ESKIMO ART AND ACCULTURATION: A STUDY OF TOURIST ARTS

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By

Norma Hackleman Wolff

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The year is 1964. An Eskimo man, living on the eastern shore of Hudson Bay in the settlement of Port Harrison, Ontario, sits with a small oiled stone carving between his hands rubbing it to a high polish. The soapstone from which he shaped the carving originated many hundreds of miles away; the tools with which he fashioned it were of European design; his carving will be sold in a Canadian city far to the south after passing through several merchandising channels; and he was motivated to carve the piece by the promise of money or comparable goods. Such a carving as this man had produced would, very possibly, appear somewhat alien to a Hudson Bay Eskimo who lived only half a century ago. Fifty years ago, the Eskimos of central Canada were still carving figurines and decorating objects within the limitations of an art tradition that originated over two thousand years ago in the North American Arctic. The stylistic roots of modern soapstone carvings, such as the one mentioned above, extend less than twenty years into the past.

That Eskimo art should show radical changes in the last fifty years is hardly surprising, for all Eskimo life and cultural traditions in North America have changed significantly in the last century under the impact of contact with European culture. A substantial amount of anthropological research has been concentrated upon this period of increasing contact with Western civilization and its values and has revealed much about change in Eskimo social organization, subsistence patterns, and concomitant changes in psychology and value systems. The results of this research show a cumulative tendency

on the part of the Eskimos to accept Western values, goals and ways of life.

However, questions concerning the role of traditional Eskimo arts and handicrafts during this period of intensive change remain largely unexplored. Published works on Eskimo art written in the last fifty years have been concerned primarily with archaeological art periods. The few authors who have dealt with modern arts and crafts of the Eskimos have been content with writing stylistic descriptions of the forms. An exception is Dorothy Jean Ray's Artists of the Tundra and the Sea. (Ray 1961) This book presents a well-documented 'on-the-spot' study of modern Eskimo artists in northwestern Alaska. Ray does not, however, attempt to fit this art movement into a broader theoretical framework.

No anthropologist or art historian has seriously examined modern Eskimo art styles and their development through the period of intensive culture change as it relates to theories of acculturation and innovation. It will be the purpose of this paper to fill that gap, that is, to examine the fate of traditional Eskimo arts and the rise of modern indigenous arts in the light of increasing culture contact with the Western world. This will be done through an examination of the function of art production in contemporary Eskimo culture and through analysis of modifications in traditional Eskimo art styles and subsequent innovations that have taken place during the last fifty years.

Two major questions are involved in this investigation: (1) what happens to the function of art production in Eskimo culture under the impact of European contact, and (2) how does modern Eskimo art differ stylistically from traditional forms, and why? Or, to put it another way, I shall examine contemporary Eskimo art as (1) an institution, and (2) as an art style. To

answer these questions I shall present a history of two modern Eskimo art movements which have developed since 1900 - the soapstone carvers of the central Canadian Arctic and the ivory carvers of northwestern Alaska.

Although this paper deals specifically with these two Eskimo art movements, it is my contention that a study of the art production of modern emerging societies can contribute significant data to expand the theory of aesthetic change and its relation to acculturation. Traditional art styles are subject to modification and change in times of contact. A common phenomenon in such situations is the rise of a new art which has been termed "tourist art." (Haselberger 1961: 341) I define "tourist art" as those art forms which are produced by a culture primarily, if not exclusively, for trade to peoples of a dominant twentieth century Western civilization. Tourist art may exist side by side with a traditional art form (may, in fact, develop from it) or may supercede the indigenouse form. As tourist art industries develop from economic motivations, it would appear that the production and marketing of such "other-directed arts" (Fagg 1961: 365) play an important role in the acculturative process and only a secondary one in the aesthetic and value system of the culture.

The contemporary art products of the two Eskimo areas which will be examined in this paper are the result of tourist art industries. Through an examination of the function of these two industries and the development of their art styles, I hope to illustrate some of the basic characteristics of tourist art movements.

CHAPTER II

A SUMMARY OF NORTH AMERICAN ESKIMO ART HISTORY

Two active art movements are taking place in the North American Arctic today. In Alaska Eskimos are producing ivory carvings which are sold to tourists and collectors; while in the Canadian Arctic, particularly around Hudson Bay, large numbers of Eskimo soapstone carvings are being produced and shipped to the south where they are sold in curio shops and art galleries. These art industries are but the latest manifestation of a long aesthetic tradition in the North American Arctic. Over two thousand years ago Eskimos were carving ivory and decorating implements, and there is evidence that some of the earliest North American Eskimo art styles grew out of even older traditions originating in Asia. Wherever the prehistoric Eskimos moved in the Arctic as they spread across the continent, they left indications of their artistic bent.

Scholars who have studied the archaeological evidence have been able to distinguish several cultural periods, each with a distinctive art style. Within continental North America two areas have developed primary art traditions: (1) northern Alaska, and (2) the central Canadian Arctic. (Collins 1962: 1) It is also in these two areas that the distinctive tourist art industries which concern us have developed.

Despite my contention that tourist arts are a result of acculturation, it is necessary to examine the history of the aesthetic traditions of the peoples involved, for the stylistic characteristics of contemporary tourist arts of the Eskimos of Alaska and Canada partake of both the old and the new. For this reason, I shall briefly discuss the archaeological and historical art periods of

the North American Eskimos so as to place the modern carving industries in proper historical perspective.

NORTHERN ALASKA

The Eskimos of the coastal area of northern Alaska have produced a number of consecutive art styles, one growing out of the other over a period of two thousand years. The abundance of decorated tools and art forms found by archaeologists show that the Eskimos of this area have since earliest times enjoyed a rich aesthetic tradition. Such traditions are often linked with cultures which produce an economic surplus that gives rise to the leisure time in which artists can develop. The Eskimo cultures which flourished around the Bering Straits area were blessed with an abundance of natural resources.

Concerning the implortance of natural resources in the evolution of Alaskan Eskimo culture and art, Henry Collins says:

> This was one of the finest hunting territories of the world and . . . living conditions in general were better here than in any other part of the Arctic. With an abundance of food animals, including walruses, seals, whales, birds, fish, and - on the mainland - caribou, and with an unlimited supply of driftwood, the Bering Strait Eskimos found life easier than did their kinsmen in areas such as Arctic Canada, where food and other natural resources were more limited . . .
>
> Perhaps the one factor most responsible for the relative population density and high cultural development at Bering Strait was the abundance of walrus. These huge animals alone provided most of the necessities of life: meat and blubber for food, oil for heating and cooking, tough durable skins for making house roofs, boat covers, and lines, and bone and

> ivory for toolmaking and carving. Ivory was preferred for making foreshafts, and ice picks, knife handles, arrowheads, scrapers, needle cases, fishline sinkers, sled runners, and many other kinds of implements and ornaments. The smooth-surfaced ivory was especially suitable for carving in the round and for engraving and was used for most of their art objects. (Collins 1962: 1-2)

The recovery of large numbers of decorated ivory implements and art objects from Alaskan sites has allowed archaeologists to distinguish a variety of art styles which act as diagnostic traits by which they identify the cultural periods. The culture periods of northern Alaska and their concomitant art styles, as determined by Henry Collins, are as follows: (Collins 1962: 2-24)

Old Bering Sea I or Okvik (OBS-I)
Old Bering Sea II (OBS-II)
Old Bering Sea III (OBS-III)
Punuk
(Ipiutak)
Thule
Modern

Although we are interested primarily in the characteristics of three-dimensional sculpture of these periods, we shall also examine the decorative art styles for it is through these that Collins and others have distinguished the art periods.

Old Bering Sea I

Time period. Approximately 300 B.C. to 100 A.D.

Sites. Alaska and Siberia. Okvik site on Punuk Island off the east end of St. Lawrence Island; at the earliest of five sites at Gambell on the west end of St. Lawrence Island; on Little Diomede Island; at several places on the opposite Siberian shore, particularly Uelen

near East Cape; and at Point Hope, Kotzebue Sound, and Seward Peninsula in northern Alaska.

Stylistic characteristics. Sculpture. The Okvik Eskimos were highly skilled in the three-dimensional portrayal of human beings and animals. The dominant subject for ivory carvers was a standardized and stylized figure portraying a naked female with a poorly defined body on which incised lines indicate what appears to be clothing. In contrast to the bodies, the heads are well-made with oval faces, long noses, pointed chins, and well-defined eyebrows. It is possible these figures were used as dolls and the meager bodies were covered by miniature clothing.

Animal sculpture, on the other hand, is not stylized but is fashioned with fanciful imagination and with highly variable forms. The almost bizarre animal and bird figures seldom represent any particular recognizable species. The smooth ivory surfaces of these figures were richly decorated using the design motifs mentioned below. While the human figures were carved as free-standing three-dimensional figurines, the animal motifs were more often used to embellish tools, such as knife handles and dart socket pieces.

Decorative art. One distinguishing trait of Old Bering Sea I art is the frequency with which surface ornamentation is added to ivory surfaces. (Collins 1962: 4) Over one-third of one thousand and twenty-five artifacts found at Okvik site on Punuk Island had surface ornamentation. (Ray 1961: 15) The Okvik artists were expert ivory craftsmen who 'gilded the lily' by decorating their tools and everyday implements with incised designs. Using a limited set of design elements including "spurred lines in a variety of forms, short detached lines (usually in pairs), borken or dotted lines, radiating or converging lines which form tentlike figures, and various linds of circles and ellipses," (Collins 1962: 7) they

developed a distinctive style of surface ornamentation. The most common motif was a combination of straight lines with small triangular spurs. Shallow, lightly incised designs were applied to all types of ivory implements including harpoons, wedges, sled runners, and other hunting tools, and a class of artifacts known as "winged objects" which may have been atlatl weights. The designs, which give the impression of having been speedily executed, include both geometric motifs as well as patterns which appear to represent the faces and bodies of birds and animals.

Old Bering Sea II

Time period. Approximately 200 A.D. to 300 A.D.

Sites. St. Lawrence Island, the bottom levels of Kukulik, Gambell on the west end of the island; Ipiutak site at Point Hope in northern Alaska; Diomede Islands; and the northeastern coast of Siberia.

Stylistic characteristics. Sculpture. A decline in the popularity of sculptured three-dimensional figures of humans and animals is indicated by the scarcity of such pieces in OBS-II sites. Of those found, there appears to have been a trend toward more highly conventionalized depictions of animals with emphasis upon diagnostic characteristics. (Collins 1962: 11) These characteristics are defined more by surface decoration than by form.

Decorative art. OBS-II Eskimos also decorated ivory tools and implements. Motifs were composed using the same basic design elements as the Okvik Eskimos but were arranged in a different and distinctive way. One of the breaks with Okvik tradition was the abandonment of the diagnostic 'straight line with triangular spurs motif'. (Collins 1962: 10) Larger objects were being decorated and more attention was paid to planning the design panels in relation to the surface contours of the object being

decorated. The incising is deeper and the motifs are bolder. In addition, OBS-II decorative art shows more all-over symmetry, and at the same time a more curvilinear style with emphasis on curved lines and larger circles. Many of the incised motifs represent recognizable but highly stylized and fanciful animal heads.

Old Bering Sea III

Time period. Approximately 300 A.D. to 600 A.D.

Sites. St. Lawrence Island, Hillside and Miyowagh sites at Gambell on the west end of the island.

Stylistic characteristics. Sculpture. As in OBS-II art, three-dimensional sculpture does not play an important role. However, some objects incised with animal-like designs were embellished with carved anatomical details, adding a third dimension to the representation. (Ray 1961: 17)

Decorative art. Old Bering Sea III decorative art is distinguished by a trend toward simplification resulting in the abandonment of a number of design motifs. Incised decoration was applied almost exclusively to harpoon heads. Many of the formerly prominent elements such as spurred lines, ovals, circles and circles set between converging lines all but disappear. A bolder and more flowing style of ornamentation with more open spaces was created with a limited inventory of design elements. Prominent in the new simpler style was the use of elevated circles suggesting the eyes of animals.

The Old Bering Sea art styles described above evolved naturally one out of the other as a result of local cultural growth. The next art style to dominate the Bering Straits area - the Punuk - was the result of both local traditions and outside influence from Siberia. (Collins

1962: 3) During the Punuk period several entirely new types of tools and implements were introduced from Siberia to St. Lawrence Island, including iron tools. (Collins 1962: 12) The introduction of metal tools had an immediate effect upon the decorative incised art of the Eskimos who , up to this time, had worked exclusively with stone gravers. The Punuk period in Alaska represents a time in which the artistic traditions of the Old Bering Sea people underwent a transition from the elaborate OBS style to the simplicity which was to mark the Thule culture tradition. Collins has called this a period of degeneration which signaled the end of art on St. Lawrence Island. (Collins 1962: 14)

Punuk

Time period. Approximately 600 A.D. to 1050 A.D.

Sites. Diomede Islands; opposite coast of Siberia; coincides with OBS on Punuk Island; Miyowagh, Ievoghiyoq, and Seklowaghyaget at Gambell and Seklowaghyaget at Kukulik on St. Lawrence Island; Cape Prince of Wales at Bering Strait; and the arctic coast of Alaska.

Stylistic characteristics. Sculpture. During this period realistic figurines of sea mammals such as whales and seals were made, as were representations of man-made objects like sleds and kayaks. Representations of human beings were simple and stylized and not of the quality of Okvik (OBS-I) figures, although at least one notable exception has been noted. This figure, called by Collins "one of the masterpieces of Eskimo ivory sculpture" represents a pregnant woman and may have been used as an "idol". (Collins 1962: 16) The head and feet have been broken off, but an examination of the body reveals a realistic portrayal which makes it "perhaps the finest representation of the human form in Eskimo art." (Collins 1962: 15)

Decorative art. The introduction and use of metal blades for engraving tools during this period led to deeper incising plus a trend toward more rigid design and simplification. Designs were carefully planned and executed to fit the shape of the object to be decorated. Up until this period, circles had been incised freehand, but now they were made with the help of bits with two fixed metal points. Nucleated ovals became dots (drilled pits); bands of continuous and broken lines enclosing ovals became single lines. However, despite changes in the design elements, the basic combinations and layout remained essentially the same as that of Old Bering Sea art.

Thus far we have discussed Alaskan Eskimo art styles which can be shown to have evolved as a part of the continuous cultural growth of the area. There is, however, one cultural period which must be examined that does not fit properly into the sequence - the Ipiutak. This culture which has an art style closely related to Old Bering Sea styles presents a problem because the other aspects of Ipiutak culture fall outside the cultural continuum of the area. This puzzling Eskimo culture which lacked many typical Eskimo traits such as lamps, sleds, pottery, harpoon floats, bow drills, and rubbed slate blades was flourishing at Point Hope in Alaska after the Old Bering Sea cultures had declined. The problem of placing the Ipiutaks within the cultural continuum of the Bering Straits area is discussed by Collins as follows:

> The closest resemblances to Ipiutak are to be found in the Old Bering Sea culture. Although Ipiutak art has some stylistic features of its own, it employed the same design elements as OBS, and many objects bear typical OBS ornamentation. In

> addition, many Ipiutak implements are identical or closely similar in form to OBS implements.
>
> The archaeological evidence indicates that Ipiutak was somewhat later than Old Bering Sea. The many implement types which the two share and the presence of typical examples of OBS art at Ipiutak cannot be the result of mere contact between the two cultures, for they form an important and integral part of the Ipiutak . . . Objects found at Ipiutak show that Old Bering Sea contributed to Ipiutak but not vice versa. (Collins 1962: 17)

Ipiutak

Time period. Approximately 200 A.D. to 500 A.D.

Sites. One site only - Point Hope on the arctic coast of Alaska. (Related cultures at Kotzebue Sound, Seward Peninsula, Norton Sound, and Kuskokwim Bay.)

Stylistic characteristics. Sculpture. The Ipiutak Eskimos are said to have been the most skillful bone and tusk carvers of the Bering Straits area. (Meldgaard 1960: 22) Animals were the most common subject for the Ipiutak artists. Large numbers of carved animal figurines have been found at Point Hope that tend toward fanciful depictions which are imaginative to the point of bizarreness. Within the stylistic restrictions of Ipiutak sculpture, a great deal of individuality is shown in each depiction of an animal or bird. In addition to sculpture of birds and animals the Ipiutak artists also made openwork carvings in the shape of chains and swivels. These, along with non-functional arrowheads and death masks, were part of an elaborate grave art. No carvings of human beings beings have been discovered.

It is thought that the Ipiutak Eskimos migrated from Asia and brought with them an art style reminiscent

of the Scytho-Siberian style of northern Eurasia. This Siberian influence in animal depiction is reflected in such motifs as surface ornamentation representing a skeleton with ribs and backbone on animal figures; pear-shaped bosses as joint markers; griffin heads; the use of an animal head as the terminal end of artifacts; inlays; circles and pits as joint markers on animal figures; the carving of detached animal legs and hoofs and bears' heads between outstretched paws.

