to focus only on resilience responses, and in that predisposition potentially ignoring what individuals may actually be expressing. This thinking was prompted by Frank (1995), who speaks of Langer’s analysis of Holocaust witness testimonies, noting that interviewers of witnesses subtly redirected testimonies towards narratives that represented resilience instead of chaos. There may be a tendency for researchers to look with rose-colored glasses at the experiences of Aboriginal peoples to simplify and look solely for ‘resilience of the human spirit’ stories. A perspective looking only for narratives representing a resilience conclusion may lead from a desire to repress chaos as Frank (1995, p. 100) states, there can be a “personal and culture dislike” of chaos narratives. A perspective simplistically looking only for positive outcomes, as of those looking at stories reinforcing perspectives of dysfunction are similarly unhelpful and distorting as they are equally based on stereotypes. In this case the charge is of romanticism.

Many Inuit discuss feeling the impact of stereotypical thinking. As Cournoyea (1988, p. 286) states “[t]hey glamorize and romanticize the Inuit.” Qitsualik (2001a) explains that reasons for romanticization of Inuit may have to do with a searching for an idealized society as there are “those who look to Inuit in hopes of seeing an ideal culture based upon the noblest traits of humanity” going on to explain that when she discussed “social problems in Inuit communities” in an interview, the interviewer responded by saying “she had simply been hoping that there was a, “better, happier existence out there somewhere”.”

Whether one intentionally looks for ‘resilience of the human spirit’ stories or conversely for stories of dysfunction, they are both ways of looking with attached expectations that can often be linked back to stereotypical thinking. Frank (1995, p. 101) explains that instead of listening for something specific, a listener should listen to what a narrator is actually saying:

“The human spirit is certainly resilient, but Langer forces his readers to recognize that *that is not what the witnesses are saying*.” Qitsualik (2001a) states that “misrepresentation is misrepresentation — no matter how you cut it.” Positive or negative, a stereotype can be equally oppressive. Rojas (quoting Chrystos, 2000, p. 59-60) explains: ““See that to pity me or to adore me are the same.” Despite the apparent range of images [. . .] the images of Inuit women, whether they are seen to be relatively positive or relatively negative can actually be seen to be the same oppressive ethnocentric force that renders the voicelessness of Inuit women.” Oppression through contemporary stereotypical thinking constructing Inuit as resilient or dysfunctional can be just as challenging for Inuit as oppression which occurred during historical colonization. In either case, the construct of ‘Inuit’ has been conceptualized rigidly. As Qitsualik (1999d) states “stop telling me that I’m supposed to worship the “sea goddess” Sedna, or that I’m supposed to spirit-travel as a shaman, or that I’m supposed to drum-dance or build igloos or let spirits guide me. And don’t you dare tell me that I’m somehow resistant merely because missionaries have beaten my culture into submission” explaining that this is “no different from some old-fashioned missionary telling me what to think and believe.”

Such understandings of a need to listen to individual stories and experiences and what the recounter is ‘*actually saying*’ instead of drawing on generalized narratives or formal categorizations points us towards Foucault, who Ball (1990, p. 1; p. 3) explains was “staunchly against the notion of universal or self-evident humanity” and who considered “the objectification of the subject by processes of classification and division.” Particularly illuminating to my work is Foucault’s (in Ball, 1990, p. 2) conceptualization of discourse where he explains that:

[T]he possibilities for meaning and for definition, are pre-empted through the social and institutional position held by those who use them. Meanings thus arise not from language but from institutional practices, from power relations. Words and concepts change their meanings and their effects as they are deployed within different discourses. Discourses constrain the possibilities of thought.

Drawing on this understanding, we can see that what is shown to be real or true or actual is dependent upon who is using a particular narrative and what that narrative is being used for.

There are definitions of realism relied upon by colonizing discourses whereby that which is hegemonic is what is only considered to be real or true. Duran and Duran (in Duran & Duran et al, 1998, p. 349) discuss realism as a “Eurocentric mode of representation” that has embedded within it a “biased assessment of non-Western cultures” while Bhabha (1992, p. 316) explains that colonial discourse is based upon “a system of representation, a regime of truth, that is structurally similar to realism.” In such definitions a realist position is seen to endorse a modernist perspective. Brody (2000, p. 143) describes a realist as one who advocates for “the full participation of indigenous peoples in the modernisation process.”

But is it not also ‘real’ knowledge claims one draws on when speaking one’s own perspective or in solidarity with cultures that have been subjugated by a hegemonic culture? As Qitsualik (2001a) states, after rejecting stereotypical thinking: “Personally, I prefer the real thing.” And Brody (2000, p. 143) questions, “does the real have nothing to do with what is right?” Researchers that have listened to members of minority cultures know that participant accounts can express the messiness and complexities that accompany the subjugation of one culture under another. Brody (2000, p. 144) explains that when “[o]ne kind of economy and culture overwhelms another”, anthropologists hear in “immense and painful detail” “[t]he realities of this, the pain and dismay to which it gives rise, and the attempts to find accommodations and alternatives.” Research that reports this, Brody (2000, p. 144; p. 147) claims, is not romanticism but rather being “in touch with the real” and “the most relevant kind of realism.” Brody (2000, p. 146) explains that researchers who have been labelled as romantics have often listened to ‘real’ accounts that differ somehow in their claims of truth to those definitions of reality which positivism and colonial discourse are based upon. “[A]nthropologists who have worked in hunter-gatherer societies repeatedly celebrate the humour, gentleness and everyday equality they find there” and to do so is “to identify the real, not perpetuate the romantic.” Research which omits these accounts can be similarly charged with misrepresentation. As Brody (2000, p. 146) states, “to avoid these concerns, or to write about a people without expressing their achievements, priorities and fears, is misrepresentation.”

Conducting this literature review on stereotypical narratives and the nature of truth, where I draw from perspectives from the source literature and non-Inuit authors, I came to the realization that there is a need to pay attention to the real within this research but in a way that is different from listening for an absolute, singular truth which is the essence of realism

as associated with positivism. Such an understanding invokes the critical realist position, most often associated with Bhaskar which Outhwaite (1987, p. 34) summarizes as one in which we are “ontologically bold and epistemologically cautious.” This argument for a boldness in asserting that a reality or world exists, but that we also be tentative epistemologically by ensuring we highlight that every account, version or narrative of reality is partial, subjective, perspectival and never total is most important for this research. In the following section, I review this in more depth and claim that these truths can be heard within writings by Inuit.

### **What truths?**

Historically and still very much currently, the geographical remoteness of the Arctic region necessarily impacts the presentations and representations of Arctic realities to the wider world. The remoteness of the Arctic has meant that for most of the world, understandings of the Arctic are necessarily mediated and filtered through representations of reality instead of through direct experience. As Moss (1997, p. 2) explains: “[w]hat we know of the Arctic now, even of the oral tradition, is largely filtered through a screen of literacy, so that the Arctic of scholars, adventurers, and to some extent of the Inuit themselves, is a literary construct.” Though this is true of most regions in the world, the diversity of representations of the Arctic can serve many interests (Doubleday, 2005, p. 167) and as we shall see, Inuit versions have tended to be marginalized and excluded in favor of hegemonic accounts. Drawing on this understanding and considering Ball’s (1990, p. 2) discussion of Foucauldian discourse where he explains that “[discourses] order and combine words in particular ways and exclude or displace other combinations”, we can see how it is the hegemony of particular discourses which govern which knowledge claims are considered as true.

There is a bias towards representations of the Arctic based on first-hand experience. As Hulan (2002, p. 14) explains, the spatial remoteness of the north has led to a privileging of first-hand accounts. “In particular, the distinction between “real” and “imagined” north has led to the assumption that only real first-hand experience in the geographical north authorizes one to speak about the discursive or imagined north.” Expectations still exist, as Hulan (2002, p. 18) explains, that one can “pick up a text about a ‘real’ place” that has never been seen “or a ‘real’ people” and “find out something [. . .] about what ‘actually’ is.”

Knowledge based on the experiences of Indigenous peoples themselves, however, has been silenced or repressed. As Morrisseau (in Valaskakis, 2000, p. 81) states regarding Aboriginal stories “[t]here is no end to the stories that need to be told out there, and they are not being told. I think they are being told from a perspective that does not reflect Native reality.” Outsider accounts of Aboriginal realities have dominated and been promoted. Valaskakis (2000, p. 78) states that “[s]ince the early days of non-Native contact, the stories of Aboriginal peoples have been constructed and disseminated by outsiders, for outsiders.” In the Arctic context, this is no different. Historically, outsider accounts of the Arctic have dominated. Hulan (2002, p. 81) states that “[i]mages of Inuit have been controlled, historically at least, by non-Inuit.” Csonka (2005, p. 321; p. 321-322) explains it is not that Inuit do not have a “well-developed sense of history” but, rather, “Inuit senses of history [. . .] have simply been, and remain, under-investigated and poorly known.”

The problem with hearing only outsider accounts of the Arctic is not that they are less authentic than Inuit accounts. Rather the problem is that they have been taken as authentic and have become hegemonic. Hulan (2002, p. 81) explains that “[t]he difficulty with outsiders’ versions of Inuit life is not that they are more or less authentic, but that they have been received as authentic.” As Moss (in Hamelin & Moss, 1995) explains, the danger of appropriation becomes larger when outsider accounts are taken as authoritative: “It doesn’t bother me so much that they appropriate, but that they are read as if theirs were the authentic versions. I’m not critical of Mowat or Thériault as writers—I think they’re both fine writers. What I have trouble with is the fact that they present themselves as authorities on the Arctic.” Outsider accounts are not necessarily more or less authentic than Inuit accounts of Arctic realities. The problem historically has been, however, that outsider accounts have been taken to be the only – and the authoritative – authentic accounts regarding the Arctic.

There are examples of representations of Arctic realities from Inuit perspectives being repressed when not in line with hegemonic stories taken as authentic. This was a particular feature in the marketization of Inuit art historically “when Inuit artists were actively discouraged from depicting scenes that made any reference to qallunaat influences on Inuit society or from drawing on symbols and themes from popular culture” (Searles, 2000, p. 96). In such cases, Inuit self-representations have even been influenced to fit into stereotypical or hegemonic models.

Representations of the Canadian Arctic through Inuit writings and expressions tend to tell alternative or counter stories to hegemonic accounts of the Canadian Arctic. Hulan's (2002, p. 80) discussion of realisms within the Arctic context, and the culmination of her argument in the differentiation of Inuit 'subject culture' realism within Inuit writings versus ethnographic realism helps establish this: "What happens when the "subject culture" uses realisms to speak out? The realism deployed by Inuit authors functions in ways to represent the north and to express different concerns about the north." 'Subject culture' realisms differ from other realisms in their capacity to move against dominant myths and stereotypes that have been claimed to be authentic. "When Inuit writers use realism, it functions quite differently from ethnographic realism; when the real is represented by a subject culture, realism is used both as a claim to authority and as a counter-discursive move against the representation provided in the writing by others" (Hulan, 2002, p. 81). Inuit writings tend to possess an inherent awareness of historical misrepresentations, or under-representations and therefore tend to possess an ethical responsibility that is not as present within non-Inuit accounts. "As members of a minority, the Inuit bear the burden of explanation: southern writers write as if they can imagine the Inuit to be whatever they want, but Inuit writers write knowing they have a responsibility to themselves as a misrepresented or unrepresented constituency" (Hulan, 2002, p. 76).

As Hulan (2002, p. 61) explains with a number of examples, Inuit accounts do provide different accounts of the Canadian Arctic. "Inuit self-representation tells a different story. Both traditional stories and contemporary writing represent Inuit men and women in ways that challenge non-Inuit representation." One example Hulan (2002, p. 77) offers, is the contrast of strong gender roles for women within traditional Inuit stories versus portrayals of "silent, pliant" Inuit women in anthropological accounts. Another example is with regards the loss or 'death' of Inuit culture. As Hulan (2002, p. 76) states, "[a]nthropologists seem to agree on the status of Inuit culture as "a way of life that is rapidly vanishing [. . .] [w]hen Inuit suggest that their culture is dying, however, their meaning is quite different, because it is inspired by a desire for continuity and renewal, not a wish to commemorate what is past." Amagoalik's (2000a, p. 138) discussion regarding his frustration with outsider accounts of Inuit culture highlights such contrasts. "There was always agreement between [non-Inuit] that Inuit could not survive as a people. They all agreed that Inuit culture and language "will disappear" and would be only memories and displayed on museum shelves. What disturbed me even more was the fact that they were so casual when they were talking about the "death

of Inuit culture”.” Hulan’s (2002) discussion of Inuit ‘subject culture’ writings establishes that Inuit writers tend to use their writing platforms to speak back to accounts of Inuit and the Canadian Arctic which have become hegemonic.

Further, when it comes to Inuit accounts, the literature notes a tendency for Inuit to feel uncomfortable in recounting truths that they have not personally witnessed or experienced (i.e. Stevenson, 2006; Csonka, 2005). As Kublu, Laugrand and Oosten (1999, p. 8; p. 9) express, in comparison to the west where “the idea that knowledge should be objective and true has a long history”, Inuit rely on a “completely different tradition of knowledge” where “[a]ll knowledge is social by nature and the idea of objectified true knowledge holds little attraction or fascination.” It tends to be qualifiers of experience and first-hand witnessing that gives weight of credibility to accounts and differentiates stories from myths or legends for Inuit. As Csonka (quoting Laugrand, 2005, p. 325) explains: “This classification, from the Inuit point of view, does not rest on the criteria of realism or credibility, but rather on that of proximity to the facts, not so much in time as in terms of personal connection to those who were witness to them.” Such an understanding of knowledge in this way means that as Kublu, Laugrand and Oosten (1999, p. 9) explain, “Inuit language and culture tends to set little value on generalizations” as these are considered “vague and confusing, whereas specific statements are seen as providing much more interesting information.” Deriving credibility and therefore truthfulness of accounts in this way, not from a dependency on scientific factual accuracy, draws the definition of Inuit realisms away from realism as defined by positivism into an alternative definition, one based more on first-hand experience and memories of the witness or writer.

Moving from the recognition that all realisms are representations including Inuit first-hand accounts, the political benefit of drawing on narratives authored by Inuit for the primary source material of this thesis becomes apparent. It is not that Inuit accounts offer an “essential truth about their culture by virtue of being Inuit” but rather it is crucial to listen to these accounts as through their performativity they tend to be used to “revis[e] myths and stereotypes of Inuit culture” and speak back through first-hand witnessing, memories and experiences to the historical collection of accounts on the Canadian Arctic which has been taken as the authentic story (Hulan, 2002, p. 81). Griffiths (1995, p. 239) speaking particularly of the Australian Aboriginal context, talks of “the importance of re-installing the ‘story’ of the indigenous cultures” as “crucial to their resistance.” Foucault (1973, p. 39)

argues that it is “the Faculties, which recognize that which is true only in theoretical structures” who “turn knowledge into a social privilege.” In this research, by listening to writings by Inuit, I aim to establish that knowledge which may lie outside academic theoretical structures should be seen equally as knowledge which can be true and valid. I focus on knowledge which has been silenced or marginalized historically, knowledge of a ‘subject culture’ which tends to counter, be alternative or passionately resistant to hegemonic, authoritative accounts.

### **‘Listening’ to writings by Inuit**

In this research, a consideration of writings by Inuit as my source literature has meant that 1) I am able to follow a non-invasive methodology, as these sources were already published and not constructed for this research, and 2) my research considers knowledge and accounts based on experience and memory which can be counter to hegemonic or authoritative knowledge on Inuit and the Arctic. A third reason behind this choice is that, in contrast to speech, when writing, an author has greater control of their developing writing and their published final narrative, which I briefly consider here.

When a piece of writing is written, the writer is in control of the developing narrative and the process of writing allows for a certain depth and refinement that is not offered when a narrative is recounted orally. In comparing oral and written accounts within qualitative research, Handy and Ross (2005, p. 40) note that “participants’ written accounts are more highly focused and reflective than transcripts from oral interviews.” Further, Smith (1999, p. 144) explains that Indigenous testimonies can be “translate[d] well” in “formal written documents” where the writer can “structure the responses, silencing certain types of questions and formalizing others.”

With the assurance that the written narratives chosen have been publicly released by the authors and not constructed through the frame of the researcher, choosing writings for my ‘data’ also ensures that private thoughts and experiences are not being enacted in a public realm inappropriately. One use of narrative is to “represent identities and societies” in the world (Fraser, 2004, p. 180) and Frank (1995, p. 72) says, there is an “invented quality to any voice.” As Penn (2001, p. 48) explains, however, “when we first write, we are not obliged to show it to anyone.” Writing offers space between the act of expressing one’s thoughts

privately to oneself and the act of releasing these constructions to the public world. The distance between the private and public realms reinforcing the author's agency in writing, my being able to listen to accounts alternative to hegemonic narratives and being able to follow a non-invasive methodology were the three main factors in my choice to begin with writings authored by Inuit as the source material for this research.

## **Summary**

In this chapter, I have discussed how 'listening' to sources authored by Inuit allowed me to place these writings in conversation with a literature review I had written on exploitative versus ethical research within the Canadian Arctic, speaking to and back to other texts. This followed on to a consideration of stereotypical thinking prevalent regarding Aboriginal peoples and communities and a questioning on the nature of truth. Here, I stressed how writings authored by Inuit offer truths which tend to run counter to knowledge claims on the Arctic which have been taken as authoritative. This discussion led into a review of my rationales for drawing on writings authored by Inuit as my source literature for this thesis. Along with the rationale that such an approach has allowed me to follow a non-invasive methodology (which I detailed in chapter 2) and the rationale that this approach has allowed me to consider accounts alternative to hegemonic or authoritative accounts, I also discussed that beginning with these writings facilitated a route to listen to truths as decided by the author. Moving on now to chapter 4, I carry forward the metaphor of listening within this research and discuss that as a social science researcher in this research I also 'listen' to the humanities through a critical questioning of the academic categorizations of Inuit writings or literature.

## CHAPTER 4: Locating the research: Critically questioning the categories

### **Introduction**

As a student of social sciences unfamiliar with literary methods, I wanted to clearly and transparently detail my consideration of the source literature as I was unfamiliar with literary methodologies. I do this by detailing how in my approach to these writings I have critically questioned academic categorizations. In this chapter, I present this critical analysis. A main focus of this questioning has been to see how and where labels and / or categories of literature fall short and equally where they might be useful as guides for my methodology.

### **Inuit writing and literature**

Like other Indigenous cultures, communication, story-telling, expression and preservation of knowledge and information within Inuit societies was historically oral. Kennedy (2004, p. 137) states that the orality of Inuit culture was maintained until contact with ‘western’ culture: “Inuit orature was the means by which Arctic people presented their creative voice until contact with the Europeans.” With orality as the traditional form of communication, use of writing as a form of communication has been used by Inuit much more recently than other cultures. As Csonka (2005, p. 328) explains, “Inuit have been confronted with [the] transition to the written word much more recently than most Western societies.” How much significance to attach to this argument is debated within Inuit writings.

There are suggestions that with a focus on orality, Canadian Inuit have reservations with writing as a form of communication. “Contemporary Inuit [. . .] still stress that Inuit stories, when written down, generally make no sense. Such a statement could appear exaggerated, but it clearly shows that even if Inuit fully adopted a writing system, they still believe that myths are endowed with an internal vitality. As such, they only belong to orality” (Laugrand, in Csonka, 2005, p. 328). Comparing the history of writing of Greenland Inuit to Canadian Inuit, Csonka (2005, p. 329) has observed that Canadian Inuit have been slower to writing, preferring “to express their sense of history through photographs, films, museum exhibits and, more recently, CD-ROMs and Internet websites.” Csonka (2005, p. 329) goes so far as

to question whether Nunavut Inuit will “bypass the written as privileged vehicle for the expression of historical knowledge.”

Such an argument regarding Canadian Inuit and the written word seems to define Inuit in generalized terms and does not account for anomalies or varieties of opinion from this generalized view. Inuit in Canada should be considered, however, as a group of individuals, as one would consider any cultural or language group. As Inuk scholar Rojas (2000, p. 9) explains “one cannot claim generally that members of a particular category of people would all express themselves in the same particular way.” Some Inuit do prefer to express themselves through media other than writing. Kunuk (in Sidimus & Kunuk, 2004), for example, cofounder of Isuma productions, has a preference for expression via new forms of media which he explains matches well to the Inuit oral tradition: “Since we have an oral history, nothing is written down; everything is taught by what you see. Your father's fixing up the harpoon; you watch how he does it and you learn from it. How he cuts the blocks and builds an igloo. For the medium I work in now, it was exactly the same thing. You don't need pen and paper to document what you see. Oral history and new technology match.” In addition, increasingly new websites and increased access to internet technology in the Arctic make it easier for individuals to express themselves using new forms of media.<sup>14</sup>

However, although there are some who suggest that Inuit in Canada tend to not prefer writing as a form of communication, others dispute this claim. Gedalof (1980, p. 7) explains that Canadian Inuit began to use writing as a form of communication well over a hundred years ago explaining that “[w]riting wasn't part of traditional Inuit culture, but once missionaries had devised various systems for putting Inuktitut on paper, the [Inuit] took to it with enthusiasm.” Gedalof (1980, p. 8) further explains that “several generations of Inuit writers have worked to preserve their culture, express their views, and communicate with their neighbours in the North and South.” Kublu, Laugrand and Oosten (1999, p. 8) note this as well, stating that “[f]or a long time, Inuit were considered to be a non-literate people. All knowledge was thought to be passed on orally. In fact, this image is distorted. Syllabics were introduced to Inuit more than a hundred years ago and Inuit have been reading and writing since then. Proportionally, Inuit may have been even more literate than the average European country at the turn of the century.” But Kublu, Laugrand and Oosten (1999, p. 8)

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<sup>14</sup> i.e. Isuma TV (<http://www.isuma.tv/?site/aboutUs>).

emphasize as well that the introduction of reading and writing tied to Christianity has meant that “literary traditions held a specific place in Inuit society. Literacy related to Christianity (reading the Bible and hymn books), and to practical purposes such as letters, accounting, and even the writing of diaries” so that “the passing on of knowledge still remained based on oral traditions.”

A wide array of sources written by Canadian Inuit further disputes the argument that most Canadian Inuit are reserved about using the written form as a source of communication and expression of knowledge and information. As Ipellie (1996f), a prolific Inuk writer and artist who passed away in 2007, states: writing for Inuit “is now part and parcel of living in a wage economy in our communities as opposed to living off the land as our ancestors once did.” Mary Panigusiq Cousins,<sup>15</sup> who also passed away in 2007, is often cited for having been a strong advocate of Inuit writing and literature early on in the 1950s and throughout her life (i.e. Gedalof, 1980, p. 8; Grace, 2001, p. 56; Crandall, 2000, p. 153). Ipellie (1996b) has written that “[t]he emergence of an Inuit literary and publishing culture in Canada’s Arctic will continue to flourish and it’s about time.” Writing as an expression of information and culture has also been seen as a vehicle for transferring the oral tradition. Weetaluktuk (1995, p. 3), as past editor, explains regarding *Inuktitut* magazine: “Inuktitut has successfully transferred the oral traditions of the Inuit onto paper.”

Cultures with a greater focus on orality have argued against the exclusionary nature of the label of ‘literature’. As Kuokkanen (2001, p. 80) states, “[o]ne of the most persistent prejudices in the Western literary canon is that only certain categories of experience can be recognized as ‘literature’. We have learned that literature means written books and that the existence of literature is a sign of a ‘civilized’ people.” Specifically referencing the Sami culture, Kuokkanen (2001, p. 81) goes on to argue for an expansion of the definition of literature. “For many Indigenous scholars, however, using the concept of ‘literature’ to refer only to written texts implies judging everything else – the whole storytelling tradition – as being subordinate to written forms. If literature is to be redefined from the Indigenous point of view, oral traditions must be included since they play a crucial role also in contemporary writing.”

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<sup>15</sup> Mary’s surname has been cited differently in various sources. One variation is due to her married status (where Cousins was added) while another is a variation of Inuktitut spelling, i.e. Mary Panegoosho.

Within much of Inuit writing and literature, orality is very much apparent and maintained. Gedalof (1980, p. 8-9) explains that “[t]he very earliest Inuit writing was simply oral literature recorded on paper.” Wachowich (in Wachowich et al, 1999, p. 9), who co-wrote a book with three Inuit women on their life histories, recalls how the oral tradition was evident within the telling of these stories and was maintained when written down.

Each of the three collections of stories in its own way illustrates distinguishing features of oral tradition: a poetic quality, an oscillation between the present and an ever-changing past, and (sometimes bewildering) ellipses of memory. Stories were told and later retold to me within the context of other stories, or in combination with new tales, with different details and emphasis. Properties of time and place changed quickly as memories provoked new thoughts and recollections. Each narrator connected past, present and future in her own way as she tapped into her own distinct ordering systems for events in her life.

A variety of contemporary Inuit and Inuit-advocacy writing projects still do accomplish a direct preservation of oral stories and traditions in such a manner.<sup>16</sup>

Contemporary Inuit writing and literature in English does also tend to possess direct links to the orality of Inuit culture whereby diverse stylistic forms are used for written text so that it more clearly resembles oral speech. Hulan (2002, p. 79) explains that Inuit writings and literature in English were “once excluded by the anglo-Canadian academy because of challenges [they] presented to received notions of form and genre” but have “been newly acknowledged.” Such ‘challenges’ include differences between English spoken and written by Inuit with English more typically used by non-Inuit. In the introduction to an anthology of Inuit literature, Gedalof (1980, p. 10) notes that English written by Inuit “doesn’t read like English Canadian literature” as “Inuit don’t speak English like people in the South.”<sup>17</sup> Like Parejo Vellido (2000, p. 237; p. 237) notes regarding Native women’s autobiography, Inuit writing and literature can contain a “hybrid form” “which fuses the oral to the Western written tradition.” Hulan (2002, p. 79) reinforces such observations explaining that “Inuit

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<sup>16</sup> i.e. Oosten, J. & F. Laugrand (Eds.) (1999). *Interviewing Inuit Elders Series*. Iqaluit: Nunavut Arctic College.

<sup>17</sup> Although English used within Inuit literature and writing does sometimes differ to English used by non-Inuit by possessing a more direct link to orality, this is not always the case. Petrone (1988a, p. xiii) explains that in the Canadian Arctic, “[s]ince the early 1960s the intensity and quality of education have increased with an ever-growing number of young people writing in English” which has meant, as Petrone (1988b, p. 201) notes that Inuit literature in English as used by non-Inuit has been a growing genre since the mid-1970s, explaining further that the growth of Inuit literature with a greater fluency in English was impacted through the increasing number of Inuit political organizations and Native media.

texts in English merge conventions from oral and written Inuit literature with forms from other literary traditions in order to preserve tradition and to accommodate modernity.”

Stretching the boundaries of the concept of literature to include orality within text can also be exhibited by writing which aims to depict an experience of culture. Some Inuit writers, for example, encourage their readers to listen to writings as storytelling as a way of experiencing Inuit culture. Ties to storytelling and orality are maintained through what Petrone (1988b, p. 201) calls the “ancestral inheritance.” Of particular note is Petrone’s (1988b, p. 202) observation that contemporary Inuit writers continue to use “the traditional practice of using satire for humour and ridicule.” Petrone (1988b, p. 202) states that, “[u]sed for contemporary social and political themes, it is a powerful weapon in the hands of such writers as Zebedee Nungak, Alootook Ipellie, and Alexis Utatnaq.” Sometimes the onus is put on the reader and the reading experience to elicit an indirect link to orality. Qitsualik (2004, p. 36) notes, regarding her story *Skraeling*: “Some of the characters in this tale are bound to be doing and believing things that are puzzling to non-Inuit readers. Good. We live in a time when critical thinking is not “hip”, when we demand a thorough explanation of everything presented to us [ . . . ] my feeling is that if the reader wants to understand a people, he or she has to live with those people for a while. And a story is the ultimate magic by which this may occur.”

There are suggestions that a stretching of the literature category can be accomplished by adapting the category to better reflect how literature written by Indigenous writers can exhibit such oral or storytelling components. Reflecting on a course she teaches on Aboriginal and racial minority Canadian writers, Mukherjee (1998, p. 82) explains that “Native writers force us to rethink the nature of literature and the literary tradition.” Explaining how this rethinking is accomplished, Mukherjee (1998, p. 81-82) states that Native writers “speak[] of the ‘healing’ function of writing, by substituting the concept of storytelling for ‘literature’.” Evidence of writing as a therapeutic process has been discussed by a number of Inuit authors.<sup>18</sup>

Despite the stretching of the term literature beyond western categories through direct and indirect links to orality within texts written by Inuit, written literature, even that which contains links to orality, is only one aspect of Inuit literature. This has similarities with

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<sup>18</sup> See chapter 10 for a more in-depth discussion of this.

Hoy's (2001, p. 23) observation on Native literature in her work: "Though published texts are the focus of *How Should I Read These?* and are the forms privileged within mainstream Western literary culture, these need to be understood as only one part of that larger Native orature/literature continuum and as deriving meaning from within that tradition." The same is true for Inuit literature. There is much Inuit literature that is oral literature. Ipellie (1996b) notes, however that if Inuit who lived in the past had access to the same tools for writing that are available today, there would have been a more direct linking between the two literatures. "Looking back to Inuit oral tradition, I can't help but wonder how the Inuit written literary tradition may have evolved to this day if they had a writing system intact and access to the computer I am using today. I am sure we the descendants would be reading some great literary accomplishments from thousands of years ago by wonderful writers in the land of nomads."

Through the use of both traditional and contemporary conventions and forms, Inuit literature has been called a literature of "cross-fertilization" and "a literature of cross-cultural contact" (Petrone, 1988b, p. 202; Gedalof, 1980, p. 8) though Petrone (1988b, p. 202) notes as well that there is also evidence of "an imaginative capacity to create new forms." Petrone (1988b, p. 201) further explains that political consciousness evident in contemporary Inuit writing distinguishes contemporary Inuit from their ancestors. "[W]ith a new political consciousness, unknown to their ancestors, [contemporary Inuit writers] are writing a literature of opinion and information, largely derivative and imitative of western models, reflecting the new realities of political and social change." Often making use of its cross-cultural nature, Inuit writing tends to inherently respond to colonization of Inuit society and culture. Gedalof (1980, p. 9) notes that "[Inuit] began to write about their own personal experiences, realizing that only in each person's individual response could the response of a people be captured." Petrone (1988b, p. 201) explains that writing forums have given Inuit space to express their feelings on the changes that Inuit society has undergone through historical colonization and ongoing acculturation and changes within Inuit society. "Acculturated Inuit young people are articulating the feelings of a generation caught in a crisis of identity trying to determine a way of life that will protect their traditions and at the same time cope with the massive outside influences in their lives." Though as Gedalof (1980, p. 9) notes, "[t]he range of Inuit experience is captured in the diversity of Inuit literature", much of it contains an inherent cross-cultural awareness while it is also used as a space to respond to historical and contemporary forms of colonization in the Arctic.

## **Native literature**

Inuit literature is part of a larger genre of literature within North America which many refer to under a 'Native literature' category, though, like Kuokkanen (2001), many Aboriginal scholars argue for a broader concept of literature than that used most prominently in the west. Indigenous literature and Native literature labels are problematized as homogenizing categories and "inappropriately broad" (Hoy, 2001, p. 6). As Acoose (2001, p. 46; p. 47) explains, "'Native literature' will simply not do," explaining that such a label blankets various literatures under a single category: "Because our literatures are inextricably connected to our communities, nations, clans, and families, we must acknowledge that there are numerous bodies of Indigenous literatures within Canada alone."

Other problems exist in the application of such labels. This labelling can also be seen to be as Hoy (2001, p. 6) states, "inappropriately narrow." Indigenous authors explain that the application of labels such as 'Native writer' mean that their subject position of 'writer' and other subject positions get subsumed by the 'Native' portion of the label. Hoy (quoting Maracle, 2001, p. 8) states that Salish-Metis writer Lee Maracle "protests that her Indigenousness, her location quite specifically as '*Native* writer,' '*Native* woman,' not as 'writer' or 'woman', is the restrictive grounds of her authority for white readers or white feminists."

Complicating this debate is the obvious catch-22 whereby writers who are Indigenous struggle not only with not wanting to be pigeonholed but also with not wanting to always dismiss such a label as it offers a recognition of unique and distinctive characteristics of Indigenous writings. This argument Hoy (2001, p. 8) describes as "epistemic privilege" or the message from Osenontion (Marlyn Kane, Mohawk) when addressing non-Indigenous feminist scholars and students (in Hoy, 2001, p. 8) "that *we are absolutely different!*" Such an argument lies close to the danger of essentializing Indigeneity. As Acoose (2001, p. 37-38) states, "[a]s I struggle with issues of theorizing or interrogating Indigenous literatures from an Indigenous cultural context, I am only too well aware of the dangers of essentializing Indigenousness." But it also lies close to the appropriation-of-voice debate, the belief that non-Indigenous people should not speak from the perspective of someone who is Indigenous, particularly in creative writing from a first-person perspective. For example, Armstrong (in

Hoy, 2001, p. 8) states “I don’t feel that any non-Indian person could represent our point of view adequately.”

Further complicating this debate is the reality that writing by Indigenous people exists in a world with a non-Indigenous hegemony. Hoy (2001, p. 13) explains that “Native writing, editing, publishing, performing, reviewing, teaching, and reading necessarily take place, at least partially, in contexts shaped and controlled by the discursive and institutional power of dominant white culture in Canada.” Hoy (2001, p. 13) explains how non-Indigenous individuals often make up the majority of the, sometimes unintentional or undesired, audience of Indigenous literature.

In *I Am Woman*, Lee Maracle begins by declaring that she does not intend to write for the European in Canada, that intimate conversation with her own people is overdue. Within that very paragraph, though, the third-person pronouns applied to a white readership begin to slide into direct address [. . .] This slipperiness Maracle tackles directly later in the book: ‘It sickens my spirit to have to address your madness, but you stand in front of my people, and to speak to each other, we must first rid ourselves of you.’

Acoose (2001, p. 47) insists that Indigenous communities need to “take control of our own stories, define our own critical methods and language, and resurrect our respective cultural epistemologies.” Ruffo (in Acoose, 2001, p. 47) explains that outsiders from a specific culture need to undergo “a degree of cultural initiation” whereby they “seek out the necessary prerequisite information so that any attempt to address [an Indigenous culture’s] literature will be more than merely superficial or, in the extreme, inaccurate.” Acoose (2001, p. 50) promotes King’s suggestion that a “critical language for Indigenous literatures” be used in place of the problematized ‘Native literature’ label and lists examples of more acceptable terms such as “tribal, polemical, associational and interfusional literatures.”

This debate extends more broadly when we consider that the category of Canadian literature has itself been problematized by different authors as exclusionary, where for instance Mukherjee (1998, p. 77) has indicated many feel “‘Canadian’ is a code word for white.” Mukherjee (1998, p. 70) explains that writings by Canadian Inuit women in particular have expressed “alienation from a national entity called ‘Canada’” an expression that is common within writings of other Aboriginal and other minority groups as well.

Inuit literature and writing is often excluded, marginalized or included very minimally in anthologies and forums of Aboriginal and Canadian literature. Examining the representation of the Inuit creative voice in Aboriginal and Canadian literature anthologies, Kennedy (2004, p. 143) found, for example, that “there appear to be significantly fewer Inuit works in individual collections by individual Inuk authors or within many Aboriginal collections and general Canadian Literature collections.” Further, Kennedy (2004, p. 138), who conducted research examining the teaching of Inuit orature and literature at Canadian post-secondary institutions, found that only Nunavut Arctic College offered courses specifically on Inuit literature while 26 of 40 universities and colleges that participated in the study included some Inuk authors in their Aboriginal or Canadian literature courses.

With this marginal inclusion in the wider anthologies and forums, it seems that Inuit literature struggles in some ways less and in some ways more with the debates and controversies that trouble the wider Native literature anthologies and forums. In some ways, there is not the same recognition or discussion of the terminology and representation debates and therefore less critical awareness, reflection and thinking on the need for drawing out a space for Inuit definitions of Inuit literature within the wider genres. Conversely, however, since Inuit literature is marginalized within anthologies and forums of Native literature, some of the challenges that directly meet and challenge the more major literatures within the wider genre, do not touch Inuit literature. For example, with the minimal inclusion in Native literature spaces that can be created and maintained by those outside Indigenous communities, Inuit literature and writing tends to exist more naturally in spaces that Inuit communities have created or in forums that Inuit maintain close observation and control of. Ipellie’s (1996b) discussion of Inuit writing (in an Arctic newspaper) is a case in point. “Today, we can be less afraid about having our Inuit voice appropriated as it used to be not so long ago by writers from other lands and cultures. I, and my contemporaries, will see to it that it will never happen again.”

### **Post-colonial literature**

Literature authored by Aboriginal people in North America has also been categorised in some forums as a ‘post-colonial literature’. In *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*, Ashcroft, et al (2002, p. 2) define literatures of formerly colonized nations (“Africa countries, Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Caribbean countries, India,

Malaysia, Malta, New Zealand, Pakistan, Singapore”) as post-colonial literatures in “that they emerged in their present form out of the experience of colonization and asserted themselves by foregrounding the tension with the imperial power, and by emphasizing their differences from the assumptions of the imperial centre.” Ashcroft, et al (2002, p. 142) place the writings of Aboriginal peoples such as “Maoris, Inuit and Australian Aborigines” in a special position in that “they are doubly marginalized – pushed to the psychic and political edge of societies which themselves have experienced the dilemma of colonial alienation” and therefore discuss these literatures as having “a capacity, far greater than that of white settler societies, to subvert received assumptions about literature.” Explaining further, Ashcroft et al (2002, p. 143) discuss how Indigenous writing has similar “general historical problems of post-colonial writing” in that these writings have been “incorporated into the national literatures of the settler colonies as an ‘extension’ rather than as a separate discourse.”

Grace (2001) and Hulan (2002) look particularly at Inuit writing and literature in relation to terminologies as introduced by Ashcroft et al (2002). In her consideration of Inuit writing and literature under her description of the north “writing back”, Grace (2001, p. 234), defining the north in a strictly Canadian context, explains that these writings “constitute a powerful counter-discourse in which the North can be, as it were, heard, in which it breaks an imposed silence, and through which it eventually writes back.” Speaking of the placement of literatures of Aboriginal peoples by post-colonial scholars and theorists, Hulan (2002, p. 75; p. 74), acknowledges that “the feature of Inuit writing has affinities with post-colonial literatures as theorized in *The Empire Writes Back*” and explains more clearly that “the task of literary criticism of aboriginal writing should be understanding its own features, not embedding it in a national or post-colonial canon.” Hulan (2002, p. 74) argues for Inuit literature to be examined and seen as “valuable beyond how it illuminates non-aboriginal literature.”

Many Indigenous intellectuals argue, similarly, for the rejection of the category post-colonial altogether. King (in Acoose, 2001, p. 49; p. 50) states that he is “quite unwilling to use these terms” explaining that “[w]hile post-colonialism purports to be a method by which we can begin to look at those literature which are formed out of the struggle of the oppressed against the oppressor, the colonized against the colonizer, the term itself assumes that the starting point for that discussion is the advent of Europeans in North America.” And Armstrong (in Acoose, 2001, p. 49) argues that there “isn’t a postcolonial literature” as “we are immersed in

colonial literature.” Though there were no examples of Inuit writers addressing the category post-colonial in the source literature reviewed, such discussions by other Aboriginal scholars speak towards the inappropriateness of such a term for writings authored by Inuit.

### **Resistance literature**

Indigenous writings and literatures often inherently resist hegemonic discourse and histories written and maintained by colonialism and, in so doing, are at the “forefront” of what de Sousa Santos (2006, p. 24; p. 24; p. x) calls “the struggle for an ecology of recognitions” or evidencing and making visible diversities which “characterize the differentiated and unequal dynamics of global capitalism” making them, therefore, part of an “alternative, counter-hegemonic kind of globalization.” Armstrong (in Acoose, 2001, p. 49) speaks of Indigenous literatures as “rooted in an inner voice of resistance [. . .] resistance to colonialism and resistance to the whole culture clash that is assimilationist in nature.” Kuokkanen (2001, p. 80) identifies writings from “people on the margins” as “a political and social act” whereby “[m]inority and Indigenous writers have often stressed their critical and oppositional relationship towards mainstream societies.”

Resistance literature is a category increasingly being applied to Indigenous writing and literatures though a foremost text drawing on such a label analyzes “literature that emerged significantly as part of the organized national liberation struggles and resistance movements in Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East” specifically (Harlow, 1987, p. xvii). Though excluding Aboriginal writing and literature within the North American context, Harlow’s (1987) analysis sets the stage and provides the context for locating literatures by Aboriginal, and more specifically Inuit, writers as resistance literature. Of particular relevance is Harlow’s (1987, p. xvi) questioning of the applicability of “contemporary literary critical theory in the West” to “the literary output of geopolitical areas which stand in opposition to the very social and political organization within which the theories are located and to which they respond.” Such questioning is particularly relevant as Aboriginal scholars have raised the same concern and have in different contexts begun to develop Aboriginal-based literary criticisms (i.e. see LaRocque, 1999, chapter six).

Resistance literature as a category has been used to define Aboriginal writings by some intellectuals within the North American context (i.e. Strong-Wilson, 2008, p. 62; LaRocque,

1999). LaRocque (1999, p. 2) analyzes Aboriginal literature within the Canadian context in depth on its potential categorization as resistance literature and concludes that “Native writers have indeed produced Native resistance literature.” LaRocque (1999, p. 2) discusses how Native writing and scholarship as seen as resistance literature exists in a critical position for promoting decolonization, particularly in responding to and promoting critical awareness and understanding within non-Indigenous “scholarly, critical and constitutional treatment of Native peoples” where “much more work remains to be done.” Although Inuit writing and literature has not been located as resistance literature in the source literature, more general location of writings by Inuit as resistance literature is identified by LaRocque (1999, p. 301) who locates Native writing within the Canadian context as resistance literature and Inuit writing within her consideration of Native writing.

Locating Inuit writing as resistance literature is also reinforced by examining the relevance of writings by Inuit under defined characteristics of resistance literature. Godard (in Parejo Vadillo, 2000, p. 239) defines resistance literature with three characteristics: “first, it is ‘a political and politicized activity’ engaged with ‘formal experimentation,’ [ . . . ] Secondly, experimentation leads to the ‘exploration of the formal limitations of the literary codes’ imposing ‘*historical* demands and responsibilities on a reader.’ The last characteristic of resistance literature is that it is produced within the struggle for decolonization.” Parejo Vadillo (2000, p. 239) uses such a definition of resistance literature to define Native women’s autobiography, calling such writing “a counter-hegemonic mode of writing, following both the oral and written tradition” which achieves decolonization through construction of “a Native identity.” Inuit writing is often political and decolonizing and often combines oral and written traditions within textual form, which through its contrast to hegemonic styles could be said to ‘experiment’ with different styles and forms. Inuit writers often work to question hegemonic accounts accomplished in some writings by ‘reversing the gaze’ (discussed in more detail in chapter 10). Addressing the third characteristic of resistance literature, Inuit writers often rewrite local histories in ways that are oppositional to hegemonic meta-narratives and histories and in this way, aim to resist and decolonize.

### **Testimonial literature**

Another major genre that is also useful to consider regarding Inuit literature is the genre of testimonial literatures or testimonio. This label is often not applied beyond the Latin

American context, however it is useful to consider as many characteristics of the genre can equally be recognized within Indigenous writings. Smith (1999, p. 28) discusses how Indigenous writings can be considered as testimonies in the critical role they play both in “rewriting and rerighting” hegemonic histories explaining that “Indigenous peoples want to tell our own stories, write our own versions, in our own ways, for our own purposes. It is not simply about giving an oral account or a genealogical naming of the land and the events which raged over it, but a very powerful need to give testimony to and restore a spirit, to bring back into existence a world fragmented and dying.” In such ways, Indigenous writings share similar characteristics with the testimonio genre which Nance (2006, p. 7) defines as “a body of works in which speaking subjects who present themselves as somehow “ordinary” represent a personal experience of injustice, whether directly to the reader or through the offices of a collaborating writer, with the goal of inducing readers to participate in a project of social justice.”

Characterizations and analyses of the genre which Nance (2006) outlines, are particularly relevant for this study when considering that writings authored by Inuit hold many similar characteristics to the testimonio genre. In fact, in a notable exception to this label being solely applicable to Latin American literatures, Behr (2004, p. 130) considers one particular text authored by an Inuk as a testimonio – *I, Nuligak* – which he describes as “the first book length testimonio by a Canadian Eskimo.” As Behr (2004, p. 130) summarizes, “the principal narrator, Nuligak [. . .] articulates how he and his people, the Kitigariukmeut tribe of the Mackenzie Delta, were dispossessed of their native traditions and lands by whites.” The placement of this text authored by an Inuk within the testimonio genre is important as an example for this thesis as I have also come to consider the source literature as testimonials on colonization in the Canadian Arctic, and my process of reading as a witnessing of those testimonies.

