

Autobiographic Narrative in the Drawings
of Napachie and Annie Pootoogook

Karolina Tomaszewska

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By: Karolina Tomaszewska

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_____ Chair
_____Dr. Catherine MacKenzie_____ Examiner
_____Dr. Elaine Cheasley Paterson_____ Examiner
_____Dr. Johanne Sloan_____ Supervisor

Approved by _____Dr. Johanne Sloan_____
Chair of the Department or Graduate Program Director

_____Catherine Wild_____
Dean of Faculty

Date: January 2012

Abstract

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In June of 2005, *Windows on Kinngait* featuring drawings by Annie Pootoogook and Napachie Pootoogook had opened at the Feheley Fine Arts Gallery in Toronto. With this thesis I set out to compare these two art practices, focusing on how each artist approaches issues related to gender and how they tackle the motif of modernity through representations of landscapes (both indoor and outdoor) and objects, all of which convey much about the personal lives of these women. They will be examined in terms of how space, and the things that fill it, are utilized to convey an idea about personal representation. In order to understand the inventive drawing practices developed by Napachie and Annie, I will trace the changing status of drawing as a medium in relation to the printmaking tradition; I will also introduce some other artists from Kinngait (Cape Dorset) who have explored the tension between traditional and contemporary motifs in their work. In theoretical terms, I use Hertha Dawn Wong's scholarship on forms of indigenous autobiography and the postcolonial concept of hybridity (as put forward by Homi Bhabha) to illuminate the 20th-century transformations in Inuit artmaking, as exemplified in the art of Napachie and Annie Pootoogook.

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Introduction

In June of 2005, the exhibition *Windows on Kinngait* featuring drawings by Annie Pootoogook and Napachie Pootoogook opened at Fehleley Fine Arts Gallery in Toronto. This show marked the first time that mother and daughter's works were shown together outside of Kinngait (Cape Dorset). Both artists had contributed to the renowned printmaking project which originally put Kinngait on the international art map, but this exhibition consisted of drawings – sixty by Napachie and about fifty by Annie. The show came three years after Napachie had passed away, and Annie expressed her feelings about this event, saying "I'm very, very happy and very proud that I'm going to be having a show with my mother. I never thought that would be possible."¹ The show at Fehleley Fine Arts coincided with the solo exhibition *Napachie Pootoogook* at the National Art Gallery in Ottawa;² both exhibitions featured work from the same series. At that moment Annie had an upcoming solo exhibition, which took place in Fall 2005 at the Power Plant Gallery in Toronto.

A striking work by Napachie Pootoogook in the Fehleley exhibition is a drawing entitled (Fig.1) *Throwing Away Prized Possessions* (1997/98). Three figures appear in the drawing; a man stands by and looks while two huddled women are disposing of their personal belongings into a hole in the ground. The women are identified by their long braids and women's parka, the amautik, which is fashioned with a large pouch at the back designed to carry a baby or young child. The drawing is mostly monochromatic as it is rendered in black ink with minimal accents of colored pencil. The use of line dominates the work; each figure is outlined against a rather sparse background consisting of white space, grounded only by the textured terrain underneath their feet. The explanatory syllabic text

¹ Tina Rose, "Mother, daughter art team capture contemporary Cape Dorset," *Nunatsiaq News*, June 24, 2005, accessed February 6, 2011, http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/archives/50624/news/nunavut/50624_11.html.

² This was a traveling exhibit organized by the Winnipeg Art Gallery. It was at the Winnipeg Art Gallery from June 1-September 19, 2004.

underneath the image translated into English explains, *They were ordered to throw away their possessions when Christianity arrived. That's what they used to do. The women, especially, would throw out their beaded embroidery even though they wanted to keep it.*

A notable work by Annie Pootoogook in the Fehleley exhibition is the prismacolor drawing entitled (Fig.2) *Watching Jerry Springer* (2002/03) in which an individual is lying on the couch pointing a remote control at a television set featuring a scantily clad, bleached blonde woman giving an obscene gesture back at the viewer. The scene is sparsely furnished with various showcases of modern life dispersed around the room. A phone hangs on the wall beside a thermostat and wall clock. A lone, green potted houseplant stands on the floor next to the television set. The largest piece of furniture is two gigantic speakers flanking a rather elaborate entertainment unit.

Differences between the two art practices are immediately evident. Both these drawings portray an intimate view into the lived experience of their creators, but Napachie records her autobiographic narrative by depicting events from the past and inscribing syllabics directly alongside her drawing whereas Annie documents her life through the depiction of everyday scenes and objects, which often include elements of North American pop culture. With this thesis I set out to compare these two art practices, focusing on how each artist approaches issues related to gender and how they tackle the motif of modernity through representations of landscapes (both indoor and outdoor) and objects, all of which convey much about the personal lives of these women. They will be examined in terms of how space, and the things that fill it, are utilized to convey an idea about personal representation. In order to understand the inventive drawing practices developed by Napachie and Annie, I will trace the changing status of drawing as a medium in relation to the printmaking tradition; I will also introduce some other artists from Kinngait (Cape Dorset) who have explored the tension between traditional and contemporary motifs in their work. In theoretical terms, I use Hertha Dawn Wong's scholarship on

forms of indigenous autobiography and the postcolonial concept of hybridity (as put forward by Homi Bhabha) to illuminate the 20th-century transformations in Inuit artmaking, as exemplified in the art of Napachie and Annie Pootoogook.

This project is being undertaken at the moment when the very question of what it means to make “modern Inuit” or “contemporary Inuit” art is being reconsidered by a number of scholars in the field. For instance, an important exhibition and accompanying catalogue, *Inuit Modern*, were produced in April 2011 by the Art Gallery of Ontario. This project set out to trace “the artistic, social, political, and cultural transformation of the North over the past century” by focusing on questions of colonial influences, globalization, and artistic agency. Heather Igloliorte looks at the precursors of ‘art as cultural resistance’ and cites Napachie Pootoogook and later Annie as embodiments of a changing Inuit style. Ingo Hessel discusses how the autobiographical drawings of Pitseolak Ashoona and Napachie and Annie Pootoogook have gone through thematic shifts over the span of generations. This follows on the heels of a series of articles published in *Inuit Art Quarterly*³, which discuss autobiography and gender as exemplified by Napachie Pootoogook and also personal realities as presented by Annie Pootoogook. This thesis builds on ideas brought up initially by the aforementioned scholars but delves deeper into discussions of autobiographic narrative and gender while exploring how these themes encounter modernity. It takes into account previous writings on autobiography but expands on the topic through a precise case study, adding to the discussion of previous scholars.

This exhibition serves as the starting point for this thesis, which will examine and compare the art practices of mother and daughter. I will explore both the similarities and differences in these bodies of work. It is important to note right from the start that the works in question are drawings, and

³ A particularly relevant article to this discussion is from Janet Catherine Berlo’s “Autobiographical Impulses and Female Identity in the Drawings of Napachie Pootoogook,” *Inuit Art Quarterly* 8, 4 (1993):4-12. Also relevant; James Sinclair Bytes, “Breaking New Ground: The Graphic Work of Shuvina Ashoona, Janet Kigusiuq, Victoria Mamnguqsualuk, and Annie Pootoogook,” *Inuit Art Quarterly* 19, 3&4 (2004):58 and Leslie Boyd Ryan, “‘Mannaruluujujuq’ (Not So Long Ago): The Memories of Napachie Pootoogook,” *Inuit Art Quarterly* 20, 3 (2005):9.

that this art form is only beginning to be analyzed in terms that are quite different from the well-known print tradition. Perhaps most importantly, I will be highlighting the question of autobiography in relation to both artists. When Napachie started to include scenes drawn from her own life-story in her art, around 1998, this explicit autobiographical emphasis was a new attribute. By the time her daughter became an artist, the autobiographical dimension had changed in certain ways. Looking at the drawings featured in *Windows on Kinngait*, it becomes evident that there are radical differences from one generation to the next and it is a worthwhile comparison and contrast to see how similar subject matter was handled differently. Napachie's drawings are a mix of personal experiences and those belonging to fellow community members. Most drawings were set outside, on the land. The narrative arises from the characters depicted, their actions, and the syllabic explanations included on the work. Annie also drew on personal experiences but her drawings were usually set indoors, within places that were familiar to her. The sense of narrative in Annie's artworks is linked to the objects and locales that are created as part of the scene. Both women also portrayed the unique experiences of women. Napachie's scenes are usually quite dramatic, relating to specific people and events whereas the bulk of Annie's drawings show more common, everyday activities such as getting ready for work.

In order to examine the shifting concept of autobiography in these Inuit women's lives, I will be drawing on Hertha Dawn Wong's text *Sending My Heart Back Across the Years*⁴, which expands the definition of autobiography to include non-written forms of personal narrative and non-Western concepts of self. Wong argues that indigenous peoples have often recorded their personal narratives using methods that are not traditionally considered autobiographic – such as oral traditions, pictographs, as well as performances. Wong suggests an expansion in the definition of autobiography to include different types of self-narration. This is particularly compelling for the study of the

⁴ Hertha Dawn Wong, *Sending My Heart Back Across the Years Tradition and Innovation in Native American Autobiography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

Pootogooks' drawings because it offers a new framework within which the drawings can be looked at. Not only are the drawings highly personal but they serve as records of lives experiencing cultural change. This framework situates the Pootogooks' art in the realm of scholars discussing modern and contemporary art without the need to classify their art as exclusively Inuit or aboriginal.

Napachie Pootogook (1938-2002) was born at the island of Saarruq. She was the only daughter of Pitseolak and Ashoona. Pitseolak was the mother of seventeen children, of which only 6 survived. Napachie moved to Kinngait as a young woman in her 20's. She and husband Eegyvudluk were one of the first Inuit families to take up residence in the new community. Following in the footsteps of her mother, Pitseolak Ashoona, she took up drawing in the late 1950's. Napachie has produced over 5 000 original drawings of which approximately 50 have been turned into prints in the Cape Dorset annual print collection. Certain themes related to local history, customs and folklore recur in both her prints and drawings. From 1998 until her death in December 2002, Napachie worked on an autobiographical series of drawings.⁵ This series depicts her early life growing up in traditional camps on south Baffin Island, as well as her later years as mother and wife. She drew personal stories and also those told to her by her mother about fellow members of her Inuit community. Referring to her work, Napachie said,

I have noticed a change in my style of drawing. Back in the early days I used to draw what I had heard from my mother, the things she used to talk about from long ago. I didn't ask my mother's opinion of what I was going to draw, but when I heard stories from my mother, I drew them the way I pictured them. I drew what I had heard about. Nowadays, Jimmy [Manning⁶] asked me to start drawing what I had seen, what I had started seeing nowadays. So that's how I

⁵ Patricia E. Bovey, introduction to *Napachie Pootogook*, by Leslie Boyd Ryan, et al. (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 2004), 9.

⁶ Jimmy Manning worked as a buyer for the West Baffin Eskimo Cooperative from 1972 until 1992. He also served on the board of directors and worked as the manager of the Kinngait printmaking studios for almost 40 years.

started drawing things like the one with the new accordion. It's what I've seen. It's not what I've heard about.⁷

In what can be called the “autobiographical series” of about 300 drawings, Napachie approached difficult themes. Some drawings featured happy moments from camp life such as dancing, playing games and eating meals, whereas others were much darker, introducing imagery related to spousal abuse and arranged marriage. There are drawings that depict infanticide as well as people in the community suffering from mental illness. Napachie also drew elders, leaders and shamans and recorded their stories in her work. These are narrative drawings that included syllabic text, to further elaborate on the illustrated representations.⁸ Leslie Boyd Ryan, co-curator of the *Napachie Pootoogook* solo exhibition at the Winnipeg Art Gallery, notes that,

Motivated in part by her awareness of her own failing health, Napachie decided to illustrate these stories and incorporate into each drawing a section of syllabic text to explain the circumstances and the people depicted. She had never done anything quite like this before and she made it clear that “if people were interested” she had more stories she could tell.⁹

The syllabic text in Napachie's drawings, and lack of in Annie's drawings will be examined and discussed in terms of autobiographical narrative within this project.

Annie Pootoogook was born in Kinngait in 1969 to parents Napachie and Eegyvuđluk Pootoogook and took up drawing in the late 1990's. Annie had a more modern upbringing than her mother Napachie and grandmother Pitseolak; by the time Annie began drawing, the nomadic lifestyle

⁷ Jean Blodgett, *In Cape Dorset We Do It This Way: Three Decades of Inuit Printmaking* (Kleinburg: McMichael Canadian Art Collection, 1991), 121.

⁸ There are approximately 300 drawings in the autobiographical series by Napachie Pootoogook, the bulk of which is owned by the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative. In 2000, Leslie Boyd Ryan formerly with Dorset Fine Arts (Toronto) received a grant from the Canada Council program *Grants for Aboriginal Writers, Storytellers and Publishers* to conduct interviews with Napachie Pootoogook and translate the Inuktitut inscriptions on her drawings.

⁹ Leslie Boyd Ryan, “‘Mannarulujujuq’ (Not So Long Ago): The Memories of Napachie Pootoogook,” *Inuit Art Quarterly* 20 (2005).

of her ancestors was no longer a reality but instead, a memory that she learned about from her mother who also, in part, learned about it from her mother. In her drawings, we see that people in her community have satellite television, providing access to American programming such as the Jerry Springer talk show and the CNN news channel. They eat “Hungry Man” frozen dinners and watch erotic movies. Annie’s work is filled with candor much like her mother’s, and yet the autobiographical elements of her artworks are interwoven with the marked presence of commercialized products and pop culture. Commenting on her own work, Annie states, “I never thought that this is traditional Inuit way, and this is white style. I never thought that because I just draw what I see.”¹⁰ Annie’s comment that there was no barrier between Inuit style and “white” is an indication that the situation had changed for her generation. Gerald McMaster calls this style of drawing “descriptive or critical realism....tradition often comes up against modernity.”¹¹ While the clear distinction may not be immediately obvious to Annie herself, the enduring legacy of an Inuit style permeates her drawings and is a recognizable characteristic.