Decorative art. It is in the decorative art that we find the most resemblances to Old Bering Sea art, as the Ipiutak used the same inventory of design elements as did the Old Bering Sea artists. Tools and implements were more elaborately decorated than during any other period. Most of the motifs represent either animals or birds and are executed in a combination of carving and incising which covers every inch of the tool or implement, function allowing.

Between 1200 A.D. and 1700 A.D. the Thule people spread throughout the Arctic from Alaska to Greenland, and brought with them a new art style which was to become dominant over all other styles. The Thule culture was characterized by cooperative whale hunting and rather large populations and was pervaded by "uniformity". (Meldgaard 1960: 27) This uniformity extended into their aesthetic system as well as other parts of the culture so that we find a sameness in artistic conceptions throughout the Arctic wherever the Thule people migrated.

Thule

Time period. Approximately 1200 A.D. to 1700 A.D.

Sites. Numerous sites spread throughout the Arctic from Alaska to Greenland.

Stylistic characteristics. Sculpture. Three-dimensional representations of birds, animals and human beings were the most common type of art object produced by Thule artists. These figures are rather crudely executed and ungraceful in line. They are, however, basically realistic in concept. The artist worked within a framework of basic conventional forms. Occasionally an individual artist managed to put a stamp of individuality on his carvings, but this was rare.

The most common type of carving was what is known as the "swimming bird". (Meldgaard 1960: 28) These small flat-bottomed bird figurines were probably used as game pieces. Thule animal carvings are characterized as "lineal in concept . . . [with] sagging stomachs, stumpy legs, and elongated necks." (Ray 1961: 160) On the whole, however, these animal carvings although crudely executed, are more realistic in concept than those of earlier periods. The surface of the carvings were either left undecorated or only sparsely incised.

Human figures were also a common subject for the Thule artist. These rather uninteresting stylizations of the human form represented tiny naked figures with arm stumps and flat featureless faces.

Decorative art. Thule art makes a sharp break with the decorative art styles of preceding peoples in that the characteristic emphasis on the embellishment of tools and implements with incised decorations is no longer the dominant form of artistic expression. The elaborate all-over designs were replaced by simple border designs using a limited number of design elements such as Y figures, single and double spurred lines, and parallel lines. The majority of ivory and bone implements were not decofated at all, reflecting a rejection or lack of interest in geometric and decorative art.

Thule-based art was still being produced by Eskimos at the time of contact with the Whites. However, before examining Eskimo art in historical times, we shall turn our attention to the prehistoric art periods of the central Arctic.

CENTRAL CANADA

During the period that the above mentioned art styles were flourishing in the western Arctic, an entirely different culture and art style was prevalent in the eastern half of the North American Arctic. While several art periods waxed and waned in the Bering Straits area, the Dorset culture was dominant in the eastern Arctic from Newfoundland in the south, north through the Hudson Bay region to the islands of the Arctic Archipelago, and throughout Greenland. The Dorset people hunted sea mammals and small game (not whales) and developed some highly specialized hunting techniques unknown to the western Eskimos. Their material culture was characterized by small and delicate tool forms and microlithic chipped stone implements.

Dorset

Time period. Approximately from 1000 B.C. to 1300 A.D.

Sites. From King William Land in the west, north through the Hudson Bay region and Baffin Island, to the islands of the Arctic Archipelago, and east to include Greenland.

Stylistic characteristics. Sculpture. Dorset artists excelled in the carving of small three-dimensional sculptures. They utilized all the natural materials at their disposal for carving - walrus ivory, antler, wood, bone, and soapstone. Representations of human beings and animals show a high degree of originality, varying from realistic portrayals to highly abstract

figures. Meldgaard notes a striking stylistic difference between the conceptions of animal figures and human figures. He suggests that each human figurine is a "vivid and realistic portrait", while animal figures take "definite and conventional shapes." (Meldgaard 1960: 26) This disparency he feels is due to the use of animal sculpture as hunting magic as these figures are usually life-like, although more stylized animal representations with hollowed-out bodies have also been found. In portraying the human figure the Dorset artist, unlike those of western areas, paid attention to the formation of the body. Arms and legs are formed with care on the tiny bodies. The figures typically have broad round faces with large mouths and wide flat noses. Human beings are portrayed as naked or partially clothed.

An art form which is unique to the Dorset culture is antler and wood carvings with several human faces and heads carved at random on their surfaces. These carvings are of particular interest to archaeologists because often the depicted faces are peculiarly un-Eskimo in appearance.

Decorative art. Incised decoration, although present, was not an important form of artistic expression. Such incised designs as were utilized were usually applied to small sculptures; tools were seldom decorated. The incised design motifs applied to animal and human figures are made up primarily of arrangements of straight and oblique lines, Xs, and chevrons. An ever-occuring pattern represents a stylized skeleton "with an X for the head, transverse lines for vertebrae and scapulae, slanting lines for ribs, and longitudinal lines for leg bones." (Collins 1962: 25) This pattern was so commonly used by Dorset artists as surface decoration on animal and human figurines and small ivory spatulas, that Collins has called it "something like an 'idee fixe' in Dorset

art. (Collins 1962: 25)

The Thule culture, which advanced eastward across the Arctic about 1200 A.D. superceded the Dorset culture and brought a new style of art which appears to have replaced the Dorset art style. Although there is evidence that Dorset styles influenced the development of the Angmagssalik Eskimo art in Greenland (Collins 1962: 25), there is no indication that they were carried over or influenced Thule art in the central Arctic. A Thule-based art style prevailed in the central Arctic until the soapstone carving industry developed in the middle of the twentieth century. (See Thule section above for a description of Thule art style.)

THE HISTORIC PERIOD IN THE NORTH AMERICAN ARCTIC.

The art of the Thule peoples, which to most art historians seems a degenerate art form in comparison with earlier periods, was the last recognizable art style in the North American Arctic until modern times. The historic period, after Eskimo contact with the Whites, did not produce any outstanding styles of art in the areas under discussion.

Northern Alaska

Collins characterizes the historical period of the western Eskimo areas over the last two hundred years as having "produced hardly anything that could be described as art." (Collins 1962: 20) The local Eskimo culture which grew out of Thule traditions during this period was marked by a simplicity in which art forms played almost no part. However, while the northern part of Alaska was declining in the arts, southwestern Alaskan Eskimo art flourished, particularly in the making of

masks for religious purposes. In northern Alaska the traditions of the past were being carried on in the decorative arts. The incised designs of the historic period are extremely simple but the design elements - the spurred line, the Y figure, and the circle and dot - are traceable to traditional styles. However, the patterns in which the design elements are arranged had become highly conventionalized and stereotyped and little originality was shown in arrangement of motifs. The decorative art of the southwestern Eskimos during the same period was more free with a style reminiscent of Punuk and Ipiutak. More elements were used and more variety of arrangement was shown. (Collins 1962: 21)

One of the best known Eskimo art forms known today - pictograph engravings on ivory depicting scenes of Eskimo life - was developed during this period in northern Alaska. The production of these realistic pictographs appeared before contact with American and European whalers, and in the latter half of the nineteenth century after extensive exposure to the scrimshaw work of these men it showed stylistic innovations. Scenes depicting episodes from Eskimo life, particularly hunting scenes, were engraved on ivory with grease rubbed into the incisions to darken them. These silhouette engravings were commonly applied to bow-drill handles, workbag handles, and pipes. (Collins 1962: 23) (A thorough study of this style of Eskimo pictographic representation has been written by Walter J. Hoffman. 1897)

Central Canada

In the central Canadian Arctic, even less art, as such, was produced in the last two hundred years. Material culture of the area during this period was simple and meager and so was the art. The art of the Eskimos of this area was also overshadowed by a neighboring area

during the historical period. The Angmagssalik Eskimos of eastern Greenaldn produced a highly original and skillful style of art during this period. However, as they were virtually isolated from other Eskimos, influence from this highly individualistic art did not spread.

In this chapter we have briefly examined the characteristics of the dominant archaeological and historical art styles of the North American Arctic prior to the development of modern tourist art industries.

Even a superficial examination of the archaeological periods reveals one major difference between the art styles of the western Arctic and the eastern Arctic. In Alaska a number of art styles evolved, one out of the other, each of which placed emphasis upon the surface ornamentation of utilitarian objects. Such decoration was carried to great extremes within the limitations set by the continued utilization of the tool. It is through changes in these decorative design motifs that we are able to distinguish the various art styles. Until the Thule period, representational three-dimensional sculpture was a minor art. The emphasis was upon the applied decoration of tools with only occasional excursions into purely representational art.

In the eastern Arctic, however, one continuous art tradition (Dorset) existed in the prehistoric period. This art placed emphasis upon the three-dimensional representation of living objects - animals and human beings - with form the essential quality. Applied decoration was a minor art and was usually only an embellishment on sculptured forms. Tools were seldom decorated.

The intrusion of the Thule peoples brought a decline of the arts in both areas as the simplistic art style of these people overwhelmed the local traditions. Very

little of what can be classifed as 'art' was produced in the historical period throughout the North American Arctic.

A new impetus was needed to stimulate renewed artistic activity in the Arctic, and when it came, it came from outside Eskimo culture. Today, art objects are once more being produced in quantity by the Eskimos, in both Alaska and central Canada, but they are tourist art made for an outside market - for white people to the south. Contemporary Eskimo art production is directed toward a Western audience that supports Eskimo artists by purchasing their products as additions to art collections or souvenirs.

How these 'other-directed' tourist art industries developed and how they are related to the continuing art traditions of the Arctic is the subject of the following two chapters.

CHAPTER III

THE CONTEMPORARY SOAPSTONE CARVERS OF CANADA

Traditionally, Eskimo art was a spare-time activity. Tools were decorated for the pleasure of the activity and for the resultant beauty of the object. However, the decorations never interfered with the utilitarian aspects of the object and obviously the decorating of tools was a secondary activity to the use of them. Small carvings from scraps of ivory and soapstone were fashioned while the hunters were idle and were made as toys or merely for pleasure.

Today (1965) many Eskimos of the central Canadian Arctic are full-time artists, producing soapstone sculpture and prints which are marketed in the urban centers of Canada and the United States. A great deal of nonsense has been written about these artists under the sponsorship of those agencies whose primary concern is with the profitable marketing of the art forms. For example:

> The link between past and present in their art remains as yet unbroken. What motivates this man? What inner spring of consciousness demands an art of him? Perhaps it is a clinging remnant of a forgotten civilization of the Asiatic continent where he almost certainly originated.
>
> or;
>
> Nowhere in the world do we find people so undisturbed by the surge of civilization.

Presented in all sincerety, such 'publicity' gives a false impression by presenting modern Eskimo soapstone sculpture and prints as traditional or 'primitive art'.

In my opinion the carvings and prints being produced in the Canadian Arctic today cannot be so classified. Primitive art presupposes a close and continuing relationship between the art style and the culture which nourishes it. In this chapter I shall present evidence that in both function and style contemporary Eskimo art forms of this area represent a break with traditional Eskimo culture, and as such must be classified as an art of acculturation or a "tourist art".

All in all, the soapstone carving industry of the central Canadian Arctic is quite a remarkable phenomenon. It represents a contemporary art period with a distinctive Eskimo style which grew from outside stimulation and economic need. (I have called this an 'art industry' because at its highest point around the middle 1950s, seventy-five to eighty per cent of the Eskimo men in areas where it was introduced were carving on a full-time or part-time basis.) Art production became a major source of income, and as such had an impact upon the way of life. Although the production of carvings for sale can be equated to the exchange of furs, the effect is different, because carvings are art forms and hence cultural while furs are a natural product. We must consider not only how the carving industry effected Eskimo life but also how the carving industry effected the art form itself. To do this, we shall trace the historical development of the art industry and then examine the stylistic characteristics of the art form and its relationship to traditional Eskimo art. Lastly, we shall look at the impact which the industry has had on Eskimo culture.

A HISTORY OF THE SOAPSTONE CARVING INDUSTRY

At the end of World War II the Eskimos of the Hudson Bay area of central Canada were settled into a way of

life which reflected their dependence upon the trade goods of the white man. A string of Hudson's Bay Company trading posts catered to their needs. Not only were the Eskimos dependent upon the traders for those luxuries which they desired, but in many cases were dependent for their subsistence needs as well. The shift from an Eskimo subsistence economy to one in which commodity exchange was the prevailing way of life had begun in the early nineteenth century when the Hudson's Bay Trading Company moved into the area. The appearance of Hudson's Bay posts in this area, according to C. Hughes:

> greatly increased the dependence of Eskimos on the outside world. It encouraged their use of imported foods, tools, and household and personal equipment; dependence on outside supply and administrative centers; concentration of population around trading posts; and comitment to a fluctuating, inconstant, and in recent years unrewarding economic base. (Hughes 1965: 17)

The major item of trade was white fox pelts which the Eskimo trappers exchanged for goods at the trading posts. The disadvantage of fur trapping as a steady source of income to the Eskimos was that, not only was there a fluctuating market to the south, but also the population of the white fox waxed and waned in cycles. Good trapping years were followed by periods of several years when the fox population was substantially smaller.

Nineteen-forty-nine (1949) was a year when the white fox population was at a low ebb. It was not a good year for the Eskimos for not only were there fewer pelts to be had but the southern market for white fox skins had declined so that in that year trappers were receiving a low of twenty-five cents (25¢) per fox skin.

This combination of demographic and economic pressures made the Eskimos receptive to suggestions of a

new way of livelihood. However opportunities were rare. A few men abandoned trapping almost completely to take the few available wage-earning jobs, but most Eskimos continued to hunt and trap although they were willing to explore additional income sources. Government welfare was available but the Eskimos preferred to support themselves if at all possible.

It was during this economic low that the idea of producing soapstone carvings as a source of income was introduced from the outside, and hundreds of Eskimo men took up the specialized role of artist. How this came about is intimately tied to the Arctic career of one man - James A. Houston.

In 1948, James Houston, a young Canadian artist, boarded a train in Montreal and rode to its most northerly station - Moosonee on the southern tip of James Bay. From there he journeyed by plane to the Port Harrison-Povungnituk Eskimo area on the east coast of Hudson Bay. Houston had become instilled with a romantic desire to sketch and paint in the Arctic north while on duty with the Air Force at Goose Bay, Labrador.

> My thoughts were filled with the north, and I had long had a desire to draw the Eskimo in his true surroundings. (Houston 1952:102)

It is not too surprising to find that he developed a great enthusiasm for 'things Eskimo' and spent several weeks in the area sketching and painting.

We do not know how successful Houston's 1948 sketching trip was in its original intent, but we do know that his contact with the Eskimos at this particular time was to have a telling effect upon both their economy and art during the next decade.

During the time Houston spent in the Povungnituk-Port Harrison area in 1948, he became aware of the production by the Eskimos of small soapstone carvings. These

carvings, produced as a spare-time activity by the Eskimos, portrayed the animals important to the hunters, the hunters themselves, and small models of everyday Eskimo objects. By the time Houston returned to the south, he had acquired a small collection of carvings and was strongly convinced that they were of high aesthetic quality.

When he reached Montreal, he took the carvings to the Canadian Handicraft Guild, a non-profit organization for the promotion of skilled handicrafts. The representatives of the Guild were impressed with the carvings and Houston's enthusiasm and authorized him to return to the Arctic the following summer at their expense and commission enough Eskimo carvings to attempt a purchase exhibit in Montreal. The Guild was interested in discovering whether the Eskimo carvers of Hudson Bay could produce marketable carvings in both quality and quantity.

The following summer (1949) Houston returned to the Port Harrison-Povungnituk area where he commissioned and purchased approximately one thousand carvings and shipped them south. The Canadian Handicraft Guild held the purchase exhibit in November of that year in Montreal. The overwhelming success of this first venture is reflected in the fact that the carvings were all sold by the end of the third day.

Despite Houston's obvious enthusiasm and the willingness of the Handicraft Guild to market this art form, the Hudson's Bay Company was not encouraging. The Company had attempted to introduce Eskimo handicrafts, including stone carvings, to southern markets in the 1930s - a time of economic depression not only in the south but also for the Eskimos. They wrote the Canadian Handicraft Guild in answer to their inquiry:

> The carved ivory around Port Harrison is not particularly good, nor particularly plentiful. The soapstone you speak of would, presumably, be little

> models of stone lamps, and so forth . . . The soapstone models of implements and animals are inclined to be crude because the material is so breakable. The ivory carving is much inferior to that done further north. (Swinton 1958:40)

However, despite their pessimism, the Company agreed to cooperate in the marketing of the carvings.

The success of the venture was assured when the Canadian government became interested in the project. Representatives of the Department of Mines and Resources visiting in the Povungnituk-Port Harrison area saw the improvement in the local economy as a result of Houston's test purchases in 1949. Alert to any possibilities of improving Eskimo economy, they contacted the Handicraft Guild and encouraged them to purchase more carvings by granting them financial aid toward transportation of carvings to the south.