Further, Inuit testimonials are evident within the canon of Inuit literature, and have been used to bear witness to a number of historical and contemporary realities within the Canadian Arctic. For example, they have been drawn upon within the Canadian Government Royal Commission on The High Arctic Relocation (see Dussault & Erasmus, 1994), and Isuma (2010) has produced a film examining Inuit perspectives of the relocation of Inuit families from Inukjuak to the High Arctic community of Grise Fiord. For a project which I worked on at ITK, Inuit testimonials regarding experiences of climate and environmental change were

relied upon with aims to increase global awareness and action on climate change (Nickels et al., 2005). Inuit testimonials have been drawn on, in these and other cases, often for the purpose of speaking to and back to historical and contemporary authoritative accounts regarding the Canadian Arctic.

## **Summary**

In this chapter I have considered formal or academic categorizations of writings by Inuit. This analysis has clarified how the diversity and complexity of perspectives regarding labels and categories of this literature requires that care be used in their application. As my research is located within the social sciences but relies on literary methods which are more typical within the humanities, this analysis is also a way of listening to the humanities. Through this analysis I have come to see the need to reject the use of post-colonial with regards Inuit writing as the term itself assumes that colonization is past. I have also discussed how terminologies which describe literature written by Inuit as resistance have relevance for my thesis. It is important to note, however, that applicability of academic or formal terminologies is not what makes these writings resistant. While writings by Inuit – as with other primary sources written with aims to resist, subvert or displace hegemonic narratives – may or may not be formally termed resistance literature within academic discourses, it is their capacity to write or speak back to hegemonic and authoritative narratives which mark them as resistant. Application of a terminology of testimonial literature to Inuit writings was also discussed as relevant for this thesis. It is particularly relevant for my reading methodology where I have considered aspects of listening and witnessing as part of the reading process. In chapter 5, moving forward from this consideration of classification processes, I draw on a notion of intertextuality which helps to highlight the partial nature of a text and which I have drawn on throughout this thesis in questioning processes, such as academic labelling and categorization, which fix concepts as rigid.

## CHAPTER 5: Locating the research: Intertextuality

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I detail my understanding of truth and discuss how intertextuality has informed my rationale behind writing the thesis text as a conversation. I first discuss how I conceptualize truth as multiple, fluid and achieving partial, temporary singularity through intersubjectivity. Next, I review how in the writing of this text, I have encountered challenges with language which have reinforced drawing on intertextuality within this thesis. Finally, in discussing how intertextuality allows for conscious partiality, I return to address the questioning I encountered on positionality. Here I explain that such questions can perpetuate divisions and exclusivities and I propose that within research we can write in ways that are different than direct representation.

### **Truths and imaginations behind the text**

Recounting her experience during the Spanish flu epidemic in Nunatsiavut, Joshua (1995, p. 22) makes the disclaimer: “I can only remember what I am telling you now.” Inherent within this statement is the recognition that there are other truths that exist but that Joshua feels she cannot access. Similarly, Qitsualik (1999b), in describing her reaction in coming across an old can and pair of sun goggles in an ancient tent ring on the land, states that “[i]t was indeed tempting to tie all the clues together to make a larger story within which all occurrences seemed to make sense. But the truth, I have to remind myself now as then, is that the old sites, their encampments and their graves, were always layer upon layer of intermingled history and happening.” A similar example is given by Law (2004, p. 129) in recounting an anecdote where a researcher asked an Australian Aboriginal to comment on the ceremonies of a neighbouring group, and was told that the interviewee felt it was “none of my business.” Such definitions of truth are explained by Law (2004, p. 129) who discusses that within Aboriginal cultures, “there are multiple possible realities – and indefiniteness – but this is not experienced as a problem.” If singular truths do come to occur, they are recognized as created through relations. Within Aboriginal belief systems, truths which Law (2004, p. 129) terms “narratives” are “negotiated and renegotiated.” In this context, Law (2004, p. 129) explains that when a singular truth is achieved, partiality and the relational nature of that truth

are recognized. “The implication is that if singularity is achieved (and the extent to which this is the case is contingent and uncertain) then this is a local and momentary gathering or accomplishment, rather than something that stays in place.” Such examples highlight how worldviews, when in accordance with ‘traditional’ notions of Aboriginal cultural perspectives and ways of being, show openness towards truth as not absolute but multiple and influenced largely by perspective.

Just as Inuit recognize the relational or perspectival nature of singular truths, the same can be argued of singular truths within research. For example, Law (2004, p. 59) explains that “[r]ealities are not explained by practices and beliefs but are instead produced in them. They are produced, and have a life, in relations.” A truth can shift depending on the lens through which we are being offered a view. I have come to conceptualize truth in this manner, becoming aware of how it is multiple, fluid, partial and created through intersubjectivities.

My perspective on truth within research has also been influenced through imaginations not easily expressed in language. Ipellie (1993, p. xix) speaks to such imaginations in the Arctic context as he discusses the real as encompassing both the true and the imagined. “The Arctic is a world unto its own where events are imagined yet real and true to life, as we experience them unfolding each day.” In writing this thesis, I have encountered intangible elements through the reading and writing and in reflection or dreams about the work. Here I refer to interesting coincidences, subtle nudges or new connections which have often allowed me to reface my thesis anew. Thrift (2008, p. 16) similarly notes what he terms “poetics of the unthought, of what Veseley (2004) calls the latent world, a well-structured pre-reflective world which, just because it lacks explicit articulation, is not therefore without grip.” I have tried to offer in the text some hints at these imaginations and, although these have been difficult to articulate, their presence lies behind the written text.

Further, there are imaginations – aspects of truth – that sit amongst the discussions of this thesis that are unknowable. Describing Inuk stories of the past, Petrone quotes Rasmussen (in 1988a, p. 2) as saying “[t]hese stories were made when all unbelievable things could happen.” Within my Master’s research, an Inuk woman, speaking of her birth, said, “[t]hey delivered me as a boy. They delivered me in Inuktitut way [. . .] I was a boy for few minutes!” Explaining further, she said, “[t]his is one thing Qallunaat don’t get [. . .] but it do happen” (Moquin, 2004, p. 170). As Irigaray (2004, p. 24) states, “[i]t is when we do not

know the other, or when we accept that the other remains unknowable to us, that the other illuminates us in some way, but with a light that enlightens us without our being able to comprehend it, to analyse it, to make it ours.” Such a perspective has been very important to this work as my aim has been to bring different perspectives together, not to encompass one by another.

This has also meant, however, that a challenge has been how to present these varieties of truth, imagination and unknowables in a written text so that their prism-like qualities remain evident but still relying on a linear format that an academic thesis necessitates. The text becomes a place of synthesis where I stand at the crossroads based upon these understandings that realities are multiple and singular truths are created through relations. Such a perspective is facilitated through a poststructuralist concept of intertextuality.

Intertextuality is a concept used within poststructuralism to recognize that texts contain multiple, sometimes conflicting voices and that the text itself inherently possesses awareness that it is produced through the reworking of realities and voices to represent something else. Murfin and Ray (2003, p. 363) explain that “Julia Kristeva coined the term intertextuality to refer to the fact that a text is a “mosaic” of preexisting texts whose meanings it reworks and transforms.” Short (as cited in Strong-Wilson, 2008, p. 54) defines the term as “a process of making meaning through connections across present and past texts.” The singular meanings created through intertextuality are, however, always recognized as temporary as this concept facilitates an inherent awareness by the text of its partiality. The notion of partiality and temporariness afforded by a poststructural definition of a research text as an intertext means understanding that writings or representations derived from research are considered as partial snapshots of realities. As Clandinin and Connelly (2000, p. 84) explain with regards narrative inquiry, the texts derived “are always interpretive, always composed by an individual at a certain moment of time. As researchers, we may take a photograph as a field text, but that photograph is one telling, one shot, one image.”

While some speak of the concept of ‘intertextuality’ as being potentially used as a colonial tool when applied to the writings of Indigenous people,<sup>19</sup> I see intertextuality as decolonizing

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<sup>19</sup> As Brydon (1991, p. 195-196) states, “[w]hen directed against the Western canon, postmodernist techniques of intertextuality, parody and literary borrowing may appear radical and even potentially

as it allows for the consideration that a research text is a constructed form that can be shown to have an inherent awareness that singular truths created through the text are partial, forged through relations inherent therein and therefore questioning the notion of one hegemonic truth. I define intertextuality similar to Law's (2004, p. 131) explanation of things regarded within Aboriginal mediations, "[i]f they hold their shape at all it is because they are participating in their continuing recreation." Intertextuality inherently carries within it a space for dialogue as texts can be placed in conversation with each other whereby singular, and potentially alternative or counter, meanings can be made.

### **Considering language**

With writing as a methodology, draft writing has been a significant part of this research but when it came time to fix this piece of writing as permanent I ran into concerns with language. Constantly seeing the partiality of my thoughts within this thesis, it was difficult to reach an end or make my temporary and partial thoughts permanent and fixed. Such a challenge became particularly obvious when I returned to previous writings on the need to question rigid binaries and labelling, after having just written three draft chapters which I felt contained rigid and static definitions. This concern made me revisit my previous writings to ensure that I was critically questioning the defining I had done – but it also brought forward concerns with language, as it was beginning to feel like the use of language necessarily meant a labelling or defining. In language, a word stands in for greater meanings and language therefore inherently represents. Moving from draft writing to trying to make this into a final permanent written text brought my concerns with the inherent representational nature of language to the fore.<sup>20</sup>

But language can also be conceptualized less rigidly. hooks (1994, p. 167) states that "[I]ike desire, language disrupts, refuses to be contained within boundaries." Such a radical perspective of language has been something I have been working towards in writing this text intertextually as a major theme of this thesis has been the critical questioning and

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revolutionary. When directed against native myths and stories, these same techniques would seem to repeat the imperialist history of plunder and theft."

<sup>20</sup> Such concerns are rooted in Derrida's discussion of *différance* and his arguments regarding language as necessarily representative but also unable to accomplish pure representation (i.e. Derrida, 1996, p. 216).

problematizing of rigid categories, constructions and definitions. To write a thesis – and to use language – is to necessarily represent but I have attempted to use language in such a way that I am not imposing a language but learning different languages and terminologies and placing them side-by-side to see where they fit together and where they differ.

Such an understanding of language also requires a tolerance on the part of the reader. Inuit writers sometimes use English words differently than I use them but rather than translate their meanings – or standardize all terminologies – into rigid and singular definitions that I set out, I ask that the reader of this text recognize “that we know in fragments” as hooks (1994, p. 174; p. 173-174) states, explaining that:

[I]t is evident that we must change conventional ways of thinking about language, creating spaces where diverse voices can speak in words other than English or in broken, vernacular speech. This means that at a lecture or even in a written work there will be fragments of speech that may or may not be accessible to every individual. Shifting how we think about language and how we use it necessarily alters how we know what we know.

In reading this text, I ask that readers understand that I am drawing on a multitude of voices, perspectives and meanings that sit behind singular words and I do not define these into singular, limited and narrow meanings. I ask that we work at being open to multiple definitions, approximate meanings and allowing for different truths to speak. It is by not always rigidly defining where there is space to create bridges of understanding across differences.

A rejection of a rigid view of language, so that being within language can be seen as a place of dialogue, has also allowed me to return to language in a way where I can speak with my own voice, as I am able to critically question it as I learn to use it. hooks (1994, p. 168) states that when we are just learning to speak, belief in a rigid understanding that language is colonizing (or necessarily representative) can limit and disempower us: “I resist the idea of the “oppressor’s language,” certain that this construct has the potential to disempower those of us who are just learning to speak, who are just learning to claim language as a place where we make ourselves subject.”

As I work in English and draw from texts authored by Inuit and written in English, I must acknowledge English’s inherent ‘imperialism’ as Phillipson (1992, p. 47) makes clear: “the

dominance of English is asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages.” But I also recognize that hooks’ (1994, p. 168) discussion of “language as a place where we make ourselves subject” helps to decentralize the English language from its placement at the center, which can be implicit in questions of who speaks for who, as such questions necessarily confirm margin/center binaries. English can then be seen as a place where anyone can make him or herself subject. Yes English is dominant but this does not disqualify it from being used by those who have been marginalized through its dominance or disqualify it from being used in a radical manner. Viewing language as a place for dialogue and a decentralizing of English have been important understandings for this thesis. Written works can always be taken as representative but intertextuality offers a method for the text to become a space for dialogue so that inherent recognition of partialities and questioning of hegemonies can be contained inherently within the text itself.

### **Considering ‘speaking for’**

Speaking for and speaking about others have been defined variously as problematic. Alcoff (1991-1992, p. 1), discussing feminist and anthropological disciplines, states that “[w]hile the prerogative of speaking for others remains unquestioned in the citadels of colonial administration, among activists and in the academy it elicits a growing unease and, in some communities of discourse, it is being rejected.” Literary disciplines also struggle with this crisis of representation. For example, Hoy (2001) writes a transparent text on her struggles as a non-Indigenous academic and teacher of Native literature and Lundy (2001, p. 104) quotes Filewood, a non-Indigenous theatre critic, as stating “I can’t write about native theatre; all I can write about is my response to it. When I watch native theatre I see my own gaze returned; my watching is an appropriation, even when it is invited.” This problem has also been considered by some critics of Inuit literature and writing. As Hulan (2002, p. 62) writes, “non-Inuit writers effectively ‘speak for’ Inuit both by reaching an audience that Inuit writers may not have access to and by influencing how that audience may receive Inuit writing.”

Alcoff (1991-1992, p. 2) answers her posed problem of speaking for others by articulating questions which follow from not speaking for:

If I don't speak for those less privileged than myself, am I abandoning my political responsibility to speak out against oppression, a responsibility incurred by the very fact of my privilege? If I should not speak for others, should I restrict myself to following their lead uncritically? Is my greatest contribution to move over and get out of the way? And if so, what is the best way to do this—to keep silent or deconstruct my own discourse?

The appropriation-of-voice debate considered in relation to Aboriginal literature in Canada is one instance where the solution has been to “move over and get out of the way” with regards the problem of speaking for others. Alcoff (1991-1992, p. 1) speaks of one particular example where Cameron (a non-Indigenous author who has written on the lives of Native Canadian women from a first-person perspective) was asked by Native authors at the 1988 International Feminist Book Fair to “‘move over’ on the grounds that her writings are disempowering for Native authors.” Hoy (2001, p. 8) explains that this debate has centred “on the non-Native creative writer who employs a first-person Native perspective or retells stories from the oral tradition.” Hulan (2002, p. 61-62) relates this debate to the Arctic context, explaining that “[s]ome writers of the north refuse to become embroiled in the controversy at all, by refusing to write about the Inuit or to report their words.” This can have the effect of silencing voices from the north completely. Hulan (2002, p. 62) explains that “[t]his well-meaning attempt to avoid appropriating the voice of others can have the same effect, however, if the voice of northern inhabitants cannot be heard.”

Regarding the appropriation of voice debate, two Inuit writers speak primarily of the need for writers to be free to be creative. As Carpenter (in Robbeson, 1997, p. 112) states, “I'd like to tell you all that I'm very concerned about this appropriation of voice. I think no one should have to second-guess their thoughts when they write. I think you should write what you want to write in any gender and in any race because nobody can own you, or own your power to write or tell stories.” Ipellie (in Robbeson, 1997, p. 111) discusses the need for creative freedom more explicitly, also discussing the need for this to be tempered by a responsibility to cite when drawing on specific contextual knowledge.

I think a writer has to have that freedom to express their own creativity, imagination, in what they're putting on paper. You have to have that freedom. I have a problem with only one thing: if someone relates stories from the Inuit people and then puts it into their own work without even mentioning the source, then I would have a problem with that.

Such a freedom of creativity tempered by responsibility to context has an underlying theme of respect.

But there is a difference between fiction and non-fiction writing where the latter is said to be factual – or representing reality. Inuit speak on behalf of larger Inuit communities and these narratives speak back to stereotypical images circulated among those who are ignorant of Arctic realities. Hulan (2002, p. 62) states that “[w]ithout the practice of speaking for others, aboriginal people would not find voices that could reach the people who need to learn most, and non-aboriginal people who continue to imagine aboriginal people according to prevailing stereotypes.” Hulan (2002, p. 62) explains that speaking for others, therefore, is useful in particular contexts, and she offers the particular example of Inuit self-representation and autobiography where (and here she nods to Alcoff) “it is politically expedient to have a spokesperson speak on one’s behalf.” This was particularly the case in the past when an Inuk spokesperson for other Inuit would be those who were able to write and/or speak English, evident in the following excerpt by Akeeko (1980, p. 19).

This is Akeeko writing. Other Eskimo know much more than I do but they do not write. But I know their way of life. Some work now but what they earn goes away fast. I know because lots of them come and tell me. And now they want stoves for the winter. I tell them to ask the teachers but many won’t. I cannot help them though I feel sorry for them—especially the ones who are in need.

Still in the contemporary Arctic, as Ipellie (1996a) explains, many feel that greater access for Inuit to wider forums, where issues particular to Inuit are discussed, is a privilege which carries with it responsibilities to ancestors as well as Inuit contemporaries.

Inuit are no doubt becoming important proponents in these kinds of conferences, bringing with them experiences and perspectives about their people which had never before been told at these kinds of exclusive clubs of the academic world [. . .] we do not take these privileges lightly, because we owe it to our ancestors and the four generations (including mine) living today to make sure that our our [sic] voices are heard and not just echoed from our past.

Both in the historical as well as the contemporary Arctic, certain Inuit have felt a need to speak for or represent other Inuit.

Further, suggested in texts where there is reluctance to represent – or speak for – wider political or cultural groups, potential for clear articulation and inclusion of the partiality of one’s perspective within the text itself, is also discussed. Such critical awareness and advice on representation is addressed in Rojas’s (2000, p. 10) thesis where she clearly spells out that despite her identity as an Inuk woman, she does not intend for her words to be taken to represent Inuit women. “This cannot be emphasized enough. I dread the potential misperception of readers interpreting my text as generally representing the thoughts of all Inuit women. It is not my intention in this thesis to represent the viewpoints of Inuit women (I will leave that up to Pauktuutit, Inuit Women’s Association): rather, it is my attempt to understand my own thoughts on what has been written about Inuit women.” Texts are necessarily transformed when read and words not necessarily meant to represent or speak for can be taken by readers as doing so, but an author that critically contemplates the potential dangers of representation within the writing process gives the text an inherent awareness of its own limits of representation.

### **Addressing the question: How can you speak for?**

A question such as ‘how can you speak for?’ contains an inherent assumption that identities are fixed and necessarily distinct. When asked this question, the researcher becomes locked into a particular identity construct distinct from the group that is being researched so that there really is only one answer: ‘I can’t. I am not a part of this group. This research is invalid.’ Such a question carries this already envisioned answer within it. Faundez (in Freire & Faundez, 1989, p. 40) calls this a “bureaucratized asking of questions” stating that “[t]he questions are questions which already contain their answers. In that way, they are not even questions! They are answers rather than questions.” Carrying an inherent assumption within it, the question – how can you speak for? – presupposes an answer based on identity constructs which are falsely considered to be rigid.

Though rigid conceptualizations of difference are false, genuine differences are not. Individuals are different from each other, and non-Indigenous researchers tend to be in positions of racial and class privilege in comparison to Indigenous groups who they are looking to research. But when we ask questions like – how can you speak for? – we lock race, class and gender differences into facades of permanence and ignore that all of us are made up of cross-cutting hybrid identities. There is an inherent assumption that the

researcher and the research group are essentially different. Upon encountering such questions, it is difficult to return to spaces where we can connect across our differences.

I have attempted to mitigate my own ‘crisis of representation’ and doubts on being able to speak on behalf of others by drawing first on writings by Inuit as my source material. Further, like Annahatak (1994, p. 12) I have also included my own narrative within this thesis to emphasize that my positionality frames the research.

One [factor related to my values] is not to use the approach of describing my fellow Inuit, nor any other group of people, but to have respect towards everyone and everything that I use as my source in giving a message. The style I felt most comfortable and right about, then, was narrative, using my own experience of the subject under discussion.

In this research, I speak for myself with the recognition that I am consciously choosing my research goal and way of researching according to my values or ontology. This recognition has been influenced by Law’s (2004) discussion of “ontological politics” and is similar to Alcoff’s (1991-1992, p. 9) discussion of the “constructing a possible self, a way to be in the world” that is bound within the speaking for one’s self. I speak from a position of non-neutrality and aim to conduct ethical research. My way of going about this research has a responsibility to the different and varied contexts and voices of which I speak and represent but inevitably owes the greatest responsibility for the text itself – embodying what Thrift (2008, p. 13) discusses as “hold[ing] to a sense of personal authorship.”

Considering intertextuality in a manner where self and other are mediated by ‘to’ rather than ‘for’ has meant that though research could be taken to ‘speak for’, it can also be taken as a ‘speaking to’ which I see as a more appropriate and a necessary speaking. In considering subject positions, I draw from Irigaray’s (1996) discussions of ‘to’ between subjects as maintaining respectful and ethical distance. As Irigaray (1996, p. 109-110) states: “The ‘to’ is the sign [. . .] of mediation between us. Thus, it is not: I order you or command you to do some particular thing which could mean or imply: I prescribe this for you, I subject you to these truths, to this order.” Instead, Irigaray (1996, p. 110) explains that the ‘to’ is “a barrier against alienating the other’s freedom in my subjectivity, my world, my language.” Seeing intertextuality in this manner also indicates that there is a sense of responsibility to be considered with regards these subject positions towards an ‘other’ which Attridge (2004, p.

123; p. 123-124) defines as “the other I struggle to create or the other I encounter in the shape of a person or a work”, explaining further that “I am responsible to the other—the other calls me to account [. . .] this is nowhere near as demanding as my responsibility for the other. Being responsible for the other involves assuming the other’s needs.” There is space for the other to speak back, potentially altering the self. Expanding on this, Spivak (discussed in Alcoff, 1991-1992, p. 10) advocates a “speaking to” which Alcoff (1991-1992, p. 10) states is where “the intellectual neither abnegates his or her discursive role nor presumes an authenticity of the oppressed, but still allows for the possibility that the oppressed will produce a ‘countersentence’ that can then suggest a new historical narrative.” Such a perspective allows for conscious representation that though the research could be taken to be ‘speaking for’ there is a need to listen to other ways that the text is speaking. It is speaking to. It is allowing others to speak to each other. It is allowing for disagreement between and among differences and it is a space for dialogue.

As I have explained, intertextuality has allowed me to question the question (how can you speak for?) but it is not questions themselves that need to be discouraged. As Obama (2004, p. 438) states, questioning and the conversation carry the potential for dialogue. “[I]n the conversation itself, in the joining of voices, I find myself modestly encouraged, believing that so long as the questions are still being asked, what binds us together might somehow, ultimately, prevail.” But Hoy (2001, p. 14), pointing to the limitations of considering conversation from a purely literary approach, states that “the metaphor of conversation ignores issues of power and access. Whose conversation? Whose favourite topics predominate? Who keeps being interrupted? Whose contributions are heard only when paraphrased by someone else? Who is too strident, beside the point, political, incomprehensible? Who is even permitted to be in the room? Who is bringing the coffee?” These questions push us to acknowledge the existence of differences and that inequities exist but unlike the speaking for question, they do not essentialize those differences. Instead they help us get behind essentialisms, looking to understand for whose benefit and for what purpose labels are being applied and under whose control and whose initiation categories are constructed. Instead of asking bureaucratized and acontextual questions which can further divisions, we need to research in ways that acknowledge difference and recognize the reality of power but reject seeing these differences as fixed.

Whilst Hoy's reservations concerning a purely literary or conversational approach are important, nevertheless approaching each other from such perspectives allows us to get to places where we can connect across differences and in connecting across difference there can be positive learning opportunities. As Qitsualik (1999e) states, "[i]ntermingling and interlearning can only strengthen any individual, and a society of strengthened individuals is ultimately a stronger society." It is through conversation where we can begin to get to know the other – both open to transforming in the process. Through the intertextuality of this thesis, I have learned that I need to question the question (how can you speak for?) because in encountering it, I have felt the division it can create. Intertextuality has provided a way out of this questioning so that the thesis can be used as a space to recognize differences and ways to connect across difference.

## **Summary**

In this chapter, I have discussed a notion of intertextuality as a conceptual guide for the construction of the written text of my thesis. I first explained that I conceptualize truth as perspectival, partial and co-constructed and that a notion of intertextuality has allowed me to see the text as a place for conversation. I went on to discuss how, in approaching the final writing of this text, a contemplation of intertextuality facilitated a questioning of the rigidity of language. Seeing language as slippery can be an aid when learning to speak as a "subject capable of knowing" (Freire, 1998, p. 111) and seeing language in this way has helped me contemplate a decentering of English. I discussed next the problematizing of 'speaking for' as a theme arising across many disciplines while I also discussed this in relation to the appropriation-of-voice debate regarding Native literature and perspectives of Inuit on the question. I ended this discussion reconsidering that intertextuality facilitates a presentation of texts as necessarily partial. Finally, I directly addressed the question 'how can you speak for?' I discussed how such a question is a bureaucratized question in that it inherently contains its answer while it also can create division between differences by carrying an inherent assumption that identities are rigidly distinct. I responded with a suggestion that in research, which can be taken as representative, if we consider other subject positions, research texts can also be seen as 'speaking to' and allowing different perspectives to speak to each other. Drawing on this, I concluded with the claim that intertextuality as conversation (though I noted Hoy's (2001) reservations on conversation as metaphor) is a useful frame for learning and understanding across differences. In the next chapter, I pick up on Hoy's (2001)

misgivings on differentials in power within the metaphor of conversation and I further explain my own reservations concerning textual research.

## CHAPTER 6: Locating the research: Methodologies

### **Introduction**

In this chapter I detail the methodologies I have used within this research. I begin with a short review on the first step of identifying reading and writing as my methodologies. Next, I reflect on my misgivings regarding the capacity of textual research to be practical and dialogic. I then situate my methodologies, discussing my understanding of standards which my search for alternative methodologies was in reaction to before looking at theoretical perspectives on methodologies located close to my approach. In the next two sections, I discuss different theoretical perspectives which have informed my reading and writing methodologies respectively. Finally, I consider the selection of the texts included within the thesis in more detail.

### **Identifying the methodologies**

Throughout the research for this thesis, the trick has been to recognize where and when meaning is occurring. And here by ‘meaning’, I imply what is significant to the parameters of this research (i.e. research, colonization and pedagogy in the Canadian Arctic) and what is significant or ‘fits’ to the developing thesis text. In more standard research there are often examples of research templates which can be drawn from and referred to which can make it easier to spot these moments because they tend to occur as expected. But with this research, when encountering moments where meaning would typically begin to emerge, I felt frustration in realizing this research was not progressing ‘normally’. For example, I spent a good part of the first year attempting to narrow down a research question becoming frustrated that a typical step of research, i.e. going to the context and allowing a topic to emerge or clarify, did not feel ‘right’. Instead, however, the meaning-making moments were clearly occurring during my processes of reading and writing. The trick has been tuning in to these processes and recognizing that, though perhaps not typical as methodologies within the social sciences, they have been useful and valid for this research.

I came to realize that writing and reading processes were my methodologies. The quotes I read spoke directly to the text that I was writing and as I was writing, I would see gaps in the

text that would be filled by quotes I was collecting. I first wrote literature reviews drawing on academic literature, both from Inuit and non-Inuit, while I read a wide array of Inuit and non-Inuit authored texts concurrently. I realized that the large amassing of quotes from my reading spoke directly back to these initial writings. In addition, some of the newly gathered quotes opened new areas that I did not initially seek out.

It was a conversation that was happening through my reading and writing. After recognizing the validity of these processes by naming them as methodologies, I could then document this conversation in text. In doing this, ideas and concepts needed to be considered as in-flux and a sense of movement seemed to facilitate the connections between quotes becoming apparent. A consideration of such processes as my methodologies has meant a need to be open and receptive to the developing narrative and the in-flux aspect of the text throughout my writing. I have critically questioned definitions, categories and labels as they arise and sat comfortably with definitions and counter definitions side-by-side with gaps in between. By placing different views beside each other within the text, meanings have emerged.

### **Reconciling misgivings on textual research**

I have had misgivings throughout my research if working only with texts could be relevant to a practical context and if this work could be dialogic. Spokane-Coeur D'Alene poet and writer Sherman Alexie (in Hoy, 2001, p. 16) highlights the limitation of academic theory and writing in his poem 'Introduction to Native American Literature', when he writes:

it will not save you  
or talk you down from the ledge  
of a personal building

Whitford discussing "Irigaray's point of view" (in Lather, 1993, p. 681) cautions that "[p]laying with a text [. . .] is a rather solipsistic activity; it is not a dialogue with the other which includes process and the possibility of change." I have similarly worried if this research is a meaningless exercise as I interpret texts regarding a context such as colonization in the Arctic where tangibles, such as high suicide levels, exist that are genuinely devastating and needing to be changed. I have questioned whether there is a place in academia for research out of genuine compassion and concern regarding actual difficult and painful 'other' challenges which can be helpful to ameliorating aspects of these difficult and painful realities.

And I have had concerns about the often cited problem with theorizing, that there are no tangible, practical benefits to the ‘real world’.

But, is it better to engage participants in research projects framed by theorizing in the west, in many ways removed and potentially irrelevant to ‘other’ realities? I attended a feminist workshop early on in my Master’s degree. No Aboriginal women were in attendance and yet when speaking of marginalization, Aboriginal women were neatly allocated as being the most marginalized group in Canada. There was a sense of needing to acknowledge the further marginalized status of Aboriginal women before moving on to discuss how non-Aboriginal women are also marginalized in different ways. But there was no critical engagement with the political correctness that was guiding the labelling and there was no deconstruction of the category. Aboriginal women were assigned as a lumped category to the bottom rung. During this workshop, I felt discomfort with this classification. Increasingly upon reflection, I have been able to gain clarity that it is the masking of individual diversities within such rigid essentialisms which is misleading and which can be potentially damaging.<sup>21</sup>

Breaking down these categories means consciously recognizing that academic and ‘real world’ contexts overlap and crossover. Sarris (1993, p. 74) presents a conversation between relatives of a Pomo medicine woman and tribal leader – Anita and Violet – and students in a mainstream classroom at Stanford University which points at this.

“Well, that’s what I’ve been bothered about all quarter. What you said Violet, I mean Mrs. Chappell. We read all this American Indian literature, the folklore and everything, and I don’t know what I’m reading. I don’t know anything about the Indians. I was hoping to know something after today. Like where to start.”

“You just said it,” Anita said. “You don’t know anything. That’s where to start . . .”

The woman wrung her hands. “But then how can we know about Indians or this film? I wanted to learn something.”

“. . . Listen,” Anita said looking back to the woman, “do you know who you are? Why are you interested? Ask yourself that. I think you are asking yourself right now. . .”

Violet straightened in her chair. “Get to know us, mingle. Watch. Something will pop out that will say something to you.”

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<sup>21</sup> I have drawn on Cyrulnik (2009) to crystallize such thinking, see chapter 11.

Here, Anita and Violet encourage students to converse, to 'mingle' and to search for knowledge regarding others by beginning with themselves and contextualizing. Such a discussion can also be seen to offer suggestions to academia so that in seeking to learn about the world, it is important to acknowledge that we are all a part of it while also recognizing that there are other ways of knowing which may be different but which are valid and which can be learned from. Sarris (1993, p. 70) confirms this interpretation: "I am suggesting and I hope demonstrating that academic discourse, with its various argumentative and narrative styles, be interrogated by and interrogated with other forms of discourse, perhaps to broaden what we (academics) mean by academic discourse or to collapse the rather arbitrary dichotomy between academic and non-academic, nonpersonal and personal discourse." Within academia, in acknowledging that we begin where we are, already in the world, we contextualize research designs. We are better able to see how research can benefit the 'real world' when we acknowledge that we are a part of it.

In my research I have felt a need to become better familiar with contexts I am or have been a part of before attempting potentially intrusive research, under goals of activism, of those contexts. The textual nature of this research has allowed me to do this as I could move more slowly and carefully, bringing texts together and attempting lateral conversations. Questioning myself on issues of power and access has meant that instead of embarking on a project and creating source material that I 'thought' might be liberatory or even useful, I have used this thesis as a space to take the time to listen to what already exists. Carpenter's (1997, p. 225) writings on resilience of Inuit women living in southern Canada where she advocates an approach of non-judgment were a guide here. "I once lived in the Badlands of Vanier, Ontario, and met Inuit women who had a tremendous drive to compensate for long famines and exile. They were endangered by excessive and mindless striving towards people and goals that were not nurturant, substantive, or enduring [. . .] my way to cope with this spiritual famine was to read more and judge less." I have conceptualized the activity of listening to context under a posture of non-judgment which I have relied upon within this research.

Instead of adopting and understanding this posture to mean a posture of non-criticality, however, I have tried to be both critical and non-judgmental within this research. Reconciling such a supposed conflict has been assured through a way of working that I have come to see as empathetic criticality, influenced by Brueggemann's (2009, p. 28) discussion of 're-

describing reality' as being beyond "simplistic naiveté" and "acute critical awareness" and working with an element of "hopeful imagination." Criticality is ever present, but so too is empathy and a need to approach research with hope and with a desire to construct something of practical use and relevance from the work. This need to move beyond overt criticality, still holding in some ways to naivety has obvious linkages to Freire's (in Freire & Faundez, 1989, p. 48) assertion that we work in positions, not 'basist' or 'elitist' but "in sympathy with both commonsense and a rigorous academic approach" as he explains that "rigorous thought must not deny naivety in its attempt to go beyond it."

Returning to my concerns that textual work can be removed from context, impractical and non-dialogic, I feel that textual work conducted from a perspective of 'empathetic criticality' can lead to areas of practical concern to those contexts. Reinterpretation work has allowed me to approach texts in such a manner. As I reinterpret texts in different ways, I have been critical and questioning, but also looking to create something new from the conversation so that criticality is not the final word. When we are able to move beyond overt criticality and carry an element of non-judgment alongside, I feel it is possible to get to spaces where new understandings are created and here there is a chance to make textual work relevant to practical concerns.

### **Situating methodologies**

#### *Choosing away from standards*

I have noted previously that Inuit tend not to speak truths when they cannot relate these to their own experience which I have discussed as equally important within research. For example, Csonka (2005, p. 325) explains that "[m]ost Inuit make a sharp distinction in conversations between memories they have personally witnessed and those they have heard from others, and are often loath to report the latter." Research that does not acknowledge how certain realities get enacted through research methods and fixed in final written products is lacking the same type of disclaimer. As Law (2004, p. 36) explains, subjective aspects of research are often omitted: "This deletion of subjectivity is crucial. In natural and social science, research statements about objects in the world are supposed to issue from the world itself, examined in the proper way by means of proper methods, and not from the person who happens to be conducting the experiment." Law (2003, p. 7) further explains that the most

important part of this problem is not that assumptions have been ignored, but rather it is the “denial of that exclusion” which is most worrying. When subjectivities are omitted from research, neutrality is portrayed. And as Horton (in Horton & Freire, 1990, p. 102) explains, neutrality claims are invariably false and have political implications. “[T]here can be no such thing as neutrality. It’s a code word for the existing system. It has nothing to do with anything but agreeing to what is and will always be [. . .] a refusal to oppose injustice or to take sides that are unpopular. It’s an excuse in other words – you’ve got to take sides.” Research which relies on the masking of assumptions and feigned researcher neutrality can therefore be a form of violence as subjective processes behind knowledge building are excised from research reports which structure and standardize research activities to fit within a hegemonic model of knowledge. Describing positivism, de Sousa Santos (in Phipps, 2007, p. 92) argues that this form of research is “often the most violent way of taking and gaining knowledge, involved as it is in forms of epistemicide – in the killing of other knowledges in order to monopolise the whys of understanding the world in narrow ways.” In this section, I explore remaining allegiances to standards within academia, setting the stage for my consideration and choice of alternative methodologies.

When we take research methods classes as students, we are told that our research can be taken as ‘reliable’ if we follow ‘rigorous’ ethically approved research methodologies. As Law (2004, p. 3) sees it, we are told to “[d]o your methods properly. Eat your epistemological greens. Wash your hands after mixing with the real world. Then you will lead the good research life.” When I began this degree and took a research methods class, having already participated in research projects for my Master’s degree, for a wide-scale project on climate change while working at ITK, and concurrently with my degree on a project exploring the learning journeys of older adults in the west of Scotland, I knew that there was no clear division between the world where we conduct research and our everyday world. The world is complex. Research is a messy endeavor and the world where we conduct research cannot be ordered and regulated by standards. Even where standards are set and we try to follow protocols, assumptions, subjectivities, biases and relationships invariably seep in. Law (2004, p. 3) confirms this, stating: “my intuition, to say it quickly, is that the world is largely messy. It is also that contemporary social science methods are hopelessly bad at knowing that mess.”

Such a perspective – that qualitative research be ordered according to standards so that what comes out of the process is necessarily reliable – sits closer to positivism than we may like to admit. Clear descriptions of positivism’s remaining influence within social science are difficult to be found in social science texts but they still exist in practice. Law (2004, p. 16) states that:

In the social sciences, empiricism and especially positivism are now usually seen negatively. Raymond Williams comments that positivism is a ‘swear word by which nobody is swearing’ (1989, p. 239). No doubt this is right. However, their basic intuitions are widespread in Euro-American common-sense thinking about science and social science. It is commonly assumed that observations should be unbiased and representative, and that theories should be logical and consistent both with one another, and with observation.

Perspectives informed by assumptions based on positivism are widespread within social sciences, even within qualitative domains. They are present at conference presentations when students are told to ‘triangulate’ methods as a sure way to increase reliability and validity. They are present in new researchers who hold fast to notions of objectivity in research, discussing ‘biased’ research as ‘bad’ research. They are present within ethical procedures where a researcher changes from ‘suspect’ to ‘ethical’ researcher once an ethical procedure has been completed and approved. Bochner (2000, p. 267) defines two “incommensurable” camps within the social sciences – one who “believes that “objective” methods and procedures can be applied to determine the choices we make” and the other which “believes these choices are ultimately and inextricably tied to our values and our subjectivities” but sees that the modernist perspective has the stronger hold, explaining that:

In our hearts, if not in our minds, we know that phenomena we study are messy, complicated, uncertain, and soft. Somewhere along the line, we became convinced that these qualities were signs of inferiority, which we should not expose. It appeared safer to keep the untidiness of our work to ourselves, rather than run the risk of having our work belittled as “unscientific” or “unscholarly.”

The idea that there are acontextual rules, regulations or standards for research which, when followed, will make for ‘good’ and ethical research is still a widespread assumption within qualitative research.

As already discussed in some detail in chapter 2, such a perspective is inherently distrustful of researcher ontology and can exclude realities which are not deemed as academically interesting. Ethical protocols governing what is valid or invalid ignore that individuals have personal sets of ethics which already govern how we treat others in the world outside of the research context. Bochner (2000, p. 269) explains that aspects of academia with the “subtext” aimed to “authorize or legislate a preexisting or static set of standards that will thwart subjectivity and ensure rationality” “takes us away from the ethical issues at the heart of our work.” Certain topics, perspectives or groups which may not follow or fit standards can be excluded if seen by those in charge (of funding, ethical approvals, or academic acceptances) as uninteresting or invalid. Irigaray (2004, p. 66) explains the continuing view of the link between objectivity within research and the standing of ‘experts’, stating that “maintained at a distance by the technicalities of methodological approaches, the other is the object of studies which increases to a greater or lesser extent the standing of one expert [. . .] the less a researcher brings into play his own affects, the more likely he is thought able to produce a good portrait, a good profile, a good analysis etc. of the alterity in question.” With certain individuals – those who tend to be in elite or powerful positions within academia – setting guidelines and standards which govern what gets studied, there is a real danger that certain research agendas and contexts are being excluded.

### *Searching out alternatives*

After an experience involving acontextual questioning on the issue of research positionality at a conference in my first year which I have discussed at length in chapter 2, I decided to research in a ‘non-standard’ or alternative manner within the social sciences. By this I mean that I did not want to fit knowledge on the Canadian Arctic into standards set by the research community which I felt were removed from this context, and inherently carrying Euro-American assumptions. Law (2004, p. 4) explains: “[w]e are being told how we must see and what we must do when we investigate. And rules imposed on us carry [. . .] a set of contingent and historically specific Euro-American assumptions.” Instead of conducting research according to standards set by the academic community or in line with a research agenda that I had not yet developed, I sought out alternative methods of researching which, I came to see, allowed me to research more in line with values many Inuit consider as important and to develop a sense of my own personal ethics as part of the research process.

Recognizing that, within research, researchers choose representations to enact, there is a need to be conscious of the power, agency and ethics involved and choose accordingly. As Law states (2004, p. 143) “[m]ethod is not a more or less successful set of procedures for reporting on a given reality – rather it is performative. It helps to produce realities. It does not do so freely and at whim [ . . . ] method does not ‘report’ on something that is already there [ . . . ] [i]nstead, it makes things more or less different. The issue becomes how to make things different, and what to make.” Listening first to Inuit accounts of reality, which were already being articulated and expressed, was my first step towards alternative forms of researching. Questioning standards of research led to a searching for alternative ways of researching which could better accommodate Inuit agencies to be better integrated into my research. I outline next some of these alternative theoretical perspectives and research approaches which are situated close to my own approach.

Whitford (in Lather, 1993, p. 681) has discussed textual work as ‘playing’ with texts. Whilst Whitford and Lather draw on this to critique textual work, I feel that such a conceptualization helps to highlight a conscious allowance for creativity within the process of writing a text. The concept of ‘play’ has been an idea I have drawn on in seeing meanings as in flux within my methodologies. ‘Playing’ with texts has similarities with improvisation theory which I draw from Heble and Waterman (2008, p. 3) who are working on a major study in Canada which has the core principle “that musical improvisation needs to be understood as a crucial model for political, cultural, and ethical dialogue and action.” In rejecting standard ways of researching within the social sciences and utilizing alternative methodologies of reading and writing, I have experienced how learning can come from improvisation. Heble and Waterman (2008, p. 3) stress that improvisation should be better integrated into academia, stating that “scholars in the humanities and social sciences have much to learn from performance practices that accent dialogue, collaboration, inventive flexibility, and creative risk-taking, from art forms that disrupt orthodox standards of coherence, judgement, and value with a spirit of experimentation and innovation.” Seeing meaning as in-flux in this research has allowed for new and different conceptualizations and perspectives to occur. Heble and Waterman (2008, p. 3) affirm this as an essential aspect of improvisational theory stating that “[i]f humanities research and teaching have for too long operated on the flawed assumption that knowledge is a fixed and permanent commodity, then the most absorbing testimony of improvisation’s power and potential may well reside in the spirit of movement, mobility, and momentum that it articulates and exemplifies.” My approach has similarities with this

theoretical perspective, in both a consideration that there needs to be fluidity and flexibility for creative knowledge or meaning to occur and in the recognition that qualities which are characteristic of improvisational, performative and creative activities, can be better integrated within the social sciences.

My methodologies are also situated close to Daloz's (1999) conceptualization of 'dialectical thinking.' Daloz (1999, p. 138) states that "[d]ialectical thinking [. . .] refers to a process of thought that relies instrumentally on formal logic but, more importantly, on the relationship of one idea to another. It presumes change rather than a static notion of reality. As each assertion is derived from the one before, truth is always emergent, never fixed; relative, not absolute." With a reliance on an understanding of truth as relative, my methodologies are situated close to this understanding of dialectical thinking.

In this recognition of truth not as static or singular but as multiple, there are similarities to how Inuit consider truth, as previously discussed. Kublu, Laugrand and Oosten (1999, p. 10) further explain the importance of variation within this conceptualization discussing that, regarding their interviews with Inuit elders, "[t]he point [in the course of the interviews] was not so much to come to a common opinion, but to come to an awareness of the existing variations. In that respect, it did not matter whether the elders came from different places. Variation is an essential characteristic of the knowledge of the elders." In this way, therefore, my methodologies are situated close to Inuit understandings on truth As Qitsualik (2001e) explains, a predominant focus on survival in the Arctic environment which she emphasizes as a fundamental aspect to Inuit lifestyles in the past, helps explain this multiple nature of truth privileged by Inuit.

An explorer might be told, for example, that the Northern Lights are the spirits of the dead, battling around a walrus skull. He might be told immediately afterward that the dead go to a place below the ground, where people play games and hunting is plentiful. He might then be cautioned about anirniit, which remain present after death, and can reincarnate into another body. The rational explorer would then, of course, ask, "How can all of these things be true? Which one is it: walrus skull, underground, or reincarnation?" One might say that, in a sense, in Inuktitut, they're all true. But, more accurately, nothing is held "true" in Inuit cosmology, because it is not dogmatic. Traditional Inuit were concerned more with what might be, rather than what is. Their whole world was one of possibilities instead of facts, wherein it was wisest to anticipate anything, to remain adaptable [. . .] They believed in everything, and nothing — and thus every eventuality was covered.

Such an understanding where singular truths are situated in a particular time and context and created through relations sits close to Daloz's (1999) understanding of truth as relative which I have drawn upon.

Situating the methodologies further, there are similarities with non-representational theory as articulated by Thrift (2008). As discussed within other theoretical perspectives where I closely locate my methodologies, Thrift (quoting Alliez, 2008, p. 5) relies on an understanding that meaning is in flux and therefore there is a privileging of movement.

[T]o begin with, it would be possible to argue that human life is based on and in movement [. . .] Then again, movement captures the joy – I will not say simple – of living as a succession of luminous or mundane instants [. . .] And, finally and relatedly, movement captures a certain attitude to life as potential; 'to pose the problem is to invent and not only to dis-cover; it is to create, in the same movement, both the problem and its solution.'

