

**Take it from the Top Video Project:**

**Northern Perspectives on the North, the South and Newcomers to Their Land**

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## Abstract

The Arctic occupies an important place in Western imagination, in particular in the development of colonial and Southern (Western) power. Through a process of co-research and community-based video making, the researcher and student researchers made several group and individual video projects investigating the North, to reclaim, celebrate and educate. The project media contributes to the expanding field of politics of representation and knowledge to empower the social and cultural perspective and expression of the Arctic people. This thesis analyses collaborative video documentation created by Aurora College Adult Education students in Inuvik who designed the research guide, interviewed, filmed, edited and also created personal video projects. It examines the *North*, *Newcomers to the North* and *The South Through Northern Eyes* –and their cultural and social implications and how those implications effects communications, within the North and between the North and South. From a Northern perspective of homeland and adaptation, the Southern binary of assimilation and Modernity have been incorrect, disruptive and discriminatory and it fails to interact with Northern realities of paradox, pragmatism and strength. It argues that that the dominant Southern perspective with its power-centered negative and inaccurate perceptions and portrayals need to be disempowered and discarded for authentic Northern narratives with intertwining concepts of story, voice, image and culture. Representations and experiences, present and future, are vastly different stories when told from the perspective of the North. This research endeavors to act as a conduit to contribute the direct academic voice of Northern peoples, contexts and truths through knowledge co-production and video creation.

Drawing on public sociology, visual sociological theory, cultural studies, Northern studies, education and the reexamined “post”-colonial theory, this interdisciplinary thesis covers ideological processes, cultural politics, community practices and social issues that have shaped this cultural clash. Hence, this study is textually based, describing the video narratives and academically situating the work in Northern discourse becoming central and dominant in Northern research and education. This thesis tries to restart/reframe the conversation on the representation/knowledge of the Indigenous peoples of the Western Arctic and its evolving identity, power and place in the global world.

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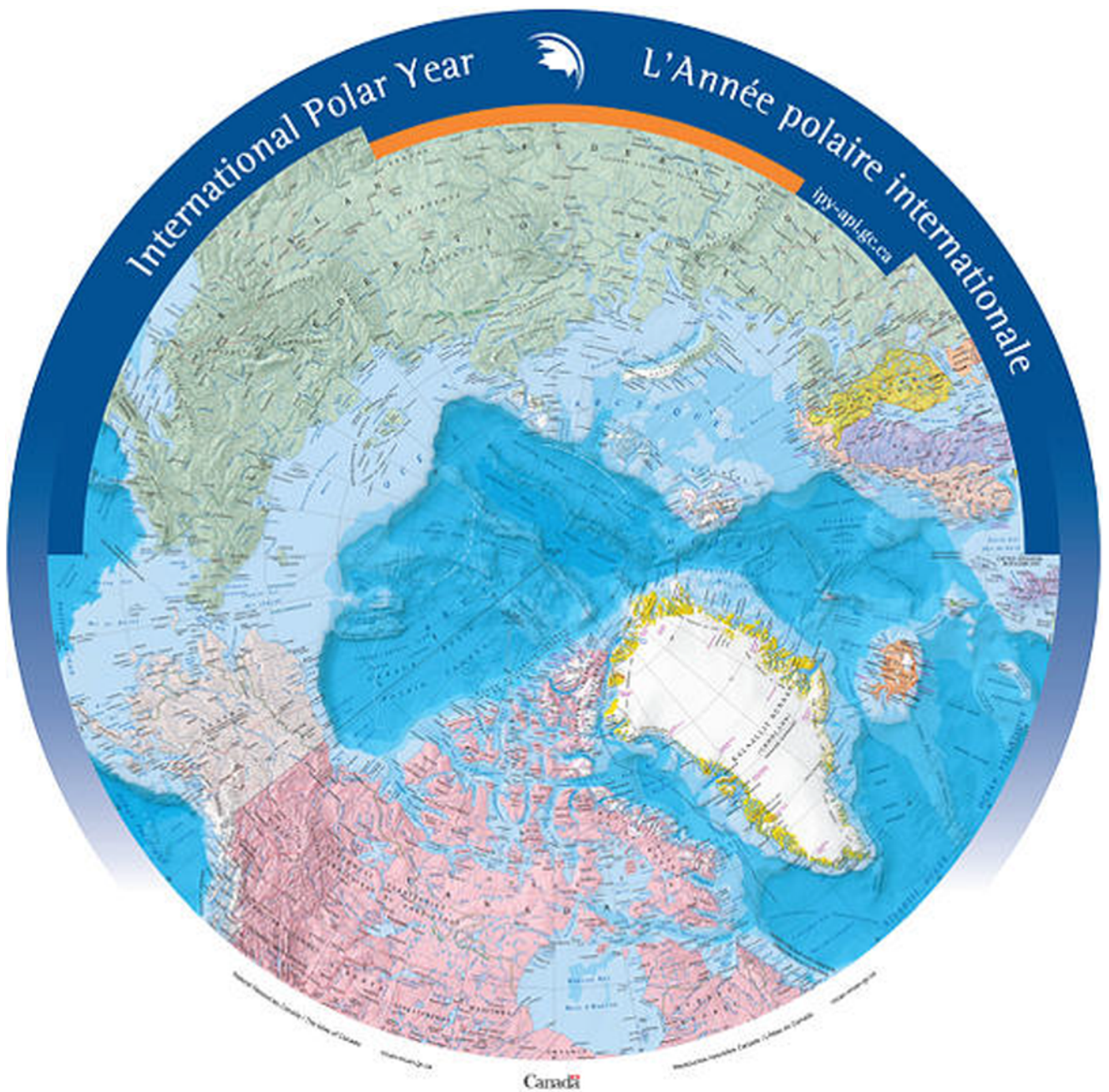
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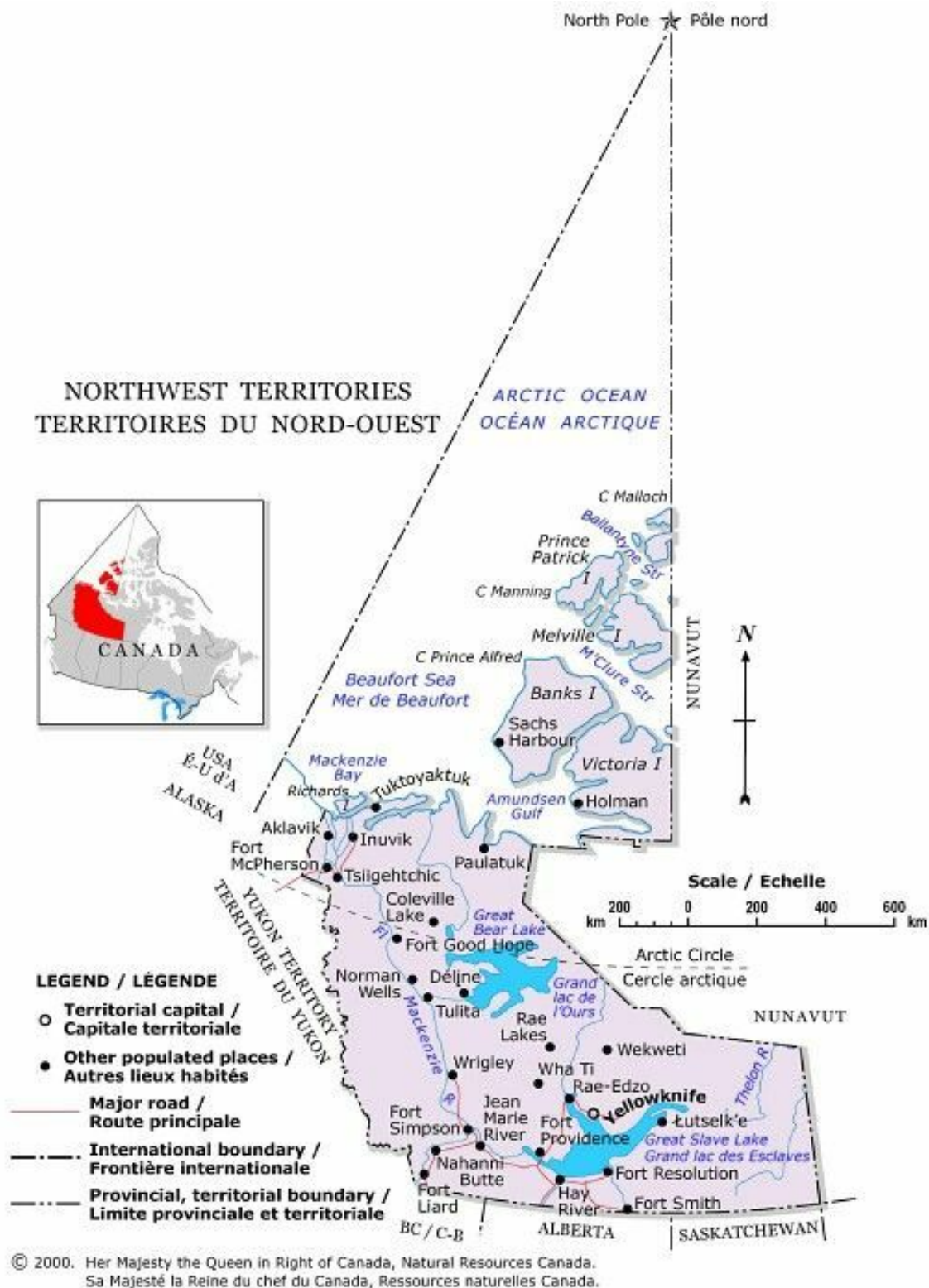
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## Map of Circumpolar World - Canada



[Available at <http://mapdesign.icaci.org/2014/10/mapcarte-288365-atlas-of-canada-international-polar-year-map-by-nrcan-2008/> (Accessed April 18, 2017)]

## Map of the Northwest Territories



[Available at <http://www.arcticcharinn.com/map-of-nunavut-map.html> (Accessed April 18, 2017)]



## **Preface**

This research is video based. This dissertation is an effort to chronicle and situate the work in a written format. However, it is best expressed in video form and readers are encouraged to view the videos before reading or throughout the reading process.

The videos are available at:

Dedicated video project site with all videos

<http://takeitfromthetopoftheworld.weebly.com>

Short videos and project photos Facebook Film Page 'Take it from the Top'

<https://www.facebook.com/Take-it-from-the-Top-106713977389/>

Short videos on youtube channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/TakeItFromTheTopVids>

Happy viewing!

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

In a fractured age, when cynicism is god, here is a possible heresy: we live by stories, we also live in them. One way or another we are living the stories planted in us early or along the way, or we are also living the stories we have planted – knowingly or unknowingly – in ourselves. We live stories that either give our lives meaning or negate it with meaninglessness. If we change the stories we live by, quite possibly we change our lives.

- Ben Okri (1997: 46)

A wit said I don't know who discovered water but we're pretty sure it wasn't a fish.

- Marshal McLuhan (2005:106)

Real recognition of our presence and humanity would require a genuine reconsideration of so many peoples' roles in North American society that it would amount to a genuine leap of imagination

- George Manual and Michael Posluns - The Fourth World (in Coulthard 2014:1)

### Stories (Narrative) and the North as Guiding Principals

This research began after the story had already started. Society had existed in the North as long as there were people making their lives in this severe and awe-inspiring place. Time did not begin when explorers, missionaries, whalers and fur traders arrived, though they brought tremendous change and their clock. Education did not begin with schools being built or students being forced into desks. Families did not stop when residential schools disrupted the sanctity, continuity and safety of

the family unit. Culture did not end despite predictions of extinction or government systems of assimilation, nor with brutal government interference or callous indifference. This story goes on because life goes on; as does society even when change, clash and cohabitation bring good and bad. 'The truth about stories is, that's all we are', as the novelist Thomas King (2003: 2) eloquently said in his Massey<sup>1</sup> lectures. I begin this thesis with another's story because this work came out of stories that were not mine, nor mine to tell but with my need to share them. This research grew out of a desire to assist my students in the telling of their stories and directly includes Northerners in Northern research. I tell some stories I have learned and lived along the way too, as context for this dissertation and teacher's habit. The stars of the show are my students and I hope you enjoy their stories, as Dennis Allen (project interview) says, "Northerners are all born storytellers..."

So another's story is the best beginning; I apologize for my telling, as it is a pale shadow of the original. I have taught at Aurora College since January 2000. Early in my tenure I had the opportunity to teach Forrest Kendi, who is one of my all time favourite students, a proud Gwich'in man, residential school survivor, hard worker, high school graduate in his sixties and fantastic storyteller. As a small child living in Aklavik, Forrest contracted tuberculosis in his eyes and was sent to the hospital in Fort Smith, a community thousands of miles away. They expected him to

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<sup>1</sup> The Massey Lectures are widely regarded as the most important public lectures in Canada. Established in 1961 by the CBC to honour the former Governor-General of Canada, the Right Honourable Vincent Massey. They are broadcast by the CBC from cities across Canada, and published at the same time by House of Anansi Press. See <http://www.masseycollege.ca/massey-lectures/>

lose his eyes. However, resilient child that he was, he tells his journey, of the excitement of riding in a truck and flying in a plane, all for the first time. Forrest sparkles when he describes his joy at this grand adventure and how he felt so lucky and special (all the more intriguing due to his grave health condition but such is the strength of children), until he arrived at the hospital and was greeted by the sisters. Forrest then became terrified and began to cry and continued to cry for several days. You see his worst fear had been realized; the Catholic Grey nuns, who ran the St. Anne's hospital in Fort Smith, had stolen him just as his mother had warned they would if he did not stay close to home. So sick, alone, and having no one who spoke his language he cried and cried. Finally several days later they found someone who could explain that the Catholics had not stolen him. He had been taken to a hospital and when he was better he could go home. Forrest stopped crying and to everyone's surprise he did not lose his eyes. The doctors credit his tears with flushing out his eyes enough that they could heal.

Years later, when he told his mother this story; she was distraught because her warnings of the Catholics had not been religious or truly fearful but an attempt to keep her large family close to home. You see they lived on the Anglican side of Aklavik and she did not want her children going across town to hang out at the Catholic recreation centre, which was considered better than the Anglican recreation centre closer to home. Forest tells this story with real flare and ends it with a laughing flourish, he explains that everything has a reason and we just have to find it. Forrest did not really get to go home after the hospital, rather he was then sent to a residential school in Yellowknife that was also thousands of miles from Aklavik and his

traditional territory of the Mackenzie Delta. He lost his language and on the infrequent visits home discovered he could not even talk with the family he was only seeing every few years. He left school when he says he could not handle the rules anymore and says it gave him wanderlust. After being forced to stay in places not of his choosing, he has never opted to stay in one place or job too long. He returned home to the Delta almost twenty years ago and has stayed. He completed his high school diploma with us (which was then a very complicated process at the time and few students were able to do so) and went on to be very successful in his Environment and Natural Resources Technology Diploma. However, he likes to point out his truck has “Run Forrest Run” on the side so you never know when he might just get going. Forrest never minimizes his struggles but also celebrates his life with merriment. His story exemplifies that the North is about survival, resilience, adaption, community, good stories and laughter.

The **polarity** of this story illustrates the polarity of this thesis and research project. The Oxford Dictionary puts forth these two definitions for polarity ‘the state of having two opposite tendencies, opinions, etc.’ and ‘the condition of have having two poles with contrary qualities’. Forrest’s story clearly demonstrates the first definition as it expresses the positive and negative aspects of his experience. This thesis will try to explore this polarity in the framing of the research context, research process and the stories told. It will vacillate between the contrary qualities of an education system (impart knowledge of or skill but also synonymous with indoctrination), societal clash (a system of human organizations generating distinctive cultural patterns and institutions and usually providing protection, security,

continuity, and a national identity for its members threatened by outside/apposing systems), and cultural endurance (the totality of socially transmitted behaviour patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought withstanding outside/apposing hegemonic forces) .

The two main terms, Southern (from Southern Canada grounded in Western culture, urban, middle class, white and dominant) and Northern (living or from the north, predominately Aboriginal, linked to environment/land, all socio-economic backgrounds but with the average being far below Canadian socio-economic norms, and an Indigenous world view with a majority population but minority power status) for the people involved in education in the North also demonstrates polarity. Please note the normative term for Indigenous people in the Northwest Territories is Aboriginal and is predominately Inuvialuit and Dene peoples but I will use them interchangeably as it happens here. At times the writing will be very stark and negative when considering the history and challenges of education and some hard realities of life in the North but it will also be overwhelmingly positive when detailing the video research project and the encouraging stories research students chose to share. During the drafting process I tried to bring the research in tidy and neat, however given the extremeness of the context and situation, it must be expressed with its defiant awkwardness and paradox.

**Paradox** is inescapable as this work is about yes and no. It is about darkness and light. It is about the good and the bad. It is the reality and duality that “Education is seen as the cause of and panacea for all the diseases of society” (Tomasevski 2003: 2). I am a teacher and when I am teaching I am all about “Yes, you can and we can do it.” I work in the light and focus on the good. However, in the back of my mind, in my office, as I am walking home or lying awake at night I live in a dark place of “No we aren’t getting it done and things are bad.” Life in the high Arctic is harsh and can be cruelly tragic. When the media pays any attention at all it shows drive-by images of alcoholism, abuse, drugs, violence and misery. It shows these images out of context and in a sensational, disjointed drama that too often reinforces terrible stereotypes and the negative and racist opinions of far too many Canadians. I am going to say it. Racism and prejudice towards Aboriginal peoples in Canada is all too common and all too tolerated, as the *Eye of the Storm* (1970) educator Jane Elliot’s ‘brown eyes, blues eyes’ exercise devastatingly showed prevalence of prejudice. It was demonstrated again in an Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal context in her DVD *Indecently Exposed* (2005) that was filmed in Saskatchewan and is her fiercely succinct dispelling of the myth that nice Canadians do not have prejudice. We do and Aboriginal people are the number one target. Race is not something nice people talk about but too many ‘nice’ people are racist and hold cultural prejudice. In a world of positive and polite tyranny it is difficult to talk about the dark. Indeed if you met me after reading my writing, you would be surprised that I am very cheerful and am known to be unflaggingly optimistic. That is true but there is also a deep need to question and ask for change. The state of the Arctic is strong but it is also fragile. It is strong because Northern people have survived and thrived in spite of and in union with an environment that most of the globe think is uninhabitable. It is also fragile

like its ecosystem, that has been abused and used, and needs time to replenish and heal. The state of the Arctic is light and dark, thankfully the light of the summer is much longer than the dark of winter showing the ultimate power of light over dark.

### **Purpose of Research**

I wish I could start with just one story but just as this research has been about many stories it began and continues to develop with many stories meeting and blending. For me it begins with my first year of teaching in the Arctic and being assigned to teach Northern Studies. Imagine my terror, a white middle-class urbanite Southerner, to be required to teach Northern Studies to an all Aboriginal Beaufort Delta class of students. It seemed utterly absurd but unfortunately not uncommon. It is an expression of the complex and troubling South/North cultural power dynamic in Northern education and research as the vast majority of teachers and education administrators are not Northern. But I had a class to teach, so began my obsessive quest for Northern resources and trying to find ways to lead a class through collaboration and mentorship.

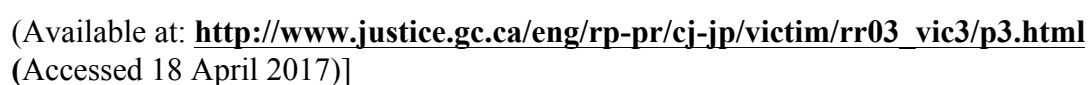
I literally quaked when I walked into my first Northern Studies class but continued to teach it for the next ten years and it has substantially influenced and changed my educational career. The course has been very popular and began every year with me saying this was a team effort and my academic skills with their Northern expertise would get the job done. Five years after I started, I was in a



Masters program, part-time while teaching and I was asked to do the project of my dreams, a video on Northern definition and hopes for education and literacy in the Western Arctic. Somewhere in the writing phase I read Rasmussen's (2001) *Qallunalogy of the Oppressor* and I wrote on the top "Sounds like fun" and "Class Project" which was the beginning of Southern Studies.

Moving ahead a few more years, during a presentation on my Master's video research project and I was asked if I was a Northern Expert and I was overwhelmed with the idea that the longer I live in the North the stronger the realization there is still so much to learn. In that moment I was never more aware of the power that research and education could wield. Expertise is a societal power and in my Southern culture, academic expertise can be very powerful. When I consider what I know if I am a Northern authority by these years of working and living with Northerners then Northerners would conversely be supremely proficient in understanding Southerners after dealing with them for their lifetimes. In that moment I realized it was time to do this with my students and include Northerners as fellow researchers. Northerners are perfectly placed to study the North but also the South (turnabout is fair play). At its heart the project was about trying to communicate difference, identity, culture and meaning. However, the challenge of the writing is to contextualize the impact of understanding through the prisms of power, society and differing cultures, which are distorting and difficult to negate and account for. As an educator in the Western Arctic it is a strange reality that most instructors at the secondary and post-secondary level will be from Southern Canada but the students will almost all be Northerners. This dynamic leads to many communication challenges. As an instructor that teaches

### Map 3: Northwest Territories Boundaries



Like the Beaufort Delta, this project is a great confluence of people, perspective, and place. The Delta is the confluence of many rivers, the largest being the Mackenzie, coming together and emptying into the Beaufort Sea and Arctic Ocean. The significance of the many rivers and waterways being part of the large and powerful Mackenzie River demonstrates the interconnectedness and strength of the Northern Aboriginal cultures, and the Arctic Ocean can be seen to symbolise the larger membership in the family of the human race. This intersection and connection in modern times has not always been civil or equitable but like the Beaufort Delta these connections are unavoidable. The Arctic watershed is ever changing, from clear waters, to frozen to rushing current and the turbulent disruption is filled with the stuff and matter of the south traveling north. This place is a meeting not only of waters but also of people, culture, society, education and circumstance. The delta is the traditional meeting place of two ancient cultures, the Gwich'in and the Inuvialuit, but also the meeting place of newcomers to the North from Southern Canada. The basic goal of the research project is to try to stimulate, support and nurture dialogue and understanding in the North but also in the South. After hundreds of years of being the object of Southern research, the voice of northern people needed to be heard not only on the north, but also on the south. The Inuvik Literacy Circle, with Aurora College's Inuvik Learning Centre's staff and students, conducted a three-part research project focusing on Northern perspectives on the North, the South and newcomers to their land.

This project was designed, executed and completed by and for Northerners. The underlying philosophy of sharing and storytelling inspired what stories students

wanted to create and what the community members wanted to share about their North, the South and newcomers. This project sought to engage students on what they thought of the issues and also what their community thought. Almost 50 students took part in this video research project that focused on a community based appreciative enquiry. The project evolved over time and has grown accordingly. Most of the research was a group collaborative process with students and community members; however, the students were also able to pursue individual projects. My responsibilities progressed from initially leading/mentoring and organising the groups to functional administration and support as we progressed into personal projects and theme editing, when students moved into leadership and self-directed roles.

### **‘Take it from the Top’ Project Scope and Progression**

Research in the North has had a long history much like education and due to problems, power inequality and poor communication, both have earned a great deal of mistrust. There is an often-repeated joke in the North that a northern family used to consist of “A mother, father, children and a researcher”. Research in the Canadian North is now much more closely monitored and controlled, protecting communities and the Arctic. This protection comes in two phases; the first is an ethical review like in any other academic project, but then the second is the scientific research licensing process for the Northwest Territories through the Aurora Research Institute. This process was all accomplished before we began but all phases involved intensive student participation and community consultation. Funding for equipment and technical support/instruction salaries was provided for by grants from several

government agencies, as well as some local private organizations. Initially, I did most of the funding requests but as work progressed, the research students became more involved with this aspect of things, however as team leader, it remained a large part of my responsibilities. The research was integrated into student course work from the beginning of Spring 2008 until the end of Spring 2009. 43 students worked in four groups to design the research, interview 95 people, edit and create personal projects. All except one of the student researchers were Aboriginal. Most were Gwich'in and Inuvialuit but three were Dene from the Sahtu, which is the region directly south of the Beaufort Delta. The students ranged in age from 18-65. Most of the 95 people interviewed were also Aboriginal, with 11 being from the South originally but most of those had lived in the North for many years.

A group of three students, all Inuvialuit, then continued to work through summer 2009 through paid research internships. The funding was made available through territorial government grants and the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation. The summer research interns edited all the collected interviews into the themed project while continuing their own personal projects. The summer was filled with filming at the Great Northern Arts Festival and the Northern Games. The students also travelled to Edmonton to interview 25 people about what they knew about the North and the South. Due to limitations in the sample size, this data was not meant to be statistically significant. However, given that the 95 people interviewed and 43 students involved were from a community of 3500 and region with a population of 7500, it is reasonable to start to draw some conclusions. This is at its heart a qualitative study but it does fulfil the criteria of population saturation, that is, the last

interviews did not bring in many ideas that had not already been expressed in the preceding ones. Data thus conveyed a relatively exhaustive range of opinions about the three themes: 'Northern studies for northerners', 'north to south' and 'Southern studies'. Although from a qualitative point of view the unique quality of the interviews and stories are essential to the research.

The research was formed around were six main theme questions:

- What does the north mean to you?
- What does it mean to be northerner?
- What advice would you have to newcomers to the north?
- What do you want the south to know about the north?
- What does the south mean to you?
- What does a southerner mean to you?

However, students also created almost 100 questions in total. Each person in the north was asked the main questions and then answered an additional 15–30 questions they chose themselves from the extra questions in the research guide. Most northern participants wanted to answer most questions about the north, and then would offer a few suggestions for newcomers to the north and what southern people should know about the north and then they might offer one opinion or story about the south. This was consistent with all participants but not by design. This did however track with the students' interests, too. If we were to quantify the time spent on questions, 50–60% would be about the north, 25–35% on advice to newcomers and the south and then 10–15% on the south. The richest answers about the south were the standard

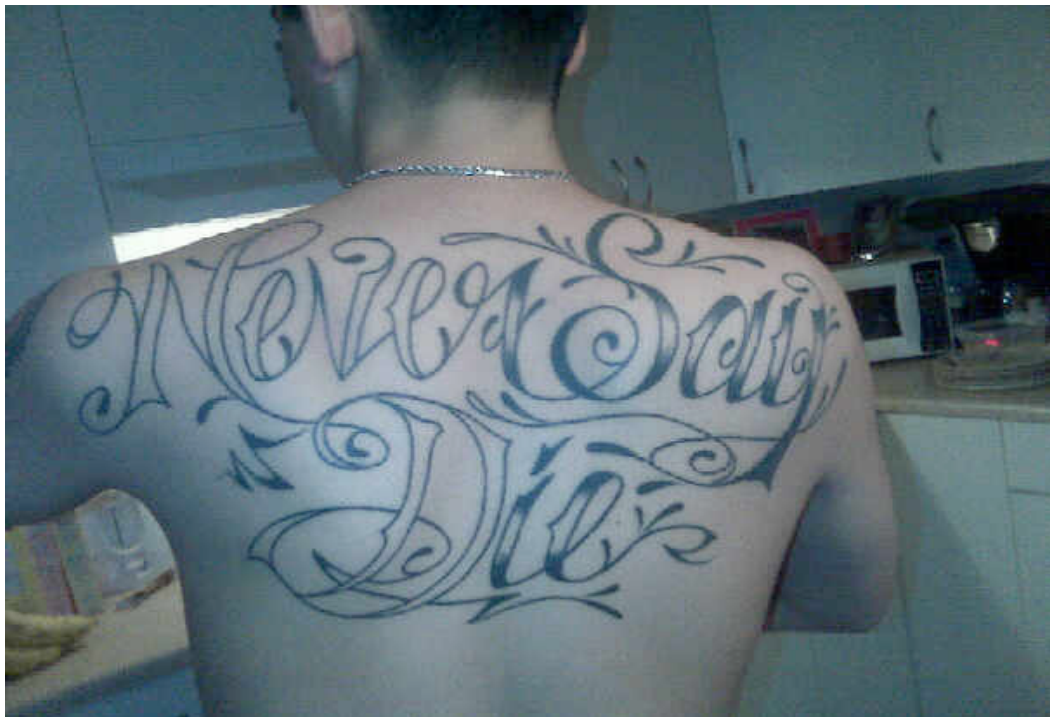
questions asked of everyone, what does the South mean to you and what does it mean to be a Southerner. There were 95 people interviewed in the north and the students all also answered the main questions with the additional 25 interviews in the South. There were also 11 initial individual projects and additional work that also followed this rational breakdown of focus.

### **Midnight Sun, Winter Dark, Forest and Trees**

To understand the **duality** of this project and problem in a metaphoric sense it is important to consider the polarity of the Arctic season. In Inuvik, as with all the high Arctic, the sun is bright for three months and it is at its zenith for three full days at the summer solstice. Conversely it does not rise for more than a month. Such is the balance of my work: to celebrate the light and the good with optimism and hope but to understand the dark and the problematic. Like the Northern environment, there is not one without the other. Students and participants were predominately positive but were also honest about more troubling and negative things that form a part of Northern life. It is important to understand the high context quality of Northern community life. People live closely to one another and have interconnected lives. They know each other's stories, good and bad. They know what each student has overcome and survived and what an achievement it is that they put their energy into creating messages of hope. Students and participants have survived the gambit of human suffering from poverty, substance abuse problems, abuse, violence and they persevere. The positivity of the project, evidenced by the almost universally upbeat personal project topics and the remarkably positive Northern interview responses, is a

triumph given the circumstances. The very fact that each of the students, as adults, are involved in the project is also a testament to the fact that the system is failing Northern students. An uninformed viewer might think the happy messages are saying that everything is okay but they are saying that some things are okay but not everything is all right and we are working to make them right.

Plate 1: Back tattoo



(Taken from Facebook post)

The village of Aklavik's motto is "Never say die" and one young man had it tattooed on his full back. It is a concrete manifestation of real Northern resilience. Aklavik was sinking due to its soft soil and constant spring flooding, it could not accommodate the community size desired for a government hub. Instead, the government built Inuvik for its ready availability of gravel and location on a side channel that was not prone to flooding. Aklavik was supposed to be abandoned but some people stayed and continued to stay. The North is about survival and that is the



backbone of Northern culture, the resilience and resistance required to survive as a people in spite of the elements and the government.

The boreal forest is a symbol of Northern resistance. If you were to come to Inuvik, you would see the small and twisted trees that make a boreal forest. To a Southern person, they look like were new growth or saplings but in reality it is an old forest that is hundreds of years old. These trees fight to grow in a very short growing season in alkaline soil and limited by the permafrost to account for their small size and twisted shapes. But as with everything it is also relative, I once drove a new student into town from the Eastern Arctic, above the treeline, whose son marveled at the huge trees and wondered aloud how he was going to avoid getting lost. This study focuses on many stories and is about the forest rather than the trees. Paradoxically, its depth comes for its breadth rather than focusing more specifically on one or a few trees.

Looking at academic research, this is not a theory driven sociological project and the study finds itself between the micro and macro focus. I did not choose to do a traditional ethnography with its deep focus on one or a few subjects, despite this work finding its roots in that tradition. Ethnography has long been used in Northern research of which Briggs (1970) and (1999), Cruikshank (1991) and Wachowich (2001) are excellent examples. Freeman (1978) is an interesting and unique ethnographic example due to her Inuit perspective of *Living among the Qallunat* (White people). These are amazing studies, but are concerned with concentration while this study was about saturation. Sociology has many interesting examples like

*Gang Leader for a Day* (Venkatesh, 2008), or *Promises I Can Keep* (Edin and Kefalas, 2005), but they tend to look at systems specifically while this focuses on people in a more general sense. Macro sociological themes do present in this study but in a matter of course rather than focused design. This decision was taken to maximize the number of stories, but also to avoid leading the process too much. It is also a function of being an instructor in a classroom and the reality/joy of working as a group. The students who eventually interned often said that we research as a pack. At its core it is interdisciplinary and the work flows from the collective to the individual and back again; from discipline to discipline in the same way. Which alludes to my eventual conclusion, to argue for the trans-disciplinary approach as a hopeful future. However, it is important to concede that for my students and community members trans-disciplinary was already their position. Existential sociology is a locational assist for the writing, and myself, and its glorious paradox and absurdity is an essential compass. It is trees and the forest and both and sometimes neither.

This project was **co-knowledge production** and **co-research**. It fits in the Northern norms of consensus and collaboration in decision-making. I am purposeful with using co-knowledge production rather than knowledge co-production to emphasize importance of a shared process but also product which is critical that co-research be equitable at all stages . Knowledge and responsibility are grounded in personal autonomy/independence but function in an interconnected and collective group identity. Jasonoff qualifies knowledge co-production as:

Well, I think it's important to distinguish two versions of co-production - the Science and Technology Studies one and the commonsensical one. I distinguish

what I mean by co-production from what I jokingly refer to as Miramax co-production, the kind you see referred to when the film credits roll.