In these early days of the development of the Eskimo soapstone carving industry, the above three organizations - the Canadian Handicraft Guild, the Hudson's Bay Company, and the Canadian government - closely cooperated in developing the industry. However, their motives for encouraging the movement differed. The Canadian government was primarily interested in improving the plight of the economically depressed Eskimos of the Hudson Bay area; the Canadian Handicraft Guild was interested in promoting a new, interesting, and possibly profitable art form for which they established a marketing monopoly; and the Hudson's Bay Company was protecting its trading monopoly in the Canadian Arctic.

During these early stages of the soapstone carving industry, the carvings were purchased in the Arctic by James Houston, and later also by Hudson's Bay trading post managers, who shipped them south to the Handicraft Guild which was the sole distributor. In 1953 the Guild

expanded the market by authorizing Eugene Power of Ann Arbor, Michigan to handle the distribution of Eskimo carvings in the United States by means of a non-profit corporation known as Eskimo Art, Inc. (Although the two above organizations still distribute soapstone carvings today (1965) Eskimo art objects are also sold through mission organizations, in Hudson's Bay stores throughout Canada, and by Canadian retailers who purchase carvings directly from the Canadian Department of Northern Affairs.)

The five years following the initial purchase exhibit in 1949 were years of expansion for the carving industry. By the middle 1950s soapstone carving had become 'big business' for all concerned - the Eskimos, the Hudson's Bay Company, the Handicraft Guild, and the Department of Northern Affairs. It had, through government encouragement, spread throughout all the Canadian Arctic, including those areas where stone carving was not a traditional craft, and indeed, in areas where soapstone was available only through importation. An estimated seventy-five to eighty per cent of the Eskimos in areas where sculpture production had been introduced were carving. (Houston 1952:104) Since the first sale in 1949, approximately twenty-five thousand pieces of sculpture had been placed on the market and sold. (Leechman 1955:) At this time Povungnituk and Sugluk on the eastern shore of Hudson Bay were the two largest producers of soapstone carvings. Men, women and children were carving and selling their products.

Meanwhile, James Houston had settled at Cape Dorset on Baffin Island where he was appointed Area Administrator for the Department of Northern Affairs. Houston continued to work with Eskimo craftsmen of this area and eventually the Cape Dorset Eskimos became known as the most skilled carvers and artists of the Canadian Arctic.

In 1957, in response to a failing market for soap-

stone carvings, a center for the development of arts and crafts was established at Cape Dorset under Houston's direction. (This center was to become the first Eskimo cooperative.) The center's primary concern was to develop new art forms which could be produced for the southern market at a profit. Soapstone carving trade had begun to fall off and the market was becoming glutted with inferior works. The center was sponsored jointly by the Department of Northern Affairs which provided a building for the craftsmen and technical assistance - we assume in the form of James Houston - while the Hudson's Bay Company furnished the raw materials for the artists and marketed the resulting products. The Eskimo craftsmen were salaried and the salaries were charged against the finished artistic products. (Anon. Steps Toward Tomorrow. 1962: 2)

The Dorset artists experimented with different materials for carving as well as with other crafts. One of the biggest problems facing the center was the procurement of new craft materials. Raw materials, such as wood, had to be flown in from the south or brought by boat, both processes making the experimental method economically risky. In the first year the Hudson's Bay Company was barely able to regain the price of the raw materials they imported from further south.

It was in this atmosphere that graphics production was developed at the Cape Dorset center. This craft was to prove as successful and profitable to the Eskimos as soapstone carving. The production of prints was an ideal activity for the Cape Dorset Eskimos. The basic materials were locally available - soapstone to make blocks for lithographing and seal-skins to make stencil prints. The blocks and stencils were printed on thin tough tissue paper which could be air-shipped in at a low cost by the Hudson's Bay Company. The fin-

ished prints were also easily transported, and if the production of each individual design was limited, a higher price could be charged.

The first series of Eskimo prints were flown south in December of 1959. An appointed committee of Canadian art experts examined them, determined their quality, and set prices. The first purchase exhibit of Eskimo prints at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts realized a gross profit of twenty-five thousand dollars ($25,000) for the Eskimo cooperative. A year later in the spring of 1961, the Dorset Cooperative had banked sixty-three thousand dollars ($63,000) profit from the sale of prints. Pleased with their first venture in production as a cooperative, the Dorset Eskimos explored other fields - fishing and trapping for sale to local people, a bakery, tourist facilities, and a general store. All were successful. (Anon. Steps Towards Tomorrow 1962: 1-5)

The Cape Dorset Cooperative's example, which successfully developed and exploited an original art form, led to the establishment of sixteen or seventeen additional Eskimo cooperatives within the next two years. Their activities ranged from handicraft production to house building and from commercial fishing to grocery stores.

In 1962 James Houston left the Department of Northern Affairs and the Arctic to take a position in American private industry. He left behind him an established Eskimo industry based upon the creation of art objects which had developed from the casual carving of soapstone toys to business-like cooperatives in twelve years.

To summarize, the soapstone carving industry, introduced from the outside to the Canadian Eskimos at a time of economic depression, appealed to the trapper-hunters as an alternate means of livelihood. Based on the basic idea of commodity production for the western market, this industry developed entirely through out-

side influence. Although large numbers of Eskimos became 'artists' as a result of this promise of added income, they worked on a piecework basis and traded the finished products to those same contact specialists with whom they were used to dealing as trappers. The Eskimo artists were creating art objects for a vast unseen audience; the actual marketing of the sculpture was left to the outsiders. The art style which grew out of this situation in which the Eskimo artists were motivated to carve primarily by economic incentives is the subject of our next section.

THE STYLISTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF SOAPSTONE CARVINGS

Materials and Techniques - Soapstone

Modern Canadian Eskimo carvers work primarily with easily carved soapstone. Soapstone, or steatite, has been used in the North American Arctic for at least two thousand years. Its use by the peoples of the Dorset culture in central Canada and the Old Bering Sea culture in Alaska have been noted. (DeLaguna 1940: 53-76) Its most common use until recent times was for the making of flat lamps used for illumination, heating, and cooking. These lamps, basically alike in design, were used throughout the Arctic from Alaska to Greenland although soapstone deposits are found primarily in the central Hudson Bay area and in the Coronation Gulf area.

Soapstone has been considered a precious commodity by the Eskimos since prehistoric times. Where soapstone was not available locally, it was obtained through trade. Boas recorded that among the Central Eskimo:

> Two desiderata formed the principal inducement to long journey (before European influence) which sometimes lasted even several years: wood and soapstone. (Boas 1885: 469)

Soapstone mines were scattered about the central Arctic although "it is found in a few places only, and very rarely in pieces large enough for the manufacture of lamps and pots . (Boas 1885: 469) Boas mentions the following areas where the Eskimos mined soapstone: Kautaz and Qeqertelung at Cumberland Sound; Qarmaqdjuin (Exeter Bay); and Committee Bay. (Boas 1885: 469) Although a few Eskimo camps were accessible to mines, most Eskimos had to travel to them on overnight or longer journeys.

The difficulties of mining soapstone are magnified by the fact that many traditional mines can not be mined the year around. Houston mentions one mine at Akeeaktolaolavik where the soapstone is under fifteen feet of water part of the year - a not uncommon feature he observes. (Houston 1954: 15) The stone is quarried seasonally when the waters recede and is removed by using a harder stone as a hammer to break pieces from the main bed. Such a traditional mining technique is somewhat wasteful in that the Eskimo may not always break off the sizes and shapes which are most valuable to him.

In other areas, soapstone may be more readily available. Willmott mentions such mines near Port Harrison on the east coast of Hudson Bay:

> Each camp has one or two soapstone mines which they visit every time their stock runs low. The Inukpak mine, for example, is located a day's journey north of the camp. Here the men dig pieces of soapstone from under the gravel as well as gathering a few good pieces scattered on the beach. Each piece is tested with a hatchet to assure smoothness and softness . . . (Willmott 1961:)

A certain amount of ritual, which Boas called "buying from the rock" was connected with traditional mining. This occurred when visitors to the mines left offerings such as ivory carvings, beads, and food in exchange for

the soapstone they took. (Boas 1885: 469, 596) It is possible that this custom is no longer practiced as it was not mentioned by any fieldworkers in the 1950s.

Large pieces of soapstone were needed in the pre-contact period to make lamps and pots, as they were carved from a single stone. However, the precious quality of the stone is reflected in the practice of making vessels from small fragments of soapstone when large pieces were not available. The small pieces were cemented together using a mixture of seal's blood, clay and hair. The patched together vessels, after being hung over a lighted lamp to dry, were ready for use. (Boas 1885: 526)

Small pieces of soapstone not used in lamp-making or fragments from broken vessels were sometimes utilized to make small representational carvings, mainly of tools and utensils carved in miniature. These may have been used as toys, although there is also evidence that they were used as grave offerings. After European contact, small fragments were also used to carve figures which could be traded to white visitors. In 1888 John Murdoch mentions such tourist-oriented sculptures from Point Barrow in the western Arctic:

> We brought home a series of seventy-nine objects which may be considered as purely works of art without reference to decoration. Some of the older objects of this series perhaps also served the purpose of amulets or charms, but a number of the new ones were made simply as works of fancy for sale to us. (Murdoch 1888:391)

Although walrus ivory was the most common material from which the above objects were carved, Murdoch mentions that:

> Soapstone, from the ease with which it can be cut, is also rather a favorite material. Seventeen of these carvings

> are made of soapstone, in many cases evidently pieces of an old lamp or kettle. Other mineral substances appear to be rarely used. (Murdoch 1888:392)

Although the traditional methods of mining put natural limits upon the amount of stone available at any one time, the accelerated expenditure of soapstone resources since 1949 under the government-sponsored carving industry has practically depleted the traditional mines. This situation was speeded up by the practice of the Canadian government and the Hudson's Bay Company of introducing stone carving into areas where economic stimulation was desired but where there was no tradition of soapstone carving and no raw materials. Stone was shipped by boat to Coppermine, Bathurst Inlet, and other areas where carving in stone was introduced and instruction was given in techniques.

By 1960, the industry was advancing at a faster rate than soapstone could be supplied. Although soapstone was still being mined in traditional fashion at Rankin Inlet on the west coast of Hudson Bay and some was being mined on the east coast of the Bay, most deposits convenient to Eskimo settlements had been worked out. In 1961, the Department of Northern Affairs announced that it had contracted for thirty-five tons of soapstone to be shipped from the south by a Quebec company. This was estimated to supply the Eskimo carvers with stone supplies for one year. (Anon. Eskimo Carvers Aided. 1961: 5) This scarcity of soapstone led carvers to experiment with other local stones, but soapstone continued to be the favored material because it was the softest and easiest to carve.

In summary it may be said that the traditional use to which soapstone was put by the Eskimo has changed. The soapstone lamp of precontact Eskimo culture is sel-

dom made or used today. It has been replaced with sheet-metal copies and purchased cooking pans. However, soapstone, if anything, is even more precious to the Eskimos than it was in precontact times, but the carving industry has created an unnatural demand that has drained local resources. When eighty per cent of the Eskimo men of a community are full or part-time stone carvers, a large and steady supply of soapstone is needed. The practice of the government and trading posts of importing stone to supply carvers has given the carving industry a sense of artificiality.

Most interesting to us from the standpoint of the stylistic characteristics of soapstone carvings is the very nature of the raw material. Soapstone, in traditional Eskimo culture, was used for utilitarian household implements that called for little refinement in carving; today it is used almost exclusively as an art medium. It has replaced ivory as the preferred material for sculpture and by its very nature and way in which it must be handled has led to changes in Eskimo art style.

Materials and Techniques - Tools and Methods

The quality of ease of workability mentioned above has made soapstone a popular material and has contributed to its ready acceptance as a material for sculpture. Water-softened soapstone is easily carved with blades of harder stone or metal.

In the early stages of the soapstone carving industry, the traditional techniques used to shape stone lamps and pots were merely adapted to the carving of representational figures. Today more refined and individualistic techniques have been devised.

The basic tools used in carving are adzes, hand drills, reamers, files, and a kind of stone-saw. These tools are a combination of unaltered traditional tools,

modern tools purchased at the trading posts, modified modern tools, and a combination of the two. Stone blades and points are used less today and have been largely replaced by hand-fashioned metal tools. Where scrap metal is available the Eskimo craftsman shapes it to fit bone or antler handles. Each Eskimo carver makes his own tools to his own specifications. However, if available, many Eskimo artists today prefer to use manufactured tools: hacksaws, blades, metal rasps, rat-tail files and steel points for the bow drill, but they have not yet adopted the basic sledge-hammer and chisel techniques of European sculptors.

Each Eskimo artist approaches carving in his own way, but a general sequence of steps can be distinguished. The carver does not usually have a specific subject in mind when he sits down to carve, but first carefully studies the size and shape of the soapstone block. Once he has determined his subject, the preliminary roughing out of the figure is done with an adze. The preference for the adze can be traced back to precontact Eskimo culture. Today in many areas the European-style hatchet has replaced the adze for this job. (Turner 1963:135)

After the preliminary outline is defined, the modern craftsman turns to a variety of metal files; or, if files are not available, he uses harder stones and stone dust to smooth and round the rough shapes. This is combined with the use of knives and scrapers. Once the surface is smooth, a knife is used to incise fine detail and if the artist wishes to add further detail, the bow-drill may be used to drill holes for decorative effect or for inserting ivory plugs. When the last detail is completed to the artist's satisfaction, final polishing is done with varying coarsenesses of stone and stone dust. Sandpaper may be used today. Most carvings are

then soaked in seal oil for several days. This serves the purpose of darkening the stone and giving it a rich surface which the original gray, slightly chalky, stone lacks. The carving is then removed from the oil and rubbed first with stone dust and then between the artist's hands until its surface has the desired shine and luster.

The following passage written by a visitor to the Cape Dorset Eskimo community graphically portrays an Eskimo carver at work:

> Crossing the slope from one part of the Dorset community to another, we found the explanation to a tapping which had for some time echoed consistently over the every-day sound of children playing and dogs barking. The noise was made by Kiakshuk shaping a figure from stone with a hatchet. As we approached he paused to light a cigarette. Grinning at me he observed that carving with a hatchet was a hard job.
>
> The form of an Eskimo mother in her parka was gradually emerging from the stone. Seeing his carving technique was particularly interesting. Eskimo sculptors generally use a hatchet to create the first outline of the form. Then a succession of files is used to develop the various parts, and draw such details as features, patterns and textures. The final quality of the surface in the best pieces depends upon the sculptor rubbing the piece with his hands, with or without an abrasive. (Turner 1963:230)

The Stylistic Characteristics of Soapstone Sculpture

The 'modern art' of the Canadian Arctic - the soapstone carving and print-making industries - represent a new phase in Eskimo art history. Soapstone carvings differ just as much in style, or more, from Thule sculpture as Thule art did from Dorset art; and because soap-

stone carving is, in part, introduced from Western civilization some of its features are peculiarly non-Eskimo. (As this thesis deals only with modern Eskimo sculpture, I shall not further discuss the print-making industry. However, I shall remark in passing that print-making in the central Arctic is the outgrowth of a program of deliberate artistic experimentation encouraged by the Cape Dorset Cooperative and bears little relation to traditional Eskimo art styles.)

The human figure appears to be the most popular subject for the artist, while animal figures including seals, walrus, bears, and birds are also very common and occasionally household objects, including 'igloos', are represented.

The human figure is represented in almost every Eskimo daily situation and is always shown fully clothed. Practically every activity of the Eskimo hunter is depicted by the carvers, as is women's life. Occasionally all the elements of small scenes, such as a hunter dragging a dead seal back to camp, are carved and mounted upon a base. The intentional humor which many artists display in the development of individual sculptures has been commented on by more than one art critic.

Animal carvings, particularly those that represent seal and walrus, are distinguished by their smooth rounded surfaces. There is definite appeal to the tactile sense not only in the flowing lines of the form but in the carefully oiled and smoothed surface. Those who equate modern soapstone carving with traditional Eskimo sculpture feel that this appeal to the tactile sense is deliberately sought because the sculpture is:

> intended to be enjoyed by passing it from hand to hand, rather than by standing it on a shelf; therefore the quality of the stone to the touch is as important as its appeal to the eye.

> This characteristic is so strongly developed that almost all of those to whom I have shown Eskimo carvings for the first time have immediately put out their hands to stroke the smooth curves. (Winter 1958:156)

Despite the undenied appeal to the touch of Eskimo sculpture, most modern soapstone carvings are no longer suitable to be used as 'finger-pieces'. This is due to two modifications which can be traced specifically to the desire to appeal to the southern market. These are (1) increased size, and (2) the addition of a base to the figure so it can be set upon a shelf or other flat surface. Traditional sculpture was not displayed except by handling so a piece did not need to stand up.

Individual carvings today vary from approximately six inches to twenty inches in height. The trend toward larger sculptures is motivated by the fact that more money is paid for a larger work which involves less labor than several smaller ones which would make a comparable value. The figures are usually made with a flat base because purchasers prefer sculpture which can be set up and admired from a distance. Because bases are added, the figures often, but not always, are made with a "favored side for viewing." (Carpenter 1961: 362)

Soapstone carvings give the impression of being bulky and solid with few projecting parts and have a sense of weightiness and compactness characterized by the constant use of curves. The straight line is rare in soapstone sculpture. Various surface textures are added by many artists but they do not, on the whole, detract from the basic forms.