Speaking to the notion of relativity already discussed, Thrift (2008, p. 2) also highlights the constant changeability of the world. "The contours and content of what happens constantly change: for example, there is no stable 'human' experience because the human sensorium is constantly being reinvented." Like those who emphasize an integration of improvisation into academia, Thrift (quoting Vendler, 2008, p. 12) stresses the need for performance to be better considered within social sciences research: "I want to pull the energy of the performing arts into the social sciences in order to make it easier to "crawl out to the edge of the conceptual." Such understandings lead to where Thrift (2008, p. 18), drawing on Law's (2004) description of messiness, articulates a rejection of what he calls "methodological rigour" and highlights that the recognition "that this is a world which we can only partially understand" is an acknowledgement of "the greatest methodological importance." Thrift (2008, p. 18) explains this rejection of methodological rigour on the basis that it seems to "miss a large part of the point of social sciences by purposefully going about deadening itself" instead he embraces "new kinds of practice messiness – the mistake, the stumble, the stutter" seeing these as "vehicles for bringing into view the conditions of meaning, not so much a means of going further as a technology for tackling inconceivability." My methodologies are situated close to theory articulated by Thrift (2008), in the privileging of movement for creative potentiality, in the critique of standard methodologies – which by cutting out risk-taking or substituting creativity for a copying of formulaic models can also

excise capacities for genuine wonder – and in the embrace of messiness as a new concept for articulating perspectives on reality.

In situating my methodologies, I wish to also acknowledge that I strive to make this research decolonizing which points to a commitment to bring perspectives which have been marginalized historically within hegemonic systems of knowledge into the conversation in a lateral manner. By bringing writings by Inuit directly together with writings by non-Inuit on the broad parameters of this thesis, i.e. research, colonization and pedagogy within the Canadian Arctic, these texts are placed in a position to deconstruct and speak back to stereotypical beliefs held as authoritative. Such a perspective has been influenced through a reading of Smith's (1999) discussion of "decolonizing methodologies." This research has attempted to counter homogeneous or universal conceptualizations, constructs and perspectives of history, instead highlighting the heterogeneity that characterizes all groups of people, no matter which culture or society they are a part of. This work is located, therefore, within Westwood's (1991, p. 169; p. 168; p. 169) "sub-altern studies" as it attempts to re-work "familiar colonial discourses which subjugated colonial peoples at home and throughout the world" by "engag[ing] in recovery – the recovery of the other, of the colonial knowing subject."

In striving for this work to be decolonizing, I also see it situated close to definitions of translation which emphasize the transformation of both self and other (or commentary and original texts) through translation. For example, Attridge (2004, p. 125) explains that by translating something other into our terms we inevitably and necessarily transform the other but that we can "aim [not] only to appropriate and interpret the work, to bring into the familiar circle, but also to register its resistance and irreducibility, and to register it in such a way as to dramatize what it is about familiar modes of understanding that render them unable to accommodate this stranger." Fitting with such a definition of translation is Murray's (quoting Rothenburg, 2005, p. 72) conclusion that "translation can function as "a discourse on its own problematic" and "a commentary on the other and itself and on the differences between them. It is more of a kind of question than a summing up.'" I would add that, in translation, there is potential to not only highlight or comment on differences between but also within groups, while there is also potential to look for similarities between differences. Such understandings of translation fall in line with the goal of this research to use this thesis text as a space for intertextuality.

Obligations that accompany intertextuality therefore are those that similarly accompany translation. Attridge (2004, p. 120) explains that “[the literary work] presents itself as simultaneously familiar and other, puts us under a certain obligation (to attend scrupulously, to suspend as far as we can our usual assumptions and practices, to translate the work into our terms while remaining aware of the necessary betrayal that this involves).” What follows is that bringing knowledge together from self and other or through different texts is not one text being incorporated into another but two or more texts merging, both transformed in the process. This thesis text is a response to the works I have read and hopefully as Attridge (2004, p. 124) articulates, it will be “a responsible response, the one that attempts to apprehend the other as other [. . .] while it inevitably strives to convert the other into the same, [it] strives also to allow the same to be modified by the other.”

Such a method of interpretation carries elements of non-judgment and non-violence where there is respect and acceptance regarding mystical aspects of other ways of knowing. Irigaray (2004, p. 23) explains that research which does not respect other cultures is a form of violence, which can occur when a dominant culture looks to appropriate other knowledge which deadens it and is accomplished through “a desire to know something fully.” Attridge (2004, p. 33) also contemplates the moral implications of interpretation, stating that in “affirming the other as other [. . .] I encounter the limits of my own powers to think and to judge.” Encountering aspects other, outside ourselves and our understanding, one meets ‘unknowables’ and there is a responsibility to present these as is, with minimal mediation or alteration. In his argument on affirming the other as other, Attridge (2004, p. 34) explains that “what is foremost in the creative mind is [. . .] the demand being made for a just and generous response to thoughts that have yet to be formulated” and that “[i]n responding to the other person [. . .] a similar demand for justice is at work, requiring a similar step into the unknown.” In locating intertextual work as decolonizing and non-violent, there is the need to draw on an alternative definition of translation where texts involved are considered as open to transformations in the process and where a responsibility is shown towards elements which are unknowable.

As I place existing texts in conversation with each other so that lesser known understandings particular to the Canadian Arctic are placed side-by-side with more dominant understandings and so that different understandings emerge, this has also been termed ‘re-describing’ as

articulated by Brueggemann (2009) which I have discussed previously. Situating textual work as re-describing, Brueggemann (2009, p. 28) draws on Ricoeur's notion of 'second naiveté' to explain that "the interpretation now required of us does not linger excessively over criticism [. . .] It pushes beyond it or is pushed beyond criticism by spirit-led artistry to receive a new world imagined through the text, thus 'second naiveté' after criticism." Engagement with the artistry of the text is emphasized, and so are notions of partiality and re-creation: "good art does not give closure, but invites those who see to probe in order to see more" (Brueggemann, 2009, p. 27). Such a definition of interpretation, through Brueggemann's (2009, p. 27) insistence of the distinction between artistry and Ethics, returns us again to going against standards within research for "good artistry is never didactic and does not seek to instruct. It intends, rather, to let us see, and then to let us respond as we will." Locating my work close to Brueggemann's (2009) definition of interpretation as 're-describing reality' helps to clarify that in moving beyond overt criticality, one engages with the artistry of texts which opens possibilities for new understandings.

As different aspects of this thesis text were developed, it became increasingly clear that my methodologies also lie close to my characterization of ideal pedagogies. Locating my methodologies under this characterization was influenced through recognizing echoes of my own learning in this research with different characteristics of ideal pedagogies'. I locate my learning under Freire's (1998, p. 111; p. 111) description of a "pedagogy of freedom", by seeing that my "inherent curiosity [has been instigated] instead of softening or domesticating it" and I have been affirmed, as a "subject capable of knowing." A freedom in research methodology has allowed me to be creative in how I conducted my research, not following standards that have come before. The creativity allowed in this research was similar to the creativity Milner (1984, p. 154) discovered in herself when she learned how to paint where "any copying of, obedience to, an imposed plan or standard, whether inner or outer, does necessarily interfere with this primary creativeness." Such characteristics of my own learning process situate my learning as I have characterized ideal pedagogies, particularly regarding the emphases on empowerment through freedom and a revaluing of so-called 'soft' skills such as imagination.

## **Reading as methodology**

There are a multitude of perspectives regarding whether reading can be a dialogic process which I have considered in framing reading as one of my methodologies. Ricoeur (1976, p. 39) argues that the reading of a text is not necessarily a space for lateral dialogue since, though the author can attempt to ‘help’ the understanding being taken from readings, in the end “[b]y themselves [the writings] are unable to rescue themselves.” Watson (1997, p. 90), conversely, describes reading as an active process, explaining that a reader “actively interpret[s] texts but cannot interpret them in just any way they wish. The texts themselves contain ‘instructions’ which yield strongly preferred readings.” Okri (1997, p. 42) offers further support that reading can be dialogic, stating that readers have “great responsibilities [. . .] to make something valuable from their reading” and explains that if these responsibilities on the part of those reading and writing are acknowledged, these activities can become dialogic, so that “books [can be seen as] a dialogue between souls.” In references which acknowledge that texts can contain preferred readings and through the perspective that reading carries responsibilities, I have come to see that some definitions of reading do confirm reading as dialogic work.

Coming to this realization has also been influenced by Qitsualik’s (2003b; 2003c) clarifications on guessing within Inuit traditional culture. Qitsualik (2003c) explains that guessing when speaking – or interrupting – is perceived as negative within Inuit culture. “The worst thing one can do, in the presence of an elder, is to comment on their thoughts or opinions. Such a thing is considered no less than a challenge to the integrity of their private mind, their *isuma*. The traditional way for an elder to deal with this is play the trickster, to begin a pattern of contradiction.” Qitsualik (2003b) explains that such a way of conversing is not limited to Inuit culture as “Qallunaatitut used to use a similar way, known as riddling” and this is “not eccentricity, but [the elders’] way of teaching.” Qitsualik (2003b) more specifically explains that “riddling and “elderspeak” are related by way of their teasing method of inviting a listener’s mind to untangle what it is hearing. They invite the listener to draw their own conclusions from the lesson, a highly personalized way of learning.” There is a distinction in considering guessing according to these examples: Guessing when listening is encouraged and guessing when speaking or interrupting is considered to be inappropriate. When one listens and guesses or draws out one’s own understanding in an appropriate or an encouraged way according to Inuit ‘traditional’ culture, it is done silently while guessing out

loud is considered inappropriate in Inuit ways of conversing because it involves interruption in another's portion of a conversation or time for speaking and *isuma*. Such a perspective has implications for my choice in reading as a methodology. Rather than attempting to conduct fieldwork which I felt had more in line with guessing through speaking or interrupting, I felt it more appropriate to follow a reading methodology where guessing or 'untangling' what one is hearing, or learning is a quieter and more respectful activity.

Further clarification on my reading methodology has come about through Attridge's (2004) discussion of creative reading, where responsibilities on the part of the listener are identified. Attridge (2004, p. 79) explains that reading can be considered "creative reading" when there is "an attempt to respond to the otherness, inventiveness, and singularity of the work." This begins to make clear the need for responsibility within reading beyond Okri's (1997) notion of responsibility as 'making something valuable from the reading.' As Attridge (2004, p. 80) states, "to read creatively in an attempt to respond fully and responsibly to the alterity and singularity of the text is to work against the mind's tendency to assimilate the other to the same, attending to that which can barely be heard, registering what is unique about the shaping of language, thought and feeling in this particular work." Such an understanding means that in approaching reading with clear responsibilities to the written work and the writer of that work, reading and, subsequently, writing the excerpts that have been read into a new text, can be dialogic work.

Seeing reading as listening and as a learning opportunity has also been a conscious viewpoint which has framed my methodology of reading. Freire (1998, p. 107) explains that "listening is an activity that obviously goes beyond mere hearing." Going further, similar to Attridge (2004), Freire (1998, p. 107) articulates the obligations one has when listening but also discusses obligations one has to oneself. "To listen [. . .] is a permanent attitude on the part of the subject who is listening, of being open to the word of the other, to the gesture of the other, to the differences of the other. This does not mean, of course, that listening demands that the listener be "reduced" to the other, the speaker. This would not be listening. It would be self-annihilation." Further, Freire (1998, p. 34) articulates that "really reading" draws on very similar principles to those he articulates for listening, that of humility (which I also draw on in chapter 11 as important within ideal pedagogies). "Really reading involves a kind of relationship with the text, which offers itself to me and to which I give myself and through the fundamental comprehension of which I undergo the process of becoming a subject [. . .]

For one of the necessary requirements for correct thinking is a capacity for not being overly convinced of one's own certitudes." Purposely viewing my methodology of reading as listening, and as a learning opportunity have been important influences in my consideration of reading as a methodology.

Considering the texts I read as testimonials has also influenced my understanding of reading in my consideration of this process as a form of witnessing testimonies. Frank (1995, p. 137) offers guidance on using a 'witnessing testimony' methodology to inform reading or listening to socially repressed narratives stating that "the witness offers testimony to a truth that is generally recognized or suppressed." Transforming an account into a testimony is based on the commitment of the reader or listener in the consideration of an account as a testimonial truth. As Frank (1995, p. 137) explains, to move beyond repression of accounts of chaos, a researcher needs to regard the account as testimony. "The chaos narrative requires a listener who is prepared to hear it as testimony." A consideration of reading as 'witnessing testimony' has influenced my reading of writings authored by Inuit in that purposefully considering these writings as testimonials I have tried to read or listen to narratives which may have been socially and culturally repressed.

In contemplating reading as a form of witnessing, there is a need to listen to evocative truths which has obvious ties to earlier discussions on truth within this thesis. Simon and Eppert (1997, p. 181) raise this when discussing Laub's sharing of a particular evocative testimony of the Holocaust at a conference which was met with audience naysayers disputing the truthfulness of the account because it veered away from historical facts ("only one chimney had been blown up, not all four" (Simon & Eppert, 1997, p. 181)). Simon and Eppert (1997, p. 181) claim that truth for witnessing is not based on factual accuracy but on a capacity to evoke what a reality was actually like: "The woman's testimony bespoke neither the precise number of chimneys blown up nor the fallacy of a successful revolt" but instead the "reality of an unimaginable occurrence" (Laub in Simon & Eppert, 1997, p. 181). Simon and Eppert's (1997) work provides guidance on how to listen for such evocative realities of accounts, which they explain as not necessarily representative of facts but offering evocations of a particular situation or experience.

In the recognition of what it is which makes a witness pay attention to this aspect of truth, Simon and Eppert (1997) make claims on the obligations that frame the act of witnessing or

listening as methodology. As Simon and Eppert (1997, p. 181) state, Laub and the historians at the conference were “differently positioned with respect to the obligations (acknowledgement, remembrance and consequence) of witnessing another’s testimony.” The authors go on to explain that obligations and ethics of witnessing can often be dictated by standards and rules of particular discourse communities. “[T]he historians interpreted the woman’s testimony according to the methodological and interpretative dictates of their discourse community” and the historians deemed the woman’s account as “incomplete and historically invalid” (Simon & Eppert, 1997, p. 181). By contrast, Simon and Eppert (1997, p. 182) explain that Laub was not as tied to such standards and instead had a freedom – or alternative obligation – to recognize “a textured excess mediating the woman’s attempt to evoke the palpable presence of a prior traumatic event” which brought the sense of reality home to the listener.

Listening fully to the writings during my reading has meant listening to the ‘unsaid’ as much as to what is being articulated within the narratives. There are precedents for these types of listening within the literature. Discussing trauma counseling, Penn (2001, p. 43) states, “[t]he listener is a participant/witness, there to appreciate the whole story of the suffering as many times as it must be told [. . .] It is our choice to enter into this space with the speaker/writer [. . .] without judgment and with hope.” Speedy (2008, p. 11; p. 32) speaks of a “compassionate witnessing” (defined by Weingarten (2003, p. 2) as “founded on an ability to recognize and express a common bond with another”) as a way of doing research and discusses listening at the edges and within liminal spaces to hear the “absent but implicit.” Such descriptions of listening have influenced my methodology of reading as my previous experience of living in the Arctic and working with Inuit has given me a broader contextual and empathetic knowledge of issues and experiences of Inuit in Canada which has afforded me access to unsaid contextual aspects behind the writings and is a frame which I have consciously relied on during the reading portions of my methodological work.

### **Writing as methodology**

Ways of researching that are transparent of the process of research rely on inclusions of researcher subjectivity. With the critical turn within social science, drawing on post-positivist theory, many feel that author subjectivity needs to be included within all research texts as “self-reflection is no longer an option” (Denzin, 1997, p. 266). A research

methodology to do so has been called 'writing as inquiry' which is a way of writing researcher voice and subjectivity into the research text and which allows a researcher to be transparent about uncertainties within the process as part of the research.

Like many researchers, I have encountered uncertainty within this research. Uncertainty within research can be useful, however, if we trust that it is integral and normal. Law (2004, p. 10) calls for new approaches to research methods that honestly and brazenly declare uncertainty to be part of the process. "Method, in the reincarnation that I am proposing, will often be slow and uncertain. A risky and troubling process, it will take time and effort to make realities and hold them steady for a moment against a background of flux and indeterminacy." Using Appelbaum's comparison of a blind person to a person with vision, Law (2004, p. 10) explains how openness to possible wisdoms within uncertainties offers researchers potentially new and unique opportunities to learn. "[T]he groping, the halting progress with a stick, also has its privileges. The blind person sees what the person with vision does not, because she moves tentatively [. . .] in the groping there is a kind of poise." When we see uncertainty as normal, we are reminded that the research process is a learning process and when we trust that uncertainty can be useful, we become open to discovering new ways of researching and new ways of learning.

Researching means encountering uncertainties but as we encounter them, there is a certain element of faith that we must hold to, to progress past these moments. Early on in my research process as I moved away from my original proposal, the process of undertaking my research felt to become much more an act of faith. Noy (2003, p. 5) speaks of a similar struggle and also hints at the potential for research to take on a mind of its own when reflecting back on the movement she made away from her first proposal to her completed dissertation. "I had promised something that I failed to deliver, and I delivered something that was not asked for (and might have not received approval to begin with). It is not that I compromised one proposed perspective or another, but that I simply took an entirely different direction (or it took me...)." Faith in the process, and in the momentum that can sometimes seem to be driven by the research itself can pull us through moments of uncertainty.

As in the process of research where, at times, there seems to be something outside ourselves guiding the process, the same is true in the creation of a written work where "[t]he coming into being of the wholly new requires some relinquishing of control" (Attridge, 2004, p. 24).

In this way, writing itself as a form of inquiry is an important part of drawing out knowledge despite uncertainty during research. As Barr (1999, p. 4) states, writing in this manner allows one to “break certain habits of thought” especially those of “not putting anything down until [we] have thought it through *completely*.” Earlier within my research as I moved into a new direction and felt a number of calls from the literature, I struggled for a touchstone, and by this I meant something that I felt I could use to ground my thoughts more practically. I discovered as Foucault (1997, p. 208) states, that the act of writing itself can serve as a touchstone. “Writing constitutes a test and a kind of touchstone: by bringing to light the impulses of thought, it dispels the darkness.” Writing as a methodology itself can serve as a touchstone to ground and connect the dots of knowledge gained through research.

The act of writing tests the validity of our thoughts. Foucault (1997, p. 208) explains that through the act of writing, our selves are opened up and tested by becoming companion others that judge our thinking. “The fact of obliging oneself to write plays the role of a companion by giving rise to the fear of disapproval and to shame.” Looking at the act of writing in a more positive light, Penn (2001, p. 48) states “[e]mpathy flows from our pen—empathy for ourselves and for others.” Whichever perspective we take, both confirm that writing is a whittling process. As Lather (1991, p. xix) expresses regarding language, “it frames, it brings into focus.” And even more so in written rather than verbal language, refining and refining, we whittle our thoughts down to what we actually want to say within our writing.

Within research, subjectivities should be included but need to be written into texts in such a way that self-narrative does not “squeeze out the object of study” (Bruner, in Denzin, 1997, p. 218). As Bruner (in Denzin, 1997, p. 218) explains, “[n]o one is advocating ethnographic self-indulgence.” Inclusion of self narrative within research requires a project. Drawing on Sontag’s (in Barr, 1999, p. 12) work to get behind metaphoric thinking on cancer, to attempt to see it as “[n]ot a curse, not a punishment” but a disease, Barr (1999, p. 12) explains that “research is informed by and makes sense in the light of an idea” and narratives in texts move beyond “just a personal narrative” when we locate them “within a practical project.” In this research, my own narrative is brought into this research in light of the project to write this text as an intertext on colonization, research and pedagogy with regards the Canadian Arctic.

It is through the act of writing that we constitute ourselves. As Noy (2003, p. 5) asks, “[i]sn’t writing a becoming?” Foucault (1997, p. 213 & 214) explains that it is our identity and our soul that we create when we write. But there is also the caution, discussed in chapter 5, that in the act of writing, in the creation of ourselves within writing, we freeze something that is not stable into something fixed and unmoving. “Identity freezes the gesture of thinking” (de Certeau, 1986, p. 194). Our written representations need to also represent the instability that lies behind the fixed image of the texts.

And in this research, this is where I have been led to the notion of intertextuality which I have pointed to throughout the thesis text, but discuss in particular detail in chapter 5, which intrinsically includes awareness of partialities of perspectives and space to critically question myself and others within this research. Awareness of the intertextuality of this text has taken my methodology of writing further by facilitating the presentation of multiple realities, perspectives or ways of seeing/conceptualizing the world within a single text while still portraying awareness of partialities. And this has led to my drawing particularly on Attridge’s (2004, p. 80) discussion of ‘singularity’ so that I have attempted to view the writing act itself as a potentially inventive or creative one fixed to a particular context or project so that the writing takes on characteristics of performance. For such an understanding I have drawn from Attridge’s (2004, p. 118; 118) discussion of “responding responsibly” to a literary work where he explains that this is done by “staging the act of reading it—not in the sense of reporting what happens as it is read, but of bringing out as far as possible in the writing of the commentary the experience of reading for a given reader.” Further, “[t]he commentary itself [. . .] must strive to be a singular and inventive event, and thereby invite readings that respond inventively to its own singularity and inventiveness.” My thesis text has been written in a way where I have attempted to be cognizant of the singularity of both the texts read and the text being written. I have followed these atypical methodologies in an attempt to offer a responsible response.

### **Selection of texts**

It is important to review my selection of texts for my research, a main part of my research methodology of ‘reading as listening.’ I selected texts and excerpts from texts in an organic manner as I observed them fitting into the developing narrative of the thesis. I later reflected back on this process and found that my selection of texts was focussed on three main themes:

research, colonization and pedagogy. In this section, I review the finer details of my text selection, discussing some of the concerns I encountered and how these were reconciled.

In my selection of Inuit authored texts, I actively sought out voices which did not formally declare themselves to be in a representative capacity. Therefore my selection was biased towards voices not speaking as representing all Inuit, and away from advocacy or political organizational perspectives which are oftentimes for political rather than personally motivated agendas. Having the knowledge to understand where such texts may tend to arise came from having lived and worked in the Arctic, and having spent time working within Inuit representative institutions in southern Canada. In my search of publication locations, I sought out locations which felt to be democratic to a diversity of Inuit and non-Inuit perspectives on Arctic issues. From my previous experience, I was aware of both *Inuktitut* magazine and *Nunatsiaq News* which fit this purpose. I was also aware of a number of publications where Inuit were sole authors, joint authors or where Inuit authored texts were included within edited works. I felt many of these to be excellent sources, inclusive to perspectives informed through first-hand experience of the Arctic, and often directed to an audience also informed on the Arctic. As is obvious through reading the text, however, I did not consistently exclude political or advocacy texts. Instead, I included these voices only when I felt that they offered a new and important perspective on a developing theme within the textual conversation which was developing, rather than allowing these voices to be primary guides to the developing thesis.

The sources selected help to show the complexity of Arctic issues which I was looking to highlight within the thesis. I felt there was a benefit for academia to be privy to the complexities evident within these sources, and as I have discussed elsewhere, I felt that these diverse perspectives would be important to help disrupt misrepresentations still circulated and discussed as authoritative within academia. Therefore I actively sought out sources which were not necessarily seeking to represent but were participating in an ongoing conversation on Arctic issues.

As I conducted my search and analysis of texts, I continued to reflect upon concerns with representation. Some of these reflections helped to inform my understandings on the mediated quality of all texts. For example, during my analysis, differences between re-launch versions of *Inuktitut* magazine with earlier versions of the magazine became apparent. After

the re-launch, the magazine showed a marked difference in the diversity of voices included. The magazine took on a more polished look and style and the inclusion of the writings within the publication was reflective of this. New issues of the magazine did not offer the same unmediated cross-section and diversity of Inuit or non-Inuit perspectives. As the publication became more 'professional' and polished there tended to be in evidence a greater degree of mediation from the organization while there simultaneously tended to be greater exclusion of unmediated writings from individuals with less polish to their writings. Reflecting upon the changing nature of *Inuktitut* magazine during my analysis was helpful for my greater understanding on the mediated nature of texts.

The choice to include letters to the editor of *Nunatsiaq News* was made largely reflective of such concerns with mediation of texts. As is typical of these pages in most newspapers, this page in *Nunatsiaq News* is very democratic. From very early on in my decision to use texts as my source 'data' for this research, I decided to draw upon these letters as I felt the letters presented the complexity of issues which I was always looking to highlight. One issue of the newspaper may include, for example, a number of perspectives which may range from the informative, such as birth and death notices, to more existential and theoretical discussions, such as perspectives on human rights. Even this source, however, which seems to have fewer mediating influences, has been edited for publication through the addition of titles and in many cases letters have been translated from one language to another.

Reflecting upon the texts as I selected and analyzed them, including the examples I have included here on the differences between the re-launch of *Inuktitut* magazine and editorial changes made to the letters to the editor in *Nunatsiaq News*, helped me to better see the mediated nature of all texts and therefore which Inuit perspectives may be excluded from the text of the thesis. As is evident within my discussion of *Inuktitut* magazine becoming more professional-looking, there is an obvious exclusion or alteration of writings not considered by gate-keepers to be professional. Writings from individuals, therefore, with lower levels of literacy and education seem to be included less within later versions of this publication and the degree of mediation and polishing to their writing seems to have increased. Another main mediating influence on text, translation, is a factor to many of the sources I have included. Though many texts which I sourced are published in both English and an Inuit language, predominantly Inuktitut, the translation of texts into the different language and the subsequent reading of only one translated version can exclude certain meanings or

perspectives. Continuing reflection during my text selection and analysis was helpful to my understandings regarding mediation of texts to all writing not published directly by the author.

Much of this discussion foregrounds my decision to begin with published texts as my source literature, which I have discussed at length in chapter 3. Here I highlighted that my decision to draw upon previously published texts for my source 'data' was made for three reasons: 1) the texts were not created for this research therefore I had not influenced their construction, 2) I was interested in considering knowledge potentially outside knowledge realms deemed as academically valid, and 3) a written text provides the writer a greater degree of control over what is passed into the public realm. But as I have highlighted here, though I actively selected texts which felt to be representative of more marginal voices, it became obvious to me during the selection and analysis processes that there are mediated qualities to any text and locations of publication can never be wholly inclusive to, and representative of, everyone from a society. There are myriad forces influencing and determining inclusivities and exclusivities to discourse regarding Inuit and the Arctic in Canada as these exist in every society. Gatekeepers overseeing these publications, for example, have final decision over what to include or exclude or how far to mediate or alter writings submitted for inclusion.

Despite these concerns with the mediated nature of texts, and the exclusion of certain voices from a public discourse on the Arctic, I still felt, however, that there were clear benefits to seeking out texts with minimal mediation from a researcher or from an editor. I have emphasized this throughout the thesis as I feel that seeking out more marginal perspectives helps to displace the hegemony of accepted authoritative accounts. This will be focussed on in greater length in chapter 10 where I discuss ways I feel Inuit authored narratives help to deconstruct hegemonic accounts. Though it is very difficult to access unmediated texts directly from research participants, there are still benefits at attempting to access texts with as little mediation as possible as this is a way to open discourse to a greater diversity of perspectives.

Further, guidance accessed from both Inuit and non-Inuit perspectives on the need to be cautious with dominant notions of 'truth' also helps to offset some of these concerns regarding mediation of texts. As discussed in chapter 5, there is always a partial element to text. Inclusion of awareness regarding the inability of a single text to represent a diversity of

voices within the text itself can help to offset concerns over the influence of mediating factors. I have included awareness over these concerns with representation throughout the thesis and encouraged readers to consider this text as partial in the hopes that this text will not be read as wholly representative. This does not offset the fact that some Inuit voices have been excluded from my selection of texts, and indeed from discourses on Inuit and Arctic issues made available to the public, but it does provide the guiding disclaimer that caution needs to be drawn upon when considering any text's representational purposes or qualities.

## **Summary**

I began this chapter with a discussion on how identifying reading and writing as my methodologies meant giving weight to moments that were meaningful as I was experiencing them in this research, meanings created through placing different voices and texts alongside each other. Next, I presented a reflection on my concerns whether this textual research could be practically relevant and dialogic, concluding that contextualizing and slowly approaching texts with a posture of empathetic criticality helped to establish the text as a space for conversation and a place to consider practical concerns. I situated my methodologies, discussing standards this research was in reaction to, detailing theoretical perspectives and alternative approaches which are situated close to my methodologies. In the next two sections, I reviewed theoretical perspectives which I have utilized in framing my reading and writing methodologies respectively. Finally, I considered my selection of texts in greater detail, reflecting on the mediated quality to text.

This is the final chapter of section 1 in which I have located my research and detailed methodological arguments behind my claim that new ways of engaging within research can be useful for problematizing rigid conceptions of difference and for learning across differences. The remainder of this thesis rests on this set of arguments in performing this research claim.

## SECTION 2: Reaffirming context

### CHAPTER 7: Reaffirming context: The Canadian Arctic

#### Introduction

In this chapter, I consider the Canadian Arctic largely from perspectives of the source literature. I consider ‘contact’ between Inuit and non-Inuit, outlining that the approximate period from the 1910s until the 1970s is considered by many as the period of initial (or historical) colonization in the Arctic. I review reflections on colonization in the Canadian Arctic, which are often discussed through terminologies highlighting transformative, painful and violent aspects within the source literature. I look at impacts of colonization or social health challenges in the contemporary Canadian Arctic.<sup>22</sup> This leads to my discussion of the tendency of writings by Inuit to conceptualize colonization as having been experienced differently, in general terms, for three distinct generations. Finally, I discuss the maintenance of contemporary social health challenges in Inuit communities and consider the role of the Canadian state in prolonging and maintaining these conditions.

#### Historical colonization

Though the time period most often referred to as bringing the greatest change and acculturation for Inuit is the period from the 1910s until the 1970s, Inuit had contact with non-Inuit well before this time. Mitchell (1996) discusses the first and subsequent contact between Inuit and non-Inuit as occurring in three periods. First, contact was made by explorers and itinerant traders. Mitchell (1996, p. 49) notes that Norsemen traders had contact with Inuit “several centuries before Columbus discovered the New World” and explains that the presence of explorers in the different regions of the Canadian Arctic varied with the earliest visitations occurring in Northern Quebec in the late sixteenth century. The second period of contact outlined by Mitchell (1996, p. 63) is the whaling era which again varied greatly across the regions as “whalers were working in Labrador long before they

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<sup>22</sup> See Appendix 1 for a summary of social health challenges in this context.

penetrated into other areas of the Arctic.” This era ended in the 1920s (Mitchell, 1996, p. 63).

It was the third period, which Mitchell (1996, p. 87) explains as occurring from 1920 until 1960 (though other sources stretch this period to one decade on either side, i.e. Pitseolak in Ipellie, 2007a; Nungak, 2000a, p. 33), when missionaries, traders and police were the primary groups of non-Inuit living among the Inuit, which is most often the period being referred to when colonization is discussed. Mitchell (1996, p. 87) notes that “in the space of a few decades, this alliance succeeded in delivering the capitalist mode of production to the Inuit.” The effort was not a joint orchestration between the three parties, however (Brody, 1975, p. 15). But these three groups, the missionaries, Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and the Hudson’s Bay traders, are often discussed as diversely impacting on Inuit and heralding in a new lifestyle for Inuit more akin to life in southern Canada at the time. Brody (1975, p. 1) explains that “[s]uch a combination is familiar enough in the history of colonialism, but rarely in that history can the alliance have been so complete.” Though Inuit had contact with non-Inuit prior to this period, it is this time period which is most often referred to as colonization.

Evident in writings by Inuit are subjective expressions of colonization in actual terms from the perspectives of those who were part of a group of people colonized by another. Those who were adults during the 1910s to 1970s often provide specific details to the events of contact per region. For example, Pitseolak (in Ipellie, 2007a) states that “The Hudson's Bay Company people were the first to stay. The Company built in Lake Harbour in 1911 and in Cape Dorset in 1913. [. . .] There was an increase in the white men in the 1930s. It started with the Baffin Trading Company in 1939 and that same summer the Catholic Mission came.” Peryouar (in Peryouar & Hill, 1997, p. 20) notes that in the community of Baker Lake in Nunavut, 1958 was the year when change of what he terms “the Inuit traditional way of life” began. “[I]n 1958, the first school was opened, it was even smaller than our house. Both the bigger children and the small ones were taught in the same classroom. From that point on everything began to change; women do not do as much sewing any more, neither do the men make iglu (snowhouses) as much.”

Inuit sources reveal that well-meaning intentions did sit on the face of colonization in the Arctic. Freeman (1988, p. 237) writes, “[m]ost of you, and I, too are aware that 20 some

years ago the Government of Canada did have good intentions to care for Inuit.” Qitsualik (2000d) explains that prevailing characteristics of gentleness and non-violence accompanied the enforcement of colonial law by the police: “From their earliest days as the Northwest Mounted Police, their level-headed and non-violent conflict resolution has ingratiated them to most Canadian aboriginal peoples, including Inuit.”

These ‘humanitarian’ concerns were touted as being behind the state’s emerging interest in the Arctic and the lives of Inuit. The Depression of the 1930s and the resulting collapse of the fur trade meant that Inuit, who depended on the trade, were living in increasingly destitute conditions (Purich, 1992, p. 43). As Mitchell (1996, p. 90) states, “[v]irtually every adult Inuk has memories of starvation and death during the Depression.” The estimated 7700 Inuit living in Canada at the time became wards of the state (Purich, 1992, p. 42). Criticisms of the living conditions of Inuit which circulated among high profile American and Canadian media and military personnel, as well as an emerging discourse at the United Nations on the welfare state did influence Canadian state policy towards the Arctic at the time (McLean, 1997, p. 13; Brody, 1975, p. 30).

The hardship conditions that Inuit lived in resulted in relief rations from the state which were controversial as they forced the reliance of Inuit on the state and monetary system. Crowe (1997, p. 34) explains that “[a]lthough the rations were necessary in emergencies, they became a controversial institution, with some people saying that the supplies given were inadequate, and others claiming that the rations undermined the pride and independence of the Inuit.” Ipellie (1993, p. xi) explains that: “Understandably, Inuit would flock around the administrators asking for assistance in the manner of orphaned children.” Inuit living in the Arctic during this period – particularly Inuit of a certain generation – were left believing that they could depend on the government for the rest of their lives. As Freeman (1988, p. 237) states, “my grandparents and my parents, understood that the Government of Canada committed themselves to look after the Inuit for the rest of their lives, and they still believe that.”

Well-meaning intentions are more clearly conceptualized as assimilationist actions and policies when discussed as part of a framework of colonization. As Qitsualik (2001d) explains, “conquest — in full ugliness — comes with grins and handshakes as easily as with soldiers and guns.” Freeman (1988, p. 237) confirms this, explaining that well-meaning

intentions of the government were based on cross-cultural misunderstandings and a mistaken belief that Inuit needed to be helped. As Freeman (1988, p. 237) explains:

I understand that Inuit upon being first seen by the early qallunaat arrivals looked so destitute, helpless, and smiling too much. The first qallunaat arrivals did not understand our ways, our culture [. . .] Probably the first thing that came to their minds was to look after Inuit the way they would with welfare-needy people in the South. I also understand now that qallunaat culture is very based upon material possession. Can you just picture a qallunaat seeing Inuit in furs, with skin tents, fur bedding and stone utensils?

Pudlat (1990, p. 20) discusses similarly: “It would have been far better when white people came up North, a long time ago, if they had listened to us in the first place—learned from us, did things the way we did, and then listened to us and just accepted our culture. If they had learned from us, worked with us, instead of walking all over us, I think everything would have worked out better today.” Ipellie (1993, p. xi) explains that hardship conditions Inuit lived in were created through the change from a nomadic way of life to community life which left an ideal set-up for Inuit to be ‘rescued’ by the government. “When Inuit became helplessly trapped in the midst of their cultural upheaval, the administrators went out of their way to provide the goods and services to rescue them. Thereby this guaranteed the administrators the dubious honour of becoming ‘saviours’ of Inuit.” When discussed in a framework of colonization, it becomes clearer that well-meaning intentions and ‘humanitarian’ concerns towards Inuit helped to rationalize assimilationist strategies. Qitsualik (2001d) explains: “The hideous thing about it all is that many individual colonists meant well. But profiteering takes on a life of its own.” We are left with policy documents that clearly exhibit the extent to which the assimilation of Inuit was blatantly outlined by administrators. “I get a chill when I think of this and remember the old Canadian documents I’ve read, full of statements like, “Without the dogs, the Eskimo will adapt to settlement life.” Or, “Since the family is the basic unit of Eskimo culture, separation of parent and child is the key to assimilation”” (Qitsualik, 2002a).

Among other major factors behind state interest in the Arctic such as increased government intervention through social welfare programs that were occurring throughout Canada as well as increased access to northern resources (McLean, 1997, p. 13), the principal motivation of the Canadian state’s interest in the Arctic was one of sovereignty leading from strategic concerns during the Cold War. Many sources attest that such interests were behind the

settlement of the Arctic (McLean, 1997; Brody, 1975; Qitsualik, 2002a). In the 1960s in the eastern Arctic, Inuit were issued with matchbox houses which they were expected to pay for, with no prior consultation. “The systematic implications of having to [pay for the houses] were significant, including the need for cash income, a threat to subsistence hunting posed by the necessity of wage employment and a need to acquire the skills and training necessary to live in different circumstances” (Tester & McNicoll, 1999, p. 2). Further, movement of Inuit into the communities themselves had been accomplished coercively to facilitate the delivery of health and social services. As Tester and McNicoll (1999, p. 2) explain, “[t]he federal government decided against providing services to outpost camps and tied social welfare payments to schooling for children by threatening the discontinuation of family welfare payments to those unwilling to send their children away from families to residential schools.” Of particular note, the government forced the relocation of some Inuit between settlements thousands of kilometres across the Arctic and to vastly different environments and climates (Hicks & White, 2000, p. 47; Tester & Kulchyski, 1994). As Qitsualik (2002a) explains: “[T]he federal government’s overarching excuse for its forced relocations and its dismantling of culture was always, “protecting Canadian sovereignty”.”

### **Terminologies of colonization**

Many Inuit have described in detail the impact that contact with Qallunaat and Qallunaat culture, particularly during this period of historical colonization, has personally had on them, or has collectively had on Inuit as a group. Much of the descriptive language Inuit writers use to express the changes that were brought about through colonization tend to offer a genuinely transparent sense of the pain and struggle that accompanied this period for many Inuit in Canada.

Colonization is often characterized as a violent event by many Inuit. Lapage (in Lapage & Okalik, 1997, p. 47), for example, speaks of colonization as the “crashing [of] our cultures together” while Ipellie (1997, p. 93) refers to colonization as a “recent cultural explosion [that] is still vibrating through the lives of four generations of Inuit.” Carpenter (1995, p. 53) describes this period as one of “great social and cultural chaos for the Inuit.” And Tookoome (in Stevenson, 2006, p. 174) likens contact to a car crash. “What people usually forget is that we only had contact for the last fifty years. [. . .] When you’re in an accident and all of a

sudden you are just like spinning out of control. You have no time to think and to understand what's really happening. I think that's where we're at right now. [. . .] We don't realize the significant impact that contact had on us.”

In the descriptions of change brought about through colonization in the Canadian Arctic, some Inuit writers describe the loss of one way of life for another. In these descriptions, writers sometimes describe such a change as total. Okalik (1990, p. 4) states that “[o]ur life seems to have been completely turned over.” In a similar description of the change of lifestyles for Inuit, Ipellie (1997, p. 93) writes of the uncertainty that accompanied colonization and the irreversible nature of the change.

Let me speak, for a moment, of my fellow Inuit of the recent past, who were rendered by outside forces a fated people thrown collectively for a loop into an uncertain future. Their long history as a nomadic people living in one of the world's largest deep freezers has now proven their traditional cultural and heritage were destined for a wholesale change. This change left behind, in its wake, victims whose sense of Eskimo reality was irreversibly altered by cultural upheaval.

Underlying these descriptions, many also portray the rapid nature of colonization. Lapage (in Lapage & Okalik, 1997, p. 47) states, “we were exposed to a life that was much too rapid for us when the Qallunaat (white men) arrived” and Rojas (2000, p. 84) explains that “[t]his process has been extremely rapid and yet it has been extremely drastic.”

Inuit also tend to discuss how pain accompanied colonization. Lapage (in Lapage & Okalik, 1997, p. 47), for example, states, “[t]his rapid change has affected us with various pains.” Freeman (1988, p. 238) in describing the changes attributed to the introduction of the Qallunaat culture to the Arctic compares the accompanying pain to that of a sharp change in temperature.

I do not think changes that happen within the culture itself hurt as bad as the changes that have occurred during the last 100 years. How many of us can go from extreme hot to cold conditions within a very few minutes? There is bound to be some very painful change within our body. The changes the Inuit have gone through are similar to that example.

Describing the “culture-clash” and a loss or ‘dropping’ of the “Inuit way” as occurring for the reason that “we thought that we could not have strength if we did not lose it”, Arnakaq (in

Naqitarvik & Arnakaq, 2003, p. 3) also characterizes colonization as painful, stating, “[t]oo many people grabbed the culture that is not ours, this is where we shattered.”

### **Impacts of colonization**

In speaking of the fall-outs of historic colonization, many Inuit also discuss feeling caught between two worlds, cultures or identities – the mainstream Euro-Canadian culture and the Inuit culture. For example, Pudlat (1990, p. 20) states: “I try and live a balanced life, but I’m caught in between! I know how to be Inuk, but not fully Inuk like my parents were. I’ll never be that, I know. And I know the whites’ way of life, but that will never make me a white, so I am in between. I am living both ways.” Others explain that for younger Inuit, in particular, this ‘living with two cultures’ results in confusions in identity. Kaukjak Katsak (in Wachowich et al, 1999, p. 199) states, for example, that “[t]here are people who are a little bit younger than me who are very confused. They don’t know what culture they value most, they are stuck.” In describing the interest that young Inuit express to return to ‘traditional’ cultural activities, Mark (in Deschênes & Mark, 2002, p. 7) explains: “Young people are very interested in [throat-singing] because we are sort of going, to me, through an identity crisis. I’m going through an identity crisis. I don’t really know who I am in a sense.” But feelings of identity confusion or loss are not exclusive to young Inuit. Discussing feelings that have been “buried for 30 years of [her] life”, Grey (2000, p. 4) notes that she also feels “lost somewhere between the Inuit and Qallunaat society.” Taylor (1997, p. 185) who has conducted research into identity crises between majority and minority cultures for individuals who belong to ethnic minority cultures, explains that it is inevitable that such crises occur for individuals belonging to groups which have experienced colonization. This is because, Taylor argues, there is little motivation to integrate a majority culture when it has been forcibly imposed onto the cultural group. The sheer number of Inuit writers who discuss their varied conceptions of living between the Euro-Canadian culture and their Inuit culture provide ample support that such difficulties with integration of cultures is a long-lasting impact leading from the events of historical colonization.

There are sources which discuss changes in the extent of violence and confrontation expressed by Inuit as another impact of historical colonization, though the noting of such a trend tends to be tied into uses and debates on essentialist language regarding Inuit as having been traditionally non-confrontational. Annahatak (1994, p. 15) states, for example, that

“[o]ne of our cultural values is to have an ongoing respect and obedience to whoever is in authority and to avoid conflicts and be wise in everything we do” while Amagoalik (1988, p. 211) explains that “[t]he Inuit, by nature, are not a violent people.” Despite such essentialisms as being used by Inuit writers, Carpenter (2001, p. 70) feels that there is a tendency for “cultural outsiders” to use essentialist language in expressing how “Inuit do not like confrontation.”<sup>23</sup> Mitchell (1996, p. 419; p. 413; p. 413) notes that Inuit have tended to “employ nonconfrontational tactics” as a form of resistance in the face of events of colonization and assimilation in Canada, stating how “there has been a near-universal back-to-the-land movement among Inuit” since the 70s, going on to note, however, that “politically organized resistance” has been a “typical strategy of Inuit leaders in response to a perceived sense of increasing powerlessness.” Amagoalik (1988, p. 211) argues that experiences of colonization should not be used to justify an increase in hate or violence towards non-Inuit, explaining that “anger and hate are not the answers” and “[non-violence] is one of our virtues which we must not lose.” Carpenter (2001, p. 70), reviewing the text *Saqiyuk*, relates Inuit potentially becoming increasingly confrontational as a result of colonization as a positive change. “There is understandably an edgy tension to Rhoda’s story. She sums up her valid rage with these compelling words, “Those people, I have no idea who they were, the people who decided to move us all off the land, but it is them who I get angry at.” [. . .] [Such writings] are telling us that we may be heading toward new and exciting confrontations.” Changes regarding Inuit demonstrating non-confrontational or non-violent manners were noted within the literature, although such observations were linked into debates on essentialist language with regards non-confrontation as a naturalized Inuit trait.

Feelings of anger as a result of experiencing colonization have also been noted. For example, Amagoalik (1988, p. 211) states that:

Over the past few years, in my visits to Inuit communities, I have had many private conversations about what is happening to our people and what the future holds for us. I have become more and more concerned about the angry words which some of our people are starting to use. I cannot really blame them for their feelings. Their feelings towards the white man are easy to understand. It is very easy to blame the white man for the predicament we find ourselves in today.