Printmaking and Drawing

Inuit art today does not look as it did fifty years ago. The last 50 years have been tremendously life-changing, innovative and productive for the community of Kinngait, Nunavut. Kinngait is located at the southern tip of Baffin Island in the Quikiqtaaluk region of Nunavut. It has garnered a great deal of attention for all the art, artists and innovations that have emerged from the community and continue to flourish there, so much so that it is sometimes referred to as the capital of Inuit Art.¹² Experiments in printmaking began in late 1957 with the assistance of James Houston, who at the time was the

¹⁰ Nancy Campbell, *Annie Pootoogook* (Charlottetown: Illingworth Kerr Gallery, 2007).

¹¹ Gerald McMaster, “Inuit Modern: An Introduction” in *Inuit Modern: The Samuel and Esther Sarick Collection*, ed. Gerald McMaster (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 2011), 8.

¹² The introductory remarks at www.capedorset.ca read “Welcome to the Municipality of Cape Dorset, the Capital of Inuit Art.” < <http://www.capedorset.ca/en/index.asp>>

Northern Services Officer for the Department of Northern Affairs and Natural Resources. The government thought it would be beneficial to organize a community-owned cooperative, which would help build a new economy and organize a way to market traditional industries as well as artistic activities. The West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative¹³ was first incorporated in 1959 with the original incorporation documents signed by Kananginak Pootoogook, Iyola Kingwatsiuk, Joanasie Salomonie, Lukta Quiatsuq, and Lukta's father Kiakshuk. The Co-op would operate a store to provide an alternative shopping destination to the Hudson's Bay Company which has held the monopoly of trade goods for centuries. The first president of the Co-op, Kananginak Pootoogook remembers how he first heard about the idea of the Co-op through James Houston and Joanasie Salomonie¹⁴: "I began to think that a co-op would be better than the traders, and ... if we could have a co-op we would have two stores here and that would be better, for the prices of things would be lower."¹⁵

The Hudson's Bay Company was not thrilled with the competition and complained that the government was subsidizing their competitors, at which point the government removed itself from the direct involvement of Inuit Art promotion.¹⁶ Co-op federations were created to allow small co-ops to assist one another. The Canadian Arctic Producers (CAP) was the first federation created in 1965 to act as an intermediary between remote northern co-ops and southern galleries with Alma Houston, wife of James Houston, as its first director.¹⁷ In 1978, after several years of joint marketing within the

¹³ The Co-op was first incorporated as the West Baffin Sports Fishing Co-operative for which the original incorporation documents went astray. This allowed for the changing of the name to the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative, which remains to this day. There were some discussions that took place about changing the word Eskimo to Inuit but no formal attempt has yet been made. The association is also locally known as the Kinngait Co-op.

¹⁴ Joanasie Salomonie, nephew of Kananginak, was one of the original signatories of the Co-op's incorporation documents. He also acted as an interpreter, having learned English while spending several years living in southern Canada at a tuberculosis sanatorium.

¹⁵ Leslie Boyd Ryan, "Titiqtugarvik, The Place To Draw," in *Cape Dorset Prints A Retrospective : fifty years of printmaking at the Kinngait Studios*, ed. Leslie Boyd Ryan (San Francisco : Pomegranate, 2007), 31.

¹⁶ Leslie Boyd Ryan, "Titiqtugarvik, The Place To Draw," 32.

¹⁷ The Canadian Arctic Co-operative Federation was the next federation to appear in 1972. In 1981 Canadian Arctic Producers Co-operative Limited and Canadian Arctic Co-operative Federation Limited joined together to form Arctic Co-operatives Limited (ACL), which remains to this day.

co-op federation, the West Baffin Co-operative ventured out on its own. It established its own marketing and distribution division, known as Dorset Fine Arts, which is run out of offices located in Toronto. The printmaking studios, known as Kinngait Studios, are the longest running print studios in Canada.¹⁸ Fifty some years after launching their inaugural print collection, the National Art Gallery in Ottawa, the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto along with many other public and private locales are acknowledging the efforts and immense creativity that comes out of the studios.¹⁹ Membership in the Co-op continues to grow and represents the majority of adults in the community.²⁰

The history of drawing in Kinngait is relevant to an understanding of the dramatic change that has occurred in the span of fifty years. There are several stories that are told about the beginning of the printmaking program in Kinngait. The most famous tale tells of how James Houston demonstrated printmaking by using incised walrus tusk and office ink to demonstrate how an image, specifically the image on his package of cigarettes, could be repeated over and over again without the need to redraw it.²¹ This tale marks the beginning of what is now a world-renowned printmaking program. Early prints were the result of incised drawings or low relief carvings on ivory, stone, antler and whalebone.²² It was essentially this printmaking program that generated a need for an image bank of drawings. Subject matter for the drawings changed over the years, however, and it is important to understand that the work of Napachie and Annie evolved in relation to a whole community of image-makers. I will therefore introduce some of the key figures in the Kinngait artistic sphere, to demonstrate how the

¹⁸ Leslie Boyd Ryan, "Titiqtugarvik, The Place To Draw," 33.

¹⁹ The National Art Gallery in Ottawa held the exhibition *Uuturautiit: Cape Dorset Celebrates 50 Years of Printmaking* (16 October 2009—17 January 2010) and the Art Gallery of Ontario exhibited *Arctic Spirit: 50th Anniversary of Cape Dorset's Kinngait Studios* (18 July 2009—8 November 2009).

²⁰ The stipulations to apply for membership are that one live in Cape Dorset and be over 19 years old. All applications are then reviewed by a board of directors. For a more in depth explanation of the Co-ops share dividend and profit distribution turn to Leslie Boyd Ryan's "Titiqtugarvik, The Place To Draw" in *Cape Dorset Prints A Retrospective: fifty years of printmaking at the Kinngait Studios* eds. Leslie Boyd Ryan. San Francisco : Pomegranate, 2007.

²¹ The whole account is told by James Houston in *Confessions of an Igloo Dweller* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1995), 263.

²² Dorothy LaBarge, *From Drawing to Print: Perception and Process in Cape Dorset Art* (Calgary: The Museum, 1986).

tension between traditional and contemporary motifs plays itself out in different ways throughout this extensive body of work.

Kenojuak Ashevak, believed to be the first Kinngait woman to start drawing, remembers asking James Houston about what she should draw. Ashevak says, “I asked him what kind of a drawing am I going to make. And then he just told me to draw anything that comes into my mind—it could be anything”²³ Pitseolak Ashoona, mother of Napachie, also had questions relating to subject matter with which she too would turn to James Houston for advice. In her autobiography, *Pitseolak: Pictures Out of My Life*, she states, “Jim Houston told me to draw the old ways, and I’ve been drawing the old ways and the monsters ever since.”²⁴ In the early days of printmaking, drawing the “old ways” was a common recurring subject. Animals, birds, creatures from the artists’ imagination and everyday activities such as hunting and camp life were common themes. Jean Blodgett remarks that, “It was the older generation especially who looked back at life as it had been out on the land in the years before their move into the community. In these works they recorded the past—which was quickly disappearing—with a sense of pride and nostalgia.”²⁵ Early artists at the printmaking studios included Parr (1893-1969), Pudlo Pudlat (1916-1992) Pitseolak Ashoona (1904-1983), Kenojuak Ashevak (1927-) and Kananginak Pootoogook (1935-2010). Each artist was able to find their own unique niche, style and approach to depicting either traditional, contemporary or sometimes, both, types of motifs within the constraints of the collective printmaking process.

Parr was a very early adopter of the printmaking and drawing program. His style is much different from any artist that came after him. Parr’s use of color is very limited. Most of his work is composed of heavy, sometimes hatched or layered, lines that create texture over mostly flat areas.

²³ Jean Blodgett, “The Search for Subject,” in *Cape Dorset Prints A Retrospective : fifty years of printmaking at the Kinngait Studios*, ed. Leslie Boyd Ryan (San Francisco : Pomegranate, 2007), 179.

²⁴ Jean Blodgett, “The Search for Subject,” 179.

²⁵ Jean Blodgett, “The Search for Subject,” 179-184.

(Fig.16) *My People* (1961), (Fig.17) *Walrus Hunting* (1963) and (Fig.18) *Geese and Man* (1964) are works that demonstrate Parr's distinctive, heavy-handed, style. His subject matter is comparable to that of Pitseolak Ashoona and Pudlo Pudlat, focusing mainly on chronicling traditional Inuit life. Being a hunter himself, a lot of his work focuses on the act of hunting as well as animals that are popular to hunt. He sticks to fairly flat depictions, showing his subjects either fully frontally or in profile. Parr's style is very distinctive and his motifs are very traditional in relation to the community of image makers.

Pudlo Pudlat was one of the first Kinngait artists to represent nontraditional subject matter in his drawings and prints. Among landscapes and scenes of daily Inuit life, Pudlo would also include airplanes. Blodgett remarks;

In 1976 he created quite a stir in the Inuit art world with his print *Aeroplane*. His departure from "traditional" subject matter was criticized by Inuit art purists, but in fact airplanes are more common in Cape Dorset than another favorite subject of Pudlo's—the musk-ox.²⁶

Pudlat's inclusion of contemporary motifs came as a change in comparison to the traditional motifs that were abundant among the community.

Pitseolak Ashoona is another talented artist from Kinngait. Her work is equally distinctive but is informed by another sensibility. A lot of Pitseolak's work focuses on chronicling the traditional way of life. (Fig.8) *Tattooed Woman* (1963) is an example where the composition is based around the use of line. (Fig.9) *Dream of Motherhood* (1969) includes elements from daily Inuit life such as the ulu, and the woman's parka, the amautik. While quite graphic and descriptive, this print from Pitseolak also shows her humorous side, which makes an appearance in quite a bit of her work. A 1974 felt tip drawing, (Fig.10) *Summer Camp Scene*, is typical of Pitseolak's elaborate depictions of camp life. The drawing is incredibly precise including minute details such as stitching on the tents and the varied roles

²⁶ Jean Blodgett, "The Search for Subject," 190.

individuals take on in the camp. Much like Kenojuak, Pitseolak's motifs are relegated to the traditional realm in terms of style and subject matter. Pitseolak is an important figure, specifically in Inuit art history, because she was the first Inuk to have her recorded oral history turn into a biography of her life.²⁷

Kenojuak is most well known for her motifs of fantastical birds, especially owls, but also other animal forms such as rabbits, dogs, bears and fish. Other subjects for Kenojuak included spirits and transforming creatures. Her work is often very vibrant and graphic, filling the entire composition.

Rabbit Eating Seaweed (Fig.3) was her first and only print included in the inaugural 1959 Dorset Print Collection²⁸. Patricia Fehely, of Fehely Fine Arts, comments on the imagery in Dorset's first print collection,

Unlike many of the other narrative or descriptive images in the collection, Kenojuak's print astonished southern audiences with its fresh style, its unusual subject matter, and an overall dreamlike character in which stylized elements are combined in a cohesive composition. In this, her first print image, Kenojuak's distinct and definitive style was already evident.²⁹

Rabbit Eating Seaweed is done in varying shades of blue, almost turquoise. The abstracted seaweed spreads, quite organically, across the whole composition. It is then grounded by a rather realistic rabbit in the upper left corner, which serves to unify and balance the whole piece.

Kenojuak's 1960 print *The Enchanted Owl* (Fig. 4) is her most famous and recognizable print, having been reproduced on a six-cent postage stamp in 1970. Her work was featured again on Canadian postage in both 1990 and 1993. *The Enchanted Owl* has radiating feathers that stem from the owl's head and tail, growing to fill the entire composition with their fluidity. More recent work from

²⁷ Dorothy Harley Eber, *Pitseolak: Pictures Out of My Life*, (Toronto: Oxford University, 1971).

²⁸ Kenojuak's work continues to fetch high prices at auction. *Rabbit Eating Seaweed* (17/30) sold for \$21 600 at Waddington's May 2011 Inuit Art Auction.

²⁹ Patricia Fehely, "Tradition and Innovation," in *Cape Dorset Prints A Retrospective: fifty years of printmaking at the Kinngait Studios*, ed. Leslie Boyd Ryan (San Francisco: Pomegranate, 2007), 77.

Kenojuak employs a similar style, albeit a more expansive use of color. (Fig.5) *Luminous Char* (2008), (Fig.6) *Observant Owl* (2009) bear a resemblance to her earlier work, yet also show a mastering of the medium. New techniques in printmaking allow for the addition of texture and luminous, gradation of color. In (Fig.7) *The Light Within*, (2005) the organic, abstracted animal forms appear to be in movement, integrating themselves with one another to create an elaborate visual effect. Kenojuak continues to create work exhibiting traditional motifs to this day. Her prints are easily recognizable and sought after by collectors of “traditional” Inuit art.³⁰

Kananginak Pootoogook has been involved with the printmaking studio since its inception. He had a particular interest in drawing Arctic animals in a very realist style and was particularly adept at depicting many species of birds. Having been a hunter and trapper before becoming a printmaker, Kananginak had an intimate knowledge of animal anatomy and behavior. Ingo Hessel, curator of a Kananginak Pootoogook solo exhibition at the Museum of Inuit Art in Toronto, remarked how; “You could tell how much he understood animal behaviour...It wasn’t simply the details, but the spirit and intelligence of the animals in his drawings. You feel like the subjects are looking you, as much as you’re looking at them.”³¹ Kananginak’s (Fig.11) *Arctic Mures* (2007) and (Fig.12) *Steadfast Herd* (2007) are examples where Kananginak’s knowledge of animals becomes quite apparent. Both prints depict a group of animals; Kananginak captured both the group dynamic showing interaction but also, individualism within the group. (Fig.13) *Wise Guys* (2010) and (Fig.14) *Evening Shadow* (2010) are examples of birds with personality. Both prints are owls but not one owl is the same. Kananginak was able to capture their individual personality through the way he portrayed the eyes and demeanor. While arctic animals were a favorite subject, Kananginak also drew things from his surroundings that were

³⁰ Remarks by Nancy Campbell at “Sanaugaq: Things Made by Hand,” symposium at University of Toronto Art Centre, Tuesday 5 April 2011.