Another characteristic of modern soapstone carving that is not immediately apparent upon examination is that today's Eskimo sculpture is no longer anonymous in the way of most of the world's folk art. The pieces are

usually signed on the bottom by the artist, a practice encouraged in the early stages of the industry by Houston and others.

At least one anthropologist has attempted to correlate this trend away from anonymity in art with a growing awareness of individualism in the rapidly acculturating Eskimos.

> Modern Eskimo . . . art is not a thing, an object, no longer an act, a ritual: . . . most pieces are now characterized by a base, a favored point of view, 3-dimensional perspective, etc. all of which reflect growing individualism, an aggressive self-concept that seeks to possess and control the external world, in contrast to the traditional, aboriginal techniques of multiple perspective, visual puns, 3-dimensional x-ray or openwork sculpture, etc., which reflect a less assertive, less individual self-concept. (Carpenter 1961: 362)

Such assertions, however, appear to need more documentation than Carpenter is able to supply.

We have outlined above the basic stylistic characteristics of modern soapstone carving. If we compare these with those of traditional Eskimo sculpture of the area we find the following changes have taken place:

(1) soapstone is the primary material for carving;
(2) carvings are significantly larger;
(3) human figures are represented fully clothed;
(4) a flat base has been added to most carvings;
(5) carvings have a "favored side for viewing; and
(6) sculpture is signed by the artist.

How these alien elements were introduced and why the changes took place is the subject of our next section.

The Development of Soapstone Sculpture Style

To understand how modern soapstone carving differs from traditional Eskimo art, it must be remembered that from the inception of commercial soapstone carving it was created for sale to a southern audience. Although all three organizations involved - the Canadian government, the Canadian Handicraft Guild and the Hudson's Bay Company - disclaim any attempt to have changed in any way the indigenous methods of carving, it was soon evident that Eskimo stone carving was no longer a traditional Thule-derived art form. Rather it was a commodity being produced by the Eskimos for an unseen Western audience and which the Eskimos viewed primarily as an economic activity and only secondarily as an aesthetic activity. The success or failure of stylistic innovations was dependent upon their popularity with the buying public to the south in the urban areas of Canada and the United States. For this reason, the Eskimo artists, isolated from their ultimate audience, were dependent upon advisors such as Houston to suggest ways in which they could best appeal to potential customers.

In 1951, less than three years after Houston 'discovered' Eskimo art, the Handicraft Guild and the Department of Resources and Development of the Canadian government cooperatively published a booklet, Eskimo Handicrafts, written in Eskimo orthography and English for distribution to would-be artists. The booklet, illustrated by James Houston, pictures typical pieces of Eskimo handicraft as examples of the kind of product which is acceptable for sale to the white man. In the introduction the following statement is made:

> This pamphlet is published in Eskimo
> for the people of the Canadian Arctic,
> to encourage them in their native arts.
> It is hoped that these illustrations
> will suggest some of their objects

> which are useful and acceptable to the white man. Although the articles are not produced in all regions of the Arctic they are purely Eskimo and could be made wherever materials are available. These suggestions should in no way limit the Eskimo. He should be encouraged to make variations and introduce new ideas into his handicraft. (Houston 1951A)

It also includes such admonishments as:

> Stone objects should not have delicate projecting portions which may be easily broken. (Houston 1951A: 1)

The pictured carvings in this booklet, which received wide circulation in the central Arctic, include such diverse items as ashtrays and totem poles. How many less talented and unorginal Eskimos copied these pictured carvings is not known because of the early policy of suppressing those carvings which were of inferior quality or unsuitable subject matter. Although all carvings were purchased from the Eskimos, not all found their way to the southern market. Today, fifteen years after the carving industry started, warehouses full of inferior Eskimo carvings still exist. (M. Maxwell. Personal communication 1964) However, one is inclined to deplore the lack of sense of humor of the pre-judgers of Eskimo art who destroyed as not authentic Eskimo carvings representing a kangaroo and an Edsel car which were produced by tubercular Eskimos in a southern sanatorium. (Carpenter 1960: 347)

Further examination of the illustrations in Eskimo Handicrafts reveals that the idea of putting a base on sculpture was suggested, as well as the portrayal of fully dressed human figures. It must have also offered the Eskimos their introduction to that fine American institution - the souvenir ashtray.

No consideration of the development of Eskimo soap-

stone carving style is complete unless we take into account that James Houston was a trained artist in the European tradition. He worked in the Arctic from 1948 to 1962 in various capacities encouraging the production and sale of Eskimo art. There can be no doubt that during this period, through his advice, buying policy, and encouragement, he influenced the individual style and subjects of many native carvers. Evidence pointing to such influence is cited by Edmund Carpenter:

> During a 1959 Royal Visit to the Stratford (Ontario) Festival, one of the Eskimo carvers exhibiting (and being exhibited) there, was asked how he decided what to carve, he replied innocently that he consulted Mr. Houston because he had no desire to produce anything unappealing to White men and therefore unsaleable. (Carpenter 1960: 347)

When the industry expanded so that Houston could no longer act as the sole purchasing agent, the Hudson's Bay Company managers at each post took over the job. These men were not trained artists, and as often as not were not even interested in the arts. Their criteria of excellence and judgement of stone carvings no doubt influenced the local artists. Although at present we can only speculate, a field study of the influence of individual white men on regional variations of style would probably reveal some interesting insights.

By the early 1950s soapstone carving was being encouraged all over the Canadian Arctic as an economic aid. Houston was happy to report that in 1952:

> In this first step into industry, we find the Canadian Eskimo clever and energetic. He is delighted with the opportunity to improve his living (and to avoid the necessity of Government relief) through the creation

> of art. Over 75% of those in any group we have yet to meet take an active part in producing saleable work. (Houston 1952:104)

Underlying such enthusiasm lurks the possibility that perhaps a full seventy-five per cent of the population were not particularly talented artists. The carver's desire to "improve his living" was such that he was overly receptive to suggestions to make his work more acceptable to the white man. E. N. Turner, deploring this tendency which extended over into the print-making industry, in 1963 says:

> The example of Povungnituk over the last two or three years is the best possible warning of the results that can be expected from over-enthusiastic coaching inspired by misled good intentions and/or an intense desire to raise funds as quickly as possible to alleviate the considerable deprivation of the community. We have already found that the graphic artists produced work of inferior quality having no individualism when the artists had been "instructed" that the "pinks" to the south liked bright colors, clean contours, amusing anecdotes and other such specific criteria. Whereas when, under the guidance of Victor Tinkl, who arrived at Povungnituk at the end of July 1962, the graphic artists were told to do as they wished and were given no preconceived notion of what would sell, they produced works of strength in which individual styles and attitudes quickly became evident.
>
> But unfortunatley, the problem of well-intentioned advice continues. Nothing indicates this more clearly than the two identical carvings of a subject we saw in Povungnituk. This is a remarkable phenomenon since the Eskimo carver does not repeat his subjects. But, even more serious, the subject was a crucifix, which to the Eskimo is a relatively meaningless subject since there are no practicing Eskimo Catholics in the community even though the mission's hall is a leading meeting place of Povungni-

tuk. (Turner 1963:226)

A step toward eliminating the problem of well-intentioned but unskilled advice was the establishment of the Canadian Eskimo Art Committee in September 1961. The Committee consisting of several prominent Canadian artists (no Eskimos) was formed at the request of the Cape Dorset Cooperative with the understanding that other cooperatives were free to use its services. The committee acts primarily as a screening device for the release of Eskimo carvings and graphics to the southern markets. Although evidence is not available, it would seem likely that the formation and influence of this committee has acted to standardize and define the Eskimo soapstone carving and print-making styles.

To summarize, the Canadian Eskimos have developed a hybrid style of art under a program of deliberate stimulation by administrative whites. Creating for a southern market, they have had to evolve a style that is readily recognizable as Eskimo but which will also appeal to people whose taste rests with the aesthetic traditions of Western civilization. To do this, in their isolated communities, they have had to rely on the advice of government administrators and traders as to what appeals to the southern whites. In the earliest stages of the industry the influence from local whites was particularly strong and led to the adoption of many characteristics that are today an integral part of Eskimo soapstone sculpture style.

Speaking in broad terms, it can be said that contemporary Eskimo soapstone sculpture displays an artistic style in which the subject matter is completely and uniquely Eskimo, while the formal elements by which the theme is developed are adopted from the stylistic characteristics of European-style sculpture. The same holds true for Eskimo prints.

THE IMPACT OF THE SOAPSTONE CARVING INDUSTRY ON ESKIMO CULTURE

A comparison of the stylstic characteristics of modern soapstone sculpture with those of traditional art forms of the area shows that a new Eskimo art period has emerged. However, the definition of this new art style is incomplete if we consider only the stylistic characteristics; we must also take into account the effects of this art industry on the socio-economic sphere of Eskimo culture. If we examine the function of soapstone carving in contemporary Eskimo culture and its effects, we will find that the role of art production has undergone definite transitions from old culture patterns to new.

To analyse the impact that the soapstone carving industry has had upon Eskimo culture, I propose to examine the effects of the introduction of this economic activity upon one Eskimo settlement - Povungnituk. Povungnituk was one of the two Eskimo communities first "discovered" by James Houston in 1949 and participated in the first soapstone sculpture test purchase. This settlement, perhaps more than any other, exemplifies what can happen to a community under the impact of an accelerated tourist art industry.

Povungnituk (1949 to 1963) - a case study

Povungnituk, located on the east shore of Hudson Bay and four miles inland on the Povungnituk River, consisted (in 1958) of an Eskimo village, a Hudson's Bay trading post, and a Catholic mission. In this year Povungnituk was the largest producer of soapstone carvings in the Canadian Arctic.

Approximately two hundred and thirty Eskimos lived within three miles of the Hudson's Bay Post and supported

themselves largely through the manufacturing of soapstone carvings which they sold to the Post. Only occasional hunting and fishing trips were made by these Eskimos. However, an additional population of approximately one hundred and fifty-five Eskimos in that area still pursued the traditional hunting and trapping economy and came to the settlement only to trade for supplies. In this community soapstone carving had practically replaced all other means of livelihood.

In 1949 Houston bought one thousand dollars ($1000) worth of carvings from the Eskimos of the Povungnituk-Port Harrison area. The carvers at that time were primarily hunter-trappers, and only spare-time artist-carvers. By 1955 artist-specialists had appeared and the total income for carvings from Povungnituk alone was figured at eleven thousand dollars ($11,000). In 1956 this had risen to thirty-seven thousand dollars ($37,000) and by 1957 it was forty-two thousand dollars ($42,000). In this same period at Povungnituk the income from trapping had dropped from thirty-four thousand, three hundred and seventy-six dollars ($34,376) in 1955 to a low of three thousand, two hundred and eighty-five dollars ($3,285) in 1956 which rose to five thousand dollars ($5000) in 1957. (Canada. Dept. of N.A. & N.R. Arctic Div., Devel. Sec. 1958: 20) The tremendous drop in hunting income in 1956 was in part due to the cyclic fluctuation of the white fox population, but the corresponding rise in the income from soapstone carving reflected at the same time a tendency on the part of the Eskimos to devote more time to handicraft production. As a result, because time was more profitably spent in carving than in laying trapping lines when so few fox were to be caught, the Eskimo carvers tended to settle close to the Hudson's Bay Trading Post where they could trade the carvings for goods quickly.

A more sedentary life, with foodstuffs largely obtained from the trading store, meant that many hunting tools could be disposed of and that the large dog team was no longer economically feasible and so was reduced. A by-product of this sedentary life was impaired health and poor nutrition as the foods obtained at the stores did not serve them as well as the traditional fresh meat diet. The Povungnituk Eskimo artists were becoming less dependent upon the land and almost completely dependent upon the trading post for their basic needs.

By 1960 it was estimated that about four hundred and seventy-five Eskimos formed a carving community at Povungnituk. In that year, in response to the economic deprivation of the area, a cooperative was founded at Povungnituk with its economic basis dependent upon the soapstone carving industry. This cooperative was established upon the advice of the Department of Northern Affairs after the success of the Cape Dorset Cooperative was established. By 1963, large numbers of soapstone carvings were being produced by the Povungnituk Cooperative. E. H. Turner, who visited the community in 1963, found that:

> In the two week period preceding our visit the Bay had purchased about a hundred and seventy-five carvings, and the cooperative apparently even more. (Turner 1963:226)

However the number of carvings produced did not necessarily mean that the Eskimo of Povungnituk were enjoying relative prosperity, for Turner further states:

> We were told that the number of Povungnituk and Port Harrison carvings purchased last season and still left on the market were so considerable that the Bay agents throughout the Arctic had been told to pay less high prices this season. (Turner 1963: 226)

In the meantime, the Cape Dorset Cooperative continued to successfully market its art products and to add several new facets to its operations.

If we analyze, from the published information available, why the Povungnituk Cooperative was not as successful as the Cape Dorset Cooperative there would appear to be two basic reasons: (1) Povungnituk's complete reliance upon art products as the basis of economic gain, and (2) the lack of a forceful and knowledgable technical advisor to guide them.

Povungnituk Eskimos, as we noted above, gained very little income from hunting, and opportunities for wage employment were practically nonexistent. Soapstone carving was the only sure way of making a living in the late 1950s, and many men became artists not so much out of desire as out of necessity. We can assume that not all individuals who practiced this profession were equally adept. However, because this industry had been introduced and subsidised by the Canadian government as an economic measure, those persons who did not have natural ability as artists could not be punished for their lack of artistic talent. All carvings were purchased, although better prices were paid to the more skillful artists. Nevertheless, it was inevitable that large numbers of inferior carvings were released on the market. This tendency was aggravated, according to Turner, by the cooperative's purchasing policy.

> We feel that the reason great numbers of poor carvings from Povungnituk have been released on the Canadian market is the method of purchase presently followed by the cooperative in that community: Eskimos are entirely responsible for purchasing carvings from other Eskimos. The danger of payment being influenced by personal sympathies is inevitable. But, much graver, as the committee's work with this cooperative has already shown, there is no

> reason whatsoever that an Eskimo should have a relative sense of quality in assessing another Eskimo's work; he will know what appeals to him, and in many cases that appeal has no relation to quality. (Turner 1963:126)

A continued good market was extremely important to this cooperative because expansion in other directions was dependent upon the initial economic gain from art production. In the early 1960s, Povungnituk's artistic products were judged "inferior" by the Eskimo Art Committee, and accordingly the market was poor.

This leads us to the second problem which afflicted Povungnituk. When one makes a living from art prduction, one must be very aware of the fluctuating tastes of the market. The Povungnituk artists, like all other Canadian Eskimo carvers, were handicapped by the fact that they were creating for an unseen audience. This made them most receptive to suggestions as to what would appeal to the ultimate purchasers of their art products. It is for this reason that the role of the technical advisor to the cooperative was so important. Unfortunately, while Cape Dorset had James Houston, who had already proved his marketing acumen, Povungnituk Cooperative did not fare as well. Turner, as a member of the Eskimo Art Committee, felt that the production of inferior carvings was due largely to the technical advisor of Povungnituk whose "well-intentioned advice" and "over-enthusiastic coaching" led to a further decline in the quality of art produced. (Turner 1963:) The Povungnituk Cooperative's attempts at graphics were twice rejected by the Eskimo Art Committee as being "imitations of the famous works . . . produced in Cape Dorset," and never reached the market. (Anon. Can. Esk. Art Sale Announced. 1963)

The decline of artistic quality at Povungnituk was alleviated in 1962 when Victor Tinkel was appointed the

new technical advisor to the cooperative. Tinkel, like Houston, was an artist and was apparently better able to guide the carver-artists to create individual styles which, at the same time, were acceptable to the southern market. Under his direction, the Eskimos developed a Povungnituk style of graphics which was immediately accepted by the Eskimo Art Committee as suitable for the southern market. From that point the cooperative was a going concern and was able to expand in other directions. That same year Povungnituk became the first Eskimo cooperative to establish a credit-union.

The example of Povungnituk illustrates the extreme to which a tourist art industry can be carried. The very fact that carving was identified with the economic sphere immediately took art production out of its traditional role. Carving, which was a spare-time pleasurable activity in traditional Eskimo culture, became a means of livelihood. Because carving provided a more stable means of livelihood than trapping, many Eskimos turned to carving exclusively. Art became to them primarily an economic activity. With this identification came the pressures of producing enough art objects in both quantity and quality so as to support a family. The pleasurable aspect of carving under such pressures must have been reduced. Once committed to such a way of life, new patterns of everyday living evolved. As carving was an easier way of making a living than trapping and hunting, the latter was abandoned. This meant that supplies of food and clothing which were once at least partially accounted for by hunting and trapping had to be obtained in their entirety from the white man's trading post. There was no reason for a semi-nomadic life if carving was a full-time occupation, so the carvers and their families settled within easy travel-

ing distance of the trading post. In Povungnituk the population of the settlement swelled as more and more carvers settled there. This move not only meant that the Eskimos were adopting a higher percentage of western-style goods from the trading posts, but it also meant increased social contact with other Eskimo families resulting in changes in social relations as well as crowded living conditions with resultant health problems. It also very probably speeded the processes of acculturation affecting the Eskimos. By settling near the trading post and the mission they were in almost daily contact with those white contact specialists whose job it was to fit the Eskimos for entrance into the world of twentieth century civilization.