The second version is very consistent with one idea of democratizing politics. To be inclusive, you need more voices – transposed to research, the idea is that all of these stakeholders sitting around the table are bringing in perspectives that are not shared by the others. Then you get a good product that can only come about if everybody has brought their insight into it. So in the film context, the person who is doing the design, the script, the editing, the sound system, each one needs to contribute to get the final product.

(Jasonoff, 2014)

This example is particularly salient as it links to the even deeper reactive/reflexive taxonomic nature of western/Southern thought. Asian films do poorly in western markets, as they tend to defy genre. Indeed, Asian cinema can be high drama, musical and slapstick in a matter of minutes and careen back and forth multiple times in an epic 3-4 hours. However, if you harken back to time when orality was normative in England and consider Shakespeare's plays you see they are also a mixed bag; clowns in drama, dirty jokes always and true sad social commentary found in his comedy. Neither of these narrative traditions fit neatly in the modern western narrative groupings where these things are in separate and orderly genres.

The tendency to taxonomy is in some ways innate, I watch my toddler daughter beginning to sort and order her toys and anything else she can get her hands on. It is an important way in which she is trying to make sense of the world. I defend it, as I know I do the same intellectually and sometimes even physically, but wonder if it is perhaps a more simplistic way of approaching information than I thought. It is a main occupation of the academy and education. But it is a construction or fabrication like literacy, and it is very useful but not everything, and definitely not whole despite the parts. We can lose meaning in the parts or our expression of them.

I tend to this allegiance to genre with my own apparently acculturated viewing choices but when you consider it, reality is far more multi or inter genre. Nothing real is as neat and orderly as genre narrative. It is interesting to note that horror films tend to be a huge favourite in the North, as their construction is perhaps the most fluid of western genres.

Taxonomy is not a friend of paradox or of the difficult to categorize. Even our clock is a construction and yet we from the South are slaves to it and impose it on the North. It is another legacy of Linnaeus which is another other legacy of to science, particularity with the rise of Darwin and a purpose of Modernity. Linda Tuhiwai Smith expertly explains imperialism and its main projects from her Maori perspective:

Imperialism tends to be used in at least four different ways when describing the form of European imperialism, which started in the fifteenth century; (1) imperialism as economic expansion; (2) imperialism as the subjugation of 'others' (3) imperialism as an idea or spirit with many forms of realization; and (4) imperialism as a discursive field of knowledge...located in the Enlightenment Spirit which signalled the formation of economic, political and cultural life in Europe...within the enlightenment context the development of the modern state, of science, of ideas and of the 'modern' human being. It further understood as what enabled Europeans to image the possibility of the new worlds, new wealth and new possessions existed that could be discovered and controlled... finally The reach of imperialism into 'our heads' challenges those who belong to colonized communities to understand how this occurred, partly because we perceive a need to decolonize our minds, to recover ourselves, to claim a space in which to develop a sense of authentic humanity...colonialism became imperialism's outpost, the fort and the port of imperial outreach.

(Smith 1999: 21-23)

Tomlinson (1991: 169) asserts 'the failure of modernity, which the discourses of cultural imperialism register, is the failure of the autotomized institutions of modernity to meet this cultural need'. To deny place, culture, and community is to

deny the Indigenous student. It also becomes an almost concerted effort to disenfranchise. Perhaps it is not only the North that needs more. Tomlinson contends:

If one central theme runs through them all, it is the claim that people need something that modernity has not provided. This is a need not for material well-being, or political emancipation, but a specifically cultural need: to be able to decide how we will live collectively in the widest possible sense – what we will value, what we will believe in, what sense we will make of our everyday lives.

(Tomlinson 1991: 169)

Knowledge co-production in a process of co-research can be a process and produce something not limited to one way or one thing. Perhaps the answer to many questions and challenges will be in the postmodern world but as it is now, it will still be a Western or Southern answer for Northern peoples, which is to say an answer proposed by outsiders.

### **Living in the Field**

Upon reflection my metaphors are largely geographic. It is a matter of place, as I live in my field. Smith (1999: 74) explains ‘the significance of place, of land, to the landscape and to other things in the universe, in defining the very essence of a people, makes for a very different rendering of the term essentialism as used by Indigenous people’. I wish I could say it was by thoughtful and clever design but I must confess it just happened. Perhaps my adopted home has imprinted on me or perhaps I have been trying to explain it so long that I have gravitated to metaphors that would be preferred here. Or perhaps I have achieved a personal goal in a small way, to be an

interpreter or bridge for my students and perhaps for the academy. Giroux proposes that:

By being able to listen critically to the voices of their students, teachers become border-crossers through their ability to not only make different narratives available to themselves and other students but also by legitimating difference as a basic conditions of understanding the limits of one's own voice...radical educators can bring the concepts of culture, voice, and difference together to create a borderland where multiple subjectivities and identities exist as part of a pedagogical practice that provides their potential to expand the politics of democratic community and solidarity.

(Giroux 1992: 206)

Maybe I have learned enough to be able to translate a little of the in-between. I must confess to be very much the Southern lady with her clock (though usually late), lists and some lasting Southern habits and characteristics, but I seem to be learning more. I hope so. It is wonderful to think this gorgeous and precious land is changing and teaching me. Like Freddy Jerome, a Gwich'in elder showed me once, as we enjoyed a fall day sitting on the river bank at camp, when he pointed to the birds and asked me what I thought they were doing flying back and forth. I said I had no clue but isn't that what birds do? He smiled and said "Think Suzanne. It is fall and the young ones need to learn to stay together as they have a long journey ahead migrating to the south." He described more things about the birds, their ages, type etc., which I could not follow. I felt a little stupid, as I would never have made that conclusion and could not keep up with his observations. He continued to say that you could tell when the snow would come based on when they started their formations and it would be later this year, which was of course correct. He smiled again and said I would get it eventually if I just kept looking and trying.

### **Research Questions:**

The three themes of the study have their questions as outlined before but the broader question is how can we gain better communication and understanding across differing cultures and perspectives. The basic questions of what is the North and the South asks people to answer them and to then examine not only their answers but those of others to gain new understanding and insight. For example, one student noted that elders say that watching white people talk is like watching seagulls fight over food. I laughed, as in comparison to most Northerners most Southerners are a conversationally aggressive bunch and I am very guilty of that myself, as I love to talk. The student then blushed and said she hoped she had not offended me. She was very relieved when I assured her it was an apt description and a good example of cross-cultural observations of communication. My Northern partner has often lamented the constant repetition at staff meetings and my students of the repetition in essay writing. Repetition is not a Northern norm as you are meant to observe and get it the first time, which Southerners are often not as adept at doing and certainly not silently. I am constantly reminded to try my best to be silent on the land and then teased for being like a *siksik* (ground squirrel in Gwich'in and Inuvialuktun) always chattering and on the move.

Another broader question is how can we better understand our own perspective and innate biases as things that must be questioned, and interfere with our understanding and communications with others. The very first week I was in Inuvik in my first job as a lifeguard was very instructive as to how little I knew about intercultural communication. As children do, a little boy smacked his sister and she

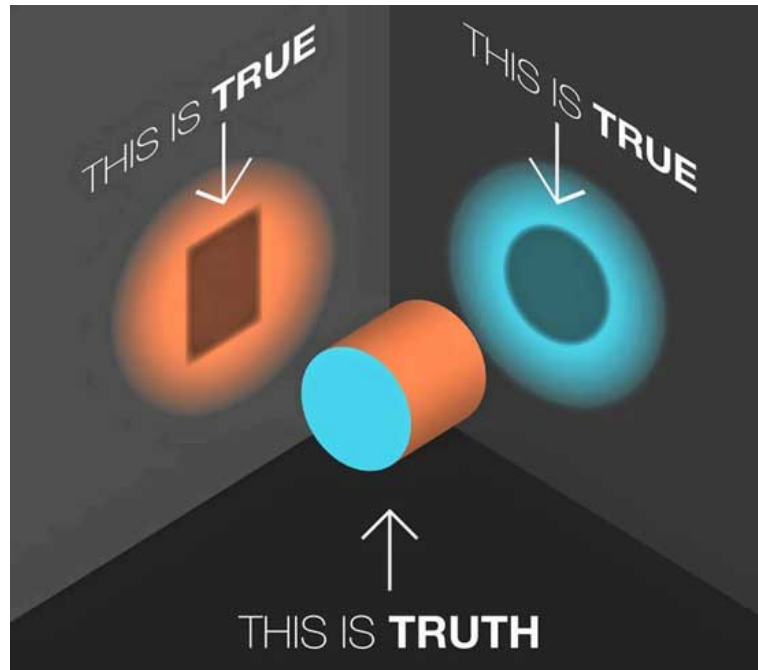
ended up with a bleeding nose. So out of the pool they came so her nose could stop bleeding and I could talk with him. So I asked, “Are you going to do that again young man?” on a supremely chaotic pool deck during solstice at the end of the school year. He screws his face up. So I said, “Don’t you make faces at me” and he literally recoiled. His sister intervenes, with blood still pouring down her face, “He is saying no...don’t they tell you people anything?” She was outraged and he was looking scared of me. She continues raising her eyebrows telling me “this is yes” and scrunching her nose telling me “this is no” with a huff. So I asked him again and he scrunches his nose. I apologized to them both and send them back into the pool (her nose had finally stopped bleeding). So I went home that night very irritated with my partner, born and raised in Inuvik, for not telling me this. He laughed and said “Oh yeah”. I pressed him and he replied, “I forgot and you don’t go around telling people how to say yes and no. They will think you are a turnip. No one ever told me how down south. I figured it out”. It is an essential example of a Northern observation and non-verbal communication. Our children innately learned to raise their eyebrows and scrunch their noses from their father long before they started nodding or shaking their heads, which they rarely do. After a recent presentation about this project to the Aurora College Nursing program when a very earnest and literal Southern student who said, “cute project but really what is the point and what does it matter?” I replied that it is hard to communicate but we can try and do better and I knew she would want to do this as a nurse.

The last broad question is perhaps the most important as it is about how challenging and critical it is to be rigorous with yourself by accepting how little you



may know or understand, and how much of your truth and reality is completely subjective. As Obi Wan Kenobi famously says in Return of the Jedi (1983), “many of the truths we cling to depend greatly on our point of view”.

**Plate 2: This is Truth**



[Available at: <http://www.literateape.com/blog/2016/8/21/to-get-to-truth-triangulate> (Accessed 18 April 2017)]

Confronting white cultural hegemony and going back to as many foundational concepts and ideas as possible is essential to ensuring effective and meaningful communication and deeper understanding. This action is the most critical and complex and it is also the hardest. Student researchers did the same but from a non-western perspective and were usually more skilled as they are forced to do it everyday in navigating, school, government and Canadian society. My white privilege has me coming to this interpretive and deeply cognitive skill later in life, nor does my personal, professional and academic navigation require constant reframing as I am from the dominant culture and society. It has shifted and changed in the North

but still vast advantages are mine and when I stumble here I am usually gently and kindly righted and redirected. Kimmel describes white privilege as:

This breeze at my back. To run or walk a strong headwind is to understand the power of nature. You set your jaw in a squared grimace, your eyes are slits against the wind, and you breathe with fierce determination. And still you make so little progress

To walk or run with the same wind at your back is to float, to sail effortlessly, expending virtually no energy. You do not feel the wind; it feels you. You do not feel how it pushes you along; you feel only the effortlessness of your movements. You feel like you could go on forever. Only when you turn around and face the wind do you realize its strength.

(Kimmel 2010: 1)

It is hard to confront and its power, like the wind, seems inexhaustible but maybe that is a limitation of my perspective. Perhaps the resilience, determination and optimism of the North can also be understood by their perspective of the wind, as they are a people who do not turn their faces from its icy, Arctic blow, but into it with strength, knowledge, and a smile.

However, the greater questions of the work are (please note these last three to numerous Indigenous research recommendations across disciplines):

- A. How can research be conducted in a collegial and equitable way with Indigenous<sup>2</sup> people through knowledge co-design and co-production?
- B. How can the academic research in the North make room for recognition of diverse and outside voices? Specifically in this research, how can sociological research with its focus on society make Northern inclusion and diversity of voice a central research project?

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<sup>2</sup> This research was conducted in the Western Arctic and the main focus. However, the underlying principles could be viewed from a more global Indigenous perspective. The viewer and reader are invited to consider the work specifically but also generally.

- C. How can academic discourse recognize and honour Indigenous voice, worldview, perspective and leadership?

The last question is a personal one:

How can a white person ethically and effectively research and teach in an Aboriginal community?

This is a question I will always ask and will always need to check myself because that is my compass. As my granny told me, “Always work hard. If you don’t know what to do, try and be useful. You are no more special than anyone else. Remember that. And I love you”.

## Thesis Outline

Throughout I try in this writing to balance the North and South with stories, ideas and concepts to try and gain a better understanding and communications from both directions. It is a complicated history as Canada began as a company<sup>3</sup>, grew as outpost of industry and resource into a British colony. The colony would become a nation state and then the entire process would culminate into the North as a site of contested land and demanded sovereignty with the people bearing the brunt of their imperial machinations. This collision is best displayed through the deployment of education that wrought the very worst on the most vulnerable. The realities of

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<sup>3</sup> In 1670 the Royal Charter of the *Hudson’s Bay Company* gave an exclusive trading monopoly over the entire Hudson Bay drainage basin to ‘the Governor and Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson Bay’ and this commercial control of this territory, comprising almost half of current Canadian territory, was the beginning of what would eventually become Canada.

education and society in the North today are still profoundly impacted by these plans and systems. The only way forward is reorientation and the piloting of a new course for the North and its people. Who better to steer this course than Northerners themselves? It is their land, their future and should be their choice. This is the challenge of education and society to support this redirection. This research tries to find a way to do that through co-research, community involvement and student empowerment. These are their stories and the stories we hope people will not only enjoy but also be challenged to learn more about the North and South.

This thesis like the Western Arctic covers a great deal of ground and like the regional and landscape has great variety. It is not driven by theory but makes connections and use of different processes and ideas. Building on Zebedee Nungak's (2006) ground-breaking work in *Qallunology*, Rasmussen's (2002) *Qallunology: pedagogy of the oppressor* and Sandiford's *Quallunaat: why white people are funny* (2008) this project was an investigation into Northern perspectives. Historically, it also relates to Paine's (1977) *White Arctic*, Brody's (1975) *The People's land: Eskimos and whites in the eastern Arctic* and Parson's (1970) *Arctic Suburbs: A look at the North's newcomers* and incorporating the developing project of White Studies. Employing primary research techniques with basic anthropological and sociological theory, students interviewed each other and community members and ultimately travelled to the south for fieldwork. They drew on the 1920s Vertov (James 1996), Low and Snowdon's Fogo Island (1967) films and Balikci and Mary-Rousseliere *Netsilik Eskimo* (1968–1969) series models of using video as an educational method of dialogue and community development. The project used collaborative research

design, interviews, video and reflective assignments to explore the South and the North. As advocated by Freire (1998), hooks (1989), Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) and Graham Hingangaroa Smith (1992), student researchers used their voices in a project of reclaiming and expanding Northerner research while learning from a distinctly and uniquely northern place. The research finds itself connected to the history of colonization, education and sociology. The video research project realizes itself best linking to visual sociology Harper (1988) building on a tradition of photo elicitation into video elicitation. It is truly best to watch the videos and I would suggest readers view this writing simply as a resource to the videos.

This dissertation is collection of stories and attempts to bridge storytelling with academic writing to honor the research process of this project. Cruikshank (1991) eloquently captured the essence of story in the North in her seminal work entitled 'Life Lived Like a Story'. In the North stories belong to the teller and are shared with the audience and this is how this research was developed and conducted. The videos and their stories belong to those who tell them and this writing seeks to share them respecting their autonomy. It is also my story as an educator, researcher and Northerner. As with any long and complicated story it has slight repetition to assist the reader and author with the necessary exposition to come in and out of the various narratives. This thesis is organized into six chapters, including this introduction that provides an overall interpretive framework:

Chapter Two sets the foundations and outlines the challenges of the Western Arctic. The Gwich'in and Inuvialuit believe they have made this land their home since

the world was young with newcomers being very recent. The progression of the Canadian colonial project developed in the South but would ultimately bring its government, laws and systems to the North. The nexus of the South and North conflict can be seen in education with its goal of assimilation, that is now hopefully a site of reconciliation.

Chapter Three deals with the sociology of education in Canada to try and understand the societal clash of the South and North. To try and contextualize relative amount of time these colonial and educational systems have come to bear, the history of sociology is considered to try and understand the construction of the problem. Public sociology and co research/co-knowledge are proposed as an approach for the North to work with the South to right the course. Existential sociology is introduced as a way to more fully appreciate the differences of the North and South perspectives. Visual sociology is the method to try and capture the stories, ideas and messages Northerners want to share with the North and South.

Chapter Four is very focused on the film and the project. Film and media in the north are considered from a non-Indigenous and Indigenous perspective and production. This consideration ultimately puts forth the goal of Northern Visual sovereignty as demonstrated by Inuk filmmaker Zacharias Kunuk. Various community-driven video processes provide foundations for the video research grounded in non-verbal communication norms. Finally, the project is chronicled from funding, to ethical review, to interviewing, to personal projects, summer student internships and finally presentations.

Chapter Five focuses on the aims and reflections of the video research's three themes that seek to repatriate Northern research. This chapter is not about analysis but rather provides overview and context. Northern Studies encompasses the interviews and personal projects and also how the research was conducted in a Northern way. South Studies endeavours to unpack white privilege and its gaze, and consider the reversed gaze as seen in three narrative individual projects. The last theme on newcomers challenges outsider ideas of identity and primavatism while inviting the viewer to try and see the North from an insider perspective.

Finally, the concluding chapter summarizes the findings and suggests a positive beginning to the work. There is still much to do.

## Chapter 2

### Foundations and Intrusions

When the world was new, my people understood that the creator had given them Denedeh and all they needed to live. They did not need to travel to all parts of the world to build empires.

- George Blondin (1997:vii)

The world in which you were born is just one model of reality. Other cultures are not failed attempts at being you; they are unique manifestations of the human spirit.

- Wade Davis (TED Talk 2003)

This section focuses on the turbulent confluence in the Western Arctic of water, land, culture, society, and power. It tries to narrate, situate and scaffold the foundations and structures connecting and separating the players, people and place to build the context for the research project. The subjects are sometimes radically different and that can make the reading experience broad and occasionally appear disjointed. However, it is necessary to try to bring these areas together to better understand the insidious progression of powerful colonial and economic interests that have culminated in legal, institutional and cultural displacement and conflict. They form the crucible of Northern education and how that reflects the complexities facing the people and region. The first section is an overview of the Western Arctic's people, predominately the Inuvialuit and Gwich'in and their lands since time immemorial. Focusing on the recent history, which has resulted in economic interests, imposed institutions and settlements leading to enormous intrusions and interferences with the people, culture and environment. The way of life was disrupted and changed



rapidly due to the culminating external forces arriving armed with colonial systems and agendas. The next section is an overview of the statutes, contracts and agreements that formed from an economic quest for resources and sovereign territory that evolved into official Canadian legal and legislative documents and systems that would create the entrenched cultural subjugation and marginalization of Aboriginal Canadians. The nexus of the first two sections the people/place and economy/government is education, which is explored in the last part of this chapter. The clash of societal, economic, political, legal, geographic and cultural realities is never so tragically played out than in the classroom. The system of settlement through schooling, theft of children in residential schools and the institutions/curriculums of assimilation and indoctrination would result in loss and pain and cultural pain and social suffering. The result is an ineffective educational system with appalling results that further marginalize students and the economic futures of Western

## Peoples and Place

**Map 4: Aboriginal Languages of the Northwest Territories**



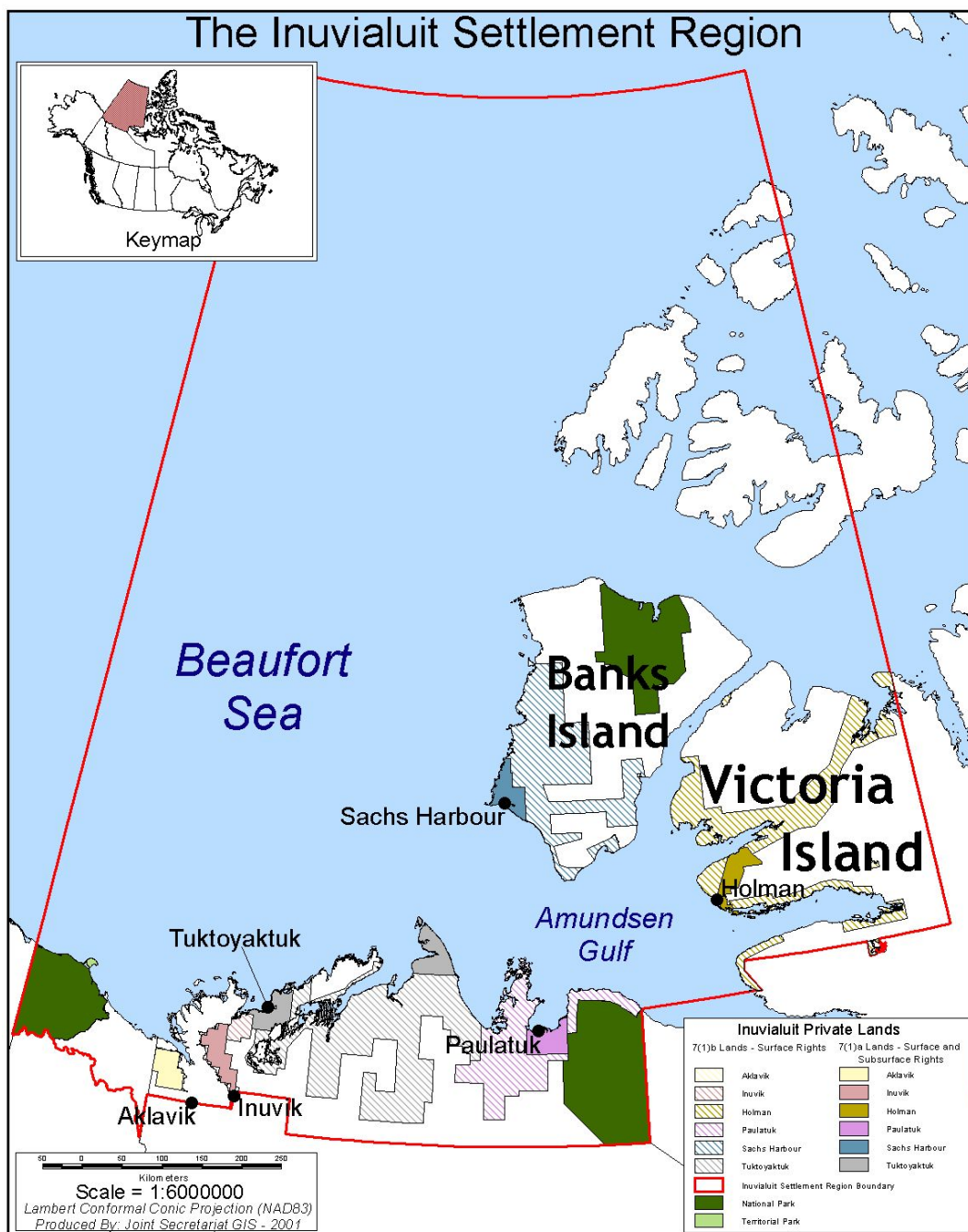
(Available from <http://www.nwtwaterstewardship.ca/sites/default/files/official-languages-map-english-2007.pdf> (Accessed 7 April 2017))

This section gives background and context to the Western Arctic region, history, people, and the vast lands and cultures that coexist and thrive at the top of the world. Their strengths and adaption still captivate the world with the wonder of surviving the cold and space that are arguably the greatest joys of the Northern people, despite being frightening and mystifying to the rest of world, where more than half of us will never see snow in their lives. The Western Arctic region, also

known as the Beaufort-Delta<sup>4</sup>, is a part of the NWT, according to the Conference Board of Canada, a not-for-profit research organization and think tank focusing on economic trends, organizational performance and public policy issues. As of the 2011 census (Government of Canada 2011), the population of Beaufort-Delta was enumerated at 6,898, of which the vast majority, roughly 80 per cent, of the population identified with an Aboriginal ethnicity (5,521 people). Nearly a quarter of the population (23.5 per cent) is under the age of 15; in keeping with other Canadian Aboriginal populations, the Aboriginal population is much younger when compared with the non-Aboriginal population. Nunavut has even higher numbers of young people. Inuk individuals make up the majority of the Aboriginal population (slightly over 65 per cent of the Aboriginal population) in the Beaufort-Delta region. This research was done predominately in Inuvik which has a demographic breakdown of Inuvialuit (predominately Uummarmiut or Inuvialuit), 38.9%; First Nations (predominately Gwich'in) 18.4%; Métis, 4.7%; other Aboriginal, 1.2%; non-native, 36.7%. The 2016 census data was becoming available the time of writing but this reflects the population at the time of study. The non-Aboriginal population is much higher in Inuvik as other communities are more than 90% Aboriginal. The region consists of the Mackenzie River Delta communities and the Beaufort Sea and Arctic Ocean coastal island communities. There are two main Aboriginal groups in the region, the Inuvialuit and the Gwich'in.

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<sup>4</sup> The region is also known as the Mackenzie Delta but this term does not include Paulatuk, Sachs Harbour and Ulukhaktok

**Map 5: The Inuvialuit Settlement Region**

(Available at [http://eirb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/private\\_lands.jpg](http://eirb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/private_lands.jpg) (Accessed 7 April 2017))

Inuvialuit (meaning the real people) are a High Arctic Inuk people numbering about 10,000. Their language is Inuvialuktun, with the dialects Uummarmiutun,

Siglitun and Kangiryuarmiutun, (people of the large bay). This last dialect is also considered a dialect of Inuinnaqtun in the village of Uluhaktok. These languages are part of the Inuktitut language group. Morrison's (2003) *Across Time and Tundra* is a comprehensive history of the Inuvialuit, it pieces together the intricate past of their Tan'ngit (foreign) whalers and Alaskan Inupiaut ancestors coming to the Western Arctic before and after the turn of the last century. This time is called *Tiamani* (the recent past) and the arrival of the Tan'ngit began with Alexander Mackenzie and his party coming up the river (for whom it would be renamed) in the *Inuvialuit Pitqusiit* (ECE 1991: 40). According to Crowe's *The History of the Original Peoples Of Northern Canada* (1974: 56) (extremely dated but useful) the Inuvialuit also were historically known as the Mackenzie Eskimo/Inuit and are believed to have descended from the Thule people who once lived in the Arctic. Scientists propose that the Thule people migrated to the Canadian Arctic approximately 5000 years ago but most Inuvialuit feel that they their people have always been here. It is important to note that many also completely reject the dominant western migration theory of people crossing from Asia based on the comments student and community members have made to me over the last 13 years. The Inuvialuit never signed a treaty but signed their final agreement (land claim) in 1984. The Inuvialuit settlement region stretches from the Alaskan border east to the Amundsen Gulf and the western edge of the Canadian Arctic Islands. It is a land of rolling tundra and high, rocky mountains, bisected by the labyrinth of the Mackenzie River Delta. Sachs Harbour, Uluhaktok (formerly Holman), Paulatuk, Tuktoyaktuk are all Inuvialuit communities with Inuvik and Aklavik being shared communities with the Gwich'in. Environmental knowledge and survival skills continue to be essential to modern Inuvialuit culture. The Inuvialuit Regional Corporation's website describes modern life thusly: 'Inuvialuit

love and appreciate the land. Although many Inuvialuit work in the communities, the pull of the land is always strong. "I'm going to the bush" or "I'm going out on the land" are commonly heard phrases'. The differentiation of bush and land can qualify where they are from or going as Inuvik and Aklavik are on the tree line, hence Uummarmiut or *people of the green trees*, and all other communities are above the trees stretching across the tundra and ocean.

**Map 6: The Gwich'in Nation**



(Available at <http://www.gwichin.ca/gwichin-settlement-region> (Accessed on April 7, 2017))

The Gwich'in are the most northerly First Nations group in North America, with ancestral lands in the Yukon but predominately in the Northwest Territories in Canada and Alaska in the United States. Historically, they have been unfortunately known as the *Loucheux* (which means shifty or slanted eyes in French) or the *Kutchin*, the first Anglicized spelling of their name (with many variants) (Crowe 1974: 51). They are a Dene nation whose language is part of the Athapaskan group and has one main dialect in the NWT and another in the Yukon. Traditionally, Gwich'in lands extended from the mountain headwaters of the Peel and Arctic Red Rivers in the south, to the Mackenzie Delta in the north, from the Anderson River in the east, to the Richardson Mountains in the west. In the Northwest Territories, their traditional communities are Fort McPherson (traditional name Tetlit Zheh, home of the Tetlit Gwich'in), Tsiigehtchic (Formerly Arctic Red River home of the Gwichyaa Gwich'in), Aklavik (Home of the Ehdiitat Gwich'in) and Inuvik (home of the Nihtat Gwich'in). They are part of Treaty 11 and signed the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim in 1992. The Gwich'in nation, total about 5000 people, extends into the Yukon and Alaska. 'Many families still maintain summer and winter camps outside our communities. Hunting, fishing and trapping remain important both culturally and economically, with caribou, moose and whitefish being staples of our diet' (Gwich'in Tribal Council website). The inextricable connection to the land is beautifully chronicled and shared in *Gwichyaa Gwich'in Googwandak: The History and Stories of the Gwichyaa Gwich'in* tells detailed histories of the land and its people (Heine, Andre, Cardinal and the Elders of Tsiigehtchic 2001).

There are also some Inuinnaït (another Inuk people of the Central Arctic) and some of my students from Uluhaktuk identify as both Inuvialuit and Inuinnaït. This group has historically also been known as Copper Inuit (Crowe 1974: 57), peoples who used and relied on native copper gathered along the lower Coppermine River and the Coronation Gulf. They live in treeless rolling tundra, split between what is now Nunavut's Kitikmeot Region and the Northwest Territories' Inuvik Region as Victoria Island spans the two territories. Historically, most lived in the area around Coronation Gulf, on Victoria Island, and southern Banks Island. Their western boundary was



Wise Point, near Dolphin and Union Strait. Their northwest territory was the southeast coast of Banks Island. Their southern boundary was the eastern shore of Great Bear Lake, Contwoyto Lake and Lake Beechey on the Back River. To the east, the Copper Inuit and the Netsilingmiut were separated by Perry River in Queen Maud Gulf. They are the Inuk group in the middle and have the smallest population amongst the Inuit, the most widespread Aboriginal people on the earth (Morrison 2003: 9).

As to the rest of the region and Inuvik, there are also a few Inuit and other group community members but the last largest demographic is the non-Aboriginal population. These are over a quarter of the population with the majority being white Southern Canadians. It is important to note that this population is mixed with a significant number from Eastern Canada and Newfoundland. This population tends to be very transient, but there is a slowly growing population of what the Government of the Northwest Territories unfortunately terms 'indigenous' non-Aboriginal, like my partner. However, it is important to note these non-Aboriginal people do not refer to themselves as 'indigenous' unless in regards to this affirmative action policy but rather 'born here', 'raised here' or 'half-lifer'. Under the government's affirmative action hiring policy this group is recognized as second priority or Priority 2 (colloquially 'P2'), as are people who have lived half their life in the NWT, ahead of other non-Aboriginal people. The first affirmative action priority is to what the government calls Indigenous Aboriginal or Priority 1 (or colloquially 'P1'). The two terms of Aboriginal and Indigenous are interchangeable here when referring to Inuvialuit or First Nations groups. There are some European (mostly eastern) and

from the Philippines, as well as a growing number of Middle Eastern and African immigrations. Also, the number and diversity of new Canadians is expanding rapidly. Inuvik has Canada's most northerly mosque and in fact one of the highest latitude mosques in the world. Ramadan fasting is keyed to Edmonton rather than risk conflicting with 24-hour sunlight. Indeed the diversity of new Canadians in the Northwest Territories is rapidly expanding to over 155 mother languages spoken in addition to English, French and the 13 official Aboriginal languages (see census). Inuvik has 350 people identifying with other languages, which is a very significant portion of the population and making it a very diverse community.