³¹ Sarah Rogers, “Inuit art legend Kananginak Pootoogook dies at 75,” in *Nunatsiaq Online*. 28 November 2010, accessed February 13, 2011, http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/98789_inuit_art_legend_kananginak_pootoogook_dies_at_75/.

traces of the modern world such as tourists, RCMP fully clad in uniform and modern machinery like motorboats, rifles and ski-doo's. (Fig.15) *Boat on the Shore* (2008) is a fine example of the precision Kananginak took in rendering the details of a boat and mooring equipment.

He was a pioneer of a certain kind of Inuit art that sought to address more contemporary concerns, as opposed to producing romantic images that reflect a purely traditional (and increasingly outdated) image of northern life," said the Marion Scott Gallery's Robert Kardosh, who curated the artist's recent Vancouver solo show, held during the Winter Olympics. "His work deals with such topics as the introduction of alcohol and modern machinery. In many ways, he paved the way for other contemporary northern artists, such as Oviloo Tunnillie and Annie Pootoogook (Kananginak's niece), who have similarly pursued challenging themes in their work.³²

Within the work of Kananginak there is a tension between traditional and contemporary motifs.

Because of his draftsman like skills, Kananginak was able to switch between the two styles, sometimes incorporating elements of both. This was a major shift compared to the other image makers within the community who started and continued with traditional subjects and motifs. This shift was significant among the community and specifically influenced Kananginak's niece, Annie Pootoogook.

This list of early artists is a sampling of the type of art and subject matter that was being produced by artists from the Kinngait studios. This history is important to see how the images of Napachie and Annie Pootoogook are compellingly different and how they evolved based on the type of motifs that came prior to their work. Their contemporaries approached the tension between traditional and contemporary motifs but both Napachie and Annie took their work to a whole new level of contemporaneity. Other communities took up drawing and printmaking shortly after the printmaking studios in Dorset took off and many great works and artists continue to come out of Ulukhaktok

³² Kevin Griffin, "Kananginak Pootoogook: Pioneering Inuit Artist Dies," in *The Vancouver Sun*, 26 November 2010, accessed January 8, 2011, <http://communities.canada.com/vancouver/blogs/cultureseen/archive/2010/11/26/kananginak-pootoogook-pioneering-inuit-artist-dies.aspx>.

(Holman Island), Qamani'tuaq (Baker Lake) and Pangniqtuuq (Pangnirtung)³³. From these examples, the overall feel and look of the early Kinngait drawing and printmaking collective can be discerned. The themes, while varied, are quite similar. Most of the artists incorporate arctic animals and Inuit life as their main subject matter. In the most traditional pictures, even the chronicling of daily life is done from a distanced point of view. In such cases we see a hunter with an animal, but not necessarily *this specific* hunter on *this specific* hunt. However, we have seen that many artists found ways to engage with contemporary life, and to incorporate traces of non-traditional culture into their image-making. Interestingly enough, it is worthwhile to point out that it was in the men's art that 'non-traditional' imagery first made an appearance. Artists like Pudlo and Kananginak integrated modern visions into otherwise conventional scenes. Napachie and Annie's images extend and exaggerate this tendency, which is all the more unique because it is mostly unprecedented by women from their artistic circle. While they too chronicle daily life, they use specific details of their immediate environments to do so. The people in their images are quite explicitly their family, friends, and members of the community. The places that are depicted are places they frequent, such as the Co-op, the print studio, the grocery store, the post office and even the inside of the pre-fabricated homes which many residents inhabit.

The changing status of drawing

Within the co-op system, prior to the early 1980's, drawings were seen as preparatory works that would eventually and ideally be reworked into prints, however, only a limited number of drawings could be turned into prints. Some drawings are characteristically more accommodating to the printmaking process, as is explained by Terry Ryan who from 1960 onwards held the role of manager of the studios:

³³ Some early artists coming out of Ulukhaktok include Mark Emerak Helen Kalvak, and Agnes Nanogak. Qamani'tuaq early artists include Luke Anguhadluq, Jessie Oonark, Myra Kukiiyaut, and Simon Tookoome. Pangniqtuuq artists include Elisapee Ishulutaq, Tommy Nuvaqirq and Lipa Pitsiuk.

In some cases the original work was simply too complicated as a linear design to entertain it as a stonecut, and therefore you either took liberties and made it into a stencil, or some parts were eliminated—which was a decision of the printmaker. But given a wealth of drawings, more often than not you simply didn't use that work.³⁴

Drawings themselves only began to gain a separate audience in the 1980's when various exhibitions focused on drawings but also the relationship between drawing and print.³⁵ Judith Nasby remarks how drawings are “the most direct and unencumbered expression of one individual”³⁶ The draftsman, the stonecutter and finally the printer can be one person but most likely it is three different individuals. In the case of a print, each collaborator's individual contribution is therefore difficult to gauge because of the complexity of the process.

In the 1960's a new medium of engraving and etching was introduced at the Kinngait studios. This allowed artists to work directly onto the plate, which could subsequently be printed eliminating the need for an intermediary stonecutter. Some artists were immediate supporters of the new medium while others did not take it up whole-heartedly.³⁷ In 1972 lithography was introduced as yet another printing technology. With this method, artists would often create primary drawings for compositional

³⁴ Jean Blodgett, *Cape Dorset We Do It This Way: Three Decades of Inuit Printmaking*, 29. Terry Ryan worked as the general manager (1960-2000) and later director (2000-2008) of Kinngait Studios, which was founded in 1959. He has received the Order of Canada for his support of Inuit Art. He is winner of a 2010 Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts from the Canada Council for the Arts.

³⁵ Some touring exhibitions included Art Gallery of Ontario's *North Baffin Drawings* (1986) and the Art Gallery of Windsor's *Vital Vision: Drawings by Annaqtuusi* (1986). Some exhibitions that looked at the correlation between the original drawing and subsequent print included The Winnipeg Art Gallery's *Baker Lake Prints and Print Drawings* (1983) as well as the Glenbow Museum's *From Drawing to Print, Perception and Process in Cape Dorset Art* (1986). At the same time Marion Jackson produced a dissertation analyzing Inuit drawings from the community of Baker Lake as an art form. Marion Jackson, “Baker Lake Inuit Drawings: A Study in the Evolution of Artistic Self-Consciousness,” PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1985.

³⁶ Judith Nasby, et al., *Contemporary Inuit Drawings = Dessins Inuits Contemporains* (Guelph: Macdonald Stewart Art Centre, 1989), 1.

³⁷ Kiakshuk, Kenojuak, Pitseolak, and Kananginak, among others continued to create drawings for stonecuts and prints while experimenting with the new medium as well.

purposes³⁸ but then could also draw directly onto the stone if they so chose, enabling a greater vividness of color. This changed the overall look of prints as it brightened the color palettes.

Patricia Feheley of Feheley Fine Arts remarked,

The reaction of the collectors in the south was not overwhelming. These new prints did not look or feel like the expected print image from Cape Dorset. While the subject matter did not change greatly, the texture was less prominent, the colors brighter, and the compositions more complicated and layered. They certainly did not bear a great resemblance to the iconic stonecuts of the 1960's³⁹

This unenthusiastic reaction to changing styles recalls ongoing reflections on tradition and authenticity. Ruth B. Phillips and Christopher B. Steiner examine both in *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds*.⁴⁰ They remark how,

...until recently, both art historians and anthropologists have resoundingly rejected most commoditized objects as spurious on two grounds: (1) stylistic hybridity, which conflicts with essentialist notions of the relationship between style and culture, and (2) their production for an external market, which conflicts with widespread ideas of authenticity.⁴¹

Discourse on authenticity and tradition is something widespread that comes up again and again during discussions of art in relation to postcolonial culture. Inuit art has for a long time come under criticism for being produced specifically for an outside, commercial market.⁴² Janet Catherine Berlo remarks how,

³⁸ An example of artist Helen Kalvak from Holman describing her working process is as follows, "Kalvak used her hands for placement of animals and figures in her compositions. She was composing with her hands and fingers in various positions to get a feeling of what the composition could be...No drawing or marks were made in paper before going through these rituals of placing her hands on the paper." in Janet Catherine Berlo, "Helen Kalvak (1901-1984) Undisputed Artistic Royalty," in *Drawing & Printmaking at Holman, Inuit Art Quarterly* 10, 3 (1995): 24-25.

³⁹ Patricia Feheley. "Tradition and Innovation," 84.

⁴⁰ Ruth B. Phillips and Christopher B. Steiner, *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

⁴¹ Ruth B. Phillips and Christopher B. Steiner, "Art, Authenticity and Baggage of Cultural Encounter," in *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds*, Ruth Phillips and Christopher Steiner, eds., (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999). 9.

⁴² For more information on financial considerations in relation to Inuit art turn to Shannon Bagg's, "*Without carving how would I survive?*" *Economic motivation and its significance in contemporary Inuit art*. Master's thesis, Ottawa: Carleton University, 1997.

The fiction maintained for the general public is that of a special, unmediated relationship between the ‘pristine’ indigenous artist and the purchaser of the print. Presumably, this fantasy would be ruined by acknowledging that the economy of art making is a transitive one between northern artist and southern patron and that this fact is central to modern life. Most prints retain an unacculturated look, although they are made by modern citizens of the Canadian Arctic, some of whom have traveled extensively and almost all of whom have been exposed to southern ways for their entire adult lives.⁴³

The question that arises is who is authenticity important for? Is it the consumers and patrons of the art or members of the community that are creating it? What is considered authentic and by whose terms is it actually defined? These investigations are worthwhile considerations when looking specifically at Inuit drawings and prints and how they have come a long way since their humble beginnings. Through the drawings of Napachie and Annie Pootoogook we can see how they negotiate tradition and authenticity and make it essentially their own. Through the advances that have been made with the printmaking medium, the aesthetic of both drawing and print has changed immensely. The new methods of printmaking allowed for a more fluid use of color and line and did not have the same rigid, blocky feel of the stonecut. The Kinngait printmaking studios continued to develop and experiment with new printmaking techniques throughout the years. An ongoing guest artist program encouraged experimentation with various mediums (printmaking but also new media). Artists from the south were invited to the Kinngait studios to either work alongside current artists or provide workshops on their specific artistic niche.⁴⁴ In the age of computers and high speed internet, printmaking endeavors and processes have changed quite a bit. The Inuktitut word for proofing is *uuturaqtu*, which means, "to try different things."⁴⁵ With Adobe Photoshop the print development process can be reworked, broken

⁴³ Janet Catherine Berlo, "Drawing (upon) the Past: Negotiating Identities in Inuit Graphic Arts Production," in *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999) 188.

⁴⁴ Some notable artists that came to the studios included K.M. Graham, Toni Onley, Les Levine, Joyce Wieland. More information on visiting artists and their impact can be found in Wallace Brannen's "Lithography: Catalyst for Change" in *Cape Dorset Prints* and online at Feheley Fine Arts.

<<http://feheleyfinearts.com/gallery/exhibitions/MixedMedia09/index.shtml>>

⁴⁵ Dorset Fine Arts. <http://dorsetfinearts.com/prints.php>

down into layers, and colors can be changed and decided on all on a screen within minutes.⁴⁶ This is quite the drastic change from the labor-intensive proofing method of test printing colors and layers individually.

Nevertheless, most prints start out as drawings and despite the abundance of printmaking methods that are available for consumption within Kinngait studios some drawings simply are not conducive to the printmaking medium. John A. Westren points out how, “”The drawing is the first idea. It is personal, intimate, uninhibited.”⁴⁷

The drawings of Napachie and Annie are not so obviously locked into the logic of the printmaking process, which makes them such a compelling object of study. Feheley notes how Napachie’s drawings, “Full of detail, covered in language, and monochromatic, the images did not lend themselves to the print medium.”⁴⁸ Annie’s drawings are often full scenes that fill an entire page with minute details, which work well as drawings and do not necessarily translate onto a print block. The characteristics of what make a good print and drawing are decidedly different. While both Napachie and Annie have had prints printed, it is truly Annie’s drawings that have propelled her into the contemporary art scene.⁴⁹ In order to continue addressing the differences between these artistic practices, I will now explore in greater detail the subject matter, drawing style and pictorial qualities. I will look more closely at how each artist represented gender and how they depicted space, to see how these elements contributed to an autobiographic narrative.

⁴⁶ William Ritchie. “The Modern Atelier” in *Cape Dorset Prints A Retrospective: fifty years of printmaking at the Kinngait Studios*, ed. Leslie Boyd Ryan (San Francisco: Pomegranate, 2007).

⁴⁷ John A. Westren. “Toward the Millenium” in *Cape Dorset Prints A Retrospective: fifty years of printmaking at the Kinngait Studios*, ed. Leslie Boyd Ryan (San Francisco: Pomegranate, 2007), 270.