The Future of the Soapstone Carving Industry

The future of the Eskimo soapstone carving industry in the central Canadian Arctic is uncertain. This sixteen year old industry, which is dependent upon the marketing of art objects to the south, already shows signs of waning. It is not only at Povungnituk that the artistic quality of carving has declined. In 1964 a gift shop proprietor in Port Arthur, Ontario revealed to me that many merchants of that city were having difficulties marketing the Eskimo carvings they had, and they subsequently refused to purchase more. A Detroit handicrafts importer wrote:

> When we started to see carved stone seals with built-in ash-trays, we got out of the Eskimo sculpture business . . .

In 1960 art production was the "main dollar earner" for Canadian Eskimos, according to Commissioner Gordon Robertson. (Anon. Art Appears Replacing Trapping... 1961) Fur sales at that time accounted for only thirty cents (30¢) on the dollar while seventy cents (70¢) came

from prints and carvings plus cooperative ventures. Robertson estimated that over one million dollars ($1,000,000) worth of carvings had been marketed by the Eskimos since 1950.

One year later, the passing of soapstone carving was being publically regretted:

> If you have any Eskimo carvings, keep them. They'll soon be irreplaceable . . . (Anon. Montreal Gazette. 1962)

To many Eskimos soapstone carving as a money-making activity has been a stop-gap measure in their integration into the Western money economy. As better means of earning a living, such as wage jobs, become available, carving is abandoned. In fact, many Eskimos willingly give up soapstone carving production when local hunting conditions improve. (Maxwell, personal communication. 1964; Graburn, personal communication. 1964)

My guess is that the future of both soapstone carving and print-making lies with the talented few Eskimo individuals who prefer artistic activity over all other means of livelihood. This also includes the misfits and physically handicapped to whom carving is one of the few professions open to them. The Eskimo cooperatives are laying the groundwork for the evolution of a class of artist-specialists who will function much as artists in our own society. Experimental programs at the cooperatives have been aimed at helping the affiliated individual artist to establish and maintain creative independence and integrity. This growth of an individualistic class of artist-specialists, in my opinion, will be the final result of the soapstone carving tourist art industry of the Canadian Arctic.

CHAPTER IV

THE CONTEMPORARY IVORY CARVERS OF ALASKA

The Eskimos of the coastal area of Alaska have been in direct contact with the white man since the early nineteenth century. That is, they have dealt directly with white visitors rather than through contact specialists such as traders and government administrators as the central Arctic Eskimos did. The coastal Eskimo villages have been in seasonal contact with American and European whaling ships since the middle of the nineteenth century. The change from an Eskimo subsistence economy toward participation in a western-style money economy was a natural consequence as numbers of outsiders seasonally invaded their territory. The desirability of European trade goods spurred the Eskimos to the production or acquisition of items which could be traded to the white visitors. During the early contact days these transactions involved mainly natural materials such as baleen, raw ivory, and furs. Later when more prefessional white traders appeared fox pelts became the big item of trade.

Handicrafts and carvings were also used early as trade items, although in a limited sense as the demand for such things was souvenir-oriented. This early souvenir trade was limited to the exchange of unaltered cultural objects, although, by 1888, John Murdoch was able to report that the Eskimos of Point Barrow were making small carvings for the sole purpose of trading them to outsiders. (Murdoch 1888:)

The historical period in Alaska, as discussed in Chapter II, was a time in which the artistic production of the Eskimos was marked by degeneration, and less

carving and decoration of tools was being done than in the past. The traditional reasons for carving ivory were vanishing during the contact period as metal tools and rifles were fast replacing traditional ivory harpoon heads, knives and other hand-fashioned tools.

A new reason to carve ivory was found in the demands by outsiders for souvenirs, and a tourist art industry was born. As mentioned above, the Alaskan Eskimos had considered carvings as an item of trade since at least 1888, but we will count the start of the tourist art industry from the time when carving first came to be considered by some Eskimos as a primary means of livelihood.

The modern Eskimo ivory carvers of Nome, Alaska say that the "first carving known" was made by Happy Jack and "there were no carvers when we were young boys." (Ray 1961: 25) They are acknowledging the first successful tourist artist of that area who, at the turn of the century, produced modifications of traditional Eskimo art forms and made his living by selling his products to whites. The emergence of a definable tourist art industry in Alaska is linked with the activities of this one Eskimo man - Angokwazhuk, or Happy Jack (c1873 - 1918) of Little Diomede Island.

A HISTORY OF THE IVORY CARVING INDUSTRY

In 1892 a whaling ship commanded by Captain Hardson Bodfish took a passenger on board at Little Diomede Island off the coastline of Alaska. This passenger was an Eskimo by the name of Angokwazhuk who, a few months before at the age of nineteen, lost both feet as the result of a hunting accident. It was the custom at the time for whaling ships to take Eskimo men and women as crew members for specialized jobs such as seamstresses, hunters, and tool makers. Captain Bodfish was extremely

interested in Eskimo art and took Angokwazhuk along because the Eskimo had gained a local reputation as an exceptional carver. His primary duty on board ship was to produce carvings from walrus ivory. During this voyage he was dubbed 'Happy Jack', a name which became famous as his skill in ivory carving became known. In the course of his journey, he was exposed to new techniques and ideas; the scrimshaw art of the sailors was copied by the Eskimo and combined with traditional Eskimo styles. His highly individualistic ivory engravings and sculpture found a ready market on shipboard and in San Francisco at the end of the voyage. Happy Jack returned to Little Diomede Island but later made a second journey because on the island his market was limited to the crews of passing whaling ships. He had become a full-time specialist in an activity that to able-bodied men was only a pastime. Happy Jack was planning a third voyage when an event took place which was to be a turning point in the history of Eskimo tourist art.

Gold was discovered in Alaska ! The influx of thousands of potential customers from the south for Eskimo souvenirs gave an impetus to Eskimo carvers that helped shape art production into an industry which has endured to present times. The Eskimos, drawn to the hastily organized cities of the goldrushers, quickly found a market for their everyday cultural implements such as fur clothing, tools, toys, etc. Natives with an artistic bent found a ready market for small carvings and ivory engravings. Souvenirs of both types were peddled in Nome by Eskimos. The first items created specifically for the tourist trade in Nome were identical copies of an old ivory needlecase made by one enterprising Eskimo man in 1900 - 1901. (Ray 1961: 7)

Although the city of Nome became the center of the Alaskan gold rush, it did not immediately attract a

permanent Eskimo population because of its isolation from the hunting grounds. A population of thirty thousand in 1900 included only "a handful of Eskimos." (Ray 1961: 7) These few 'town Eskimos' were dependent upon occasional wage employment opportunities and upon the sale of Eskimo souvenirs. It was into this Eskimo community that Happy Jack moved shortly after the turn of the century. Until his untimely death in 1918 during an influenza epidemic, he supported his family there solely from his income as an ivory carver.

Happy Jack was not the first Eskimo to sell art objects to the tourists and white residents of Nome - in fact, there were manh others who successfully exploited the souvenir market during the same period. However, Happy Jack stands out for his one hundred per cent devotion to carving plus his exceptional talent and creative ability. He is credited with a large number of innovations directed toward making Eskimo crafts more acceptable to the souvenir market. For instance, Happy Jack is said to be the first Eskimo who made walrus tusk cribbage boards, an idea he no doubt got from white sailors. He often made carvings to order for customers, using traditional Eskimo carving methods in producing such themes as American eagles and was most famous for his copies of photographs and pictures engraved on walrus ivory.

> He reproduced faithfully every dot or hachure mark from the printed page so that his copy had the appearance of a photograph printed on the ivory itself. In many cases, the ivory picture was better than the original. (Ray 1961:8)

Happy Jack can be credited with having the vision, perhaps unconsciously, to see that the future of Eskimo ivory carving was to be rooted in its market potential to another culture. This is indicated by the fact that until his death in 1918, he willingly tried new ideas

and copied any item which potential customers brought him. He was the great innovator in developing forms which appealed to the outside market. Other carvers of the period followed his lead, using his ideas and freely copying his successful art forms.

Nome became and has remained to this day the center of the Eskimo tourist art industry in Alaska. From the small Eskimo tent-city set up on the beach in the time of Happy Jack, two permanent 'carving communities' have grown - King Island Village and Sandspit. Sandspit is populated largely by Little Diomede Island Eskimos. The population of these communities is increased each summer by Eskimo carvers who return to a hunting economy in the winter. While the permanent resident carvers come primarily from outlying areas of the Seward Peninsula, the transient summer artists come largely from King Island and Little Diomede Island.

The Eskimo men who make up the permanent population of the carving community can be said to be full-time professional artists. Carving ivory has been recognized as an acceptable means of livelihood among certain members of the Eskimo community. However, this does not mean that all town Eskimo men are artists. There are more money-making opportunities for Eskimos in Alaska than in Canada, and carving is rarely indulged in among those Eskimo who have had the education or training to take other jobs. Ivory carving is not considered a highly desirable profession.

> It is a rare man who can subsist on the proceeds from carving when $900 is considered a very large yearly income from that source, and actually no man can do it without supplementing his diet with a large amount of native food. (Ray 1961: 12)

The Alaskan ivory carvers unlike the Canadian soapstone carvers have from the beginning of the industry

dealt directly with the ultimate purchasers of their art objects. Most purchasers are visitors to the area, although occasionally the artists sell some carvings to distributing agencies. The King Island carvers have the advantage of being able to carve as well as sell their products directly to the consumers at the King Island Village kazgi (men's house.) Those Nome carvers not affiliated with the King Island kazgi usually sell their carvings to the following outlets: individual collectors, retail stores, and the Alaska Native Arts and Crafts Clearing House at Juneau. The artists prefer to sell directly to the final customers and may in fact carve specific subjects to order for individuals. For the casual tourist or collector, the artists of King Island Village display carvings at the men's house where visitors can also watch the carvers at work. The Eskimos make no attempt to sell any carving to a potential customer but let him make his choice from the display table at the front of the building. Prices of three-dimensional sculptures are based on length and are marked on the bottom of each piece. This marked price is what the customer must pay and no bargaining is allowed.

Although ivory carving was developed as an industry by the Eskimos themselves in the last fifty years, the governments of Alaska and the United States have also contributed to its growth, though perhaps not as directly as did the Canadian government with the soapstone carving industry. In the 1930s, when Eskimo children were segregated in 'native schools' run by the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, an attempt was made to teach crafts in the schools at Nome and on King Island. Ivory carving and skin sewing were taught as a means of achieving individual economic independence. When the schools were consolidated with the regular Alaskan public schools, these crafts were dropped from the curriculum. Today

young boys learn to carve from their fathers or grandfathers in the traditional way. Further aid from the Bureau of Indian Affairs came in 1947 in the form of a building program. The Bureau financed the building of wooden structures for the King Island community on the beach east of Nome and one of these buildings became the men's house mentioned above where artists congregate to carve ivory.

Since world War II more economic opportunities exist for the Alaskan Eskimos. Ivory carving, nevertheless, has remained important as an income source. Although fewer men carve full-time in the city of Nome than in former years, there is still what can be considered a carving community, particularly at King Island Village where carving production centers around the local kazgi. Ivory carving is of perhaps greater economic importance today on the off-shore islands of Alaska than in the cities. For the island Eskimos who live closer to the traditional subsistence hunting and gathering life, ivory carving is the only commodity which brings them a money income.

In summary, the identification of ivory carving as a tourist art industry in Alaska was a natural outcome of the intimate relationship of the resident Eskimos with the 'invading' outsiders. The introduction into a commodity-oriented money economy came over one hundred years ago to the Alaskan Eskimos, and ivory carvings were but one of a variety of cultural items which they traded for European goods. Transactions involving art objects were, from the beginning, on an individual to individual basis. That is, there were no middlemen, the carver dealt directly with the ultimate purchaser of his carving.

It is only by a historical accident - the Gold Rush - that enough outsiders collected in Eskimo territory to

make it profitable for individual carvers to devote their full time to carving art objects for trade. Without this initial influx of whites, it is doubtful if there would ever have been more than a few deviants of Happy Jack's type who would devote their time to carving for a living.

THE STYLISTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF IVORY SCULPTURE

Materials and Techniques - Ivory

Walrus ivory is the great natural material of Alaska. The material culture of the Eskimos has been built upon it - tools, art objects, ceremonial paraphernalia, household implements - all have been carved from ivory. Over two thousand years ago it was fully utilized by the Old Bering Sea peoples of the area, and throughout the Arctic wherever the walrus was available, we find evidence of the extensive use of walrus ivory in the manufacture of cultural items. (Wood may also have been a popular material in some areas but we do not know to what extent it was used because of its perishability. It is used for modern Eskimo art only among the Eskimos of southwestern Alaska.)

Although walrus tusk ivory is the most common material for the contemporary Alaskan Eskimo carvers, other materials are used which are also classified as ivory. These include the teeth of walrus and seal, whales' teeth, and the fossil ivory of mammoths and mastodons. Sperm whale teeth are also used by Eskimo carvers although the sperm whale is not native to the Arctic regions. Eskimo carvers started using them over one hundred years ago when whaling ships brought the teeth to the area. They are highly prized by contemporary carvers for their flawless ivory, but few use them because they are costly.

Up until quite recent times, walrus ivory was much more readily available than it is today. Fresh ivory

was traditionally obtained through periodic cooperative hunts and when additional ivory was needed, trips were made to the Siberian coastline where old ivory could be dug out from the beaches. Today's political situation makes it nearly impossible for the Alaskan Eskimos to mine these beaches.

Acquiring raw ivory is a problem for the modern Eskimo artist. It is not as readily available as it once way. The most common method of obtaining ivory today, as in the past, is through hunting. Most ivory carvers go out on regular group hunts to get both meat and ivory tusks. The hunters are dependent upon the seasonal migrations of the walrus in the Bering Straits, and the catch is better some years than others. Some carver-specialists no longer hunt with any regularity. These men must depend upon buying or trading for tusks, but the "only sure way of getting ivory is to participate in a walrus hunt." (Ray 1961: 32) A less reliable method of acquiring old ivory is to dig in old village sites where one can unearth old tools and ivory scraps which can be utilized. Although the Federal Antiquity Act of 1901 forbids such activities, it is still practiced to a certain extent by the Eskimos. (Ray 1961: 35) Mammoth and mastodon ivory is only rarely dug today because the majority of tusks are too rotten for carving.

Once the fresh ivory is acquired, it is aged at least two weeks to a month or longer before it is carved. This prevents excessive cracking or splitting. The aged tusk is then carefully split into several small pieces from which individual carvings can be made. Of particular importance to the Eskimo carver is the size of the 'core' of the tusk. The core which is mottled and darker in color than the outer tusk is considered unattractive and hence a problem to most carvers.

> All Eskimo carvers consider the mottled core of the walrus tusk both a personal affront and a challenge. It becomes a real problem for the figurine carver because the practice has developed of keeping as much of the core hidden as possible. . . . A carver cannot predict before he cuts into a tusk whether or not the core, which is the deposit of the dentine, will be large or small, but he always hopes that there will be very little. . . . Tusks that cannot be used for sculptured animals because of the preponderence of core are reserved for billikens and paper knives, which are less highly esteemed. (Ray 1961: 96)

Materials and Techniques - Tools and Methods

Ivory is an easily carved material, although inclined to split if it has not been properly aged. Before the Punuk period in the western Arctic when metal tools were introduced from Siberia, very sophisticated and intricate ivory art objects were carved with the use of stone-bladed tools. However, since that time metal tools have been increasingly adopted so that today's sculptors seldom if ever use a stone-edged tool. Some of their tools, nevertheless, such as the adze and the bow-drill are basically the same as those used by their ancestors over two thousand years ago.

Each contemporary ivory carver collects his own stock of tools which are a mixture of European-style commercially manufactured tools, modified commerical tools, and traditional tools. (A detailed account of the types of tools and their manufacture is given by Ray, pp. 101-105) Each carver buys or manufactures his own tools and keeps them in his own box.