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<sup>23</sup> See chapter 9 for a discussion on how essentialisms, though often useful for strategic political purposes, can also be dangerous and damaging to self conceptions.

Carpenter (2000b, p. 66), similarly expresses concern at levels of anger evident in Inuit contemporary communities, explaining that this is a symptom of larger wounds impacting Inuit communities.

[Dorothy Mesher] made my heart shiver when she wrote that in her youth there was no word for anger in Inuktitut. Today, there are over 400 words for anger used in workshops conducted in the Ungava communities. My experience in the wilderness with animals has taught me that when people have wounds this bad, you can smell them coming. It takes courage to do what Mesher and many Inuit are doing in Nunavik by helping to heal their people.

Pitseolak (in Ipellie, 2007a) makes a similar observation linking expressions of anger to the increase in alcohol accessibility that also accompanied colonization. “But it’s not happier living in today’s world. Today the Eskimos are not so poor, but not long ago I never saw grown-ups fighting. They would argue but without getting mad. Now, everywhere, when they get drunk, they fight.” In his discussion on the increase in anger in Inuit communities, Amagoalik (1988, p. 211) makes a plea for levels of anger to decrease and expresses hope for more patience and understanding with the changes initiated through colonization.

Difficulties of living with the demands of two cultures, increases in anger, frustration and despair at assimilation have been linked by many to an increase in social health challenges, such as substance abuse and suicide.<sup>24</sup> As Carpenter (2000b, p. 10) explains, destructive dependencies such as smoking and drinking have provided a sense of escape for some Inuit. “Government propaganda against smoking and drinking hard liquor has created many cynics among Inuit as these two habits have brought much escapist pleasure to those living in the harshest land.” Speaking of contemporary challenges in Arctic communities, Watt-Cloutier (2000, p. 120) mentions alcohol and drugs as well, expressing that there is collective frustration on why such destructive dependencies have become so prolific.

The learning of wisdom started to diminish, as did the ability to be independent in one world or another. This has led many of our people to despair, and without the inner resources that are developed by constructive independence, people become vulnerable to different kinds of destructive dependencies. The use of alcohol/drugs became a way of life for many, although few people understand why.

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<sup>24</sup> Refer to appendix 1 for a summary of social health challenges.

Changes brought about through colonization have left ongoing impacts for many Inuit. Some have expressed challenges with self-identity constructions and increases in anger, both of which have been linked to an increase in health problems within Inuit communities.

In the contemporary Canadian Arctic, many tend to focus on suicide as “everyone is affected by it” (Allen, 2000, p. 56). As expressed within a backgrounder on suicide prevention from NAHO (2007), the reality of high suicide levels is recognized as dire, especially when put in contrast to the wider figures of Canada as a whole as Inuit suicide rates are more than 11 times the national rate. The suicide rate among Inuit is 135 per 100,000 while the national rate is 12 per 100,000 (NAHO, 2007). A study by the Ajunnginiq Centre<sup>25</sup> (2006, p. vi) outlines the increase in the rates of suicide over the years since contact and some of the trends in the rates of suicide within the population. In the study, elders note that “[s]uicide was not common among Inuit in the past, and in fact was very rare among young people.” It was noted that suicide rates began to climb in the mid-1970s to the still currently high rates today (Ajunnginiq Centre, 2006, p. 1). Elders note how young men have higher rates of suicide than young women (Ajunnginiq Centre, 2006, p. viii), although, whilst rates of suicide for Inuit women are below those of Inuit men, they are still far above the national average (Ajunnginiq Centre, 2006, p. 2).

Many Inuit discuss the profound sadness and despair that accompanies suicide within Arctic communities which can be difficult to translate in writing. As Qitsualik (2000c) explains “the real horror of suicide cannot be conveyed by a story, nor can the devastating impact upon the loved ones left behind in the wake of a true suicide.” In a letter to *Nunatsiaq News*, an anonymous writer explains that “I’ve been hurt by suicide, lost friends and relatives to it. It really affects you when someone from Nunavut becomes a statistic when someone could have done something about it” (Anonymous, 2003). Though there are difficulties expressing the heavy despair and sadness that many feel with regards high levels of suicides in the Arctic, solutions are being discussed and worked towards.

In seeking solutions to suicide, many offer their own explanations on why rates have become so high. In recounting a story Amagoalik (1996b) surmises on a number of potential reasons, also expressing the difficulties posed for those left behind.

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<sup>25</sup> The Ajunnginiq Centre has been renamed, Inuit Tuttarvingat, and is the Inuit specific branch of NAHO.

They sat quietly for a minute, enjoying the warm spring sun shining down on them. “I heard there was another suicide last night,” Simon finally broke the silence. “Yes. It's hard to understand why there are so many of them these days,” Pitaloosie said. “You must have thought about what might be the causes. As we all have.” Simon didn't say anything for a moment. “Alcohol and drugs, family problems, lack of jobs, cultural alienation, I suppose it could be many things.”

Kunuk (in Sidimus & Kunuk, 2007) discusses the changes in suicide rates over time in Inuit communities, noting that one rationale behind contemporary high rates by the younger generation may be due to a loss of cultural values.

The suicide rate is high now but it was not always like that. In Inuit history the only people who committed suicide were elders. The elders are respected, but when an old man cannot hunt and supply the community with more food, he is just being carried around. This is a moving culture – people are always moving from place to place, seeking better hunting grounds. Elders – men and women – would get left behind. That was their choice. We call it suicide, but probably it was their last communication with the spirits, and the spirits just took them. But today our young people are committing suicide because they are now in the lost culture.

Qitsualik (2000c) also compares suicidal tendencies of Inuit in the past with contemporary Inuit.

Inuit have a long-standing history of killing themselves when feelings of uselessness become unbearable. [. . .] Times have changed, and Inuit culture is radically different from the way it was. Yet the tendency toward suicide has remained. Why? The answer is quite simple: the need to belong, to feel useful, still remains as strongly as ever.

In a source considering suicide of Inuit youth authored by a group of elders from Pond Inlet (1997, p. 52), feelings of uselessness are also focused on as a major precursor to suicidal tendencies. “One reason is that they are mistreated, being told by relatives that they are useless. When they become uncomfortable around relatives they turn to alcohol and drugs.” These elders (1997, p. 52) list other factors: “Some other reasons youth begin to consider suicide is when they hit poverty, bills to pay, or even guilt over criminal acts they have committed.” Feelings of uselessness leading to destructive dependencies on alcohol and drugs are seen by Qitsualik (2000c) as the step before suicide contemplation. “Those who cannot make it in this modern, mechanized existence, who no longer have a way to prove

themselves valuable, most often turn to chemical comforts such as drugs or alcohol. As a final recourse, they turn to suicide.”

Many go on to offer their own advice and knowledge for lowering high rates. For example, Dialla (2004) explains that more public meetings and communication with teenagers are required. “I know it’s hard for the parents to lose their loved ones, but it can be prevented by talking to their teenagers and having a public meeting with teenagers.” In another letter, (Anonymous, 2003), it is stressed that essential communication and support needs to be offered not only during the crisis of a completed suicide, but on a more constant basis to prevent suicides occurring. “There should be things done in the community to prevent suicide. Support groups finally come to help, after a suicide, when they could’ve been more available in the community. They should have public meetings about it, and do something about it, before it is too late.” Qitsualik (2000c) offers direct advice to those contemplating suicide: “For those of you who consider suicide as a release, please pause. Study your life, for it is worth doing so. Suicide is not a madness, but merely a terrible mistake.” Elders from Pond Inlet (1997, p. 52) also emphasize the importance of advice and direct counseling, stressing that elders be more formally involved in such processes. “It would benefit the communities if elders were to intervene in situations like these, perhaps even incorporating this into law [. . .] Elders should consider preparing a written law incorporating their traditional prevention methods to deal with suicidal persons.” Many stress that culturally appropriate communication and counseling services within Inuit communities and with those potentially thinking of suicide provided on an ongoing basis can be potential aids to help stem the high rates of suicide Arctic-wide.

Looking more broadly, health problems in contemporary Inuit communities are often spoken of as linked to each other so that in many cases, the challenges are expressed in more general and intertwined terms.<sup>26</sup> For example, Lapage (in Lapage & Okalik, 1997, p. 56) explains the occurrence of many of the same type of challenges in different communities in the Arctic. “[T]he problems that are revealed are all the same when shared: relationships, sibling rivalry, relatives, child sexual abuse, assaults, verbal abuse and belittling people. The problems are all similar to one another whether it is in this community or another.” Hicks (2006, slide 55)

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<sup>26</sup> Refer to appendix 1 for Inuit specific factors contributing to levels of suicide as presented by NAHO (2007), which depicts this interconnectedness.

also discusses this interlinking, stating that “[t]he high rates of suicide by Inuit in Nunavut are not a ‘stand alone’ problem [. . .] Nunavut’s high suicide rate should not be viewed in isolation, but as a symptom of a society experiencing rapid and difficult social, cultural and economic change under specific historic and political conditions.” Viewing the various social health challenges affecting Inuit communities in this way means considering the greater complexity of issues affecting Inuit communities behind manifest health problems such as a single suicidal attempt.

### **Generational experiences of colonization**

Sources authored by Inuit tend to discuss three distinct generations of Inuit having experienced the historical period of colonization (1910s-1970s) directly and indirectly. While within those three generations there are unique individual stories and experiences, there are similarities of experience for three separate generations: 1) Inuit who were adults during the period of historical colonization; 2) Inuit who were children during this period and 3) children of this second generation, who are indirectly impacted by historical colonization.

The first generation are those Inuit who were adults during the period of historical colonization. These Inuit, elders today, experienced the move off the land into settlements as adults. Okalik (1997, p. 8) offers an example of the generalized experience of the oldest generation. “[O]ne of the top adjustment periods for our older generation have been to relocate to communities on differing times in the regions when before they were practically surviving off the land in and around their surrounding camps.” As adults undergoing colonization and changes accompanying a move from a nomadic life to settlements where Inuit became increasingly dependent on a western style infrastructure, this generation had to negotiate events of colonization. Members of this generation often needed to make decisions with very few indicators foretelling how their decisions and the changes brought with colonization may impact themselves and their families.

Inuit who were children during this time period experienced the second wave of colonization. Inuit of this generation are adults today and are spoken of as experiencing some of the most profound fall-outs of colonization. Carpenter (2001, p. 70) in reviewing the book *Saqiyuq*, terms this generation the “transitional generation.”

Rhoda Kaukjak Katsak, born April 18, 1957 in her bold statement hollers, “I am number six of eleven kids, right smack in the middle!” Rhoda is part of a transitional generation of Inuit who were sent to federal day schools. Rhoda was one of the lucky ones, she was relocated to Igloolik where she boarded with her grandparents and attended federal day school. Boarding with her grandparents in Igloolik meant: being under the roof of family, being exposed to the Inuktitut language, traditional food, and the wisdom of the older generation.

But even Kaukjak Katsak (in Wachowich et al, 1999, p. 194), defined as having had a luckier experience of colonization, found the experience to be a difficult one, explaining: “It was very difficult for me, this period. I don’t know about other people, but for me it was very difficult coming in off the land and going into school. It was difficult for me to learn when I was a child that there are other races, like the Qallunaat, who have the power, who have the authority. It was difficult for me.” This generation of Inuit faced historical colonization as children and many were forcibly separated from their families and their culture when taken away to residential schools.

The third generation are those who are children and young adults today. This generation has felt historical colonization more indirectly through the transitions and contemporary impacts of colonization within the generations of their parents and grandparents. Napartuk (2002, p. 66) explains this:

My parents went through a lot of hardships and change during their youth. They went through a lot of pain and a lot of changes in a very short time. We demand a lot from our parents, with the little resources they grew up with. Through many issues, there is a lot of healing that needs to be done in my parents’ generation. They are doing the best with what they have, and with what they have learned. It is very hard.

Napartuk (2002, p. 66) goes on to explain how the differences in the impacts between generations has made for glaring differences in experiences generationally. “Just to give you an idea of the differences in one generation, my mother was born in an igloo out on the land, with a traditional midwife. I have been to Chile, Australia and France, and that’s just one generation’s difference.” Such generational differences further complicate the healing that is needed, as much effort is required to reach a place where generations can communicate to each other. Napartak (2002, p. 66) explains:

I see a lot of parents who have given up on their children, and a lot of children who have given up on their parents. They don't know what to do with each other anymore. This is not a whole case scenario, it is not as though everyone is like that, but there is a lot of pain and a lot of learning to do. The main reason is because they just don't know how to relate to each other – the differences between just one generation are staggering.

The youngest generation has experienced historical colonization indirectly through the impacts faced by the generations of their parents and grandparents and through generational differences that become exacerbated through participation in a globalizing world. Such gaps in experience and knowledge between generations for Inuit are further considered in chapter 11 where I discuss a reintegration of intergenerational learning as an example of an ideal pedagogy.

### **Maintenance of social health challenges**

Current disparities in the social health of Inuit communities are further exacerbated by the reality that Inuit living in Arctic regions do not have consistent access to medical care. According to Statistics Canada (Tait, 2008, p. 6), while 79% of the total Canadian population have access to a family doctor or specialist, 56% of Inuit noted the same access. Because of the remoteness of Arctic communities, most health stations do not have doctors on staff and residents need to fly to large cities such as Iqaluit for visits with doctors and to southern Canada for visits with specialists. Travel away from home communities is a challenge for many, especially for those who have never left the north, and as visits outside home communities and the Arctic are often for medical reasons.

Low rates of high school completion and subsequent low rates of attendance and completion of professional certifications and degrees mean few numbers of Inuit are professionally trained as nurses, doctors and social workers and therefore much of the workforce for these positions are filled by non-Inuit and non-northerners.<sup>27</sup> As Korhonen (2005, p. 5) explains, this impacts the cultural appropriateness of services as “[t]oo often, notions of Aboriginally-appropriate services and training, when provided by non-Inuit both Aboriginal and non-

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<sup>27</sup> One factor behind low numbers of Inuit employment within the health and social service sector is that rates of high school completion in the Canadian Arctic are considerably lower in comparison to the rest of Canada (Hicks, 2005; Berger, 2006) as one half of Inuit (51%) have not completed high school (Tait, 2008, p. 18). The reasons for such low rates are many and complex. Refer to chapter 8 for a more detailed discussion.

Aboriginal, are based on First Nations culture, practices and rituals.” Napartuk (2002, p. 70) echoes such an observation, indicating further that being grouped into the same category with First Nations peoples means that Inuit often lose out on funding. “Right now, program funding and the programs themselves, go mainly to First Nations groups. The North doesn’t get a fair share of this money, because much of the government’s funding methods are based per capita, not location or cost of living expense.”

For those who do work in the medical fields in the Arctic, conditions are difficult as these fields are filled with an understaffed and overworked workforce. As Napartuk (2002, p. 70) explains, “[s]ome excellent, qualified and talented people are burning out in the medical fields [. . .] A few years ago, we had a crisis with sexual abuse back home. The frontline workers were exhausted and overworked, with little relief. When these front line workers have to stop, they are not being replaced with the same level of service [. . .] Often they move from crisis to crisis. I cannot emphasize this enough; we need more support and training for frontline workers.”

Further difficulties with regards high levels of social health challenges come from policies and actions at the national government level that act in maintaining such conditions. Hicks (2006) speaking specifically on high suicide rates in Nunavut, expresses how federal government support in the Arctic is urgently needed alongside that of the Nunavut government.

There is no reason why Nunavummiut and other Inuit should suffer decades of elevated rates of suicide among their young men – it IS possible to break the cycle of transmission of historical trauma. The fledging Nunavut government, with its limited resources, is not capable of solving the problem on its own. There is an urgent need for the Government of Canada to acknowledge the nature and scope of the problems, and to commit the resources required to address them.

Current government support at the national level could help Inuit to more effectively stem some of the social health challenges which are currently at high levels.

Ongoing difficulties exist in securing and maintaining support from the Canadian state for established self-government land-claim agreements in the Canadian Arctic and these difficulties superimposed on ongoing manifestations of colonization are a further aspect of

the struggle Inuit communities experience in moving away from dire statistics. Nunavut is one example of a land-claim yet to be fulfilled. As Kaludjak (2007) states, “[w]e have tried for years to persuade the Government of Canada to live up to its obligations in the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement” and even with recommendations from Canada’s Auditor General in 2003, and “concrete proposals” from former justice Thomas Berger in 2006, full implementation is not a reality.

A further complication to contemporary government support of Inuit, though not a widely known or discussed complication, is the non-recognition of Inuit existence within Canadian law. The film *Kiviaq versus Canada* (Isuma, 2006) highlights Kiviaq’s attempts at suing the Canadian government for the right to be recognized as uniquely Inuit and therefore distinct from other Canadians. The history of the recognition and non-recognition of Inuit as distinct began with a landmark case involving Inuit from Northern Quebec in 1929, who at that time, as Amagoalik<sup>28</sup> (Isuma, 2006, 8:35) explains “were desperate and starving.” As Amagoalik (Isuma, 2006, 8:35) continues to explain, there was a struggle in the courts as to how these Inuit should be defined in law. This struggle was primarily to determine who, either the federal or Quebec government, was responsible for payment of Hudson’s Bay Company provisions to these Inuit. The film (Isuma, 2006, 9:37-10:48) reviews this court struggle, which eventually culminated in the decision that Inuit were the responsibility of the federal government:

Amagoalik: The government had a different view: that Inuit weren’t like Indians and didn’t have treaties. Therefore Inuit were the responsibility of the Quebec government.

Tester: And the government of Quebec said no, the federal government is responsible. Inuit are Aboriginal people, they’re your responsibility under the BNA act. The only problem is the British North America Act in the Canadian constitution doesn’t mention Eskimos or Inuit at all. It only talks about the federal government having responsibility for Indians and lands reserved for Indians and Inuit were just forgotten about – left out altogether. A decision comes down in 1939. The outcome is really kind-of shocking because the court decides that for purposes of administration Inuit really are just another kind of Indian.

Amagoalik: Therefore the federal government is responsible for Inuit.

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<sup>28</sup> In the film, Amagoalik’s statements are spoken in Inuktitut and translated into English subtitles.

As Tester (Isuma, 2006, 10:56) further explains, “the federal government had decided that it didn’t want to create what it called the same kind of dependency relationship that existed between the government and First Nations in Canada” at the time, and therefore wanted to “avoid creating an Act like that for Inuit and it wanted to make sure that the Inuit did not come under the Indian Act.” What resulted, Tester (Isuma, 2006, 11:16) explains is that the government shockingly “never bothered – they ignored it altogether.” The meaning of this is, as Kiviaq (Isuma, 2006, 13:54) explains, as an Inuk, he “literally [doesn’t] exist unless I want to proclaim that I’m a white man.” Inuit were therefore considered to be “just like other Canadians – whatever that means” (Tester, in Isuma, 2006, 13:58).

This attempt to draw attention to the non-existence of Inuit within Canadian law has subsequent implications for all Inuit land claim agreements. For example, with regards the Nunavut land claim, responsibility for the territory has completely been given over to the territorial public government put in place in Nunavut and all responsibility at the federal level has been relinquished through as Tester states (Isuma, 2006, 25:04) “extinguishable clauses.” This subsequently means, as Tester (Isuma, 2006, 26:41) clarifies, that the federal government has washed their hands completely of all responsibilities and left the public government to handle everything. “[T]he federal government gives, you know, 700 million and they say, ‘we’ve met our responsibility.’ We’ve handed it over to the territorial government. It’s over to you.” If Inuit are not defined by law as Kiviaq (Isuma, 2006, 24:25) is attempting to prove through suing the Government of Canada, then this means all land-claims made are invalid as “there’s no way they can make a claim with an undefined people.”

Legal existence or, in other words, confirmation of the distinct collective identity of Inuit is being held by the Government of Canada. Like King (2003, p. 143) discusses regarding the legislation in Canada termed “the two-generation cut-off clause” which dictates that after two generations of marrying out of status, First Nations individuals become non-status and therefore non-existent in legal terms, such reigns over existence or non-existence of distinct peoples and belonging or non-belonging of individuals to a particularly distinct group, are a unique form of assimilation. The process is not as overt as other methods of colonization but the assimilation is still there. As King (2003, p. 143) states, “[n]o need to send in the cavalry with guns blazing. Legislation will do just as nicely.” The fight Kiviaq is leading is a fundamental struggle against assimilation: the struggle to acquire the freedom and ability to define oneself. This struggle has profound implications for this thesis, as it is about having a

freedom to choose one's own identity, how one – or one's cultural group – would like to be labelled or the choice to reject labels altogether.

Subsequent implications from a lack of real support from recent and current Canadian governments have acted to contribute to the maintenance of poor conditions in health and social services within the Arctic. Simon (2007a) states that “[t]he huge gaps in health, education and housing between aboriginal and non-aboriginal Canadians remain a source of shame at home and abroad for all of us.” And Kaludjak (2007) explains that full implementation of the Nunavut land claims would mean the government “taking concrete steps to tackle the harsh reality [of] acute social problems [which] leave many of our young adrift.”

With climate change opening up the Northwest Passage, the federal government of Canada is expressing renewed and increasing interest in the Arctic, mainly for sovereignty reasons. In contrast to such interests in the Arctic during the earlier period of colonization (1910s – 70s), these government interests are not masked with feigned altruism and are often spoken of without recognition that Inuit inhabit and are rightful owners of the land. As Simon (2007a) explains, Harper declares his interests outright. “He has told audiences of foreign businessmen that the untapped oil, gas and mineral riches of the Arctic are a major factor in his description of Canada as an energy and mining “superpower”.” This ignorance of the presence and even existence of Inuit and their rightful ownership of the land are reminiscent of discrimination that has plagued Inuit for decades. Amagoalik (2000a, p. 138) expresses his personal experience and perspective on such ignorance.

In the 1950s an [sic] 60s, when journalists first discovered the Arctic, they would come up and interview a cop, a teacher, or the local government administrator. Having spent a few days in the Arctic and spoken to “Arctic experts”, they would return to their homes in the south and write their stories. Somewhere in their article a familiar line usually appeared. They almost never failed to refer to the Arctic as a “wasteland where nobody lives”. I couldn't understand this because they obviously saw us. Even as a young boy, I was annoyed that these guys thought of us as nobodies or that we somehow did not qualify as human beings. It was not very long ago that even some federal government people were still referring to our homeland as a wasteland and defending their policies in the Arctic because “nobody lives there”.

As Kaludjak (2007) explains, current state interests in the Arctic still represent hegemonic thinking ignorant of the realities, and indeed sometimes even existence, of an Aboriginal minority that calls the Arctic home. “But [Harper’s] rationale, “We either use it or lose it,” doesn’t hold water. The Arctic is not an uninhabited wilderness. It is our homeland and has been for centuries. More than 50,000 Inuit – proud Canadians – live in the Canadian Arctic.”

In the fight to foster federal government interest in the Arctic, necessary for strengthening Inuit communities, decreasing high rates of social health challenges and rightfully owed to Inuit through land-claim agreements, Inuit political leaders do not deny that state interest in the Arctic is genuine and wish to maintain it but demand that current sovereignty interests not bypass Inuit, as they have been. For example, Simon (2007a) states that “Arctic sovereignty is too important to be treated as just an adjunct to foreign relations or as a stage for foreign investment. It must be built from the inside out.” In the fight over Arctic sovereignty that has raised the interest of the current Government of Canada into Arctic affairs, Inuit leaders are demanding that gaps in social and health indicators between Inuit and the rest of Canada’s population be met alongside those interests. “We are pleased to see the Prime Minister’s genuine interest in the Arctic and his willingness to back up that interest with bold pronouncements and money. But let’s assert our Arctic sovereignty in ways that impress outsiders with the creativity and practicality of our domestic policies, building up the well-being of the Inuit communities of the Arctic, as well as the size and strength of our ships” (Simon, 2007a). Real support from the Canadian government can help Inuit to decrease rates of social health challenges and Inuit political leaders work to stress such issues in their dealings with the state.

## **Summary**

In this chapter I have reaffirmed the context of this thesis drawing largely from Inuit perspectives on colonization in the Canadian Arctic. I began reviewing how Inuit tend to discuss colonization using terminologies which highlight painful, transformative and violent aspects. I then discussed contemporary impacts of colonization, including difficulties with self-conceptualizations of identity and identity confusion, increases in anger and levels of social health challenges, stressing in particular the high rates of suicide but also the interconnectedness of health problems in Inuit communities. I briefly considered the tendency of Inuit writers to discuss colonization as experienced differently for three distinct

generations, which has relevance for my later discussion on intergenerational pedagogy as an ideal pedagogy in chapter 11. I also briefly highlighted a lack of consistent access to culturally appropriate medical care as a contributing factor to the maintenance of social health challenges in the Arctic. Finally, I discussed lacks in real support from past and current Canadian governments through unfulfilled land-claim agreements and non-recognition of Inuit within Canadian law, which further act to maintain discrepancies between social health indicators of Inuit communities versus those of the broader Canadian population. Carrying on with this theme of reaffirming contextual aspects, in chapter 8 I consider education and schooling spheres of the Canadian Arctic more specifically.

## CHAPTER 8: Reaffirming context: Education in the Canadian Arctic

### **Introduction**

In this chapter I discuss the spheres of education and schooling in the historical and contemporary Canadian Arctic, considering in more detail the link between low levels of education completion and high levels of social health problems in Arctic communities as noted in chapter 7. I review conceptions of Inuit ways of knowing and learning prior to historical colonization, before looking at perceptions of mainstream education which were brought in during this period through forced attendance of Inuit children at residential schools. I review broader impacts, such as confusions and crises in constructions of self-identities, which are described by some as a result of the introduction of these forms of education. I also consider how many refer to contemporary education in the Arctic as in a state of crisis. I discuss how challenges occurring with and in reaction to primary and secondary education have led on to challenges with higher education for many Inuit, where examples of barriers to education include those due to physical distance, those of bureaucracy and those stemming from difficulties with identity constructions. I conclude with a discussion pointing towards changes with education as an avenue to facilitate empowerment of individuals and communities in the Canadian Arctic.

### **Ways of learning prior to colonization**

In the Canadian Arctic prior to colonization, Inuit forms of education or learning fit into the nomadic lifestyles of Inuit in the past. Inuit pedagogy was framed around the values of intergenerational communication, experiential learning, learning for a practical purpose and learning as intertwined with living. As Kakkiarniun (1996, p. 26) testifies, “I always say, because some people say that we did not have teachers in those days, that yes we did; our fathers were our teachers. As children we were taught truly rich, life-nourishing skills that would be useful for us.” Watt-Cloutier (2000, p. 118) explains that Inuit ways of learning were holistic: “In our Native heritage, learning and living were the same thing, and knowledge, judgment, and skill could never be separated. The Native way of teaching is holistic.” There was a gender divide in the nomadic lifestyle where Inuit men and women held unique but compatible roles. Rojas (2000, p. 22-23) explains that:

Inuit women are not subservient to Inuit men but rather, both Inuit women and Inuit men together make up the complementary parts of a one whole [. . .] In order for the bird to fly up high both wings must do their part; likewise, in an Inuit society, both women and men have to carry their own burden in order for the society to function smoothly and in a sense fly high.

As Peryouar (in Peryouar & Hill, 1997, p. 12) explains, education also tended to follow this gender divide, but for both genders the aforementioned values were intrinsic.

If the child were a male, the father taught the skill of hunting, and the child would not even be aware that he was being taught because he felt he was just being allowed to go along on a hunting trip with his father; [. . .] That is how male children were taught before by their fathers. If the child were a female, they started learning how to sew, how to prepare skins, how to handle meat and cook from observing their mother's daily activities.

Watt-Cloutier (2000, p. 114) explains that such an education was effective in that it maintained a congruent cycle of well-being through the generations. "For thousands of years Aboriginal peoples had a very effective education. We knew how to prepare our children to handle the challenges they would face when living on the land. The harshness of our environment imposed a discipline that produced resilient, proud, and self-reliant people." The environment in the Arctic was always uncertain and changeable, but the lifestyles and ways of learning of Inuit in meeting and adapting to the changeable Arctic environment were relatively steady. As Qitsualik (2001f), explains, Inuit ways of learning were always in response to that changeable environment.

All was merely knowledge of one kind or another — a knowledge that no single person could ever master. This outlook was typical of the way in which Inuit were forced to regard learning. [. . .] Since the Nuna and Sila played by their own mysterious rules, it was up to humanity to learn to interpret those rules, to respect them in order to live. There was no supernature, only nature, and humanity had to be crafty in order to observe it, learning how to adapt around the whims of wind, water, temperature, light, animal migrations, sickness, bears, treacherous terrain, and the worst terror of all: the unknown — hazards that one is not knowledgeable enough to anticipate.

The ways of learning that each generation relied on to pass on knowledge effectively to the next generation were consistent with the relatively stable lifestyle many Inuit had which was

geared predominantly towards reacting to the uncertainty and changeability of the Arctic environment.

### **Residential schools and settlement**

Change became the overriding expression for the time period of historical colonization for Inuit. As Watt-Cloutier (2000, p. 114) expresses it: “Contact with the southern culture brought a flood of new things and new ways of life. People and decisions from far away places began to have more impact on our lives than the people around us and the disciplines of the land that we knew and understood. It was no longer clear what our own time and place was or what we now had to learn in order to control our own lives.” The new influences being introduced through events of colonization changed the relatively stable way of living in interaction and reaction to an Arctic environment to one where the changes were unpredictable, confusing and, in many ways, outside the control of Inuit.

Inuit expressed little resistance to many of these changes which accompanied colonization as they tended to regard the newcomers with what has been described as fear or respect<sup>29</sup> in reaction to the seeming ease that the newcomers were able to survive in the Arctic environment. It became obvious to Inuit at the time that old ways of learning, as Watt-Cloutier (2000, p. 114) explains, were no longer useful in meeting the challenges that were brought with the newcomers and with the introduction of mainstream culture. “The path of education we had successfully followed for countless generations did not prepare us for these new things.”

Some Inuit express how, during this period of transformation, some felt the new forms of education might help their children cope with changes brought with colonization. Watt-Cloutier (2000, p. 114) explains that most parents felt this way: “[I]f schools would help prepare our children for the changes they were facing, than most parents were willing to let their children be educated in the southern ways.” During this period, Pitseolak (in Ipellie, 2007a), an Inuk leader in Cape Dorset at the time, discusses how his decision over whether or

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<sup>29</sup> Such discussions of this fear or respect of authority of non-Inuit are often related to an Inuktitut concept termed *llarasuk*, *llira*, or *llirasulaurpugat* both by Inuit and non-Inuit sources (i.e. Napartuk, 2002, p. 66; Brody, 2000, p. 42-43) which Napartuk (2002, p. 66) defines as “when so much respect is given to someone that it borders on fear, it’s when you take another person’s word without ever questioning or arguing.”

not to agree to schooling in this community was influenced by the realization that children in his community could be left behind as the changes swept across the Arctic if schooling was not introduced. “I thought to myself, if there are no teachers in Cape Dorset and there are teachers in other places, then Cape Dorset will be behind.”

Though many Inuit did feel that the introduction of mainstream education may have had its potential benefits, the education of Inuit children that took place in a number of residential schools across the Arctic has also been described as the strictest part of the assimilationist schemes of the Canadian government. Most writers in the source literature discuss residential schools as removed from Inuit culture. In recounting her experience of being sent to a residential school when she was 10, Annahatak (1994, p. 14-15) explains that for her it was not an altogether unpleasant experience, but the learning felt to be irrelevant.

For 5 years I went to school in our settlement and then some of us were sent away to Churchill Manitoba to attend a vocational school that the federal government had organized for Canadian Inuit. Although I enjoyed it immensely, I could not foresee what I wanted to do. My learning did not have any relevance to anything in my life at the time.

Questions over whether Inuit children should have been encouraged to learn such an irrelevant curriculum still resound. As Ootoova (in Nakasuk et al, 1999, p. 26) explains: “It turns out it was wrong for us to agree to send them to school when the teaching material was irrelevant to the North. We were wrong in some ways and right in other ways. It is good to learn to read and write in English, to be able to understand the language. But they were not taught about the lifestyle in the North.” Some Inuit discuss their feelings of fear, loneliness and confusion with regards their specific experiences of residential schools. For example, French (1988, p. 205) describes seeing her brother across the dining room, stating: “How little he looked, lost and lonesome. I felt like going over to tell him that everything was going to be all right, only I was not too sure of that myself.” Though Watt-Cloutier (2000, p. 115) expresses that there are many diversities in the experiences of those who attended residential schools, she emphasizes the need to not underestimate the ongoing impacts. “Certainly there are many negative effects from those years, depending on the places we were sent and the circumstances we faced, and we must deal with these issues on a daily basis as we come to terms with our past. The impact of the past situations should not be underestimated.”

Carpenter (2000a, p. 8) echoes this, stating: “We are still struggling individually to dismantle the destructive energies garnished from our residential-school experiences.”

As Inuit were made to learn English through this schooling, children were taught that their own languages and culture were less important. Freeman (1988, p. 239) remembers having to question the worth of her language from her experiences at residential schools. “[T]hey did not allow me to speak my own language in their schools so that I began to think that there was something wrong with my language.” Agalakti Awa (in Wachowich et al, 1999 p. 105-106) recounts an example of abuse at school in reaction to a student’s use of Inuktitut. “[Arvaluk] told me one time when he came home from the school trip, he told me that one of the teachers slapped his hand because he was speaking Inuktitut. That is what he told me when he came home. He said that she slapped him!”

Living away from family, community and cultural homes, and with instances of abuse occurring in reaction to expressions of Inuit culture, Inuit children were forced to assimilate. Speaking of undertaking his education not in a residential school, but as part of the ‘experimental Eskimos’ project in southern Canada where Inuit children were moved south to live as part of non-Inuit families as an ‘experiment’, Nungak (2000b, p. 12), explains that “[h]aving to be “educated” according to Qallunaaq ways was a seismic shock to my generation. We were to leave behind our “education” in Inuit ways, grinding into the negative by-products inevitable from such a step. This upheaval started the unravelling of our moorings to our families, surroundings, language, and culture.” Kaukjak Katsak (in Wachowich et al, 1999, p. 3) sums up her experience at residential schools by stating: “I moved in off the land and went to school when I was eight years old. That is when they started trying to teach me to become a Qallunaaq.” Qitsualik (2001d) also discusses how Inuit children, along with being forced to assimilate into southern culture, were forced into Christianity. “It is ironic that children kidnapped from their families were daily forced to thank a foreign deity. The institution’s policy was that we should appreciate our “betterment.”” And it was these feelings that children were being kidnapped, and a growing resistance to the division of families which motivated some parents to oppose sending their children to residential schools.

But for those who did resist sending children to residential schools, the government applied measures which forced parents to do so. Agalakti Awa (in Wachowich et al, 1999 p. 108)

explains that she and her husband were able to convince the government that they needed to keep one of their children with them as they not only missed their children greatly but needed them to help with hunting and their way of life.

When the boat came, my husband started arguing with the teacher. He was telling him, “He is mine! He is my son! Since you have taken all my other sons away, I am going to keep this son! He is going to help me. He is going to learn how to hunt!” He was telling the teacher how he would rather see Solomon learn the Inuit way, not the Qallunaat way.

For this family, however, the government issued the consequence of cutting off their family allowance social welfare payment. “[T]he teachers told my husband that if Solomon didn’t go to school, they would cut off the family allowance that we were getting for him. My husband said that was okay, and that is what the government did. They cut off our family allowance” (Agalakti Awa, in Wachowich et al, 1999 p. 108). As Watt-Cloutier (2000, p. 114-115) explains, this consequence forced many parents to give up their children and agree to have them sent to residential schools. “For those who were not willing to go this route, the government held back family allowance cheques, making it difficult for parents to feel like they had a choice in the matter.”

Upon reflection, some express regret at not exercising a choice to school children in traditional ways of learning during this period. For example, “[o]ne elder said that she regretted letting teachers take too much control back then. They said they had a choice, and could have objected if they wanted to. They could have taught the traditional ways if they had objected to the schools” (Shaimaiyuk in Nakasuk, et al, 1999, p. 139). But many of the sources indicate the emotional strain these decisions carried and the reality that there was often little room for choice. Kaukjak Katsak (in Wachowich et al, 1999, p. 166), another of Agalakti Awa’s children, states “I was crying and begging him to let me go with him, but he couldn’t do anything. [. . .] At that time I was really mad at him for not taking me home with him. Later I realized that we had to be in school. He had no choice. The Qallunaat authorities in the settlement said so, and there was nothing he could do.” Pudlat (1990, p. 18) explains that the forcing of parents to give up their children and send them to residential schools was really the major factor which resulted in the settling of the Arctic.

I went to school. I had to go to school because I was ordered. We were still in the camp when the government came to our parents, and they told us, “Your

children have to go to school.” My parents had no choice. And if we didn’t go to school, we wouldn’t receive family allowance [. . .] That’s what really gathered the North—the education, the school, the government. Our parents had no powers.

With the movement of children into residential schools, many parents missed their children and wanted to be closer to them. For example, Agalakti Awa (in Wachowich et al, 1999 p. 106) explains that “[a]fter a while we were told by the Qallunaat that our sons had to stay in the community all year long. We left them there, but we missed them very, very much when they were gone. We missed them so much! They were away from us all winter.” Many Inuit parents followed their children into settlements. Peryouar (in Peryouar & Hill, 1997, p. 20) explains that “Inuit preferred to have their child with them and some asked to keep them year round, but because children had to start attending school they were put on a plane and taken to the settlement. [. . .] because parents do not want to be separated from their children, they started moving into the community while their children attended school.” Kunuk (in Svenson & Kunuk, 2002, p. 1) feels that this was part of a colonizing strategy that the Government of Canada was executing. “After two years my parents came, because they wanted to be close to us. It’s like a scheme the government brought everybody into one place [with]: ‘Send the children to school and the parents will follow.’” One of the primary factors behind the creation of settlements in the Canadian Arctic was the forcing of children into schooling as many parents subsequently followed as Inuit were led to increasing dependencies on the Canadian federal government.

### **Impacts of mainstream education**

Over time the introduction of mainstream education in the Canadian Arctic led to broader changes in lifestyle for Inuit. Annahatak (1994, p. 15-16) explains that when education was introduced into Nunavik communities, English was the only language of instruction, which instigated other changes reinforced through an expansion of institutions at the community level.

When schooling was first started in our community by the government, English was the only language used for instruction in all subjects. I did not see this as having any negative impact on our community then because it was just the beginning of one of many ways of seeing another culture. There were not many distractions from following our lifestyle and traditional values. We came home from school and continued to follow our cultural ways at that time.

But with more and more institutional developments in the communities, our cultural activities evolved from traditional land-based to more community-oriented processes.

Pitseolak (in Ipellie, 2007a), a decision-maker on the introduction of Qallunaat education, recalls that he felt concern that this would lead to difficult times ahead for Inuit, though, as discussed earlier, he was torn as he also had concern his community might get left behind. “I said, If you want to, let them come. But I knew it would be the beginning of difficult times [. . .] I knew that some would learn English but that others would not learn enough; that people who went to school and learned something might think themselves better than those who did not [. . .] What I thought in my mind has come true.” Iqallijuq (2000, p. 21) explains that mainstream schooling has led to such difficulties because of the younger generation being disconnected with past Inuit cultural values. “The younger generation is less equipped with knowledge of their ancestors because in schools white people do not teach them about those things. The customs and the very social fabric are greatly damaged by the schools – to a point of confusion.” The introduction of mainstream schooling into Canadian Arctic communities did accompany broader cultural changes, playing a role in the widespread transformation of Inuit cultural activities to ones more akin to southern ways of living, also creating more division between Inuit and losses in Inuit cultural values.

Accompanying losses in Inuit cultural values, some Inuit express concern that mainstream styles of education have led to the development of more individualized and consumerist values in younger generations of Inuit. As Iqallijuq (2000, p. 21) states, “[f]amily doesn’t seem to be a priority anymore. They are more concerned about themselves now rather than their siblings, parents, and other relatives, and they are mixing in the community with other people. They seem to have lost their focus.” Ootoova (in Nakasuk et al, 1999, p. 26) explains that accompanying changes in education, Inuit children tend to have a greater focus on monetary and consumerist values, whereas values considered as cultural, such as being resourceful in times of scarcity, have decreased.

All our children in Miitimalik have been taught as though they were to continue on to Ottawa. They are not taught the way of life in our community. They are not taught what to do when food becomes scarce. They start asking, “Do you have money?” They have no qualms about asking the question. They sure know how to ask for money now in our community. We were not like that. We wouldn’t ask for anything. We were respectful and didn’t want to ask for anything. If we didn’t have it, then we didn’t have it. Children today

seem to think it's okay not to eat meat; as long as they have junk food they are happy.

Kaukjak Katsak (in Wachowich et al, 1999 p. 193) echoes this, also emphasizing how younger generations of Inuit tend to favor store-bought food over country food. "Things have really changed now that I have my own children [. . .] My kids, they think about money every day [. . .] Another thing I find with my kids and money is that if I don't have store-bought food on the table every day, my kids act like we have no food that day, no "real" food." Within the source literature, there are expressed concerns regarding an increase in consumerist and individualist values in younger generations of Inuit which is linked to the introduction of mainstream schooling.

The teaching of an English-only curriculum within mainstream education also resulted in negative impacts. This has been tied to losses in the use of Inuit languages. For example, Ipellie (2007b) discusses abusive assimilation practices in residential schools in relation to losses in the use of Inuktitut.

The result today is that many of our youth now speak in broken English peppered with halfhearted, fractured Inuktitut. They live a life walking both sides of the cultural divide and not fully in either. They now do their thinking and speaking in two or more languages in their daily conversations. Some of them have unfortunately lost their original language forever, having spent their formative adolescent years in government-sponsored residential schools where they were strictly forbidden to speak Inuktitut or suffer the consequences of being caught doing so.

There are links drawn between losses in the use and knowledge of Inuit languages in the contemporary Arctic with the introduction of English-only curriculum, originated at residential schools and continuing in contemporary schooling.

Introduction of mainstream schooling has also exacerbated identity confusions many were experiencing with the introduction of wider aspects of western culture. Freeman (1988, p. 239-240) discusses her experience moving back and forth from a residential school to life at home with her grandmother where she felt inhibited in both. "At that time, I used to feel that I was in 2 hells – one while I was in school – the second when I went home, because my grandmother would not hear any other language spoken in her presence in our house." Ipellie

(2007b) explains that such a way of living lead many Inuit to feel stuck between the two cultures.

In these modern circumstances, an Inuk child being brought up between two cultures is vulnerable to mixed-messages about which culture to duly follow. They are not being given optimum opportunity because of unforeseen circumstances, to become a strong proponent and loyal follower of either culture. It is this present life-dilemma that has produced its share of modern-day Inuit victims who are stuck in the middle of Eskimo and European cultural, intellectual societies.

As discussed in chapter 7, Taylor (1997), a psychologist who has studied the impact of colonization on minority cultural groups and Inuit in particular, reinforces such a perspective. Discussing what he terms “valueless colonialism”, Taylor (1997, p. 186) explains that:

[C]olonized people have no clear portrait of mainstream culture. For example, while Inuit were no doubt overwhelmed by the visible aspects of European culture, they were never exposed to the fundamental values that lie at the core of European culture. These values were not focused on survival but, instead, revolved around the acquisition of material goods.

Further it is the coupling of this ‘valueless colonialism’ with a corresponding confusion in what Taylor (1997, p. 185) terms the “heritage” culture (or Inuit culture), also a result of colonization, which leads to profound confusions in personal identity constructions.

I believe that the crisis in identity is one not merely of conflict, but a profound confusion arising from competing cultures that are themselves devoid of fundamental values. Inuit students, for example, do not merely face the pushes and pulls of their heritage culture on the one hand, and mainstream culture on the other. Rather they confront a heritage culture that is itself a confusing array of values and practices as a consequence of colonialism. [. . .] Inuit students, then, have their identity conflicts compounded by the fact that the two competing collective identities are themselves poorly defined templates.

Such confusions in identity, initiated for many from experiences at residential schools and subsequent feelings of being trapped between two cultures, as discussed in chapter 7, have led to increases in destructive social health challenges in contemporary Inuit communities.

## **Contemporary education**

Contemporary education in the Canadian Arctic has reached crisis levels. As already pointed to, half of Inuit in Canada (51%) have not completed high school (Tait, 2008, p. 18). Discussing reports put out by the District Education Authority in Iqaluit, the capital of Nunavut, Kunuk (2006) discusses drop-out rates, explaining that for those students who are experiencing difficulties, there is little help.

We were saddened to learn the facts about what our eyes are telling us: that there are an unacceptably high number of students leaving our schools long before graduation. Our second report looked at those students who were struggling in school. As parents, we assume that our schools are able to provide supports for those students who for whatever reason are struggling in school. But again we were saddened to learn just how few remedial programs are provided through the school funding formula. We learned in our research that the risk factors associated with children leaving school early are often present at the kindergarten to Grade 5 level, yet these grades have no more remedial resources available to them than the older grades.