⁴⁸ Feheley. “Tradition and Innovation” in *Cape Dorset Prints*. 96.

⁴⁹ In 2005 Annie had only two published prints and won the Sobey award in 2006 and was also invited to an artist in residency program. For more information look to John A. Westren’s “Toward the Millenium”.

Post-colonial context

While this is a study of two artists who stem from the same community, and even from the same family, it is important to draw on a post-colonial discourse to address the impact of their artworks. Post-colonial discourse explores and accounts for the residual effects of colonialism. It deals with cultural identity and representation, specifically examining how the previously colonized subject desires to understand her or his condition in geo-political, psychological and cultural terms. Edward Said's 1978 book, *Orientalism*, is a canonical post-colonial text that looked at the Western construction of the Orient. Said described and perceived "Orientalism" as a series of false, essentialized stereotypes that underlie Western attitudes towards the East. The East was posited as an "other", making it pointedly different and therefore deviant from the West. "Orientalism" views the "other" as a homogenous group that can be easily compartmentalized based on shared traits. Said noted that the bias was so deeply entrenched as systematic knowledge that Western scholars did not recognize it, even while they continued to appropriate and interpret Eastern culture and history, therefore negating the idea that the East could compose its own narrative. Many of Said's insights about the oriental "other" have relevance for other colonized peoples, including the Native people of northern Canada. This is especially relevant to the study of Inuit peoples and subsequently, their art, because the initial method of promoting Inuit art was marketing it as primitive, different, coming from the "other". Inuit were encouraged to create specifically 'traditional' and 'primitive' work to be marketed in the South. This promoted a specific vision about the North and its inhabitants to Southern viewers. It is for this reason that the motifs presented by Napachie and Annie Pootoogook are so pointedly different from the initial beginnings of Inuit art and do not conform to the idea of the "other".

The scholarship of Homi Bhabha is important because he was specifically interested in looking at heterogeneous societies, and examining what occurs when social interaction between two antithetical groups takes place. “Hybridity”, in the simplest of explanations, is the mixing of varieties that are not the same; whereas a hybrid is the resulting entity of the mixing. In the post-colonial context, hybridity can take on various forms including cultural, political, and linguistic articulations. While central to colonial discourse, this concept carries with it traces of its legacy as a derogatory, pseudo-scientific and racist term for mixed-breeds who were the products of miscegenation. Bhabha does not see hybridity in the 19th century eugenicist way but rather as an antidote to essentialism. Hybrid identity is the creation of something that is both familiar and new as a result of the merging elements of colonizer and colonized. Ankie Hoogvelt remarks on the positive nature of hybridity saying it is “a kind of superior cultural intelligence owing to the advantage of in-betweenness, the straddling of two cultures and the consequent ability to negotiate the difference.”⁵⁰ Both Said and Bhabha’s writings are relevant to a discussion of the Pootoogook artists because they allow me to address how art forms can be situated at a threshold between cultures and worldviews. Said’s view of the “Other” is particularly relevant to the study of the Pootoogooks because both women challenge the subject matter and style that was deemed “Inuit” and “primitive” and therefore suitably “different” from Euro-Canadian culture. They established a personal cultural identity for themselves that is a merging of traditional and newly introduced modern elements. Bhabha’s discussion of hybridity is especially relevant to the Pootoogooks because it provides a lens through which to examine the tremendous cultural change that the artists experienced and subsequently recorded in their art.

⁵⁰ Ankie Hoogvelt, *Globalization and the Postcolonial World: The New Political Economy of Development* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1997), 158.

Post-colonial Inuit

The colonial imprint on Inuit culture occurred between 1800 and 1950. This was realized through contact with explorers, commercial whalers, traders, missionaries and police. According to Alan D. McMillan, during the 19th century many relations between explorers and Inuit were amicable; the Inuit acquired axes, knives, and other useful tools in exchange for knowledge of the country, survival techniques and fresh meat for the explorers. Commercial whalers appeared shortly thereafter, employing Inuit as crew on whaling ships. Trade continued and Inuit gained access to firearms, iron tools, metal pots and kettles as well as woolen clothing and tobacco. In parts of the North, relationships with whalers were not entirely amicable as many spread disease and dispensed alcohol, both of which brought an onslaught of problems for the Inuit. After 1910, the diminished whale population and a collapse in the market for baleen sent the whalers homeward bound. Nevertheless, they were quickly replaced by fur traders, who were there to stay. The dominant trading company throughout the 18th and 19th century was the Hudson's Bay Company. There was a great demand in Europe for the furs of beavers, minks, and colored foxes. This was in the Inuit's favor as they were able to acquire a variety of goods in exchange for hides and furs of animals they would hunt regularly. It became less advantageous when the market for furs went into decline in the 1930's while Inuit were becoming dependant on trading posts for weapons and ammunition, tobacco and even food such as flour and sugar. Missionaries, both Roman Catholic and Anglican, were often sent to establish missions in the same places that had a Hudson's Bay Trading Post.⁵¹ Missionaries brought about major cultural changes and introduced education and medical assistance. It was not until the 1950's that the Canadian government took a more active role in the North. Government administrators took on the roles previously provided by missionaries, fur traders and police. They encouraged settlements in permanent

⁵¹ Ernest S. Burch, "Canadian Inuit Culture 1800-1950," in *Shadow of the Sun: Perspectives on Contemporary Native Art* (Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1993).

communities in exchange for family allowances, welfare, and old age pension. Furthermore, sedentary community living was encouraged to give Inuit families access to education, health care and government subsidized housing.⁵² New community living did not bode entirely well for the Inuit. They did not speak the language nor understand the nature of the new institutions that were being established underneath their noses, which excluded them from any decision-making that affected them directly.

Self-reliance quickly gave way to dependency, as town living relied heavily upon outside institutions. Although they were the numerical majority (in some cases there might only be half a dozen outsiders in a village), Inuit townsmen were in effect a minority. They had once patterned their lives according to a biologically determined rhythm—a time for catching caribou and a time for making clothes—but town life was decisively patterned by outsiders who had direct access to external support systems....The new villages were artificial conglomerates of previously discrete camp groups.⁵³

Inuit culture was changing rapidly. This is a pattern that we have seen around the world; a dominant external force subverting the existing culture and changing its course of development forever.

Social disorganization was not the only negative consequence of town living. The development of the people as consumers and their deterioration as producers was almost immediately evident. Firearms had by now virtually replaced harpoons and spears, and by the mid-sixties, snowmobiles were replacing dog-sleds as the principal means of land transportation. The most significant material changes that occurred were the move from skin tents and snowhouses into pre-fab houses, and the shift from country food to imported food...Increasing Inuit reliance upon imported consumer goods led inevitably to the loss of their formerly necessary hunting and handicraft skills, passed, in apprentice fashion, through generations.⁵⁴

In addition to the plight of community living that Inuit were coping with, others suffered through different hardships. Tuberculosis was widespread and many families were separated when infected

⁵² CV (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1995).

⁵³ Marybelle Mitchell, "Social, Economic, and Political Transformation Among Canadian Inuit from 1950 to 1988," in *Shadow of the Sun: Perspectives on Contemporary Native Art* (Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1993), 338.

⁵⁴ Marybelle Mitchell, "Social, Economic, and Political Transformation Among Canadian Inuit from 1950 to 1988," 339.

individuals were sent to southern Canada for lengthy hospitalization.⁵⁵ Other families, from Northern Quebec and Baffin Island, were relocated to remote camps in the High Arctic. This was particularly harsh and the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples charged that the forced relocations were “cruel and inhumane” and that the Inuit were being used as “human flagpoles” during a time when Canada was trying to sustain and strengthen sovereignty in the High Arctic.⁵⁶ Alongside these plights, by 1955 the federal government instituted the northern Federal Day School⁵⁷ system, which was the residential school system for Inuit. Inuit students would be taken away from their homes and encouraged to forget their own culture and language and instead accept a “white, modern”⁵⁸ lifestyle. Inuit children were fed Western food and dressed in Western attire. They suffered through neglect, as well as physical and sexual abuse.⁵⁹ This cultural turmoil left behind a legacy of harmful long-term effects for the students themselves as well as their families and communities.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ For more information on Inuit being forced to leave the north because of tuberculosis epidemics and the subsequent life within hospitals see, Pat Sandiford Grygier, *A Long Way From Home* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1992).

⁵⁶ Alan D. McMillan, *Native Peoples and Cultures of Canada* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1995).

⁵⁷ Heather Igloriorte explains, “All schools in the Arctic between 1955 and 1970 (and later in some places) were called Federal Day Schools. These schools had hostels or dormitories built around them, to hold as few as eight to twenty-four students, or as many as over a hundred. Although the government did not use the term residential school to describe this new system of day schools with hostels, the Inuit and northern First Nations children who lived in hostels and dormitories near the schools (which were operated by the Department of Northern Affairs) were considered residential school students by the government.” In Igloriorte’s “The Inuit of Our Imagination,” in *Inuit Modern: The Samuel and Esther Sarick Collection*. Edited by Gerald McMaster. 41-48 Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 2011. Footnote 5.

⁵⁸ *An Inuit Education: Honouring a Past, Creating a Future*. CBC Digital Archives. Accessed January 23, 2011 <<http://archives.cbc.ca/society/education/topics/529-2678/>>

⁵⁹ David King. *A Brief Report of The Federal Government of Canada's Residential School System for Inuit*. (Ottawa: Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2006).

⁶⁰ For documented proof of forced assimilation policies, physical and sexual abuse that took place at residential schools turn to John S. Milloy, *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System 1879 to 1986*, (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1999). For a personal account of experience in federal residential schools turn to Zebedee Nungak, “Experimental Eskimos” in *Inuktitut* #87 (Ottawa: Inuktitut Magazine, 2000). For more information three generations of Inuit perspectives on formal education taking place in northern Quebec (including elders teaching traditionally, day/residential boarded students under the Department of Northern Affairs and students of the current education system managed by Inuit) see Ann Vick-Westgate, *Nunavik: Inuit-Controlled Education in Arctic Quebec*, (Calgary: University Press of Calgary, 2002). For observations of cultural change as a result of residential schooling based on over two hundred interviews look to C.S. Brant and C.W. Hobart, *Sociocultural Conditions and Consequences of Native Education In the Arctic: A Cross-National Comparison*, (Toronto: Indian Eskimo Association of Canada, 1970).

Christine Lalonde addresses the influence of colonialism throughout the Inuit art movement and Inuit aesthetic perspectives in her essay “Colonialism Changes Everything,” which appeared in the *Inuit Modern* catalogue. In the past, writers about Inuit art history have placed a large focus on carving whereas Lalonde points out that other Inuit traditional modes of expression such as clothing have not been examined as thoroughly.⁶¹ Lalonde discusses George Swinton’s and Edmund Carpenter’s opposing views on the meaning and role of ‘art’ within a culture producing for an outside market and suggests that “meaning itself is evolving and mutable, formed and reformed over time and circumstances.”⁶² Despite much adversity, Inuit continue to produce innovative and relevant art to this day.

Sculpture had a strong visual presence at a time when Inuit voices were yet to be heard and it reminded the world that they were still alive and well and capable of creating works of unexpected eloquence and power. Art thus acted as a means of communication for Inuit that transcended language and geography.⁶³

Lalonde’s view on the role of art for Inuit themselves is that it is not only active communication but also a form of resistance. This discourse is relevant to the drawings of both Napachie and Annie Pootoogook because not only are these women narrating their lives and recording history for their succeeding generations, they are also doing it for a Southern, Euro-Canadian audience to see. The fact that difficult to approach subjects are circulating in the public sphere calls attention to the issues Inuit are facing and, therefore, acts as a form of resistance.

Heather Igloliorte looks at the historic role of colonization and sovereignty in her contribution to the Inuit Modern project, “The Inuit of Our Imagination,” in order to provide context for the contemporary art and artists she goes on to discuss. Igloliorte takes a somewhat different stance than

⁶¹ Christine Lalonde cites artist Paulosie Kasadluak who wrote, “We do not reveal ourselves only in stone. The work of woman shoes the type of clothing, which we as people had. That, too, contributes to the truth.”

⁶² Christine Lalonde, “Colonialism Changes Everything,” in *Inuit Modern: The Samuel and Esther Sarick Collection*, ed. Gerald McMaster (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 2011), 31.

⁶³ Christine Lalonde. “Colonialism Changes Everything,” 31.

Lalonde in that she believes Inuit art takes on the role of resilience and not so much resistance. Referring to contemporary Inuit art she writes that "...viewing these artworks as acts of resilience—fortifying the culture from within, rather than reacting to outside opposition—is more in line with the Inuit world view as communal and based on the well-being of the collective."⁶⁴ This is a new way of looking at Inuit art because it takes into account a different concept of self. As will be shown, this issue also arises in Hertha Dawn Wong's discussion of pre-contact indigenous autobiographical forms.

Post-colonial Pootoogook

Deborah Root remarks on Annie's images;

Rather than a portrayal of Northern and Southern cultures as separate, isolated entities what we see in Pootoogook's (Annie) images is an integration of elements, an integration characteristic of lived experience. Her work presents culture as a fluid entity, and makes it very clear that Southern elements are being taken up and interpreted actively, rather than by passive recipients or victims of colonialism.⁶⁵

To further elaborate on Root's commentary I will once again draw on Bhabha's inquiry into hybridity.