The sets of carver's tools are by no means standardized as each carver manufactures or modifies tools to his own specifications. The inventory, however, usually includes the following basic types: saws, files, gravers,

adzes and bow-drills. The basic tools are the adze which is used for cutting the original tusk and the file and saw used for shaping the carvings, while the remainder of the tools are for decorating and engraving the carvings. Power tools, such as electric drills, are occasionally used although the carvers have found that the customers prefer 'handmade' objects and pay higher prices for such. (Ray 1961: 108)

To illustrate the use of the tools and the difficulties of working with ivory, I can do no better than quote Dorothy Jean Ray's eyewitness account of the manufacture of a typical ivory carving:

> The first step in the making of any object is the trimming of the tusk with the adz. An experienced ivory worker takes dainty bites out of the hard ivory with the adz as easily as if it were coconut meat. After he has trimmed the tusk neatly, he cuts it into square or rectangular pieces, each section representing the approximate size of the animal or object he will make from it. As a rule all figurines . . . are begun in this manner.
>
> Usually the carver hurriedly places a few pencil lines on the block of ivory as guides and, on this basis, cuts out a few chunks of ivory from the block with a hack saw. The result is a block-like animal, with four slabs of ivory representing the two front and two rear legs, and a rectangular piece, the neck. For further refinement the carver uses a coping saw next, referring to his pencil marks for the animal's outline.
>
> By now the carver has produced all the essential parts of the bear . . . but it is scarcely recognizable because of its chocky angularity. The recognizable animal emerges as the carver uses a succession of files in increasing degrees of fineness. Sometimes during the course of filing he cuts out the ears and mouth with a graver and makes holes for eyes, which he will inlay with contrasting material of ivory or baleen

> after he has used the last fine file. When carvers do not make inset eyes, they gouge out a hole with a graver instead, coloring it with graphite. To fit the inset material into the hole, the carver cuts one end to the approximate size of the eye and tapers the other. He then inserts the tapered end into the eye as tightly as possible, paring it off flush with the ivory. Inset eyes are held in the ivory through friction, but the flat inlaid bracelet pieces are glued with cement. During the nineteenth century, wood and even pieces of rock were used as inlays.
>
> To make a bear twelve and a half centimeters long, the foregoing steps would take about twelve hours, the cutting and filing consuming about three-fourths of that time. After completing the filing, the carver sandpapers it with new grade three sandpaper, then subsequently with reused and worn-out pieces until the ivory is smooth. He then applies a metal polish and vigorously polishes the bear with a cloth until it gleams. After that, he cuts out the claws and mouth, applying graphite for the claws and hematite for the mouth after the polishing so that the color will not rub out. (Ray 1961: 105-6)
>
> Almost every carver uses a small driftwood stump to support the ivory while adzing, sawing, and, often, engraving. This simple support competes favorably with a vise in popularity, and the carver will keep one for years until the top is disfigured by thousands of adz and saw marks. He also makes extensive use of his mukluks to support the ivory. A right-handed carver usually steadies the ivory on the right mukluk, which he rests on top of the left one. The inside edge of the left leg is then used as a secondary prop for the hand holding the ivory. (Ray 1961: 104-105)

The Stylistic Characteristics of Ivory Sculpture

The ivory carving industry, like the soapstone carving industry of central Canada, represents a new phase in the

history of Eskimo art. However, the style of modern ivory carving is more derivative of traditional Eskimo art than is that of soapstone sculpture, and the choice of ivory as an art medium is definitely linked to the past.

The most common subject for contemporary carvers is the local birds and animals which they know so well. These are usually straightforwardly portrayed, although occasionally they may be distorted into salt-and-pepper shakers, paper knives, and other types of curios. Carvings of the human figure are less common, if you discount the multitude of "billikens" made for tourists. Billikens are small good-luck pieces carved in the form of seated Buddha-like figures. They are not popular with the Eskimo carvers who make them although there is always a demand for them and they are sure money-makers. Some carvers specialize in carving and engraving ivory jewelry - bracelets and necklaces. Engraved cribbage boards are also made, although many artists are reluctant to do so because they require a large expenditure of ivory.

Of these forms, cribbage boards and billikens can be traced back to the earliest days of the tourist art industry. Ivory jewelry and the figurines of animals and birds have been made extensively only in the last thirty years.

It is interesting to note that very few human figures are carved by modern Eskimo artists despite the fact that large numbers of small human figurines have been found in archaeological sites in Alaska. Those which are carved by modern artists, moreover, are depicted as fully clothed and bear little stylistic relationship to these prehistoric predecessors.

As the Alaskan Eskimo carvers work almost exclusively with walrus ivory, the stylistic characteristics

of their carvings are largely controlled by the nature of ivory. The figures are small - the size being limited by the size of the walrus tusks. The surface of the carving is almost always highly polished. An exception to this rule is bird carvings which are usually partially engraved with a distinctive chevron-type feather pattern into which color is rubbed. The figures are compact with few projecting parts; sharp edges and straight lines are rare. In fact, modern Eskimo art, on the whole, is distinguished by its lack of fragility. As ivory is a somewhat brittle substance this considerably diminishes the possibility of breakage.

In comparison to traditional Eskimo sculpture of this area, modern carvings, particularly those of animals, are very realistic. The criteria by which contemporary Eskimos judge the work of others and their own is in terms of ideal realism or naturalism. (Ray 1961: 143) Realism is determined by the amount of detail included or excluded and the naturalism or stiffness of movement in the figure. (Ray records several examples of such artistic standards, pp. 132-153.) Despite the consensus of opinion, most modern carvers by their own admissions do not reach the ideal standard. Two reasons are given by the artists for this inability: (1) lack of time, and (2) respect for the ivory. Because the artists are carving for a living, they will often omit details which would be too time-consuming (1), such as indicating feathers on birds or fur on animal figurines. The carvers develop basic forms, through a selective process of indicating diagnostic characteristics of the animals or birds, which they will use again and again. The respect for the ivory (2) is shown in the habit of giving all carvings a high polish although the surface of the object being portrayed would not have such an appearance. A third reason for lack of naturalism may be added - and that

is outside influence. For example, the abandonment of several small natural details on animal carvings can be directly traced to missionary influences. Ray was told by one of her Eskimo informants that Eskimo artists "used to put a hole under the tail of a fox or wolf, but the missionaries told them it was wrong so they stopped." (Ray 1961: 151)

The artists, while realizing that complete realism is an ideal and not a reality are above all craftsmen and also judge the work of fellow carvers according to their technical skills. The ability to copy well and reproduce a large number of different forms is admired, as is a high degree of manual dexterity. Other criteria by which artists judge themselves are: "neatness and precision in both engraving and carving; ability to work swiftly; ability to obtain a high polish; and proficiency in applying color to incisions." (Ray 1961: 137)

Contemporary Alaskan Eskimo ivory carving is anonymous in the traditional way, that is, the artist does not sign his sculpture. However, within his own community his work can be immediately distinguished from that of others. It is to this audience that he looks for recognition of his abilities, so it makes no difference to him that the outsider who purchases his carving does not know his name.

It is difficult for us to compare the stylistic characteristics of contemporary ivory carving of the Alaskan Eskimos with traditional art because of the number of art periods involved. However, using the same basic types of changes noted for Canadian Eskimo soapstone carving (page 39), the following statements can be made in comparison:

(1) the use of ivory for aesthetic expression is in the local Eskimo tradition;

(2) the limitations of tusk ivory have caused the

Eskimos to follow the same size limitations (small) for carving as did their ancestors;

(3) as in soapstone carving, the representation of the human figure as fully dressed is a new feature;

(4) flat bases are usually not added to ivory carvings and thus they have remained 'finger-pieces; so that

(5) carvings have not developed a "favored side for viewing"; and (6) sculpture is anonymous in the traditional way.

In addition we can add the following ways in which contemporary ivory carving differs from traditional Eskimo sculpture stylistically:

(1) carvings are more realistic in concept;

(2) the human figure is seldom a subject for the carver; and (3) the majority of carvings are not embellished with surface ornamentation.

Modern ivory carving in Alaska is firmly rooted to traditional art styles of the area, but new features have appeared as a result of its function as a tourist art. These new features and their genesis are the subject of our next section.

The Development of Ivory Carving Style

The Alaskan Eskimo carvers are true commercial artists in that they limit their production almost entirely to forms proven popular on the market. Only a few artists are innovators, and if they do develop a new form that catches on with the buying public, the other artists are quick to copy. What an ivory carver creates at any particular time is dependent upon two factors. Of primary importance is the carver's knowledge of what forms or patterns have proved to be commercially feasible. Carvers are advised of current customer demands by the local stores and the Alaska Native Arts and Crafts Clearing House in Juneau. Most carvers have a limited repertoire

of proven forms. The particular form which he will then close is determined by the nature of the ivory he has on hand.

When the influx of southern whites into Alaska provided the Eskimos with a ready market for tourist souvenirs, items such as traditional tools and needlecases coped after old patterns were popular. The cribbage board, according to Ray, was the first departure from the stylistic boundaries of traditional art. (Ray 1961: 120) Since that period the taste of tourists has changed and although some items, such as cribbage boards, have been made and sold since Gold Rush days, there has been a shift toward souvenir carvings which can be classified as "art for art's sake."

Most of the forms which are standardized and consistent sellers today were originally suggested to an Eskimo artist by a white store keeper or customer. (Ray 1961: 120) When Ray traced the history of such stock items as the cribbage board and the billiken she found their origins in such an encounter. One specific example of the importance of outside influence in the development of ivory carving forms is in the genesis of bird carving among the St. Lawrence and King Island Eskimo carvers:

> The finesse of the very realistic ducks and geese made today is attributed to the interest of Admiral (then Captain) Edward Darling Jones of the U.S. Coast Guard in the 1920's. He showed the carvers pictures of birds, especially, and described the way he wanted them made. Over a period of time he selected only the best carvings, and thus a very high standard was established. (Ray 1961: 125)

The influence and advice of outisders is one factor in the development of ivory carving style; a second is found in its function as a money-making activity. Many

of the stylistic characteristics of contemporary ivory carving which at first glance appear to be natural evolutionary development are, in fact, a direct result of the artists; regarding carving as an economic activity. For instance, the individual carver chooses his subject taking into account how he can earn the most money with the least ivory expenditure. For this reason cribbage boards are usually made only when quick money is needed, because the same amount of ivory can be used for several carvings which would bring in a larger income than the single cribbage board. (Ray 1961: 112) Another example of ivory conservation is the practice of saving carvings that split so they may be recarved into smaller sculptures. (Ray 1961: 112) The lack of delicacy of modern carvings is yet another manifestation of the concern for the economic aspects. Delicate carvings with projecting parts and edges not only take longer to carve but also are more likely to break in the process. In the earlier days of the industry when the artists were not completely dependent upon their incomes as carvers, a higher percentage of delicate carvings were made. (Ray 1961: 112)

One last characteristic I shall point out in this regard is the stylistic aspects due to the speed of carving. The faster a man can carve saleable items, the higher will be his income. The form which shows most clearly modifications that come from speed in carving is the billiken. First copied by Happy Jack in 1909 from a popular U.S. good-luck statuette at the request of a Nome storekeeper, it quickly became a standard form and has remained part of the Eskimo repertoire every since. The changes which have taken place in the depiction of Billikens, which the Eskimos do not particularly care to carve in the first place, are described by Ray as follows:

> The first billikens in ivory followed the original in every detail, with the oblique eyes and eyebrows, mouth, nostrils, nipples, and navel emphasized in India ink. The figure had well-defined feet, arms, hands, and ears, and a fat belly. However, changes rapidly occurred as a result of several factors, the most important being the urgency of speed in carving. This caused some characteristics to be mimimized and others to be abandoned. Hair is no longer indicated, and the feet and toes have degenerated to nothing but a fringe in front with a vetical cut indicating the separation of the feet. In many cases, the nine notches in the fringe that mark the toes have decreased to four, and sometimes only three. The arms and hands, which had always been made tight to the body, are sometimes barely discernible, and the fingers are only slight indentations in the ivory. The face, except for very large billikens, is made without contours, and with the slanting eyes, the smiling mouth, and the nose indicated only with India ink. The stomach in some cases has been reduced to an emaciated condition. (Ray 1961: 122-123)

A carved bear twelve and a half centimeters long takes twelve hours to carve; a billiken three centimeters high takes only forty-five minutes. (Ray 1961: 106)

To summarize, we can say that the Eskimo carvers of Alaska have developed a style of carving in which forms are standardized and individual interpretation is limited. The test of a stylistic or subject innovation is in its marketability and if it is successful, it is then adopted into the repertoire of others. Unlike the soapstone carvers of Canada, the Alaskan carvers throughout the history of the carving industry have been able to deal directly with their customers. They find out firsthand what appeals to potential purchasers and do not have to

deal with a middleman. No centrally-organized group of outsiders has ever forced advice and instruction upon them. The changes which have been made in the style of the art form have been in the shape of Eskimo solutions to suggestions from outsiders. Thus, they have evolved a style of art which has moved away from the traditional art of the early historic period, but which is still completely Eskimo.

THE IMPACT OF THE IVORY CARVING INDUSTRY ON ESKIMO CULTURE

An examination and comparison of the style of modern ivory carving shows that it developed naturally out of the foundations of Thule art styles. In the choice of materials and forms it shows most its heritage of Thule art, while stylistically the modern carvers seem to have developed a more realistic rounded art form. As with soapstone sculpture of the central Arctic, however, ivory carvings differ most from traditional art forms in their function in Eskimo culture. Modern ivory carving, even by Eskimo definition, is "other-directed art." Dorothy Jean Ray, from information gained from Eskimo informants in 1955, found that contemporary Eskimos carefully distinguish between ivory objects manufactured for their own use in traditional fashion and "carvings" made for sale to outsiders.

> "In the old days," they say, "they made things for their own use," but today they 'carve' items for an outside market. The word 'carving' has acquired a specific meaning that refers to a certain kind of ivory product outside the sphere of the utilitarian, or even the ceremonial, needs of the Eskimos. 'Ivory carving' and 'carvers of ivory' emerged gropingly after the whalers began plying the northern waters and were fully developed at the turn of the century. (Ray 1961: 25)

Ivory carving, like soapstone carving, is considered primarily as an economic activity and its function in modern Alaskan Eskimo culture is based on this identification.

The Eskimo settlements of Sandspit and King Island Village on the fringes of Nome, Alaska serve as examples of modern carving-oriented communities. We shall examine these in more detail to see what role the production of tourist art plays in the social and economic life of the residents.

Nome (1900 to 1960) - a case study

Nome is a small city of approximately two thousand population that was created as a result of the Alaskan Gold Rush at the turn of the twentieth century. Located on the southern shore of the Seward Peninsula, Nome at its heigth in 1900 boasted a population of thirty thousand white outsiders. Today, approximately three-fourths of Nome's residents are Eskimo or mixed. (Ray 1961: 10)

The Eskimo communities of Sandspit to the west of Nome and King Island Village on the beach east of the city were established shortly after prospectors established a tent city on the spot that was to become Nome. The great attraction of Nome for the Eskimos was the opportunity to make money. Those who came to Nome lived on the fringes of a city that was orientated toward a money economy, and carving or the selling of cultural items was the only way that they could participate in this economy. The population of Eskimos was limited because no wage-earning jobs were available for them because of of competition of 'down-on-their-luck' prospectors. One Eskimo commodity that proved most successful to market in the city from the beginning was ivory carvings and many Eskimo turned to their manufacture. They did not come to Nome to be carvers but rather became carvers

there out of necessity.

The Eskimos who came permanently did so out of their own desires. The fact that the coastal Eskimos at this time were facing starvation because of a depletion of game resources was probably a contributing factor. Those who settled in the city had to give up hunting as a primary activity because hunting in that area was limited to small game, although many continued to hunt seasonally. Even today a certain percentage of Nome's Eskimo population spends the summer as town dwellers while in the winter they return to a hunting economy.

The sedentary Eskimo population of Nome, of course, shows the greatest change from traditional culture. During the early days of Nome, these town Eskmos were exposed to sustained contact with Western values and change rapidly took place in all phases of Eskimo culture. As traditional Eskimo household items and clothing were traded away to souvenir-seeking whites, they were often replaced with western-manufactured goods purchased in the stores. Even basic hunting and household tools were traded away.

The very fact that Eskimo families settled at Sandspit and King Island Village represents a break with traditional life. No longer was the place of residence determined by subsistence needs. Eskimo men no longer went out to hunt with regularity but bought foodstuffs for their families with the proceeds from their trading ventures. This change of diet and the crowded living conditions led to the same problems of health and nutrition that plagued the newly sedentary central Canadian Eskimos. With permanent residence, also, came the opportunity for Eskimo children to attend school on a regular basis and most of the town Eskimo children who have been able to take advantage of the free schooling have chosen professions other than hunting or carving.

Although ivory carving was a popular profession among those who settled at Nome, it never gained the almost universal acceptance that soapstone carving did in the Canadian Arctic. Today an even smaller percentage of Eskimo men in Nome are carvers than in the past. Too many other opportunities exist to make money, and carving is, after all, indulged in primarily as a money-making occupation. As mentioned earlier, full-time carving seldom yields a man more than nine hundred dollars ($900) a year in income. The men who carve full-time in Nome today are usually older men; the young men have taken wage-earning jobs.