Reporting a conversation with an elder, Shaimaiyuk (in Nakasuk, et al, 1999, p. 139) also expressed concern regarding schools leavers. “She said teenagers now drop out because they feel they are not good at anything; for example, when teachers tell them they can’t write. They end up dropping out and turning to drugs and alcohol.” Watt-Cloutier (2000, p. 115) discusses her view that academic standards in Arctic schools have been lowered in what she fears are a form of structural racism.

Many will agree that this rigour and challenge no longer exists in our schools and that we have gone from the extreme of a paternalistic system to the extreme of a system that challenges our youth so little that it undermines their intelligence. Time and time again we hear that our students are not learning well in either their mother tongue or the second languages. The watering down of programs, the lowering of standards and expectations is a form of structural racism that we must make every attempt to stop.

Despite a variety of views on the high levels of school leavers in contemporary Arctic schools, the sheer quantity of Inuit not completing high school is a point of real concern.

One area which many agree has influenced high drop-out rates is the continuation of English-only or French-only curricula, initiated primarily through assimilative practices at residential

schools, but which continues to be an area of concern within contemporary schooling in the Arctic. Simon (2006, p. 52) expresses that losses in the language of Inuktitut continue to be maintained through a curriculum that makes a sharp shift in the language of instruction at the grade 3-4 level, explaining that both languages taught become impacted, as do levels of confidence and completion rates.

In Nunavut and other Inuit regions Inuktitut is taught until grades 3-4. The language of instruction then reverts to English or French (in Nunavik). It means starting over from scratch in terms of language instruction, with the end result being poor proficiency in both Inuktitut and English or French. Many Inuit students are failing by Grades 8-10, damaging their personal confidence. Inuit view this also as an institutional rejection of their language and culture.

Similar observations prompted former justice Thomas Berger's recommendation to the Government of Canada for Nunavut comprehensive bilingual education. As Berger (2006, p. v) states, "Inuit children have to catch up, but they are trying to hit a moving target since, as they advance into the higher grades, the curriculum becomes more dependent on reading and books, more dependent on a capacity in English that they simply do not have." Qitsualik (2000a) discusses how she views globalization through media as another danger to the survival of Inuit languages.

While Inuit culture has survived in Arctic isolation, it is now very much a part of the global village — mostly due to electronic media. And it is no coincidence that, at this time, Inuit languages (Inuktitut, Inuinnaqtun, Inuvialuktun, etc.) are suffering greater linguistic erosion than at any other time in the past. The first treasure of Inuit culture — language — has survived repressive bureaucrats and residential school systems, but is rapidly crumbling before television, radio, and electronic print media.

The use of English-only or French-only curricula in the Arctic regions and impacts of globalization continue to be contributors to losses in Inuit languages and low levels of school completion rates across the Arctic.

A sense of disconnection from curriculum and schooling culminating in low completion rates and corresponding confusions in identity for many Inuit youth, are compounded by the exclusion of Inuit cultural values within Arctic classrooms. Annahatak (1994, p. 17) explains, from her perspective as a teacher, that exclusion of Inuit values from curricula mean that these curricula do not reach students as ones based more on cultural values could. "More

often than not Inuit values are left out of school. I have taught many lessons which I have come to term “floating lessons.” These I find not to be connected to our cultural purposes and I see them more for surface learning, that is, to learn the physical aspects of culture (food, clothing, tools, customs, etc.). They rarely touch upon students’ choices, decisions, and identity.” After discussing high levels of suicide as being particularly an issue for young Inuit, Kunuk (in Sidimus & Kunuk, 2007) goes on to link such challenges to a lack of cultural education, stating “[t]hat's how I see it. They are not educated; they went to school, but didn't receive an appropriate education.” Explaining further, Kunuk (in Sidimus & Kunuik, 2007) discusses how even an integration of cultural values into mainstream schooling may not be sufficient, indicating rather that connecting children more directly to life on the land may be required. “My children went to school, but I stopped them going. I'm just preparing them, now, to go out on the hunt with me. I don't know if I will succeed – I have three boys at home, one girl, one adopted – and they have gone through the school system.” Though there is discussion on how inclusion of cultural values into mainstream classrooms could help to reconnect Inuit youth with education, others stress that education needs to be reconsidered as it was in the past – part of a way of life.

There is also discussion that such informal aspects of cultural ways of learning for Inuit have decreased in connection with the introduction of mainstream schooling. Elders from Pond Inlet (1997, p. 53), explain, for example: “Elders want the young people to listen to the older people because they know what they are talking about. The younger generation is encouraged to listen to the elders because elders have obtained wisdom and knowledge through their own experiences and patience. Therefore the youth are expected to listen to the older generation when they speak.” In discussing informal learning opportunities, many point to decreases in respect for elders and learning situations between elders and youth, which are linked, oftentimes, to greater time and focus being given to a school system that is culturally irrelevant and in crisis. As Kunuk (in Sidimus & Kunuk, 2007) states, “[m]y culture respects the elders, so we wait for what the elders have to say. But that system doesn't work in this day and age, because we are now colonialized [sic].” Some claim that the school system is responsible for these decreases in respect shown towards elders and cultural values. As Kunuk (in Sidimus & Kunuk, 2007) goes on to explain, “[w]hen you go through the school system you lose respect. You have no more respect for elders or the old ways. That is what I am seeing.” Peryouar (in Peryouar & Hill, 1997, p. 27) notes how respect now shown to principals and school officials has replaced the respect that was traditionally given

to elders. “It is only recently that the children stopped showing respect towards their elders, because they say now that they have to listen to the principal of the school.” Furthermore, Qitsualik (2003b) explains that elders tend towards sharing less. “Among Inuit, there was much more time available in the old days, so that someone whose opinion was asked had the right to speak at will — especially if that someone was an elder. But these are not the old days, and many elders, now faced with time-constraints upon their opinions, simply opt for silence.” Freeman (1988, p. 241) explains how the demands placed on adults to participate in a workforce has also played a role in the decrease of informal intergenerational learning. “[F]or the last twenty years or so Inuit have not really passed on their knowledge to their children. Not by any means on purpose though. How much can you be aware of your own environment if you are working 9 to 5? Also the *qallunaat* system of education has interfered a great deal.” Changes in time schedules of adults and children was also pointed to by Kakkiarnium (1996, p. 31). “We never get to see them anymore and that situation is worse for some children because they do not get home until their parents are asleep. Those are the reasons why we are unable to teach them fully as we should do.” Whereas in the past, learning for Inuit used to be informal intergenerational learning intertwined with a way of life, in the contemporary Arctic Inuit explain that these forms of learning have decreased. Seeteenak (in Tapatai & Seeteenak, 1996, p. 23) summarizes: “We now have to try to teach our children to hunt and fish, whereas before it was a way of life.”

### **Barriers to higher education**

Leading on from crises at the primary and secondary levels of education within the Canadian Arctic, there are also low numbers of Inuit in attendance at higher educational institutions. As mentioned in an ITK (2004, p. 10) backgrounder document: “It is not surprising that there are also a low number of Inuit who go on to complete trade certificates, college certificates/diplomas or University degrees given the low number of Inuit high school graduates.” Unpacking reasons behind low attendance of Inuit in higher education from the source literature, we can see that Inuit are encountering different barriers in seeking and participating in higher education: barriers of bureaucracy, barriers of distance and barriers due to rigid identity constructions. ITK (2004, p. 10) articulates some main reasons for the low numbers of Inuit participating and completing higher levels of education: “[S]kills are not always at a level acceptable to many post secondary institutions due to early drop out, low literacy skills or the unavailability of certain courses at the high school level; as well as

travel outside the community.” Though difficulties with attendance and completion of education at the primary and secondary levels do lead to difficulties in completing and moving on to higher educational institutions, just as it is with primary and secondary levels of education, so too are there different interplays of difficulties impacting attendance numbers of Inuit within higher levels of education. Qitsualik (1999f) mentions the difficulties in attending tertiary levels of education while also reflecting on the high levels of social health challenges in Arctic communities. “Unfortunately, there is not a lot of business in the northern communities, so many are unemployed. They get angry, frustrated, and sad. Unfortunately, many kill themselves, use drugs, drink alcohol, or sniff solvents to escape from their unhappy lives. The children attend elementary and high school, college or university if they can.”

Reaching tertiary levels of education is particularly difficult for Inuit as few courses at this level are offered within the communities. As indicated by ITK (2004, p. 10): “Few courses at the college level and limited courses at the University level are offered in the land claims areas.” Although there are some universities who are now offering degree courses in capital cities,<sup>30</sup> many Inuit must still move away from their home communities to participate in tertiary education and face barriers due to distance from family and community life. For example in my Master’s research (Moquin, 2004, p. 126), one Inuk woman stated that “[t]he [course] I was supposed to take [. . .] for early childhood development last two years ago but I didn’t go cause my parents were sick and I didn’t want to leave them.” Along with barriers due to physical distance, when seeking to participate in higher education, Inuit are also encountering bureaucratic barriers. For example, in a letter to *Nunatsiaq News*, Aupaluktuq (2002) speaks of the bureaucratic difficulties he has encountered in attempting to gain funding for participation in education down south:

I have written to all the Inuit organizations requesting assistance in paying for my schooling, but have not received any funding assistance or advice from anyone [. . .] All Inuit and Nunavut organizations and departments have said I don’t meet the requirements to benefit from Nunavut education. The criteria I don’t meet are: I have been away from home for more than a year, and I have not applied to a post-secondary institute from my hometown.

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<sup>30</sup> i.e. Nunavut Arctic College in Iqaluit.

The following year, Aupaluktuq (2003) wrote another letter to *Nunatsiaq News* highlighting how he still had not received funding which raised questions regarding conceptions of northern identity and entitlement: “Because I have been out of Nunavut for more than a year, I would have to return home for more than three months to qualify for funding [. . .] [T]here is another side to this situation. A relative said to me, “There are some that consider you no longer a northerner.”” Inuit have also encountered questioning on identity when in attendance within tertiary levels of education. For example, Rojas (2000, p. 11) states:

I was simultaneously confronted with many doubts about my own identity as an Inuk. One of the professors in my first year in the Masters program questioned whether or not I was really still an Inuk, having completed a BA program and continuing in an MA program in a Western institution of ‘higher learning.’ This question planted a seed of doubt within me. I was devastated. I began to seriously question my identity as an Inuk and I continue to grapple with my identity.

Within the source literature, distance, bureaucracy and rigid identity conceptualizations are discussed as barriers in relation to Inuit seeking to participate and participating in higher levels of education.

Barriers to higher education because of rigid definitions of identity construction are particularly relevant for this thesis where rigid identity definitions impeding learning has been a noted theme. This barrier has two sides to it. First, as exemplified by Rojas’s (2000) struggle at defining herself as both a student at a western higher education institution and as still Inuk, there is her own definition of her identity as a potential barrier to participation. Here, we can see that, in this case, Rojas finds participating in higher education not easy to reconcile with what she terms her Inuk identity. This exemplifies how some members of minority cultures feel a sense of non-belonging within higher education institutions. Secondly, as exemplified by the professor in the quote, there are members of academia – those who feel a sense of belonging within western higher education institutions – who could be acting to prolong, maintain or promote the exclusive nature of such institutions and therefore perpetuate the notion that higher, formal educational institutions belong to an identity realm that is distinct or inaccessible to minority cultures unless a change is made in the student’s identity construct. Such an understanding that only particular identities ‘fit in’ or belong in higher education institutions can be seen as exemplifying an academic discourse. This understanding is rooted within Ball’s (1990, p. 3) definition of discourse as being

“structured by assumptions within which any speaker must operate in order to be heard as meaningful”, a Foucauldian perspective. Ball (1990, p. 3) goes on to confirm educational settings as “generators of an historically specific (modern) discourse, that is, as sites in which certain modern validations of, and exclusions from, the ‘right to speak’ are generated.” Barriers to higher education, therefore, enacted and encountered through constructions of identity, can be rigidly reinforced through the circulation of authoritative and dominant discourses which bestow inclusivities and exclusivities.

Both connotations of this barrier discussed by Rojas (2000) in relation to her attendance at higher education – personal conceptions of identity impeding a sense of belonging within higher institutions of learning and authoritative conceptions of identity impeding certain individuals feeling a sense of belonging within higher education – have relevance for later discussions. In chapter 8, I look more in depth at how rigid conceptions of identity can be potentially harmful to the development of self conceptions. Further, in chapter 11, I contemplate pedagogies which are ideal in the sense that they be used to teach students how to negotiate the paradox that rigid conceptions of identity are necessary in the world but also harmful and potentially misleading.

### **Pointing towards changes in education**

Despite a preponderance of views outlining the state of crisis in which the education system currently exists, some Inuit still feel that Inuit youth should be participating in mainstream education. For example, Peryouar (in Peryouar & Hill, 1997, p. 25) explains that “[b]ecause it is very expensive now, people need to be educated, I support education.” Many who favour the participation of Inuit youth within mainstream education discuss education for instrumentalist purposes. For example, Okalik (1990, p. 8) states: “I am very much in favour of our young people completing their education. The need to qualify in southern technology is always growing and will become useful to know for future job opportunities. Inuit have a chance at job competitions in the future only if our young people continue and complete their education.” Education as a necessary route to employment for Inuit is a view sometimes discussed in connection with the creation of Nunavut. For example Peryouar (in Peryouar & Hill, 1997, p. 24) explains that, prior to the creation of Nunavut, Inuit looked forward to administering. However, with the lack of formal education many Inuit had at the time Nunavut was created, most jobs ended up being filled by non-Inuit. “We lack the knowledge

for administering Nunavut because we lack the necessary education. If we continue being that way, we will always have to ask for someone to help us, to aid us.” Napartuk (2002, p. 66) echoes this, and discusses how this can lead to a further exclusion of cultural values, stating “[b]ack home I see a lot of administrative jobs given to Qallunaat from the South. They have their education, but they also have their limitations. The cultural and traditional values between the Inuit and Qallunaat are very different.” Kunuk (in Sidimus & Kunuk, 2007) also recognizes education as employment-oriented but explains that there is a trend of Inuit youth leaving Arctic communities and seeking jobs elsewhere. “I see three hundred kids going to school every morning. They are after a goal – to have a good job. But how many jobs do we have in Igloolik? A lot of the young people leave, because they are given a chance elsewhere.” Many discuss education as needed for Inuit youth to take up the jobs in their communities, but there are also discussions that more jobs in the communities are required to keep youth in the Arctic.

There are also those who draw links between disempowerment of Inuit youth and a lack of success with education with a need to make drastic changes to the system of education so that it is affirming and relevant. Watt-Cloutier (2000, p. 118) discusses how pretending that the education system in the Arctic is alright when it is not further complicates the issue. “If education does not genuinely empower children, then pretending that it does will only confuse them further. And it may even help to break their spirits because they will think it is their fault that they can find so little meaning in it. If education is done badly, then it can do more harm than good.” And Annahatak (1994, p. 16) explains that her most pressing concern is “to find appropriate schooling to revive students’ initiative in learning and living.” Changing the figures so that more Inuit youth are completing education may mean transformations in mainstream schooling systems across the Arctic.

Further, Inuit writers stress that low completion rates in education need to be seen as a symptom of a greater host of challenges requiring a complex host of solutions. As Annahatak (1994, p. 15) explains, for example, it is necessary to not look only at educational issues when looking at restructuring schooling. “When I went home from school, I started teaching small children in our language and, as a result, many questions have come to me about how best to structure Inuit schooling. They have been questions with no easy answers, and I see it even as dangerous to approach these questions too simply with only educational issues in mind.” It is the complexities surrounding social health challenges and low educational

completion rates in Arctic communities which herald the need for action. As Napartuk (2002, p. 66) states, “[t]he question of healing is complex and there are a lot of touchy issues, but we can’t hide from those anymore.” Watt-Cloutier (2000, p. 121) expresses the same urgency, explaining that changes to the educational systems need to happen alongside broader changes in Inuit communities for a fostering of resiliencies. “We cannot wait until communities heal before making changes to our institutions, especially to our education systems. Many things can be happening at the same time.” Spurred on by genuinely challenging realities of which low education rates are seen as both a fall-out and a cause, many articulate great urgency regarding the need to create new and more effective systems of education in the Canadian Arctic.

## **Summary**

In this chapter, I have reaffirmed contextual factors regarding education and schooling spheres of the Canadian Arctic. I began with a review of Inuit ways of learning prior to colonization, before looking at the introduction of mainstream education within the Arctic where I discussed the role of residential schools in settlement of the Arctic. I considered implications of mainstream education such as widespread confusions in identity, and I considered the current situation of education in the Arctic where drop-out rates are said to be at crisis levels. After defining how a crisis within education systems within the Canadian Arctic is seen to be occurring at primary and secondary levels, I went on to discuss barriers for Inuit seeking to participate and participating in higher levels of education. I emphasized here that barriers due to identity construction reinforced through dominant discourses have particular relevance for my thesis. Finally, pointing towards changes in education, I stressed that many articulate a sense of urgency regarding a need to transform education in the Arctic to make it culturally relevant and empowering to individuals and communities.

Within this section in reaffirming the context of the Canadian Arctic, and in this chapter reaffirming particular aspects relevant to educational and schooling spheres, there has been a reiterated theme that historical colonization continues to impact many Inuit in contemporary Arctic communities in the form of difficulties with identity constructions which have been linked to manifest health problems, such as suicide or substance abuse. In the next section, drawing largely on this assertion, and contemplating that “being Inuit is just a story” I

consider that construction of self/identity within narrative can be an act which devalues or affirms self.

## Section 3: “Being Inuit is just a story”

### CHAPTER 9: “Being Inuit is just a story”: Narratives as harmful

#### Introduction

In this chapter, I consider how narratives can be potentially harmful to self conceptions of identity. I first review how many Inuit discuss a loss of freedom to name oneself or form one’s own identity concept as a loss particularly relevant within the contemporary Canadian Arctic. I go on to consider how narratives – particularly those stemming from outside oneself, but which can be internalized as self narratives – can be harmful and misleading when considered to be rigidly true. I begin this discussion considering the applicability of terminologies of trauma to the source literature regarding historical colonization and contemporary social problems in the Canadian Arctic which has the ultimate purpose of registering a need to be wary of formalized discourse terminologies. Foucault (1989, p. xi) explains that “the whole dark underside of the body lined with endless unseeing dreams, are challenged as to their objectivity by the reductive discourse of the doctor.” Formal terminologies on ‘trauma’ which stem from diagnostic idioms located within medical and clinical spheres are emblematic of discourse and can similarly challenge or reduce individual, minority stories. Referencing the source literature, I review that, like any group of individuals, Inuit have a multiplicity of experiences and perspectives on colonization and use of generalizing terminologies can lead to the subsuming of individual experiences into overly simplistic narratives. I next explore the use of Inuit culture essentialisms, discussing how these can be used for strategic purposes but also highlighting that within idealizations of traditional culture, Inuit stress how they tend not to be harkening back for the past as it was lived but idealizing and aiming to re-establish non-physical aspects of culture. I also consider dangers of essentialisms, discussing how rigidity in identity or cultural constructs can lead to some devaluing themselves, particularly when a registering of the fluidity of essentialisms is not bound within their use. Finally I briefly consider how Inuit point towards education for losses of freedoms experienced through colonization to be restored and I draw here on the obvious echoes with Freire’s (1973, p. 46) “education as the practice of freedom”.

## **Loss of freedoms**

Through colonization there is a general sense that Inuit experienced a loss in their freedom to live as they wished to live within the Arctic land-mass. The imagery of a boxed-in feeling that accompanied colonization is evident in Kunuk's (in Sidimus & Kunuk, 2007) contrasting of the contemporary ties that bind Inuit to communities with the earlier sense of living freely on the land.

Now we are all sucked into one community. Earlier, at this time of the year, when the birds come, people would be scattered out on the land - anywhere they wanted to be. But we are now boxed in, because we have to go to the health centre and we have to get our welfare cheques. And you need a job. It costs twenty bucks to buy five gallons of gas, and another twenty-five bucks to buy bullets. So we are boxed in, and are just like the rest of the world. We plan for our holidays.

Such losses of geographic freedoms are particularly evident within Inuit descriptions of historical colonization when Inuit were forcibly moved from nomadic camps to settlements.

Inuit continue to discuss a loss of spatial freedom as a factor in contemporary communities, noting in particular individual and social health implications of losing the ability to live freely on the land. Referring specifically to the settlement of Inuit in communities, Tagoona (1988, p. 212) discusses densities of Arctic communities as a particular factor influencing health and happiness. "I'm not sure that because more are gathered together it is happier than the past. Many of us still think it was a mistake to put all the people in one place. We know three people together are happier than one hundred together." A geographic sense of freedom is very closely tied to descriptions of Inuit identity and culture. Amagoalik (1996a) describes in more detail this linkage, noting that a sense of strength comes from living with a close connection with the land. "One of the anchors to our culture and our need to continue our close relationship to our land is our food." Settlement into permanent communities has impacted the close ties Inuit hold to the land which has also been described as impacting the well-being of Inuit.

Such a perspective hints towards the understanding that what has been lost for Inuit through experiences of historical colonization and ongoing impacts is much greater than losses in geographic freedoms. As Ipellie (1988, p. 251) describes in a story featuring an Inuk

(Inuksiaq) conversing with a caribou on losses of freedom, Inuit have also lost a more ideological notion of freedom.

‘But when our whole life and everything we own is threatened, it strikes you in the middle of your heart. Our very freedom is put on the edge of a cliff, hanging only from a piece of rock three inches thick. It’s a scary feeling. And yet there seems nothing we can do to save ourselves from this real threat of extinction if those geologists keep bothering us the way they are doing today. My feeling of pride for the caribou herd on this island is deeply rooted in me and I must fight for them with the hope that we will eventually survive. Do you understand what I am saying, Inuksiaq?’ ‘I couldn’t understand you better,’ Inuksiaq replied. ‘The situation your herd is in is a reflection of our own. I understand you perfectly.’

As a young Inuk today, Mark (in Deschênes & Mark, 2002, p. 6) describes in more detail freedoms lost during her elders’ generation, also highlighting a loss of choice many Inuit had with these losses. “And there is a thing called freedom of speech, freedom of voice, whatever; but they didn’t have no such freedom. Our people were told that shamanism was bad and it was devil’s work. They were treated as if they were savages. They lost so much and not by choice.” Mark (in Deschênes & Mark, 2002, p. 7) goes on to contrast what she sees as a lack in freedom of thought and lifestyle in the contemporary Arctic, noting the irony this holds because of the vastness of the Arctic, to a greater freedom she perceives as more prevalent outside the Arctic and she links this perceived lack of freedom with contemporary rates of suicide.

In the north, physically, you have so much space to move around, but your mind has very little space. In the south, you have very little space to move around physically, but your mind has so much space. Because you live in the north and it’s so tight, the way of thinking is one way. The kids see, specially [sic] through television, that there is not just one way, there is so many ways to live life. That situation brings a lot of crisis to the youth, which is the reason why we have the highest suicide rate in Canada.

Beyond the loss of geographic freedoms through events of colonization, Inuit have lost more ideological notions of freedom. For example, with the introduction of E-numbers and renaming policies, Inuit conceptions of identity and culture were forcibly altered. Qitsualik (2003a) explains that Inuit are a people who have been labelled from outside beginning with colonization. “Today, “Eskimo” only reminds Inuit of the days when missionaries kidnapped

them, dumped flea powder all over them, and assigned “Eskimo numbers” to them, instead of bothering to note the proper name for the culture or the individuals within it.”

Colonization in the Arctic introduced mainstream culture, while Inuit continue to hold onto many facets of their heritage culture in contemporary Inuit society. Promotion of rigidities in these identity and cultural constructs has left some Inuit feeling stuck between two cultural identities, not feeling completely at home in either which has been linked to dysfunctional dependencies. For example, Watt-Cloutier (2000, p. 120) discusses the “use of alcohol and drugs” as “the most popular means by which the majority of the people choose to attempt to change the quality of their experience” with the following potential consequences: “morbidity, socioeconomic costs, and, most devastating and insidious of all, loss of personal powers and, ultimately, loss of freedom.” Kiviaq’s (represented in Isuma, 2006) struggle to have Inuit – defined by Inuit themselves – recognized within Canadian law represents another aspect of loss in freedoms of identity for Inuit in Canada. As Qitsualik (2000b) explains, the need to gain or the potential to lose legal status identifying Inuit as Inuit leads to its own various complications, but none more intrinsically unjust than the need to attain and *prove* such a status in the first place.

“No, we’re not called ‘Eskimos’ anymore.” Somewhere, someone must surely have written this stuff down. Do Inuit lose their “status” when they marry a “non-status” person? And I know that governments and organizations have been hashing out who can hunt and where for what seems like an eternity [. . .] my suspicion is that many of the answers haven’t been hammered out yet. How did it happen that Inuit came to need an instruction manual on how to be “Inuit?”

Proving identity has also been explained as an issue for Inuit of mixed heritage, as Mark (in Deschênes & Mark, 2002, p. 7) explains in reference to becoming a throat-singer which has cultural relevance for Inuit. “Even though I was raised by my grand-parents, like a pure Inuk, some people in my community put me down because I was half white. I wanted to prove them wrong. Now I realized I did not have anybody to prove to.” These different factors which are pointed to in the source literature, spell out losses in freedoms in identity for many Inuit.

Historically, losses in freedom in the Arctic for Inuit were more overt as Inuit were moved into communities and forcibly lost their lifestyles of living off the land nomadically. More

contemporary losses of freedom for Inuit tend to be described in more ideological terms as many express feeling trapped or stuck between two cultures or within identity crises. Some Inuit explain that they feel they have lost the freedom to define themselves as they wish to be defined while others express frustration at feeling the need to prove their identities as Inuit. These more contemporary losses in freedoms are expressed as having just as potent impacts as Inuit struggle in regaining freedom to define – or freedoms to not have to define – themselves both individually and collectively.

### **Multiplicities hidden under discourse terminologies**

#### *Considering terminologies: Historical colonization*

From a psychological perspective, a widely recognized predictable outcome for people who suffer horrific events is “psychological harm” otherwise called psychological trauma (Herman, 1997, p.3). Different terminologies, derivative of medical and clinical discourse communities, have been used to describe the pain or trauma which people experience, and the most familiar of these is post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The term ‘historic trauma’ tends to be defined more broadly in comparison to trauma per se or PTSD and is applied to trauma experienced by specific groups, societies and cultures historically that is ongoing within these groups through intergenerational transmission. Transmission of trauma between generations and over long periods of time has been described under various terminologies, “collective trauma, intergenerational PTSD, historical grief, an acute reaction to colonialism, intergenerational trauma and multigenerational trauma” (Denham, 2008, p. 396) and “historical trauma transmission” (Wesley-Esquimaux & Smolewski, 2004). Historic trauma is discussed sometimes as trauma that has been “untreated or unspoken of” (Denham, 2008, p. 397) or as a form of collective memory of grief (Robertson, 2006, p. 10; Wesley-Esquimaux & Smolewski, 2004, p. iii).

These terminologies have not always been used in relation to the experiences of colonization of Aboriginal groups in North America. Historic trauma is a term which has tended to be applied in relation to genocide, acts of terrorism and war trauma (Wesley-Esquimaux & Smolewski, 2004, p. iii; Denham, 2008, p. 396). Many sources cite the Holocaust as primary example of historic trauma (Denham, 2008, p. 396; Whitbeck et al, 2004, p. 121; Wesley-Esquimaux & Smolewski, 2004, p. 54) and Danieli (1998, p. 1) explains how writers

studying the effects of the Nazi Holocaust “pioneered the field of multigenerational legacies of trauma.”

Terminologies regarding collective experiences of trauma or pain, such as historic trauma, however, are increasingly being applied to experiences associated with colonization of Aboriginal communities within the North American context. Whitbeck et al (2004, p. 119) explain how a real movement in the United States has grown to study historical trauma in this context, looking to “understand intergenerational psychological consequences of more than 400 years of genocide, “ethnic cleansing” and forced acculturation.” Yellow Horse Brave Heart is often cited as the first to apply the term historical trauma to Aboriginal experiences of colonization (Whitbeck et al, 2004, p. 119; Wesley and Smolewski, 2004, p. 54; Denham, 2008, p. 396). In Canada, some of the principal research utilizing the historic trauma model in relation to Canadian Aboriginal communities has been accomplished through the Aboriginal Healing Foundation (Wesley & Smolewski, 2004; Dion-Stout & Kipling, 2003).

There are some applications of such formal terminologies towards colonization experiences of Canadian Inuit, although such applications are rare. For example, Hicks (in Johal, 2008, p. 2), principal investigator for a follow-back<sup>31</sup> study on suicide within Nunavut speaks of “unresolved historical trauma in the communities” in addition to “poverty and low standards of living” as needing to be understood in the consideration of suicidal behavior in Arctic communities. Ali (2007, p. 34), who summarizes Hicks’ presentation at the *Public Policy Forum Seminar: Economic Transformation North of 60*, describes how Hicks identifies the applicability of such terminologies to colonization experiences of Inuit: “A significant social determinant of elevated rates of suicide by Inuit is the intergenerational transmission of historical trauma, rooted in processes and events which occurred (or were particularly intense) in the initial period of active colonialism at the community level.”

Of the sources I reviewed, most, however, recognize the traumatic and transformative nature of colonization without necessarily using these specific terminologies. For example, Stevenson (quoting Das, 2006, p. 174) characterizes colonization of the Arctic under Das’s (in Stevenson, 2006, p. 174) definition of a “critical event,” an event that is characterized as

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<sup>31</sup> By ‘follow-back’ Hicks (2010, p. 1; p. 1) refers to a consideration of the different “risk factors and preventative factors” behind suicide. Since suicide victims cannot be interviewed, interviews are conducted with family members and friends to gain info on the details of the victim’s life “from birth to death.”

so transformative that lifeworlds and perspectives shift significantly. “[T]he transition the Canadian Inuit experienced after WWII from a camp life to a settlement life should be considered a “critical event” – an event transforming existing lifeworlds in a way that seems “almost hostile to the continuity of time.”” Such characterizations of the transition of life Inuit have experienced through colonization speak to its traumatic nature though formal terminologies derivative of medical discourse, such as historic trauma, are rarely used.

In the source literature, again, it was rare to find references to formal trauma terminologies regarding colonization in the Canadian Arctic, although there were some. For example, Nungak (2000b, p. 17), who wrote in reference to his experience as part of a group of Inuit children who were moved down south to attend schools and live with non-Inuit families in a project which administrators during the period of colonization called an ‘experiment’, states: “[t]he results of our experiences with the Qallunaat were not all negative ones. Much good has come out of them. A thorough account of the experiment, though, would also show many dark periods in each of our lives. Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome? I don’t know.” In another example, Carpenter (2000a, p. 8) describes her experience of attendance at residential schools as follows: “I attended two church-run residential schools in Aklavik and a federal government educational facility in Yellowknife. [ . . . ] I experienced children starved of basic encouragement and familial support, and filled with sorrow and resignation as a result. The legacy of this genocidal experience was collective trauma.” Some within the source literature do draw upon such formal trauma terminologies to describe the events of historical colonization, but the majority tend to more generally refer to the traumatic nature of these historical experiences. Such an observation is significant for this thesis because it demonstrates that a consideration of these accounts of colonization may allow for a registering and recognizing of versions potentially alternative or counter to authoritative versions simply affirmed as true by fitting within or stemming from hegemonic medical discourse.

### *Considering terminologies: Ongoing aspects of colonization as trauma*

Much of the literature from Aboriginal and advocacy organizations presents health and social challenges within Aboriginal communities in Canada in many ways as manifestations, in relation to or directly attributed to events of colonization which occurred historically. For example Wesley-Esquimaux and Smolewski (2004, p. 7) state that “[m]ost Aboriginal people

and most researchers who work with them agree that the ‘*present*’ Aboriginal communities are a direct result of their traumatic ‘*past*.’” Though such a statement raises the question of whether the traumatic ‘past’ is really past, it also affirms the perspective that contemporary realities within Aboriginal communities tend to be seen and considered in light of past experiences of colonization. To elaborate on formal terminologies of trauma, the distinction between ‘historic trauma’ and the ‘historic trauma response’ helps to differentiate traumatic events of the past from ongoing traumas in Aboriginal communities. Yellow Horse Brave Heart has been cited as the first to make this distinction and to name these terms (Wesley-Esquimaux and Smolewski, 2004, p. 54; Denham, 2008, p. 396) and the two terms/periods together comprise the “historic trauma complex” (Denham, 2008, p. 396). As Denham (2008, p. 396) makes clear, however, much of the literature – even for those who rely on diagnostic terminologies of trauma – tend not to utilize these terminologies to mark clear distinctions between past and current colonization events and traumas.

Contemporary social health challenges existent in Inuit communities are in many ways described as a fall-out from past colonial history (Tester & McNicoll, 1999, p. 2; Billson, 1995; Ali, 2007; Hicks, 2006). As Billson (1995, p. 106) states, it is only recently that the full impacts of historical colonization are being recognized. “The far reaching impacts of resettlement have come into focus thirty years after the Inuit were moved in from the camps. We are only now beginning to appreciate the social repercussions that followed.” Such recognitions provide further indication that, just as is the case with more general contemplations with regards Aboriginal groups (as discussed in chapter 4), so too is the terminology of ‘post-colonial’ inapplicable to experiences of Inuit where events, such as resettlement, are simply an example of the much longer-lasting process and broader colonization of Inuit initiated by Europeans. Qitsualik (2001d) explains the need to maintain a focus on the connection between the period of historical colonization (1910s-1970s approximately) and contemporary society: “To say that those times are no longer important to Inuit is to discount everything that Inuit are today, or ever can be. To say that it could never happen again is to beg for its recurrence.” Explaining further, specifically referring to her own experience at a residential school, Qitsualik (2001d) states: “Little did we know that, long after our belongings were burned upon arrival, after we had flea powder dumped on us, had been forbidden our real language, had been denigrated and terrorized, the true struggle would begin against depression, addiction, and suicide — in an attempt to come home again.” Mark (in Deschênes & Mark, 2002, p. 7) also views contemporary social challenges within

the Canadian Arctic as a fall-out from past events of colonization, highlighting an introduction to new foods as well. “When there is a change, there is always a stir; there is always an impact from that change. So, the impact we're going through right now is horrendous. We have diabetes, cancer, suicide, abuse. This is the impact of all the changes that were brought about by religion, food, sugar [ . . . ] [a]nd it was brought to us in so very little time.” The source literature affirms clear links between contemporary challenges for Inuit, such as high rates of suicide, with events and aspects of historical colonization.

There are sources which discuss contemporary impacts of colonization in connection to formal trauma terminologies but, as with references to historical colonization, so too are uses of these terminologies rare in the source literature. As hinted at earlier, Hicks (2006, slide 52) makes links between present difficult realities in Inuit communities with colonization experiences of the past by drawing on formal terminologies, in identifying the “intergenerational transmission of historical trauma” as a “significant social determinant of elevated rates of suicide by Inuit.” Others do not draw on formal terminologies in the same way, though a reference to trauma is maintained. Kulchyski (2006, p. 167), for example states: “the people of pangnirtung [sic] are no strangers to trauma – both the trauma of colonization itself and the trauma of compulsive repetitions of its original violence are too much a fact of daily life in pangnirtung [sic].” Inuit also refer to contemporary individual and/or collective traumas specifically. Takpannie (2002) writes, for example: “It all boils down to childhood trauma. Like I said again, I was in a mental state of being unwell. [ . . . ] I went to sexual abuse counselling for three years, and I also went to a psychiatrist for at least six months. I had to get lots of help from counselors.” While in her discussion of healing circles, Arnakaq (1999, p. 34), described as a healer and counsellor, explains that “[p]eople with emotional, life, and personality traumas need to heal from within. Problems like these cannot be cured by medical doctors, psychologists, or psychiatrists. Emotional pain is not easily fixed through discussions. These have their benefits, but participating in healing circles will get to the heart of the matter.” Contemporary social problems such as sexual abuse in Inuit communities are often defined as tied to experiences of historical colonization, though references to formal terminologies such as historic trauma response as discussed in the wider literatures on trauma and Aboriginal groups are lacking within the literature regarding the Canadian Arctic.

Foucault (1989, p. xi) clarifies that within discourse, which I argue formal or diagnostic terminologies of trauma are emblematic of, “[t]he figures of pain are not conjured away by means of a body of neutralized knowledge; they have been redistributed in the space in which bodies and eyes meet. What has changed is the silent configuration in which language finds support: the relation of situation and attitude to what is speaking and what is spoken about.” Certain ‘figures of pain’ become highlighted and others put in low light. In considering formal terminologies of trauma increasingly being applied regarding groups with experiences of colonization such as Aboriginal peoples in Canada, I see these ‘formal terminologies’ as originating within medical and clinical spheres and enacting a discourse which highlights as authoritative particular accounts or languages of trauma and colonization. In considering the applicability and use of these terminologies within the source literature on colonization within the Canadian Arctic, though many make reference to the traumatic and transformative nature of colonization and link historical colonization to contemporary social health challenges, most do not rely on clinical terminologies of trauma to express realities of pain or change. Understanding this is important for this thesis as these expressions and portrayals of colonization may relay diversities and experiences which have not been marked as significant by falling into discourse terminologies but are significant on their own merit as ‘figures of pain’.

### *Being wary of labels and recognizing multiplicities*

Such a perspective is confirmed by those who stress the need to be wary of easy labels for describing colonization and current challenges within the Arctic as these can reduce the variety of individual accounts under an overly generalized collective narrative such as in the application of a historic trauma label. As Hicks (2006, slide 49) argues, blaming current challenges only on the legacy of historic trauma is not helpful: “While historical colonialism and ongoing ‘internal colonialism’ are [. . .] important contributing factors to suicide by Inuit, we must not reduce suicide to a problem brought about entirely by outsiders. To do so is fundamentally disempowering: how does such an approach help communities, families, and individuals figure out how best to heal themselves?”

There is a danger when applying labels such as historic trauma that similarity of impact and experience of colonization for all Aboriginal people is assumed. Robertson (2006, p. 17; p. 16-17) critiques the historic trauma model for what he terms its “pan-Indianism” in that it

does not take into account if initial colonization happened “150 or 450 years ago” (or in the case of Inuit in the Canadian Arctic, approximately 40-100 years ago) and that it assumes the impact of historical trauma is universal for all Aboriginal people. Denham (2008, p. 395; p. 391) calls the assumption that all individuals respond similarly to trauma “irresponsible”, stating that “[t]here is significant variation in how people experience, emplot, and intergenerationally transmit trauma experience.”

Referring to the Canadian Arctic, there is a need to consider individual responses and experiences of colonization and ongoing contemporary impacts. When considering factors behind suicide, individual factors (that potentially may also show up universally) need to be considered alongside factors unique to the collective history of colonization within the Arctic (Hicks, 2006). Further, Kirmayer et al (2003, p. S20) stress that a focus on past historical trauma factors should not be used to mask current difficult realities that may also influence and potentially exacerbate historical factors within Aboriginal communities. “The location of the origins of trauma in past events may divert attention from the realities of a constricted present and murky future; which are the oppressive realities for many aboriginal young people living in chaotic and demoralized communities.” Though many sources do link contemporary social health challenges within the Arctic to historical colonization events, there is a need to be careful not to ignore the variety of experiences of colonization, the variety of responses to traumatic events and the variety of other contemporary factors, not linked to colonization, that also contribute to social health challenges in Arctic communities.

Further, just as there is not a full consensus that current social health challenges in Inuit communities are a direct result of historical colonization, there is, similarly, not a full consensus that Inuit experiences and perceptions of the events of colonization are always necessarily negative. de la Sablonnière et al (2008, p. 1) question whether the “loss of self-esteem and accompanying feelings of helplessness that have led to the widespread social dysfunction that is plaguing Inuit communities” is a direct fall-out of negative experiences and perceptions of colonization. de la Sablonnière et al (2008, p. 1) go on to explain that “[s]urprisingly, and contrary to the view captured in the agreed-upon labels, many Inuit do not judge colonization negatively. They do not interpret colonization as a series of major negative social changes implemented by White people that destroyed Inuit culture.”

There are varying opinions regarding whether events of colonization are considered as positive or negative – or more complexly – by Inuit. Some Inuit do see aspects of colonization with a positive lens. For example, Anaviapik (1998, p. 19) expresses gratitude to the government for the changes that accompanied the move into settlements. “In 1966 we moved to Pond Inlet because the Government built a big school for our children and a number of houses for the people [. . .] We are grateful to the Government for all they have done for us. We have a much better life than we ever had before.” Just as there are examples of Inuit viewing events of colonization in a positive light, so are there examples of Inuit viewing these same events negatively. In contrast to Anaviapik’s (1998) expression of gratitude for the change in lifestyle that accompanied colonization, Okalik (1990, p. 3) expresses alternatively that “[m]y way of living is very different now than the way it used to be. And though we are provided with some comforts from modern culture, it isn’t the same kind of comfort and peace that we had.”

Inuit, like any other group of individuals, have unique experiences of colonization and contemporary experiences in the Canadian Arctic. Some Inuit describe the portrayals of policies during the historical period of colonization as being exaggerated in terms of the negative consequences for Inuit, while others feel the portrayals of the policy do not do justice to its overtly oppressive nature and the negative experiences created for many Inuit. There is not one generalized narrative that can describe such a diversity of experiences.

## **Essentialisms**

### *Strategic essentialisms and genuine differences*

Searles (2006, p. 92) notes that there is a notion of Inuit cultural identity which is held by many Inuit and non-Inuit to be a dominant notion, where “Inuit identity continues to be based on the memory of Inuit as “hunter-gatherers”.” Graburn (2006, p. 152) echoes this observation, noting that help in fixating this image may have come about through the long history of anthropological writing. “Inuit identity even among Inuit seems to be based almost solely on the image of Inuit as hunters [. . .] this male-centered view may have been aided and abetted by a century of anthropologists’ writings.” This definition is based on a notion of culture as static. It ties into the concept of the stereotypical image of the ‘other’ popularized and promoted through colonizing discourse. As Bhabha (1992, p. 312) explains, “[a]n

important feature of colonial discourse is its dependence on the concept of 'fixity' in the ideological construction of otherness. Fixity, as the sign of cultural/historical/racial difference in the discourse of colonialism [. . .] connotes rigidity and an unchanging order." Griffiths (1995, p. 237) speaks of the preponderance and danger of representations based on claims of authenticity of Indigenous peoples within popular discourse and contemporary media through the "overwriting [of] the actual complexity of difference." Speaking of the Australian Aboriginal context, Griffiths (1995, p. 237) explains how these dangerous representations are "crippling to the efforts of indigenous peoples to evolve an effective strategy of recuperation and resistance."

But Inuit culture and identity definitions based on rigid ideas of traditionality have been used as a source of strength for Inuit politically. As Smith (1999, p. 73) notes, from the perspective of the "colonized world", harkening to an authentic culture or what she terms "symbolic appeals [,] remain strategically important in political struggles." Claims to authenticity by Indigenous peoples as being of political strategic importance and use have also been recognized by other authors (i.e. Strong-Wilson, 2008; Griffiths, 1995). Searles (2006, p. 90) notes, for example, citing the use of traditional culture definitions by ITK, that Inuit organizations tend to rely on Inuit identity as a "source of strength, vision and focus" where definitions of Inuit culture are very much based on promotions of traditional values. This is echoed by Dorais (1997, p. 6) who states that "to emphasize the differences between [Inuit] and the rest of Canadian society, some Inuit organizations may deem it useful to depict their members as primarily preoccupied with traditional pursuits."

And such essentialisms are often derived from recognitions of real differences Inuit culture tends to have from other cultures and from the fact that Inuit in the past did tend to exhibit similarities in traits as lifestyles were very similar. Even those not working directly in a politically representative capacity can work to promote claims of the uniqueness of Inuit language and culture. As Ipellie (1996e) states: "[E]ven though our moral values are closely related to our human cousins from all over the world, we Inuit have an entirely different language and cultural heritage and traditions which can never be taken away from us." Further, recalling the discussion of essentialist language regarding a trait of being 'non-confrontational' (chapter 7), Amagoalik (1996a) explains why Inuit in the past did tend to possess such a trait. "On the land, the rules are clear. Each family member has certain areas of responsibility. Cooperation and sharing are essential. If it does not function in a well

organized manner, the family could face serious consequences. For this reason, conflict is rare.” Use of essentialisms, therefore, often stem from recognitions of unique differences Inuit tend to possess from others and can also stem from past conceptions of traits which probably did tend to be more universal among Inuit as most Inuit lived a nomadic lifestyle which necessitated the development of certain characteristic traits.

### *Re-establishing non-physical aspects of culture*

There is still strong evidence that Inuit traditional culture and ways of knowing are idealized in many contemporary accounts. However, in looking more in depth at these accounts, and explanations by Inuit on what is being idealized, one can begin to see some of the differences which Smith (1999, p. 73) explains exist between how the “colonized world” sees and uses terms such as “authentic” and how “First World academics” use these terms. As Smith (1999, p. 73) explains, for the colonized world, ‘authentic’ “does appeal to an idealized past when there was no colonizer, to our strengths in surviving thus far, to our language as an uninterrupted link to our histories, to the ownership of our lands, to our abilities to create and control our own life and death, to a sense of balance among ourselves and with the environment, to our authentic selves as a people.” In many cases, rather than idealizations of the past indicating a desire to return to past lifestyles, expressed definitions of Inuit cultural identity in ideal terms means an idealization of principles or values that were part of the culture of the past. Cournoyea (1988, p. 286) expresses how in idealizing the past, Inuit possess an inherent awareness that actuality of the past is not what is being talked about. Rather it is idealization of principles such as independence and control. “When someone says, ‘I want to practise [sic] my own culture,’ it doesn’t mean going back to freezing in igloos and hunting with bows and arrows. It means regaining the control we had over our lives before.” When an account idealizes the past, it does not necessarily mean that the author is indicating a desire to return to that lifestyle. It can equally be a harkening back to values, morals and/or principles that were a part of, and were often exhibited more strongly within Inuit traditional culture.