In *Location of Culture* he writes;

The simple binary is breaking down, creating something that is neither Colonizer nor Colonized, because the colonial presence is always ambivalent, split between its appearance as original and authoritative and its articulation as repetition and difference.⁶⁶

This insight allows us to see how Annie's artwork is evidence of a struggle to straddle two cultures; she knows the customs and traditions of the nomadic life on the land of her grandmother's time but she addresses these with the technological and cultural resources she has at her disposal at the current time. Seal hunting was done during her grandmother's time whereas now it can be watched on the television. Distinctive aspects of one culture can survive and become an integral part of the new

⁶⁴ Heather Iglooliorte, "The Inuit of Our Imagination," 45.

⁶⁵ Deborah Root, "Inuit Art and the Limits of Authenticity" in *Annie Pootoogook* (Calgary: Illingworth Kerr Gallery, 2007), 24.

⁶⁶ Homi K. Bhaba, *Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

intermixed culture. Annie has drawn families eating whale meat on the floor and also eating TV dinners while seated on the floor. The difference between Annie's work and that of her mother's is that Annie makes the meshing of old and new cultures more evident. Annie's drawings are hybrid because they incorporate traditional elements from the past alongside explicitly new things that have come from the South. Annie's fascination with pop culture and the mass-produced world of commodities becomes quite apparent after seeing even a few of her drawings. While life for the Inuit of Annie's generation has changed dramatically, there are some things that remain constant. Patricia Deadman remarks on the importance of keeping some traditions constant and alive;

The impact of European colonialism on Inuit culture presents a myriad of repercussions that influence the way of life for many individuals and families. New technologies, resource development and socio-political interventions are but a few adversities to impede upon Inuit culture. Retention of language, traditional values and relationships between community and individual become a matter of survival.⁶⁷

Despite the many challenges that the Inuit people have had and continue to face, art making has provided a link to the past as well as a way to understand the present. Through art making, Inuit people are able to acknowledge and learn the ways of their ancestry while maintaining new knowledge and lifestyle through daily life. Gerald McMaster suggested that Annie's work intends "to convey the almost complete overlay of the South on the North."⁶⁸ While McMaster qualifies his statement with 'almost', it is important to note that while Annie does depict elements of the North and South, they remain quite distinct despite being portrayed in the same space.

⁶⁷ Patricia Deadman, "Annie Pootoogook," in *Sobey Art Award 2006 presented by Scotiabank*, ed. Patricia Deadman (Halifax: Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, 2006), 22.

⁶⁸ Gerald McMaster, "Inuit Modern: An Introduction," in *Inuit Modern: The Samuel and Esther Sarick Collection*, ed. Gerald McMaster (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 2011), 8.

Autobiography

Hertha Dawn Wong, a professor of English at the University of California, Berkeley, the author of *Sending My Heart Back Across the Years*, has addressed Native American autobiography and self-narration through the expansion of the definition of autobiography to include non-written forms of personal narrative and non-Western concepts of self. Developing this contemporary autobiographical theory, Wong is able to follow the changes that occurred in Native American autobiography from its pre-contact stage to the contemporary stage. The first part of her book sets out her theoretical framework. In her introduction she quotes several authors⁶⁹ who have stated that,

Most literary scholars insist that autobiography is “a distinctive product of Western post-Roman civilization,” “a late phenomenon in Western culture” that “expresses a concern peculiar to Western” individuals.⁷⁰

Wong has set out to counteract this viewpoint presented by previous scholars. Indigenous peoples have used different methods of recording personal narratives that do not necessarily mirror the methods used in Western culture. Oral traditions, pictographs as well as performances are examples of personal narratives and events being commemorated which therefore means that autobiography is not only a Western concern but could merely use an expansion in its definition. Wong was not the first scholar to question the roots of autobiography; Writers Lynn Woods O’Brien in *Plains Indian Autobiographies* (1973) and H. David Brumble in *American Indian Autobiography* (1988) have both called attention to

⁶⁹ The specific works are as follows; Albert E. Stone, “Introduction: American Autobiographies as Individual Stories and Cultural Narratives,” in *The American Autobiography: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Albert E. Stone (Englewood Cliffs : Prentice-Hall, 1981), 1; Georges Gusdraf, “The Conditions and Limits of Autobiography,” in *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*, trans. James Olney, ed. James Olney (1957; Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1980), 29.

⁷⁰ Hertha Dawn Wong, *Sending My Heart Across the Years Tradition and Innovation in Native American Autobiography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 3.

the need for a consideration of nonwritten autobiographical traditions. To expand the idea of autobiography, O'Brien would include songs, storytelling, dance, visions and artwork and Brumble distinguishes "six fairly distinct kinds of pre-literate autobiographical narratives: coup tales, informal autobiographical tales, self-examinations, self-vindications, educational narratives, and stories of quests for visions and power."⁷¹ Arnold Krupat, author of *For Those Who Come After: A Study of Native American Autobiography* (1985), puts forth the principle *original bicultural composite composition* explaining, "Indian autobiography is a ground on which two cultures meet...the textual equivalent of the frontier."⁷² It refers to oral life histories that were recorded and edited by Euro-Americans and not by Native Americans personally. Scholars have noted that this definition does not function in pre-contact Native American personal narratives.

The Euro-American definition of autobiography is usually linked to a book about a person's life, written by that person. The roots of the word autobiography, self-life-writing, re-emphasize the above definition. Wong problematizes the roots of the word autobiography by questioning each of the components. The first is the idea of self, which differs from one culture to the next and even from one individual to the next. Referring to the second root, life, Wong points out, "the second root of autobiography, seems to be unassailably straightforward, but what makes a life important or meaningful is profoundly culture specific."⁷³ Wong notes how, "pre-contact indigenous autobiographical forms emphasize a communal rather than an individual self; they often narrate a

⁷¹ Wong, 12.

⁷² Wong, 11.

⁷³ Wong, 17.

series of anecdotal moments rather than a unified, chronological life story; and they may be spoken, performed, painted, or otherwise crafted, rather than written.”⁷⁴

Wong goes on to further differentiate concepts of self,

A Native American concept of self differs from a Western (or Euro-American) idea of self in that it is more inclusive. Generally, native people tend to see themselves first as family, clan and tribal *members* and second as discrete individuals....Traditional Native American self-conceptions thus are defined by community and landscape. In many cases, this identity is also dynamic; that is in process, not fixed.”⁷⁵

Inuk commentator, Zebedee Nungak⁷⁶ describes the thematic subjects Inuit artists took on; “Having never known anything else, Inuit artists tapped into what they were totally knowledgeable about: their *unikkaatuat* [legends], their *unikkaat* [historical accounts], their *inuusirminitaat* [life experiences], and their *isumaminitait* [inspired imaginations].”⁷⁷ These four categories of Inuit experience are precisely the ingredients that make up a self-narrative. They differ from a Western idea of autobiography in that they “emphasize a communal rather than an individual self; they often narrate a series of anecdotal moments rather than a unified, chronological life story” and are not always in a written format. Drawings by Napachie and Annie Pootoogook cover all four areas of Inuit experience described by Zebedee. Napachie’s work specifically even includes a written component as she describes what takes place in each of her drawings in inuktituk.

⁷⁴ Wong,12.

⁷⁵ Wong,15.

⁷⁶ Zebedee is also the founding member of the Northern Quebec Inuit Association and is a signatory of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. For years he has been a political activist defending Inuit rights. A well known role for Zebedee was the collaboration he took on as writer and satirist with filmmaker Mark Sandiford for the docu-comedy *Quallunaat! Why White People Are Funny*.

⁷⁷ Ingo Hessel, “Narrative and Anthology in Inuit Art,” in *Sanattiaqsimajut: Inuit art from the Carleton University Art Gallery collection*, ed. Sandra Dyck (Ottawa : Carleton University Art Gallery, 2009), 33.

Representation of gender

Napachie and Annie's drawings showed a particular interest in depicting the experiences of women living in the North. It was important for both women to have their experiences recorded on paper for future generations to see. Napachie even went so far as to inscribe syllabics into each of her works so that a written explanation was available for when she was no longer there to explain in person. While inscription on drawings are not a common feature among some of her contemporaries, it is not the first time that explanatory text has appeared in Inuit graphics. In 1964, Terry Ryan traveled around various northern communities including Clyde River, Pond Inlet and Arctic Bay. He supplied paper and pencils to anyone interested in producing drawings. On his return trip Ryan collected the finished work and ended up with just over 1800 drawings and pages of text.⁷⁸ Of these, 75 drawings were selected for an exhibition and most of these drawings were accompanied by syllabic text. Some draftsmen wrote out dialogue that accompanied an illustrated game whereas others identified individuals in the drawings by name, which is similar to what Napachie has done in the *Windows on Kinngait* series.

Syllabic text has also appeared in a drawing by Napachie's mother Pitseolak Ashoona. In a 1980 drawing, *The Blind Boy Kills the Bear*, Pitseolak writes out the Inuit legend in syllabics alongside her drawing as to explain what is happening.⁷⁹ Pitseolak's narrative style influenced the work of

⁷⁸ A lot of the drawings came back as simply writings with no drawings to accompany them. Terry Ryan thinks this may have been due to a misinterpretation. He explains, "So I thought Simeonie understood me when he asked me what kind of drawings were people to do, I simply said anything, but perhaps legends and that sort of thing. But his interpretation was that I wanted to 'hear' about things." in Jean Blodgett, *North Baffin Drawings: Collected by Terry Ryan in North Baffin Island in 1964* (Art Gallery of Ontario, 1986).

⁷⁹ The translation of the syllabics is as follows; "The mother who abused her blind son—The sister loved her brother a lot though. A polar bear came into their camp and the boy shot the bear with a bow and arrow through the window, which was made from bearded seal's intestines. He heard the bear sliding down when he caught it but his mother said he didn't shoot it. He knew it had slid when he shot it but his mother said, 'No! You didn't.' She lied, saying 'It's not dead.' The sister boiled the polar bear meat and hid the meat under her sleeve so she could feed her brother." Dorothy Harley Eber explains that the translation of the syllabics comes from Pootoogook who grew up with her grandmother, Pitseolak, who often told her legends as she drew. Found in , "Pitseolak Ashoona 'I draw the things I have

Napachie. In works such as (Fig.20) *Mischievous Charlie Ikey* (1997/98) and (Fig.21) *Legend of Lumaag* (1998/99) Napachie is narrating the legends that have been passed down to her and she immortalizes them on paper so they can continue to be told and talked about. Referring to works that offer a narrative explanation Janet Catherine Berlo remarks that in these works, “ the Inuit artist takes on the role of cultural commentator...tour guide to his own culture.”⁸⁰

Napachie was a tour guide who was not afraid to show the dark parts of her culture to the outside world. The exhibition catalogue for *Windows in Kinngait* explains,

Napachie was particularly attuned to the experiences of women, and spoke candidly in these drawings about their collective suffering at the hands of dominant and often dangerous men. Arranged marriages were still customary when Napachie was growing up, and she made several powerful drawings of both herself and other women being taken in marriage against their will.⁸¹

Some works that feature these unique women’s experiences include (Fig.22) *Woman Trying to Steal Her Sister’s Husband*, (1998/99) (Fig.23) *Reluctant Wife* (1996/97) and (Fig.19) *Trading Women for Supplies* (1997/98). Darlene Coward Wight makes a poignant comment that “the perspective is so intensely personal that there is a sense of a culture within a culture—a female world of supporting and, at times, surviving men.”⁸²

These works by Napachie Pootoogook are drawn with black felt tip pens and colored pencils. The dominant medium is black pen, and this restrictive use of colour provides unity throughout the whole series. Napachie used colored pencils either softly over the black pen lines or more firmly to draw attention to details. The use of color can be seen on the embroidery of the women’s garments or

never seen,” in *Sanattiagsimajut: Inuit art from the Carleton University Art Gallery collection*, ed. Sandra Dyck (Ottawa : Carleton University Art Gallery, 2009).

⁸⁰ Janet Catherine Berlo, “Portraits of Dispossession in Plains Indian and Inuit Graphic Arts,” *Art Journal* 49, 2 (1990): 137.

⁸¹ Feheley Fine Arts, *Window on Kinngait: The Drawings of Napachie Pootoogook and Annie Pootoogook*, exhibition catalogue (Toronto: Feheley Fine Arts, 2005).

⁸² Darlene Coward Wight. “Beyond Narrative” in *Napachie Pootoogook*, by Leslie Boyd Ryan, et al. (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 2004), 27.

the fleshy pink tone of the skin against an otherwise stark white background. The syllabics underneath *Reluctant Wife* translate to “This is how is used to be with Inuit when a man was trying to take a wife who was not willing. He is really scaring the woman and her siblings.” Napachie’s artwork calls attention to the practice of arranged marriage, which was a dire reality for many women, who were were powerless in these situations and entered into the arranged unions, despite many apprehensions.

Spousal abuse is a serious concern that is shown in both Napachie’s and Annie’s drawings. Napachie has approached the subject even before the *Windows on Kinngait* series. Her drawings were chosen for a 1992 booklet produced by the Pauktuutit (Inuit Women’s Association of Canada). The booklet entitled, *Listen Well= Naalatsiarlutit: spousal abuse*⁸³, collected various forms of artwork on the topic of spousal abuse received from across the North. From close to a hundred submissions, forty were chosen to be included in the *Nallatsiarlutit* booklet. The introductory text reads as follows;

The art work on the following pages challenges readers to open their eyes to the reality of spousal abuse. Listen well to what each artist is saying. Many of the drawings portray scenes of violence in the homes of families in crisis—children watch through tears or cower in corners as their mother is beaten...artists have presented images which encourage us to hope for and work for a better future.⁸⁴

Some artworks depict how women suffered physical and psychological abuse by their partners.

Trading Women For Supplies (1997/98) is a particularly telling drawing of the hardships of women.

The syllabics underneath read, “The captain from the bowhead whale hunting ship is trading materials and supplies for the women. As usual, the man agrees without hesitation.” In this image, the woman is essentially helpless over her own fate because she is being handed off without the ability to fight back.