### **Recent History in the Western Arctic**

The Western Arctic region is very geographically isolated and has a unique contact history that is comparatively longer than most high Arctic locations. Contact occurred a little over 300 years ago with Samuel Hearne and Sir Alexander Mackenzie in the late 1700s. In 1826 the British Royal Navy, intent upon finding a Northwest Passage, sent a party under John Franklin down the Mackenzie River. This initial contact had little impact on the people and area. More significant contact did not occur until at the end of the nineteenth century with the arrival of the whalers and missionaries on the coast, the relative proximity to the Klondike gold rush in the Yukon and to a lesser extent the fur trade shortly thereafter. This put stress on the environment and the caribou (populations and a shift to their migration routes) that would result in food scarcity as the century progressed. Resources like gold, oil and other minerals, found to the south of the region would also bring interest. Later

explorers Diamond Jenness, Vilhjalmur Stephenson (leaving behind a Inuit son and his many descendants) and Knud Rasmussen<sup>5</sup> traveled throughout the region just before, during and after WWI. Fumoleau (1973: 185, 206-207 & 274) account the Gwich'in signed Treaty 11 in 1921 but the Inuvialuit were not initially asked to sign in 1921 and when asked in 1929 they declined as Bob Cockney recounted that they did not think it was a good deal and the Canadian government saw Inuvialuit land as a barren land and were very happy not to sign with them. Reindeer were introduced to the region in 1929 to address the dire situation with the rapid decline of caribou. *Reindeer Days Remembered* (Hart 2001) is an Inuvialuit view of the endeavour, including some Sami bringing the animals to the area where they remain today with extended family ties across the top of the world. The herd remains but herding was only briefly a major occupation, unlike other circumpolar places such as in Scandinavia and Russia. The fur trade was the main cash industry until after the Second World War.

The lives of local people had remained largely traditional/subsistence, with some communities being slowly established but the people living most of their lives in the bush or in camps until the late 1940s and early 1950s with a federal push for settlement to assert sovereignty of the Arctic, due in large part to the Cold War and its creation of the Distant Early Warning system. The major changes before this were the introduction of steel hulled ships, rifles and Southern trade dry goods like tea, flour,

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<sup>5</sup> Rasmussen was an early twentieth-century Danish Arctic explorer and anthropologist, born to an Inuit mother, who became the celebrated father of "Eskimology" as it is still known in Denmark. His writing on the Beaufort Delta is unfortunately limited as he found them modern and sophisticated and did not possess enough of the 'ancient' stories he wanted.

sugar and cloth, but life on the land remained dominant with settlements being for supplies and part-time living. The English language did not gain prominence until around the time of settlement, and up until then schooling had been voluntary and provided by the missions which will be discussed later in this chapter. The cold war's influence on the North continues with Canada constantly needing to demonstrate sovereignty through control. The nuclear arms race necessitated pulling uranium out of the shores of Great Slave Lake that would culminate in the bombs that were dropped on Japan, which is a little known fact even in Canada. The Dene experience is chronicled in the documentary *Village of Widows* (1999) that explores medical fallout, radiation and contamination and the Dene being unwitting accomplices in the bombs dropped and their journey to Japan to make amends. With the end of WWII and the emergence of the Cold War, the North would be changed forever. Despite the fact that Distant Early Warning (DEW) line sites were useless against Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles due to weather or submarine launched missiles due to ice and geography. There was a military base constructed in Inuvik and regional DEW line sites constructed, as well across the Arctic, even though it was almost impossible that the Soviets would march soldiers over the pole or mount any Arctic based land attack. The quest for Canadian sovereignty meant the North needed to be controlled and that control demonstrated internationally which meant people needed to live in permanent communities. The most efficient manner to force people into communities was forcing their children into schools. The settlements also cleared the land to begin large-scale oil, gas and mining ventures all without any consultations with the Aboriginal people.

After settlement, federal schools were established and schooling became mandatory; this prompted many families to begin moving into communities for at least part of the year to be with their children. *On Blue Ice: The Inuvik Adventure* extolls:

Inuvik was unique from the onset. Never had a community in Canada been so thoroughly planned, researched and documented. It is a town conceived by the mandarins of Ottawa and built by hands that had previously skinned muskrat and set snares in the Delta.

(Stoneman-McNichol 1983: 5)

Unfortunately, this careful planning Inuvik was set up and unequal from its onset as half the town had services and the other did not. Parsons writes in *Arctic Suburbs: A look at the North's Newcomers* from the Mackenzie Delta Research Project, Parsons' is the eighth report of the projects 12, that was conducted ten years after Inuvik was fully established. He writes:

when respondents were asked to name things they did disliked about Inuvik. For many, this was an opportunity to criticize the governments management of Indian and Eskimo affairs, particularly in the fields of housing, education, employment and social assistance.

(Parsons 1970: 19)

He continued:

The living conditions of the native people were often deplored, and many comments made about the injustice of a situation on which most Indians and Eskimos lived in sub standard housing with inadequate sanitary facilities, while transient whites enjoyed good accommodation and modern services... suggestions for improvements of inter-ethnic relations included providing better job opportunities to native people, providing them with housing and municipal services equal to those enjoyed by transients, and integrating the housing so that the groups might live together in the same area.

(Parsons 1970: 23-24)

The west side had full services, water, sewage and heat carried by utilidor, for the Southern transient professionals and service people and the east side was not connected and had trucked water, “honey bucket” or sewage pick up and no heat. Even some apartment buildings were built with separate and divided access. The construction of the town resulted in de facto segregation for many years.

The arrival of Southern/Western culture is within living generations. As is radio, electricity and indoor plumbing. Television, telephones, and long distance arrived at the same time my in-laws moved to Inuvik in 1973 when the Anik 2 satellite went up. Inuvik itself was not established until the mid 1950s. Dick Hill’s (former resident, first mayor and long-term government planner) *Inuvik* (2008) is an exceptionally well-documented archive of the history of the town and recent historical overview of the Mackenzie Delta region. The Inuvik Centennial Library has a special collection of books he donated that form a chronicle of the region from a research and policy perspective. The Dempster Highway opened in 1979 after 20 years of construction. It connects Inuvik (and Fort McPherson and Tsiighchic) to the south through the Yukon for most of the year, except during freeze up and break up which determine the ice road and ferry access respectively. It is still the only year round road to cross the Arctic Circle in Canada.

The mid 60s saw the shift from the federal to the territorial government. Schools were pivotal to the building of communities and the decisions people would make on where to live and the time they would spend in the community. In 1967, Inuvik’s hostels or residential school dormitory students numbered 500, which is a fifth of the community’s population (Parsons 1970: 8). It is staggering thought. Ervin

wrote in *New Northern Towns in Inuvik* the fifth Mackenzie Delta Research

Project report that focused on the Aboriginal adaptations to Inuvik that:

Children are highly valued, and parents became very lonely in the fall when children are sent away to school hostels. In fact, one of the main reasons that so many trappers moved to Inuvik was so that they could be with their children.  
(Ervin 1968: 7)

By the mid to late 70s, all Western Arctic communities had schools from kindergarten to grade nine and the hostels in Inuvik were still used for students to be able to come and attend high school. The Stringer Hall residence closed in 1975, as it wasn't needed any longer as younger students stayed in communities and Grollier Hall was sufficient for high school students. All communities eventually got high schools in the mid nineties and Grollier Hall (the last Inuvik student residence) closed in 1996. Settlement life is only in its third or fourth generation, and the length of a Northern generation is shorter since most people begin families in their teens. Some of the students at Aurora College were born in the bush and they are the first generation in their family to go to school and college. Most attended residential school in some way. Northerners have lived lives of transition in between the land and the community. Gwich'in author Velma Wallis writes in her beautiful autobiography *Raising Ourselves*:

an idea that early missionaries and teachers drilled into our parent's minds – and our minds also – that it is not good to be who we are: Gwich'in, Haida, Eyak, Aleut, Eskimos or whatever tribe we are. A subconscious part of us still believes it is better to be a cowboy than an Indian...it almost like we still fear that missionaries and teachers will return and slap our hands and mouths if we dare reclaim our past...we must dispense with the feelings of shame for wanting to be Indians instead of cowboys...I saw nothing wrong with being Indian, or Native, and I try to teach my children that today.

(Wallis 2002: 211)

An ironically, satisfying outcome arising from the first generation of residential school students was that they would produce the Aboriginal leaders that would raise their voices and assert Aboriginal leadership to demand negotiations with the government. In the NWT “Indians” ceased to be during the Canadian centenary (1967) when Yellowknife became the capital. Rene Fumoleau remembers in a video interview, part of the Tlicho Land Claim course for high school students in that region, that after the celebrations moved through the communities, the people decided that they did not want to celebrate the history of colonial Canada and over that summer the Indians became Dene, they politically rejected the term assigned them by the Canadian Government and reclaimed the name they called themselves in their language, linguistically signaling the beginning of the Native Rights movement in the North. Then, during the inquiry that would ultimately bear his name, Berger (1977) *Northern Frontier, Northern Homeland: The report on Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry Volume 1 and 2*, which recommended resource development cease until Aboriginal rights could be asserted and land claims could be negotiated. According to the Dene Nation website, the *Indian Brotherhood* became the *Dene Nation* in response to the government’s *White Paper* (1969) because:

The policy proposed to dissolve the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and shift the responsibility to the provinces and two territories — in effect, wiping out the government’s constitutional duty to Canada’s First Nations; the paper was an insult.

(Dene Nation website)

This is also that time when Eskimos became Inuvialuit and the *Committee for Original Peoples Entitlement* was formed (Stoneman-McNichol 1983: 61) and the Inuvialuit would negotiate with the Canadian government for the first time. Rather than the extinction predicted at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and concerted



assimilation efforts, the people continue to fight for self-determination. Extinction is an interesting concept in the Western Arctic. As a majority population, the myth of Aboriginal extinction was never a concept that was accepted or actively promoted in the Western Arctic, though it was in Southern Canada, perhaps this accounts for the intensity of the assimilative efforts by the government which will be explored more fully later in this chapter and in the next.

This region saw the oil boom turn bust and a Canadian forces base leave in the eighties. Recent years have hinted at but never actualized another oil boom with the possibility of the Mackenzie Pipeline project and the changing climate of the Arctic Ocean seeing the Northwest Passage opening currently on a small scale to industrial traffic in 2012. *The Washington Post* reported ‘The Arctic is melting...the shipping through Northwest Passage is another story’ (Mooney 2015). This is concerning for the region due to the volatility of the weather and unpredictable ice in the Beaufort Sea as experienced by many ship vessels in the past. These concerns did not stop a luxury cruise ship going through in 2016.

Inuvik has always been a boom/bust economy and with the sharp downturn in the oil and gas industries it has fallen into an economic slump. The *Financial Post* was succinct in Snyder’s (2016) article entitled ‘Arrested Development: For the town of Inuvik, the Mackenzie Valley pipeline was the lifeline that never came’. Community leaders, like Fred Carmichael, Jim Macdonald, Bob Gully and Floyd Roland, share their grave concerns with the community’s bleak economic future and what that means to the economic security of the people. The price of furs has been very high over the last several years but that is one industry and a small number of

workers. The Beaufort Delta is basically a permanently frozen swamp and so climate change is disastrous for infrastructure despite the federal and territorial government currently completing extending the *Dempster Highway* to Tuktoyaktuk. The region's architecture and infrastructure, which was always experimental, is failing as the frozen swamp begins to melt. All buildings are on pilings or stilts except for very new ones that have built-in ground refrigeration. I have worked in two buildings that were condemned and hastily taken down after the roof on the high school collapsed; the riverbanks are eroding, as is the coastline. There are big challenges coming and there are still not clear and easy fixes for current challenges and problems, environmental and social. All this paper and history has brought change and opportunities but also problems that are, despite Northerners being proficient, willing and ready to adapt (on their terms), and formidable.

### **Land, Legal Legacies, Government Context – Canada and the North**

This section looks at the Canadian context; legislature and institutions that would come North like the waters up the Mackenzie, the birds in the summer and the wind, rain and snow full of Southern toxins and pollution. It is all connected like our country and our planet even if the culmination of events and statutes seems far ways and foreign to the North. Rasmussen is acidly critical of the created situation of the Northern peoples when he writes:

The ruling elite says to the people: The land that used to root you we have taken; the human arrangements that have been used to connect you we have broken; the pattern-language face-to-face myths and stories that once flowed between you and your place we have frozen onto paper. Now we train you to master alphanumeric symbols in order to make money from us in order to get

access to the land (we took from you) in order to buy the essentials of life. This is the Euro-American way.

(Rasmussen 2001: 107)

Indeed Rasmussen's *The Pedagogy of the Oppressor* was my initial inspiration for this research. It was written to call question to ask Southerners to confront what they had brought, wrought and taken from the Arctic, including the 'intolerable' toxins discovered in the Inuit people with a Southern industrial origin. He was outraged and angry. Rightly so as the health, community and cultural costs are high for something the Inuit have not participated in, benefited from or chosen. Rasmussen notes that in Nunavik and Nunavut:

today in relations with the Euro-Canadian government, Inuit tend to spend most of their energy negotiating for rights to things they never had to ask for before and resisting Trojan-Horse style offerings from government 'Rescuers' ('Rescuers' mean Southern professionals and programs, as Rasmussen terms them).

(Rasmussen 2001: 105)

Also, in engaging irreverence he writes of the European/ southern constant push into new places, messing them up and moving on is a habit of colonialism driven by land acquisition and resource detection and extraction. Inuk leader and human rights activist Sheila Watt Cloutier (2015) eloquently writes about *The Right to be Cold* and how it is threatened by the choices of others as the Arctic is threatened by climate change. Initially her human rights claim was dismissed but ultimately it went forward successfully and put the Inuit perspective on the global stage. Her book is exceptionally detailed in the arduous process juxtaposed with her scenic worldview and personal story. Her perspective and navigation through the institutions, channels and systems exemplifies Inuit perseverance, strength and wisdom. However, she is clear she prefers her Northern home and personal silence to the world stage but is

motivated and driven by her hope for the future and responsibilities to future generations.

This part of the story begins before Europeans even set foot in what would become Canada with the numerous papal bulls beginning at the end of the fifteenth century giving consent for explorers to go forth, find new territory and bring back riches that would culminate in the Doctrine of Discovery. The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB) apology in 2016 for the Doctrine of Discovery qualifies that the crimes against Indigenous people and seizure of Indigenous land and resources was not the papal intention. The apology is clear that the church did not condone or promote the dehumanization of Indigenous peoples and the concept of:

terra nullius (literally: no one's land) is a term that attempts to explain how Europeans often justified their seizure of Indigenous lands. In effect, Europeans often treated the territories of Indigenous Peoples in the New World (particularly in North America and Australia) as if they were unoccupied and belonging to no one, and therefore free to be taken by whoever discovered them (CCCCB 2016: 7).

The CCCC is clear in the apology statement:

We believe that now is an appropriate time to issue a public statement in response to the errors and falsehoods perpetuated, often by Christians, during and following the so-called Age of Discovery. In light of all this, as Catholics:

1. We firmly assert that Indigenous people, created in the image and likeness of God our Creator, ought to have had their fundamental human rights recognized and respected in the past, and that any failure to recognize and respect their humanity and fundamental human rights past or present is to be rejected and resisted in the strongest possible way;
2. We firmly assert that there is no basis in the Church's Scriptures, tradition, or theology, for the European seizure of land already inhabited by Indigenous Peoples;

3. We reject the assertion that the principle of the first taker or discoverer, often described today by the terms Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius, could be applied to lands already inhabited by Indigenous Peoples;
4. We reject the assertion that the mere absence of European agricultural practices, technologies, or other aspects common to European culture, could justify the claiming of land as if it had no owner;
5. We reject the assertion that Europeans could determine whether land was used or occupied by Indigenous people without consulting those people.  
(CCCB 2016: 1-2)

The ‘appropriateness’ of the timing is the completion of the Canadian Government’s recent completion of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on the residential school system (which is dealt with in greater detail later in this chapter) and also due to Pope Francis’s pronouncement in Bolivia on July 9, 2015: ‘I say this to you with regret: many grave sins were committed against the native peoples of America in the name of God’. These sins are outlined above and did occur. There is an interesting Northern connection in Pope Francis’s apology to Pope John Paul II, who asserted at Fort Simpson, NWT (September 20, 1987):

At the dawn of the Church's presence in the New World, my predecessor Pope Paul III proclaimed in 1537 the rights of the native peoples of those times. He affirmed their dignity, defended their freedom and asserted that they could not be enslaved or deprived of their goods or ownership. That has always been the Church's position . . . My presence among you today marks my reaffirmation and reassertion of that teaching.

(John Paul II made a very similar statement, also citing Paul III, at the Yellowknife Airport on September 18, 1984 when fog prevented his plane from landing in Fort Simpson during his first papal visit to Canada)  
(CCCB 2016: 15)

Unfortunately, things went so terribly wrong in the ensuing centuries. However, many of my students were in Fort Simpson and it is a treasured experience and memory.

Colonialism is an enormous concept and process, having dominated a great deal of the world. The confluence and clash of education and colonialism is best understood by Hall's (1996: 254) agreement that colonialism is a system 'of rule, power and exploitation' and a system of 'knowledge and representation'. As a system of rule, colonial practices are intended to exercise control over Indigenous peoples while appropriating their lands. These will be detailed in a Canadian context below. The second classification of knowledge is more insidious in its devastation. As a system of knowledge and representation, colonialism aims to justify authority and control over colonized peoples by using and constructing specific kinds of assertions and arguments. These European and ultimately Canadian discourses are predicated on various judgments about the identities, qualities and rights of Aboriginal people. Within Canadian history and education the knowledge discourses were of inferiority, assimilation and annihilation.

The colonial myths like extinction and ultimately the project of 'enfranchisement', the vote for loss of Aboriginal status, are predicated on inevitability. Enfranchisement was a colonial chess move seeking the extinguishment of aboriginal identity, rights and land. Dictionary definitions state enfranchisement is 'to set free and to imbue with rights of a citizen' (like voting) but to be Canadian meant the denial or death of being Aboriginal. It is an unfortunate twist of the English language as it is effectively disenfranchisement. Disenfranchisement which means 'to deny right', which was originally voting, but in the Canadian Aboriginal context it is the denial of the right to exist and have agency. Connectedly, the most common use

of franchise has the meanings of the right or license granted by a company to an individual or group to market its products or services in a specific territory or a store, restaurant, or other business operating under such a license, like brand name goods, MacDonald's, or some sports team. The first definition is very interesting when you consider the legal meaning and it is a privilege of a public nature conferred on an individual, group, or company by a government. Canada is a British franchise.

While the Western Arctic and its people were ostensibly in a geographic vacuum, the Canadian government, formed by colonialism and the Modernity's values and ideas, would appear with its generated mechanisms and intuitions and would come to bear very quickly after several hundred years of fine-tuning in the south. When considering Canada and the Aboriginal peoples whose land Canada claims, it is important to consider the legacy of governmental and economic interests in creating institutional machines, like education. I use the term machine as it is a constructed thing that then largely runs on its own without thought or input and just keeps continually running. W.E.B. Du Bois (1940) (1998: 35-36) in his rhetorical *Dialogue with a White Friend* is equivocal in challenging his reader to confront power, race and questioning the unquestioned (First African American to earn a doctorate and founder of National Association for Advancement of Colored People). The fictional friend extolls excellence of 'the State; the modern industrial state. Wealth of work, wealth of commerce, factory and mine, skyscraper's.' Du Bois considers 'this is the best expression of the civilization...what the white world means by culture' and concedes in these the white race is superior but as to the position of other races to this 'superiority':

The excellence here raises no envy; only regrets. If this vast Frankenstein monster rally served its makers; if it were their minister and not their master, god, and king; if their machines gave us rest and leisure, instead of the drab uniformity of uninteresting drudgery; if their factories gave us gracious community of thought and feeling; beauty enshrined, free and joyous; if their work veiled them with tender sympathy at human distress and wide tolerance and understanding – then all hail, White Imperial Industry! But it does not. It is a Beast! Its creators even do not understand it, cannot curb or guide it. They themselves are but hideous, groping hired Hands, doing their bit to oil the raging devastating machinery which kills men to make cloth, prostitutes women to rear buildings and eats little children.

(Du Bois 1998: 36)

In Canada the economic interest pre-exists the country and government in the form of the Hudson's Bay Company (informally "the Bay"). The company was incorporated by the English *Royal Charter of the Hudson's Bay* (1670) as The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson's Bay and functioned as the *de facto* government before other colonial institutions reached the territories. Explorers came for resources and riches and were funded by European governments. Aboriginal Canadians were temporary partners or expendable staff in the quest for fur, and eventually timber and minerals. This national Genesis, through commerce, is critical to understanding Canada's relationship with Aboriginal people and the government it would form. After winning the seven years war, the British passed the *Royal Proclamation* (1763) that is the founding legal agreement about the government's power relationship with all Aboriginal Canadians, which subjugated the Aboriginal people as wards but did not create them as British subjects. That would take 'enfranchisement' or being a regular British subject but only with extinguishment of Aboriginal and treaty rights. So, for example, the *Gradual Civilization Act* (1857) and the *Gradual Enfranchisement Act* (1869), specifically the *Act to Encourage the Gradual Civilization* of Indian Tribes in this Province, and to



Amend the Laws Relating to Indians, was a bill passed by the 5th Parliament of the Province of Canada. The statute built on the *Act for the Protection of the Indians in Upper Canada* passed in 1839, but required the ‘enfranchisement’ of any recognized male Indian over the age of 21 ‘able to speak, read and write either English or the French language readily and well, and is sufficiently advanced in the elementary branches of education and is of good moral character and free from debt.’<sup>6</sup>

Canada became an independent colony (a ‘Dominion’) with the *British North American Act*, (BNA) in 1867 (later Renamed the *Constitution Act 1867*) and the Indian Act was passed by the Parliament of Canada under the provisions of Section 91 (24) of the BNA. The British North American Act gifted/sentenced Aboriginal peoples with the *Indian Act* (1876), which continues British subjugation, and the Ward relationship with the Canadian government to this day. Treaties pre-and post-Confederation were commercial considerations with governmental power. As mentioned before Treaty 11 was signed in 1921 with the modern land claims movement (Berger: 1977) beginning in the late 1960s leading to the regional land claims in the 80s and 90s. MacDonald was going to extend the right to vote to all Aboriginal peoples in the BNA but changed his mind after the North West Resistance<sup>7</sup>. It would not be granted for Inuit Canadians until 1950 but voting remained elusive due to the isolation of Inuit communities as they span the high arctic, even beyond that date. On 31 March 1960, portions of Section 14(2) of the

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<sup>6</sup> I do not specifically include French Canadian legal and governmental history as in Western Canada its impact is limited despite the history French traders and trappers having been in the region as evidenced by the many French regional last names.

<sup>7</sup> Best source available: <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/indigenous-suffrage/>

*Canada Elections Act* were repealed in order to grant the federal vote to status Indians. First Nations people could now vote without losing their Indian status.

National Chief Bill Erasmus explains:

In 1973, the Dene won a long-fought victory in the Paulette decision, a court decision that shattered the myth that the Dene had surrendered their land and their Aboriginal Rights...Dene already knew that their ancestors had not given up the land and that the treaties described were described in terms of peace and friendship.

(Erasmus: 2009: x)

Despite this Chief Erasmus continues that:

Canada still maintains that it owns Dene land as, where generations of Dene far into the future will continue to live. Being Dene is to live as part of the land. Dene conceive of the “land” not in a capitalist sense as a patch of ground legally surveyed, registered and paid for. The concept of land for the Dene is understood as what non-indigenous people would call eco-system or all of life – animate and inanimate – that makes the world whole: earth, air, water, minerals, insects, animals. The reality that Dene are part of the land will never change. When the Dene are forced to articulate their relationship to the land in Canada’s terms, they assert collective ownership, which Canada has great difficulty in understanding because its constitution is based on individual rights rather than collective rights.

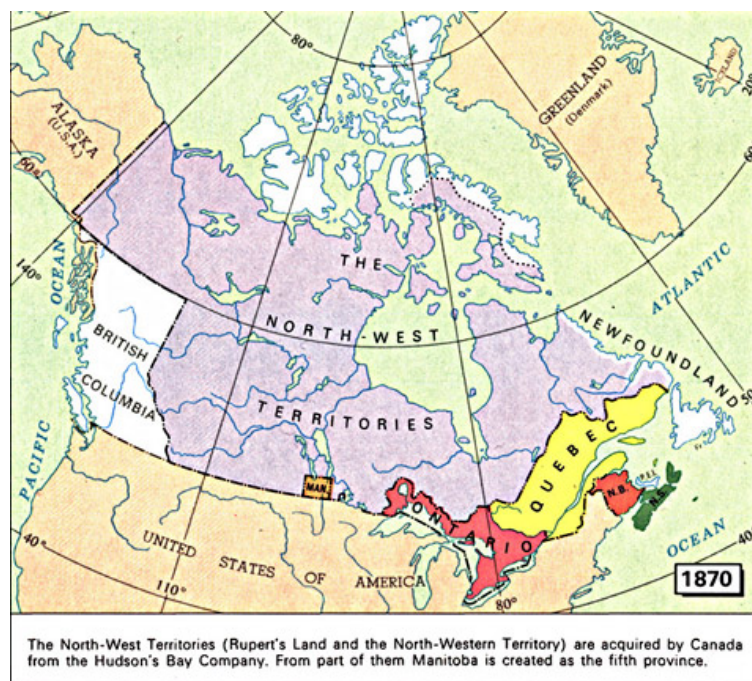
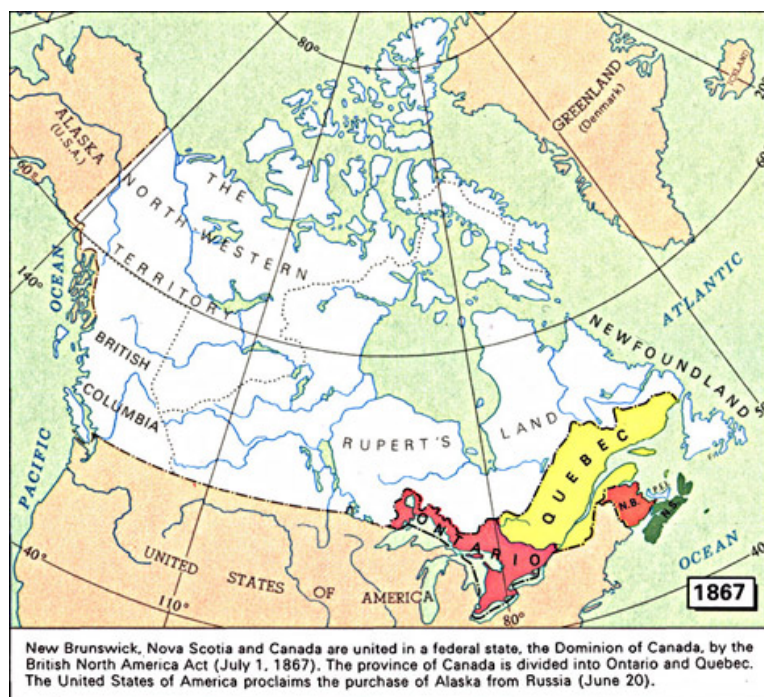
(Erasmus 2009: x-xi)

Canada evolved to a full constitutional monarchy with the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (1982), though this entrenched protection of Aboriginal rights in sections 25 and 35. However, considering the pre-existing legal legacy and the reality within the democratic power structures, the minority rights of Aboriginal Canadians are limited due to their complex legal status and their occupying land desired for resource development. Basically, this makes Aboriginal Canadians inconvenient dependents that are impediments before being citizens as they possess inherent rights, yet are not in a position to defend those rights outside of the legal system which is not only antagonistic but also cost, time and energy prohibitive for the people to constantly have to pursue.

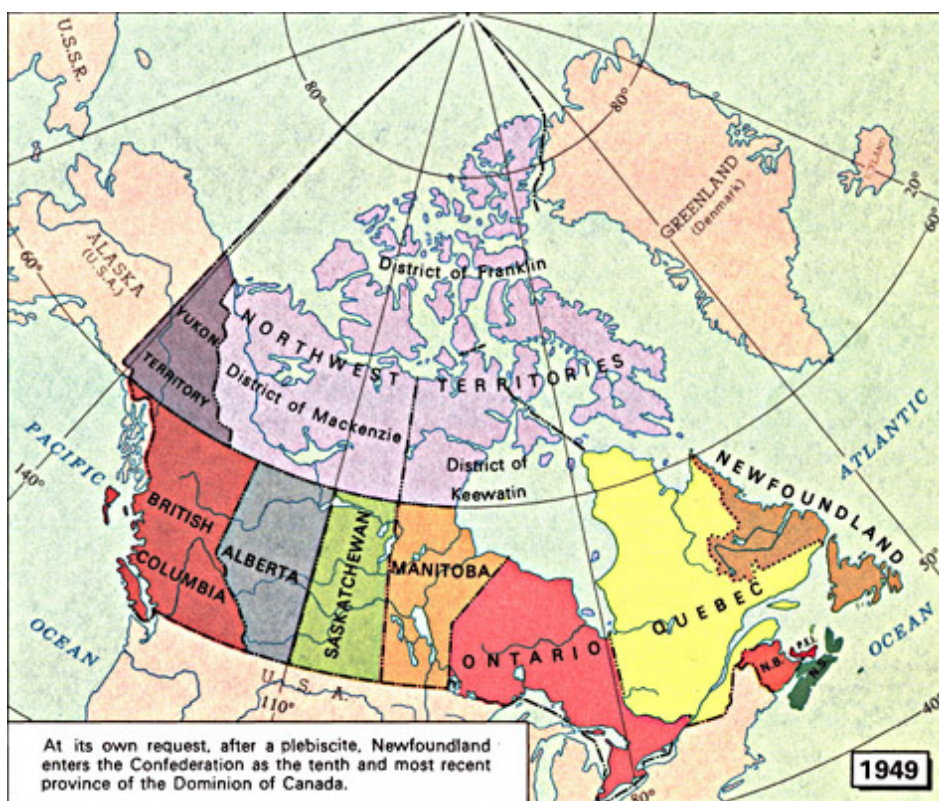
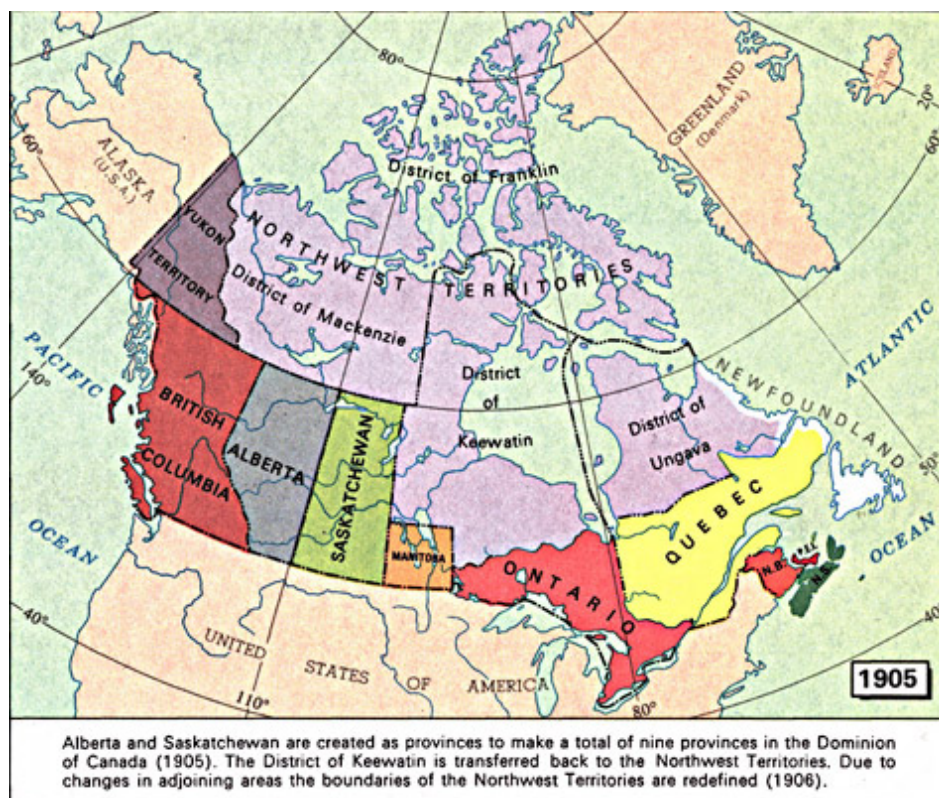
Another example of these legacies protracting is that the fur trade remained dominant until after the Second World War with the Bay's influence on the Western Arctic stretching far into very recent time only divesting of the Northern stores and fur business in 1987 (Newman, 1991). The government and industrial processes continue at a fevered pace and resource extraction remains the main industry on Aboriginal lands.

The next section shows the geographic progression of Canada and the Northwest Territories. It is a large territory but is began as an immense land map that changed as Canada developed. The first map shows Rupert's Land, which was purchased by the Canada government from the Hudson's Bay Company. The 1870 map shows the Northwest Territories at its largest area after confederation. The 1905 map sees the founding of Provinces and the post World War II map remained largely unchanged until 1999 with the creation of Nunavut. These maps are a visual depiction of the historical significance of the Northwest Territories and its geographic progression within a changing Canada. It also visually contextualizes the legal implications of the government machinations that seemed so very far away. The creation of Nunavut as part of the Inuit Land Claim process is a positive progression as the changing maps in the past were signs of colonial progression, rather than signalling Aboriginal self-determination. These maps do not show the on-going Aboriginal language reclamation for places, lakes, rivers, and other geographic features that continues and expands each year. Perhaps one day the Mackenzie will once again be the *Deh Cho* or have many names for each of the people who make their homes on its shores.