And there are components of identities and cultures that carry on from the past. Perhaps, in some cases, these aspects may be so intangible or abstract that they cannot be explained completely to those who do not innately know or understand them. Amagoalik (1988, p. 209)

distinguishes between “physical” and “non-physical” parts of culture, explaining that the non-physical aspects of Inuit culture still exist strongly.

It may be true that the physical part of our culture has been eroded to the point where it can never return to its full potential. But the non-physical part of culture – our attitude towards life, our respect for nature, our realization that others will follow who deserve the respect and concern of present generations – are deeply entrenched within ourselves. The presence of our ancestors within ourselves is very strong. The will to survive is there. This part of our culture will die a slow death, if it ever dies at all.

In expressed idealizations of the past, there tends to be more of an emphasis on idealizations of values, principles or abstract and non-physical aspects of the past. Importantly, however, some Inuit do express that getting at non-physical aspects sometimes requires reconstructing physical aspects of culture in order to truly access the lessons therein. Qitsualik (2000a) explains these aspects of a culture in terms of ‘folklore’ explaining that folklore can be assumed to be meaningless but in actuality still holds knowledge and lessons that can only be accessed within physical practice.

When we hear of such a loss, we tend to refer to it with words such as “tragic” or “sad” or “unfortunate,” words that are perfunctory and reserved for meaning things like, “Too bad, it was cute like igloos and fur coats, but it isn’t really needed today...” And this is because folklore is foolishly assumed to be akin to a game, a flight of fancy, a form of primitive entertainment long outdated. But folklore, despite being derived from oral tradition, still comprises a body of knowledge no less vital to a culture than any modern skill. Folklore, in particular, serves to tell the members of a culture who they are and where they fit in amongst the rest of humanity.

Despite not wanting to return to the past as it was actually lived, some Inuit still discuss the need to hold onto physical aspects of culture, perhaps not always in an absolutely authentic ‘traditional’ sense but in reconstructed and contemporarily adapted manners.<sup>32</sup>

There are strongly evident concerns regarding potential loss/survival of Inuit culture. As Graburn (2006, p. 139) states, “Inuit are concerned—almost hypersensitive—about the survival of “their culture”.” There are very evident expressions of urgency, responsibility and ongoing efforts to preserve aspects of Inuit culture within the source literature. There is a

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<sup>32</sup> i.e. Kunuk’s (in Sidimus & Kunuk, 2007) statements on learning on the land versus learning within schools in chapters 8 and 11.

tendency to stress a need to re-establish non-physical aspects of Inuit culture integrated with positive changes brought through modernity. For example, Qitsualik (2000a) states that “[w]hile I am ever eager for Inuit to fully modernize, remaining unsurprised that Inuit have exercised rapid mastery over any new technologies afforded them, I am desperate for Inuit to remember their past, and escape the doom of many cultures that have dissolved into larger nations to such an extent that they are now barely recognizable.” Idealizations of the past, therefore, with aims to re-establish and integrate non-physical aspects of culture with modern aspects are emblematic of the recognition made by Hulan (2002, p. 76) that Inuit tend to speak of cultural loss in terms of renewal.

Contemplating potential losses of culture, as evident in the following excerpt from Amagoalik (1988, p. 209), is a sad prospect for most Inuit. “Will the Inuit disappear from the face of this earth? Will we become extinct? Will our culture, our language and our attachment to nature be remembered only in history books? These questions bring a great sadness to me [. . .] What can be done?” But along with sadness, many Inuit express a sense of responsibility and proposed actions to ‘preserve’ aspects of Inuit culture as Qitsualik (2003b) explains, referring specifically to the potential loss of the oral tradition aspect of Inuit culture. “[T]he loss of the oral tradition only becomes a true tragedy if we fail to record the knowledge that passes with the elders. We children are blessed in that we have this one fading chance to exercise patience, and hear the voice of tradition.” Evic (1999, p. 67) is also expressing a need to re-establish Inuit knowledge and cultural ways of being, points towards education: “It is a joy to be a hunter, to be alive, to have a culture, and to be happy. It is advisable that we pass on [our ancestors’] knowledge. They taught us and passed on their survival skills. Let us be grateful for the teachings. We would not have been able to succeed if it weren’t for them. We, in turn, have to teach our young now.” Partridge (2005, p. 48) similarly echoes these statements, but offers a caution that the educational practices used by contemporary Inuit in preserving or re-establishing cultural knowledge cannot superficially address this challenge but must, rather, thoroughly maintain the richness of Inuit cultural ways and knowledge.

Without culturally relevant education and life experiences, our children become strangers to their own rich heritage. Our will to survive as Inuit remains strong. But if we don’t give our children tools to understand their heritage, their family ties, their living culture, we risk becoming facsimiles of

Inuit, defined by corporate branding and a vague sense of what our grandparents were like.

Within the source literature, accompanying many uses of essentialisms or idealizations of the past are recognitions that non-physical aspects of culture are desired,<sup>33</sup> though some discuss a need for reconstructions of physical aspects of culture for this re-establishment to take place and on this, education is pointed to as a method to accomplish this.

### *Danger of essentialisms*

Different processes work to construct and deconstruct our shifting changeable identities. As Dorais (1997, p. 5) explains: “[I]dentity is a dynamic and creative process that is best expressed through the strategies developed to relate to one’s physical, social and spiritual environments.” What is necessary to understand for this thesis regarding the construct of identity is its fluidity, and that it is created and recreated through interactions. As Dorais (1997, p. 5) states further: “These environments may change over time and space, and thus identity is never fixed once and for all. It fluctuates constantly. An individual or a group may possess more than one identity – or develop varying relationships to the world – without losing his, her or its sense of self.”

But when identity constructs are promoted as fixed, they can contribute to traumatic experience or be even more painful or difficult to encounter than the initial traumatic experience itself for individuals. The trauma of being labeled or of not fitting into already constructed labels can be more harmful to self-image than experiences we typically regard as traumatic. Cyrulnik (in Groskop, 2009) notes an example of this, where those being considered are a group of street children in Columbia: “They had been told that, ‘The abused become abusers.’ They had been more hurt by the labels put on them than they had by their experience.”

The construction and imposition of rigid labels for people can actually be what is setting the conditions of disadvantage for people. McKnight (in McKnight & Byzek, 1997) explains that

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<sup>33</sup> There is also evidence of similar recognitions within academic literature. For example, Jack & Phipps (2005, p. 2) point to this when drawing on the example of contemporary Indigenous peoples making and selling crafts which reifies the concept of authenticity: “the ‘modern’ entrepreneur here is precisely the one who is being consumed by the ‘modern’ tourist as somehow authentic and indigenous.”

people – through processes of labelling – can be created as victims, as being needy or as a stereotyped ‘other’. “There are ways we talk about people so that they are separated from and less than us. Those ways usually have labels that go with them – for instance, welfare recipient, ex-convict, developmentally disabled. Labeling is a way of throwing someone out of the club. You’re not one of us, you’re not in.” As McKnight (1995, p. 103-104) explains, this perspective that he and I draw on is located historically in “labelling theory” where perceived deficiencies become labels applied to certain individuals or groups which inevitably have negative implications for those who have been labelled as deficient.

McKnight (1995, p. 25) explains further that health and social services which work to maintain or even create labels for people and target people’s deficiencies function in this way because these institutions remain afloat through people’s dependencies on them. “Just as General Motors needs steel, a service economy *needs* “deficiency,” “human problems,” and “needs” if it is to grow [ . . . ] This economic need for need creates a demand for redefining conditions as deficiencies.” Rigid labels, defining people as needy or victims, are imposed onto clients of health and social service institutions so that these institutions can function. The ‘clients’ can go on to internalize these labels and see themselves as necessarily dependent. A reinforcing perspective on deficiency inevitably results in a self-perpetuating system of dependence. As Illich (1972, p. 78) states “[t]hese institutions provide their clients with the destructive self-image of the psychotic, the overaged, or the waif, and provide a rationale for the existence of entire professions.” Once we understand that we are needy – or come to believe in rigid deficiency labels instead of seeing being different as actually ‘normal’ – we often give up ownership of personal development processes to institutions which results in what Illich (1972, p. 87) terms “spiritual suicide”.

Such an understanding of “dependency-producing institutions” has already been recognized within the Canadian Arctic by Watt-Cloutier (2000, p. 120), who states:

As the dependency-producing institutions continue to thrive, our people are led to further dependencies on substances, processes, people and systems. People can become destructively dependent on anything that is a substitute for wise management and control. Organizational services as well as individuals often create dependencies in order to fill their need to be needed, to be in control of others. Furthermore, they are often threatened by any sign of growing independence because it would eliminate their reason for being. This makes it

much harder for those who are dependent on them to break away and regain their freedom.

Idlout (in Johal, 2008, p. 4) similarly explains that a dependent relationship on the state for Inuit, originating during historical colonization, is still impacting Inuit in the contemporary Arctic with real and devastating consequences: “The Nunavut communities need to realize that they were once self-reliant and independent people, that they didn’t always depend on government services or other organizations to take care of themselves.”

Though dependencies on institutions may have originated through labels being applied to Inuit from those outside the culture through colonization, it is important to also critically question how both Inuit and non-Inuit use and rely on rigid identity and cultural constructs. When viewed from a perspective of potentially being lost, culture definitions have been linked to challenges with mental health in the Canadian Arctic context. Inuit elders within the Ajunnginiq Centre (2006) study on suicide expressed concern with a link between losses in Inuit culture and values and increased rates of suicide among Inuit in the Canadian Arctic. As Searles (2006, p. 89) notes, Inuit culture definitions based on the promotion and preservation of tradition, are supported by “anthropologists and psychologists who identify the loss of culture with both acute and chronic episodes of psychological stress and other disorders.” Billson (2001, p. 290) links Inuit cultural loss to challenges with identity and mental health struggles in attributing social problems to a movement away from past cultural values. “As population size and southern influences have increased, so have rates of alcohol and drug abuse (even in dry communities), deviant and criminal acts, divorce, and domestic violence, partly because of the weakening influence of education on old values.” Contemplations of loss of Inuit culture have been linked to increases in social health challenges in Arctic communities.

Whilst in idealizations of the past by many Inuit there are recognitions that use of essentialisms does not mean a return to the past but a desire to revitalize non-physical aspects of culture, essentialisms, nevertheless the recognition framing their use, can be dangerous to self-conceptions. This is particularly the case when an individual forming a self conception is not made aware of the fluidity of such definitions and feels that he or she does not ‘fit’ into promoted identity constructs. In this way, though fixed definitions of Inuit culture are used for strategic political means and as a motivation to reclaim non-physical aspects of culture

definitions, they can also exclude and discriminate. Searles (2006, p. 98) notes this: “Promoting Inuit identity and tradition through metaphors of being on the land and learning how to survive in the natural environment raises many questions about the place of those who lack such knowledge, or who have little interest in developing it, within Inuit society.” As we have already seen, Rojas’s (2000, p. 3) questioning over “constructions of being an Inuk woman who is becoming less Inuk by going to school and attempting to write [her] thesis” is an example of a dilemma where the promotion of a static notion of Inuit cultural identity can cause some, who are participating in ‘non-traditional’ activities, to devalue themselves. Rojas (2000, p. 14) does go on to reconcile her doubts if her Inuk identity extends to include her experience of attendance at a western higher education institution. “I validate that I am no less Inuk although I am in a MA program in a Western institution of ‘higher learning’.”

In my Master’s thesis I considered identity definitions which were discussed in my interviews with 11 Inuit women, where fixed conceptions of identity were often conceptualized as a dichotomy with the two poles being Qallunaat/modern and Inuit/traditional (Moquin, 2004, p. 23, p. 190-192). In this thesis, I have reviewed how many Inuit express similar sentiments with regards the two cultures, some stating they feel ‘caught between’, ‘confused’, ‘stuck’, ‘lost somewhere between’ or in an ‘identity crisis’. Promotion of fixed conceptions of identity can lead some, who may not see themselves as belonging fully in either category, to struggle with personal identity constructions. And such struggles with identity have been linked by many to high rates of social health challenges within Inuit communities.

In the Arctic context, struggles with identity have been highlighted as especially the case for Inuit youth. As Stevenson (2006, p. 178) explains, quoting a suicide counsellor from Nunavut, “the youth don’t understand why they are called Inuit and not living on the land. To them being Inuit is just a story.” As Valaskakis (quoting Elberg, 2000, p. 86) discusses, “the representation of ‘real Inuit’ challenges the identity and self-esteem of younger Inuit, whose stories of urban difficulties are “as significant in understanding the life of contemporary Inuit as some of the older stories about cold and anguish collected in earlier decades are to understanding the culture of those times”.” Inuit youth face particular challenges to identity as they have had greater access and been more greatly influenced by western culture and have often had less access to heritage cultural activities and lifestyles which are in many ways promoted as crucial aspects to essentialist Inuit identities.

Further, at times, reliance on rigid identity and cultural constructs can become ideological tools for contemporary political means where certain stories or narratives that do not coincide with dominant or majority narratives are excluded. One example is the gay rights debate in the Arctic. Reporting for an Arctic newspaper, D'Souza (2003) quotes Aareak, whom she describes as a pastor with the Full Gospel Church, as stating he "represents the views of the majority of Inuit" when he spoke to a meeting of a "standing committee on justice and human rights" looking into same sex marriage and stated that "IQ<sup>34</sup> is not about sexual orientation, it's about survival" and that "[t]he definition of a family is a father who is a male and a mother who is a female. It brings a natural balance that only this relationship can produce." In a letter to the editor of this same newspaper, Sageaktook (2003) responded against these claims stating, "[H]e, nor anyone else, asked me what my views were on this matter [. . .] I'd just like to say that he does not represent my views on human rights [. . .] [f]or the record, I don't think the debate should be on gay rights, but on human rights. We are all human and deserve equality, no matter what our gender, religion or sexual orientation." Essentializing culture and identity constructs, when relied on for representation purposes on issues which are controversial within the contemporary Arctic, can be used to exclude segments of society believing in viewpoints not deemed as majority.

Further, reliance on rigid identity and cultural constructs with a lack of cognizance that such constructs are fluid and shifting, can act to mask and complicate issues of practical concern. For example, in her work as past president for Pauktuutit, Dewar (2000, p. 4) relied upon a description which constructs certain values as universal for Inuit when aiming to motivate others to assist in finding solutions to high rates of domestic violence in the Arctic: "As Inuit, we are very tolerant and forgiving, placing much value on a person's well-being and personal integrity. However, our values of tolerance and forgiveness must not compromise the rights of the victim. We must show victims at least the same support and respect as is too often only given to offenders." This statement depicts some of the complication which can stem from over-reliance on essentialist understandings of culture, as values of 'tolerance and forgiveness' seen in impartial terms would not 'compromise the rights of the victim'. A lack of deconstruction of these essentialist terminologies in this particular example distorts the

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<sup>34</sup>IQ or Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit is defined as a broad worldview or perspective in approaching Inuit life. "Though we tend to think of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit almost exclusively as traditional knowledge, it is more properly defined as is: The Inuit way of doing things: the past, the present and future knowledge, experience and values of Inuit Society" (IQ Task Force, 2002, p. 4).

meanings of the words and masks what forces may actually be compromising the rights of the victim.

### **“Education as the practice of freedom”<sup>35</sup>**

Where constructions affirming rigid understandings of identity and culture stemming out of hegemonic discourses and essentialist understandings can be harmful to self conceptualizations, there is need for restoration in the freedom to be able to name oneself. Freedom, under this understanding, is having the ability to choose what ‘label’ one wants to fall under, or rejecting labels altogether. As Qitsualik (2003a) explains, “[i]t all really boils down to choice, the right to accept or reject specific labels at will, the right to be known as one wishes to be. Is that not what freedom is all about?” I would describe freedom as having the ability to choose how one wishes to live, to choose who one wants to be, how one wants to be defined or named, or, indeed, feeling unencumbered to live without having to constantly name, label or define one’s self, people or culture – having space to invent and reinvent one’s self conception.

Within the source literature, there are descriptions of processes which have been or can be used in regaining freedoms of identity. Qitsualik (2000b) discusses how the process to regain the ability to label oneself has begun through some of the political work on Inuit self-definition. “Despite the criticism sometimes levelled at it, I’m pleased at the progress toward Inuit self-definition. Labels can be a good thing — but only when one is empowered to label oneself as desired. Perhaps one day it will be Inuit who state what “Inuit” are, and all that such a label entails.” Napartuk (2002, p. 66) points to better education as a way to move beyond crises in Inuit identities and losses in freedom. “To move beyond this will require better education in our generations. If we manage this, the youth of the future will be better equipped to tackle both worlds.” Spelling out what attaining freedom would mean for Inuit, Watt-Cloutier (2000, p. 122) explains that a learning of particular skills are needed in the process.

There are many advantages to freedom and independence, which is why much of history is a story of people’s struggle for greater freedom. Freedom allows you to make more choices in life and makes it easier to adapt to different and

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<sup>35</sup> A quote from Freire (1973, p. 69) which is used as a title to this chapter section throughout.

uncertain situations. Freedom requires skills and does not just happen. Everyone has some of these skills, but, like any kind of fitness, freedom skills will develop or decay, depending on whether and how they are exercised.

Mark (in Deschênes & Mark, 2002, p. 7) speaks of Inuit youth feeling interested in traditional Inuit culture activities, such as throat-singing, because of the reaffirmation of identity. “So, when they are introduced to something that will make their characters stronger, they go for it, like throat-singing. They grab it, they’re hungry for it. And I guess I can say I was one of them. It’s like craving for something that will make your identity stronger. It brought my attention to who I am, to my identity, to my culture.” A number of sources point to education or learning for Inuit to regain freedoms lost through the period of historical colonization and lasting contemporary social problems. Such a perspective of coming to a position of being able to name one’s reality through education has obvious links to Freire’s (1973, p. 69) ‘pedagogy of the oppressed’ or “education as the practice of freedom” where Freire (1973, p. 76) argues that people can transform states of marginalization through “dialogue...between [people], mediated by the world, in order to name the world.” I pick up on this discussion in chapter 11, considering similarities between Inuit pedagogies with pedagogies defined more broadly where I discuss pedagogies ideal in that they can be useful in teaching individuals to negotiate binary constructs and find meaningful and fitting conceptions of self.

## **Summary**

In this chapter, I have outlined that Inuit discuss a loss of freedoms through colonization, where losses in ideological freedoms are seen as particularly relevant within the contemporary Arctic. I considered the applicability of formal trauma terminologies, emblematic of clinical or medical discourses to the Arctic context, concluding that uses of formal terminologies are rare but that many discuss the traumatic and transformative aspects of colonization in more general terms. I went on to consider the use of essentialisms in the Arctic as important strategically for revitalization of culture, but also as potentially challenging for self-conceptualizations of identity. In these discussions I stressed that constructions of identity when conceptualized rigidly, particularly when constructed outside the self and when derivative of hegemonic discourse or essentialisms, can be harmful or misleading to individual contemplations on identity. I concluded this chapter with a brief discussion pointing towards education as a place for restoring freedoms in identity.

From this chapter, a disconnection between two strong themes within the source literature has become more apparent: There are strong assertions that use of essentialisms or idealizations of the past do not mean a desire to return to the past but a revitalization of non-physical aspects of the past culture and there are equally strong assertions of the occurrence of identity confusion for many Inuit stemming from a lack of conscious promotion that identities are fluid and not fixed. I pick up on this disconnection and claims of education as a space for restoring lost freedoms in chapter 11 where I consider ideal pedagogies, after first contemplating affirmative aspects of narratives in chapter 10.

## CHAPTER 10: “Being Inuit is just a story”: Narratives as affirmative

### **Introduction**

Just as constructed narratives can be harmful or misleading as I have considered in chapter 9, so too can they be affirmative. In this chapter, I look broadly at aspects of narratives that are affirming to the promotion and fostering of empowerment – or resiliencies – of Inuit in the Canadian Arctic with regards colonization and contemporary social health challenges. Within the process of reading or listening to the source literature I became aware that the processes of constructing a narrative and the processes of sharing narratives offer potential for affirming empowering constructs of self-identity. I first consider how the construction of a narrative through writing is a potential process for constructing identity and for accommodating painful experiences. I next consider how the sharing of narratives opens up spaces for the fostering of resiliencies through the potential of dialogue. I then consider specific discussions from the source literature pointing to these themes. Through my research, I have also found that the source literature narratives enact resilience – or speak back to question hegemonic truths. I discuss how I have come to see these sources speaking to and back to hegemonic accounts through four methods: deconstruction, the offering of alternative accounts, reversing the gaze and reactionary humour.

### **Narrative construction**

The process of continually adjusting and readjusting one’s understanding of meaning in life through the act of narrating one’s story to oneself and to others has been called different terms: restorying, reframing, cognitive restructuring, narrative framing or reauthoring. Williamson (1998, p. 180) explains, for example, that people make sense of their experience by “framing it in narratives which provide explanations and often justifications of what is and what has taken place in their lives.” Okri (1997, p. 46) sums up the process of meaning-making, stating that “we live by stories, we also live in them. One way or another we are living the stories planted in us early or along the way, or we are also living the stories we planted – knowingly or unknowingly – in ourselves.”

These concepts of narrative construction and framing are discussed within literature on resilience as effective behaviours and processes individuals use in the fostering of resilience to challenges in their lives. As Benard (2004, p. 35) explains, meaning-making “in the form of writing or speaking one’s story is consistently associated in the research with positive health outcomes” and has been categorized as a self-righting tendency, a concept discussed as positive for resilience within this literature. A therapeutic function of narrative construction is also discussed by Tester and McNicoll (1999, p. 16) who state that “[n]arration is not only important to research, it is, in itself, therapeutic (as in narrative therapy).” Herman (1997, p. 1; p. 3) also discusses the potential strength of narrative therapy, explaining how “reconstructing the trauma story” is an important step in the trauma recovery process and that narrative plays a role in the “restoration of the social order” along with its healing potential for individuals.

Narratives have also been identified as important sites for the fostering of resilience responses to challenges experienced through colonization. This is evident in Denham’s (2008) work with the Si John family. In this example, narratives were defined as a source of strength, identity and resilience in that memories were accommodated through what Denham (2008, p. 392) terms “strategies of resilience” that were “embedded within the trauma narratives” of the family. Tester and McNicoll (1999, p. 16) also identify the importance of narratives as a response to colonization, emphasizing that “[n]arration is essential to demystifying the relations to power” and “recovering and redefining these relations” which are “found in historically-constituted realities” and are “central to the problem of young Inuit suicide.”

Memories of challenging experiences, particularly traumatic ones, have also been identified to tend towards anti-narrative. Denham (2008, p. 408) notes that “[i]n their raw state, trauma memories often differ from normal memories, as they may lack a cohesive plot and narrative development.” Frank (1995, p. 98) discusses chaos narratives, which he describes as narratives told during “lived chaos” where “the person living the chaos story has no distance from her life and no reflective grasp of it.” Like Denham, Frank (1995, p. 99) identifies such narratives as those that have “no narrative sequence.”

Some relate coping with a trauma experience as related to an ability to narrate that experience. For this to occur beyond anti-narrative structure, some point to a need for

distance to reflect on such an experience. Coping with trauma through constructing a narrative has been identified by Denham (2008, p. 408) this way: “[A] person’s ability to manage a traumatic experience is related to her ability to place the experience into narrative form.” Within expressions of trauma, especially trauma involving an act committed by ‘human evil’ or an unspeakable act, Herman (1997) has identified that speech patterns tend to be contradictory. “People who have survived atrocities often tell their stories in a highly emotional, contradictory and fragmented manner.” Frank (1995, p. 98) explains that reflection is required to put difficult experiences into narrative form: “To turn the chaos into a verbal story is to have some reflective grasp of it.” Similarly, Weingarten (2003, p. 16; p. 16) explains that “[reflection] allows one to witness the self and to witness others” and “[t]he ability to reflect on one’s experience is a key capacity that fosters resilience.” Having a witness to the testimony, or a listener to the story, particularly in struggles where there has been an element of powerlessness, can also be helpful for coping with challenging life experiences. Weingarten (2003, p. 16) explains that “the capacity to witness the self is linked to having an appreciative listener.” Sometimes, the telling of stories – hearing and having one’s story heard or witnessing and having one’s testimony witnessed – can help with the processing of trauma or challenging experiences.

Both Herman (1997) and Kirmayer (1996) note repression as a factor implicating the fluctuation that is characteristic of recounted memories and experiences of trauma. Herman (1997, p. 2) explains that secrecy can surround traumatic events due to society’s inherent desire to dissociate and hide such events from the collective consciousness, explaining that “[t]he knowledge of horrible events periodically intrudes into public awareness but is rarely retained for long.” Herman (1997, p. 2) explains that the fluctuations in speech patterns which can tend to occur are due to a fear with regards innate senses of credence when recounting horrific acts in the face of “denial, repression and dissociation [which] operate on a social as well as an individual level.” Recountings tend to possess contradictory statements due to to-ing and fro-ing between feeling comfortable expressing an event as real and something which did occur and feeling uncomfortable expressing that ‘secret’ to others. Kirmayer (1996, p. 174) notes the repressive element behind fluctuations in trauma recounting, explaining the sites one fluctuates between as “half-acknowledged” and “half-suppressed” and the recountings as possessing “the contours of the struggle to remember and forget.” Kirmayer (1996, p. 174) also identifies fluctuation between realism and fiction,

stating that “constructing a fiction” is what “affords the reader the experience of complicity in seeking out, and hiding from, memory.”

Furthermore, writing can offer a buffer from direct memory when used to recount a traumatic event. Constructing a narrative through writing can accommodate memories of trauma as there is more space for fluctuations between remembering/forgetting, realism/fantasy or allowing for what Mitchell (1999, p. 130) terms “the repressed” to come through. It is during the first stage of writing that, Mitchell (1999, p. 130) explains, one reaches that familiar place where “one commonly discovers that one didn’t know that one had such ideas or perceptions.” Penn (2001, p. 49; p. 36) notes that “the idea that writing is an act of discovery is the most frequent description our clients give us of their writing experiences” and states that “as the hand and eye move across the page and back as we write, the performance of this process bumps events so that gaps in memory fill in: new words or expressions that have been inhibited suddenly appear and make their way into the writing.” Writing, in this way, has been discussed as a useful process for the processing of traumatic events or memories, allowing for fluctuation and for repressed elements to come through in the natural discovery process which writing can be.

### **Sharing narratives**

The sharing of narratives is also seen as useful for potentially fostering resilience responses to experiences of colonization. In Denham’s (2008, p. 393) study of the Si John family, for example, a resilience process is noted as being facilitated through the sharing of narratives such that “a strong circle of oral traditions and narratives” is created through contributions “by each family member to the larger family circle.” As Denham (2008, p. 393) goes on to explain, “[t]his ethic of sharing narratives generates and connects a cycle of listening and learning that culminates in sharing their wisdom with others.” Tester and McNicoll (1999, p. 17) explain that processes of narrative sharing can be cathartic and empowering for Inuit youth. “[F]acilitating the telling and sharing of Inuit stories offers not only considerable hope in understanding the problem of young Inuit suicide, but the possibility of generating individual and collective experiences which are both cathartic and empowering in addressing the more urgent of contemporary Inuit problems.” Sharing of narratives can foster resilience through providing forums for witnessing, which I have pointed to, drawing on Weingarten (2003), as facilitating the path for a self to be one’s own witness.

Further, narrative sharing can be a process of fostering resilience through providing forums for resisting and/or dialoguing on contested narratives. Speaking of the Native American context, Owens (as cited in Strong-Wilson, 2008, p. 54) explains how claims of identity for Indigenous peoples are necessarily always up against varying representations of authenticity. “For Native Americans, the term ‘Indian’ is a deeply contested space, where authenticity must somehow be forged out of resistance to the ‘authentic’ representation.” As Searles (2006, p. 90) states, the same is true for Inuit. “[T]here is really no consensus among Inuit about what constitutes a more authentic lifestyle or who is really Inuit.” Constructions of Inuit identity and culture vary considerably. As Graburn (2006, p. 153) notes, these definitions are constantly being contested, changed and struggled over. “In the past forty years of growing multicultural awareness, Inuitness is often a set of fragmented and contested suppositions, which are constantly changing.” Through sharing narratives, there is space to disagree and dialogue on contested narratives.

The sharing or publication of literature offers space for fostering resilience because these narratives are potentially responsive to hegemonic or contested narratives. As Valaskakis (2000, p. 76) states:

Identity is not formed [. . .] in internal conceptions of the self, but in the adoption of changing representations and narratives that we generate, experience, and express in our individual and social experience. These changing images and narratives emerge in the area of social struggle, in which visual and verbal stories are told. As a result, identity is continually contested and reconstructed in the discursive negotiation of the complex alliances and relations that constitute community.

Strong-Wilson (2008, p. 54) notes how both Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars locate Indigenous stories as “contested spaces for the representations of Indigeneity.” In sharing narratives, resilience is fostered through both an increase in the capacity for collective witnessing which can facilitate one’s own witnessing and reflection on individual challenging experiences and through providing sites to resist and dialogue on contested concepts of culture and identity.

## **Inuit speaking to and back to these themes**

Within the source literature, there are a number of examples of reflexive writing on the process of writing and/or construction of narratives as fostering resiliencies. For example, in writing her thesis, Rojas (quoting Chrystos, 2000, p. 11-12) discusses the curative aspect of writing, offering an example of fluctuation, when she reflects that “[s]ome days I do not know whether or not writing this thesis is keeping me ‘sane’ because I have so many bad days, like TB, where I “cough & cough trying to get it out all that comes is blood & spit.” On other days I convince myself that it is doing me good in understanding my role and position as an Inuk woman.” Another example is offered by French (in Watson & French, 2000, p. 38-39) as she summarizes her process of writing her two autobiographical texts: “As you write, everything that you’ve kept down and held down for so many years comes out and you have so many problems because of it, mainly because you weren’t able to and weren’t willing to deal with them. But, now you suddenly have to deal with them, because you are writing this book. And that’s where the healing comes in.”

Where this reflection and awareness was most pronounced was in and regarding the writing and artwork of Alootook Ipellie. Realism and fantasy are constant fluctuating elements in Ipellie’s works.<sup>36</sup> Ipellie (1996d) notes that his writing was often derived from painful experience. “[T]he majority of my writing derives from some experience of pain, whether this is personal, or that of my fellow Inuit. I suppose, if I had been born in paradise, all my writings would be full of blissful happiness—Heaven-on-earth-sort-of-life-experiences.” Similarly viewing writing as therapeutic, as both Rojas and French do, Ipellie (1997, p. 99) explains that his writing was his therapist: “The serialized stories, then called “Those Were the Days,” were a way of coming to terms with the demons of my past. They were my real therapist.” Like those who write of the writing process as one of discovery, Ipellie (1996c; 1995, p. 100) writes:

I seem to be driven by unknown forces which have parked themselves on both my shoulders. Some images suddenly show up, it seems, on their own volition, on my drawing board. What can I do but to help them get out of their once-eternal solitude and bring them into the visual world?

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<sup>36</sup> i.e. See Ipellie (1993).

The drawings came out by themselves. I really didn't have any control over what happened to the final product of that image. You let the darn thing interpret itself. Otherwise, it doesn't work out. If you are struggling with it, then it doesn't deserve to come out. I suppose I can say this is also true of the written word.

As a storyteller for his people, Ipellie has given insights to others, both Inuit and non-Inuit, into how writing and art can help accommodate the processing of painful experiences. As Carpenter (1995, p. 54) writes, "Ipellie struggles with the chaos. We feel the disenfranchisement in his stories and we see the fractures in his art. Ipellie forces the reader/viewer to interact with the truth of his power, and we identify with his need to breathe soul over the thing that is ailing or in need of restoration."

Many writings by Inuit are responses or reactions to colonial ideology and experiences in the Canadian Arctic and in this way offer a space for Inuit writers to build or gain resilience through narrative construction, and, when shared, foster or enact resilience by partaking in an – unofficial – but ongoing conversation in reaction and response to colonization in the Canadian Arctic. Hulan (2002, p. 61) states, "Inuit writing plays a historical role in preserving details of past traditions, a pedagogical role in addressing and educating outsiders, and a political role in making statements on behalf of Inuit." And Ipellie (in Ipellie, 1997, p. 101) explains the diverse purposes of Inuit writing:

Let us write passages that will sway the centuries-old impressions that others have about our true colours. Let us put, without a moment's hesitation, a voice in the mouth of our silent mind. Let us help breathe out the songs that want to be sung. Let us free ourselves from the chains that shackle our imagination and explore the unknown world that is within us. Let us help our silent mind speak through the beauty of the written word. Let us help to release it from Hell's world of pure silence. Let us dream forever and write.

The sharing and publication of writings by Inuit open potential spaces to foster resilience to colonization and contemporary challenges as this writing can be responsive to colonizing discourse.

Writings from the source literature exhibit resilience, offer direct advice on being resilient, explain how Inuit are resilient or speak of the need for resilience to colonization or ongoing social health challenges and in this way, by being shared publicly, can foster resilience in others. Pudlat (1990, p. 20), for example, explains how she has negotiated living with the

influence of both cultures: “I am living both ways. I try to go out on the land as much as possible with my children. We live down there and that’s when we feel free, that’s when I feel so close to my ancestors.” Thrasher (1988, p. 203) offers inspirational advice to others on resistance in the face of colonization over land which belongs to Inuit. “Just remember one thing: many times the clouds drop tears on the ground, then a flower grows. Many times the ice comes back, then we have to go on our dog teams to go hunting. It used to be a beautiful life [ . . . ] It’s we Inuit who have to stand up and save as much land as possible. Always remember this is our land, the Inuit country.” Okalik (1997, p. 9) explains how Inuit have been resilient to the changes brought with colonization: “[L]ots of changes have occurred amongst the Inuit: no longer living in Illuvigat (snow houses/igloos), now living in houses; dogteams done away with (other than for races), replaced with skidoos, cars and three/four wheeler Hondas [ . . . ] Inuit are coping, to the best of their ability.” Others offer personal stories which offer individual ways of coping to personal tragedies that many see as coming out of the history of colonization in the Arctic. For example, Qitsualik (1999c) describes her reaction to her brother’s suicide: “I think, tragically, that what at last bought my mental freedom was the blinding agony of my younger brother’s suicide. Compared to that, many things paled in importance. What did I care about a society that had failed him, and myself to a degree? I realized I had a choice. To move forward, or freeze forever.” By sharing writings on resilience or by exhibiting or enacting resilience within writing, Inuit writers partake in an ongoing conversation on colonization in the Canadian Arctic, resisting and reclaiming identity and cultural constructs.

### **Questioning hegemonic ‘truths’**

For this research, in reading Rojas’s (2000, p. 5) thesis in which she explains that, within it, she is “venturing to open up some space to question the general perception of Inuit women”, I came to see that Rojas (2000) uses two main methods in her questioning of general perceptions: Deconstruction and offering alternative accounts. Upon reflection on my wider reading of the source literature, it occurred to me that there were four common methods Inuit authors were using to question hegemonic ‘truths’: 1) deconstruction, 2) offering alternative accounts, 3) reversing the gaze and 4) reactionary humour. Cyrulnik (in Groskop, 2009) discusses resilience as “about abandoning the imprint of the past.”<sup>37</sup> Drawing on this

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<sup>37</sup> See chapter 11 for a more in-depth discussion of Cyrulnik’s (2009) notion of resilience.

definition but seeing it in broader terms (that resilience is therefore about abandoning any imprint which does not or cannot define you) I see the use of these methods which question dominant accounts as enacted resiliencies.

### *Deconstruction*

The first method of questioning hegemonic accounts which I came across was the deconstruction of their truthfulness by questioning the language and statements made within past academic theorizing on Inuit. Ipellie (1996a) states that “I suppose, in a certain way, some of us Inuit, whenever given the privilege, are here to debunk certain myths about our culture and heritage which, over previous years and decades, may have been perpetuated by a few ethnographers and anthropologists who came to the Arctic at a time when our ancestors were still living in naiveté, and in more, [sic] innocent times before full contact from the outside world.” Many of the narratives that I reviewed did directly question dominant accounts held regarding Inuit and the Canadian Arctic in this way.

Of the narratives that I read, it was the thesis by Rojas (2000, abstract) where I encountered this most obviously where her intention was “to open up a space in which inquisitive dialogue is encouraged regarding the generally accepted position of Inuit women.” An example of deconstruction is provided by the following excerpt where Rojas (quoting Jenness, 2000, p. 44) questions judgments on Inuit gender roles.

Jenness comments on the tasks of the genders when he described how when “Icehouse wanted to cook, Ikpuck, forgetting the pride of a hunter, would fill her bag with dryads and bring her water from the lake. No eye but mine saw his undignified conduct, and I was one of the family.” Ikpuck having ‘forgotten the pride of a hunter’ according to Jenness was able to accomplish ‘undignified’ tasks.

The deconstruction becomes obvious when Rojas (2000, p. 63) goes on to point out how Jenness’ own construction of gender roles superimposed onto Inuit society influenced how he presented this aspect of his work: “It is clear to me that there was not a strict division of labour, I suspect this attitude towards a man accomplishing a task that has been viewed in Western societies as a task that befalls women may be the author’s view that has been projected onto the ‘primitive peoples’ that are being looked at.”

Another example of deconstruction is provided by Kunuk (in Sidimus & Kunuk, 2007) who is a renowned Inuk film-maker who aims to “put something up on that screen that [is] true to Inuit culture.” Explaining this, Kunuk (in Sidimus & Kunuk, 2007) states that he is trying to “tell the story behind” the films. It becomes clear how this work is able to deconstruct existing accounts and offer truths more in line with Inuit culture when Kunuk (in Sidimus & Kunuk, 2007) explains how he reinterpreted an observation made by Perry, the explorer, on Inuit women standing outside the igloos when men went out hunting:

[Perry] started to notice that every time the men would go out hunting women would guard their huts. He writes that. That's how he saw it, but he was wrong. Being an Inuk, you know what they were doing. They were listening. He saw it as guarding, but they were actually standing long hours just listening, waiting for their men to come home. When I was growing up, we were told to do that. Go out and listen if they are coming.

By reinterpreting accounts of Inuit culture from an Inuk perspective – based on previous knowledge and memories – Kunuk and Rojas both work to deconstruct and critically question accounts which have been taken to be authoritatively true.

### *Offering alternative accounts*

Accounts by Inuit, whether written, created as artwork or presented in film, speak back to hegemonic accounts taken as authoritative by offering counter accounts that are also considered to be true. As Kasudluak (1988, p. 180) states “[w]hat we show in our carvings is the life we have lived in the past right up to today. We show the truth.” When deconstructing gender roles of Inuit as constructed by accounts written by past academics, Rojas (2000, p. 63) relies on an account by elder Uyarasuk to offer an alternative view: “Like Ikpuck, Inuit women too were able and often did assist their husbands with their tasks. Uyarasuk explains how Inuit women also did tasks to help their male partners. She says, “And some women, if they would go hunt for animals, would return home after being away from the camp during the day and work on the sewing of items that they would have to get done.” Comparing the experience of participating in a film produced by Kunuk, with the experience of participating in a film produced by non-Inuit, Tookalak (in Dubois, 2006, p. 36) explains how this ‘alternative’ experience was “the real thing, not just according to white people’s imagination and stereotypes, but as we, Inuit, see it.” And Kunuk (in Svenson &

Kunuk, 2002, p. 4-5) explains that in making films on Inuit culture from an Inuk perspective, he moves Inuit – and truths as held by Inuit – from the background into the foreground.

It's all Inuit. It's fabulous because Inuit have always been put in the background as extra actors. And if they speak Inuktitut, it didn't mean anything, it was just a part of the show. Seal oil lamps—how they burn, nobody cared. They could be touching the Olympic torch and nobody would care. I was noticing a lot of this when I saw films about the North. We're just background—who cares? We do.

These examples express how alternative or counter accounts are drawn upon to dispute accounts regarded as dominant truths.

### *Reversing the gaze*

Another way to question hegemonic accounts I encountered in my reading of narratives authored by Inuit was a 'reversal of the gaze' or through Inuit offering accounts of their observations of Qallunaat. Grace (2000, p. 45) confirms a tendency for Inuit writers to accomplish a 'reversal of the gaze' when she describes how plays authored by Inuit insist on the reshaping of self-other thinking, stating that "the objectifying gaze has shifted from that of the benevolent colonizer to the critical gaze of the colonized, who, by returning the reader's/audience's gaze, assert their own subjectivity and show *us* how to see ourselves as *non-Inuit*."

Many accounts within the source literature expressed their observations of their first encounter with non-Inuit or the south. For example, Idlout d'Argencourt (1988, p. 231; p. 231-232) comments particularly on encountering the south for the first time and notices both how the natural environment differs from the Arctic, and how so much of the landscape had been constructed:

It was completely different in every way from the Arctic. The land was covered all over with amazing, beautiful green grass, and it was full of tall, green trees. We passed by hundreds and hundreds of houses, and wee-looking cars that, from a distance, looked exactly like the toy one Suujuq and I had received from one of the white passengers.

Everything that met our eyes on the shore's edge looked so unbelievable! All around us where the ship docked – the streets, the sidewalks, parking lots –

were concrete and so ugly-looking. Even the buildings were made out of stone and bricks. It was hard to believe that we were really seeing what was before us. Just to think that men had created all these things: the high buildings, some as high as 14 stories; buildings that seemed so long, they just went on and on; and rows of outdoor lights all along the roads.

A defamiliarization of the west or non-Inuit world, present in many of these accounts, is what serves to trigger the understanding that the gaze is being reversed and is what triggers subsequent reflections on questioning the hegemony of western perspectives. Freeman (1988, p. 238-239) forces the reader into a reversal more explicitly.

If I were to reverse the situation, and Inuit had the dominant culture, would any of you decide to walk on the ice in the middle of May? Would you eat the liver of polar bear? Would you keep travelling when overtaken by a blizzard-storm? Would you take a walk to the next mountain (when you don't know that the distance is deceiving)? Would you behave differently in front of children who might be in their baby ways, makutuk ways (soft age) or Inummariit way? Would you know the cause of social behaviour at any given different situation? I, for myself, now understand a little the ways of qallunaat.

Such 'reversing of the gaze' or presentations of how Inuit see Qallunaat within the source literature, serve as triggers for the reader to see how the western gaze on Inuit has become hegemonic, and act in this way to question the dominance and assumed authority of accounts constructed in the west.

### *Reactionary humour*

The final method I encountered used to question hegemonic accounts within the source literature was reactionary humour. Some elements of humour or play were discussed in reaction to being an over-researched culture or collective group. As Qitsualik (2001c) explains at length, in her experiences as a translator she was privy to elders making up stories – or playing with – over-questioning researchers.

Often, to get rid of such people, the elders would anticipate what the researchers wanted to hear, telling them all sorts of outrageous bunk about Inuit. I translated for several of the elders myself [. . .] [T]here was always a mischievous gleam in the elder's eye, so that I could tell when he or she was pulling the researcher's leg. [. . .] I wonder, sometimes, if academics ever realize the extent to which members of indigenous cultures around the world play with researchers — anthropologists especially.

In another example of reactionary humour, Ipellie (1997, p. 96-97) describes an example of a satirical cartoon he created that pokes fun at the exploitative history of being over-studied while highlighting violence experienced by Inuit. This cartoon also reverses the gaze, this time by making the history of atrocities of colonization – potentially unfamiliar to those in the west – more familiar.

I once drew a cartoon of a very friendly Inuk, and I cannot emphasize this too lightly, as a sandwich man walking smack in the middle of a very busy intersection in a large Canadian city. On both sides of the signboard was written: I'm Nanook from the Far North. I've come here to dig up somebody's grandfather to find out what an interesting life people used to live in Toronto. Have a nice day! On either sidewalk are Qallunaat walking to and fro, perplexity splashed all over their faces, and a question mark over their brains [. . .] The cartoon did give me a chuckle after completing it. Except that, horror of horrors, it was also the very week that my own grandfather, Inutsiaq—famous for his childbirth carvings—was being dissected by a redoubtable anthropological team just outside Iqaluit. No, no, just kidding...

Similar reversals of the gaze through satirical humour are made by Nungak (2002) in his creation of 'Qallunology' (the study of Qallunaat) in reaction to 'Eskimology'. Nungak (2002, p. 96) explains:

I don't proclaim to be an expert on Qallunaat and what makes them tick. But my commentaries on Qallunology are based on having eaten, slept and breathed their life for some years, learning their language and tumbling along in their tidy-squares thought processes. The resulting recollections are no more superficial than those of the first Qallunaat, who unwittingly illustrated their educated ignorance when they tried to describe Inuit.