The reduction in the number of carvers is partially due to the fact that the carving industry in Nome has never been organized and subsidized to the extent of the soapstone carving industry in Canada. As of 1955 no cooperatives had been established, although the Nome Skin Sewers, Inc. started after World War II showed the value of such marketing organizations. (Hughes 1965: 34) Although Nome Eskimo carvers enjoy being with a group of men engaged in the same activity while they work, they have never extended this group spirit to the economic aspects of carving. In the early days of the industry, carvers often gathered at the home of Happy Jack at Sandspit where he willingly instructed them and offered ideas. Most Eskimos, however, worked at home or on the beach until 1947 when the Bureau of Indian Affairs building program provided a men's house (kazgi) where the men of King Island Village now gather to carve and display ivory. This building is, however, only a gathering place; there has been no attempt to work cooperatively (other than sharing tools) or share profits. The cooperative spirit of traditional Eskimo culture does not seem to have extended to the handling of money.

This individualistic character of ivory carvers

has also led to changes in hunting procedures. As we mentioned earlier, hunting is the only reliable way a carver can get the ivory he needs for his profession. Several carvers join forces to hunt the walrus; this pattern of cooperative hunting is a typical feature of Eskimo culture. It is in the division of the kill that a break is made with tradition. For the carver-hunters the ivory tusks of the walrus are more important than the meat. Less than thirty years ago, the parts of the walrus killed were divided according to the prestige of the participants and the part they took in the hunt. The traditional division of the hunt allotted the tusks of the walrus to the harpooner; today the tusks are divided equally between all who participate. (Ray 1961: 31-32)

In summary, the ivory carving industry of the Alaskan Eskimos has always been a small-scale operaton in comparison to the soapstone carving industry of the central Arctic. It has from its inception been completely organized by the Eskimos themselves; in fact it is notable for its lack of organization. It can be called an industry only because a large number of Eskimos in a restricted area practic carving the same type of art objects as a profession. The marketing of the art products is done strictly on an individual basis. The only cooperation that exists in the industry is the freedom with which successful stylistic innovations are shared and the group hunts by which ivory tusks are acquired. Because the Eskimo carvers have no marketing agency to distribute their carvings, they have to be near the potential purchasers of their products. This has led to the formation of small 'carving communities' on the outskirts of Alaskan cities. Ivory carving was, from the beginning, practiced as a profession mainly by those

Eskimos who had decided that the material advantages of Western civilization were preferable to the Eskimo way of life. Carving was a means to an end; it made it possible for the Eskimo to enter into active participation in a money economy. This close contact with western civilization has led to increased acculturation and has had the effect of reducing the numbers of professional full-time carvers, for in the cities other and better money-making possibilities exist.

The Future of the Ivory Carving Industry

The future of the ivory carving industry in Alaska, like that of the soapstone carving industry in Canada, is uncertain. Over the fifty years that the Eskimos of Nome area have been producing tourist art, the sales of these art objects have been confined largely to local transactions. Such organizations as the Alaskan Native Arts and Crafts Clearing House do distribute ivory carvings to other parts of the United States, but do not push them to the extent that the Canadian government has done with soapstone carvings.

Probably one of the reasons that ivory carvings have not gained the same popularity with the public in Canada and the United States as have soapstone carvings and prints, is that they have not achieved the status of 'art'. The Alaskan Eskimos, like the Canadian carvers, are dependent upon the taste of people who judge art objects by the boundaries of the aesthetic traditions of the Western world. The Canadian Eskimos from the beginning of their venture were guided to create art forms which would be acceptable to Western taste. The Alaskan Eskimos have developed a style which is still very Eskimo and more alien to Western taste.

A second factor in the lesser appeal of ivory carvings to southern collectors, I feel, is their size.

The tendency in American art over the last decade and a half has been toward massiveness - in paintings and in sculpture. There appears to be an unwritten rule that paintings and pieces of sculpture have to be a certain size before they can be taken seriously. For the casual collector the criteria is often whether the sculpture is sufficiently large to be seen easily from all parts of the room where he places it. It is because of this tendency that I feel Eskimo ivory carvings, except to a few discriminating collectors, are considered primarily as curios - souvenirs, but not necessarily art objects to be taken seriously. For this reason, the casual tourist balks at paying the price of a piece of serious sculpture for what he considers only a knick-knack, and ivory carving prices are high in comparison to most souvenirs.

In addition to these circumstances, fewer and fewer Eskimo men are turning to ivory carving as a profession. There is already a tendency among the town Eskimos to abandon carving for more lucrative occupations. It does seem likely, however, that ivory carving as a money-making activity will continue as a part-time occupation, particularly among those more conservative Eskimos on the off-shore islands where wage-earning jobs are rare.

CHAPTER V

TOURIST ART INDUSTRIES AND ACCULTURATION

In this paper we have been dealing with art forms which are the product of culture change and the agents of acculturation. Outwardly this so-called tourist art production can be distinguished from the traditional art forms of the Arctic by such features as an outward-directed style (modified for increased market value to an outside culture), economic motivations as incentives for artistic creation, a resultant substantial increase in the number of artist-specialists in the population, and consequently an increased volume of aesthetic production.

There is no dearth of problems and implications which can be derived from a study of these two Eskimo tourist art industries. Many problems, such as, is it 'art'? are beyond the scope of this paper and must await extensive fieldwork with the artists of the areas involved. The definition of 'art' within a cross-cultural context is still debated by anthropologists and art historians who are inclined to group tourist arts wherever found under the rubric of 'non-art' or even 'anti-art'. It is my feeling that this question can be answered only by determining the attitudes of the Eskimo artists themselves toward their products, rather than judging the art forms by their stylistic and formal characteristics. Anthropologists have proven to be particularly 'culture-bound' in their evaluations of primitive art forms.

Actually tourist arts should be considered from two sides for proper evaluation - the producers and the consumers. For instance, Canadian soapstone sculpture qualifies as a fine art within the Western aesthetic

system and functions as such there. On the other hand, it was pointed out to me by an anthropologist who worked extensively in the central Arctic that this sculpture can not be considered art because the Eskimos themselves think of it only as an economic activity, and a second choice one at that. (Graburn, personal communication. 1964)

Such problems as those above, however, demand field-work techniques. Considering the limitations of the published materials on tourist arts of the North American Arctic, the scope of this discussion shall be limited to aspects of change in contemporary Eskimo art production and the relationship of these changes to the acculturative process. In Chapters III and IV we examined the two art industries from two basic views: (1) their function or role in Eskimo culture, and (2) the stylistic characteristics of the art form. Actually these two aspects are intimately intertwined. To show this interrelationship, I shall first discuss the function of art production in culture change and then show how these changes have effected the development of art style.

TOURIST ART PRODUCTION AND CULTURE CHANGE

The Function of Art Production in Contemporary Eskimo Culture

Art production in any society must be studied within its cultural context to be fully understood. With the rise of a tourist art the situation is complicated by the fact that the audience for the art products is outside the producer's society. This specialized set of circumstances appears to produce similar results wherever it occurs. In our two Eskimo areas, for instance, we find that the shifts in function which art production has undergone are basically the same so that we can speak in generalities.

The major change that has taken place is that, as a tourist art industry develops, the production of art becomes identified with the economic sphere. The motivation for producing art objects is more an economic than an aesthetic one, and art products are regarded primarily as commodities. Traditionally in Eskimo culture the aesthetic impulse was channeled toward the decorating of tools and the carving of toys, grave objects, or small figurines made purely for the pleasure of aesthetic expression. Artistic activities did not intrude upon economic life. In fact, they were strictly leisure-time activities and were indulged in only when hunting and other activities of subsistence were impossible. Carvings were not sold or traded either inside or outside of the Eskimo community. Today, most carvings are made expressly for the purpose of selling. Although the aesthetic impulse may enter into the creation of such an object, the ultimate purpose in carving is to earn money. This represents a shift in function for carving.

Intimately tied to this shift is the change in the expenditure of time. As we said above, carving in traditional Eskimo life was a leisure-time activity, while today it can no longer be considered such. As it is a money-making activity, it now often takes precedence over other less profitable occupations, including hunting. For many men, it has become a full-time occupation. There were no full-time artist-specialists in traditional Eskimo society, and for men to now spend a full day carving art objects is a departure. The result of the shifting of art production to the economic sphere and the increased time allotment dedicated to it has resulted in more Eskimo artist-specialists producing more Eskimo art in the North American Arctic than ever before.

In conclusion, it is possible to say that the development of tourist art industries among the North Amer-

ican Eskimos has resulted in the following changes in the function of art production in Eskimo culture:

(1) the motivation for producing art objects has become almost entirely economic in nature;

(2) art products are considered primarily as commodities; and

(3) art production, being economically motivated, rates the time expenditure traditionally devoted to major livelihood pursuits.

Tourist Art Industries as Agents of Acculturation

In many Eskimo areas where tourist art production became an acceptable means of livelihood, particularly in parts of the Canadian Arctic, the selling of carvings was the Eskimo's first introduction to commodity production. After European contact, hunting and trapping fit easily into traditional ways of life and did not result in major changes in life patterns because the Eskimos who sold furs to the trading posts were still dependent upon the land for their livelihood. However, those Eskimos who adopted carving production as a profession were immediately less dependent upon the land; as mentioned above, many abandoned the traditional hunting economy. The adoption of a more sedentary life was a natural result as the Eskimo carvers settled near the trading posts and towns where they could convert their artistic products into European goods. Although all Eskimos did not give up hunting and gathering, and some combined carving production with a hunting economy, we can speak in general terms as to the results of complete acceptance of art production as an economic activity. The end result of such complete acceptance has resulted in:

(1) less dependence upon the land for livelihood; leading to

(2) the abandonment of hunting and trapping as a

livelihood in favor of art production; and

(3) a move toward a more sedentary life with dependence upon traders and storekeepers for necessities.

When we examine these changes that have taken place it is clear that the introduction of tourist art industries into the Arctic has induced culture change, and that tourist art industries may be called agents of acculturation. However, these art industries are not the primary acculturative devices. In fact, they appear rather late in the acculturative process and tend to reinforce or accelerate acculturative trends rather than initiate them. Before "other-directed" art could develop to any extent in either Eskimo area certain basic Western-oriented concepts had to be present and accepted by the Eskimos. These prerequisites necessary to the development of the tourist art industries include:

(1) a prior acceptance by the Eskimos of a money economy; and

(2) a stated desire (market) in the other culture for the products of the Eskimo artists.

Under these circumstances, tourist art industries began and flourished in the two Eskimo areas under discussion. Art production presented an alternate economic activity, and those individuals who chose it over more traditional forms of livelihood were also accepting a more Western-oriented style of existence. The Eskimos, by carving, had an acceptable commodity to offer to the Western market which gave him a return in money or its equivalent goods. In this sense tourist art production has acted as an agent of acculturation in initiating the Eskimos into a commodity-oriented economy.

Those Eskimos who became artist-specialists tended to settle around the outlets where they could sell their carvings. This led them to settlements where there was increased exposure to the Western way of life in the

form of cities, missions, government stations, and trading posts. As mentioned in Chapters III and IV, many disposed of their hunting gear and became sedentary. This not only speeded the acculturative process by increasing the opportunities for acquiring and substituting Western material culture for their own, but it also gave the Eskimo children an opportunity for full-time schooling. The percentage of children who have returned to a tradition way of life after adequate schooling is extremely small.

TOURIST ART STYLE AND ACCULTURATION

No aspect of tourist art production is more intimately tied to the acculturative processes than the development of art style. The fact is that the establishment of a tourist art industry rests on the ability of the artists of one culture to develop an art style which will appeal to the people of another culture. In almost all cases, this means altering a traditional art form to conform to the tastes of a dominant culture. It is probably safe to say that an "other-directed art style" can only develop in an area where at least partial acculturation has taken place.

The fact that the Eskimos of Alaska and Canada, who share a basically similar Thule art tradition, have developed differing tourist art styles is important to our analysis. In this section I propose to show why these divergent styles developed. My hypothesis is based upon the contention, developed in Chapters III and IV, that the tourist art of the Alaskan Eskimos is more similar to traditional Thule-based art than is that of the Canadian Eskimos. This is due, I feel, to two principal factors:

(1) the characteristics of the original advocates of tourist art in the two areas, and

(2) the type of conjunctive relations established between the producers of tourist art and their customers.

The first factor is self-evident in that the original advocates of a tourist art industry must have a great deal of influence upon its development. In Alaska, the advocate was a native Eskimo who learned carving techniques and style in the traditional way and who, asa skilled carver, chose to become a tourist art specialist. He sold his products to a rather non-discriminating, souvenir-oriented white audience who were looking for things typically Eskimo. In Canada, on the other hand, the original advocate was not an Eskimo. Moreover, he was a trained artist in the European tradition. He advocated from the beginning a kind of art which he felt would appeal to people whose appreciation for the aesthetic was rooted in the European tradition. Although he disclaimed any attempts to influence or change Canadian Eskimo art, there is no doubt that many artificial and contrived stylistic changes can be traced to him.

The second factor bearing upon stylistic change is closely linked to the first. Briefly stated, it is as follows. The Alaskan Eskimo tourist artists, since the beginning of their industry, have dealt directly with the ultimate consumers of their products, while the Canadian artist have consistently dealt with middlemen or contact specialists. This has led to situations where, in Alaska, the artist themselves have had to make their own decisions about any changes in their art products, while in Canada the artists have relied upon and followed the advice of Western-orineted advisors, resulting in breaks with traditional art forms.

CHAPTER VI

THEORETICAL ANALYSIS OF TOURIST ART INDUSTRIES

Although I have discussed only two areas where tourist arts have appeared and purposely chose the Eskimo regions that share a basically similar cultural background for comparative purposes, tourist art movements are not uncommon in other parts of the world. And the appearance of such tourist arts invariably appears to be a product of acculturative forces. To mention a few additional such movements, there are the Brazzaville Poto-Poto school of painters of the Congo where painting was taught in the European-run schools and a distinctive style was developed; the Kamba woodcarvers of Kenya who developed a wood carving industry in an area where carving was not a traditional craft; the water color paintings of the American Indians where Indians of several different tribal backgrounds paint with a basically similar style; and the wood carvers of New Zealand who, although they carve in a modified Maori art style, are usually not Maori. These are but a few examples and it can be seen through only a superficial examination that the types of tourist art that have developed throughout the world are varied, particularly in their relations to the traditional art styles of the artists' culture prior to contact.

I believe, however, that these industries arise out of similar situations to those of our sample Eskimo industries and that identical shifts in the functions of art production have taken place in all tourist art movements. In other words, I am suggesting that there are certain universal characteristics of tourist art movements that can be used in analyzing these industries and their relationship to acculturation. To support

this assertion, I must first answer the question - what are tourist art movements in terms of anthropological theory? A perhaps over-simplified answer to this question is - they are innovative events within the context of acculturation. To expand upon this notion, I shall use the two Eskimo tourist art industries with which we are familiar and analyze them within the framework of H. G. Barnett's theoretical scheme of innovations. (Barnett 1953) Briefly stated Barnett's theory of innovation is as follows.

H. G. BARNETT'S THEORY OF INNOVATION

Innovation is defined as: "any thought, behavior, or thing that is new because it is qualitatively different from existing forms. Strictly speaking every innovation is an idea, or a constellation of ideas; but some innovations by their very nature must remain a mental organization only, whereas others may be given overt and tangible expression." (Barnett 1953: 7) Innovation results from the substitution or recombination of ideas for already existing traits or concepts in the culture. All innovative activities are initiated by individuals who are creative within the limitations of the cultural inventory and environment to which they are exposed. In an acculturative situation, an individual has two or more cultural inventories upon which to draw.

The conjunction of differences (i.e. contact situations) can result in the following reactions: (1) rejection; (2) imitation by copying, or (3) syncretism (compromise between the alien and indigenous forms).

The incentives to innovation are the wants and needs manifested by individual members of a culture. The types of wants which lead to change are (1) self-wants, (2) dependent wants, and (3) those wants which reflect a desire for change.

Innovation occurs when "there is an intimate linkage or fusion of two or more (cultural) elements that have not been previously joined in just this fashion, so that the result is a qualitatively distinct whole." (Barnett 1953: 181) It is made up of preexisting components that through mental activity are recombined to form a new and qualitatively distinctive whole, or configuration. It is configurations which, once identified , can be recombined in the innovative process. The innovator then reorganizes configurations according to the following successive processes: (1) identification, (2) substitution, and (3) discrimination. Identification is seeing the relationship between two existing configurations. Substitution, involving the processes of assimilation and projection through which one configuration is substituted for another, is the next step. The final step, discrimination, is a reclassifying process whereby a "configuration of difference emerges from a previously undivided whole." (Barnett 1953: 215)

No innovation is created out of a vacuum; there must be a prototype. The reconfiguration must be related to the existing cultural inventory. Once an innovation is conceived it is either accepted into the cultural inventory or rejected. If it is to be accepted each innovation must have an advocate. The advocate is not necessarily the original innovator. He is an individual member of the society who accepts the innovation by adopting it himself, and he may, or may not, urge others to adopt it. Innovations without advocates never become accepted. (MIstakes fall into this category.) Types of advocates, other than the innovator himself, mentioned by Barnett are: (1) professional advocates, (2) out-group advocates, and (3) conservative advocates (who advocate not changing).