**Maps 7-11:** The historic graphic progression of the Northwest Territories









(Available at <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/politics-government/canadian-confederation/Pages/maps-1667-1999.aspx> (Accessed 7 April 2017))

Though most of these governmental and legal documents far predate the current incarnation of the Northwest Territories (shown in its Canadian geographic progression in maps), they created the commercial, legal, governmental, industrial and institutional foundations that would come north and impose themselves on Aboriginal Northerners. It would be this power structure that would be recreated and its power relationship forced on the people. It would impose social and political order that would force settlement and build schools. In these schools it would be this culture that would be taught. Even if space and distance would see the spread and entrenchment of power to be uneven, it was insidious. As a recent student in my adult Grade twelve English class, told me that the only one who spoke English in his school classroom was the teacher. He laughed and they just ignored her, which is a valid and strong form of resistance that is very admirable. The student said proudly

that his community kept their language and culture. But fast forward a few decades and he is in my class, learning Shakespeare to get the level of English he needs for postsecondary education. He said, shaking his head, “that guy”, like English itself, is unfortunately inescapable. *Treaty 11* (1921) states the commitment of the government ‘to pay the salaries of teachers to instruct the children of said Indians in such manner, as His Majesty’s government may deem advisable and the government deems English language the primary language of instruction. Jackson writes of ‘on autonomy’:

any empirical exploration of the situations in which human beings struggle to create viable lives often reveals a determination to strike a fair trade-off between being able to choose to live on one’s own terms and accepting the different terms on which others choose to live. This is the meaning of being at home in the world. This is the balance that many Aboriginal people feel they have not been permitted to attain or sustain.

(Jackson 2013: 248)

The next section is an overview of the recent educational background and context in the Western Arctic.

## **Education as a Human Right**

Education has had a very difficult and often brutal genesis in the North.

Education has the awesome power to affect major change, good and bad. It is the method of transmitting society’s values, norms and processes. Education and its control of ‘knowledge’ has long been the tool of colonialism, including residential schools. Sir John A. Macdonald and then the Canadian government decreed that ‘“Indianness” was not to be tolerated; rather it must be eliminated. In the buzz-word of the day, assimilation; in the language of the 21st century, cultural genocide’ stated Chief Justice Beverly McLaughlin (2015) in her address on pluralism. Education was

supposed to “kill the Indian in the child”. When describing the education situation of the Maori, Smith goes on to caution:

that this embedded process of social and cultural reproduction of dominant Pakeha (White) interests has contributed significantly to the continued failure of the mainstream system to develop meaningful change.

(Smith 2000: 62)

Smith writes of the Aboriginal perspective of Western educational systems:

It angers us when practices linked to the last century, and the centuries before that, are still employed to deny the validity of indigenous peoples’ claim to existence, to land and territories, to the right to self-determination, to the survival of our languages and forms of cultural knowledge, to our national resources and systems for living in our environments.

(Smith 1999: 1)

Stephen Kakfwi, who would later be Grand Chief of the First Nations Assembly, guide the Dene-Métis land-claims discussions, and be NWT Premier, is a vocal opponent of the Diamond Companies and the Mackenzie Gas Pipe Line Project as he was during the Berger Inquiry. He states:

It is my belief that the Dene are unique, different from the people in other parts of the Canada; that education should reflect our uniqueness. That our own uniqueness must be built on the traditional values of the Dene along with the ideas and views we now have from our experiences as a colonized people.

(Kakfwi 1977: 145)

Smith (1992: 160) asserts that ‘treating all parties the same merely maintains existing inequalities’. Curwen Doige writes that the educational systems’ legacy of rejecting the value of Aboriginal Literacy:

means that a student’s personhood is devalued, he or she disconnects from the attributes that assist in the development of self-respect, confidence, and the ability to trust oneself and others. This rift is the insidious tool of disenfranchisement, because the student is not only told that he or she is unacceptable; the student now feels inferior and rejected.

(Curwen Doige 2001: 124)



The wording of the United Nations *Declaration of Indigenous Rights and Freedoms* is very clear; culture is protected under the following articles:

#### Article 8

1. Indigenous peoples and individuals have the right not to be subjected to forced assimilation or destruction of their culture. 2. (d) Any form of forced assimilation or integration

(United Nations 2007: 18)

#### Article 14

Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning

(United Nations 2007: 22)

#### Article 15

Indigenous people have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State...in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning

(United Nations 2007: 22)

If these recommendations are not fulfilled and the Canadian Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms does not include education as a fundamental right, this will be a failure of Canada on a moral, legal, and humanitarian level.

### **Education – Promises Unkept and Evils Done**

This section will look at education in the North to try to trace the history of Western Arctic Education. Despite the saving and civilizing missions, education obviously existed in the North before contact. Indeed, it was rigorous to survive and thrive at the top of the world. However, as with everything, it was not acknowledged like systems of law, governance and coordinated decision-making. Indeed, one of the first projects of the Committee of Original Peoples (COPE) had to do was research

and prove that this was true so they could negotiate self-government. In a satisfying example of irony, Rachel Nakimayak, one of the student researchers, chose to do her first individual project on the Inuvialuit Final Agreement and interview Nellie Cournoyea as the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation was preparing to celebrate its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The educational and political terrain has changed since the beginning of this project. The attention to the issue is also reaching more Canadians and high-ranking officials. Foucault speaks of government responsibility when he wrote:

It is a duty of an international citizenship to always bring the testimony of people's suffering to the eyes and ears of governments, sufferings for which it's untrue that they are not responsible. The suffering of men must never be a mere silent residue of policy

(Foucault 1984: 212).

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's (TRC) website explains:

For over 100 years, Aboriginal children were removed from their families and sent to institutions called residential schools. The government-funded, church-run schools were located across Canada and established with the purpose to eliminate parental involvement in the spiritual, cultural and intellectual development of Aboriginal children.

(TRC website)

The idea of removing children as an assimilating or civilizing 'mission' is perverse and cruel.

At the TRC hearings, former Prime Minister Paul Martin (2013) said 'Let us understand that what happened at the residential schools was the use of education for cultural genocide, and that the fact of the matter is — yes it was. Call a spade a spade,' (CBC). More recently the Globe and Mail (2015) reported, 'Supreme Court Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin says Canada attempted to commit "cultural genocide" against Aboriginal peoples, in what she calls the worst stain on Canada's

human-rights record'. These public admissions that residential schools were a cultural genocide is a seismic governmental, political and unlikely but possible judicial shift. This is a critical distinction as genocide is an international crime according to the United Nations *Genocide Convention* (1948) and cultural genocide is not. Brean (2015) writes succinctly that it was no accident 'Canada was Ready to Abandon 1948 Accord if UN didn't Remove 'Cultural Genocide the Records Reveal' s' colonial countries fought against it being included as an international crime. Short (2010: 842) argues that genocide is genocide. He contends sociological 'research should unashamedly utilise the analytical lens of genocide as assaults on the 'essential foundations of life of national groups' is what the concept was designed to highlight and prohibit'. Former International Criminal Tribunal legal advisor and current Associate Professor of law Akhavan clarifies:

The confusion between cultural genocide as an academic disputation about the past, rather than the present challenge of reconciliation with Canada's Indigenous Peoples...the residential schools are a horrific legacy of forced removal, humiliation, abuse and death. It is a grim past that explains the contemporary reality of poverty and violence and substance abuse and suicide. Redressing this injustice puts on trial our very self-perception as Canadians.

(Akhavan 2016: 269)

From a historic standpoint the completion and release of the TRC and the release of its reports and recommendations is momentous. This was an arduous and painful six-year process of gathering testimony of thousands of survivors, government documents and other historical data to foster discussion work towards reconciliation about the causes, processes, experiences and outcomes of Canada's residential school history and legacy. The TRC (2015: 8) calls for 'federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to fully adopt and implement the *United*

*Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* as the framework for reconciliation’ and for ‘the Government of Canada to develop a national action plan, strategies, and other concrete measures to achieve the goals of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*’ in calls for action recommendations 43 and 44. The recommendations are very clear in outlining the need for change and pressing issues facing all Canadians:

### **The Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action for Education (2015)**

7. We call upon the Government of Canada to repeal Section 43 of the *Criminal Code of Canada*. (the use of corporal punishment which gives educational context of violence in Residential schools)
8. We call upon the federal government to develop with Aboriginal groups a joint strategy to eliminate educational and employment gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians.
9. We call upon the federal government to eliminate the discrepancy in federal education funding for First Nations children being educated on reserves and those First Nations children being educated off reserves.
10. We call upon the federal government to prepare and publish annual reports comparing funding for the education of First Nations children on and off reserves, as well as educational and income attainments of Aboriginal peoples in Canada compared with non- Aboriginal people.
11. We call on the federal government to draft new Aboriginal education legislation with the full participation and informed consent of Aboriginal peoples. The new legislation would include a commitment to sufficient funding and would incorporate the following principles:
  - i Providing sufficient funding to close identified educational achievement gaps within one generation.
  - ii Improving education attainment levels and success rates.
  - iii Developing culturally appropriate curricula.
  - iv Protecting the right to Aboriginal languages, including the teaching of Aboriginal languages as credit courses.
  - v Enabling parental and community responsibility, control, and

accountability, similar to what parents enjoy in public school systems.

vi Enabling parents to fully participate in the education of their children.

vii Respecting and honouring Treaty relationships.

12. We call upon the federal government to provide adequate funding to end the backlog of First Nations students seeking a post-secondary education.
13. We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for Aboriginal families.

(TRC 2015: 6-7)

Its orderly list only hints at the horrors and dark history of Aboriginal Education in Canada and the North. To me, my education has been everything, refuge, support, success and ultimately independence and my profession. It is extremely painful to consider the torture and misery that was wrought in the name of learning. I could not bear to be there when the commission came to Inuvik. I was not strong enough to hear my friends and my community members testify and share their truths. The aftermath, where survivors were compensated with monetary settlements by the federal government, which were calculated using government formulas based on years of attendance and substantiated abuse claims, was very fast for some. My main campus supervisor's stepson got his settlement money and drank himself to death within a year. Some of my students would have traumatic flashbacks in class, this continued regularly for a few years, and flashbacks still occur occasionally now. There was such pain for so many. Others came through seeing the process as transformative and many used the money for very positive things. Many computers and educational aids were purchased along with boats, skidoos and rifles and many camps were updated. The legacy is still to be determined but if the recommendations

above are carried out correctly perhaps the promise of education can finally be realized after long being pledged to Aboriginal Canadians.

### **A History of Institutional Education in the North – ‘Civilization’ and Endurance**

The Royal Proclamation is the founding legal document and it required education be provided for ‘Indians’ and Indian Act has similar requirements. Treaty 11 also made similar promises. Carr-Stewart writes of the treaty right to education qualifying that:

The Crown, however, did not fulfill its constitutional obligations and, from the outset, chose to provide limited educational services not as a treaty right, but as an assimilationist mechanism through its own criteria, the Indian Act (despite) that the First Nation representatives who negotiated the numbered treaties had an understanding of formal education and expected their members and future generations to benefit from such services. Formal education would enable First Nation communities to supplement traditional educational practices with western teaching

(Carr-Stewart 2001: 1)

While this paper is on Treaties 1-7 and Western Arctic region is Treaty 11, Fumoleau (1973) contents that these were similar education expectations in the negotiations of Treaties 8 and 11 in the NWT. Inuit were classified as Indian under the Indian Act in 1939 (McGregor and Millar 2015: 17). To further complicate matters, the Indian Act governs education on reserves but no reserves were ever established in the Western Arctic, while this is ultimately a good thing it also contributed to governmental game of “not-it”.

Northerners in the Western Arctic often initially wanted to send their children to mission schools, as explained to me in numerous student and community member conversations, but it must be understood that life was very difficult at the turn of the century due to over-hunting by whalers, trappers and prospectors. The caribou herds declined, and also changed their migration pattern resulting in terrible hunger, as mentioned before. There were also horrific flu epidemics and very limited health care. Parents would choose to send their children to the mission schools to try and ensure they would survive and there were too many orphans to be absorbed into surviving family units (Morrison 2003: 196). The government did not send adequate funds or support until it was economically and politically advantageous to do so which was much later and even then the funding is insufficient to the needs. That is the first legacy of education in the North. This is complicated by the religious expectations of the schools. Surprisingly in the Beaufort Delta the mission schools in the pre-war era are largely not locally viewed in the same light as the post-war government mandated residential schools. Emma Dick, an Inuvialuit elder, well into her nineties, whom I know and have worked with, is brutally practical in stating that while her mission schooling was not perfect and was very difficult, she did not die of pneumonia like her two sisters and even a cold mission wall was warmer than an igloo. Life has always been a Northern imperative. The following chart is of the regional residential schools that operated in the Western Arctic including locations, years of operation and religious affiliation.

**Figure 1. Western Arctic Residential Schools**

School Name	Location	Date Opened	Date Closed	Denomination
All Saints Indian Residential School	Shingle Point	1927 (moved to Aklavik in 1934 due to overcrowding and flooding)	1959	Anglican
Aklavik Catholic Indian Residential School	Aklavik	1925 (relocated to Inuvik in 1959)	1959	Roman Catholic
Inuvik Federal Day School (residential school) renamed Sir Alexander Mackenzie Day School (SAMS) in 1959  Samuel Hearne High School opened in 1969 and SAMS became an elementary school	Inuvik	Stringer Hall was Anglican Residence/ hostel and Grollier Hall/ the Romans Catholic residence/hostel  Grollier Hall was secular after 1975	June 1975 (Stringer Hall);  June 30 1996 (Grollier Hall)	Secular  Roman Catholic  Anglican
Fort McPherson Indian Residential School; (Including residence, Fleming Hall) <sup>8</sup>	Fort McPherson	Mission school begins 1862 Federal Funding 1899 Federal Day School 1952	After 1970 the residence was phased out	Anglican until 1969 then non-denominational

The forceful removal of children began in the 1940s to Aklavik. Elder Eddie Kikoak remembers Roman Catholic Mission boat *St. Immaculata* arriving in Tuktoyatuk and sometimes taking all the children, including babies as young as two and three years old (Morrison 2003:1997). The TRC website *We Were So Far Away* shares Lillian Ellias's (respected elder and colleague) brave testimony. This is an excerpt:

I found out that the reason they had to put me in there was because they were going to lose my Family Allowance, or all the children's Family Allowance if one of the children didn't go to school... You didn't dare speak your language, even if you didn't know how to speak in English. You would get roughed up.

I think that's why I really fought to keep my language. Because they didn't want me to speak it I thought to myself, "you're not going to keep me from

<sup>8</sup> The residential school in Fort MacPherson does not factor heavily the literature or in my student's recollections or experiences. It was a small Anglican school that was secondary to the Aklavik school see <http://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/Fort-McPherson.pdf>



speaking my language”, and so I really picked it right back up when I got out of there.

The only thing that I heard in Residential School about my home was that it was not a fit place to live in. We were poor. We had nothing. We didn't have good blankets. We didn't have the foods they were giving us. I've heard people talking about that. These are the things that are really very, very hard for me to talk about when they put your home down. They say that your home is cold. It's not warm like this. Would you rather be home where it's cold and you don't have much to eat, and that's where your home is. You would rather be there but you couldn't tell them these things. If you start crying about going home they would tell you all these things. They would tell you what a pitiful home you had just to try to stop you from crying. They make you cry harder because that's where your home is

I was in school for five years, really. That's a long, long, long five years. It was more or less like forty years because the year moved so slow. How long is it going to be until June? You wait for June so you could go home. My husband didn't go home at all. He died thirteen years ago. I lost my husband. And I know it's through Residential School. I know for a fact it's through Residential School because he didn't know how to talk about the problems that he went through. He was a quiet person. He was there for eleven years. And sometimes he wouldn't go home because him, he was from further away.

My children never stepped in a Residential School because their father wouldn't let them. He was there too long. From his trap line he had to move to Inuvik. He left his traps and I just know he loved to trap, but he wasn't going to see one of his children go to the Residential School. He was going to prevent that. Never! So, all four of my children never as much as walked into the Residential School. It was because of what he went through, eh.

I kind of know what he went through, but the only time that he would talk about it is when he was drinking. He wouldn't talk about it otherwise. But the only time he talked about it was when he drank. I had to have a few, too. It's very hard to talk about it because he would have been still here if it wasn't for that. I know they killed him

(*We Were So Far Away* website).

The TRC *Where Are The Children* website shares the testimony of Abraham Ruban from Grolier Hall in Inuvik:

That first night at the Residential School I had nightmares. In the nightmares I saw the face of this Nun and I had nightmares all through the night. I woke up in the morning and I had wet my bed from just being disoriented, scared, and all the other elements. She came out and all the other kids had already gone out and gotten dressed. She came out and saw me still sleeping and realized I had wet my bed. She dragged me out and laid her first beating on me

(*Where Are The Children* website)

Grollier Hall has a particularly sinister history from 1959 to 1979 with many young boys being sexually assaulted by guardians at the school (Morrison 2003: 201). In addition, two teachers from the 1970s and 80s are currently serving sentences for multiple sexual assaults. The testimony in Inuvik revealed much more physical and sexual abuse. An anonymous student from Stringer Hall shares their harrowing experience ‘The cries and struggles were no match for the adults who pulled me from my mother’s arms...I remember this being one of the saddest times of my life’ (Morrison 2003: 199-200). It is a reprehensible legacy of the Canadian and then Territorial governments that have resulted in institutionalization, cultural and family disruption and intergenerational trauma that we are only beginning to understand. The NWT is the first jurisdiction to require schools to teach residential school history. *Fatty Legs* (2010) by Christy Jordan-Fenton and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton is about Margaret’s frightening experiences in residential school that began with an eight year old girl’s desire to read but chronicles abuse in the name of education. They have written several other books for varying reading levels on the subject that are used in the NWT and throughout Canada. George Blondin is too kind when he writes:

Europeans judged us by their standards and that was not a fair thing to do...my childhood was taken from me when I went to mission school...fortunately, I returned to my family and learned traditional ways from my father again

(Blondin 1997: vi & xii).

What happened to him and so many was a crime against humanity and to subject children to such abuse as a method of acquiring land, asserting sovereignty and exercise government power is a methodical attempt at cultural genocide. Student researchers in this study, Kendra Tingmiak did a personal project on residential

schools that is detailed in chapter 5. The powers that culminated in the nightmare of residential schools will be discussed in the section on the sociology of education.

### **Educational Achievement Legacies and Realities**

Education has failed and continues to fail in the Canadian North. The International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey (Government of Canada 2003) study confirmed that 69% of Aboriginal northerners scored below level 3 (of 5), which is the level required by most people for day-to-day activities. Conversely, about 70% of non-Aboriginal Northerners scored at level 3 or higher. The government of the NWT (2005) found in their research that fewer than half of Aboriginal students complete high school. In contrast, 87.1% of non-Aboriginal students complete high school. Non-Aboriginal northerners are far more likely to complete post-secondary education than Aboriginal Northerners are to complete high school. University graduation rates are 4.6% for Aboriginal Northerners compared to 27.7% for non-Aboriginal northerners.

The more recent Program for International Assessment of Adult Competencies (Government of Canada 2013) shows little has changed. This has economic consequences for all residents but when you consider the employment rates below, the disparity based on race is still very clear, according to Conference Board of Canada (2016). There are large differences between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations' unemployment rates (22.7 per cent compared with 3.4 per

cent) and employment rates (48.1 per cent compared with 85.1 per cent). When compared with the fact that more than half the jobs that Aboriginal persons do have require high school or less this means about three quarters of the people are without jobs or with low paying entry level jobs. A common argument is that the schools exist so the opportunity is there, but given these statistics, it is clear that educational opportunities are not equitable or successful. It is also concerning that our more current data is from the conference board and the most current government report Skills 4 Success (ECE 2016) is strictly about employability. Jobs are very important but not the complete goal of education and it is another example of commerce and industry determining the direction of the North. Just as the education statistics are largely unchanged so too has the success of employment training. Abel's (1989) *Gathering Strength* examined employment-training programs for Aboriginal workers in the NWT in the 1980's and much of its recommendations have not been actualized.

### **Looking in the Mirror**

Education in the Canadian North has been a tool of assimilation and control that has been at once oppressive and inefficient. It is oppressive to use education as a means of social reproduction and assimilation through forced settlement, displacing and disrupting traditional language and culture and exercising unchecked power. Education has been devastating but also practically inefficient because the reality is that a majority of Aboriginal Canadians lacks the basic literacy skills to participate fully in Canadian Society as outlined above and in smaller communities the numbers

just increase. Framing this research project academically has been a challenge; taking the very practical and putting it into the theoretical. For example, when considering educational statistics the theoretical question might be: are these statistics really appropriate or meaningful? The answer to that theoretical question is that the education statistics are measured with acculturated tools, computers, English Language, design to name a few, in Southern ways and purposes. All this is true, but still. Gathering the statistics is an important process of analysis and investigation. These low basic literacy skills severely limit participation in work, community and home life and they severely limits personal options and financial security.

Rasmussen (2001: 106) writes that ‘The print-based, age-separated, isolation-tank form of instruction favored by Euro America has not necessarily been the universal model for cultivating wisdom throughout human history’. In theory it is very attractive and desirable to break completely from the educational system because of its damning history and seemingly insurmountable problems. However, improved educational achievement is linked to personal wellness, better health, and economic security. As an instructor I am very invested in assisting students in improving their lives and trying to work within a system that although it is extremely flawed and in many ways failing, it is all that we have. Practicality and theory do not always coexist easily. As with polarity, this research and the writing dwells in paradox. Tompkins (1998: 127-128) writes on education in the North: ‘the concept of valuing people is in some ways a simple one, yet the translation of that concept into action has eluded many sincere attempts, by principals, parents and politicians’.

As a Canadian, how to come to terms with the colony? Puxley writes of the colonial experience in *Dene Nation: The Colony Within*:

the assumption that the so-called 'social impacts' relate only to the experience of those unfortunate enough to be on the end of colonial projects is quite incorrect. The social impact can also be determined in the lives of those who serve this dehumanizing process.

(Puxley 1977: 103)

'I am the colonizer and the colonized' Memmi's (1991) phraseology is resonant of my personal journey as an educator and researcher and trying to come to terms with my placement in the colonial power dynamic. This research was conceived with the idea that my place in Aboriginal research is changing and hopefully someday disappearing. Memmi writes of his role as an in-between and disappearance. Do not misunderstand my placing myself as 'the colonized' as I do not mean to trivialize or misrepresent myself as I am a white, middle-class, university educated, urban-reared woman, if from a working class background, but after living and working in the Arctic for almost two decades, I have felt my perceptions and paradigms change and shift on a fundamental level. Before living here, I would have done research differently and seen the work in a different way. I have lived, worked, laughed, buried family and students in this cold place and tried to understand how things work and why they work that way. Tompkins clearly states:

I am coming to realize the universality of racism in our society and the need for all educators to try and examine and change their conscious and unconscious racist beliefs. I think most Quallunaaq [Southern] need help through orientation, in-service, and contact with Inuit to examine the racist attitudes that they bring with them by virtue of being non-native, mainstream Canadians. Inuit educators too may have to examine prejudiced attitudes that they have picked up from dominant culture

(Tompkins 1998: 130)

I have taken the hard realization to try and understand my place in colonization as a white person and as a teacher and confront my hidden, seemingly innate racisms. I

had the opportunity to read some excerpts in the NWT Archives from a teacher's journals from her time teaching in Aklavik in the 1930s. She wrote expansively about Stephenson's grandson and how she could tell his grandfather was the great explorer and white because he was such a clever boy and so much brighter than the other children. The content was so damning that the archives, to protect her identity, redacted her personal information. It is an example of the pervasiveness and nonchalance of racism in education.

No system of colonization has been more powerful and wide sweeping than education. The Nunavik Educational Task Force asserted:

Our people did not have any institutional immunity, just as we had no immunity to measles or alcohol. When these institutions came into our lives we had no way to deal with their poisonous side effects, their tendency to undermine wisdom, and our spirits slowly begin to die. In our weakened condition we attracted even more services and more rescuers, and the cycle got worse.

(Vick-Westgate 1992: 11-13)

Thiong'o's work *Decolonizing the mind: The politics of Language in African literature*, is very clear about the process and result of colonial education:

annihilate(s) a people(s) belief in their names, their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves. It makes them see their past as one wasteland of non-achievement and it makes them distance themselves from that wasteland. It makes them want to identify with that which is furthest removed from themselves.

(Thiong'o's 1986: 3)

I have observed this struggle with many of my students and some who are candid in how this felt-sense consumed them. I have observed that in the midst of this struggle there is also deep pride and desire for culture and I have seen the vacillation from

anger to pain and from pride to joy as these two things war within a person.

Throughout this thesis I will discuss polarity as a reality of my work and indeed this polarity is a reality for many Northerners, a deep desire for the past but also a need for the future. The desire to survive and thrive is not the desire to Southernize. Indeed research is problematic as so much of it follows the scientific method but that entire process is not fully appropriate to the Northern worldview.

### **A Problem with Literacy**

As a reader and teacher it pains me to come to terms with literacy as problematic, but contextually Pattanayak writes assertively that literacy is an instrument of oppression:

Under conditions of orality, people identify and solve problems by working together. Literacy brings about a break in togetherness, permits and promotes individual and isolated initiative in identifying and solving problems...theorizing that proclaims the superiority of literacy over orality, rather than the differences between them has a debilitating effect.

(Pattanayak 1991: 107 & 105)

Print is a part of Western culture but it need not be understood as an intrinsic evolution. Evolution and viewing print as a developmental hallmark are Western concepts and cultural values. It is important to question and understand the placement of print in the Western culture. Andersen (2000: 258) states 'culture is so basic, learned at such a tender age, and so taken for granted that it is often confused with human nature itself'. The case can be made that orality can more clearly speak to the natural communicator in all of us. Havelock asserts:



the natural human being is not a writer or reader but a speaker and a listener...literacy at any stage of its development is in terms of evolutionary time a mere upstart, an artificial exercise, a work of culture, imposed on the natural man

(Havelock 1991: 20)

It can be argued that orality, not print, is our natural communication mode. Oral communication is universal to all cultures. My experience substantiates there is a certain privilege or elite status of the written word that imbues it with greater credibility, seriousness and status. Aboriginal culture does not have a written word tradition, and therefore no direct or inherent trust in print, indeed it is often quite the opposite given their colonial history with print and its consequences. There is inherent distrust of the printed word among people in the Western Arctic.

There is a conflict between the Western norm of the written word being hegemonic and the Aboriginal norm of orality. Rasmussen (2001:107) asserts 'the ideology of print means everything is seen in terms of the written word as the apotheosis of achievement; literacy is the benchmark for intelligence, illiteracy equals incompetence'. Theorists debate the best way forward in this conflict. The problem is described by Havelock (1991: 11) as being 'perceived as pulling one way in favor of a restored orality and then the other way in favor of replacing it altogether by a sophisticated literacy'. Aboriginal history and culture was long and complex but was not written down. Western newcomers did not honour orality as a valid form of recording information and so began a complex and on-going Aboriginal conflict with the Western tradition to have Aboriginal culture and history recognized, respected and honored. In rhetorical terms, no ethos is established.

In the classroom of books too often the Aboriginal perspective is not present, and when it has been recorded, it has too often been filtered through the perspective so much as it is almost unrecognizable. Miscommunication, human error, interpretation and poor scholarship have made Aboriginal persons weary of being studied and distrustful of studies. Too often I have found a text on my region, brought it in to class and discovered there are discrepancies, inaccuracies and wrong information, rendering the text almost useless. In Northern Studies class we were using the Crowe *The History of the Original Peoples of Northern Canada* (1991) later printing of the original 1974 text. It was suggested in the curriculum and, despite its age, I used it in the introductory unit as other books *Across Time and Tundra* (2003) *Gwichya Gwich'in* (2001) and *Yamoria: The Law Maker* (1997) would be used later. So in the middle of the class a student blurts out “Who are these Loucheaux people? And the Kutchin? Never heard of them.” Another student who would later work on the video project turned to her, smiled and said “That is you dear. And me too. They are old white names for the Gwich'in”. I keenly feel this conflict between trust and legitimacy as an educator in an Aboriginal community. Smith describes:

So I trained as a teacher and went out with great ideals to the classroom and suddenly got confronted with the fact that in a single classroom all the issues of power, justice and the silence of our history are right there in front of you  
(Smith 2002: 2)

This is why my students almost immediately begin primary research in Northern Studies because it is necessary for material and also for the student experience. It is also why video was chosen for this research. Smith speaks of writing her own book on research in Indigenous communities:

That is the audience that I wanted to reach, and that's the audience I tried to write for. This is the audience that don't read books and don't buy books. If I just look at my own communities, they don't buy books.

(Smith 2002: 4)

### **Locating my Project Within the College System**

Aurora College's website gives a good overview of Adult Education in the North as an institutional programme. It began in the late 1950s but was often delivered through the day schools. Most NWT communities had some type of organized adult education with focus initially on vocational training. The authority for Adult Education was transferred from Ottawa to the territories in 1969. In the 60s, Frontier College formalized the system of community based adult education and it was legislated in 1974. The college was initially called Thebacha College in 1981 but later became Arctic College in 1984. According to the Aurora College website, in 1986 Arctic College was re-created 'as a corporate entity at arm's length from the government, and gave it the mandate to deliver adult and post-secondary education'. By 1987, the Aurora Campus Inuvik opened and all Community Learning Centres joined the college by 1990. The college's first Adult Basic Education (ABE) Curriculum was completed in 1991. The college was renamed Aurora College in 1995 in preparation for the creation of Nunavut. The Aurora Research Institute eventually joined the college and is in charge of all mandated research licensing. It can offer ethical review and extensive practical research assistance. There are several postsecondary programs and through southern academic partnerships, the college offers two degrees. Inuvik's Aurora Campus is the campus for the Western Arctic

region. Each community has an Aurora College Learning Centre focused on basic skills and training, but for the upper level high school academic upgrading classes required for post secondary entrance, students must attend a campus. There are also campuses in Yellowknife and Fort Smith. Beaufort Delta and some Sahtu adult students attend the Aurora College-Aurora Campus, Inuvik Learning Centre for their higher-level academic upgrading courses. The Inuvik Learning Centre also teaches lower level upgrading classes for Inuvik residents.

Given the education statistics from above it seems my job security, notwithstanding government budget cuts, is secure. However, the educational view is from the bottom. As an adult educator in the Arctic of Canada, my position is in the hinterlands of a minority in the deficit-forgotten segment of education because Adult Education exists as a result of the school system failing. As a high school teacher told another researcher when we were in Oslo at a conference together, “When we give up on students we give them to Suzanne. Somehow she does something with them and they succeed where we couldn’t. She is presenting work they did together here. Thank God for Adult Ed”. This was awkward but startlingly honest for a teacher to admit and I considered her a better teacher than most. It makes me very sad and even angrier that the school gives up on my students. That is not what schools and teachers should do. They buckle down and figure out a way to support that student’s success and then they do it again and again and they keep figuring it out, student by student if they must. That is the only thing we are supposed to be doing. As the school system is also a government department, that is much larger and more powerful, I am in an awkward and disadvantaged position. Adult students are often

seen as failures, broken and less-than, never mind that the statistics bare out extreme problems in the school system, on top of the horrific beginnings of education in the North and with Aboriginal peoples, and that the chances of academic success are abysmal at best. Never mind the reality of Northern schools where half of all students do not take the standard achievement tests as they are not ready and that in the smaller communities this would indicate that 90% of students are below grade level.

Just 10.6 percent of grade 6 students in the NWT Communities met acceptable math standards for the test, according to the data collected as a percentage of the total enrollment. The number increases slightly to 11.2 percent for grade 9 math students....the outlook for English is slightly better...grade six 16.1 per cent...Grade 9...15.2 per cent.

*(Yellowknifer, March 17, 2107)*

The rates of success only become incrementally better as the community becomes larger, but Inuvik is the lowest regional centre for student achievement with less than half of all students performing at grade level. It can be a frustrating position when adult education is often seen as a duplication of service for people who should have gotten it right the first time. This attitude has often been communicated to me by college administrators and other government bureaucrats, both in and out of official meetings. The college has a habit of promoting itself as a post-secondary institution, despite the reality that more than half its students are in Adult Basic Education. The school system engages in a dangerous indulgence by discarding each generation as they age out with the conceit that the next generation will finally perform. Even if that was a reasonable assumption, which it is not given the numbers, who do you think are the parents of this next generation? Parental educational achievement,

particularly the mother's, are a strong indicator of a child's potential educational achievement. The need for a brighter future is critical and cannot wait.