⁸³ Linda Archibald, *Listen well = Naalatsiarlutit : spousal abuse by Napachie Pootoogook ... [et al.] ; text written by Linda Archibald ; translation, Muati Qitsualik* Ottawa: Pauktuutit, 1992.

⁸⁴ *Listen well = Naalatsiarlutit : spousal abuse. Introduction.*

In *Windows on Kinngait* Annie drew episodes of violence that she had seen within her community and ones that she experienced first hand. Nancy Campbell captured Annie's thoughts on her personal situation in the following interview;

She [my sister] told me to get out of that house before he broke my bone. So my sister was in shock because I was going crazy. And I wasn't normal anymore. But I had to charge him because what he did to me in that house, I had to charge him 'cause he used too much weapons on me and my life was lost.⁸⁵

A particularly chilling drawing by Annie is a self-portrait, (Fig.24) *Man Abusing His Partner* (2001/02) that details the hardship Annie faced from her partner while on a trip to Arctic Quebec. The scene takes place in a small room filled with only a handful of props; a television, two coats and a lone suitcase. It perpetuates feelings of entrapment since there is no visible escape route as even the window is boarded up. Another drawing on the same theme is (Fig.25) *A Man Abuses His Wife* (2003/04) where a man is shown being abusive to his wife in front of two children. One child tries to pull his mother away from the abuser while another runs away in fear.

Returning to Christine Lalonde's "Colonialism Changes Everything" where she suggests the role of art for Inuit is both active communication and also a form of resistance, these particular drawings by Annie and Napachie serve the dual purpose whole heartedly. *A Man Abuses His Wife* not only draws attention to the experiences of women living in the North but condemns the behavior by placing it in the forefront for all, even strangers in the South, to see.

Following *Windows on Kinngait*, Annie's images were featured in an all-woman group exhibition⁸⁶ *Pandora's Box* developed by the Dunlop Art Gallery's curator, Amanda Cachia. The curator writes that the artists in the exhibition "challenge, appropriate and critique patriarchal myths,

⁸⁵ Nancy Campbell, "Annie Pootoogook" in *Annie Pootoogook* (Calgary: Illingworth Kerr Gallery, 2007).

⁸⁶ Other artists included Laylah Ali, Ghada Amer, Shary Boyle, Amy Cutler, Chitra Ganesh, Wangechi Mutu, Leesa Streifler, Kara Walker and Su-en Wong.

archetypes that claim universality, and various fairytales, to make them a more accurate mirror of female experience across a range of socio-economic contexts.”⁸⁷ Seeing Annie’s work in this exhibition is important because here she was among fellow women artists of many backgrounds and ethnicities instead of only fellow Inuit women artists. While the distance between the North and South is quite great, the challenges that are gender specific are not isolated to a particular area code.

Space Part A: Inside/Outside

The question of autobiography in the Pootoogooks’ art practices can also be approached by focusing on the question of space, and more specifically, the distinctions between interior and exterior space, and private and public space. Napachie’s drawings are largely depicting scenes that take place outdoors. The land is depicted as vast and mostly empty except for slight interruptions of mountainous snow. Short, brisk lines add texture to the snow. It is interrupted with indented footprints that are left by kamiks, skin boots. Other scenes by Napachie are liminally outdoors; they are in or around an igloo. These images are more closely framed, using the igloo’s demi-circle shape to define the space. Rarely is there a drawing in the series that takes place within the wood frame house that Napachie was then sharing with Eegyvudluk.

Annie’s images are in direct contrast with her mother’s, in that the bulk of her drawings depict indoor scenes. Looking at Annie’s drawings is much like looking upon the set of a play, where all the furnishings and props are set against a fixed and flat background. Annie’s (Fig.26) *Eating Walrus* (2002/03) is an example of a typical scene that takes place indoors. A family is seen gathered in a modern kitchen equipped with the basic amenities such as a fridge and stove, but they are sitting on the

⁸⁷ Amanda Cachia, “Bearing Gifts: The Myth of Pandora,” *Pandora’s Box*, ed. Amanda Cachia (Regina: Dunlop Art Gallery, 2008), 15.

floor to enjoy a traditional meal of walrus. Annie has sets the scene by including a variety of details such as fridge magnets, a clock, calendar and even dish soap. As was evident in the Igloliorte text quoted earlier, cultural resilience is evident through art making. Here Annie demonstrates her resilience and connections to her traditional Inuit culture despite the various Southern elements that are present in the scene. Bhabha discussed the mixing of cultures to result in a hybrid identity and that is what is visible through this particular work by Annie. She has reflected on the specific spaces, objects and activities relating to her everyday life and conglomerated them into a single scene where Northern and Southern elements co-exist. McMaster remarks that “For Inuit, modernity is the world experienced as fragmented...”⁸⁸ Hybridized culture is filled with difficulties and contradictory components. McMaster notes that “The transition to modernity is an ongoing process, and both traditional and modern ways coexist in the North”⁸⁹ which is what Annie has been drawing. Hessel remarks how within this type of work, “southern viewers see not themselves but a hybrid reality, familiar yet foreign –still slightly Inuit –with everything filtered through the emotional lens of the artist.”⁹⁰ Southern viewers of Annie’s work are able to pick out elements that are clearly Northern because these are unfamiliar to them. Annie is highly attuned to all the distinctions that permeate her everyday life and presents them to the viewers in a hybrid format. She is living and therefore drawing her own hybrid reality.

In contrast to Annie’s indoor scenes (Fig.27) *Starvation* (1999/00), by Napachie takes place completely outdoors in a rocky landscape. A family is wandering in search of food and Napachie’s work shows just how difficult it can be to find food in a barren place. The hills and rocks are filled in

⁸⁸ Gerald McMaster. 5.

⁸⁹ Gerald McMaster. 5.

⁹⁰ Ingo Hessel, “I am an Artist” Inuit Art Transcends Ethnicity,” in *Inuit Modern: The Samuel and Esther Sarick Collection*, ed. Gerald McMaster (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 2011), 191.

with a variety of different textured strokes to show the vastness of the scene. Nevertheless, this image does not pinpoint a specific place or time because this episode could have really happened anywhere, to anyone living out on the land. Once again the syllabics come into play, where Napachie explains that this is actually the story of Akatuk and her daughter Mary⁹¹ and that this was in fact a lived reality. This is yet another example where Napachie is demonstrating cultural resilience through her art. She is taking her lived experience and documenting it in her work for all future generations to see. This is also in line with Wong's consideration of aboriginal autobiography where Napachie is recording 'anecdotal moments rather than a unified, chronological life story'. There is a specific individual and time that the drawing refers to but it is not entirely clear exactly what year it happened – and this is in accordance with the way aboriginal autobiography is presented. To Napachie, it was important to record the people and events, as Zebeedee referred to them as *unikkaat* (historical accounts) and their *inuusirminitait* (life experiences) without necessarily creating a linear timeline. Napachie's drawings such as this one are in dialogue with contemporary theorists and writers on aboriginal autobiography and offer insight into how the definition of autobiography may need to be expanded to include drawings such as this.

Space Part B: Objects

The question of autobiography in relation to the Pootoogooks' art practice can be examined in terms of objects and details that are included, or left out of their created scenes. Napachie's drawings are filled with many intimate details that further elaborate on the storyline. Textures on the garments distinguish the season; short strokes simulate fur for the winter whereas crisp white cotton

⁹¹ The syllabics on the bottom right explain the story in the drawing. They are translated to, "Akatuk and her daughter Mary were starving. When they were walking together and the mother was far ahead, Mary abandoned her baby, surrounded with rocks, as she did not want her to be eaten by her mother. Every time the baby cried, the mother would say, 'Stop crying dear child, you are nice and tender'. The baby was crying when her mother left her."

parkas indicate warmer months. Details relating to physical outward appearance can indicate inward dispositions. Women portrayed in her drawings are often seen with neatly arranged braids that can be looped at the back of the head into a characteristic south Baffin bun. This is a sign that things are well in the home whereas disheveled hair points to trouble in the home.⁹²

Annie's drawings of interior spaces are not necessarily replicas of homes she has been into or lived in but rather a composite of things and objects she has seen in a variety of places. Campbell elaborates;

She takes a chair from one place, a stereo and people from another, and composes interiors that reflect life, depicting traditional Inuit activities such as seal tail parties, or the softening of seal skin, or eating on the floor, and seamlessly mixing them with Southern influences such as furnishings, television and clothing.⁹³

A common object that is repeated in most of her drawings is a clock. In an interview Annie explains,

Cause we [Inuit] know...it's the way of the world, time...that's why I drew too. Cause all over the world knows the time. So I have to put the time too, all the time. Because we wouldn't know if we didn't have the time. So I put a time (clock) all the time because everybody knows.⁹⁴

What is particularly ironic about this object inclusion is that time does not control schedules as much up North as it does in the South. "Time in the Arctic is still negotiable...a meeting scheduled for ten o'clock meant the artist would leave their house at ten, if at all. It remains a seasonal society that is only beginning to rely on standard time."⁹⁵

⁹² Darlene Coward Wight, "Beyond Narrative," in *Napachie Pootoogook*, ed. Darlene Coward Wight (Winnipeg : Winnipeg Art Gallery, 2004).

⁹³ Campbell, *Annie Pootoogook*, 16.

⁹⁴ Nancy Campbell, *Annie Pootoogook* 16.

⁹⁵ Nancy Campbell, *Annie Pootoogook*, 20.

Another recurring object in Annie's drawings is a television set. In many of the drawings included in *Windows on Kinngait* it is what's on television that is the subject of the drawing while in others it serves as a prop. (Fig.28) *Watching Jerry Springer* (2002/03), (Fig.29) *Watching Seal Hunting on Television* (2003/04), and (Fig.30) *Playing Super Nintendo* (2003/04) are all drawings which forefront the television and the type of influence it has in Northern homes. Practically every Northern home is equipped with a television set. In the catalogue for Annie Pootoogook's solo exhibition, Wayne Baerwaldt compared Annie's drawing style to her recurring subject; television. He states,

Unsurprisingly, the studied perspective of her drawings recalls another media source altogether: television. The recurring vision of flatness is related more to the optics of television media than to the role of drawing as a chronicler of life...the relational importance of objects in Pootoogook's drawings suggest her world, as depicted in a form of cinemascope, is stylistically linked to the world's most commonly shared fictional landscape.⁹⁶

Annie's drawings portray a universe that is part fiction and part reality in that she combines real life elements and objects in a space that is representative of most Northern homes. "She fills her domestic interiors with details such as clocks and calendars, as well as graduation photos, inspirational quotes, and Inuktitut messages taped to the fridge in modern Inuit kitchens."⁹⁷ These are all parts of Northern home life as she has experienced it first hand.

Objects proved to be of great significance in Annie's work following *Windows on Kinngait*. She went on to produce drawings that isolated objects of significance. Most notably there was a portrait of her grandmother that included only Pitseolak's heavy black glasses along with a pencil and

⁹⁶ Wayne Baerwaldt, "Annie Pootoogook: Islands in the Stream," in *Annie Pootoogook*, ed. Nancy Campbell (Calgary: Illingworth Kerr Gallery, 2007).

⁹⁷ Patricia Deadman, "Annie Pootoogook," 22.

eraser.⁹⁸ “Positioned in white space, meticulous minute details become monumentalized symbols that convey her reality.”⁹⁹

Concluding remarks

Annie and Napachie Pootoogook represent two different generations, but both artists take command of their individual and communal identity by memorializing it in their drawings. Napachie moved to Dorset at a time when everything around her was changing. She experienced new neighbors, new language, new food and a completely new way of life. Going back to Bhabha’s concept of ‘hybridity’ we can see how elements of Southern culture permeated her world rather quickly as it informed a new sort of lifestyle up North. Culture is dynamic and this dynamism is very visible through the span of changes Kinngait went through over the past fifty years, especially in terms of art making. Residents were living with one foot on the land and another in the fabricated community that was now their home. For Annie, there was less of a feeling of change because as she grew up most cultural differences had been already brought together. Annie’s work shows the incursion of pop culture into this already- hybrid lifestyle, where elements of Southern and Northern culture are closely intertwined in everyday contexts and environments; as we have seen, whale meat can be eaten in front of a television. For Annie, the hybrid culture is one that she was born into and therefore she doesn’t make such an effort to distinguish which elements come from the North and which come from the South. For her, this hybrid it is simply her life today.

Both Annie and Napachie demonstrated that autobiography can take on a different form than the traditional book written about oneself by oneself. Each artist tells the story of her life through her

⁹⁸ This refers mostly to work done in 2006. The portrait of Pitseolak Pootoogook is simply called *Glasses, Pencil and Eraser*, 2006. In this series Annie also had a bra (*Bra*, 2006) and the ingredients for making bannock (*Coleman Stove with Robin Hood Flour and Tenderflake*, 2006)

⁹⁹ Patricia Deadman, “Annie Pootoogook,” 22.

drawings. It is not necessarily a linear portrayal of one life but rather a series of events, or daily happenings that are relevant to the life of a community. This is precisely what Wong had discussed in her book when she said that indigenous concepts of self are different in that they are more community oriented. Events, spaces and objects of importance are shared and those are now recorded in drawings. Zebedee Nungak named the elements that are important for Inuit and also make up a self-narrative. Legends, historical accounts, life experiences and inspired imaginations are the things that Inuit know and make their life important. Therefore, when an artist incorporates these alongside a depiction of their everyday life, they are forging a powerful form of autobiography.