Certain personal assets attributed to advocates

may predispose others to accept or reject an innovation. These attributes include: (1) prestige of the advocate, (2) his personality, (3) his personal relations with the potential acceptors, and (4) the support or lack of support of the majority of the group. Whether an innovation is accepted or rejected, however, is not based solely on the assets of the advocate; the characteristics of the novelty or innovation itself must be considered. Every novelty has both intrinsic features (inherent in the novelty itself) and extrinsic values (considerations concerning the feasibility of adopting the novelty.) Much the same type of patterns occur in acceptance as in the original innovative process, and, in fact, the process of accepting is creative in much the same way as is the original innovative process, The potential acceptor must first identify the novelty with something which he can substitute it for; it must be compatible and have meaning for him. He judges it by its intrinsic features. Once a meaning is established by associating the innovation with a "mentally resident configuration" (Barnett 1953: 335), it does not necessarily lead to automatic acceptance. The meaning it acquires may be incongruous to the potential acceptor if it leads to an idea pattern that conflicts with the prevailing norms. However, if the novelty is presented as a parallel but different idea, it may well be accepted because it does not conflict. Assimilated innovations, accepted from another culture, are the most easily accepted because they do not become "entangled with existing values." (Barnett 1953: 352) Assimilated novelties are, more often than not, detached from context and accepted into another unrelated context through free association or assimilation.

Once conditions of potential acceptance are established, the next question is how do the potential ac-

ceptors judge a novelty as to its desirability in comparison to established customs. Innovations are judged with reference to existing usages that can be measured on the same scale, and the introduced novelty must rate higher on a value scale, individual or modal, than the corresponding existing usage or it will not displace the latter. Such factors as degree of efficiency, cost, advantage, pleasure it gives, ease of mastery, penalty attachments, and repercussions as a result of adopting an innovation are taken into account when making a value judgement concerning a novelty.

The last major question which Barnett discusses is this - which individuals in a given group are more likely to accept innovations? Barnett offers three interlocking hypotheses in answer to this question. These are: (1) "A novelty has less appeal for those who are enjoying the benefits of its functional alternative than for those who are not" (Barnett 1953: 378); (2) "there are biographical determinants for the lack of satisfaction that is characteristic of individuals who are predisposed to accept a substitute for some accustomed idea, and . . . these determinants result from the interplay and adjustment of an indiviudal's conception of himself and the events of his life history" prior to exposure to the particular innovation (Barnett 1953: 379); and (3) "dissatisfaction or unsatisfaction may be a persuasive attitude in some individuals. It colors their view of relatively large but variable sectors of their culture" and tends to make them 'universal acceptors.' (Barnett 1953: 379-380) Barnett then suggests four categories of acceptors, defined "in terms of their attitudes toward the novelty equivalents traditional in their group." (Barnett 1953: 380) These categories are: (1) the <u>dissident</u>, (2) the <u>indifferent</u>, (3) the <u>disaffected</u>, and (4) the <u>resentful</u>.

ESKIMO TOURIST ART MOVEMENTS AS INNOVATIONS

In the beginning of this chapter, I suggested that a tourist art movement represents an innovation that arises through the stimulation of an acculturative situation. Although the development of a tourist art industry represents a series of successive and interlocking innovations involving first the function of art in culture and later the stylistic characteristics of the art form, I believe there is one basic innovative idea from which these other innovations spring. This primary innovative idea, schematically presented, is as follows:

ART OBJECT = POTENTIAL INCOME

hence

ART PRODUCTION = ECONOMIC ACTIVITY.

In this section, with this basic innovative idea in mind, I shall attempt to identify, in terms of Barnett's theory of innovation, the sequence of events through which the Eskimo tourist art movements arose.

To analyze the phenomenon of tourist arts it is helpful to distinguish the role that art production plays in preliterate culture as presented by anthropologists. In treating the components of culture, most anthropologists see art as a specialized activity which is a universal in all cultures. However, it is represented as an institution which is often shaped by other aspects of culture, such as social organization, economics, and political organization, but has only negligible effect in return. (Haselberger 1961: 351) Art production is, nevertheless, intimately intertwined with the other institutions of culture in an everchanging relationship. (Haselberger 1961: 352) More attention is being paid to the study of 'art and culture' by anthropologists today and is leading to a revised definition of art. The Boasian type of definition - "art is to be thought of

as any embellishment of ordinary living that is achieved with competence and has describable form" (Herskovits as quoted by Gunn 1960: 107) is being broadened by suggestions of social-psychological interpretations such as "when studied within the total structure of a civilization, art will be understood as an expression of collective inner life." (Haselberger 1961: 352)

For the purposes of this analysis, the interlocking complex of activities by which man gives vent to the aesthetic impulse can be called a configuration. Configurations, as defined by Barnett, are "any unified pattern of experience (in which the) elements stand in certain definite relationship to each other so that they make up a whole that is configurated by an arrangement of its parts." (Barnett 1953: 182)

The structure of aesthetic behavior in traditional Eskimo culture revolves around the fact that art production (and here we are speaking only of the plastic and graphic arts) was primarily a pleasureable spare-time activity with 'every man an artist'. Although there is evidence in some areas that art production was occasionally the handmaiden of religious activity, on the whole, artistic activity was probably indulged in for the pleasurable aspects of the activity for the individual. There is no evidence that artist-specialists ever existed in the North American Arctic prior to contact. Each man embellished his own tools and household implements or occasionally carved small pieces of sculpture which appear to have served no specific function.

More important to the Eskimos than this aesthetically-oriented configuration of activities were the everyday events directed toward subsistence - hunting, fishing, and gathering. These activities, oriented toward satisfying the most basic self-wants of the individual members of the culture, represented the largest expenditure of

time and effort in traditional Eskimo society. After partial assimilation to the Western money economy, hunt-and and trapping came to the fore, as furs became the principal item of trade within the latered Eskimo economy.

If we consider the aesthetic and subsistence activities of traditional Eskimo culture as two configurations, we would find little over-lapping. However, under the impact of culture contact and the shift of the Eskimo economy from a subsistence hunting economy to one based on money and commodity exchange, the aesthetic configuration has become dependent upon and subordinate to the economic sphere.

This shift is dependent upon the acceptance of the innovative idea - art object = potential income. The prototype of this shift is recognized in an earlier innovation whereby animal pelts which had traditionally been used for clothing and shelter needs became commodities whereby goods could be obtained within the confines of the money economy. It was possible then to identify (in the economic sense) carvings, one component of the aesthetic configuration, with animal pelts as commodities which could be exchanged for goods. Aesthetic activity then assumed the character of an economic one thus losing its identity as a spare-time pleasurable activity. The first artist-specialists had appeared.

One thing which must be kept in mind to understand fully why this innovation took place is the role of the acculturative situation. This particular shift would not likely have taken place within a traditional setting. As I mentioned above, every Eskimo man was an artist and there was no need for artist-specialists. It was in the acculturative situation, where any item of material culture is a potential commodity to be submitted for trade on the markets of a money economy, that this shift took place.

We do not know which one Eskimo individual was the first to think of art as a commodity; probably the original idea came from an outsider seeking a souvenir of Eskimo culture. However, the innovative problem with which we are dealing, involving shifts of function at the institutional level, is of a cultural magnitude that allows us to treat each of the acceptors of the original innovative idea of 'art as a commodity' as an innovator. The sum total of the activities of these individual Eskimos led to the recombining of cultural elements to create the new configuration equating art production with economic activity.

In terms of Barnett's theory, the incentives which led to the Eskimos' linkage of art objects with potential income fall within the category of dependent wants. Dependent wants are those in which "one want is entangled with another, and the pressure of the resulting impasse is resolved by an escape in novelty." (Barnett 1953: 127) Specifically, this innovation falls within the category of "compensatory wants." In this category, the individual, frustrated in achieving what by his standards represents the norm, takes one of three inventive reactions. These are (1) circumvention, (2) attack, and (3) setting up of new goals. (Barnett 1953: 136) In the Eskimo situation, the partially assimilated Eskimos' economic goals were to acquire goods which could be traded for cash value. However, the economic gains from preexisting patterns of hunting and trading furs were unreliable and often the Eskimos were not able to acquire the goods they wanted and needed in exchange. I would say in the case of the Eskimos, they chose Barnett's first alternative; they circumvented the blockage to their goal (in this case the unreliability of hunting as a livelihood) by substituting or adding art production as livelihood. Art objects were then pro-

duced as a commodity and gradually the sphere of aesthetic activities gained meaning as an economic one.

CONJUNCTIVE RELATIONS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF STYLE

Earlier, I mentioned that the development of a tourist art industry involves change at two levels - the functional (which is discussed above) and the stylistic. No analysis of an art movement is complete without consideration of its stylistic characteristics and their relationship to the culture and time. I have deferred the discussion of that part of Barnett's theory involving advocates and acceptors to this point, so it can be examined within the context of the processes by which tourist art styles develop. I feel that the nature of the intercultural role networks present in the acculturative situation, involving advocates and acceptors of tourist art production, is a prime shaper of art style.

In Chapter V, I suggested that the divergent styles of art in the two Eskimo areas are due to (1) the characteristics of the original advocates of tourist art in the areas and (2) the type of conjunctive relations established between the producers of tourist art and their customers. Although the pattern of intercultural roles differed, the basic information which had to be transmitted to the Eskimos in both areas was an answer to the question - what kind of art object is acceptable to the white man's taste? This question had to be answered through intercultural channels of communication.

We are fortunate in that in both Eskimo areas under discussion we have been able to trace the genesis of the tourist art industries to the influence of one individual - Happy Jack in Alaska and James Houston in Canada. Both were advocates of the 'art object = potential income' idea and also innovators of stylistic changes.

In Happy Jack's case, it is easy to analyze his

role in terms of Barnett's theory. Happy Jack was an in-group member who accepted the idea of art production as an economic activity because of a compensatory want. He turned to art as a profession only after disability made it impossible for him to pursue the traditional hunting economy. He then became the great stylistic innovator of the tourist art industry and through his success influenced others to follow his lead. In other words, he advocated art as a profession by adopting it successfully himself so that others accepted the innovation. Happy Jack's economic success led to prestige, and this, coupled with a pleasing personality, acted as personal assets which predisposed others to accept not only the original innovation of 'art as a commodity' but also his individual stylistic innovations.

On the other hand, the problem of James Houston's role is more complicated. In terms of Barnett's theory of innovators and advocates, Houston's part in the development of the tourist art industry in Canada is an ambiguous one. Barnett confines his categories of advocates to in-group members. His definition of out-group advocates specifies those in-group members who, through limited or sustained contact with another culture, have become advocates or carriers of alien customs. The donors of ideas which are carried across cultural boundaries are designated as innovators. (Barnett 1953: 291-292) Yet, Houston appears to have been both innovator and advocate. In terms of Barnett's theory, he was an innovator in that by projecting the aesthetic concepts of his own culture onto those of the Eskimo, he was creating something new. However, in another sense, Houston was not an innovator, as such, because the ideas which he advocated were not new with him. He was advocating his own profession of artist, an established category in Western culture; in introducing this idea to

Eskimos, he was acting as an advocate.

Houston's role in the tourist art industry is perhaps more clearly understood if we consider him, in terms of acculturation theory, as a contact specialist in the intercultural role network. This falls within the category of conjunctive relations, defined by the SSRC Seminar as: "patterns (of) intercultural role networks that not only establish the framework of contact but also provide the channels through which the content of one cultural system must be communicated and transmitted to the other." (SSRC 1954: 980) And further: "intercultural role playing reflects the interest areas that are shared by the two groups in contact, whether attention to these areas is cultivated or enforced by unilineal demands or whether the areas represent a convergence of aspiration and needs." (SSRC 1954: 981) In addition, they state that the part of the cultural inventory which a donor transmits to an alien group is dependent upon his reasons for contact.

Within this context, Houston can be thought of as a contact specialist, and more specifically as an artist. He retained his identity or self-concept as 'artist' throughout his intercultural dealings, and it appears likely that in his first contact with Eskimo carvers his perception of them was as 'artists'. He perceived of their carvings as commodities and offered them on the Western market to the south. He advocated the idea of art as a profession, showed that it was feasible by selling the Eskimos' carvings, and when this was accepted acted as a channel of communication through which ideas concerning the aesthetic system of European civilization was transmitted to the Eskimos. The rather esoteric information which he had to offer would probably have not interested them before they became 'artists' of "other-directed" art objects. As it was, they accepted

Houston's innovative ideas, in which he applied Western standards to indigenous Eskimo art style, because they were interested in making their products more appealing to the southern market.

The second factor in the differentiation of Eskimo tourist art styles - the type of conjunctive relations established between the producers of tourist art and their customers - is also more fruitfully examined in terms of acculturation theory. (Barnett's theory of innovation is less useful in examining clear-cut cases of intercultural contacts than in intracultural relations.)

In both Eskimo areas we found ample evidence that the Eskimo artist were influenced by whites in the development of their tourist art styles. In such "other-directed art" this must invariably be the case, but the network of intercultural roles can vary in its nature. It is the different character of these role networks in the two areas involved that led to a more traditionally oriented art style in Alaska, while in Canada the Eskimos developed a more outward-directed style. As pointed out by the SSRC Seminar, intercultural role patterns reflect the interests shared by the groups in contact, and information which is channeled through these networks reflects these interests. In the case of Canada and Alaska we find two different patterns of contact.

In Alaska, the white man invaded the Eskimos' territory and from the beginning the Eskimo artists dealt directly with their customers. The relationship was one of producer to customer. In this role network, where outsiders were meeting Eskimos on their own ground, it seems very likely that they were also acquiring Eskimo carvings because they were typically Eskimo. (The Western traveler's insatiable appetite for souvenirs is behind the development of most tourist arts.) Although these outsiders made suggestions for modifications

on ivory carvings, the Eskimo artist, working in a close relationship to their market were able to experiment within the boundaries of their traditional art forms in developing stylstic innovations.

On the other hand, in the central Arctic a more artificial situation was in affect. All Eskimo dealings with the outside world were handled through a handful of contact specialists. The products of the Eskimo carvers had to be sent south to the urban areas where they had to compete favorably with aesthetic products of the European tradition. In the role of administrator, the contact specialist who dealt with the Eskimo artists was primarily interested in improving the poor economic conditions of the central Arctic; he was not interested in art as such. The stylistic suggestions given under such circumstances were based on economic considerations, i.e. directed toward making the carvings more successful on the southern market. The Eskimos never dealt directly with their customers and it has resulted in a more Western-oriented art style than that of the Alaskan Eskimos.

CONCLUSIONS

This thesis has been concerned with tourist art. Specifically, I have presented a history and analysis of two tourist art industries - the soapstone carving industry of the Canadian Eskimos and the ivory carving industry of the Alaskan Eskimos. By concentrating on the specific traits of these two industries, I have attempted to isolate certain basic characteristics which may be applicable to the study of tourist art industries wherever found. These characteristics are listed below.

(1) Tourist art movements are an innovative event arising out of an acculturative situation.

(2) Tourist arts are produced by a subordinate

culture for the markets of a dominant culture.

(3) Tourist art industries develop only after at least partial assimilation into a money economy.

(4) Art production becomes linked to the economic sphere so that art objects are equated with potential income.

(5) The production of tourist art results in accelerated participation in a money economy.

(6) Tourist art production tends to replace the local basic economic activities for at least some of the population.

(7) Tourist art production results in a higher percentage of artist-specialists in a population and a resultant higher number of art objects being produced.

I have found that although generalizations can be made concerning the setting in which tourist art industries appear and their effects upon culture, I cannot be as specific in regard to the growth of tourist art style. The style of a tourist art and its degree of similarity to the traditional art style of the area appear to be correlated with the type of conjunctive relations involved in the acculturative situation. Although at this point general statements about the evolution of tourist art styles cannot be made, they offer anthropologists and art historians a unique opportunity to study the genesis and development of an art style that develops out of the contact of two or more cultures.

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ABSTRACT

ESKIMO ART AND ACCULTURATION:
A STUDY OF TOURIST ARTS

by Norma Hackleman Wolff

A common phenomenon of culture contact is the rise of a tourist art. Tourist art is here defined as those art forms which are produced by a subordinate culture primarily, if not exclusively, for trade to peoples of a dominant twentieth century Western civilization.

Two tourist art industries are examined in this thesis - the Eskimo ivory carvers of Alaska and the Eskimo soapstone carvers of the central Canadian Arctic. The art forms produced by these two groups are analyzed at both the functional and stylistic level. In these two areas we find that the tourist art industries arose as a result of the acculturative situation and then acted as agents of acculturation. Stylistically, it was found that the two Eskimo areas which share a basically similar traditional art have developed divergent tourist art styles. It is proposed that this devergence of style is due to the character of the original innovators of tourist art in each area as well as the type of conjunctive relations which followed.

By analyzing the functional aspects of the above two tourist art industries in terms of H. G. Barnett's theory of innovation, it is possible to formulate certain statements about tourist art development at a universal level. These universal characteristics are concerned primarily with the shift of artistic activity from the aesthetic sphere to the economic. Art objects

are equated with potential income and as such function as a component of the economic sphere. Stylstic characteristics appear to be less predictable as they are dependent upon the type of conjunctive relations involved in the beginning of the industry.