### **Geography of the Issues**

The Canadian national progression and territorial expansion into its present nation-state is predicated on stolen land, justified with the myth that it was empty land. From the *Indian Act* and Treaty 11 to the first oil and gas boom, the federal government has imposed policies on the North, which have directly affected Northern peoples.

The prosperity and prestige of Canada in the North was gained at the expense of the Indian people. Their chiefs were summoned from anonymity for a brief moment of political involvement and importance, only to be relegated to oblivion after their usefulness was over. They were used, as were others, to give the semblance of substance to a symbolic gesture.

(Fumoleau 1973: 306-7)

The Canadian North, specifically the Western Arctic, while being one of most geographically isolated parts of the world, has recently been subject to increased national and international scrutiny as a source of untapped oil and gas and minerals, a global warming harbinger and casualty, and a centre of international sovereignty debate. However, the quest for resource riches of fur, copper and oil stretches back over a century and explorers seeking the top of the world another century before. Although the territorial devolution of power, land claims, and self-government promise change, the standard of living of most Northerners is still far below Canadian

norms. Saku and Bone (2000: 10) are very direct in noting that ‘the socio-economic conditions of most Aboriginal Canadians remain at a very deplorable state’. Little has changed in the years since this observation as outlined by Akhavan:

In almost every respect, ranging from drop-out rates, unemployment, median income, incarceration rates and homicide rates to infant mortality and life expectancy, Canada’s Indigenous peoples are worse off than African Americans whose plight we Canadians bemoan with smug self- satisfaction. Infant mortality is 2.3 times the national average, and 40 per cent of Indigenous children suffer from hunger. The homicide rate is over six times the national average; the incarceration rate ten times

(Akhavan 2016: 269)

The North succeeds in spite of its issues (or the issues that have been thrust upon it).

When Treaty 11 was signed, Southern Canadians were told of the Northern riches in oil and minerals just waiting to be exploited in the ‘Biggest Oilfield in the World’

(Fumoleau 1973: 152-155). The Western Arctic is first a homeland, a homeland to nations of peoples of whom much has been asked and to whom not much has been given, especially in terms of education and literacy for Aboriginal Northerners.

Above and beyond the responsibility for the Canadian Government to provide education to all Canadians, it has additional obligations to Aboriginal Canadians. The Treaties and the Northern land claim processes are contracts with the Canadian government—judiciary agreements in which the government made promises of payment and services for the land that Aboriginal people were required to surrender.

Education is just one item promised in these agreements, but it is critical piece for individuals, communities and the future. Zebedee Nungak (in Vick-Westgate 1992: ix) uses the example of the Eurocentric Franklin expedition as an approach destined to failure and Peary as an explorer who was a success because he learned

from the Inuit people about the land, travel and nutrition and he incorporated European ship building technology accordingly:

to reach the objective is to have respect for the lay of the land and the ways of the people who live there. That a rigid, inflexible foreign design cannot be simply imposed. Or is preordained to fail if it is. This adaptability is a necessity of life in pursuing a goal that will be relevant to and respected by the people whom it serves.

(Zebedee Nungak 1992: ix)

It is a great hope of people in this region that improving literacy and educational success will improve their lives and strengthen communities through agency and wellness. It is made more pressing, as Aboriginal Canadians populations are the fastest growing in the country according to Statistics Canada. My hope is that this first wave (land claims) and second wave (self government) revolutions will bring the third wave for education. Vick-Westgate (2002: 237), when writing of Inuit controlled education in Nunavik, stated ‘educational systems need to continually mutate to adequately prepare students to the dynamic societies they’ll be entering’. Teaching is supposed to be a noble profession and hopefully with hard work it can regain that title. While this research project does engage the problems with the education system by engaging students in primary research as a means of fostering an equitable and culturally responsive learning environment a primary goal is to try and engage students in their educations and foster success to encourage students to pursue further education. Samson and Gigoux (2017: 185) venture that ‘if education was a means of colonial control, now it may become a means of self-determination and assist with the enlightenment of non-indigenous populations’.



## Chapter 3

### Sociological Topography and Northern Navigation

Truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions  
 – Nietzsche (1977: 46-47)

When someone says, 'I want to practice my own culture,' it doesn't mean going back to freezing in igloos and hunting with bows and arrows. It means regaining the control we had over our lives before  
 - Nellie Cournoyea (1988: 286)

This chapter outlines the sociological topography of this research and the Northern navigations used to pilot through the past and present, setting a course for the future. To understand the landscape, first we consider the history of sociology and the sociology of education. In the North, Educational institutions are Southern transplants rooted in Western knowledge discourses and Canadian systems of politics, sovereignty and ideology. The complexities of educational achievement and non-achievement are viewed through the filter of Porter's vertical mosaic and the bizarre sociological quagmire of marginalized/minority education of the majority Aboriginal population in the western Arctic. Public Sociology provides a style of inquiry/dialogue that can bridge the research situated in this 'generated' Adult Education classroom. Northern models of co-management and co-knowledge production that align with Public Sociology engagement allows for student co-research to extend out, into and with the community.

To better understand the unique co-research experience of the researchers, students and instructor, and the community members, the prism of Existential

Sociology is used. Its project of self and the individuality of the reality of experience, individual meaning, interest in emotion, its acceptance of absurdity and self efficacy are crucial to try and come to a better appreciation and inclusion of Northern worldviews and the extreme contrasts to the Southern worldview. To further understand the perspectives and knowledge, I will use Visual Sociology to negotiate the complications of meaningful intercultural dialogue about the past, present and future. These are seemingly disparate areas of sociology, history, education, public, existential and visual, but they offer past and current maps, processes, transport and interpretation to create a truer rendering of the land and people going forward. The previous chapter focused on the peoples and the place at these confluences of culture, power, knowledge and education colliding in a violent torrent of inequality and injustice. This chapter situates these convergences within the North/South dynamic, the Northern reality and the ensuing inside the histories, institutions, styles, methods and projects of Sociology. These two chapters provide the footing for the research project and its themes that are outlined in the next two chapters.

At the Inuvik Learning Center I was predominately known as an English teacher, indeed the “little English teacher”, as the other instructor was much taller. I teach many other things, Social Studies, Northern Studies, research, life skills and whatever else that we needed at the time. Yet English is how I am known, which likely corresponds to the reality that English is the gatekeeper course for most post-secondary opportunities and I teach the highest levels that college academic upgrading offers. I often read to my class, which is very popular, as students are (as discussed in the previous chapter) very skilled listeners, accustomed to oral storytelling and being read to is just enjoyable. I also have students read in class, in as

non-threatening and supported manner as I can manage with the option of passing off if they are uncomfortable reading. It is an extremely useful way that I can get to know how the students are each individually reading and assess for the possibility of reading issues that might need supporting. It is usually tolerated well, as I have said before being read-to is very popular; who doesn't love to be read to? Early on in my teaching I had a student declare at the beginning of class one day, that one of her goals was to be able to talk "smart" like me and not talk "dumb" like she does now. A few other students smiled brightly and said they wanted to do that too. Another chimed in that she wanted to talk like me because it was so nice and fancy, like a princess. Everyone was so enthusiastic and happy and I smiled back, but I was crying on the inside because it is terrible that they were carrying around "I talk dumb/I am dumb" everyday. Education had done that to them and that is so very wrong. Never had I been so aware of the power I wielded, the complete lack efficacy of social reproduction in education and society and the devastating lasting effects.

In response, I launched into an impromptu explanation of dialectic English, which is spoken in Inuvik and affectionately called 'Deltanese'. I talked about how dialects form and how theirs was informed by the pronunciations of Gwich'in and Inuvialuktun as well as their original grammars. The placement of noun/verb is very different as are articles, pronouns and words. An Inuvialuit elder once said the word for caribou and dead caribou are just different. I continued on expressing how important dialects are to identity and place, and that they are wonderful and powerful cultural expressions. I conceded that in English we practice 'standard English' in writing practice and that we also work in spoken 'standard English' in this academic setting and to model professional norms but it is just one dialect of English. The

student who started the idea expressed her surprise and broke my heart further by exclaiming “You mean I am not dumb because I talk like this because that is what I was told in school?” and a few other students also nodded their agreement with her observation and murmured mutual personal observations. I smiled brightly, though still crying on the inside, assured them that they were all so very clever, wonderful and with limitless potential, because it is true. They all reiterated their goals to improve their English. So we began reading and to their delight I read the entire rest of class. I now start every class I teach with a discussion of dialect and the importance of celebrating multi-dialectic English.

### **Sociology of Education**

Education in the North has distinctive sociological patterns of relationships and interactions but most importantly it is the intersection of two cultures Southern (instructors, administrators and curricula) and Northern (students and community members). Phillip Blake from Fort MacPherson:

Take a look at the school here. Try to find anything that makes it a place where Indian values, traditions and Indian culture is respected. It could be a school in the suburbs of Edmonton, Toronto or Vancouver. Do you think Indian people would have chosen a building like this as a way to teach their children how to be proud of their Indian heritage.

Do you think Indian people chose to have their children taught that the only way to survive in the future is to become like the white man?

Look around you. Look at the building. Find out who the teachers are. Find out what they teach our children. Find out what regulations there are in this school,

find out who decides these regulations, who hires the teachers and who fires them.

This school is just a symbol of white domination and control. It is a part of a system set up to destroy Indian culture and to destroy our pride in our Indian heritage

(Phillip Blake: 1977: 5-6).

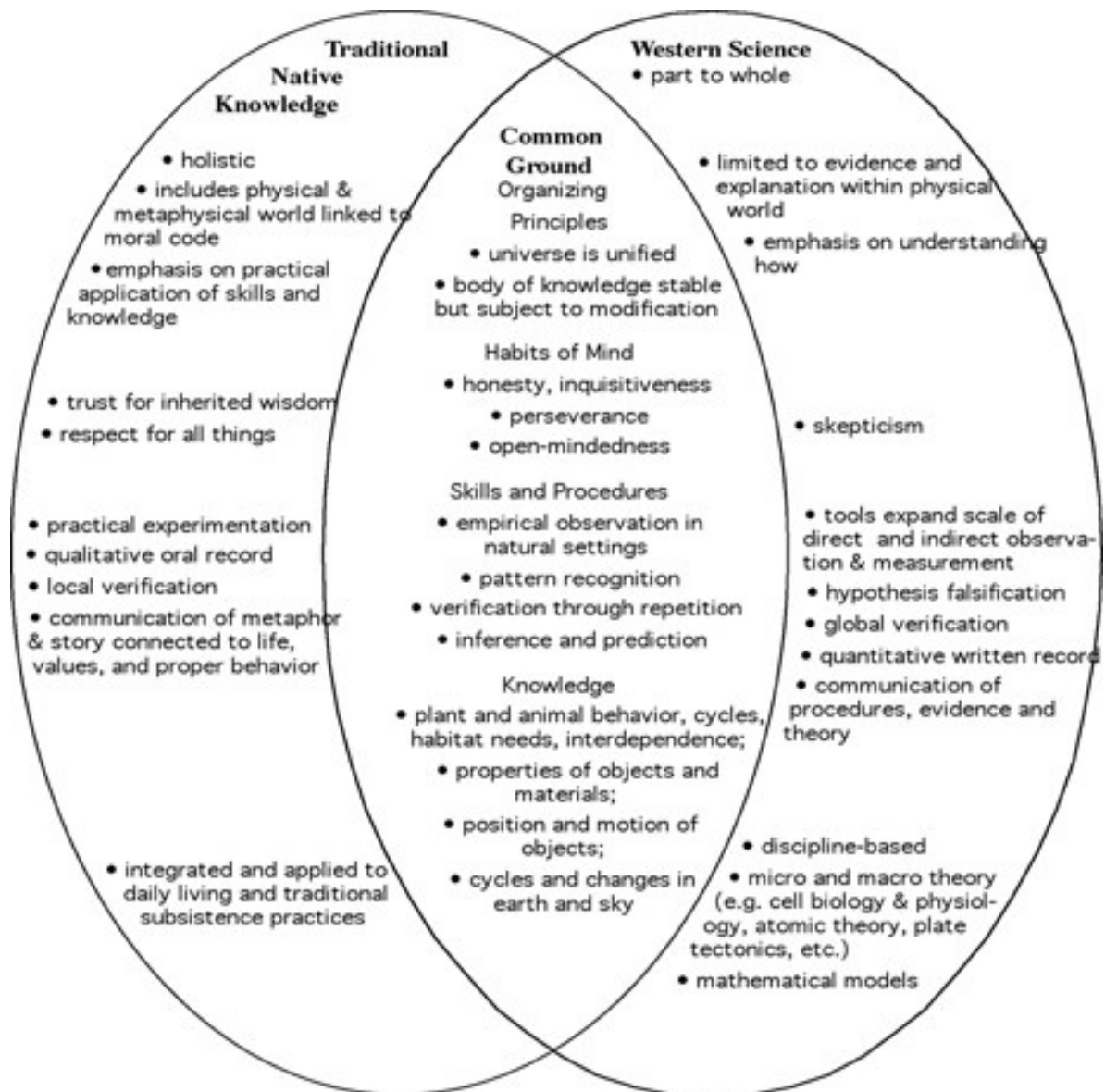
Davies and Guppy (2010: 11) propose that schools do three things: socialize students, select students through achievement and organize and legitimize knowledge. These competitive, hierarchical and imperious processes inform how education has developed Barnhardt and Kawagley, contend;

It is little wonder then that formal education structures, which often epitomize western bureaucratic forms, have been found wanting in addressing the educational needs of traditional societies

(Barnhardt and Kawagley 2005: 8).

These processes are delicate in an unequal cross-cultural environment and complicated by the Western project of knowledge acquisition, the colonial project of conquering and the Modern project of “progress” and assimilation, as discussed in Chapter Two. Consider Barnhardt and Kawagley (2005:8) Venn diagram of difference on the next page.

**Figure 2:** Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Alaska Native Ways of Knowing.



(Available from:  
[http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/curriculum/Articles/BarnhardtKawagley/Indigenous\\_Knowledge.html](http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/curriculum/Articles/BarnhardtKawagley/Indigenous_Knowledge.html) (Accessed April 8, 2017)

Adult Education draws on a long tradition of social analysis and a goal of social justice, Foucault (1975) *Discipline and Punish: The birth of the prison* in which theories on power and education first develop, Freire (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressor* which is seminal across education cultural studies and postcolonial work, and hooks (1994:12) *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* which argues that teachers' use of control and power over students dulls the students'

enthusiasm and teaches obedience to authority, ‘confin[ing] each pupil to a rote, assembly-line approach to learning’. To counter this she proposes ways to use collaboration to make learning more relaxing and exciting. Education’s, particularly Adult Education’s, philosophical foundation and core is a sociological process as a central site of cultural contestation. As an adult educator, my research finds its underpinnings and base concerns in the Sociology of Education embedded in historical patterns which are explored as part of critical literacy for social justice within the acronym of HEADSUP :

**Hegemony** (justifying superiority and supporting domination)  
**Ethnocentrism** (projecting one view, one “forward”, as universal)  
**Ahistoricism** (forgetting historical legacies and complicities)  
**Depoliticization** (disregarding power inequalities and ideological roots of analyses and proposals)  
**Salvationism** (framing help as the burden of the fittest)  
**Un-complicated solutions** (offering easy solutions that do not require systemic change)  
**Paternalism** (seeking affirmation of superiority through the provision of help)  
 (Andreotti 2012: 2)

The project exists across disciplines within community development, cultural studies, arts and education, but its foundation is sociology because it is the intermingling of society across these other intersections that creates the biggest conflicts but also the biggest opportunities for connection. Education is just the construct and process of this interaction. Smith writes:

school knowledge systems were informed by a much more comprehensive system of knowledge which linked universities, scholarly societies and imperial views of culture. Hierarchies of knowledge and theories rapidly developed to account for the discoveries of the new world were legitimized at the center. Schools simply reproduce domesticated versions of that knowledge for uncritical consumption.

(Smith 1999: 65)

Education basically became a photo-copier that constantly jams, a self-reproducing machine that worked for some but not at all for others, who instead of crisp clear pages ended up with crushed and smudged nonsense. Puxley from *Dene Nation: The colony within* on the colonial experience:

Reason can be applied to two essentially different purposes. First, it may be applied in the continuous elaboration and redefinition of reality as we experience it. Used in this way, reason turns a critical eye on everything. Nothing is given or taken for granted. This reason is in the service of human development. Reason at this level deals with such questions as the nature and purpose of man and what constitutes the good life.

(Puxley (1977: 6-7)

Reason may also be used in quite another way, as a designer or mechanic might use it to improve the workings of a machine whose existence he does not question. Within this limited framework, what is good or bad becomes defined in terms of what satisfies the need of the machine to work efficiently. The question of whether the machine serves the purpose of men or not need never be addressed if one views one's role simply as that of a mechanic, rather than more broadly as a member of the human race.

A society whose ideological underpinnings are no longer the object of other than 'academic' consideration, while its ideology demands reason merely in the service of efficiency, is a society out of control from any humanist perspective. Such a society is a prisoner of its ideology, defining men in terms of their fit with the ideological machine and, however much it claims to value individual freedom and enterprise, the truth is that it cannot afford non-conformity.

(Puxley 1977: 6-7)

Davies and Guppy (2010: 287), in *The Schooled Society: An Introduction to the Sociology of Education*, asserts that educational institutions are 'rationalized bureaucracies that merely promise access to labor markets for individuals and hopes to wealth creation to elites'. They are very pessimistic, asserting:



unless societal conditions improve, Aboriginals will remain Canada's most disadvantaged group. Their existing levels of poverty and living conditions simply are not conducive to school success, although some individual First Nations will continue to excel.

(Davies and Guppy 2010: 280)

Unfortunately, I witness this in my own classroom. Over almost two decades the students are coming in with weaker and weaker academic skills but at the same time the students that are succeeding academically are extremely successful. There is little middle ground. Wotherspoon writes:

Residential schooling and subsequent encounters with provincial and territorial education systems have contributed to a legacy in which both personal and community experiences of failure, marginalization and disillusionment.

(Wotherspoon 2009: 247)

To further contextualize not just the residential school system but education and development in the North period, Blake from Fort MacPherson:

Now the system of genocide practiced on our Indian brothers in the south over the past few hundred years is being turned loose on us, and our Eskimo brothers. 'Don't be silly' you may say 'we are sorry about what we did in the past; we made some mistakes. But it's different now. Look we have given you education, houses and health services.

The system of genocide may have become a little more polished over the past few hundred years in order to suit the civilized tastes of the southern people who watch Lloyd Robertson on the National. But the effect is exactly the same. We are being destroyed. Your nation is destroying our nation. What we are saying today, here and now, is exactly what Louis Riel was saying roughly 100 years ago.

We are a nation. We have our own land, our own way and our own civilization. We do not want to destroy you or your land. Please do not destroy us.

You and I both know what happened to Louis Riel.

(Phillip Blake 1977: 6-7)

Education as a colonial project is not a thing of the past and unfortunately it continues and is still proliferating. The documentary *Schooling the World: The White Man's Last Burden* (2010) is striking, evocative and terrifying. As a white woman teaching in North, the secondary title is one that poses the question I often ask myself: Is this really what we should be doing? And more importantly, what am I doing? In a critical and theoretical reality it can definitely be argued that education as it is in the North should stop. However, in a practical and pragmatic reality it is not going to stop and the only way forward is to improve it and change it. After so much time and interferences it would be very difficult to just stop the education system in the North. It is also a huge fallacy that everyone would think it is a good idea to stop and that industry and government would allow it to happen. So no *mea culpa* and quitting the stage but then what? In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* Freire writes originally in 1970:

in problem-posing education, people develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves; they come to see the world not as static reality but as reality in process, in transformation.

(Freire 1993: 64)

It seems that the educational system of colonial oppression has not been completely transformed given I have students coming to me every year after being told by teachers and administrators that they are dumb and will never succeed. Clark wrote *Dark Ghetto* in 1965 and in it he stressed:

Children who are treated as if they are uneducable almost invariably become uneducable. This is educational atrophy...they have a sense of personal humiliation and unworthiness. They react negatively and hostilely and aggressively towards the educational process. They hate teachers, they hate schools, they hate anything that seems to impose upon them this denigration, because they are not being treated as human beings, because they are

sacrificed in a machinery of efficiency and expendability, because their dignity and potential as human beings are being obscured and ignored.  
(Clark 1989: 128)

Wotherspoon (2009: 251), does note that despite seemingly insurmountable barriers significant numbers of Aboriginal Canadians return to Adult Education and these adults are ultimately very likely to be successful. This I also observe in my classroom as I watch my students become chiefs and tribal councillors, professionals, and politically active leaders among other things. However, just as many students were those things and more long before I met them. There is the knowledge to continue the transformational efforts and build on modest successes. It is unfortunate that time and actions have not fully realized this wished-for transformation. The inequality and hierarchy of this educational interaction was investigated in Porter's (1965) 'Vertical Mosaic: An analysis of Social Class and Power in Canada' that ultimately questions the theoretically 'socially' promised meritocracy and democracy of social mobility opportunities of Canadians and he concludes that they are not equally available to minority groups due to barriers to educational opportunity, which limits economic and democratic opportunities and debunks Canadian meritocracy. Time moves on and Porter's study is dated and had demographic limitations. However, the underlying theory stands up, as shown persistent and great inequalities in Canadian and Northern education. Buroway (2009: 869) proposes Porter as one of Canada's most distinguished public sociologists. Now we must accomplish the project of inclusion and creating a just society in and through education.

## Sociological History and the Public

The title of this research project, *Take it from the Top*, has three meanings; a fun nod to the film and drama industry axiom, it is also an allusion to the phrase “top of the world” meaning the Arctic’s location on the globe but it was most importantly the philosophical lodestone that we needed to focus on what people were saying and ‘get back to the beginning’ of the North-South research conversation to try to ensure that we are understanding each other and working together. This desire to get back to the beginning can also be found in the 19<sup>th</sup> century origins of Sociology and its history of working with the non-academic (public) and the open communication interplay between the academy and the public. According to Turner (2012: 350) ‘this is where sociology as a discipline began; not with the establishment of chairs and national societies, but as a forum for public discussion around the problem of the fundamental nature of society’. Non-academic Sociology organizations such as L’Institute International de Sociology and the British Sociology Society flourished. However, ultimately academic institutions aggressively competed with these non-academic Sociological institutions and the power struggle ultimately went to the academic organizations. Turner (2012: 351-2) characterizes Durkheim and his successor Boule with ‘their militant exclusiveness and their concerns with academic power and these goals prevailed and ‘within each national discipline, definitions of professionalism narrowed’. The academy built its ivory tower and the public was outside. The reality of the Academy trying to own or control the concepts of society, the social and the sociable is a ridiculous perversion of sociology. Samson and Gigoux (2017: ix) note that ‘sociology has not made the study of colonialism a priority’ other than to use western systems of analysis of society, empires,

democracy, industrialization and other western phenomena or left Indigenous peoples to the ‘history of the past’ and to anthropology. Sociology has largely not engaged with Indigenous societies, which resulted in an academic marginalization of the past, the other and the ‘exotic’. Paine writes:

the “everyday” of colonial life – of the encounter between colonizer and the colonized – needs sociological study. If anything, it is this that tends to be glossed over when taking apart a colonial situation

(Paine (1977: xii-xiii)

The discipline cannot exclude Indigenous society anymore than it can exclude the public.

Sociology began with the public as a partner and audience, as Turner outlines above, until the Academy fueled by Modernity and the wealth of industrialization and colonization became powerful and fought for a monopoly on power that excluded the public. Knowledge was now another commodity to own, hoard and commodify.

Burawoy (2009: 884) contends that formal ‘professionalization can become another vehicle of colonization by states and dominant sociologies but it can be a mode of resisting and subverting such dominations’. Sociology cannot exclude the public. To do so makes Sociology part of the very power structure it ostensibly critiques. This type of Sociology would be fruit of a poison tree, creating, what I contend, is an intellectual colonialism that appears professional but is insidiously neo-paternalism and opportunism. My students and community have limited access to the academy and to deny them public engagement further entrenches unequal power dynamics and denies educational human rights. Academic responsibility is the key issue to engage in because the Academy sees itself as separate and autonomous. As I have been writing up the research and trying to make sure my work fits into a PhD programme,

the Sociology department and the University, it is a daunting task. However, upon reflection it does not have to be. The idea that the university is one thing that is immutable and something that is necessary to coordinate or cleave to is in itself a construction and at times a fabrication. Sociology is a relatively new discipline and a little over a century ago it was very much popular and public as described by Turner above. Then came the Modern project of making Universities powerful but we ascribe them that power and can just as easily not recognize it because ultimately academia is what we make it. Consider the growth of universities and enrollment in Canada. According to the Canadian Encyclopedia Website, in 1939 Canada had a population of 11,000,000 and 26 universities with an average of 1500 students per institution for a total population of 40,000 students. According to Statistics Canada's website, currently the Canadian population has grown to over 36,000,000 or roughly tripled and in the same time the number of universities has grown to 98 (approximately 4 times growth) and the average enrolment has grown to 18,000 (12 times growth) for a current total enrolment of 1,800,000 (45 times growth). Universities have grown significantly faster than Canada as a whole, by number, size and percentage of the population, since the 1940s. However, we can still 'seize the tools of the oppressor' as Friere wrote. Perhaps it is not a revolution or an evolution (an uncomfortable term) but an expansion and a transformation/adaptation.

Public sociology is a style of sociology, rather than a method, that pursues to engage with wider audiences, which transcend the academy. Buroway is the most closely associated with the perspective and explains public sociology at the Association of American Sociology in his 2004 presidential address:

Responding to the growing gap between the sociological ethos and the world we study, the challenge of public sociology is to engage multiple publics in multiple ways (and)...aims to enrich public debate about moral and political issues by infusing them with sociological theory and research.

(Burawoy 2005: 1)

Considering the chart below the terms communicative, consensus and relevance are the most essential to a Northern, and I would argue, wider context.

**Figure 3.** Elaborating the Types of Sociological Knowledge

	Academic	Extra-academic
<i>Instrumental</i> Knowledge Truth Legitimacy Accountability Politics Pathology	Professional sociology Theoretical/empirical Correspondence Scientific norms Peers Professional self-interest Self-referentiality	<i>Policy sociology</i> Concrete Pragmatic Effectiveness Clients Policy intervention Servility
<i>Reflexive</i> Knowledge Truth Legitimacy Accountability Politics Pathology	<i>Critical sociology</i> Foundational Normative Moral vision Critical intellectuals Internal debate Dogmatism	<i>Public sociology</i> Communicative Consensus Relevance Designated publics Public dialogue Faddishness

(Burawoy 2005: 16)

Burawoy further develops his matrix and clarifications and proposes that:

the structure of the academic field is defined by its division of labour that derives from two questions: (1) Knowledge for Whom? (academic vs. extra-academic audience) and (2) Knowledge for What? (instrumental knowledge concerned with discovering new means and reflexive knowledge concerned with discussing ends)?

(Burawoy 2009: 871)

His detailed descriptions are useful to unpack sociological knowledge discourses:

*professional knowledge* as instrumental knowledge directed at academic peers, specifically to advance scientific research programs by solving puzzles (lacunae, anomalies, and contradictions) in which the foundations of those research programs are taken for granted;

*policy knowledge* as instrumental knowledge geared to extra-academic clients. It tackles problems that are defined by clients whose interests and perspectives are taken as given;

*critical knowledge* as the discussion among academics of the methodological, philosophical, and value foundations of research programs, extending to the discipline as whole and from there to the academy itself

*public knowledge* as the discussion of basic values and goals of society between academics and various publics

(Burawoy 2009: 871).

However, it is concerning that the public is not imbued with any of the other knowledges. It relegates Northern peoples' knowledges to only being acknowledged as public when they have knowledges that cross the quadrants. The government creates the bizarre situational project of Aboriginal people having to try and defend who they are and what they have always had; land, culture, governance.

Academically they must be full partners as only they can tell their stories and not need three levels of mediation and outside interpretation. We are all parts of our communities and believe in the equality of our membership, participation and individual thought and reasserting this idea as public sociology does seem like an unusual academic project as it seems like common sense, but I do understand it to be crucial and appreciate the sociological work to break down the erected 'knowledge' barriers.

Understanding the four part interplay lends itself to analogy of the modern democratic process ensuring separation and accountability of power. The idea of the



executive, the legislature, judiciary (being professional, policy, and critical) with the public is that this representational democracy model is full of checks and balances. As Churchill famously said “Democracy is the worst form of government except for all the others”. Burawoy’s public sociology model is better than many of the academic theories proposed, but it too has its limitations. While I support representational democracy and public sociology, they both suffer from problematic limitation of minority rights voice and representation. This limitation cannot be understated because the majority politics will always leave minority populations vulnerable. How this vulnerability is compensated for should show the strength of the government and academic system. Considering the Canadian Aboriginal people’s experience as an invaded minority, the weakness of representational democracy of the Canadian government, and in turn the social projects of academic systems. Or perhaps the above analogy is limited or optimistic and it really just shows silos of power that don’t really interact. Kallerberg (2005: 393) writes that ‘the interface between disciplines and school is essential and little developed’ resulting in the so-called Flintstone effect where surveys show half of Americans think humans lived together with dinosaurs in the past. Public sociology could get people and academic institutions talking to one another so half the public is not left with cartoons from the 1950s as ‘educational’ programming after educational programs have failed them.

Interestingly, many of Burawoy’s detractors and clarifiers, such as Helmes-Hayes (2009), Davis (2009) Creese (2009) and Christensen (2013) are skeptical of Public Sociology’s lack of scientific method and researcher objectivity, while I consider those key strengths. I argue for more public and given my local context and interconnectedness, and the isolation of my community and region, it is eminently

achievable and necessary. Qualifying the myth of objectivity is critical as ‘there is no such thing as neutral sociological knowledge, and that has nothing to do with sociologist’s capacities or incapacities for reflexivity’ (Mesny 2009: 690). This idea is linked to what I contend is academic objectivity, which unfortunately remains a gold standard for research and analysis. I challenge the idea of objectivity and academic autonomy because I think they are an illusion based on privilege and conceit or perhaps just hubris. At this point I would expect some readers to begin to disagree with my point. However to further the point, the prevailing idea is that the Academy is also independent of the government. While this is true in some respects, it is not independent of its own culture. The government is a product of that same culture and the government funds and regulates schools and curriculums and more indirectly but connected is the funding of post secondary institutions and research itself.

Where does this leave public sociology? When sociology was being created in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in England and France there was healthy engagement with the public as discussed by Turner above. It means beginning a conversation where the public is once more an important participant. When we look historically, academic theory has played a significant part in the creation of current society, government and economy. Consider this website excerpt from Ryerson University’s *Egerton Ryerson, the Residential School System and Truth and Reconciliation statement* in regards to their namesake:

In justifying his position that education should be different for White and Aboriginal children, Ryerson (1847) explained:

It is a fact established by numerous experiments, that the North American Indian cannot be civilized or preserved in a state of civilization (including habits of industry and sobriety) except in connection with, if not by the influence of, not only religious instruction and sentiment but of religious feelings (p. 73).

Ryerson (1847) was also clear on his understanding of the goal for the education of Aboriginal children, writing, “I understand the end proposed to be making of the pupils industrious farmers, and that learning is provided for and pursued only so far as it will contribute to that end” (p. 74).

He also clearly indicated what bodies should oversee the schools for Aboriginal children, stating that there should be “concurrence between the Government and the religious denominations through the agency of which each of these schools is to be conducted” (Ryerson, 1847, p. 74).

(Ryerson University: 2010)

The reality is the academy and in particular sociology is part architect of the current governmental systems ‘machines’ (mechanisms that just keep going once built without thought as described by Du Bois in chapter 2 and Clark earlier in this chapter), that solidified sovereignty and settlement of the Western Arctic. Once the ‘machines’ were going the Academy had retreated into their own institutions. I contend that the Academy bears some responsibility for these ‘machines’ and their continued motion. Aurora College is a government institution, I am a government employee and the Aurora Research Institute licenses and regulates all research in the NWT. It is a ridiculous conceit to think that because the academic change their minds about things like social Darwinism that the institutions these ideas helped create will instantly change or the machine would stop. Rather than directly engaging intellectuals that have sought to cut themselves off from the public. This isn’t meant to be as confrontational as it reads but we need to confront this reality and get on with converting these ‘machines’. In coming to terms with my place in my settler colonial society I have had to deeply consider the complexities that brought me from Calgary to the front of a classroom in a decommissioned military base with a stack of books and a government paycheck in my pocket with a smiling classroom of Aboriginal

students who want to talk like me, despite everything that has happened to them before and continues to happen today.

The only way forward to correct the disparity and atone for being responsible is to seek equitable, integrated and humble research relationships. My criticism or reconceptualization of the Academy and the government is largely unfettered as a secondary instructor of Aboriginal adults in the Arctic; I have not been part of any of those powerful groups. There is freedom in being an outsider, one that has been counted out. To be glib, freedom is just another way of saying nothing left to lose. Or perhaps more seriously it is easier to see structures on the edge and the outside. Also, being outside of dominant systems allows the room to see that there are already Northern systems and processes in place. My students and community members live and thrive at the top of the world and their methods of consensus and collaboration, detailed below, are how we can navigate our way through this melting swamp.