The taste for Inuit art has also changed, in that new types of buyers have emerged. Patricia Feheley explains,

The market today has also undergone a transformation. Traditional Inuit art collectors are often not impressed by the drawing and prints that concentrate on current life. Those works that continue to celebrate the old ways, as well as works by the older generation, easily satisfy this preference for the more traditional subject matter and style. However, the emerging artists are attracting a different audience, one that is composed of collectors of contemporary art, both nationally and internationally.¹⁰⁰

While Kenojuak Ashevak continues to produce beautiful work to this day, she is not considered to be producing ‘contemporary’ art in most contemporary art circles.¹⁰¹ Her style and subject matter is still revered and highly sought after by collectors of a traditional Inuit art. Many new artists are coming onto the scene along with Annie, however, and their innovative approach to art making easily slots them into the contemporary art market, without need for the Inuit prefix. Lalonde notes that, “at a time when Inuit contemporary artists are pushing boundaries that may have limited them in the past, it makes sense to avoid situating them exclusively in Inuit culture when their works, although rooted in

¹⁰⁰ Patricia Feheley, “Tradition and Innovation,” 98.

¹⁰¹ Remarks by Nancy Campbell at “Sanaugaq: Things Made by Hand,” symposium at University of Toronto Art Centre, Tuesday 5 April 2011.

northern realities today, speak to world issues.”¹⁰² Furthermore, Deborah Root comments, “The point is not that the North has changed but, rather, that the South must be willing to see in a different way, and begin to accept Inuit artists as artists without expectation of particular kinds of images or of a pre determined cultural authenticity.”¹⁰³

¹⁰² Christine Lalonde, “Colonialism Changes Everything,” 31.

¹⁰³ Deborah Root, “Inuit Art and the Limits of Authenticity,” *Inuit Art Quarterly* 23, 2 (2008): 26.

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Fig.1



Napachie Pootoogook

Throwing Away Prized Possessions

Cape Dorset, 1997/98

Ink, Pencil Crayon, 20 x 26"

<http://www.feheleyfinearts.com/gallery/exhibitions/pootoogook/index1.shtml>

Syllabic translation: Throwing away their prized possessions. They were ordered to throw away their possessions when Christianity arrived. That's what they used to do. The women, especially, would throw out their beaded embroidery even though they wanted to keep it.

Fig.2



Annie Pootoogook

Watching Jerry Springer

Cape Dorset, 2002/03

Pencil Crayon, Ink, 20 x 26"

<http://www.feheleyfinearts.com/gallery/exhibitions/pootoogook/index1.shtml>

Fig.3



Kenojuak Ashevak

Rabbit Eating Seaweed, 1959

Stencil, 20.3 x 55.9 cm

http://www.ccca.ca/artists/work_detail.html?languagePref=en&mkey=27396&title=Rabbit+Eating+Sea+Weed&artist=Ashevak%2C+Kenojuak&link_id=2010

Fig.4



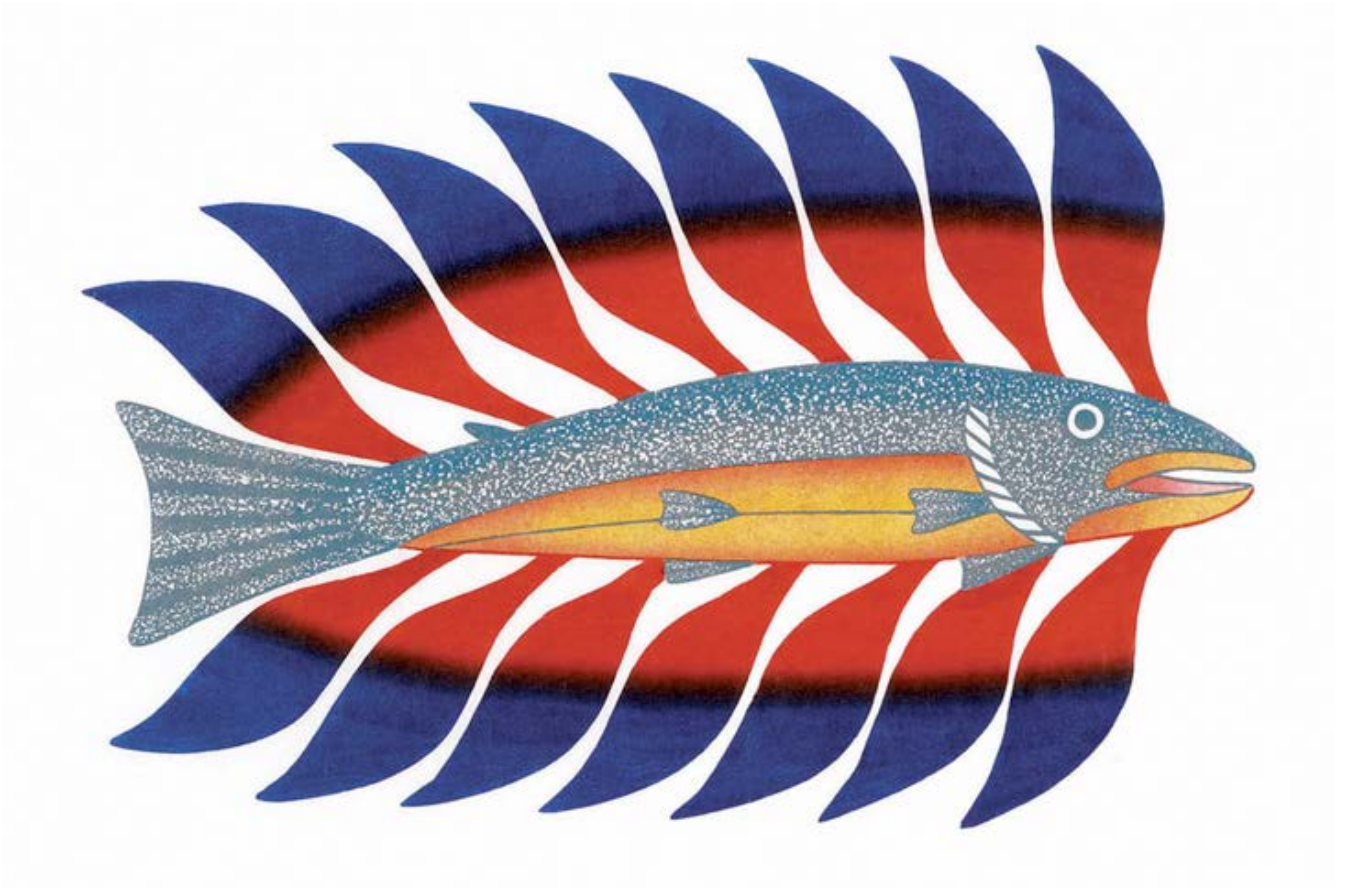
Kenojuak Ashevak

The Enchanted Owl, 1960

Stonecut, 61.0 x 66.0 cm

<http://www.gallery.ca/en/see/collections/artwork.php?mkey=6067>

Fig.5



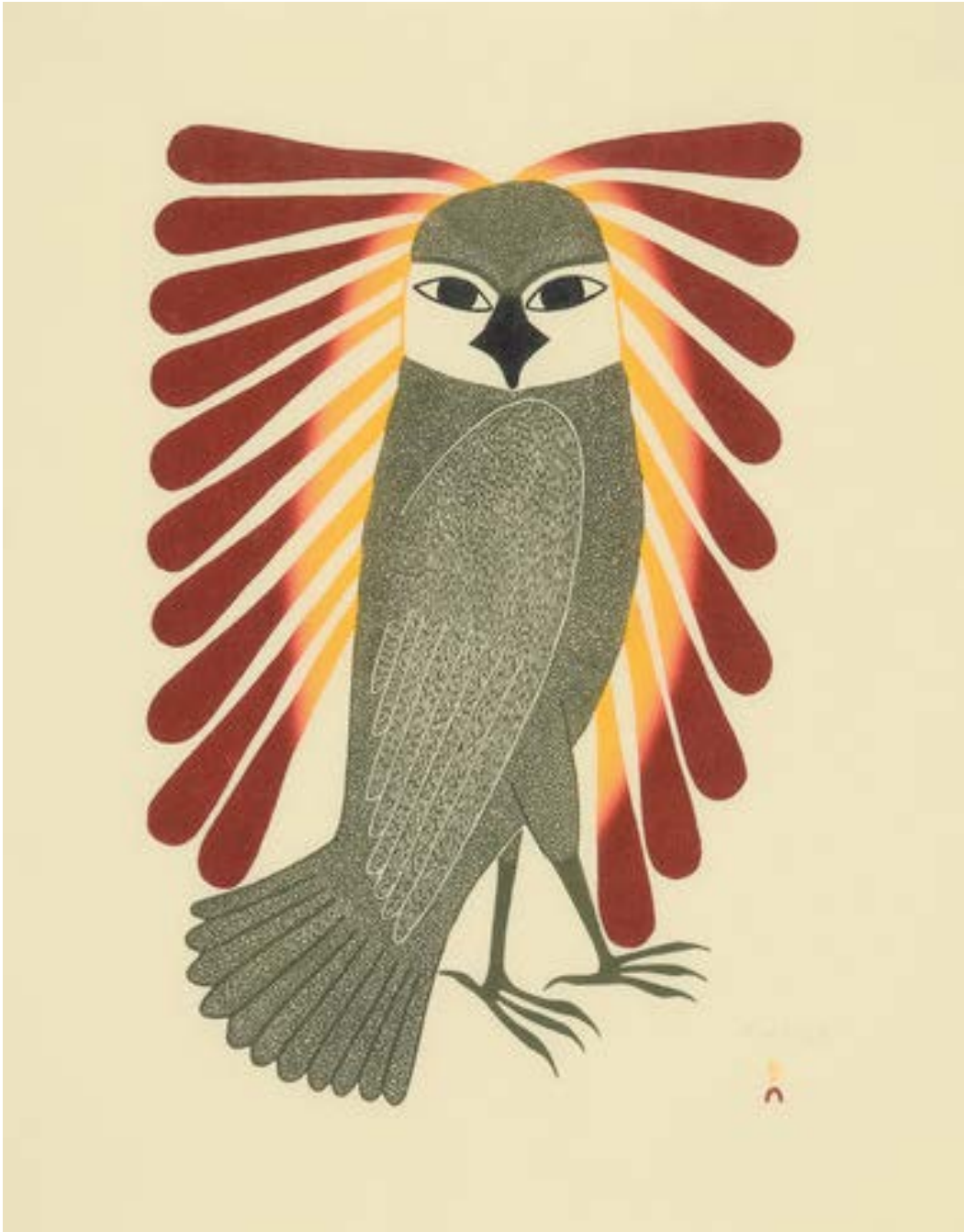
Kenojuak Ashevak

Luminous Char, 2008

Stonecut & Stencil, 20.125 x 25.125 inches

http://www.spiritwrestler.com/catalog/index.php?products_id=3898

Fig.6

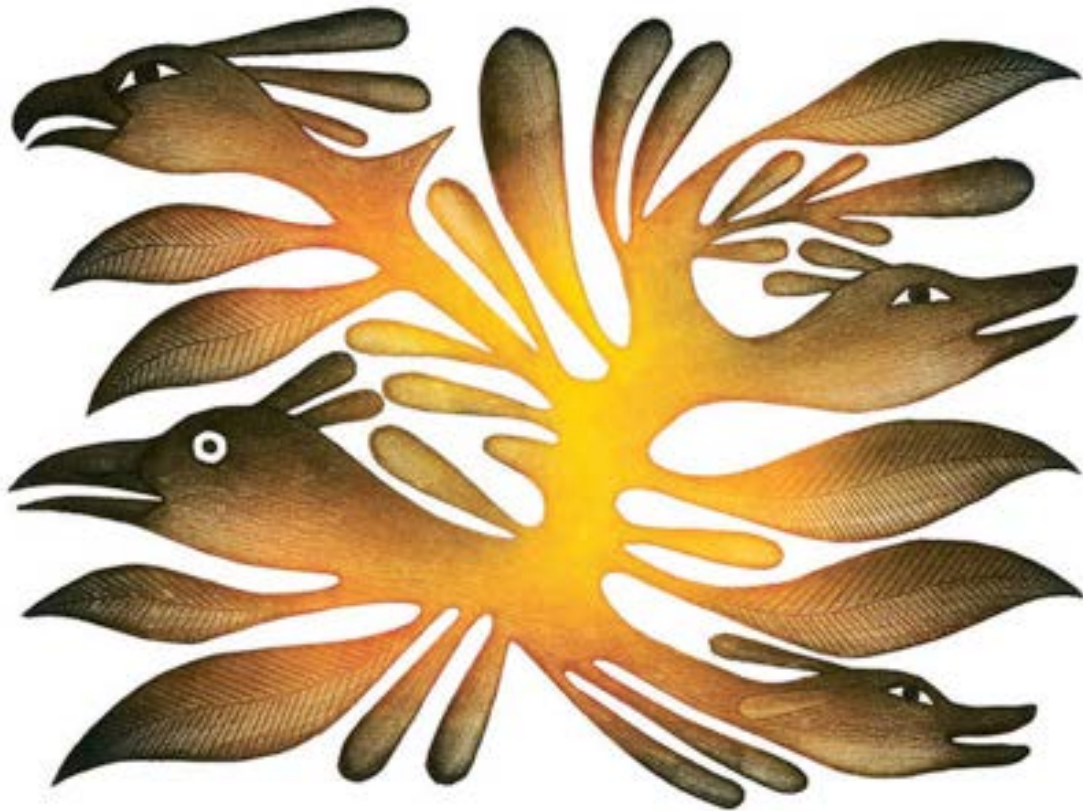


Kenojuak Ashevak
Observant Owl, 2009

Stonecut and stencil
24.5 x 19.5 inches

http://www.spiritwrestler.com/catalog/index.php?products_id=4571

Fig.7



Kenojuak Ashevak
The Light Within, 2005
Etching and aquatint
21 x 23.75 inches
<http://www.northofsixty.ca/PrintsW/DSC06175.JPG>