But with humour being used to strike back, poke fun and resist truths that are dominant, when there is a reliance on the same stereotypical thinking that created the original violence, the humour itself can move into reverses of that violence. The discussions of Qallunology by Nungak have encountered charges of racism, a charge he disputes. "These Qallunaat described what they beheld through their lens, and Eskimology was born! Likewise, observations on Qallunaat, based on much less wild guessing than the above, cannot rightly be considered racist" (Nungak, 2002, p. 96). But Nungak's writings on Qallunology do rely on stereotypical and rigid identity constructs. Though I recognize the violent history from where this stems, I question in particular how the term Qallunaat is used as a label for all

Euro-Americans in the same way ‘Eskimo’ has been used as a label for all Inuit, and do align with the critiques which see these particular writings as combating racism with racism.<sup>38</sup> There are a number of examples of how humour – particularly reactionary humour to colonization of Inuit by non-Inuit – act to question ‘truths’ which have become hegemonic and authoritative within the source literature which I have read. This reactionary humour ranges from the playful to reversals of original violence.

## **Summary**

Contrasting with my aims in chapter 9, in this chapter I have considered affirmative aspects of narratives specifically in reference to fostering resiliencies to colonization and contemporary social problems within the Canadian Arctic. I discussed how the process of constructing a narrative can promote resilience as narrative construction is a process for meaning-making, and, in the processing of a traumatic experience, writing can be useful as there is more space within writing for fluctuation characteristic of accounts of trauma. I highlighted that the process of sharing narratives can also assist in fostering resilience approaches to colonization and contemporary challenges as sharing narratives is a form of collective witnessing and it opens a space to resist and dialogue on contested constructions. I went on to briefly consider excerpts from the source literature on these themes. Finally, after discussing how through my reading methodology I had come to see the source literature as questioning hegemonic ‘truths’ in four main ways (deconstruction, offering alternative accounts, reversing the gaze and reactionary humour), I discussed that writings within the source literature can also be considered as enacted resiliencies.

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<sup>38</sup> Such discussions recall Said’s (1979, p. 227) consideration of Kipling’s ‘White Man’ which Said explains “meant—in the colonies—speaking in a certain way, behaving according to a code of regulations [. . .] It was a form of authority before which nonwhites or even whites themselves, were expected to bend.” Said (1979, p. p. 227) emphasizes that such a conceptualization “emerge[d] out of complex historical and cultural circumstances” which relies upon “the cultural sanctioned habit of deploying large generalizations by which reality is divided into various collectives [. . . and] underlying these categories is the rigidly binomial opposition of “ours” and “theirs” with the former always encroaching upon the latter.”

## Section 4: Conversations on pedagogy

### CHAPTER 11: Conversations on pedagogy

#### Introduction

Working from the recurring theme that narratives (or rigid conceptualizations on identity) can be both harmful and misleading but also potentially affirming, in this chapter I consider pedagogies helpful in the reconciliation of this paradox. I begin with a consideration of pedagogies which Inuit (within the source literature<sup>39</sup>) discuss as ideal in the sense that they are aimed towards fostering resilience through transforming an educational system and/or introducing informal learning situations which can promote healthy communities where social problems are reduced. In writing this section the disconnection I discussed in the summary of chapter 9 is brought to light again: Though many within the source literature highlight that reliance on cultural binaries can complicate confusions in identity for many Inuit, particularly youth, there is little obvious discussion of a need to formally question essentialist understandings of difference. This perspective leads into the latter parts of this chapter where I consider crossovers between Inuit and broader learning theorists' critiques of mainstream pedagogies and promotion of certain pedagogical ideals. Perspectives from the broader learning theory I consider are rooted in radical adult education: i.e. Freire's (1973, p. 69) discussion of "education as the practice of freedom" which hooks (1994, p. 12) discusses as "teaching that enables transgressions—a movement against and beyond boundaries." After briefly considering that similar to the critiques many Inuit make of mainstream pedagogies, so are there criticisms of mainstream education more broadly, I trace my path to ideal pedagogies. Drawing on broader learning theory, I detail five characteristics which distinguish pedagogies as ideal: 1) the revaluing of so-called soft skills; 2) a facilitation of identity construct reclaiming through tolerance of freedom and ambiguity 3) a distinguishing of these pedagogies as contextualized ways of living; 4) an emphasis on dialogic pedagogies where humility on the part of teacher and learner is emphasized and 5) a promotion of pedagogies which cultivate resilience in that they teach learners how to negotiate the paradox

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<sup>39</sup> This is not a thorough review of pedagogical programs which Inuit would like to enact or are already enacting in the Canadian Arctic as I present only suggestions regarding ideal pedagogies that I have derived from the source literature for this thesis.

of essentialist language. In the final section of this chapter, I consider the similarities between these ideal pedagogies with Inuit ideal pedagogies promoted within the source literature.

### **Inuit pedagogical ideals**

#### *Past principles of Inuit pedagogy still ideal*

Many Inuit discuss ways of learning that were prominent in the past when Inuit lived on the land nomadically. Evident within these recollections are three principles, often cited to distinguish Inuit traditional pedagogies from mainstream forms of learning later introduced. These three principles are use of a holistic approach, experiential forms of learning with a focus on observation and freedom within the learning for creativity, imagination or invention.

From the source literature, I have come to understand Inuit ways of learning in the past as being holistic forms of learning. Holistic, first in the sense, that, rather than consciously transferring specific skills and knowledge from teacher to student, the whole of the person was impacted through learning. As Metcalfe (1988, p. 262) notes, “[t]here are many things that my father, grandfather and uncle taught me that I can never forget because of their approach and manner – the very way they presented themselves.” Second, learning was holistic in the sense that it was holistically connected to living and the wider interactions with family, community and the environment. As many discussed and as exemplified by the following quote by Agalakti Awa (in Wachowich et al, 1999, p. 28), Inuit were traditionally taught skills necessary for their lifestyle by parents and other family members. “That was the way it was for us. We were asked to do a lot of the things, and we would listen to our parents. [ . . . ] They did this so that we could learn to survive. In the future, when we were adults, we would have to know how to look after our own children. They did this to teach us the way.” Such skills were taught in an informal manner so that there may have been no conscious attention given to actuality of a learning situation taken place. For example, when Iqallijuq (2000, p. 25) was asked who his main teacher was in the past, he replied: “My father. He didn’t act like a teacher, but if I asked how things were done he would show me and say, “Try it like this.” After a while I was able to build a small igloo while he waited at a seal hole.” Learning was holistically intertwined with living which led to it being evidently relevant and meaningful as well as vivid with knowledge gained having a lasting permanence as exemplified by Annahatak’s (1994, p. 14) recollection:

The sound and smell of the fire with moss and tundra woods burning is strong and good in the evening as we children cuddle under our blankets to listen to our parents exchanging real eventful stories with a visitor. The next day we help with the chores of our camps and play afterwards. This was the kind of learning from our camp that I was used to. I remember vividly the time when I decided to make a willow snowmat on my own and, upon the successful completion of my project, my mother asked me to give my first mat to the oldest elder in our camp because my Godmother was no longer living to receive it. I cannot seem to experience momentary flashbacks of my school days in the same way, except when I learned to go on the subway on my own. The silent joy of having learned something and going on to something new was, and still is, good.

Learning processes – though not formally or even perhaps consciously identified as doing so – were aimed at the wholeness of a person and were interconnected with living and wider interactions with family, community members and the environment.

Learning was described as being achieved through listening, watching/observation and then by doing and in this way is described as experiential. Such an importance placed on observation was especially important traditionally for men in acquiring hunting skills and in skills necessary for survival on the land. Peryouar (in Peryouar & Hill, 1997, p. 12) explains how observation was important in hunting: “If the child were a male, the father taught the skill of hunting, and the child would not even be aware that he was being taught because he felt he was just being allowed to go along on a hunting trip with his father; he learned from observing the hunt, or how to build an iglu (snowhouse) and would start to try and help out.” Such skills of observation meant the development of patience and stillness which Ipellie (1993, p. viii) explains was necessary for successful hunters. “When I was a child, my elders taught me that patience was a human virtue. A prerequisite to acquiring the skills of a successful hunter was the ability to wait perfectly still, in dead silence, for long periods of time.” Metcalfe (1988, p. 262) discusses the importance of observation for avoiding getting lost:

When we got there we would stop and he'd ask me to turn around and study the place where we had come from. He always told me that it was not good enough just knowing where you were going. You had to know where you were coming from, which was why it was important to get a good idea of the lay of the land behind you. That way you'd never get lost because you could always go back somewhere and find out where you are.

Peryouar (in Peryouar & Hill, 1997, p. 12) similarly discusses how observation was necessary for the learning of sewing and cooking tasks for girls. “If the child were a female, they started learning how to sew, how to prepare skins, how to handle meat and cook from observing their mother’s daily activities.” Observation led to experiential learning as children were encouraged to follow along with their parents and do as they were doing, as Metcalfe (1988, p. 262) explains: “he’d always tell me to start my own little fire. He wouldn’t just sit down and instruct me how to do it. He would ask me to do as he did, step by step.” Traditionally for Inuit, learning has been described as experiential, where observation was cited as particularly useful.

Sources stress that there was a freedom to the learning also where one was allowed to be creative, inventive and imaginative instead of feeling a need to obey. As Freeman (1988, p. 239) states, “we Inuit survived those harsh lands through tests and trying new ways.” In describing this adaptive way of learning and gaining knowledge, Freeman (1988, p. 239), makes the distinction that there was a freedom to learn what one necessarily needed to that was lacking in mainstream styles of learning. “First of all, missionaries considered Inuit primitive and we Inuit considered their teachings very primitive. Everything was ‘thou shall.’ ‘Thou shall’ for the benefit of learning.” Annahatak (1994, p. 13) also highlights such a distinction, one she refers to as “obedience versus originality,” when she discusses the tensions between the two cultures that Inuit have faced.

The three principles highlighted as important to Inuit traditional pedagogies are also described as still relevant for Inuit contemporary pedagogies within the source literature. In a contemporary example where she participates, at first as an observer, and later as a more active teacher in a training exercise for southern army cadets, Qitsualik (2002a) points out differences between southern or mainstream instrumentalist ways of teaching/learning with Inuit pedagogies.

It occurred to me, while witnessing their unfortunate attempts at building a fire with a single match (they could have multiple tries, but they were only allowed to use one match at a time), that they were having difficulty not because fire-building is hard, but simply because they were approaching it as though it were a school project. In my mind, one word summed these kids up: Suburbia. They were too used to their specific environment. It was obvious that much of their energy went into keeping adults — along with adult concerns — off their

backs, to the point where they approached every learning experience as though it were an equation, a process with distinct steps.

A) An adult proposes a project (eg., “Today we’re going to learn X.”)

B) The adult asks perfunctory questions concerning the project’s nature (eg., “Anyone know how X works?”)

C) The kids wait for the right answer (“right” meaning whatever the instructor wants to hear), faithfully jotting it down.

D) The kids regurgitate whatever the instructor wants to hear.

E) The lesson ends and the kids are free from temporary bondage, so that they can get on with their real lives.

What is being critiqued in this example is how the instrumentalist learning that these students have largely undertaken in southern Canada has left them without the skills necessary to creatively approach the situation and find a solution. Qitsualik (2002c) explains further, defining the necessity for education to impart, what she calls “critical thinking”:

Classic Inuit education means teaching a child how to treat the world like a universal tool – an object can take on any use you can think of for it, as long as it makes you live. These army cadets were struggling because they had been taught to cough up specific, pre-set answers to specific, pre-set questions. Every object or action had its designated place. A bowl was something that one put things into, never a scoop, because no one had ever “authorized” them to use it as such. As any hunter could tell you, imagination is crucial to survival.

This principle of freedom for creativity, inventiveness and use of imagination is a principle highlighted as essential to past Inuit pedagogies which is still identified as relevant for contemporary Inuit pedagogies. But if we look at the view portrayed, we can see that a holistic approach, in the sense that learning be intertwined with living, is also promoted as necessary for contemporary Inuit pedagogies. The instrumentalist style of learning has blocked these students into particular ways of thinking which they only feel free to escape, and return to ‘real’ ways of being, when the auspices of the learning/teaching interaction are removed. Further, the third principle – an emphasis on experiential ways of learning – is also promoted for contemporary Inuit pedagogies. As Qitsualik (2002b) clarifies:

Inuktitut teaching is completely different, because it is not about lessons or programs. It is about tapping the children’s natural talents, encouraging them to use their minds in an expansive, alternative way. An Inuk child would not be taught to make a kamotik, for example, by being told one day, “A sled is made of the following materials... the pieces are set together in the following manner...” Instead, he or she would assist in the construction of a kamotik and

participate in its use, so that the child can develop his or her personal sense of what makes a sled functional.

This example highlights that three principles – experiential ways of learning, a freedom for inventiveness and creativity, and a holistic approach – which are discussed as important to descriptions of Inuit pedagogies from the past, are still recognized as ideals within descriptions of Inuit pedagogies relevant to the contemporary Arctic.

Other writers from the source literature reinforce these understandings of ideal contemporary pedagogies. Quassa (1999, p. 17) notes that “[l]earning through paper is not as important as learning through experience.” Similarly, in her discussion of midwifery, Apiqsugtaujuq (2000, p. 22) explains how, in the contemporary Arctic, knowledge Inuit women have on birthing is gained through experience.

I think women must also be more vocal about giving birth in their communities. It used to be that they didn't have the courage to say “Let me do it,” but I myself have seen that Inuit have a profound understanding of birthing. Their knowledge does not come from formal education, but instead from gradually acquired experience and by following wise advice.

Seeing experiential or informal ways of learning as just as important as formal education is also a recognition that learning needs to be holistically integrated with living. Watt-Cloutier (2000, p. 122) clarifies this argument: “People can be well educated even though they have never been to school. Education is a means of learning, and there are many formal and informal ways to learn. Schools are just one kind of tool that can help bring about some types of learning. Schools can be very helpful if they are well-designed and capably staffed, but the important thing is not the school – it is learning, especially learning to be independent.”

### *Formal, informal? Integrated, separate?*

Some sources advocate for an integration of Inuit pedagogies into mainstream school systems. Annahatak (1994, p. 17) mentions an example of non-formalized changes that can be initiated at the teacher-led level and which have had positive repercussions in her classroom.

I have formally observed students to be most attracted to what could be termed negotiated lessons within a program unit. These are the type of lessons which contain elders' stories, drawings, and teachings of various subjects as an authentic root and purpose, but which can be taught within the framework of the school learning objectives. Once students face the questions of who they are now and where they are going, it is within the real life stories of elders that they can make meaning of our culture and of themselves as Inuit living in the present.

Like this example, others also discuss the importance of Inuit youth having access to Inuit pedagogies, but instead, discuss running these as parallel and separate to formal mainstream education. Kunuk (in Sidimus & Kunuk, 2007) discusses this, emphasizing the need for knowledge on cultural aspects, such as shamanism, to be taught: "If I could design the educational system I would design two systems; the one we have now, and cultural education, as a separate type of education. We are supposed to teach our children our way, and they should listen to us, which is not happening right now. My cultural education would include learning about shamanism." Further support for a separate and parallel type of cultural education was mentioned by Shaimaiyuk (in Nakasuk et al, 1999, p. 139) in her discussion of interviews she had conducted with Inuit elders who had concerns that the loss of traditional knowledge skills were negatively impacting youth, also discussing how this education could be made accessible to non-Inuit.

She thought it would be a good idea if they had something to fall back on when they quit school, such as learning how to sew, or boys going out hunting to learn how to hunt and to survive on the land. I thought there should be a school for Inuit or non-Inuit where they could learn traditional knowledge and how to survive on the land [ . . . ] Another elder also said he liked education today, but he was worried about the men and boys because they are not being taught how to hunt out on the land.

Though a number of sources speak to transformations to educational systems and learning opportunities for youth in the Canadian Arctic, emphasizing that Inuit need to be given greater access to Inuit pedagogies, there is no clear consensus from the literature on whether these pedagogies should be integrated into the mainstream system, run as a separate system, or maintained but better promoted as informal learning opportunities.

### *Ideals for contemporary Inuit pedagogies*

Along with the three principles considered as ideal to maintain from past Inuit pedagogies discussed within the source literature, there are consistent references to four ideals which should feature prominently within Inuit pedagogies: 1) the importance of the land; 2) bilingualism; 3) inclusion of narratives on Inuit identity, culture, history and knowledge; and 4) inclusion of elders and their knowledge.

Drawing on knowledge regarding the land and environment, and presence out on the land were discussed as needing to be featured prominently in proposed ideal ways of learning. As touched on in chapter 9, many Inuit identify spatial or geographic freedom as necessary for mental health. For example, after discussing how past pedagogies had an emphasis on observing the land, Metcalfe (1988, p. 262) explains that having access to wide open spaces is considered as positive. “I think that’s one of the reasons I get lost in a city so easily; there is no time to stop to look back. You can only see straight ahead of you; there are too many buildings blocking your view. You can relax, take your time, find peace and comfort in the wide open spaces.” This sense of geographic freedom and the importance of including time spent on the land in contemporary education for Inuit is evident in Kakkiarniun’s (1996, p. 26) discussion of his education in the past which encompassed the “hugeness of the outdoors” as “all part of an important learning experience.” Watt-Cloutier (2000, p. 124) points out that the skills that one can learn on the land are very difficult to be taught in a classroom.

Learning to live on the land, overcoming the difficulties with intelligence, ingenuity, patience, courage, a sense of humour, and cooperation is what taught our spirit and shaped who we were as a people. We can teach about this in the classroom, but we cannot acquire the spirit. The only place this can be learned is on the land, and we must find ways to ensure that all youth have the opportunity to rediscover that spirit so that they can develop the wisdom and inner strength they will need to meet the challenges of our rapidly changing world.

Reclaiming health which is discussed as coming from access to the land is argued within the source literature as best accommodated through better integration of the land within education for Inuit youth in the Canadian Arctic.

A second ideal discussed for contemporary pedagogies within the Canadian Arctic is an inclusion of bilingualism. This aspect has been much discussed, especially since the publication of Berger's (2006, p. vi) report, specifically regarding Nunavut, in which he concluded how the failure of the educational system is largely down to the factor of both languages not being learned well.

In my judgement the failure of the school system has occurred most of all because the education system is not one that was set up for a people speaking Inuktitut. It is a bilingual system in name only, one that produces young adults who, by and large, cannot function properly in either English (because they never catch up with the English curriculum) or Inuktitut (because they learn only an immature version of their first language before switching to English).

One can see clearly how language, which Berger (2006, p. v) notes "is only one element of identity, but it is a huge one" mirrors the larger identity confusions that many Inuit face. After the publication of Berger's report, many Inuit supported his proposal, but there is still a need for wider political support. As Kunuk (2006) states "Thomas Berger made a strong and eloquent argument for the importance of developing a bilingual education system in Nunavut. It was as though he lifted the veil on a subject that has not had nearly enough political and financial support in our schools through successions of governments." Kakkiarniun (1996, p. 33) similarly expressing the importance of bilingualism maintains, however, that separate schools or courses could be more beneficial to students.

If there were a separate school that only taught in Inuktitut that the student could go to, than they could learn more. If students would be required to go out of doors to attend the school that only taught in Inuktitut, leaving behind the textbooks in English for the duration, it probably would work better. I feel that if students are taught in combination form (being taught both in English and Inuktitut) their minds are being overloaded and it does more harm than good, their eyesight just worsens because they get tired out.

Despite there not being a consensus whether Inuit and mainstream educational systems would be best as separate or integrated systems, there is agreement that bilingualism is an important component for contemporary pedagogies within the Canadian Arctic.

In a similar theme to that which I discuss in chapter 10 regarding sharing narratives, a third aspect often discussed as important in ideal pedagogies is the inclusion of narratives on Inuit culture. As Arnakaq (in Naqitarvik & Arnakaq, 2003, p. 2) states: "It would be most helpful

if they could include traditional knowledge into the educational system.” Arnakaq (in Naqitarvik & Arnakaq, 2003, p. 3) further explains that the inclusion of traditional knowledge helps in the formation of identities. “My students tell me that they enjoy learning our traditions. I was born when our old traditions were very strong and I was able to experience them. I know how the traditional way of life was, our stories were more in-depth than those we hear now. I have been told by my students, learning our old traditions helps them to realize who they are.” This is echoed by Akulukjuk (2005, p. 5) who discusses his experience at Nunavut Sivuniksavut<sup>40</sup> (NS) as allowing him to better identify with the history of Inuit. “I had a profound attitude change while attending NS and started appreciating my roots and what my ancestors had to endure to get us, Inuit, where we are right now. I want to learn more about Inuit history.” As Dicker (in Sackett & Campbell, 2001, p. 16) explains regarding an educational program in Nunatsiavut which aimed to not only reintroduce drum dancing but to explain the greater cultural history, participating in such projects allows individuals to not only identify with the past but also become better motivated to act for the preservation of cultural aspects in the present. ““At first I thought it would be a fun idea because I’d like to do something after school,” she says, “But when I went there, I noticed it was more than just dancing – that the facts about the drum being taken away five hundred years ago and hasn’t been in Labrador since – and it’s up to us to bring it back to our people”.” The important aspect of incorporating narratives on Inuit culture and identity has already been integrated into particular programs of learning within the Arctic which have been discussed as positive for affirming conceptions of identity and culture.

A fourth aspect considered by Inuit writers as ideal for contemporary pedagogies is the inclusion of elders and their knowledge. This aspect was a very strong theme running through much of the writings where many expressions on this theme were accompanied by a sense of urgency and responsibility. For example, Napartuk (2002, p. 66) states: “We have so much to gain from our Elders, of our tradition, our background, our language. It is urgent that we begin to record our Elder’s [sic] knowledge now – today! It’s a question of the survival of the Inuit culture. As youth, we can’t just sit around waiting passively anymore

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<sup>40</sup> Nunavut Sivuniksavut is an educational program for Inuit youth from Nunavut that strongly emphasizes the learning of Inuit history and knowledge. As Amagoalik (2000b) explains: “The graduates of the program have come out of it understanding their history and culture. They have learned how they got here. They have learned how and why land claims were negotiated. They have learned how Nunavut came about. They have come away from the program feeling more comfortable about their place in Nunavut, Canada, and the rest of the world. They have come out with pride in their culture and identity.”

either; we need to start documenting our Elder's [sic] knowledge today." Similarly, Apiqsuqtaujuq (2000, p. 22) explains that "[w]e must reach out to our elders and listen to what they have to say – and not just about midwifery, but also about raising children, principles of marriage, in-law kinship in general."

Though there is consensus on the need for the knowledge of elders to be included within contemporary pedagogies, different perspectives exist again, relating to this, on whether mainstream and Inuit systems of education should be integrated. Napartuk (2002, p. 64-66) makes a clear distinction between formalized education versus the knowledge and education that needs to be gained from the elders.

I don't mean any offense or disrespect to our Elders with what I'm about to say – at all, but it's a fact that the adults and Elders won't be around forever, and that the older generation has less formal education than the youth of today. Formal education means the Qallunaat-style education system. This system is important, but what is equally important is that our Elders and parents begin to think about passing the torch.

Peter (in Nakasuk et al, 1999, p. 131) expresses the alternate view that elders and their knowledge should be integrated – or even substituted – with the mainstream system of education. "I also learned how we need to incorporate the elders into our education process. They were the ones who passed on knowledge and stories and they should be put back into their rightful place as our educators." Qitsualik (2003b) emphasizes that in considering the knowledge of elders, one needs to also consider – again the holistic aspect of Inuit pedagogies – that the way elders teach tends to be their way of life. "Elders are experts on one thing: life. They represent a peculiar combination of life experience and acute awareness of that experience. Their magic lies in the way they talk, the way they teach." This fourth aspect of inclusion of elders and their knowledge within pedagogy within the Arctic was emphasized strongly within the source literature.

### **Wider critiques of mainstream pedagogies**

In this section, I detail critiques of mainstream education within broader learning theories which I recognize as similar to the critiques Inuit have made with regards the introduction of

mainstream education for Inuit.<sup>41</sup> These wider critiques are rooted in radical adult education theory which originated in the Latin American context (i.e. Freire, 1973; Illich, 1972) but also include learning theorists from the North American (i.e. hooks, 1994; Shor, 1992) and European (i.e. Westwood, 1991) contexts which react to hegemonic structures within education, which have been directly or indirectly influenced through the roots of radical adult education, and which are located in community-based, informal or popular education spheres.

To clarify, I am discussing mainstream education in general terms which I see as becoming increasingly commodified, instrumentalized, and reflective of a technical-rationalistic model at all levels. A prominent criticism of mainstream education is that knowledge is considered primarily according to a technical-rationalistic model so that intellect is equated with academic knowledge. Robinson (2001, p. 7) explains:

As the technological revolution gathers pace, education and training are thought to be the answer to everything. They are, but we have to understand the question. Educating more people – and to a much higher standard – is vital. But we also have to educate them differently. The problem is that present expansion is based on a fundamental misconception: the confusion of academic ability with intelligence.

Illich (1972, p. 54) critiques how such a narrow view of intellect means that mainstream educationalists tend to see knowledge as needing to be quantified and taught according to institutional standards. “The institutionalized values school instills are quantified ones. School initiates young people into a world where everything can be measured, including their imaginations.” Rationalistic thinking is prioritized within mainstream educational settings, while imaginative thinking and emotion become marginalized. Dirkx (2001, p. 67) explains that “[p]opular notions frame teaching and learning as largely rational, cognitive processes, and understand emotions as either impediments to or motivators of learning.” When intellect is equated as ‘academic ability’ which is increasingly becoming knowledge which is quantifiable, what can become marginalized are learners’ so-called soft skills, i.e. those considered as relying more on imagination and emotion.

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<sup>41</sup> i.e. Qitsualik's (2002a; 2002b; 2002c) critiques of mainstream forms of education in the first section of this chapter and critiques discussed in chapter 8 particularly in reference to the introduction of mainstream forms of education in the Arctic.

Further, there is a predominant view that learning must occur institutionally, and such an understanding has been discussed as leading to a commodification of education where the learner is increasingly considered a consumer first and a learner second. Such a perspective has clear parallels with Inuk writer Watt-Cloutier's (2000, p. 122) discussion of schooling as only "one kind of tool that can help to bring about some types of learning." Finger and Asun (2001, p. 12) explain in more detail that:

[T]he school, and schooling more generally, have acquired, or been granted by the state, an *institutional monopoly* over education. As a result, they have managed to make everybody believe that learning can result only from schooling. This devalues all other forms of learning, in particular learning by means of naive and vernacular tools. Knowledge and education then becomes an economic commodity which one consumes or is administered.

When the learner considers herself or himself a consumer first, ownership of and agency over one's own personal development, growth or learning become externalized so that personal autonomy and individually unique creative abilities are given less emphasis as dependence on institutions takes their place. This point of discussion recalls my earlier discussions within chapter 9 on institutional dependencies created through constructed deficiencies. Illich (1972, p. 57) elaborates: "People who have been schooled down to size let unmeasured experience slip out of their hands. To them, what cannot be measured becomes secondary, threatening. They do not have to be robbed of their creativity. Under instruction, they have unlearned to "do" their thing or "be" themselves, and value only what has been made or could be made." This is also discussed as the 'instrumentalizing' of education whereby learning is no longer favoured for its own sake, rather the learner chooses to learn only according to what is needed or 'instrumental' in passing assessments or gaining skills for employment. Freire (1998, p. 111) discusses this as "the bureaucratization of the mind" explaining that this is done in the name of freedom while authentic, personal freedom is actually being undermined:

[O]ne of the signs of the times that frightens me is this, the insistence, in the name of democracy, freedom, and efficacy, on asphyxiating freedom itself and, by extension, creativity and a taste for the adventure of the spirit. The freedom that moves us, that makes us take risks, is being subjugated to a process of standardization of formulas, models against which we are evaluated.

With a dominant view that learning can only occur within institutions, and with learning within institutions increasingly becoming commodified where a learner is a necessary

consumer, the excising of emotion, imagination and creativity from education becomes bureaucratized.

In my critiques of mainstream education, I draw predominantly on theory which has stemmed from adult education where I consider the broader designation of this term which encompasses alternative or radical forms of learning at all levels. Adult education originated as a radical alternative to mainstream views of education. Finger and Asun (2001, p. 13), paraphrasing Illich, explain that adult education originated not as the ‘teaching of adults’ but as an alternative approach to all levels of education offering alternatives to instrumentalist practices of education where technical-rationalistic views of knowledge predominate.

According to Illich, adult education is the alternative to this state of affairs. In other words, adult education is *not* the portion of traditional education which caters for adults. Rather, it is an alternative to the very processes of institutionalization, commodification and expertocracy. Adult education is thus synonymous with learning, as opposed to formal education.

The term ‘adult education’ which can be used as a frame for the critical learning theorists that I draw on in my critiques of mainstream education and for my promotion of pedagogical ideals is drawing on a broad designation of the term beyond ‘teaching for adults’ and more akin to radical and alternative forms of learning.

I further acknowledge, however, that ‘teaching for adults’ spheres of education, including universities, are part of the increasingly commodified and instrumentalized trend of mainstream education increasingly evident in most spheres of formalized education. Adult education originated as a radical standpoint to mainstream forms of education for all, children or adults, so that the “ideal of humanising development through individual and collective emancipation” (Finger & Asun, 2001, p. 119) underlies ideal adult education. However, a contemporary view of adult education as ‘teaching for adults’ has taken hold and falls in line with mainstream forms of primary and secondary levels of education where instrumentalist methods dominate and where education is becoming increasingly commodified. This is evident in university-level education where recently in the United Kingdom, for example, plans to further commodify university education have been discussed. Curtis (2009, p. A1) discusses these new plans as “part of a consumer revolution in higher education” where “[s]tudents should be treated more as paying customers.” University education is a case in

point, but such commodification is affecting many ‘teaching for adults’ sectors. Finger and Asun (2001, p. 124) explain that “mainstream adult education is no longer pursuing the project of emancipation and social change. Rather, its originally emancipator practices now become distorted, instrumentalised and counterproductive.”

If we return to look specifically at the Arctic context, where mainstream forms of schooling were introduced through colonization and are currently the predominant forms of education within Arctic communities, we can see that Inuit have been forced into a system of education which is critiqued widely outside of the Arctic. As hooks (1994, p. 12) states: “There is a serious crisis in education. Students often do not want to learn and teachers do not want to teach” while Shor (1992, p. 10) states that “[c]onditions in school and society now limit [students’] development.” Shor (1992, p. 12) further explains that “the creative and critical powers” of students go “largely untouched” and that “[a] democratic society needs the creativity and intelligence of its people. The students need a challenging education of high quality that empowers them as thinkers, communicators, and citizens.” Discussing the Arctic educational system, this is also highlighted by Watt-Cloutier (2000, p. 119): “Our present education system in the remote areas is doubly disadvantaged. We are using a degraded copy of a system that not only does not address our needs as a people, but that no longer adequately addresses those of its own people.” In the remaining sections of this chapter I discuss pedagogical ideals of learning theorists with perspectives focussed outside the Arctic context and then look at crossovers between these with Inuit promoted pedagogical ideals.

### **Tracing my path to ideal pedagogies: False binaries not false difference**

Within my review of the source literature, I have noted reliance on essentialist understandings of culture and therefore dependence on a binary relationship between the cultural and identity constructs of Inuit versus the west. When I make this conclusion, I emphasize that individuals do not create constructs alone. As Elenes (2003, p. 191) explains, “[i]dentity formation is never a project that any subject constructs by herself. Identities are co-constructed by the subject and society at large; whether the subject is marked as “inferior,” “deviant,” “passive,” or unmarked (the “norm”).” Further as I discuss how Inuit authors draw on this binary, I am cognisant that Inuit are responding to binary terminologies of difference that existed and were imposed on Inuit through colonization, therefore drawing on essentialisms in reactionary and strategic manners as part of “the struggle to construct alternative identities” (Elenes, 2003, p.

202). Like Elenes (2003, p. 202) explains regarding “women and people of color”, Inuit “did not at first constitute themselves as different. They were constituted as such by patriarchy and colonialism.” I emphasize as well how reliance on such binaries is widespread, as hooks (1994, p. 28) states: “what we are witnessing today in our everyday life is not an eagerness on the part of neighbours and strangers to develop a world perspective but a return to narrow nationalism, isolationisms, and xenophobia.” I recognize as well that within this thesis in learning to critically question terminologies and in speaking of different cultures, I have also put weight on the well-tread, overly simplistic but commonly used binary terminologies of difference.

Despite there being clear suggestions that promotion of essentialist understandings of culture further difficulties for some Inuit – particularly youth – there is a predominant reliance on essentialist understandings of culture within discussions of pedagogies promoted as ideal within the source literature. Aiming for this research to be ethical and respectful to Inuit, I have felt wary expressing this conclusion. As Searles (2006, p. 90) notes also, encountering the use of fixed identity and cultural constructs can be a source of dilemma for researchers working with Inuit. “As an ethnographer of Inuit society and culture, I feel caught in a dilemma of how best to study and represent Inuit identity. Should I do what Okalik Egeesiak does and treat Inuit identity as a source of strength, vision, and focus? Or should I treat it as a resource for political power (and perhaps subgroup solidarity) that may in fact work against the interests and needs of some Inuit?” But as I have previously discussed, and as Searles acknowledges (2006, p. 90), answering such questions impinges on how we conceptualize identity. If we conceptualize identity and culture as constructs – fluid, multi-faceted and interactive – these concepts can be seen as shiftable between being a source of strength for some while equally challenging for others. Still I have felt cautious regarding my own positionality as a non-Inuk researcher making judgments and conclusions about Inuit – a positionality that is fraught with a history of exploitation of ‘others’ beginning in judgment and one where some feel I should have little to no knowledge. With regards learning styles and pedagogies of Aboriginal peoples, for example, Watt-Cloutier (2000, p. 116) cautions that “[u]ntil relevant quality programs have been in place in our schools for some time, and until benchmark studies are carried out to determine the effectiveness of such programs, it would not be wise for non-Aboriginal people to conclude anything about Aboriginal learning and schooling.”

But true to the listening methodology that I have attempted to employ in this research, I have come to a position of non-neutrality and having something to say. Freire (1998, p. 107) describes listening as follows:

True listening does not diminish in me the exercise of my right to disagree, to oppose, to take a position. On the contrary, it is in knowing how to listen well that I better prepare myself to speak or to situate myself vis-à-vis the ideas being discussed as a subject capable of presence, of listening “connectedly” and without prejudices to what the other is saying.

It is through the integrative dialogic methodology, begun with listening, that I have come to learn that I need to claim my non-neutrality and voice my position.

Reinforcing and not questioning essentialisms within this thesis would be akin to furthering stereotypical thinking discussed in chapter 3 as unethical. I would be “privilege[ing] culture and thereby difference” which Westwood (1991, p. 171) states “giv[es] rise to accounts of black people’s lives (but not theirs alone) which present their cultures as aberrant or pathological, as exotic and at a great distance from the classes or regions within which they live.” Such a perspective dismisses the contemporary and immediate realities and hybridities that – along with cultural ways of being and knowing – are also components of lives of Indigenous peoples. In this way, this would be relying on the “overly simplistic understanding of cultural knowledge production – an understanding that positions Indigenous communities as if they exist in some isolated context without any cross-fertilization of ideas from other cultures” and vice versa (Langdon, 2009, p. 5).

Through carefully revealing essentialisms as dangerous through a dialogic methodology, I am also carefully not following “[n]either elitism nor basism” (Freire, in Freire & Faundez, 1989, p. 48) as I attempt to draw together and integrate both theoretical and practical knowledges as well as hegemonic and ‘other’ knowledges (which I have discussed as a posture of empathetic criticality in chapter 6). As Freire (in Freire & Faundez, 1989, p. 48) explains further, “[j]ust because I am not elitist, it does not follow that I am “basist”. And because I am not basist, it does not follow that I am elitist.” Such a perspective as I attempt to demonstrate is needed for lateral meetings between these different domains of knowledge. As Faundez (Freire & Faundez, 1998, p. 49) explains “[b]ecause neither naivety, nor spontaneity, nor rigorous scientific thought will change reality. Changing reality involves

bringing these two forms of knowledge together so as to achieve a greater knowledge, which is the true knowledge that can translate itself into action to change reality. The division between these two forms of knowledge destroys any possibility of understanding the whole or of changing the whole.” Such a perspective requires humility on both sides.

In this vein, then, I am advocating that we use care in drawing on binaries and fixed identity constructs as promotion of rigid notions of identity can be dangerous. Elenes (2003, p. 202) explains that “[t]he “reality” is that even though these differences are socially and politically constituted, they are meaningful.” Awareness that cultural and identity labels and categories are constructs does not negate some of us feeling pressure to fit into these. Those of us who do not can struggle. There are many quotes throughout this thesis that affirm the difficulties Inuit have faced with identity constructs, while chapter 2 affirms some of the difficulties I have faced with them. There are places and times where essentialisms are drawn on ironically (as there is awareness of the falsity of the essentialism in those who use them) for strategic purposes, and particularly for marginalized groups these strategic essentialisms have been necessary for political resistance, reclaiming histories and empowerment over subjugation. However, there are dangers that the use and promotion of essentialisms leads very easily to exclusion and division, either through non-awareness of the falsity and ironic use of the construct and therefore individuals feeling bound to try to fit within them or through unnecessary division between individuals and cultures created by false understandings of difference.

Understanding that binary terminologies of differences are false does not mean that differences do not exist, however. Difference, paradoxically, is the one thing that we all have in common. McKenna (2003, p. 432) explains this: “Many have feared that difference only divides; it cannot bind peoples together under one national rubric. Yet if we understand difference as the common cultural reference point it becomes the basis for unity—a paradoxical concept that has proven difficult for many to grasp.” So returning to the Arctic context and re-examining the binary of Inuit versus the west, we can see that Inuit and the west are different but so are Inuit and Inuit and west and the west. We all differ in unique ways from a ‘norm’. Such an understanding does not smooth over differences so that we cannot recognize that some – through race, class and gender – have been privileged while others have been subjugated but it does mean that allocating individuals to either side of binary terminologies of difference is simplistic as complex, multiple and shifting identities

will not neatly – and certainly not always – fit into simplistic boxes. As Westwood (1991, p. 172) explains, recognition of our hybridities means “not falling into the traps of simple comparisons between cultural groups.” All individuals are different from each other, and though we can connect through the commonality of being different, there needs to also be recognition that labels, categories and constructs are too simplistic to describe the multiple and complex world. Instead, as McKenna (2003, p. 435) explains, we need to “acknowledge the multiplicity of difference and to acquire a tolerance for ambiguity.”

### **Ideal pedagogies**

#### *Revaluating ‘soft’ skills and creativity*

Recalling critiques which highlight that mainstream education tends towards a rationalistic and instrumentalist model which has become bureaucratized through a predominant view that learning must occur institutionally, many argue for a reintegration of creativity and imagination into education. This would ostensibly mean that education could be more inclusive to other intelligences, those potentially distinct from intelligence measured and defined as academic ability. Robinson (2001, p. 7) explains:

For years academic ability has been conflated with intelligence and this idea has been institutionalized into testing systems, examinations, selection procedures, teacher education and research. As a result, many highly intelligent people have passed through education feeling they aren’t. Many academically able people have never discovered their other abilities. We have developed institutions and intellectual hierarchies on the assumption that there are really two types of people in the world, academic and non-academic: or as they are often called by common sense, the able and the less able.

Such a dominance towards a technical-rationalist view of academic ability and subsequently intelligence, has been accommodated by what Robinson (2001, p. 8) terms “a wedge between intellect and emotion in human psychology; and between the arts and sciences in society at large.” Robinson (2001, p. 7) explains further that “there’s more to intelligence than academic ability and much more to education than developing it.” Similar to earlier discussions affirming that we are all diverse with multiple identities is the understanding that we are also diverse in our intelligences. Robinson (2001, p. 103) explains that “it is better to avoid formal categorising and to recognise that intelligence is multifaceted.” Mainstream

education tends towards excluding other types of intelligence – those which are not measurable or quantifiable while privileging a technical-rationalist perspective of intelligence. But as Dirkx (1997, p. 79) explains, “bubbling just beneath this technical-rational surface is a continual search for meaning, a need to make sense of the changes and the empty spaces we perceive both within ourselves and our world.”

To transform perceptions of pedagogy away from this narrow view, Robinson (2001, p. 9) argues that there needs to be a broadening of general understandings of intelligence to acknowledge how diverse intelligence can be. “Human intelligence is richer and more dynamic than we have been led to believe by formal academic education.” Expansion of notions of intelligence beyond those deemed as academically valid within mainstream formalized education means addressing “the limitations of a monocultural system of education” for members of both minority and majority cultures (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005, p. 10). This also means recognizing that “academic ability is not the same as intelligence” (Robinson, 2001, p. 81) but rather “[it] is essentially a capacity for certain sorts of verbal and mathematical reasoning.” Broadening definitions of intelligence means revaluing characteristics of our selves considered as ‘soft’ – emotional and imaginative aspects – which have tended to be side-lined through the equating of intelligence with academic ability. Robinson (2001, p. 139; p. 140) explains that “[e]motional intelligence is recognized increasingly as an essential dimension of personal development and social ability” though “[t]hese so-called soft skills have been too long ignored or badly dealt with by education.” Expanding understandings of intelligence means reconsidering that these so-called soft skills, such as an individual’s “emotional, imaginative connection with the self and with the broader world” can be areas in which to ground “personally significant and meaningful learning” (Dirkx, 2001, p. 64).

Such expansions in definitions of intelligence also means a recognition that creativity occurs in all fields – even those thought of as technical-rationalist – and that all truly creative processes rely to some degree on so-called soft skills. Robinson (2001, p. 10) explains that there is a predominant misconception that creativity is associated only with the arts, though creative abilities occur in all pursuits.

The truth is that creativity is not a separate part of the brain that lights up only in certain people or during particular activities. Creativity is possible in

science, in technology, in management, in business, in music, in any activity that engages human intelligence. People are not creative in general but in doing something concrete. Different people have different creative strengths according to the pattern of their intelligences [. . .] Real creativity comes from finding your medium, from being in your element.

When learning in any field there can always be an element of creativity. Creativity is present when new knowledge, any ‘type’ of knowledge, is invented. To be creative, we often need to draw on ‘soft’ skills such as emotion and imagination. Robinson (p. 155) explains: “Creativity is not a purely intellectual process. It is enriched by other capacities and in particular by feelings, intuition and by a playful imagination.” These ‘soft’ or ‘artistic’ ways of thinking may be considered alternative to technical-rationalist abilities; however, if revalued and reintegrated into formalized mainstream education, such skills could also prove beneficial to technology and scientific pursuits as well.

For learning to be creative, imagination is required and imaginative processes tend to require fluidity, ambiguity, openness and freedom. I have felt the truth of learning in this manner within this thesis, as highlighted in chapter 6. My understanding of this has been influenced by reading Milner (1984, p. 163; p. 164) who states there is a need for a “setting” in “which it is safe to be absent-minded”, a physical setting where “we are freed, for the time being, from the need for immediate practical expedient action” and “a mental setting, an attitude, both in the people around and in oneself, a tolerance of something which may at moments look very like madness.” But others also highlight the need for such tolerance of imaginative freedoms for learning to be creative. In a practical example, in ‘Training for Transformation’ handbooks for community workers (Hope & Timmel, 2007) which are based upon Freire’s work, exercises for envisioning a new society are discussed. Hope and Timmel (2007, preface) stress that “it [is] essential to challenge a group to express their vision of the society they long for, as this develops energy and hope.” Eisnor (2002, p. 9) emphasizes that learners need to be able to explore to create when he states that “[i]t is an educational culture that has a greater focus on becoming than on being, places more value on the imaginative than on the factual, assigns greater priority to valuing than to measuring, and regards the quality of the journey as more educationally significant than the speed at which the destination is reached.” Dirkx (1997, p. 83; p. 85) also acknowledges this when he discusses that nurturing soul in adult education means encouraging “engagement with the unconscious through imagination, creativity and intuition” and “unlike the ego, which prefers logic, predictability, and order,

the soul thrives on open spaces.” Robinson (2001, p. 133) explains that “[c]reativity involves a dynamic interplay between generating ideas and making judgements about them” where “[i]maginative activity is the process of generating something original: providing an alternative to the conventional or routine.” Creative learning involving imaginative processes therefore requires tolerance of ambiguities, openness and absent-mindedness at times.

### *Reclaiming identity through creative learning*

Looking at transformative learning where that which transforms – or that which is being created – is an identity construct for the person undergoing the learning, we can begin to recognize how such pedagogies are ideal in that they can allow individuals to name their identity for themselves. Boyd and Myers (1988, p. 261) argue that education must promote “personal transformations as one of its major aims.” Returning to Milner (1984, p. 154) as an example of transformative learning though she does not use this term, she explains that in learning to paint creatively where she broke “free from the urge to make a mechanical copy and a new entity had appeared on my paper” there was “a feeling that the ordinary sense of self had temporarily disappeared” accompanying this learning. Further, Milner (1984, p. 155) notes that she experienced an emerging of a new sense of self which came from her learning, stating “there is a plunge into non-differentiation, which results (if all goes well) in a re-emerging into a new division of the me-not-me one in which there is more of the ‘me’ in the ‘not-me’ and more the ‘not-me’ in the ‘me’.” Dirkx (1998, p. 4) also explains transformative learning as learning which allows individuals to be freed from “the presence of coercive forces or factors within our personal and socio-cultural contexts” which “constrain the degree to which we can be who or what we are.” Recalling earlier discussions of Inuit encountering challenges accompanying feeling trapped between rigid constructions of identity, we can see that creative learning, where there is tolerance for imaginative processes which involve freedom and ambiguity in constructs, can be ideal pedagogies for the invention of new identity constructs.