### **Navigating Northward**

Public Sociology is a good development considering the Sociological foundational practice of public engagement and more recent calls to arms; but it is a practice that could go deeper. By deeper, I speak of engagement that rather than a four-part model or a hierarchical strand is more analogous to a Venn diagram where the two circles closing in on one another would be an indication of success. This type of research will be more labour intensive and have longer time periods and be more unpredictable, which does not easily integrate into current academic and funding

structures but is critical for creating the type of research that can stop and/ or re-orientate the governmental and educational ‘machines’. In the North, modes of decision-making were based on consensus and collaboration, which should be the guiding principles of integrated and equitable research. The driving force of this research was to include as many people in the process as possible, students and community members so it was very public.

This is the process of the project and when this all started I had the focus of including absent or quiet voices of Northerners in the literature. After so much research done on Northerners, the idea was to change the power dynamic to privilege what Northerners were saying and to give the agency to be communicating directly and to minimize layers of academic analysis. What Northerners had to say did not need academic translation and indeed this academic translation has resulted in lost or misunderstood meaning. While I do think the pursuit of equitable and Northern-led research is a main focus of this research, the context of academic research needs to be considered for setting. Connecting the original project of Sociology and public sociology can be accomplished.

Knowledge is power but should it also be privilege? Mesny (2009: 674) looks at the interplay in *What do ‘We Know’ that ‘They’ don’t? Sociologists’ versus non-sociologists’ knowledge* in her modified chart below:

**Figure 4: Four conceptions of the distinction between sociologists' and non-sociologists' knowledge of the social world**

Approach	Basic Point
Superiority	Sociologists' knowledge of the social world is more accurate, and/or more objective, and/or more reflexive, than lay people's knowledge, thanks to sociologists' scientific or professional methods and norms.
Homology	When they are made explicit, lay theories about the social world often parallel social scientists' theories.
Complementarity	Lay people's and social scientists' knowledge complement one another. The former's local, embedded knowledge is essential to the latter's general, disembedded knowledge, and <i>vice versa</i> .
Circularity	Sociologists' knowledge continuously infuses commonsensical knowledge and scientific knowledge about the social world is itself rooted in common sense knowledge. Each form of knowledge feeds the other.

(Mesny 2009: 674)

Her assertions make the distinctions begin to fall away. The 'homology' and 'circularity' knowledges are 'complementary' which defuses the idea of 'superiority'. Mesny's insightful analysis and positioning of knowledge in public sociology lead into the next section on Northern models of organization of consensus and collaboration.

### **Northern Models of Organization, Consensus and Collaboration**

When writing on schools, Kakfwi (1977: 143) observes the transplanted Southern educational system is 'where the competitive spirit, the individualistic spirit is far more important than the spirit of co-operation and the spirit of community'. Co-management is a process of consensus and collaboration between Aboriginal,

territorial, federal governments with researchers to manage Aboriginal land claim areas. Notze writes:

in a nutshell, co-management of natural resources refers to the sharing of power and responsibility between government and local resource users, and to various levels of integration of local and state level management systems.

(Notze 1995: 36)

The main examples are the Inuvialuit's Joint Secretariat (where I worked my first fall and winter in Inuvik) and Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board. Each body works with the territorial and federal governments and other Aboriginal governments to determine land, fishery and wildlife monitoring and usage. It is not always fast moving or without problems but at regular intervals all groups, regions, territorial, and federal (with Yukon and Alaskan involvement depending on the issue) meet to discuss, review and decide the land, fishery and wildlife plan for that time. Consensus is again the process of decision-making. Notze concludes that co-management:

is a regime that above all, endeavors to do justice to Inuvialuit society and economy and to the nature of socio-economic change and continuity, as the Inuvialuit perceive it. In their vision, what the land provides, will always remain central to Inuvialuit life.

(Notze 1995: 51)

Change is a part of life and not only is co-management able to share power but it can be flexible and responsive to changing needs and goals. Lange notes:

the deeply imbedded place that the notion of flexibility has in traditional Inuit culture, and its enduring place as an adaptive and integral mechanism in contemporary Inuit society [and] how flexibility as a principle of social action subsumes, at least in the Inuit case, two crucial notions: creative action and consensual relations.

(Lange 1977:107)

This is not only an excellent fit but also the only fit. It remains normative and despite its limitations represents as Northern decision-making process.

The co-management process has successes and weaknesses but it is lauded to privilege the traditional Aboriginal decision making processes of consensus and collaboration on which our territorial legislature (and also Nunavut's) is based. Arctic research is dominated by science. Indeed if you go to an Arctic conference (Arctic Net, Association of Canadian Universities of Northern Studies, State of the Arctic, just about all of the Arctic academic events, except for the International Congress of Arctic Social Sciences) it is usually 75-90% of the content with that monster share involving Northern people as a minimum. Brunet (2016: 2) posed the question *How participatory is research in the Northern Canada* and answered it 'we think not'. According to a recent overview of 1100 articles published in the Journal *Arctic* from 1965-2010 by Brunet, Hickey, and Humphries (2014: 69) 74% of which made no mention of local knowledge. However, they note there is improvement and science does focus on co-management as a procedural norm in land claim areas and with land claim groups. It is meant to be a genesis of federal, territorial, science and Aboriginal groups and interests working together to manage, monitor and make decisions about Northern lands, wildlife and fisheries.

As there are government players and the outside pressures on corporate resource development, there are limitations to effectiveness, as well as there is no mechanism within research of conflict avoidance which is an integral part of many successful traditional northern decision making traditions. Co-management is better



than any other governmental processes to date and it is normative in Northern government and science. It is also common in most other decision-making systems in the North. The cultural value of consensus and the community collective is a guiding and organizational imperative in the North. White describes the structure of the NWT Legislature as based on a consensus model derived:

from northern aboriginal political culture, which avoids division and confrontation – and voting – through decision-making premised thorough respectful discussion of the issues from which a genuine consensus emerges.  
(White 2001: 84)

It is still a typical bureaucracy that implements the territorial government's decisions but its size and structure try to privilege Northern culture. This consensus model informs co-management, which has been successfully employed in this region for land management and that can be seen as a model for change. Within the classroom collaboration can be a way to build inclusive, equitable and meaningful learning experiences and positive outcomes. Harris asserts:

Hierarchy goes hand-in-hand with authority and exclusiveness, and success in the (educational) system is correlated with wealth, and power...For many Aboriginal people even if we were able to learn all the rules, we would not be willing to play the game because egalitarianism and inclusively are held as higher values by us than exclusivity and competition. Whereas the Western Education system encourages competition (positively cutthroat in some disciplines such as medicine and law) and individual success, Indigenous societies place a high value on cooperation and success of the entire group  
(Harris 2002: 191)

Education in the North needs to apply Northern systems of discourse and decision-making for it's reimagining and to negotiate equitable and meaningful relationships with students and community members. Without this students will continue to vote

with their feet and leave because without appropriate and authentic educational opportunities will be met with resistance.

### **Co-Research - Northern Process of Knowledge Co-Production/Creation**

Co-knowledge production is not necessarily a product of co-management, but in Northern scientific research it is becoming a large part of the desired output. Looking at current publishing the connection is clear and is becoming the prevailing desired direction. Currently on Google, 'Arctic co-knowledge production' is its own suggested search term. Armitage et al (2011: 999) outline the dimensions of knowledge co-production in narwhal management as knowledge gathering, knowledge sharing, knowledge integration, knowledge interpretation, and knowledge application. On further reading, the other strong focus on knowledge co-production is the developing world, which has many similarities to the Arctic in regards to insufficient infrastructure, resource economies, environmental vulnerabilities and subjugated minority populations. Pohl et al (2010: 277) propose three main challenges to co-knowledge production are power, integration and sustainability and delineate three basic researcher roles to meet these challenges as reflective scientist, intermediary and facilitator. Business seems to also favor the process but given the links above I did not spend much time reviewing those sources as seeking legitimacy for profit and power is a major limitation of co-management. The difficulty with locating co-knowledge within sociology should not discount it but rather just give the caution of context and intention. It is discouraging that one must be cautious about an

idea if its theory sounds only positive but such is the power and politics of language.

Jasonoff on co-knowledge production:

To sociologists, and social theorists, the co-production framework presents more varied and dynamic ways of conceptualizing social structures, and categories, stressing the interconnections between macro and micro, between emergence and stabilization, and between knowledge and practice.

(Jasonoff 2004: 4)

The important caution and qualification of realistic knowledge co-production according to Jasonoff (2014)<sup>9</sup> ‘an organizational one and a more social-philosophical one’. Her research focus is the later, which:

is very consistent with one idea of democratizing politics. To be inclusive, you need more voices – transposed to research, the idea is that all of these stakeholders sitting around the table are bringing in perspectives that are not shared by the others. Then you get a good product that can only come about if everybody has brought their insight into it.

(Jasonoff, 2014)

She further clarifies that:

ontology (what a thing is) and norms (how things ought to be) rather than about knowledge’ and ‘weak co-production as people sitting round a table to produce robust knowledge that is more useful, more robust, because people will buy into it, because they’ve already bought into the making of it. But in strong co-production you are not just constructing a representation of the world as it is, but also concurrently a representation of the world as you want it to be in various ways.

(Jasonoff, 2014)

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<sup>9</sup> Footnote: I have chosen to use this interview with Jasonoff in addition to her essential edited *States of Knowledge* because the dialogue and response of the interview format better support my thesis <http://www.futureearth.org/blog/2014-jul-23/be-inclusive-you-need-more-voices-qa-sheila-jasonoff>

In my experience the organizational one is more common in the North despite it being mistaken by many as the latter

This a critical distinction because ‘community consultation and engagement’ is all too often the government or industry telling people what is going to happen and considering the telling a buy-in. This happened at the signings for Treaty 11, as they were not negotiations as they were orally portrayed to the Aboriginal people, but prewritten contracts as chronicled in Fumoleau’s (1973:185-190) *As Long as this Land Shall Last*. Indeed, on the federal government’s site chronicling the signing of Treat 11 notes that in Fort Macpherson most people were out fishing but the treaty team still got the treaty signed in a day. Even today, too often the consultation phase is really just part of the communication phase. The first government consultation I participated in at the college in 2000 was not only after the report had been written but also printed and mailed. Imagine my surprise when I received a copy the next day. When I queried my supervisor in confusion, he laughed and said “Welcome to the government kid.”

The second process that Jasonoff describes takes much more time and must allow for an uncertain outcome, which is problematic for government and business. Though she is centered in science the urgency of her work on climate and environment have connection and resonance with the North as their world, environment and resultant society and community life, is changing faster than anywhere. Her interview statement ‘the questions we face today are antiparadigmatic in every kind of way’ is poignant due to Southern academic and governmental paradigms being unable to cope with the environmental future we all face and yet the

Southern governmental and academic paradigms are still being imposed as a knowledge barrier/muffler for all aspects of Northern agency, expression and identity.

Taussig writes:

So it has been through the sweep of colonial history where the colonizers provided the colonized with the left-handed gift of the image of the wild man--a gift whose powers the colonizers would be blind to, were it not for the reciprocation of the colonized, bringing together in the dialogical imagination of colonization an image that wrests from civilization its demonic power.

(Taussig 1987: 467)

Moving forward we must pursue true co-knowledge production or the consequences for us all may be dire. Indeed climate scientists rely more and more on Northerners.

The Inuit were the first to notice that the earth had tilted on its axis documented in Kunuk's Isuma film *The Tilting of the Earth has Changed Everything* (2009), despite their amazing observation being initially discounted. Then the scientists came scrambling back up to figure out how the Inuit had figured it out. They replied they looked at the horizon.

Scientists are now realizing more and more that they must rely on Northern knowledge or some are as it is a slow process. As a parallel, in CBC's *No camera, no proof: Why Sammy Kogvik didn't tell anyone about HMS Terror find* (2016), long lost Arctic doomed British explorer Sir John Franklin's last ship, the *Terror*, was found and the Inuk man who found it had known it was there for years but did not think the Southern people would believe him without proof, so he didn't say anything until years later after developing a good relationship with Adrian Shimnowski, a Southern researcher. Franklin's other ship the *Erebus* was also found in 2014 with the

assistance of Inuit Knowledge<sup>10</sup>. Armitage, Berkes, Dale, Kocho-Schellenberg and Patton about Arctic research contend:

despite the high transactional cost, however, the knowledge of co-production processes that have evolved over time in the co-management institutional arrangements examined here are triggering positive social and ecological outcomes in the face of climate change.

(Armitage, Berkes, Dale, Kocho-Schellenberg and Patton 2010: 1003)

It is critical that we listen to each other or we are just going nowhere very quickly.

### **Trans-discipline and Reflections on Northern Reality**

As Jasonoff contends, the challenges we face as a global community in regards to climate change are anti pyramidal. From a Northern perspective not constrained by paradigms, Watt-Cloutier (2015: 241) writes of the human rights petition she and Inuit hunters made to the United Nations demonstrating global climate change is negatively affecting the Inuit way of life positively and kindly:

I never felt this was a fight. We were reaching out, not striking out. We were working from a position of focus and strength, not victimhood. We wanted to educate and encourage the U.S. government to join the global effort to combat climate change. In a very real sense, our petition was a gift from Inuit hunters and elders to the world and to those most negatively affected by climate change. It was an act of generosity from an ancient culture deeply tied to the natural world and still in tune with its cycles and rhythms. It was a gift to an urban, industrial and “modern” culture that had largely lost its sense of place and position in the world.

(Watt-Cloutier 2015: 241)

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.canadiangeographic.ca/article/how-inuit-testimony-affected-search-sir-john-franklin>

If you look at the literature on co-knowledge production the term trans-discipline is starting to pop up. What made me look twice was they were in science papers, also noting that Jasonoff is from a science and technology background, as science is usually focused on the tangible and orderly. This idea is not new, Hall (1996: 258) termed 'post-disciplinary' as a break across disciplinary boundary in post colonial 'thinking at the limit'. As a post, indeed pre-colonial, perspective and trans-disciplinary it is analogous to the Northern perspective and focus, as it is holistic and integrated across thought, experience and environment. Trans-discipline is beyond discipline or constraints of discipline, and on reflection perhaps that is what the students and community members were doing as they researched and responded to researchers. Perhaps rather than looking at ways to create greater academic specifications, the goal should be to focus on communications and relationships. As a Southern academic, I am required and honestly naturally tend toward taxonomic practices. Indeed, this dissertation is in a taxonomic and binary service in its organization, creation and requirement. However, perhaps it is important I go through the process to try and get closer to letting it go. To itemize a way out and understand that it is okay to let it go and find a way to open the window to something else. I am interdisciplinary but dream of moving beyond. However, we are not quite done yet and perhaps there are still connections to be made in Sociology within existential sociology that can further this goal towards this unified perspective and purpose. 'Post-discipline' or Trans-disciplinary could be the wondrous nebulousness nexus making a Southern/Northern intellectual common ground.

Reality has long been a Sociological fascination. Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann in *The Social Construction of Reality* write:

a psychiatrist trying to diagnose an individual whose psychological status is in doubt asks him a question to determine the degree of his 'reality orientedness'...the sociologist, however, has to ask the additional question. 'Which reality?'.  
(Berger and Luckmann 1966: 75)

The North/South reality is different. Indeed, it is highly individuated and contextual. The experience of the transient Southern population is often one of adventure, isolation and money-making as I have observed in almost twenty years in Inuvik and has been explained to be me numerous Southern and Northern people. Brody (1975: 52) observes 'whites live a good life materially, they also have a degree of power to which they were never likely to have had a chance to become accustomed to in the south'. People come for the Arctic 'experience', struggle with the geographic distance and the cultural difference and all are looking to make high Northern wages or they wouldn't have come North. Brody (1975: 51) describes why Whites come to work in the North 'the most frequent attributions of motive are related to money – someone who wants to make a fast buck goes and finds himself a northern job'. The Northern experience is one of permanence and constantly hosting a transient population that often seem to forget they are guests in a home. My partner, David, muses as his apex societal status as a white, middle-class educated man, who having been born in the Arctic grew up as a distinct minority, if a privileged one. When his father passed away an Inuvialuit elder Rosie Albert comforted him by sharing remembrances of his babyhood and telling him he was *from Inuvik* and there was a specific word for that and it was different than the word for people *who lived in Inuvik*. He smiled and



asked what about her? She smiled back and said he had always been a clever boy. She said there is also a word for *of Inuvik*.

To contrast this treasured memory of an elder now gone to us who knew just how to comfort a young man she had watched grow from a baby who had just lost his father, I can share numerous examples of outsiders thinking David is not from Inuvik. When people, in the South or new Southerners to the North, have gotten mad at me when they discover my partner, whom I have described as ‘local’, is white and non-Aboriginal, they sometimes have said they feel I have misled them, to my astonishment. I have often been scolded and corrected that he can’t be ‘local’ because he is white. Our first year of teaching, a student overheard one such interchange. At our year-end supper he went over to David with a few of his fellow students and said it was high time they gave him an Indian name as he had been here his whole life. All the other instructors looked solemn. David very subtly rolled his eyes. Barry put his hand on David’s shoulder and said “We shall call you Curly” (David has thick and very curly hair that is perhaps remarkable in a predominantly Aboriginal community). Everyone looked very serious and David was doing his best to not look pained. Afterwards, I asked him what that was about, as I did not know naming was a thing. He said it is not and hadn’t I noticed them all laughing uproariously later outside smoking. The students and others had all been lifelong classmates with David and were having some innocent fun with the other teachers and enjoyed teasing him. David was trying to not let on to the other teachers as not to offend them, as he did not think they would find it funny and was concerned about work relationships. His predicament made it even funnier to the students and they all had good laugh later. Humor is an important part of Aboriginal community life, Deloria notes:

For centuries before the white invasion, teasing was a method of control of social situations by Indian people. Rather than embarrass members of the tribe publicly, people used to tease individuals they considered out of step with the consensus of tribal opinion. In this way egos were preserved and disputes within the tribe of a personal nature were held to a minimum. Gradually people learned to anticipate teasing and began to tease themselves as a means of showing humility and at the same time advocating a course of action they deeply believed in. Men would depreciate their feats to show they were not trying to run roughshod over tribal desires. This method of behavior served to highlight their true virtues and gain them a place of influence in tribal policy-making circles.

(Deloria 1969: 147)

The students' teasing of David was an act of inclusion but it was also a means of social evening as he was just another guy despite now being a teacher. David understands that he must strive at all times to be a good teacher but that does not make him more important than a student. He respects this balance which has made his career to date with students remarkably conflict-free. Humor is a significant part of Northern life, culture and community.

David accepts that his Northern identity is a paradox to some because he is *from Inuvik* to the community but not 'local' to outsiders. He is very aware his is white and not Aboriginal but he wonders where the outsiders think he is from if not Inuvik where he was born and raised, but with typical Northern autonomy has never bothered to ask them. Jodi O'Brien's *Social Prisms* pedagogy illustrates a teaching approach that uses the concepts of myths and realities to unpack the complexity of social systems. She writes:

I use the prism of paradox to illuminate tensions and contradictions in everyday practice and ideologies...we cannot make informed assessments of the current political and cultural landscape until we are able to view it through a highly

varied, multifaceted lens. Such a gaze inevitably leads to more questioning and new paradoxes. I am not convinced that paradoxes exist to be solved.  
(O'Brien 1999: 5)

As I have written before, this project is about paradox, duality and complexity (and humour).

### **Existential Sociology – Compass Points North**

Existential sociology developed through the 1960s into the 1970s. It developed on the American West Coast in California. Jack Douglas, with students and colleagues, proposed a sociological alternative with 'the emphasis was on understanding the individual as a convergence of social, affective and cognitive potentials when encountering concrete situations of everyday life' (Kotarba and Johnson: 2003: vii). Many of its interests have been absorbed into the sociology of emotions and symbolic interactionism. It did not achieve status as a formal school due to its individualist focus and that of its original authors. In *Post Modern Existential Sociology*, Lyman (2003:17) explains the Absurdist position 'holds that the world makes no ontological sense but nearly always is socially constructed and reconstructed'. In researching the theory, it is sometimes recorded as abandoned but there is still some interest, although it is challenge to link to the full literature as it is so extremely individuated but that is its appeal. I contend Existential Sociology's proposals and projects and its stubborn individuality are critical in creating a post modern and indeed a postcolonial world and freeing minds from Modern and Colonial thought. I have also come to believe that the limitations of current theories and practices fail to fully comprehend the utterly singular and unique Northern

perspective and knowledge. In this section I will use Existential Sociological principles to try and explain my position.

Indeed the everyday is the stage for the greatest questions, mysteries and contestations. Johnson and Melnikov write:

Existential sociologists begin their research in everyday life. "Everyday life" is an important term, which means life and experience from the perspective of those who live and experience it. To study phenomena in everyday life, the observer must develop a heightened awareness of his or her own culture, how people talk and communicate, the meaning and timing of gestures, the meanings of cultural artifacts and events, and of course the complexities of race, class, and gender stratification.

(Johnson and Melnikov 2009: 33-34)

They propose that there are five principles of Existential Sociology: *Individual responsibility, irrational potential of life (absurd), nature of the individual and his or her struggle to find and create meaning in life, emotion and its fundamental importance in life and living bad faith*. These principles can find coordinating values in Northern culture and society. *Individual responsibility* links the Northern central cultural value of individualism. According to the *The Inuit Way: A guide to Inuit Culture* which I will often use as Northern parallel in this section, explains:

in Inuit society, one of the most important and respected characteristics of a successful person is their capacity for self-reliance and their ability to meet life's challenges with innovation, resourcefulness and perseverance.

(Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada 2006: 32)

This links to another existential sociology aspect Johnson and Melnikov propose being the *irrational potential of life (absurd)* or perhaps paradox. In clarifying Inuit

individualism:

yet, on the other hand, submission in the face of problems one can't do anything about is also an acceptable response. Resignation and fatalism can often be their response when they are dealing with a public servant or nurse, where they feel their input is unwelcome or irrelevant, or they are at the mercy of the official they are dealing with.

(Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada 2006: 32)

*Individual responsibility and absurdity* could be seen as trying to find a balance within next the existential sociological project of *nature of the individual and his or her struggle to find and create meaning in life*, which corresponds to the Inuit 'ideal adult behaviour is considered to be maintaining one's individuality and independence while being a fully responsible and participating member of society' (Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada 2006: 39). The Gwich'in are also extremely and fiercely independent and share these Inuvialuit values even if they express them in slightly different ways than the Inuvialuit (Inuit). As the late Gwich'in elder Liz Hansen dryly told me "we have a higher level of comfort with aggression and disagreement".

The next aspect explored by Johnson and Melnikov is *emotion and its fundamental in life*. Emotional modulation among the Inuit is explained:

Inuit tend not to display strong emotions publicly as this is considered immature and may place others in the potentially awkward position of being forced to react to a situation they consider to be a very private matter. So a stranger may see a smiling and attentive Inuk but their underlying emotions may be quite different. Emotions are expressed more freely in small, more intimate groups. If the person feels he must express himself emotionally, it is felt that this expression should involve only those that he feels are responsible for his emotional state.

(Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada 2006: 38)

This mediation of private emotion is similar with Dene peoples in the High Arctic, with the similar qualification as to how it is expressed that elder Liz Hansen explained to me thusly “we prefer a strong face to a smiling one”. This can cause conflict in educational setting as students and community members will discuss emotions linked to education in discussions, as an educational setting is where the emotional state occurred.

Education is an extremely intimate and emotional experience for all students and is more so given the history and context of Northern students. Southern instructors are often uncomfortable with this and do not see it as “part of their jobs”. They also sometimes draw the incorrect conclusion that they are being personally blamed for past incidents. For the student education is personal and for these instructors it is professional. This communication conflict that can also expand into consultation meetings when someone shares very personal information but it is contextual and appropriate for the person sharing the information. They are sharing it because this is the context it needs to be mediated in. To most Southern people, emotion is inappropriate in a professional context and it has no place in decision-making. I have seen this play out countless times and both sides leave frustrated and meaningful communication has not taken place. It has pulled me up a few times when it happens in my classes, as I need to stop what I had planned and focus on what is happening. It is stressful as you worry about your schedule but it is important to listen and often that is what the student wants is to be heard in a way they do not feel they were in the past. The campus has a counselor and there are also counseling supports in the community that we enact when necessary when talking and listening is not

sufficient. Students often share that as adult students in an adult space they feel they can negotiate the education process in a more equitable way.

Living in *bad faith* is qualified by Johnson and Melnikov:

that one denies one's freedom, choices, agency and responsibility. It is to impose an order of the external, often interpretations of others which deny their freedom, agency, choice and responsibility. Living in "bad faith" means that one is orientated to other's values, interpretations, perspectives and judgments. The opposite of living in "bad faith" is living an authentic existence which means one accepts one's freedoms to make choices and accept one's responsibilities for those choices.

(Johnson and Melnikov 2009: 35)

I contend that the colonial experience of the Aboriginal peoples living in the Western Arctic has forced these peoples into a situational *bad faith* that has threatened their emotional and personal well being as evidenced but the social chaos of addictions, violence, poverty and suicide. These are well documented in the media and by the academy. Taussig writes:

Yet wildness is incessantly recruited by the needs of order (and indeed, this is one of anthropology most enduring tasks and contributions to social order). But the fact remains that in trying to tame wildness this way, so that it can serve as a counter image, wildness must perforce retain its difference. If wildness per se is not credited with its own force, reality and autonomy, then it cannot function as handmaiden to order. The full implications of this paradox are submerged in the violent act of domestication

(Taussig 1987:220).

I have sat through countless presentations on the pain and suffering in the Arctic. One stands out on suicide in which the presenter had studied Inuit suicide and compiled numbers and statistics across the High Arctic over 40 years. His haunted eyes as he

detailed suicide rates of children under ten and eight are forever in my mind. When we chatted after the presentation he asked where I was from. On learning I lived in Inuvik, he said “Oh that is good. It is the best of the worst, very few children”.

I contend that the initial rise of existentialism came from the void created by the horrors of World War II and a search for meaning. The horrors of colonialism in the North, and globally, cannot be comprehended without expanding how we conceptualize reality and consequence and developing a broader view is essential to address the challenges facing the North, and the globe. The full understanding of Northern knowledge and perspective cannot be limited by the constructs and systems of the South. The limitations of Western/Southern knowledge are becoming more apparent with global challenges. Lyman proposes:

in investigating such practices as territorialization, temporal reconfigurations and self identify movements, and existential/postmodern sociologist will be able to discern the social, political and legal constructions of ethno-racial reality that work to effect the plurality of Otherhoods, each which seeks recognition, response and justice in America and the world.

(Lyman 2003: 31)

My main interest in Existential Sociology is its initial projects proposed in the section: *Individual responsibility, irrational potential of life (absurd), nature of the individual and his or her struggle to find and create meaning in life, emotion and its fundamental importance in life and living bad faith* and how they relate to the Northern culture and reality. Existential Sociology offer enough flexibly and expansive thought to better appreciate the Northern perspective and world view unfettered by the weights of imperialism, colonialism and modernity. King proposes that Existential Sociology is:



Avowedly pluralistic and eclectic, existentialist philosophy can be said to be characterized by a set of broad themes rather than a coherent set of propositions...existentialism is a kind of sensibility that advocates a passionate engagement with the stuff of life in all its manifestations – its uncertainties, challenges and dramas.

(King 2010: 2)

In spite of everything or perhaps in part because of all that has happened, Northern life is incredibly joyful and optimistic with a wicked sense of humour as it unflinchingly faces the crimes against its humanity and the resulting pain and trauma. Taussig writes:

The wildness here at stake tears through tired dichotomies of good and evil, order and chaos, the sanctity of order, and so forth. It does not mediate these oppositions. Instead it comes down on the side of chaos and its healing creativity is inseparable from that taking of sides. Club in hand, battered by hail and tempest lightening flashing the return of the dead, these creatures of the wild not only bear the burden of society's anti-self, they also absorb with their wet, shaggy coats the best that binary opposition can deliver – order and chaos, civilized and barbaric, Christian and pagan and emerge on the other side of the grotesque and the destructive.

(Taussig 1987: 220)

The deep generosity of spirit is a passionate testament to the unparalleled Northern strength and resiliency.

The existential truth is we all have our own realities and the confluences of Southern and Northern societies might only be grasped through the lens of Existential Sociology. *On Blue Ice: the Inuvik Adventure* proposes:

one of the greatest sociological experiments of our history began as the town site neared completion. Residents of the neighbouring Aklavik and the Delta moved to their new home. Simultaneously, southern Canadian technologists

and administrators relocated with their families. A period of mutual adaption began...It continues today

(Stoneman-McNichol 1983:5).

Cole and O'Reilly, Aboriginal academics, write academic papers employing the personas of Raven and Coyote that are complex, brilliant and at times almost incomprehensible by design and resistance. Their *Coyote and Raven Discuss Mathematics, Complexity Theory and Aboriginality* is utterly effective in creating unique Aboriginal voices within the academy and refusing to be constrained by its imposed conventions. It includes lyrics from the Elvis Presley song *In the Ghetto*, does not conform to English grammar and punctuation convention and asks:

whose math raven? For whose development? For whose definition of development? math

for what end? So aboriginal students can make a statistical crawl toward mainstream occidentality without context and foundation education is a meaningless journey into an unknown where only we are absent where only we are silent and silenced

we need complexity thinking to get us out of our hole we need to be nested in relationalities.

(Cole and O'Reilly 2010: 55)

Perhaps full mutual comprehension is elusive and there is room for that paradox and accepting the attempt as enough. Johnson and Kotarba contend the academic project of Existential Sociology is:

a rebellion against the received and inherited wisdom of one's culture, against what most people think, against what most intellectuals consider true, against the herd mentality and its popular culture, against conformity.

(Kotarba and Johnson 2003: 2)

As a settler in a colonial context I reject the decisions and processes that resulted in crimes against the humanity of Aboriginal people. Jackson writes that he:

Used the term “existential” to name the terrain of practical activity, thought, and endeavor that is *there* before it is apprehended academically and constructed substantively as *the* social, *the* cultural, *the* religious, *the* historical, *the* political. The term is therefore deployed strategically, as part of the critique of a tradition of understanding the world from the standpoint of power elites or the discourse of academics, as well as to undermine the pretensions of identity thinking – that all too readily assumes an isomorphic relationship between the empirical world and the words with which it is described. Like others before me, I want to prioritize the everyday situations, critical events, face-to-face interactions, reflections, imaginings, and stories that are the stuff of live as lived, thinking from the ground up rather than seeking a view from afar.

(Jackson 2013: 251)

My project of rejection is the Aboriginal project of reclamation and restoration.

Perhaps true reconciliation can only happen in an existential process as the ‘existential self is becoming’ as ‘society is too elusive to be described; we only have shadows and movements to chase’ (Johnson and Kotarba 2003: 6-7). The mediation of the histories, challenges and knowledges are perhaps Hall’s ‘post-disciplinary’, trans-disciplinary, transformative and maybe even transcendent in their elusiveness, but like Sisyphus, essential

### **Visual Sociology – a map and camera**

Visual sociology is proposed as a theory and qualitative method. It is a nexus and process for this research. The visual is a process and product that can be a nexus and equal space to try and negotiate the conflicts and contestations outlined up until now. Pictures are open to a more comfortable and equitable interpretation for all parties, as are films. The visual is not owned in the same way that literacy could be seen. Indeed, as an instructor there is a sigh of contentment when a movie is shown in

class and I have noticed the same in my presentations at conferences that focus on photos and images with very limited text. People relax, smile and engage. Also, as shown by the earlier example of the Inuit hunters being first noticing the earth had shifted, Northerners have amazing skills of observation honed in the natural world. Their visual acuity is not limited to the land, but also keen visual observations of people. As mentioned before, people of the High Arctic tend to not display emotions in public:

often express their emotions very subtly, in the tone of voice or the lifting of eyebrows. While appearing to be almost imperceptible to the stranger, Inuit are adept at picking up the slight intonations and facial expressions from each other that reflect emotional states.

(Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada 2006: 38)

More than once I have been shuffling my papers with my head down talking about the upcoming class and a student says “Suzanne, look up” as there are things going on in the class I am missing. Indeed, it is lesson I keep learning.

The first few weeks of my teaching in Inuvik I struggled as I kept asking if people understood what I was presenting and moving on usually with my eyes to the page or board. Then the assignments came in and it was obvious my communication was not clear. When discussing with my partner, he asked me if they had said yes verbally or had they said it with their faces? He then explained the Northern “Yes”, which could mean yes, or just mean I heard what you said. People are very polite in the North and he explained that they wouldn’t want to offend me by telling me I had not explained it well or admit in public they did not understand. I was mystified and

asked him how I would know? He said look at their faces and until you get it figure out how to ask questions in a more circular way so they can answer them politely.