Fig.8



Piseolak Ashoona
Tattooed Woman, 1963

Stonecut

30 x 24.5 inches

http://www.spiritwrestler.com/catalog/index.php?products_id=6385

Fig.9



Piseolak Ashoona

Dream of Motherhood, 1969

Stonecut on laid japan paper, 62.2 x 87.9 cm

<http://www.gallery.ca/en/see/collections/artwork.php?mkey=40500>

Fig.10



Piseolak Ashoona

Summer Camp Scene, 1974

Felt tip on paper

50.8 x 65.6 cm

<http://www.gallery.ca/en/see/collections/artwork.php?mkey=40484>

Fig.11



Kananginak Pootoogook
Arctic Mures, 2007
Etching and Aquatint,

Fig.12



Kananginak Pootoogook
Steadfast Herd, 2007
Etching and Aquatint
29.25 x 37 inches

Fig.13



Kananginak Pootoogook

Wise Guys, 2010

Etching and Aquatint, 18 x 13.5 inches

http://www.spiritwrestler.com/catalog/index.php?cPath=2_8_77&products_id=5501

Fig.14



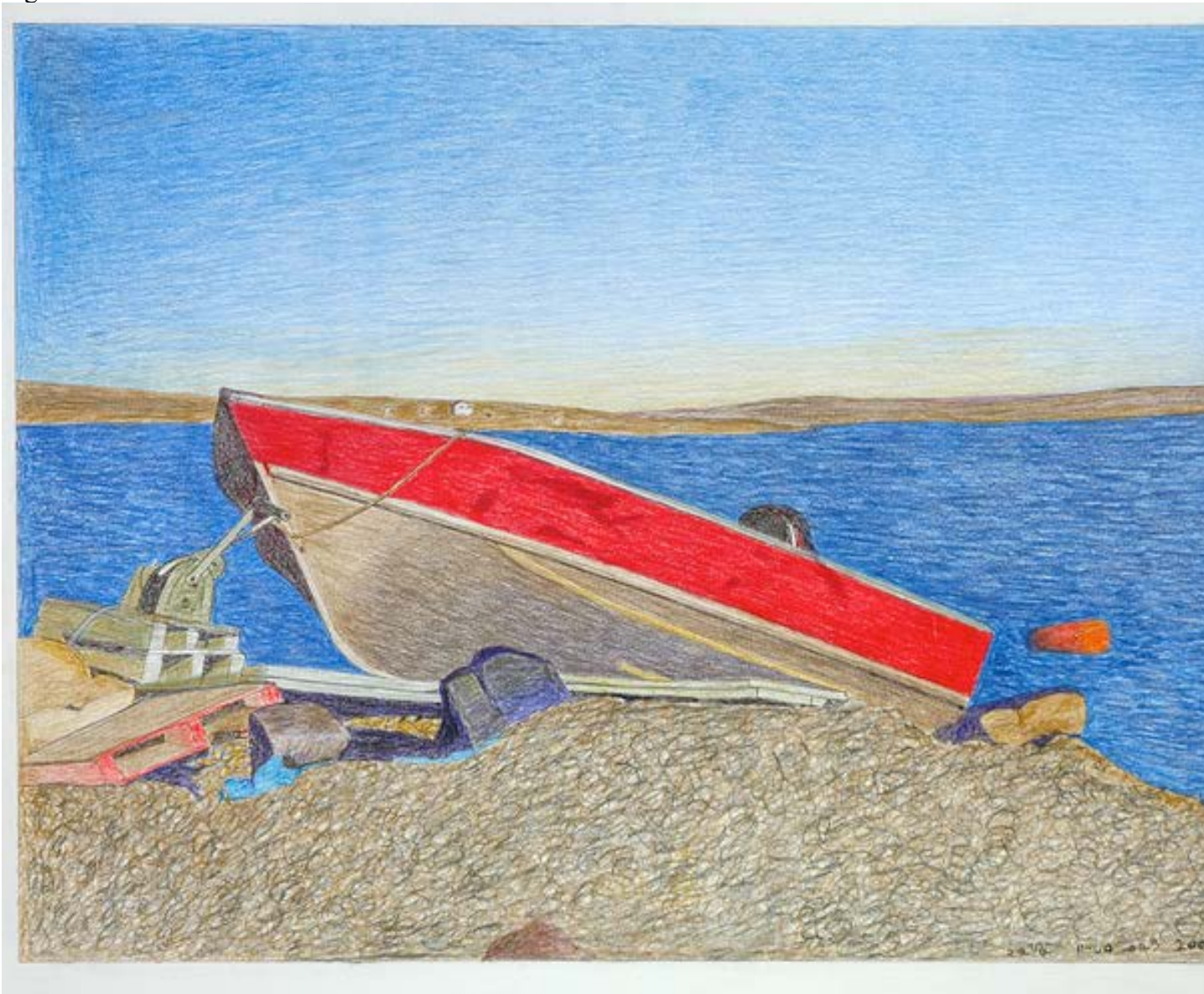
Kananginak Pootoogook

Evening Shadow, 2010

Stonecut and stencil, 24.5 x 39.25 inches

<http://www.gevik.com/gallery-phillip/inuit-prints/cape-dorset/cd2010/cd10-09-evening-shadow.html>

Fig.15



Kananginak Pootoogook
Boat on the Shore, 2008
Ink and Crayon, 20x26 inches
www.spiritwrestler.com/

Fig.16



Parr
My People, 1961
Stonecut on wove Japan paper, 76.3x50.8 cm
www.gallery.ca

Fig.17



Parr
Walrus Hunting, 1963
Etching, 12.5x20 inches
www.spiritwrestler.com

Fig.18



Parr
Geese and Man, 1964
Stonecut, 19.75x25 inches
www.spiritwrestler.com

Fig.19



Napachie Pootoogook

Trading Women for Supplies

Cape Dorset, 1997/98

Ink, 20 x 26"

<http://www.feheleyfinearts.com/gallery/exhibitions/pootoogook/index2.shtml>

Fig.20



Napachie Pootoogook

Mischievous Charlie Ikey

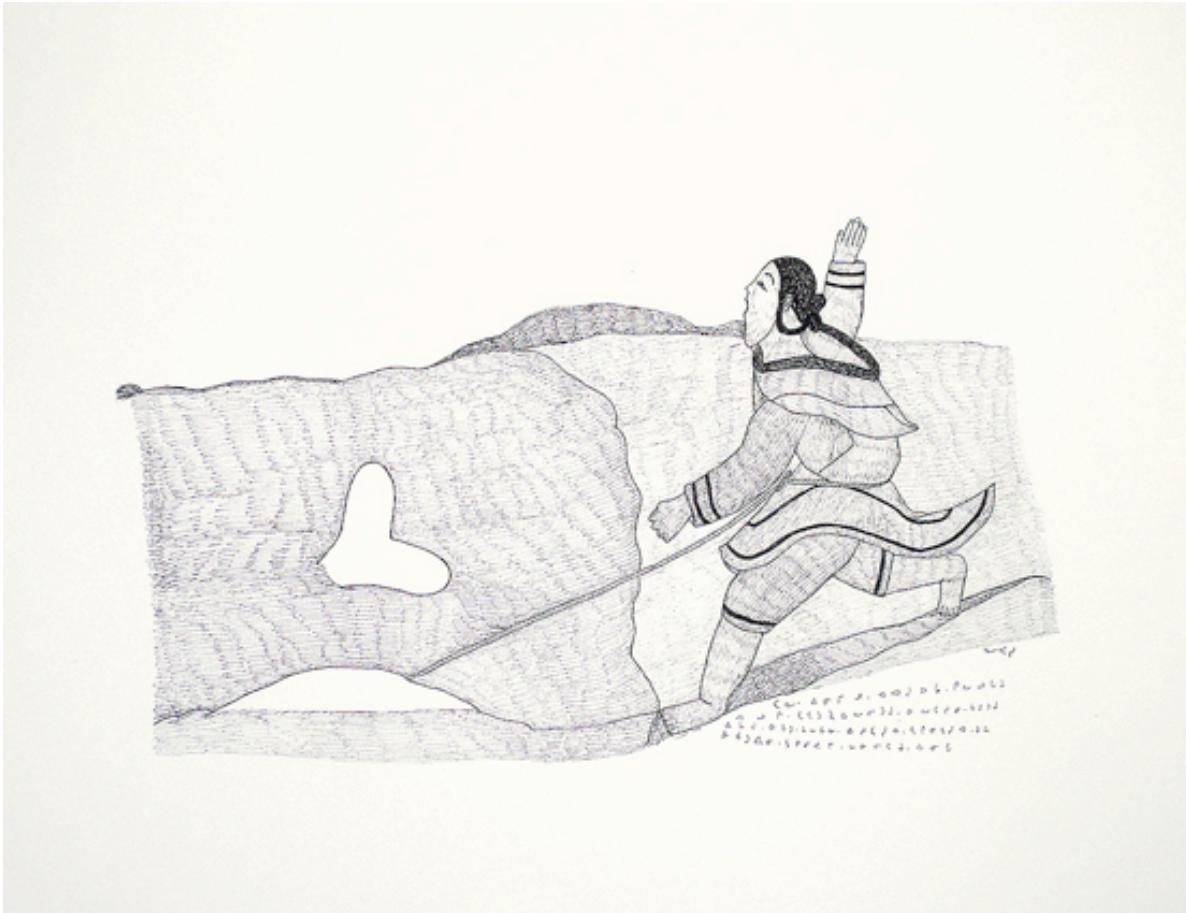
Cape Dorset, 1997/98

Ink, Pencil, 20 x 26"

<http://www.feheleyfinearts.com/gallery/exhibitions/pootoogook/index2.shtml>

This is Charlie Ikey who was a very mischievous boy. He used to make fun of old women like Pitaloosie and Qasuqiaq. He even used to go up behind them and hug them really hard from the back. When Pitaloosie turned on him, he was shocked. The old women started to gang up on him and that taught him a lesson. He is Simeonie Quppapik's friend.

Fig.21



Napachie Pootoogook

Legend of Lumaq

Cape Dorset, 1998/99

Ink, Pencil, 20 x 26"

<http://www.feheleyfinearts.com/gallery/exhibitions/pootoogook/index2.shtml>

The son harpooned the whale and then tied the rope around his cruel mother so that she would be used like an 'avatuq' (sealskin float). She doesn't realize that she has been tied, so she is running on the tundra saying, 'Look at that! Beautiful grey one!'

Fig.22



Napachie Pootoogook

Woman Trying to Steal Her Sister's Husband

Cape Dorset, 1998/99

Ink, Pencil, 20 x 26"

<http://www.fehleleyfinearts.com/gallery/exhibitions/pootoogook/index2.shtml>

This is a woman who killed her younger sister to gain her husband. She is pretending to be the sister, who was very strong. The younger sister was able to lift and move a qayak, and she would help her husband whenever he returned from a hunt. When this woman was not able to do this, the man was worried. The woman had exchanged clothing with her younger sister, but the man knew that this woman was too weak to be his wife. The son already knew that this was not his mother.

Fig.23



Napachie Pootoogook

Reluctant Wife

Cape Dorset, 1996/97

Ink, 19 x 26"

<http://www.feheleyfinearts.com/gallery/exhibitions/pootoogook/index2.shtml>

This is how is used to be with Inuit when a man was trying to take a wife who was not willing. He is really scaring the woman and her siblings.

Fig.24



Annie Pootoogook

Man Abusing His Partner

Cape Dorset, 2001/02

Pencil Crayon, Ink, 20 x 26"

<http://www.feheleyfinearts.com/gallery/exhibitions/pootoogook/index3.shtml>

Fig.25



Annie Pootoogook

A Man Abuses His Wife

Cape Dorset, 2003/04

Pencil Crayon, Ink, 13.75 x 20"

<http://www.feheleyfinearts.com/gallery/exhibitions/pootoogook/index3.shtml>

Fig.26



Annie Pootoogook

Eating Walrus

Cape Dorset, 2002/03

Pencil Crayon, Ink, 20 x 26"

<http://www.feheleyfinearts.com/gallery/exhibitions/pootoogook/index3.shtml>

Fig.27



Napachie Pootoogook

Starvation

Cape Dorset, 1999/00

Ink 20 x 26"

<http://www.feheleyfinearts.com/gallery/exhibitions/pootoogook/index2.shtml>

Akatuk and her daughter Mary were starving. When they were walking together and the mother was far ahead, Mary abandoned her baby, surrounded with rocks, as she did not want her to be eaten by her mother. Every time the baby cried, the mother would say, 'Stop crying dear child, you are nice and tender'. The baby was crying when her mother left her.

Fig.28



Annie Pootoogook

Watching Jerry Springer

Cape Dorset, 2002/03

Pencil Crayon, Ink, 20 x 26"

<http://www.feheleyfinearts.com/gallery/exhibitions/pootoogook/index3.shtml>

Fig.29



Annie Pootoogook

Watching Seal Hunting on Television

Cape Dorset, 2003/04

Pencil Crayon, Ink, 17 x 20"

<http://www.feheleyfinearts.com/gallery/exhibitions/pootoogook/index3.shtml>

Fig.30



Annie Pootoogook
Playing Super Nintendo
Cape Dorset, 2003/04
Pencil Crayon, Ink, 20 x 26"

<http://www.feheleyfinearts.com/gallery/exhibitions/pootoogook/index3.shtml>