But concepts, namings or meanings are not so much emergent through such learning processes as they are in a constant process of emerging and re-emerging which again facilitates a rejection of fixity of identity constructs. Milner (1984, p. 154) identifies that “if there is to be a new psychic creation” through learning, moments of “blankness” are an “essential recurring phase” questioning, “[i]s it not possible that blankness is a necessary

prelude to a new integration?” It follows that if blankness is recurring through such processes of learning then emergent integrations must recur as well. Illich (1972, p. 57-58) articulates the need for the promotion of these forms of learning within institutions:

[P]ersonal growth is not a measurable entity. It is growth in disciplined dissidence, which cannot be measured against any rod, or any curriculum, not compared to someone else’s achievement. In such learning one can emulate others only in imaginative endeavour, and follow in their footsteps rather than mimic their gait. The learning I prize is immeasurable re-creation.

When we contemplate learning processes as capable of facilitating conceptual fluidity and re-emergence, we can see how such spaces facilitate a transformation in our relationships to culture and identity. Rather than seeing these as fixed and absolute, such pedagogies “deconstruct the notion of a unified subject and essentialist notions of culture” (Elenes, 2003, p. 206). A practical example of such a pedagogy is that developed by Rosenberg (2003; 2010, 2:20; 2010, 1:55) where he teaches a language of non-violence (or nonviolent communication) to replace the “language of domination” where people are classified “in terms of what they are” which he claims is taught most predominantly in the world where “a few people who claim to be superior dominate others.” A large part of this pedagogy has to do with becoming aware that we live by fluid and shifting narratives. Within Freire’s (1973; p. 69; p.167) discussion of “education as the practice of freedom”, he explains that subjects “*name* the world in order to transform it.” If there is conscious tolerance of ambiguity and imaginative freedoms in construct formation and conscious awareness that we live by narratives, individuals are better positioned to name and re-name themselves and their world in affirming manners.

### *Contextualized ways of living versus decontextualized activities*

In the contemplation of pedagogy as a process through which we form identities, we are also contemplating pedagogy as a way of being or living in the world. Connecting individual processes of learning with our relationship to the world around us, Dirkx (1997, p. 83) explains that “[l]earning is not simply a preparation for life. It *is* life, the experience of living. Coming to know ourselves in the world and how we make sense of the other within this world are critical aspects of learning [. . .] learning is understood as a process that takes place within the dynamic and paradoxical relationship of self and other.” Such a discussion of

pedagogy as a way of living is also highlighted within Ingold's (2000) contrasting of learning as "enskilment" (where "learning is inseparable from doing, and in which both are embedded in the context of practical engagement with the world"(Ingold, 2000, p. 416)) with Levan's 'culture of acquisition' theory of learning. This theory is explained as "the theory of learning long favoured by cognitive science (and by Western educational institutions), according to which effective action in the world depends on the practitioner's first having acquired a body of knowledge in the form of rules and schemata for *constructing* it" (Ingold., 2000, p. 216). Ingold (2000, p. 416) goes on to further explain this institutionally preferred form of learning as "separated from doing, the application of acquired knowledge." In my contemplation of ideal pedagogies, I also see as ideal, Ingold's (2000) first definition of pedagogy, where the learner exercises personal freedom in choosing what is practically relevant to their way of life as opposed to pedagogies determined by authorities who, upon consulting standardized rules and norms, prescribe activities which are decontextualized from a learner's life.

Such a perspective of ideal pedagogy as a contextualized way of living offers further insight to earlier discussions on destabilizing the dominance within educational institutions on a technicist-rationalist paradigm where instrumentalist forms of learning are privileged. Where I discussed that there is a lack of a clear recognition that creativity is a quality which is necessary in all pursuits, Ingold (2000, p. 127) affirms as much: "[T]he subsequent growth of industrial capitalism, coupled with concomitant changes in the division of labour, led in a whole range of fields to the decomposition of skill into the components of creative intelligence and imagination on the one hand, and routine or habitual bodily techniques on the other." We can see that with this decoupling, what remains – 'routine or habitual bodily techniques' or decontextualized activities – can be considered as largely instrumentalist skills. And Ingold (2000, p. 416) further argues that within the theory of learning favoured by institutions, "[i]t is implied, moreover, that a body of context-free, propositional knowledge – namely a technology or, more generally, a culture – actually *exists* as such as is available for transmission by teaching outside the context of use." Such an argument expands earlier discussions on the dominance of a monoculture within educational institutions where 'culture' has been essentialized to the point that it has come to be seen as something which can be decomposed and thought of as parts – or activities – equally relevant to learners no matter the context. Based on essentialist understandings of culture, there exists within such a theory an inherent assumption that all cultures – and every individual's sense of culture within a monocultural 'west' – can all be well served by this decontextualized and

standardized notion of pedagogy. Reclaiming ideal pedagogies as those which alternatively take into consideration an individual learner's unique context through contemplating pedagogy as a contextualized way of living can help us reconsider what it is we lose when we subscribe to the belief that standardized, decontextualized pedagogy can serve the diversity of individual learners who exist.

### *Dialogic pedagogy*

Turning to dialogue as an ideal pedagogy, we return to the discussion of the necessity for imaginative freedom within learning processes. But when we consider that freedom is mediated by one's (dialogic) relationship with the world – or one's own context – we can begin to see that freedom is tempered through such dialogues. Within ideal pedagogies, though there is a need for tolerance of freedom and absentmindedness as I discussed earlier, which is necessary for imaginative processes characteristic of creativity, it is naive to think that such freedom cannot easily fall into chaos or that ambiguity is enough for individuals and communities to become empowered. Freedom must be mitigated to not be distorted. As Freire (1998, p. 99) explains, “[o]ut of respect for freedom I have always deliberately refused its distortion. Freedom is not the absence of limits. What I have sought is to live the tension, the contradiction, between authority and freedom so as to maintain respect for both. To separate them is to provoke the infraction of one or the other.” Returning to the practical example of the handbooks on ‘Training for Transformation’, there is similar recognition that imaginative freedom is not enough. Hope and Timmel (2007, preface) state “that vision is not enough. To bring about change effectively, one must also have good administration and management.” Explaining this tempering of freedom within pedagogy, Freire (1998, p. 33) states that “[o]ne of the essential tasks of the teaching process is to introduce the learners to the methodological exactitude with which they should approach the learning process, through which the objects of learning are knowable.” But this certainly does not mean a return to a standardized ‘banking’ system of education. Rather, there needs to be space for “making mistakes, taking risks, being curious, asking questions, and so on” (Faundez in Freire & Faundez, 1989, p. 41). Again highlighting a practical example of this form of pedagogy through the ‘Training for Transformation’ handbooks, Hope and Timmel (2007, preface) recognize that the ‘good’ management they discuss is premised not on “hierarchical, top-down structures to which most of us are accustomed” but rather on the creation of “new forms of management which are consistent with the beliefs and values of democratic

participation.” What is needed within such ideal pedagogies is a more complex and flexible “rigorous methodological curiosity anxious to explore the limits of creativity, persistent in the search, and courageously humble in the adventure” (Freire, 1998, p. 33). And it is this last aspect of pedagogical ‘methodological rigour’ which is key to mediation of individual freedoms through dialogue – humility of both the teacher and the learner. Again, Freire (1998, p. 108) defines this for us, “[h]umility is not made of bureaucratic rituals. Humility expresses, on the contrary, one of the few certainties that I am sure of, namely that nobody is superior to anyone else.” Individual freedoms must be tempered through dialogue where humility is key for ideal creative pedagogy.

Humility, defined as a crucial aspect of ideal pedagogy and a critical disciplining of freedom, when present, marks spaces of learning as truly dialogic.<sup>42</sup> And it is the presence of humility and mutual respect on both sides of the pedagogical process which facilitates transformative pedagogy. Such an understanding is particularly important for teachers as McKenna (2003, p. 436) explains: “As teachers in a classroom, either we can participate in a passive collusion with the culture of passivity or we can attempt to become agents of transformation.” Teachers facilitating and leading this process then guide students to “also become agents in this transformation” (McKenna, 2003, p. 436). And it is through such a dialogic pedagogy – with humility on both sides – where understandings of difference can be transformed. McKenna (2003, p. 436) explains that when a teacher is committed to the creation of a classroom as a dialogic space for learning they are helping “to forge an active culture that acknowledges the true catalytic power of difference and we can transform our understanding of difference.” Freire (1998, p. 108) explains, in more personal terms: “If I consider myself superior to what is different, no matter what it is, I am refusing to listen. The different become not an “other” worthy of any respect, but a “this” or “that” to be despised and detested. This is oppression.” Truly ideal pedagogies for inclusive education need to not only embrace and accommodate difference but transform understandings of difference. McKenna (2003, p. 435) states that “[w]e must ask ourselves as feminists and as educators, “What is our objective in the classroom?” Is it to “expose” students to a new angle on Western culture or is it to transform their and our relationship to culture?” It is the

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<sup>42</sup> I was first introduced to some of the ideas promoted by Freire (1973) including the importance of humility on the part of teachers and learners when I attended a secular course on development at the end of my undergraduate degree at the Cuarnavaca Centre for Intercultural Dialogue on Development in Cuarnavaca, Mexico. The courses offered there, which follow principles of dialogic pedagogy, are an example of practical implementations of some of the ideal pedagogies I discuss.

component of humility on both sides which can ensure that learning processes are dialogic and can lead, therefore, to respectful contemplation of ‘others’ and transformations in understandings of difference.

Just as understanding individual transformative learning means understanding that concepts and namings are articulated and rearticulated, so is there a need to understand that transformations in consciousness which emerge through dialogic processes of learning are constantly emerging and re-emerging. Change is not achieved through such pedagogy in a permanent manner. Rather, understandings are partial and tentative. McKenna (2003, p. 438) explains this: “Consciousness-raising connotes a permanent transformation of consciousness. The illuminations I am seeking are at their best transient. They may appear for a brief time and then retreat. The classroom, like the border, is a transitory space. The transformation of culture is not secured; at best it can be activated.” Such an understanding is reflective of our true natures as human beings as Freire (1998, p. 55) explains: “Far from being alien to our human condition, conscientization is natural to “unfinished” humanity that is aware of its unfinishedness. It is natural because unfinishedness is integral to the phenomenon of life itself.” And to return us to the beginning of this discussion, understanding our partiality is what facilitates the possessing of humility necessary for pedagogy to be transformative. Shor (in Shor & Freire, 1987, p. 50) explains: “We redevelop ourselves with the students. The illuminating process renews the educator to keep doing it. If he or she only brings illumination to the classroom, the teacher can easily get burned out. Militancy means permanent re-creation.” Contemplating dialogic pedagogy as an ideal pedagogy therefore, means understanding that transformations in our understandings of difference – changes in consciousness achieved through dialogic processes of learning – are necessarily tentative and partial and therefore ongoing processes of change.

### *Pedagogies of resilience for negotiating essentialisms*

A number of authors have affirmed that we construct our identities through narrative. King (2003, p. 2) states that “[t]he truth about stories is that that’s all we are” while Okri (1997, p. 46) explains that “[w]e live stories that either give our lives meaning or negate it with meaninglessness.” Cyrulnik (2009, p. 146) highlights how narratives external to the self also factor into identity construction, stating that “[t]he gaze of others has the power to shape us.” Such a basic idea becomes of obvious importance to notions of self-esteem when we consider

that “[i]f we change the stories we live by, quite possibly we change our lives” (Okri, 1997, p. 46). Similar to discussions in chapters 9 and 10, if we understand that we live through narratives, or conceptualizations we create or we take from interaction with the world, we can begin to understand why labels or constructions can prove to be difficult to a person’s self conception and subsequently a person’s resilience to life’s challenges.

While Cyrulnik (2009, p. 49) acknowledges that narratives are necessary, he further explains that conceptualizations can be misleading: “We need categories: classifying, delineating and separating can help us to think by shaping the objects that we imbue with certain qualities. We see the world more clearly when we have conceptualized but they can be misleading [ . . .]. In the real world, everything is muddled up together.” As I have discussed in chapter 9, constructions or labels arising out of traumatic episodes in life can be just as damaging as the trauma events themselves. To review, Cyrulnik (2009, p. 130) states that:

[I]t is not only the direct effects of the trauma that have to be repaired; the effects of how the trauma has been represented must also be repaired. All too often, academic discourse says, ‘You’re finished. You were damaged during your early childhood, and science shows that the damage cannot be undone. What is more, you are the child of genetically inferior parents. Worse still, you have so many social handicaps that you have no reason to be optimistic.’ So a trauma born of a social representation aggravates the direct effects of the trauma itself.

Cyrulnik (2009, p. 131) goes on to explain that “a trauma’s biological effects can often be repaired because the brain is so plastic. In contrast, the effects that can be attributed to an academic discourse can only be repaired if our social discourse can be changed, and that can take several years or even several centuries.” Such explanations help to confirm that if we live by narratives, and if, in our conceptualizations of identity, we are also influenced from conceptualization from the wider world, there are times when exterior conceptualizations can override, in sometimes damaging manners, self conceptions on identity.

In considering that difficulties in life bring immediate traumas as well as corresponding labels or narratives which can also prove challenging to encounter, it is helpful, Cyrulnik (2009) argues, to rely on a concept of resilience which takes into consideration such narrative influences. Resilience, as defined by Cyrulnik (2009, p. 51), is not something absolute that we have or do not have. Rather it is a way of living that we knit together. “Resilience is a

mesh and not a substance. We are forced to knit ourselves, using the people and things we meet in our emotional and social environments.” Drawing on such a conceptualization means approaching challenges in life with eyes more open, seeing not only the traumatic events themselves as challenging to overcome but also the corresponding narratives as potentially needing to be overcome. Weingarten (in Denborough & Weingarten, 2005, p. 73) confirms this in discussing how to help someone negotiate their response to a traumatic episode, stating: “If we are going to ease somebody’s response to trauma, then it is essential that we not only respond to the more obvious meanings of the event, but that we also understand and engage with the particular meanings that the event has had to [the individual].” Resilience then, as conceptualized by Cyrulnik (2009) is seen, not as a positive characteristic and not just as a response to a challenge in life, but as a way of living where challenges in life are better negotiated through a recognition of narrative influences.

Drawing on such an understanding in pedagogical terms, we can see that a particular aspect of living, greater awareness of the paradox of essentialisms (that narratives are relied on for meaning-making but they can also potentially be harmful), can be taught. Though not discussing pedagogy specifically, Cyrulnik (2009, p. 285) confirms this, stating “the feeling of selfhood, which is shaped by the gaze of others, can be reshaped and reworked by representations, actions, commitments and narratives.” A contemplation of the role which pedagogy can play in helping individuals negotiate challenging or traumatic episodes by revealing that narratives which we rely on are mere constructions has obvious links to Foucault’s (quoted in Ball, 1990, p. 1-2) discussion of revealing the concealed workings of discourse and power relations as within ‘the role of an intellectual’ as follows: “My role – and that is too emphatic a word – is to show people that they are much freer than they feel, that people accept as truth, as evidence, some themes which have been built up at a certain moment during history, and that this so-called evidence can be criticized and destroyed. To change something in the minds of people – that’s the role of an intellectual.” Understanding resilience as a way of living where we can be taught how to create a coherent sense of selfhood despite encountering traumas – inevitably part of life – relying at times on essentialisms but also on conscious acknowledgement that essentialisms can be potentially damaging or misleading can be considered as an ideal pedagogy.

## **Recognizing connections**

Through recognizing that rigid differences between cultural groups are false, we begin to see that there are other similarities beyond the commonality of difference which can be used for connection. McKenna (2003, p. 435) states that “[b]eing a crossroads does not imply a denial of difference; rather it promotes an articulation of difference. It means living without borders, but it also means living as an intersection of all the border spaces that define: race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity.” As I have placed different texts in conversation within this thesis, I came to see that many of the promoted pedagogical ideals from the perspectives of Inuit are promoted by learning theories located more broadly also as ideals. Such a perspective recognizing such crossovers is not new. For example, Watt-Cloutier (2000, p. 118) connects the terminologies of Inuit wisdom and ‘lifelong learning’, explaining that “[p]eople are “empowered” when they have learned to control the development and maintenance of their own powers – when they know what to do to continue their learning and development without being told what to do. Educators call this lifelong learning. Our Elders call this wisdom.” But as Watt-Cloutier (2000, p. 119) goes on to emphasize, Inuit need to assess which parts require reinvention and which parts might work as they are for Inuit. “We have no choice but to find our own way. This does not mean that we should ignore the educational methods and accomplishments of the South. There is no point in reinventing the wheel if a wheel is called for. However, we must be able to assemble the parts into a whole that meets our needs.” In this section, I pull together the strands of this chapter thus far and look from my perspective on these connections, not with an intent of prescribing solutions to social health challenges in the Arctic but with the hope that, through such recognition of similarities between different perspectives, there is some transformation in how we conceptualize difference.

Recognition of the first characteristic of my described ideal pedagogies: the revaluing of diversities and so-called soft skills is clearly evident within Inuit ideal pedagogies as exemplified within Qitsualik’s (2002a, 2002b, 2002c) discussions of teaching fire-building according to Inuit pedagogy (as I have detailed at the beginning of this chapter). Through considering broader learning theory, I have argued that there is a need for a revaluing of ‘soft’ skills such as emotion and imagination as these are key to creative processes no matter the pursuit one is learning. Ingold (2000, p. 417) similarly discusses ‘enskillment’ and explains that when we are not able to learn through doing or through “a palpable engagement

with the world” we must undertake an “activity of the special kind [which] we call *imagining*.” Qitsualik (2002c) confirms this connection to Inuit pedagogy when she states that, “[a]s any hunter could tell you, imagination is crucial to survival.” Qitsualik (2002c) also highlights how creativity comes through recontemplation afforded by imaginative processes: “These army cadets were struggling because they had been taught to cough up specific, pre-set answers to specific, pre-set questions. Every object or action had its designated place. A bowl was something that one put things into, never a scoop, because no one had ever “authorized” them to use it as such.”

Though there was obvious recognition that a tolerance of imagination was highlighted within discussions of Inuit ideal pedagogies within the source literature, the second characteristic I highlight within my discussion of ideal pedagogies (a tolerance for freedom in identity constructs) is not as clearly discussed. Qitsualik (2002b) identifies that “Inuktitut teaching [. . .] is about tapping the children’s natural talents, encouraging them to use their minds in an expansive, alternative way.” But where I discuss freedom with regards identity constructs, relying on Milner (1984) and definitions of transformative learning, I highlight a need for tolerance of ambivalence, a need for freedom from ‘coercive forces or factors’ and freedom from classifying language so that learners can seek out identity constructs which work best for themselves. This perspective recalls Searles’ (2006, p. 91) discussions where he acknowledges that despite there being no consensus on what constitutes Inuit identity, there are many who believe it is tied closely to traditional pursuits, and where he argues that some Inuit may not feel they fit within such a defined cultural construct. “Many Inuit believe that outpost camps symbolize a more authentically Inuit existence, because they resemble, to some extent, how Inuit lived prior to their displacement to government-built and government-run towns and settlements.” Such a perspective is consistent with the disconnection I have found within the source literature: Despite the strong recognition that some Inuit are facing challenges with identity linked to high levels of social problems, within Inuit ideal pedagogies promoted within the source literature there is a lack of clear articulation that essentialist language needs to be relied on more carefully. With challenges and, particularly youth suicide at such high levels, a more conscious tolerance of ideological freedoms could be helpful for those individuals who are struggling with confusions in identity in the Arctic context.

With the third characteristic of the ideal pedagogies I have discussed, contextualized ways of living versus decontextualized activities, a very clear link exists with Inuit ideal pedagogies. In her discussion of Inuit pedagogy, Qitsualik (2002b) emphasizes that “[a]n Inuk child would not be taught to make a kamotik, for example, by being told one day, “A sled is made of the following materials... the pieces are set together in the following manner...” Instead, he or she would assist in the construction of a kamotik and participate in its use, so that the child can develop his or her personal sense of what makes a sled functional.” Kublu, Laugrand and Oosten (1999, p. 8) also stress that Inuit prefer learning as intertwined with living, stating “[e]ven today, modern Inuit students often find literary texts describing traditional customs and practices boring. To them, these texts lack life and do not incite much interest.” And Kunuk (in Sidimus & Kunuk, 2007) explains Inuit pedagogy as a contextualized way of living very clearly stating: “Today you start to realize that that system doesn’t work. Students nowadays have no interest in going out hunting. They don’t know what a fresh or an old seal hole is, though they do teach them in school and take them out on the land. It’s part of the school program, but it’s just an activity, not part of life.”

In discussing the fourth characteristic of ideal pedagogies which I outline, I emphasized dialogue and Freire’s (1998, p. 108) assertion that there is a particular need for humility of both the teacher and the learner. This characteristic is again discussed in Qitsualik’s (2002b) explanation of her role teaching fire-building to students from southern Canada where she indicated there was a need to recognize her own learning process and therefore her humility, stating “I learned as much as I taught.” As Freire (1998, p. 35) explains regarding dialogic pedagogy, just as there is a need “to be open and capable of producing something that does not yet exist” there is “as necessary [a need] to be immersed in existing knowledge” and fully cognizant that “our knowledge of the world has historicity.” This point regarding dialogic pedagogy has particular relevance for the Canadian Arctic where decreases in intergenerational knowledge sharing, mentoring and a promoted reconnection between elders and youth, are noted themes. For example, Tagoona (1988, p. 214) states: “We older people don’t like the new type of life today. This will repeat itself from generation to generation. Our ways always seem to be the best kind of life, and the rest always the bad kind. Even though the life of our children is different from ours we should try to understand it. We shouldn’t force them to live like us.” On the need for a reconnection between elders and youth, mentoring is discussed as having a particular practical relevance in this context. For example, Qitsualik (1999a) claims the mentoring system “as the best educational tool

available to traditional Inuit society.” Amagoalik (1988, p. 210) states that “[i]f the older people will remember, the young must listen.” Highlighting mentoring as relevant for this context has also been identified by Kral (2003, p. 37-38) who conducted a major study examining Inuit perspectives of well-being and discussed that:

Inuit are concerned with families growing more distant, less visiting, youth not receiving enough support, and Elders and youth not spending enough time together. Both youth and Elders voiced a desire for mutual interaction. Elders and youth appear to be waiting for each other, and mentoring and other programs bringing them together should continue to be developed.

Re-establishing mentoring as a prominent pedagogical practice within the contemporary Arctic could increase intergenerational knowledge sharing. But recalling in chapter 7 where I noted the disconnection between generations as in some ways due to distinct generational experiences of colonization, a particular emphasis on the two-way nature of such pedagogy could be especially timely for this context so that both youth and elders (and those in between) be considered as students/teachers.

The link between the last characteristic of the ideal pedagogies which I have outlined, the fostering of resilience through teaching students to negotiate the paradox that essentialisms exist and are necessary but also misleading and potentially dangerous, is not clearly established within discussions of Inuit ideal pedagogies within the source literature. Rather I see such a link better established through the performance of these writings. Recalling discussions in chapter 8 on barriers to higher education and difficulties with education more generally as stemming from feeling trapped or confused in the face of rigid identity constructs,<sup>43</sup> a formal recognition of potential dangers of essentialist language is of particular importance within the Canadian Arctic. As I have already discussed, many have linked use of essentialist identity constructs and failure to fit within such constructs to levels of low self-esteem and correspondingly high levels of social health challenges such as drug and/or alcohol abuse and suicidal tendencies. To restate an example, Kaukjak Katsak (in Wachowich et al, 1999, p. 199) explains that “[t]here are people who are a little bit younger than me who are very confused. They don’t know what culture they value most, they are stuck.” Conscious recognition that care be used with rigid definitions of identity could be

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<sup>43</sup> i.e. Aupaluktuq (2003) hearing that “[t]here are some that consider you no longer a northerner” when questioning why he could not receive funding for higher education, and Rojas’s (2000, p. 3) discussion of “becoming less Inuk by going to school.”

very important for these particular individuals. Watt-Cloutier (2000, p. 118) confirms this, after equating lifelong learning for empowerment with Inuit wisdom, she states that “it is what we all want for our children so that they may control their lives rather than being overly controlled by external forces such as alcohol/drugs, institutions, processes and people.” As I have recognized within chapter 10, however, though there was little clear cautioning on essentialist language within the source literature, the writings themselves tend to speak back and question hegemonic ‘truths’ or essentialisms which have become dominant through deconstruction, offering alternative accounts, reversing the gaze and reactionary humour. More conscious promotion of such questioning could be very useful for those facing difficulties in encountering rigid perspectives of cultural identity.

## **Summary**

In this chapter, I first considered pedagogies which are discussed within the source literature as ideal for the empowerment of individuals and communities in response to colonization and ongoing challenges. In that I considered perspectives of broader learning theorists within the rest of this chapter, I then briefly discussed how many of the critiques Inuit authors make regarding mainstream pedagogies can be similarly found within broader learning theories. This led on to a section where I traced my path to what I have come to term ideal pedagogies. Here I restated the recurring disconnection between challenges with rigid identity constructs in the form of identity confusion which has been discussed as a factor in high levels of social problems in the Arctic with a lack of discussion within the source literature on the need to question an over-reliance on essentialisms. But as I affirmed a need to question essentialisms, I also stressed that this does not mean that differences are false. I pointed out rather that, paradoxically, difference is a commonality we all possess which can be used to facilitate connection. In the following section, I expanded on my understanding of ideal pedagogies, discussing these according to five characteristics: 1) a revaluing of so-called soft skills such as imagination which I discussed as necessary for all creative processes; 2) the reclaiming of identity constructs through a tolerance for imaginative freedoms; 3) a consideration that these are contextualized ways of living; 4) a tempering of these freedoms through dialogic processes where humility was mentioned as a key quality for both the teacher and learner; and, 5) a consideration that these are pedagogies of resilience in that they can be used to teach learners how to negotiate the paradox of essentialist language. In the final section, drawing on conversation between different perspectives within the thesis text, I

more specifically examined crossovers between Inuit ideal pedagogies with these broader definitions.

## CHAPTER 12: Conclusion

### **Aim and objectives**

This thesis has been a contemplation regarding the questioning of rigid truths considered as hegemonic. With academia and the Canadian Arctic acting as background and parallel contexts which I drew upon, I was able to contemplate rationales and methodologies for questioning fixed truths considered as dominant. My first two objectives (the first, to contemplate ethical research regarding the Canadian Arctic and attempt to follow such a way of researching and the second, to write this text as a conversation) have been more directly addressed within the first section of the thesis. In this section, I detailed the rationales and methodologies for this research. I addressed the first two objectives more indirectly throughout as I performed questioning of rigid truths enacted through a methodology of writing intertextually where different perspectives on the broad themes of research, pedagogy and colonization were brought together into textual dialogues. This had the goal and ultimately the result of addressing the third objective (and the main focus of the research question), to discuss pedagogies considered as ideal for negotiating challenging situations in life brought about through rigid conceptualizations of identity.

### **Section summaries**

In section 1, I located this research by outlining the rationales and methodologies which I have used. In chapter 2, reflecting primarily on an experience at a conference during my first year of doctoral studies, I discussed how this experience prompted me to change direction with my research. Instead of following standard research, I chose to use a literary approach which allowed me to follow a non-invasive methodology, an approach which I felt to be respectful and more in line with my personal ethics. In chapter 3, I further elaborated on the rationales behind my choice to listen to existing writings by Inuit. I discussed how this choice meant that I was listening to truths which tend to run counter to hegemonic and authoritative accounts on the Arctic and it meant that I was privileging the agency of the author in deciding what was appropriate for crossover from a private to public realm. Continuing to rely on the metaphor of listening in chapter 4, as a student within social sciences I ‘listened’ to the humanities and critically questioned academic categorizations of Inuit writings with an aim to

transparently and clearly detail my consideration of the source literature. I discussed how Inuit writings can be considered both as resistant and testimonial literatures with their tendency to speak back to hegemonic and authoritative accounts, revising and rewriting. In chapter 5, I discussed a notion of intertextuality which I have used for the writing of the thesis text. Such a concept facilitated my understanding that texts can be taken in other ways than strictly representative so that they can also be seen as useful for conversation which I offered as a response to the questioning I encountered on positionality. In the final chapter of this section, I reflected upon my selection of texts and detailed my reading and writing methodologies after reconciling misgivings on textual research and situating my methodologies within wider theoretical perspectives.

In section 2, relying largely on the source literature, I aimed to reaffirm the main focus for this study, the Canadian Arctic, by reviewing and detailing Inuit perspectives and experiences on colonization and contemporary realities. In chapter 7, I looked generally at colonization of the Canadian Arctic highlighting that Inuit perspectives of colonization tend to emphasize painful, transformative and violent aspects. I went on to consider contemporary realities of the Arctic, detailing how many Inuit discuss challenges with identity conceptualization as well as more tangible health problems such as suicide and substance dependencies as impacts of colonization. Finally, I also reviewed the Canadian state's lack of concrete support and acknowledgement of Inuit as a distinct people with unfulfilled land claims as a contributor to high levels of social health challenges in Arctic communities. In chapter 8, I continued on with this reaffirmation of context, looking more specifically at educational and schooling spheres. Beginning with a discussion of Inuit pedagogy prior to colonization, I detailed the introduction of mainstream schooling through residential schools which is consistently tied to the settling of the Arctic and is seen to reinforce identity confusion for many Inuit, before considering how contemporary schooling in the Arctic is discussed as being at crisis levels with high numbers of school leavers. I went on to discuss how the source literature has indicated that barriers to higher education also exist due to physical distance, bureaucracy and challenges with identity construction, this last barrier having particular relevance for this thesis. Finally, I pointed to the sense of urgency many express for changes within education in the Arctic so that education becomes culturally relevant and more effective at fostering empowerment of individuals and communities.

Considering the fluidity of narratives in section 3, I considered how the colonization or contemporary reality portrayed is dependent on the narrative used for explanation. In chapter 9, I considered that narratives can be potentially harmful, particularly when rigidly relying upon external narratives in conflict with internal conceptions of identity. I considered how Inuit discuss losing ideological freedoms through events of colonization, and discussed how these losses have carried forward to the contemporary Arctic. I next argued for the rejection of easy labels to experiences of colonization and contemporary social problems, drawing here on a consideration of the applicability of terminologies of trauma, emblematic of clinical discourse, to the source literature. I also considered uses of Inuit culture essentialisms, explaining how many argue that in essentializing culture, there are aims to re-establish non-physical aspects and strategic political uses. I highlighted a repeating theme of this thesis that essentialist narratives can be damaging and devaluing for some, however, when relied on rigidly before pointing to education as a space to reassert lost freedoms in identity. The obvious disconnection in these last two arguments regarding use of essentialisms was picked up on in chapter 11. First in chapter 10, I considered how narratives can also be affirmative, particularly when one is given space and agency to form one's own narrative and identity. I went on to discuss how the processes of narrative construction and sharing offer potential for fostering resilience to challenges or trauma in life. I ended this chapter with a discussion on how I came to consider the writings within the source literature as enacted resiliencies through their tendency to question hegemonic accounts which, in my reading, I saw occurring in four main ways: deconstruction, offering alternative accounts, reversing the gaze and reactionary humour.

In section 4, I discussed different perspectives on pedagogy. I began chapter 11 with a review of what I termed Inuit ideal pedagogies which I defined as pedagogical ideals discussed in the source literature as offering potential for empowerment of individuals and communities. Here I discussed how perspectives of pedagogies from the past, where three key principles (freedom for invention, experiential learning with particular emphasis on observation and a holistic approach where learning is intertwined with living) are considered as still relevant for contemporary pedagogy. I also discussed how there was consensus on four contemporary pedagogical ideals: inclusion of elders and their knowledge, inclusion of Inuit narratives, importance of time on the land and bilingualism. I went on to discuss how broader learning theorists, which I located as originating with radical pedagogues such as Freire (1973), discuss critiques of mainstream pedagogies and ideal pedagogies which are similar to Inuit. I

characterized these ideal pedagogies more specifically by discussing five key characteristics and I summarized with a detailed look at similarities between these perspectives and Inuit ideal pedagogies.

## **Audiences**

With the thesis spanning a number of different foci, there are a variety of audiences to which this thesis is directed. A number of aspects would be relevant to an academic audience, primarily those interested in education as well as those interested in research methodologies. The thesis text is also relevant to audiences with interests outside of strict academic or theoretical concerns. Directing the thesis at these wider audiences, however, would require some rewriting of the text to place greater emphasis on the practical implications of the thesis.

Where I have adopted an alternative methodology, one which I have discussed as atypical for the social sciences, the thesis is an example of one way to go about research different from set standards. This focus is relevant to those who are similarly attempting research following alternative or different methodologies. The initial section of this thesis would be of most direct use for those with these interests as it is within this section where I detail my methodologies at length, although the full text would be of relevance for those interested in exploring the results of following such an approach.

During my own path into research not following a set standard or model, I found it useful to read previous publications regarding alternative methodologies. As I discuss in chapter 6, I found it helpful to note similar characteristics and concepts between my own research and other theoretical perspectives on alternative methodologies. Lacking confidence at times in my approach, I found that these sources helped give me permission to attempt something similarly different from the norm. I hope that this thesis can be of similar relevance to others who may be struggling in their own contemplations and uses of alternative methodologies.

Connectedly, as I consider and discuss the following of a methodology within research as learning or pedagogy, I also see that this thesis has relevance to an academic audience in helping us to better recognize research as a learning process. Though this is likely something many academics are aware of, overt naming of research as pedagogy is rarer within

publications. Calling research learning can help us recall our humility as academics, and is therefore helpful for widening perspectives on exclusivities and inclusivities of knowledge realms. This message, a main one of the thesis, is particularly relevant for academic conversations looking to expand perspectives on validity of other knowledges and intelligences.

Following on from this, as the thesis is located within the discipline of education, there is another message primarily relevant to audiences interested in education. The outlining of five characterizations of ideal pedagogies would likely be of most interest to this audience. Many of the elements of these characterizations are not new, however. In fact many of them were pulled from individual educational theorists as they appear in the thesis. Where this text offers a unique perspective is in the discussion of the crossovers of ideal characterizations of pedagogy within western academic established theory with those as outlined within the source literature authored by Inuit.

Outside of the elements of the thesis relevant primarily for an academic audience, there are also aspects relevant to audiences with more practical interests. Due to the manner of listening to Inuit sources which was a predominant aspect of my methodology, the thesis offers a unique presentation of issues as promoted by Inuit which would be useful to those interested in issues relevant to Inuit both in Canada and beyond. There are examples of other edited works which have amassed writings authored by Inuit, many of which I have drawn on within the thesis. The inclusion of writings by Inuit within this thesis is more current than other books of this nature. I have incorporated more up-to-date informal writings such as those included within *Inuktitut* magazine or *Nunatsiaq News*. I believe a presentation of these sources around the broad themes of research, colonization and pedagogy would be relevant to an Arctic audience given the nature of self-government and as Inuit regain greater control and autonomy over the land-claim regions within Canada.

Where I have discussed suicide as a challenge which has reached crisis proportions in the Canadian Arctic, also highlighting the interconnected nature of social health challenges in the Arctic, it is quite obvious that there is an inherent urgency to these concerns. As discussed, having lived in the Arctic and experienced first-hand some of the despair, frustration and confusion in reaction to high levels of such challenges, this urgency was a main impetus for this study. As I outlined a number of times but particularly within my discussions of different

factors acting to maintain the high level of these challenges within chapter 7, there is a need for political bodies to better understand the complexities of issues backgrounding and maintaining these conditions. My discussions of the paradoxical nature of essentialisms (that essentialisms are useful but also potentially misleading and ultimately damaging if understood and relied upon in a rigid sense) is useful to such a policy audience looking to address social health challenges in the Arctic. To be clear, I suggest that promotion of rigid identity constructs is difficult for some individuals. Work, therefore, on more overtly deconstructing the notion that identity constructs are stable and immovable could be very helpful for those who are in need of greater freedom in their sense of identity for greater health and well-being. This understanding and main conclusion of this thesis is relevant for those with interests in the contemporary Canadian Arctic. The urgency of the various perspectives regarding social health challenges in the Arctic, well emphasized throughout the thesis through many voices, and many of the more practical aspects of ideal pedagogies for overcoming challenges set in place due to rigid conceptions of identity, are the two aspects of this thesis potentially most influential for a policy audience looking to respond to these challenges.

### **A reflection on conclusions**

The methodology of this thesis has allowed for counter perspectives to speak back to hegemonic stories regarding the Arctic still held as authoritative within various spheres of academic and popular discourses. I have been led to new understandings of difference whereby, in recognizing the falsity of essentialisms but the non-falsity of genuine differences, I have discussed similarities in perspectives on pedagogy. My critiques have brought me to a place where I have contemplated ways of being – or pedagogies – which can be used to continually remind us to set about renewing and recontemplating notions of difference. These understandings and noted themes on ideal pedagogies offer conclusions for this thesis:

- As imagination and emotion are necessary for all creative pursuits, a revaluing of these so-called soft skills could be beneficial, as this could make for more creative work in all disciplines and this could help formal institutional settings better accommodate diverse intelligences and cultures;

- For individuals to be able to find affirming identity constructs through pedagogy, there needs to be tolerance in imaginative freedoms so individuals have space to explore and try on – or imagine – ‘fitting’ identity or cultural constructs;
- Pedagogy considered as a contextualized way of living, rather than a decontextualized activity, better accommodates the finding of identity constructs which ‘fit’ as learning in this way is more intrinsically connected to lives and contexts, not detached from the self;
- Individual freedoms are best tempered through dialogic pedagogical processes, where humility of teacher and learner open the potential that these spaces of learning become settings for transformative learning and renewing contemplations on difference;
- Considering such ways of living as resilience can be helpful particularly in encountering those challenges in life which are symptomatic of over-reliance on essentialisms as the idea that we live by narratives (and the corresponding realizations on the paradox that narratives can be both harmful and affirming) is something which can be taught.

These findings have come through recognizing the crossovers between Inuit and non-Inuit notions of ideal pedagogies. Recognition of relationships between these different perspectives on pedagogy is discussed at length in chapter 11. The connecting and differing points I have observed and documented between these diverse perspectives are also findings of this thesis which are important to review.

Regarding the first characteristic of pedagogy, a revaluing of ‘soft’ skills such as emotion and imagination, I discussed that this was clearly evident within the source literature where it was stressed that imagination is necessary within learning when one is interested in finding creative solutions to a situation. Regarding the need for a similar freedom in creativity with regards identity, which I also discussed as transformative learning, I pointed out that there is less evidence that such a characteristic is emphasized strongly within the source literature. Here I stressed that less rigidity in notions of identity could be helpful for those who are feeling trapped between static identity constructs, a feeling which many in the source literature tied to behaviours such as suicide or alcohol abuse. Where dialogue with humility of both the teacher and learner is emphasized, I found that this was evident within the source

literature. Regarding this third characteristic of pedagogy, I discussed mentoring as a specific dialogic pedagogy with particular relevance for the Arctic context. The fourth characteristic of pedagogy as a contextualized way of living versus a decontextualized activity is clearly evident within Inuit ideal pedagogies as articulated by the source literature where there is great emphasis on the integration of learning with living. Finally, in considering cultivation of resilience through teaching students to negotiate the paradox that essentialisms exist and are necessary but can also be dangerous when relied on rigidly, I identified that the source literature makes very little explicit discussion on a need for care to be taken with essentialisms. I discussed instead that the writings themselves perform such a function in questioning hegemonic essentialisms held more prominently in the west on the Arctic (i.e. authoritative accounts of the Arctic). A more conscious questioning, however, of dominant notions of Inuit identity essentialisms was suggested as potentially very helpful for those who are facing identity confusion and social health problems manifest in the body, such as suicide and substance abuse. These recognized connections between pedagogies discussed by Inuit and those discussed within the adult education literature have come out of listening to commonalities among diverse perspectives, otherwise discussed as a dialogic methodology.

It is important to also emphasize that the usefulness I have found in this dialogic methodology to come to new or deeper understandings across differences is also a significant finding of this thesis and a contribution to debates questioning the usefulness of plurality. Where debates exist whether or not plurality, a tolerance for multiple ways of knowing, is valid for increasing understandings across difference, the connections I have documented within this thesis on ideal pedagogies has helped to convince me of the inherent validity of tolerance for multiple perspectives. Placing faith in pluralism as a valid methodology or pedagogy for coming to new and deeper understandings across difference has freed me to explore and better understand some of the practical implications such connections between Inuit and non-Inuit perspectives of pedagogies can have for shifting or altering rigid notions of identity. This has had the benefit of allowing me to return to contemplate pedagogies which may be of practical use to those looking to respond to social health challenges in the Canadian Arctic context.

I would like to stress the limitations and partiality of these conclusions. Through this research, I have learned to express my belief that it is not through criticism of difference that we reach conclusions on what one way could be rigidly considered as 'correct'. Instead I

have learned that new contemplations and understandings on difference can be gained by following a methodology (or pedagogy) which is flexible, tentative, open and inconclusive. Following a methodology of documenting conversation between different texts, which has been an atypical methodology in that I have not followed a standard set before in the social sciences, has been a risk and therefore has not been without its downfalls. It is obvious, for example, that such a process is actually a false exercise as each writer is so much more than the positionality and perspective offered by the various excerpts I have included in this text. Returning to the assertion that “[p]laying with a text [. . .] is not a dialogue with the other which includes process and the possibility of change” (in Lather, 1993, p. 681), though I encounter misgivings on textual research within chapter 6, explaining how I have chosen a textual site for ethical reasons, I want to emphasize my cognizance on the limitations of such a site. Does textual work offer the possibility of change? Not necessarily, this work is only a doctoral thesis and the conversations within it have not occurred between real bodies. In another piece of writing, Lather (2007, p. 44) hints towards what it is we omit in textual work: “It is one thing to ask whether new voices are being heard, quite another to ask whether voices are hearing themselves and one another fruitfully.” Textual conversation is not actual conversation and there are no guarantees that change can come from such work, but I feel that textual work can be useful in gaining perspective on possibilities for change.

Though I have been critical of rigid conceptualizations throughout, I have also acknowledged the opposite, that continuous flexible and tentative thinking is equally impossible and challenging. The text work – in its singularity – has allowed me to reach positions of clarity. It is through the risk of bringing voices together as a research project that I have been able to learn new aspects regarding research, methodology, dialogue itself, colonization within the Arctic and pedagogy. The ‘safety’ of the text has allowed me to slowly and tentatively think through and work out some of my own questions regarding the influence of stereotypical and rigid conceptualizations of identity upon real bodies. In so doing, it has allowed me to point out connections and differences in thinking on these themes and point towards tangible processes which may be useful for change which I have derived from a respectful listening through reading. In this world where rushing in to save and to heal and to change are common pathways, I think that there are benefits from using textual spaces to more slowly work out some of the intricacies of what it is we are looking to save and to heal and to change when we rush in. There is relevance in listening to texts which are already speaking, and

there is value in honouring the breathing out of “songs that want to be sung” (Ipellie, in Ipellie, 1997, p. 101).

## Appendix 1

Factors, specific to Inuit, contributing to suicide levels as presented by NAHO (2007):

- Lack of coping skills (relationship break-ups frequently trigger suicides by Inuit youth);
- Barriers or lack of access to mental health treatment;
- Loss of control over land and living conditions;
- Socio-economic factors in the community (non-medical determinants) including:
  - high poverty rates; in 2001, the average personal Inuit income was only 66% of the average Canadian's personal income, although food may cost from 2 to 3 times more than in southern Canada
  - housing problems: in 2001, 20% of Inuit households were crowded, compared to less than 2% of non-Aboriginal Canadians
  - low levels of education and literacy; only ½ of Inuit have completed high school
  - lack of employment: in 2006 only 37% of Inuit were satisfied with job opportunities in their communities; in 2001, unemployment rates for Inuit men were nearly 30% higher than for other Canadian men
- Inadequate sanitation and water quality; in one region, over 40% of Inuit consider their drinking water unsafe year-round
- Intergenerational trauma resulting from historical events, for example:
- forced relocations to permanent settlements which ended nomadic life and in some cases, separated extended families completely
  - sled-dog slaughters which impaired Inuit hunters' abilities to provide for their families and obliged them to remain in settlements
  - enforced boarding school attendance or lengthy treatment for tuberculosis or other illnesses in hospitals in southern Canada, which caused damage to family relationships through separation and language loss;
- Loss and/or changes to values, beliefs and lifestyle from various causes; for example, climate change leaves Inuit hunters unable to trust their traditional methods of predicting weather and animal migration patterns;
- Individual history (e.g. experiencing traumatic events such as the early loss of a parent; sexual abuse; experiencing or witnessing violence, etc.);
- Alcohol is frequently cited as a major factor in Aboriginal suicides. However, the Nunavut coroner's report for 1999-2003 and the coroner's data cited in the Health Canada Northwest Territories study for 1994-1996 both report that in the approximately 80 per cent of suicide deaths in which toxicology testing was possible, alcohol was not a factor in approximately 70 per cent of cases;
- Family or caretaker history of suicide, or suicide "clusters", where a number of suicides occur over a short time period.

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