The art of asking questions is further explained by:

The value placed upon a person's independence affects the way requests are made between Inuit, even in social situations. Since direct requests are considered rude and aggressive, a guest may make their wishes known only by making indirect hints about what they would like. A direct request would be seen as placing the guest in the lesser social position and would insult the host for not having had the insight or consideration to perceive the wishes of his guest. It also risks placing the host in an awkward position if he is not able to fulfill the desire of his guest or did not feel comfortable in granting him his request. This oblique way of making requests allows the host to refuse a request indirectly by pretending not to get the hint or to simply ignore it. Direct refusals are also considered aggressive and rude.

Some Inuit feel that non-Inuit are aggressive, prying, domineering and too free with unsolicited opinions. While people in public positions elsewhere may be valued for their ability to manage people and situations in order to improve production or solve problems, these traits run contrary to Inuit values and can make some interactions tense and unpleasant. To compound the difficulty, the cultural value of non-interference prevents Inuit from openly telling others how they feel. It takes a very perceptive, experienced person to pick up the subtle signs of disapproval from Inuit.

(Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada 2006: 35 and 40)

I am better at asking questions and making requests but my students do sometimes have to remind me to pay attention because as they tease me "I should know better". I deeply appreciate their patience and efforts to improve my communication skills. They do not do this with most other instructors and I have asked them why not, they say that unless they think the person is staying or would be open to listening it is not worth the effort.

Visual Sociology has grown from the 1980s into a thriving non-central sociological pursuit. Harper (1988: 54) defines it as 'the use of photographs, film and video to study society and to study visual artifacts of a society' and he proposes the

modes of scientific, narrative and phenomenological. In qualifying the last mode, Harper proposes, ‘the personal interpretations of experience and meaning may be the beginning rather than the end of sociological analysis’ (Harper 1988: 67). This qualification is expansive and why this method and theory was selected for my research. Harper (2002: 38) contents that ‘images allow us to make statements which cannot be made by words, and the world we see is saturated in sociological meaning’. In *Telling about Society* Becker (2007: 203) proposes that Visual Sociology interpretations of representations ‘live in social contexts and are truth or fiction, document or imaginative construction, depending on what the ultimate user make of them’. The richness of visual work lends itself to weaving together the sociological concepts and conflicts proposed in this section and research.

Video was chosen as it can better capture the complexity of Northern visual communication and it also allows greater fidelity to the story or message told by the person in the video. Photography is a more straightforward process, as it does not involve editing which is a huge component of video work. Photography is the dominant medium of Visual Sociology but the ideas and concepts developed around photos can be extrapolated to the use of video. Becker (1995: 5) qualifies that Visual Sociology has three kinds of photography, organizational that works by ‘drawing boundaries around the activities, saying where they belong organizationally, establishing who is in charge, who is responsible for what and who is entitled to what’, historical and contextual. His kinds of photography are useful in the interaction, interpretation and ultimate generations of visual images. Harper states:

video recordings allow for more accurate and precise observations/ The video recordings allow for more accurate and precise observations. The video camera produces data that are more reliably retrieved than are memory and field notes; replay and slow motion features make possible more thorough and systematic

analysis; a video recording makes possible the analysis of the sequential order, the “social geometry” and the precise qualification of social interaction.  
(Harper 1988: 64)

In his text, *Visual Sociology* Harper (2012), who has worked predominately with photography, is engaging with film more, does note however that video is used as a resource vastly but very rarely as a method. He proposes a variety of reasons, like the lack of texts, training and the amount and wide array of ready-made films, but he proposes that this will change quickly as technology, training and become more readily available. His observations are interesting, as my students did not hesitate when I handed them a video camera. They were not constrained but rather already sophisticated visual observers and storytellers. It just made sense to them. This can be seen across the Arctic and with other Indigenous people that is covered in the next chapter. When the legion gave us the money for the cameras they were very easy to convince. The visual makes sense in the North, as did video. We did take many photos that were part of the process but they were more complimentary. Researchers at conferences also asked me repeatedly if I had issues with people not wanting to be on camera. Honestly the only one who was uncomfortable with being on camera was me and some of the other Southerners. Northerners were very confident in video interviews and would drop what they were doing and give very focused attention when the students came in with cameras.

### **Setting Course Forward**

By situating this research in a sociological topography, I seek to connect this research to sociology theories, Sociology of Education, Sociological history,

Existential Sociology and Visual Sociology and their practice and process. I chose topography rather than terrain, as the North is not just land, but water and ice bracketed by wind, rain and snow and this research must have equal, or hopefully greater, connection to Northern perspective, practice and process. It is critical that rather than be a strident outsider that this type of research be understood as where sociology began despite the meandering path it has taken. In this writing exercise I initially endeavoured to distance myself to observe and report as an academic, but I am very much on the ground and involved in the reality. This reality is a major influence in theorizing this research and I have come to understand this objectivity is useless indulgence and false construction. The very idea that this study of society could be exclusionary of a group or groups is ridiculous. Any exclusion creates sociology as the study and tool of the powerful and outsiders as expendable or subjects for research and experimentation. And ultimately, sadly, this is partly what happened and continues to happen. The only way forward is together with everyone. Together we embarked on an inquiry based open learning experience focusing on the Arctic which is the focus of the next two chapters but it was also a hybrid research process grounded in the style of public sociology with the activities of visual sociology existing in the obscure state of existential sociology. For myself it is an exercise of modernist and postmodernist critical sociological and educational theory but for the student researchers it was more of process of grounded theory. Just as I was more than one person in the process (Educator, student, researcher, advocate,) there were many processes at work for students, participants and viewers. It is also important to note that while this account is mine, I will endeavour to include as full a picture (or video) as possible through my reporting, observations and reflections. This is a freeing future rather than a negative. Perhaps it is easier to create an equitable



relationship that pushes the public forward through preparation and support so they might do it themselves, as this is the very action of education. Education as a subversive act.

## Chapter 4

### Movies, Methods and Making Media

Seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognizes before it can speak. But there is also another sense in which seeing comes before words. It is seeing which establishes our place in the surrounding world; we explain that world with words, but words can never undo the fact that we are surrounded by it. The relation between what we see and what we know is never settled” –

- John Berger (1972: 7)

It’s a new thing. We used to watch movies when we didn’t know how much trouble it [was to make them]. We didn’t even know what a camera was or how many people were behind the camera. Movies, I thought were just ‘God sent’. When we started making films we put the whole community to work. Hunters building igloos for the set, Elders stitching clothes and making costumes with young apprentices learning how to do it and dog-teaming. These people that we filmed had never dog-teamed in their life, they had to learn. It’s what we have done since we made *Atanarjuat*. We taught actors how to try to get into character. If you can do that- that’s all we want.

- Zacharias Kunuk, (2016)

This chapter focuses on film in the North, visual as theory and method, visual participatory research processes and a chronology of the research project. Film has a relatively long history in the North from *Nanook of the North* (1921) into the new millennial Indigenous filmmaking phenomena *Atanarjuat* (2001). The evolution of film can be seen as complementary and supportive of the expression, representation and self-determination of Arctic peoples. Visual products are critical in the Northern context as culturally appropriate communication opportunities and sites of visual sovereignty. Visual methods and processes have long Canadian and Russian histories and are rooted in the participatory community video projects of Visual Sociology. As a further proof of concept, the final section details our student video project. It begins

with the preproduction of institutional support and ethical responsibilities. Then moves through funding into student's constructing the research guide and beginning to interview. As the project moves into its second year, the interviewing spans different courses and expands into a mini film school, and the research methods students creating their own individual films. In the final stage of production, student summer interns edit all of the accumulated interviews and embark on larger individual projects, including fieldwork in the South. Post-production includes student presentations at academic conferences and my individual academic presentations as part of the project sharing and dissemination.

### **Community, Research and Finding a Balance**

I begin with the end of the project, as one of the results exemplifies the goals, versatility and need of the project. The video project was edited into an Inuvialuit Communications Society television show that aired many times on the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN). This was expected, and happened naturally through the partnership with the media professionals that assisted with the technical parts of the project. However, what was unexpected was that clips of this were used as part of the mandatory Aboriginal Cultural Awareness training series for all Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) employees. This video project has been used in part of a GNWT initiative that seeks to address the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls for Action* recommendations for professional development and training for public servants:

57. We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to

provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills- based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human.

(Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015: 7)

There are 4600 GNWT employees working in all 33 communities in the NWT. Of these, almost half work in Yellowknife. The remaining 2400 government employees work in communities all over NWT (Imaituk Inc. 2011: 33-34). The population of the territory is 44,263 (NWT Bureau of Statistics 2017). Given that the original episode of the video project has aired numerous times and that the cultural awareness course is available to anyone, it is reasonable to estimate that the reach of the parts of the research project is more than 10% of the population of the entire territory. The video project is a qualitative piece of research but its breadth and reach satisfy and exceed quantitative saturation that is an unexpected but rewarding result. This shows the usefulness of video, the interest in Northern produced work, and the timeliness of the work.

At the very beginning of this Ph.D. process, I realized that in my Masters I had gotten things backwards or perhaps I should say that I got ahead of myself. In my Masters thesis, I asked Northerners what education and literacy meant to them. It was a good project and well received but when it was completed I felt a disquiet that had me returning to study very quickly. Something felt unfinished and undone. There is a cliché that you truly know something if you can teach it. As an instructor I realized this was the way to try and calm my unease. There was also a fear of having not gotten it right, or not completely right or more precisely I came to understand that it

was not right or wrong but rather incomplete. Incomplete as I had not done it with students, and also as a naturalized Northerner my perspective was only part of the story. When I did my Masters, I worked hard to interview people and ensure I had captured what they were comfortable with, but as with so much academic work it was a fairly solitary pursuit. I felt like I needed to do it again and this time do it with Northerners. My goal personally was to gain a better understanding of Northern perspectives and in furtherance to this goal I needed to move from consultation to collaboration to co-research to collegiality to co-knowledge production.

The idea was to try and create situations that allowed for students and myself to construct a research process that was equitable and interactive. And so the process would unfold with the students constructing the research guide and questions, selecting interview participants, and interviewing. I coordinated and took care of administrative duties (like ethics, licensing, data compiling and file management.) From that first group it moved into the next phase that included technical media support so students could make their own personal videos. Then part of the second group continued into becoming summer students and editing and compiling all the video interviews collected by all groups and taking on larger video projects, bringing the process full circle. I was trying to paint myself out of the room by the end in that my role became more and more supportive and bureaucratic and the students took the centre stage. So the question remains: Did I get it right this time? Had my unease quieted? The answer is absolutely. The answer was always there. The only way to understand is to ask and the best way to ask is in a conversation. This work differs from a more traditional ethnography as it has many voices and the message is found

in the broad not the specific. The only way forward for the North and Northern research is on equitable ground where participants contribute to their unique abilities and with the confidence to allow the process to grow and break from the academic researcher. I was asked about what I learned about the research at an International Polar Year presentation in Inuvik in January 201, and my answer was Northern community, generosity and reciprocity, and by their applause and response it seems we have been successful.

### **Northern Movies – Nanook to Visual Sovereignty**

Film and the significant contact in the Arctic coincide; perhaps it is no mistake that their histories are seemingly entwined. There is extensive interest in the Arctic and its film depictions. International and Southern audiences are continually mesmerized by the snowy landscape, that is for them ‘otherworldly’ and the playing out the essential drama ‘man versus nature’. Brody writes:

The argument can be stated very simply: the colonist regards his own society, or societies very like it, as synonymous with culture, and he regards the colonized as part of nature. The colonist sees the progress of civilization in the terms of overcoming nature.

(Brody 1975: 84)

It is that very essential human and literary conflict that is very difficult to teach in my English classroom because it predicates the notion that we are in a conflict with nature. What if your perspective is not that you are in constant battle with nature to survive or seeking to control the natural world? What if how you see conflict is different completely across all the classic literary conflicts and question if life is really all about conflicts? From a Southern literary perspective winter is also a

metaphor for death and there is a long tradition of romantic a longing to return to the natural world. What if winter is life for you and you don't feel divorced from nature, except perhaps in spring when the geese are flying and you are stuck in class? The reading of film especially Northern film is going to be different from North to South. That is its strength in the Northern classroom as students come from a position of observational expertise and keen visual perspective. As a result, I use film extensively in my classes, with great popularity, to try and come to terms with the cultural contexts and interpretations that are often diametrically opposed in textual analysis. I regularly use all the films detailed below except the first.

*The Romance of the Far Fur Country* produced in 1920, is actually the first film shot in the Canadian North despite the widespread belief that it was Robert Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* in 1921. Geller (2004) unearthed long lost footage that was shot in 1919 as part of the 250 year celebrations of the Hudson's Bay Company, while writing *Photographing and Filming the Canadian North, 1920-45: Northern Exposures*. Gellar with Winnipeg filmmakers Kevin and Chris Nikkel of Five Door Films have recreated the film and created a documentary about the process. I saw it at one of the first film screenings at the last International Congress of Arctic Social Sciences in 2014 and screenings continue, but it is not yet available for purchase. Despite *Nanook of the North* being second, and also being funded by the fur trade, it was very commercially successful and is still widely known. It is considered a first documentary and is also film that is used heavily by visual sociologists and anthropologists. Flaherty:

screened at least some of his rushes for his subjects, eliciting their feedback and suggestions for scenes they could film. Although he may have transformed his

subjects into actors in the process, he also actively collaborated with them to a degree that is still rare today.

(Barbash and Taylor 1997: 24)

Shot in the Eastern Arctic with the Itivimuit Inuit, its collaborative style was an initial inspiration for my venturing into video work in my Masters and again in this Doctoral program. Flaherty 'was convinced he had to live among his subjects for a long time before he would know them well enough to make a documentary faithful to their lives' (Barbash & Taylor 1997: 24). Flaherty is not an uncontroversial figure and there is a significant amount of academic discourse on the film that argues its focus on primitivism, simplistic depictions, acculturated gaze, and cultural appropriation as with many other film portrayals of Northern people. On the depiction of Alaskan Indigenous peoples the term "Eskimo orientalism" is coined by Fienup-Riordan:

Just as representations of the Orient mirrors the Occident in specific historical moments (Said 1978), so representations of Eskimos provide another window into the history of the West. Like the representation of the Orient, the representation of the Eskimo is about origins – in this case the origin of society in the 'pure primitive': peaceful, happy, childlike, noble, independent, and free. The Eskimo of the movies is 'essential man,' stripped of social constraint and High Culture. That twentieth-century Iñupiaq and Yup'ik men and women were members of complex societies governed by elaborate cultural constraints was unimportant. Their position at the geographic and historical fringe of Western Civilization made them the perfect foils for an 'Eskimo orientalism' as potent as its namesake.

(Fienup-Riordan 1995: xi-xii)

I always discuss these ideas with my students and they inevitably say of course that these things are true but the film is of the land and that is the important thing. Indeed, more than one student has been moved to tears for the landscape and a desire for country foods despite Flaherty's sometimes cringe worthy depictions of the Inuit.



Personally, the most ethically problematic concern with the film is that Flaherty fathered a child with Maggie Nujarluktuk, 'Nyla' in the film, while filming his Arctic opus that he never acknowledged or supported and then went home to edit the film with his wife. McGrath's (2006) *The Long Exile* chronicles the parallel lives of the son, Josephie E 9701<sup>11</sup> Flaherty, and his father, one wildly successful with his Arctic film in the South and one tragically swept up in the government relocation of the Inuit to Grise Fjord in the central High Arctic. The son was completely abandoned at an extremely difficult time in the region, although his uncle did take his photo when he travelled to the Arctic in 1953. The relocation was proposed to alleviate the struggles of the Inuit, resulted in the darkest deprivation and starvation of the Inuit in a government "experiment" and assertion of high arctic sovereignty with "human flagpoles". Josephie had a mental collapse in 1968 due the merciless battle to survive in Grise Fjord and never fully recovered. The documentary *Martha of the North* (2006) chronicles Josephie's surviving daughter's account of this disastrous and deadly relocation and her fight for government acknowledgement and compensation. These films show the importance of film in the North and its narrative and social impact, good and bad.

The National Film Board of Canada (NFB) filmed many films on the North. Two regional favourites are Howe's *Our Northern Citizen* (1958) that looks at the relocation of Aklavik and *Strange Doings* (1964). In a very dated and very awkward

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<sup>11</sup> E 9701 the number is his "Eskimo identification tag number" issued to all Inuit by the Canadian government. They were issued on metal disks like dog tags. Sheila Watt Cloutier (2015) writes about hers and their problematic history in *The Right to Be Cold*.

racial narration examining the “modern” success of creating Inuvik. However, the footage of the Delta and community is amazing which make it a class favourite. Looking back to Canadian film in Northern development, Asen Balikci’s *The Netsilik Film Series* (1967-1968) National Film Board of Canada series, 12 segments of various activities over the Arctic seasons, which also used reenactment and was responsible for capturing Inuit life and bringing it to the Southern audience. The strength of this series is it recreates and captures day-to-day tasks and highlights them as vital, interesting and important. Balikci (1989: 252) adds a Western Arctic connection as all Netsilik Kugaaruk (formerly Pelly Bay) students wanting secondary education were sent to Inuvik. *The Netsilik Film Series* sparked moral and cultural controversy in the United States when it was shown to school children in the late 1960s and early 1970s as part of the Man a Course of Study (MACOS)<sup>12</sup> elementary curriculum documented by Laird’s fascinating *Through These Eyes* (2004). This documentary clearly shows how political and contentious culture and power in education clash in the juxtaposition of revisiting people against the curriculum thirty years later and their opinions remaining largely the same, including an Arizona government official still touting assimilation all these years later. This part of the film is hard to watch and with each viewing, my students are always very shocked with the easy use of the word assimilation in this new millennium. The interviews with the Inuit, who participated in the Netsilik films, about the American controversy are equally mystified. Film in the North has a long history and while much of it is an exemplary example of collaboration, its consumption and subsequent interpretation

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<sup>12</sup> All the MACOS materials are available at <http://www.macosonline.org/> with the title Hu (Mans) A Course of Study and the tag line ‘What is human about human beings? How did they get that way? How can they be made more so?’

by Southern audiences in Laird's work clearly demonstrated the North/South Cultural divide of understanding and interpretation.

Politics also has a Northern filmic history. The Berger Inquiry, beginning in 1974, is a pivotal event in Northern rights and the Canadian Government that resulted in the government acknowledging Aboriginal people's rights to consultation and decision-making in regards to resource development on their lands, which led into the Western Arctic land claims. Some tout Berger as a golden age and others see it as meaningless, being all hype and no real substance. It cannot be seen as a pure example due to a cooling in the oil and gas industry and the earlier legal precedent setting *Paulette Caveat* Supreme Court decision (1977), which upheld the earlier *Morrison Decision* (1973) which the government appealed, that proved the negotiations for Treaty 8 (but also used in interpreting Treaty 11) were not seen by Aboriginal peoples as ceding land but as treaties of peace and goodwill and predates Berger. François Paulette's continued fight for his community's land claim is shown in the inspiring documentary *Honor of the Crown* (2001). However, Berger was written and played out on the national stage, in dealing with the government, vital extremely detailed documentation and precedent cannot be overstated. Part of the inquiry process was captured on film in 1977 with the NFB's *Fort Good Hope* directed by Ron Orieux and the made for television *The Inquiry Film* directed by Nishihata. The rhetoric for both is passionate, political and captures the concerns of the day. Interestingly, as the pipeline is in the process of being negotiated again, Berger came back to the North with David Suzuki in the *Nature of Things* titled 'Ghosts of the Futures Past: Tom Berger in the North' (2006). Director Geoff Bowie travels with Berger and Suzuki down the Mackenzie valley and some of the original 1977 footage is revisited; the question of what has changed, what has not and what

the future might bring is asked. The use of film and video in both these instances is important as it captures the full communication of the people, then later revisits and adds to the discussion. Though I have found no meaningful reference to the use of film in the Inquiry process, its importance as an archive and source is an important part of the Berger Legacy.

John Houston, son of James Houston, founder of the Cape Dorset artist's cooperative and novelist, returned to the Arctic after leaving in his childhood and made several films. He relearned Inuktitut and his use of language in the films and his cultural awareness make them good resources. I use his *Diet of Souls* (2004) in my Northern Studies classes as an introductory piece to begin discussing differing perspectives. The title comes from a shaman's explanation of the Inuit's hunted diet; 'the great peril of our existence lies in the fact that our diet consists entirely of souls'. Pelly writes of the sacred hunt:

The Inuit hunter is not extracting from the environment but creating a bond between his people and the environment. When a seal gives itself to the hunter, it is an act of sharing in which the seal is transformed from animal to human. Being consumed is a form of rebirth or renewal for the seal.

(Pelly 2001: 106)

Houston's film *Nuliujuk: Mother of the Sea Beasts* (2001) explores the female Inuit deity of the sea. In the Western Arctic she is more commonly known as Sedna. Her story is of betrayal and survival and in a modern context the settler displacement of feminine power. She is married to a man who is really a dog, which she discovers when half her babies are human and half are dogs. The dog children eventually leave her they go south and become the Qallunaat (white people). Whenever we watch this

in class, inevitably a student will look back at me nervously in case I might be offended. I can tease too, and I smile with a soft woof that is met with laughter. Wright (2014: 42-43) writes of Nuliajuk and how Inuit were not surprised in meeting the first white people to the Arctic as they were just the dog children coming home.

### **Indigenous (Fourth) Cinema**

The late Maori film-maker Barry Barclay proposed the term ‘Fourth Cinema’ as Indigenous Cinema. He describes why it is necessary to conceptualize a Fourth Cinema:

Indigenous cultures are outside the national orthodoxy. They are outside the national outlook. They are outside spiritually, for sure. And almost everywhere on the planet, Indigenous Peoples, some 300 million of them in total, according to the statisticians — are outside materially also. They are outside the national outlook by definition, for Indigenous cultures are ancient remnant cultures persisting within the modern nation state.

(Barclay 2003: 6)

An all Inuit film in Inuktitut filmed in Igloolik, Nunavut, is internationally known and critically acclaimed due to the epic *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner* (2001) and the extraordinary work of Zacharias Kunuk and his team. The film captured the world’s imagination and continues to be written about extensively. Ginsberg (2003: 829) outlines the contentious struggle for an Inuit film in Inuktitut to gain feature film funding from the Canadian government that was ultimately successful. She poses the issue of whether the Canadian government funders not initially funding the film ‘was the question of Inuit (and by extension, indigenous) cultural citizenship’. This is a

troubling question that I explore more fully in the next chapter. Perhaps it is the colonial critique in the film's narrative suggested by Huhndorf:

the evil that descends on the community in the opening scenes and results in change in leadership provides a stark parallel with colonial policies that similarly disrupted social policies that disrupted social relations and traditional practices. This historical parallel constitutes a critique of the origins of colonialism as well as of the social discord and disruption it caused, a critique that consequently supports the return to traditions and political autonomy.  
(Huhndorf 2003: 824)

Kunuk's other full-length films include the lyric *The Journals of Knud Rasmussen* (2006), the heartbreaking *Before Tomorrow* (2008) and the recent remake of the Western *Searchers (Malighlutit)* (2016). Kunuk explains:

The Inuit culture is a learning culture. We watch and learn, we go out hunting with hunters and we learn as we go. That's how our filmmaking has always been, we never really had anyone go to college to learn about film, we just learn it as we go.

(Darville 2016)

Kunuk also founded Isuma Productions, *Isuma* means "to have a thought", it is the first Inuit film production company and Isuma TV<sup>13</sup> is a web portal for Indigenous film. He has also created shorter films and documentaries including reporting that Inuit noticed that the earth had shifted, as discussed in chapter 2. *Nanook of the North* and *Atanarjuat* are polar opposites in conception; production and narrative construction and their consumption are also very different North to South. On a fresh viewing of *Nanook of the North*, visual anthropologist Grimshaw proposes:

that Nanook and his fellow actors knowingly craft themselves into the kind of stock characters characteristic of turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century popular culture. In

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.isuma.tv/>

doing so, they can barely contain their hilarity as they perform the ‘happy-go-lucky Eskimo’, a satire on the Western fantasy of Arctic peoples.

(Grimshaw 2014: 433)

Grimshaw asks the critical and telling question in her title: ‘*Who has the last laugh?*’ *Nanook of the North and Some New Thoughts on an Old Classic*. Indeed my students often completely brush off the stereotypical silliness of the film and say, “that was just for Southern audiences”.

The Western Arctic has a successful home-grown filmmaker that came up to work with my research students. Dennis Allen is Gwich’in, Inuvialuit and Inupiat. His impressive film catalogue includes the most recent *Crazy Water* (2013) that bravely and unflinchingly addresses alcoholism and Aboriginal people including the filmmaker. His earlier *CBQM* (2009) is a raucous love letter to the local radio in Fort MacPherson and a favourite of mine as it captures the joy, humour and interconnected life in a Northern community. *My Father, My Teacher* (2005) is a complex and touching film about his father Victor and the complexity of tradition and family. His 2003 films, *The Hunt: Food from the Land* and *The Walk: A Path to Healing*, are shot in the Sathu region and are inspirational cultural reclamation projects. Dennis is a very capable storyteller with a wicked sense of humour and describes the joyful Northern attitude in face of challenge in the films as “Smoke if you got them”. The Western Arctic is a large geographic area but the people number few and are closely interconnected. Dennis and his films speak to my students in a very personal and specific way and his mentoring the research students was an

important learning opportunity. They know each other; they grew up together and share a history and future.

Film makes sense in the North as a medium and a message. It is a good choice for a research methodology as it produces a product that appeals to a broad base as demonstrated by the brief film history above. Huhndorf writes of *Atanarjuat* that:

if Kunuk's childhood storytelling was inextricably bound to the social fabric of Inuit life, so too is this cinematic reproduction part of the broader project of Native Canadian activism aimed at achieving self-determination including the realm of representation.

(Huhndorf 2003: 824)

These are films students see and my desire was for them to now go forth and try to make films themselves. Raheja advocates a 'visual sovereignty' that promotes 'intellectual health':

By appealing to a mass, intergenerational, and transnational indigenous audience, visual sovereignty permits the flow of indigenous knowledge about such key issues as land rights, language acquisition, and preservation by narrativizing local and international struggles. Visual sovereignty, as expressed by indigenous filmmakers, also involves employing editing technologies that permit filmmakers to stage performances of oral narrative and indigenous notions of time and space that are not possible through print alone.

(Raheja 2007: 1162)

These films are inspirations in narrative mode and construction, which would eventually inform the individual projects and a few short group videos. To understand something fully you must try and do it yourself. To understand media messages it is



critical to understand their construction and power. The students took hold of the camera and went forth to ask big questions and to create positive films.

### **Visual Products as Cultural, Community and Communication Imperative**

Video is a medium that can capture the audio and visuals of the world and of people who live in it. It is an ideal tool for the Western Arctic because it can appeal to the people, capturing the subtle, meaningful and visual nuance of oral tradition, thus reflecting and respecting cultural norms and communication as discussed in chapter two. Aboriginal leaders and scholars have fought hard, and continue to fight, so that oral traditions are given the credence they deserve. Orality is not just rhythm, sounds and audible words but it is also a visual experience. The importance of non-verbal communication was first posed by anthropologist Ray Birdwhistell (1952) in *Introduction to Kinesics: An Annotation System for Analysis of Body Motion and Gesture* and his further work resulted in *Kinesics and Context* (1970). He used film to analyze physical movements to understand the deeper meaning of non-verbal communication. Building on Birdwhistell's theories in later work on intercultural communication, Andersen (2000: 258) states that 'culture is primarily an implicit non-verbal phenomenon, for most aspects of one's culture are learned through observation and imitation rather than by explicit verbal instruction or expression'. Western culture is also non-verbal but is structured around text so the emphasis on non-verbal communication is not as vital. Andersen (2000: 258) continues, 'because we are not aware of our own non-verbal behaviour, it becomes extremely difficult to identify and master the non-verbal of another culture'. It is difficult to fully

appreciate what is innate. The fish is the last to know it is in water. Andersen (2000: 262) states ‘the degree to which a culture is individualistic or collectivistic affects the non-verbal behavior of that culture in every way’. He continues that ‘collectivistic cultures are interdependent; as a result the members work, play, live and sleep in close proximity’ (Andersen 2000: 262). Silence is also a significant communication.

Akhavan writes of being:

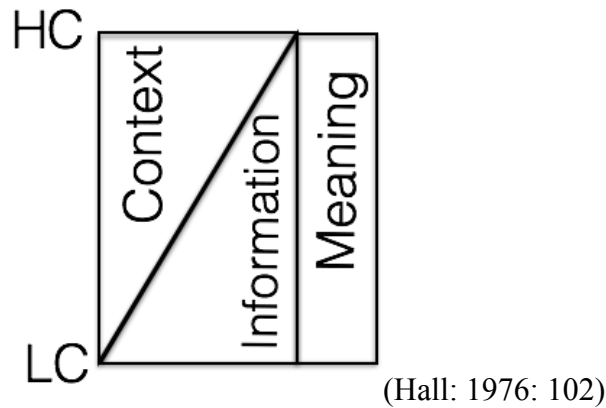
profoundly impressed by the purposeful silence of the Inuit. It was a silence that spoke, a wisdom that cannot be put into words, like the Arctic wind that carried mysterious messages from other worlds. The Inuit used very few words, but what words they used carried great meaning.

(Akhavan 2016: 270)

Silence has great importance in Northern culture, while being something that is often uncomfortable for the Southern person. Transcripts and recordings capture just part but video can capture a fuller message and meaning.

In further understanding collectivistic and individualistic cultures Edward T. Hall, introduced the respective concepts of high context (HC) and low context (LC) cultures in his influential *Beyond Culture* (1976: 102). He began his work with the Navajo (Diné) and this Indigenous foundation is interesting. His diagram below shows the interplay and differing positioning of information and context based on individualist (LC) and collectivist (HC):

**Figure 5:** Meaning, Context and Information



The visual can more fully reveal information and context. To better understand the importance of non-verbal communication it is necessary to differentiate between high context, HC, and low context, LC, communication. Andersen states:

in HC situations or cultures, information is integrated from the environment, the context, the situation, and the non-verbal cues that give the message meaning that is unavailable in the explicit verbal utterance (and) cultures vary considerably in the degree of context used in communication.

(Andersen 2000: 66)

He (2000: 67) contents that 'HC cultures do not value verbal communication the same way that LC cultures do' and 'HC cultures are more reliant on and tuned in to non-verbal communication' He continues that 'facial expressional, tensions, movements, speed of interaction, location of interaction, and other subtle 'vibes' are likely to be perceived by and have more meaning for people from HC cultures'. Southern teachers must be aware that 'people in HC cultures expect communicators to understand unarticulated feelings, subtle gestures, and environmental clues that people from low-context cultures simply do no process' (Andersen 2000: 67). Too

often teachers don't catch on and students do not feel the need or understand the need to explain themselves and communication fails as discussed in chapter 3. Again the North (HC) and South (LC) are diametrically opposed. One of writing's biggest weaknesses is its LC nature; it cannot always deliver the entire message. In HC situations this lack of depth can pervert the meaning of what is said. In the Canadian North there is a complex system of non-verbal communication strategies that have been described in this writing but is also evidenced in the videos.

### **Visual Methods – Community and Indigenous**

Visual methodologies are an interdisciplinary approach but also an established sub-group of visual sociology, but within a community and participatory focus and positioning. This research project finds its methodological foundations in the visual methods sometimes called development communications, participatory video or community video. The interviewing portion of the research comes from this tradition and the community project of engagement. Visual methods are widely used, but the use of visual methods is still somewhat on the fringe of academic research. There is more extensive writing on photo elicitation and those types of photographic respondent-generated image production and how they fit into participatory visual activism than video elicitation techniques and respondent-generated video production despite it being used since the invention of the movie camera. In addressing the outlying position Banks asserts (2006: 179) 'visual images are ubiquitous in the lives and work of those who study and those who are studied. There is not lack of attention paid to the visual, merely a failure of perspective'. The strength of the visual perspective, be it a marginal academic research method, in the North is singularly on

the geographically periphery of globe, perhaps this is why visual methods fit so well.

According to Wilkins (2001: 197), ‘development communications refers to the strategic application of communication technologies and process to promote social change’. Similarly, Harris (2002: 192) states that ‘Indigenous educators position ourselves in an academia so that our voices can be heard so it can be widely known we do not acquiesce in colonial representation of us’. In describing the difficulty of having Western knowledge grounded in objectivity, Harris asserts that:

in the view of many Indigenous people the notion of objectivity is preposterous because every aspect of Creation is continually interacting; the observer is interacting with the observed and, therefore, logically cannot be divorced from it.

(Harris 2002: 189)

Therefore, educators must be exceptionally self-critical and make every opportunity to hear learners’ voices.

The making of a video can be a collaborative process to create a tool to promote engagement, dialogue and authentic video products. Smith (1999: 151) states that ‘representation of Indigenous peoples by Indigenous people is about countering the dominant society’s image of Indigenous peoples, their lifestyles and belief systems’. She expands on the challenge of representation, saying that ‘many of the dilemmas are internalized stress factors in community life which are named or voiced because they are either taken for granted or hidden by the community’.

Communications can be a function of what Smith (1999: 152) describes as envisioning, which is a successful Indigenous ‘strategy which asks that people imagine a future, that they rise above present day situations which are generally

depressing, dream a new dream and set a new vision'. The application of developmental communications in the North can mean, as Smith (2000: 62) asserts, envisioning 'the idea of naming your own world and developing change for yourself'. As Brookfield (1990: 63) says, 'the organization, products, and effects of the mass media- particularly radio, television and the press-are important phenomena to educators of adults'. Melkote (2000: 51) states that development communications provide individuals and communities with the necessary skills, confidence and countervailing power to deal effectively with social change in a world that distributes needs, resources and power unequally. Empowerment privileges multiple voices and perspectives and truly facilitates equal sharing of knowledge and solution alternative among the 'beneficiaries' and the 'benefactors'. In a case study of a post secondary adult student video project, Vitiello noted that:

individual video diaries created an experience where students had to articulate their perspectives and self interests. Students created a construct in a medium in which they are usually the receptors of messages created by others.

(Vitiello 2001: 21)

This potential is very real in the Western Arctic community. It is a matter of finding a way to facilitate and give a voice to persons who do not regularly have an opportunity to speak in this way to their community and video can do this.

Canada has a long history of using film for social engagement and change. The *Fogo Process* came out of Canada's through the Challenge for Change Programme of the NFB with the goal of alleviating poverty. Filmmaker Colin Low teamed with Don Snowden, Director of Extension Service of Memorial University of Newfoundland beginning in 1967 for three years. They were going to make a

documentary about the isolated out-ports of Newfoundland but instead of one documentary, Low produced 28 modules on the lives of Fogo islanders. They ‘focused on ordinary people and personalities rather than issues. What emerged in the modules was a holistic view of life on Fogo Island as perceived by the people themselves’ (Williamson 1991: 272). My Master’s video project is not as extensive and focused on the issue of how community members understand education and literacy and their hopes of the future. My doctoral work is more analogous to the Fogo Process:

Individuals seeing themselves in the films, and Fogo islanders as a whole, experienced an increase in self-confidence not only in the value of their own lives, but in their power to express themselves and to do something about them.  
(Williamson 1991: 273)

This is the goal I had for the student research video process as a means of engagement, empowerment and celebration. ‘Practitioners of the Fogo Process...see development support communications as a tool in participatory action research or participatory development’ (Williamson 1991: 286). This model should bring all the other components together. Wiesner writes:

no matter how it is used, the Fogo process legitimized the use of film and media for the sole purpose of advocating for social change for disadvantaged individuals and groups. It was though that the process, if properly handled, would unfreeze individuals to become effective leaders and participants for social change.

(Wiesner 2010: 88)

While researching the Fogo Island model, I became aware of another pioneering film process from our polar neighbours in Russia. Pioneered by Dziga Vertov (1896-1954):

the early Soviets developed a comprehensive interactive media technology, combining multimedia presentations, evaluation and feedback from audience responses, complete with remedial techniques and transcontinental distance education, as early as 1920.

(James 1996: 111)

Basically, the Lennist ‘agit prop’ film train that would go back and forth across Russia or the Soviet Union shooting footage, showing footage and editing everything together as a means of propaganda but also education. Its educational component focused on raising literacy levels, improving public health and increasing national understanding and pride. Vertov stressed, ‘a feedback process whereby media footage is viewed and discussed by its producers and the people it portrays and used as a catalyst for mass education and change’ (James 1996: 114). The similarities to the ‘Challenge for Change’ and the Fogo Island model are unmistakable but due to the isolationism of the Soviet regime and the Western fear of anything even associated with propaganda, Vertov’s ideas spread but were not accredited. Long before McLuhan’s (1968: 7) ‘the medium is the message’ Vertov’s thinking that ‘the teacher is clearly an extension of the technology’ (James 1996: 114) was remarkable. He proposed that “empowerment occurred in the freedom of discussion, from affirmation that their own feelings are shared, and from the knowledge that each voice was being heard” (James 1996: 171). James found there was no reference to Vertov or credit given even though a clear line of inspiration and training by association can be traced



to the Fogo Island model. Even in Waugh, Baker and Winton's (2010) *Challenge for Change: Activist Documentary at the NFB* despite coauthor Waugh editing *Show us life: Towards a History and Aesthetics of the Committed Documentary* where Feldman (1984: 3-20) contributes a chapter about Vertov. However, the Vertov process stands as an amazing project that spanned a continent and could boast a 12-hour turnaround from filming to viewing. It was part of an educational process that addressed and improved literacy, hygiene, national awareness, working conditions. It also brought attention to national crisis and shaped the development not only of education and media, but film. While my project will not be so sweeping, the Vertov process is a shining example of how and why film works and its circumpolar origins are salient. Vertov is more known for his seminal film *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929) and the Soviet propaganda films *Three Songs for Lenin* (1934).

Indigenous media has a reasonably long and vibrant history considering its relative newness. Smith writes:

indigenous communities have struggled since colonization to be able to exercise what is viewed as a fundamental right, that is to represent ourselves. The project of representation spans both the notion of representation as a political concept and representation as a form of voice and expression.

(Smith 1999: 150)

Alia's (2009) *The New Media Nation: Indigenous Peoples and Global Communication* chronicles the successes of northern broadcasting and the APTN which broadcasts Inuvialuit Communications Society's (ICS) programming. ICS was instrumental in technically assisting with this research project and its partial dissemination. Roth's (2005) *Something New in the Air: The Story of First Peoples Television Broadcasting in Canada* is succinct in her chapter 'Policy'ing the North'

on inevitable governmental relationship in Northern media. Despite this bureaucratic process, Northern media developed and retains its unique and independent voice.

Smith writes (1999: 145) 'Intrinsic in storytelling is a focus on dialogue and conversations amongst ourselves as Indigenous peoples, to ourselves and for ourselves'. Alia describes the Indigenous peoples 'New Media Nation' as:

the urgency of its development can be understood not only by the suppression of political activities and cultural practices but by the rampant misrepresentations of Indigenous people in the dominant media. Whether benignly ignorant or aggressively racist, such misrepresentation does considerable damage.

(Alia 2009: 32)

Samson and Gigoux propose that:

At a fundamental level, indigenous films and videos have a double aim. On the one hand, they represent an opportunity to educate non-indigenous audiences on indigenous ways of life, identities and struggles. But, such media also attempt to educate and inspire indigenous communities, and in particular youth, on their ways of life, histories and collective identities, countering the dominant media outlets.

(Samson and Gigoux 2017: 188)

### **In Development - Project Preparations**

As introduced in chapter one, this research project began with an article I read while writing my master's thesis Rasmussen's *Qallunology: Pedagogy of the Oppressor* (2001). Qallunology means the study of white people. On further study I discovered Zebedee Nungak, an Inuk man from Nunavik, who had pioneered this new Northern study of white people, *Qallunaat 101* (2004). It was also very fair as

Southerners had studied Northerners for such a very long time and it seemed like the perfect way to return the favour. As I have mentioned before, I wrote on the top "sounds like fun" and this research is fun. As an educator in the Western Arctic, it is a strange reality that most instructors at secondary and postsecondary level will be from southern Canada but the students will almost all be Northerners. This dynamic leads to many communication challenges as detailed in this chapter and in previous chapters. As an instructor that teaches composition, I have learned that the main challenge students face in writing is presenting information in a cross-cultural manner. Northern students must not only master communication and writing but also writing for an audience with a different background, culture and context. Using this as a lens to teach research skills and composition was an attempt to clearly engage the cultural conflicts and challenges in communication. As Foucault (2009) and Scott (1998) have examined, the visibility of groups and bodies is a crucial dimension of state control. They propose that the more visible the group, the more power they can wield and the less visible have less power. Other than the examples above, often the only visibility afforded Northern Canadians is expressed through a few main false manifestations of the romantic, mythic and tragic portrayal of them by government and media.

The Canadian news offers endless tragic, violent and negative news stories about Indigenous Canadians on a seemingly nightly basis. Advertising uses the igloo and hunter in a bizarre array of winter or cold related ads. Watt-Coutier (2015: 247) dryly observes 'images of polar bears drinking Coca-Cola with seals, a highly unlikely scenario, as one is actually lunch, not a playmate for the other'. Mainstream

television and films often don't even use Aboriginal actors and use stereotypes and false characterizations. They are truly too numerous to mention. Even BBC documentaries and ethnographies interested in the Arctic use adjectives like bleak and desolate. My partner would like them to not always describe his home in terms of absence of life and grimness. The process of constructing questions and then undertaking interviews allowed the students to begin to engage with what was real to them and what was not; to try and understand the value of both and to try and communicate their views to a wider audience. Most chose very positive projects in a way to try and balance the negativity. With video as the method the public nature of the research was intrinsic. The interviews and then edited segments asked the viewer to make their own meaning, exemplifying McLuhan's maxim 'the medium is the message' (1996: 7). The process was not simplistic but elemental to the control over the power of public identity.

This project, especially the study of white people, was initially considered too controversial by my supervisors (which is always interesting to me as I am aware I am white as are the students and they are aware they are Aboriginal as am I and it does not seem controversial but rather like something we should talk about and consider), but in another moment of serendipity the NFB released a film entitled *Qallunaat: Why White People are Funny* (2006). This film made it possible for me to convince the college to allow the student team and myself to embark on a similar project as who were they to argue with the NFB? The DVD also includes the bonus material of *Qallunaanik Piusiqsluriniq: The Study of White People* is a mock Qallunaat Studies Institute (QSI) academic conference of Qallunologists, a fictitious

conference on the study of white people presenting papers like ‘People of the Clock’ and is even more hilarious than the feature. In my preparations for the ethical review and science licensing process I also discovered a rising body of literature called white or whiteness studies, which I discuss this further in the next chapter. This alternate perspective and developing different discourse encouraged me to not only research with my students, but to embark on an academic journey to include our work in academic literature. The process of the project and dissertation has been an effort to make a space for equality of thought and expression in Northern Education and research. The Mackenzie Delta is a confluence of cultures and societies; education should be a tool of communion not conflict. Education in the Arctic needs to support and respect northern context, culture and identity. So, we started, but we expanded our study to include messages from the North to the South for newcomers and those still in the south and also Northern Studies but by and for Northerners. In the interest of equity, it is important to note that the North will come first and with that as much as possible the participants and students will be placed in the privileged position.

My most important role is of chronicler, after being an instigator, organizer, cheerleader and mentor with realized goals of diminished leadership importance. This contribution to the academy is to write about all that so many have accomplished despite the system and the odds to portray them not being in their favour. Do not misunderstand. This description of the student’s situation is not to portray them as deficient or to be patronizing on my part, but to ensure that the context in which this work occurred was not of luxury or privilege but as underdogs that made very good. This is how we started. The project evolved over time and has grown accordingly.

Most of the research with the collaborative process was with my students and community members, however as my students were also able to pursue individual projects. I also pursued the individual project of writing this dissertation and ensuring the completion of the final Southern videos and my solo presentations taking the research into a more global context.

### **Pre-production**

I first began by approaching the college through the various levels of authority to ensure the research would be accepted and supported, as I alluded to earlier in this chapter. I cited the DVD of *Qallunat: Why White People are Funny* and Zebedee Nungak's writings on *Qallunology*, and this helped enormously. Then, informally, I floated the idea of the project to my students in the winter and fall of 2007. The students were enthusiastic about the idea, so I then proceeded to begin the ethical review process with Aurora College and the Aurora Research Institute. The process took approximately 3 months and was laborious due to the involvement of Aboriginal Canadians and Aurora College students. Canadian research guidelines under the Tri-Council regulations are rigorous for any research involving Aboriginal Canadians due to abuses of researchers in the past. The North has, as one student noted, "been researched to death". Research in the north has had a long history much like education, and due to problems, power inequality and poor communication both have earned a great deal of mistrust. As a result, Northerners have become reluctant and particular about whom they will speak to and why. Research in the Canadian North is now much more closely monitored and controlled, protecting communities and the

Arctic. This protection comes in two phases, the first is ethical review, like any other academic project, but then the second is the scientific research licensing process for the Northwest Territories.

The Aurora Research Institute (ARI) is part of Aurora College, and oversees all research occurring in the Northwest Territories. Due to the need for Northern control of Northern research and the reality that researchers are usually from the south, the Aurora Research Institute ensures that all research has been ethically reviewed, undergoes community review and approval, and that all resources are made available to the communities upon completion of research. This process took approximately 2 months and involved review of all Aboriginal governments and organizations for all the Beaufort Delta communities that would be involved in the research project. This license would also need to be renewed for each year of the project. An additional ethical review was also conducted in the middle of the research project to include the University of Essex. This additional ethical review was required by Aurora Research Institute to ensure the project was up-to-date and was conducted by the University of Essex as the project research expanded outside of the Northwest Territories of Canada (see appendix). Researchers often find this process frustrating and cumbersome, as it can be time consuming. I have heard more than one complaint from researchers at northern conferences. However, it is very necessary to ensure the researchers are accountable, their work transparent to all Northerners and results reported back to the North.

**Plate 3:** Rachel Using Release and Research Forms in Edmonton, July 2010



(Photo by Author)

Transparency is of particular importance in the design of this research project. The use of video was a conscious decision to not only increase the versatility of the research project and products but also to try and make the research messages from community members and students as direct and clear as possible. Video makes sense in an oral context and in a community context, however it is only now becoming a more typical research method. In regards to ethical review and licensing this made it necessary to not only have informed consent forms but also film release forms. This was a challenge, as written forms are not popular or trusted in a community context, which is understandable considering the context of the last two chapters. However, due to being centered in the community and the student research team being from the area, we encountered no problems with using the forms. This would have been far more challenging had I not had a history in the Beaufort Delta and if I had not already been researching with community members. All forms needed to be explained verbally to each participant and the verbal explanations carried far more weight with



the individuals we worked with then the actual written forms. In addition, whenever possible and it usually was, we would burn a copy of the interview to give to the participant to ensure they were happy with their filmed interview, usually within hours to a day. To date no participants has asked to take anything out on any interview or to have themselves removed from the research project. In some ways this is surprising, however, the project was approached as a community conversation just with a new technology and it proved very popular with all involved. We received ethical and scientific approval and began. As part of these processes I did have to propose initial questions that we kept and they were:

1. What does the North mean to you?
2. How would you describe Northern culture?
3. What advice would you have for newcomers to the North?
4. If you could say one thing to Southerners about the North what would that be?
5. What does the South mean to you?
6. How would you describe Southern culture?

(These final two initially included but were dropped as the student questions better elaborated on the points)

- Can you describe the importance of the land to Northern people?
- What do Southern people need to know about the Northern land?

Finding money was my responsibility and it was time consuming but fruitful. We were not successful applying for Canadian International Polar Year funding, (neither was Zacharias Kunuk) and it was a huge application but I was able to take students to the funding meetings which they enjoyed. Also I was able to rework the application for other funding sources that were successful. The money for the equipment was crucial to a quality visual product. The Lions Club and the Inuvik Ladies Auxiliary gave us money and directed me to the men of the Inuvik Legion and they were also

generous. I was nervous presenting to them, as they are an older and conservative bunch. One of the men on the panel said, “So you want to make videos and one of them is advice on people coming here from the South?” I said yes thinking we were sunk. He deadpanned “That sure would have been helpful when I came forty years ago”. They gave us the money. We bought a high definition digital camera, tripod and two microphones (hand held and boom). We were ready to go.

### **Production (Making Media)**

In a flurry (me) or in the calm, quiet dark (students) of winter 2008, we began researching as part of the Career and College Preparation 150 pilot course that focused on research methods, which would be repeated next academic year. We started by brainstorming part of the chart on North/South differences in the next chapter. Then we did a crash course in anthropology, sociology, and *Qallunology*. I must confess to using wikis but they are a quick and appropriate initial resource for my students. The student researchers in this group had reading levels that spanned basic to almost university entrance and I needed materials everyone could use. Then we dove right into basic qualitative research methods, an ethical overview and what was scientific licensing. We then watched *Nanook of the North*, *Through These Eyes* and *Why White People are Funny*. Right after we finished viewing, a few students came to me at the beginning of class and said they were not interested in doing satire as they felt it was mean. They clarified that they fully understood why Nungak felt the way he did and they supported his video but it was not for them as they wanted positive messages and not to possibly hurt anyone’s feelings. I turned to the class and

they all nodded. They were ready and we started writing the research guide around the three themes I proposed and that the group accepted, Northern Studies, North to South and Southern Studies. Initially, I broke them into three groups and in my vision of educational efficacy thought that each group would come up with questions and we would go forward with interviewing quickly. I was quickly corrected that we would all be working on all the questions. So under their leadership we reoriented, or maybe just me, and everyone contributed to each sections questions. It took more time but students were very satisfied that everyone would contribute equitably. On flipchart paper they worked together. Students with more advanced English composition worked with those who did not and older mature students supported younger students in finding cultural concepts and words. I learned a very important lesson: get the hell out of the way and let them go. I was consulted from time to time about vocabulary or concept but I mostly floated in a supportive way. Once they were done one student came forward with the flip chart papers and said “okay type it up”. I was delighted.

I cannot describe to readers how collaborative and respectful the process was. It was a master class in consensus and respect and showed how seriously and diligently they attacked the work. Research made sense to these Northern adult students in a seemingly innate way. Please remember that the school system has failed my students and they come into my class thinking and fearing they cannot succeed at their educational pursuits and each one made significant and very astute contributions to the research, no matter the academic level on their transcript. In the previous chapters I have questioned the academy being the gate-keeper of knowledge and watching the students and the community members they interviewed I completely

reject this notion. The place and importance of academic partnership still exists but the idea that they do not have the ability or sophistication to research at an equitable level is offensive and ludicrous. They often teased me that I had to get so much school to research but they ‘were good to go already’ and they would then encourage me ‘to get done’ so I could improve my sewing and other more important things.

## **Interviewing**

Once the research guide was typed, formatted and all necessary forms added, students identified people they wanted to interview. We decided to take a 20 questions approach where the six initial and general questions would always be asked and then the student and person they were interviewing would decide on what other questions would be asked. The 20 questions approach was to try and guarantee that they would get a good amount of full answers because some questions might only be a few words. The research guide (see appendix) was not small, eventually growing to around 100 questions, but represented their research interests and allowed for the person being interviewed to have a choice in the matter. The next chapter on themes will address the specific questions created for each theme but this chapter section is an overview of the project. Always lengthy and respectful processes of reaching a consensus on which questions would be asked took place between the student and interview participant. A few times I would assist in smoothing out the process, but usually as contextual support for the research process and how it related to the college and the student’s studies. The dedication community members had to students pursuing this research was very inspiring, to the students and myself. Interviews were

conducted during the day, before class, in the evening and on weekends and I acted as cameraperson for these interviews.

A highlight of this group was interviewing Canadian media personality Rick Mercer in June 2008. He was performing two evening shows as part of the Inuvik Petroleum Show. I was accepting a very generous cheque donation from him for the Northwest Territories Literacy Council for the Peter Gzowski Invitational as the Inuvik representative (Gzowski was a famous CBC personality). Of course, I brought several students, a fellow instructor, and the camera with me. A few students had opted to interview people at the petroleum show. Another student Patrick Joe, who had worked at ICS, was their roving cameraman. I had on a t-shirt with Peter Gzowski's picture on it and so did Debbie English, the other instructor. When Rick mentioned how much he liked it because Peter was his first mentor, Debbie pulled off her shirt, (she had another underneath), and handed it to him. Rick was speechless, and he is known to be very fast thinking, and when he found his voice said, "Thank you, Peter was very special to me". Debbie smiled and said "Northern hospitality" and chatted with him about her mom who was the Gwich'in language CBC host at the time. I asked Rick if the students could interview him and he generously agreed. Katherine Lennie stepped forward and was extremely nervous but Rick was extremely patient and supportive which was wonderful and critical in supporting a very nervous student. It remains the most popular interview in the project as fast thinking Rick encapsulated the research and Katherine was professional, beautiful and the perfect Northern research ambassador. The interviews from this group were stored and would be edited at the end of the next academic year.

### **Lets Make a lot More Media – The Project Continues**

The research continued into the Fall of 2008. The Career and College Preparation 130 class group focused on interviews about Northern conceptions of success and the Northern Studies Social Studies 140 class interviewed about Northern Studies. My intention was to offer the option to be involved in the video project to all my classes where it could fit and to my delight everyone was enthusiastic to participate. However, the option for an alternate assignment was always there. One student was initially dead set against the project. So I arranged for a meeting to address her concerns and provide the alternate work. What ensued was an extremely lively discussion on Northern research and representation and a complete review of all my project documentation including ethical review and current research license. Transparency was crucial to me and I welcomed her very detailed assessment despite it being occasionally awkward. After the review and discussion I thanked her for her input and critique and directed her to my work supervisor and doctoral supervisor, with contact information, if she had additional concerns. Finally, I pulled out her alternate written assignments. She asked me again if she was going to be in complete control of her interview and that she could pull out of the research at any time. I was confused but said yes of course. Then she smiled said she knew who she wanted to interview and once she made arrangements she would let me know and left my office. Kendra Tingmiak would be in four of the five groups, including acting as a student research intern, her son came with us during our fieldwork in Edmonton and she would present at two conferences. She is currently finishing her Bachelor degree in

Biology after successfully completing her diploma in Environment and Natural Resources Technology Program at the college.

Funding was key factor in the development of the research and I was always looking. I applied to Industry Tourism and Investment, a Government of the Northwest Territories department, in their new fund for film and we were successful. We were featured in their artists' newsletter. Editing is significant in the construction of the final video project and it was a goal to have students be able to edit their work. Thankfully, by January 2009 I had bought two iMacs. We also used the funding to bring Dennis Allen up to work with students in a mini-film school, to cover the costs of traveling to Aklavik and Tuktoyaktuk, some work with Brett Purdy from the Inuvialuit Communications Society on individual projects and to send Brett and Rachel to Paulatuk for her personal project. Hiring professionals is the best way to ensure a quality video product and it allowed for technical training and support for the students. As an Aboriginal and local filmmaker, Dennis Allen was instrumental in inspiring, motivating and teaching students to try new things with their videos which completely changed the project trajectory. The ability to travel allowed the project to reach into the region and for the students to be able to further spread their wings.

Plate 4: Dennis Allen instructing Thea Rogers, January 2009



(Photo by Author)

The Inuvik Learning Centre is on five-month semesters and has a week intersession. With funding we were able to bring Dennis Allen from Whitehorse for Mini Film School during that week. It was voluntary but proved popular. It was bitterly cold, -50, and Dennis had to use a blowtorch to warm his oil pan in the morning when he left Dawson. Despite weather, he and the elder he was traveling with managed to get a caribou on the way up. Which he butchered without a coat because he only brought one and didn't want to bloody it. He laughingly told me "it was so cold the blood was instantly freezing to my hands but it was a caribou...what were we going to do?" Dennis is a talented storyteller and an amazing teacher. This was another time I just got out of the way. I did logistics, took photos and drove



students around to where they wanted to shoot. Brett Purdy came and helped with technical things and brought an additional video camera. It was so cold we had to hold the cameras in our coats when not shooting as the temperature saps the batteries. It was the perfect way to get ready for the next semester.

Plate 5: Dennis Allen instructing film editing, January 2009



(Photo by Author)

The second research methods course was taught with a similar format as the first described earlier. We added a few new questions to the research guide and some of the research visioning work of the students. However, the big change was this group was able to travel and we did when the weather warmed in March.

Plate 6: Brett Purdy on Ice Road from Aklavik to Inuvik, April 2010



(Photo by Author)

The first trip was to Aklavik and we travelled in two cars on the ice road. The Aurora College Aklavik Learning Centre adult educator and students hosted us. We brought lunch with us; soup, buns, pizzas, fruit and sweets. We also had contacted the elder's homes and we picked up interested elders to come to lunch. So first we feasted and then made plans to go around and interview. Brett Purdy had come with us and had brought his own equipment, so we had two groups. Some interviews with elders and family were prearranged and we visited them in their homes. We had made arrangements with the school to visit with their amazing principal Velma Ilisiak and

my students interviewed high school students there. With a little extra time this group also went to a few local offices. I was with the other group going to homes but I understand that the visit to the band office was epic. A student who was known to be very quiet found her voice and was heard to ask the chief “How do I get your job?” to everyone’s delight, including the chief. The camera allowed students to be bold or become bold. They were ferocious and it was awesome.

**Plate 7:** Lunch at Learning Centre in Aklavik with Elders, April 2010



(Photo by Author)

The second trip was to Tuktoyaktuk and we had a van. We were again hosted by the local Learning Centre’s adult educator and students and brought lunch with us; chili, buns, pizzas, fruit and sweets. Due to illness our group was smaller but it allowed us extra room to accommodate community members who decided they liked what we were doing and decided to tag along for the day, including a few students from the local learning centre. We visited the elder’s home and brought treats and did

some interviewing as we did with the school. With a little extra time we stopped at the Northern Store and did some on-the-spot interviewing. This was particularly successful. We stopped a few times on the way back to Inuvik on the ice road to take photos of student's family camps and climb on ice pressure ridges.

### **Individual projects**

As the project progressed and the group work became more refined and the finding allowed technical support, we were able to begin expanding to allow students to do individual projects. So we were able to work as a group on research interviewing but also allow students the independence and freedom to pursue individual research goals. This was particularly rewarding and exciting to see what students wanted to create to show the world, their North. Initially we did two group videos, the first begins with a student setting her trap but then shifts into her checking her blackberry cellular phone the visuals moving from black and white to full color and the second where the students round up a bunch of instructors to send us off to *Traditional School* as an inversion and lighthearted critique of residential schools. This phase of the project was the best evolution an educator could possibly hope for. The goal of the project was to collaborate and it then developed into co-research and eventually we were able to become collegial and co-present at academic conferences. The individual projects expanded into personal research and this group created 12 beautiful films. My role as principal researcher and instructor became more facilitator and producer rather than director. Educationally, the students became increasingly self-directed and this evolution was the highlight of my educational career.

## Research Internships - Students Take Control of the Research

**Plate 8:** Student Research Interns, August 2010



(Photo by Maya LePage)

Never in my wildest dreams did I think the work could evolve to culminate in summer student research internships. Funding from the Gordon Foundation and the NWT Arts Council made it possible to hire three students for the summer; Kendra Tingmiak, Rachel Nakimayak and Shelby Steen. It also facilitated a second visit from Dennis Allen in July and the ability to do fieldwork in Edmonton, Alberta in August. The Aurora Research Institute also provided money for the student internships. We worked together for the first week and each student was going to take a theme and edit those interviews into the video and they would also pursue new individual projects. I had to travel due to a family death but when I came back, the students were raring to go and we filmed extensively at the Great Northern Arts Festival. They



organized what they wanted to do and we did it. My role was more and more logistics and support. The individual films were featured at the arts festival and also the Open Sky Film Festival. Zebedee Nungak and Eric Tagoona were also at the arts festival to screen *Experimental Eskimos*. Tagoona had been reclusive and this was a first time leaving his house and community in a long time. There was a standing ovation and the summer students were deeply touched. Rachel said, “See what a film can do”.

Plate 9: Filming in Edmonton, July 2010



(Photo by Author)

The next big undertaking was to conduct the fieldwork on the South, in Edmonton. When brainstorming with the students on cultural symbols of the South, West Edmonton Mall (one of the world’s largest shopping centres) was the most common student choice. Most of our work was in West Edmonton Mall, but we also visited downtown, the Alberta Museum and Toys R Us (Kendra’s son Jason came with us and was our littlest researcher). Shelby worked in front of the camera and Rachel and Kendra behind. We got home again and the Northern Games were

occurring and we again filmed extensively. Rachel would choose this as her individual project and she would contribute to the ICS episode on the games. Brett would also create an ICS episode about the student research work. By the end of the summer Kendra and Rachel completed the Northern Studies and North to South videos respectively. Southern studies had good headway but Shelby ultimately worked more in front the camera. Kendra's individual project was on the residential school system and she would eventually work with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada during the testimony in Inuvik.

**Plate 10:** Filming Northern Games, August 2010



(Photo by Author)

The fall came and the students returned to their studies and I took a sabbatical. We were fortunate to co-present at two conferences together. The students were very

nervous to present at a formal research venue but they presented well. I am biased, but I think they were the highlight of the student conference in Whitehorse (Association of Canadian Universities of Northern Studies) in October 2009. Kendra, Rachel and Shelby and one of the keynote presenters Emily Kudluk were some of the very few Aboriginal people attending the graduate level conference which is concerning for the future of Northern research. Dennis helped with some filming there. The Yellowknife conference in November was special as it was in our home territory and had a much better Aboriginal and community representation. Western Arctic Moving pictures filmed this presentation, however unfortunately Shelby could not attend.

**Plate 11:** Presenting together in Whitehorse, October 2010





## **Post-Production - Presentations to Share and Communicate Results**

Community-based work has the academic challenge of communicating the results to a wider audience. It is difficult as the very nature of the work is so specific and localized. Also community-based work usually finds its funding close to home and it often very limited so it does not have the resources that some research initiatives do. However, in the Polar Regions the International Polar Year (IPY) hosted unprecedented events and the opportunity to present the work was unique. Please see the appendix for presentation abstracts. The first two presentations were with part of the student team and then came the challenge of presenting the work on my own. Unexpectedly, this part of the process became much more involved and rather than a footnote a part of the research. Normally it would not be possible to be able to travel so much or widely but the work was presented at six conferences in 8 months, after being shown at two Northern Arts festivals that summer. A part of one short film we created as a group has been used in presentations by Dr. Dave Carlson, Director of IPY Programme Office. The individual films were chosen as an official selection at the Polar Cinema Film Festival in Oslo and I was part of the screening to answer questions. I handed out countless DVDS and sent many around the circumpolar world.

The first solo presentation was in December 2009 in Victoria, British Columbia at professional training event for graduate students hosted by the Arctic Polar Early Career Scientists (APECS) connected to the Arcticnet conference. My presentation was very popular and I was told I almost won an award (which was news

to me as I did not know you received awards at conferences) but my work and presentation was so different that they felt compelled to give the award to another presentation. It was very satisfying to have the work acknowledged but it was the beginning of a theme. At every presentation I did people would be positive but always discuss the difference and how the work didn't exactly fit the expected mould. In January 2010 I travelled to Tromsø, Norway to attend Arctic Frontiers that coincided with the sun returning. I ran into people from Inuvik and that was wonderful, as several Aboriginal leaders were in attendance. Dwayne Smith, Inuvialuit leader and then President of the Inuit Circumpolar Council, teased me as the last time we were at a conference together he had to help me with my luggage after I became very sick on the small plane from Alaska, but was very supportive and I was touched when he said, "Tell them how it is Suzanne".

My presentation was in an educational section. There was an awkward moment, as I missed the morning session to watch my colleague's presentation, and I did not know that the morning group from Athabasca University had presented Edmonton, Alberta as Northern Canada (which is the most Northerly city in Canada of significant size). When I screened segments of our fieldwork in Edmonton there was some ribbing of the morning group. I clarified that it is all relative, but it was all good humoured, and it highlighted the importance of perspective. The Russian presenters talked with me commenting on how much they loved the photos and how it looked like their home in Yakutsk. This would happen many times where Northern people would come to me after and talk about the films, but also the photos and how it looked like their home and how happy it made them. As the winter in 2010

extended, the ICS aired their *Suaggan* episode on the aired featuring the student video research. It was very popular and continues to be. Our Edmonton footage (another playful visual reversal where Shelby plays an Inuk visiting the mall and being disappointed in its division from nature as she tries to fish and do other traditional activities) from that episode is what the government used in their training series.

As IPY was beginning to wind up there were two large Conferences. The first was in March 2010 in Miami, State of the Arctic. It was very interesting to see Northern research from an American point of view although it was an international event and for it to be in Miami (which was selected due the high cost of travel and accommodation in Alaska). The second big conference was the IPY in Oslo Science Conference in June 2010. It was dizzyingly huge. I presented a poster and a presentation. Again, I was repeatedly told it is different. My poster included the videos and my evaluator told me he wished he could recommend me for an award as he was very impressed by the work but my vision of the poster was too different. At this point I was starting to be unsettled but the constant 'different' feedback. The conception of this project was very clear to me, the students and the community and it did not seem so different and while it was creative that was a part of the video making process. However, now the constant use of creative seemed to indicate something more. As I have traced in the literature it isn't new or unique but it is far more fringe than I initially thought. It strikes me as curious because it doesn't seem too novel but in sitting in conferences I can say it was usually remarkable. However, I think this is changing and this type of research is gaining ground and I am seeing it more. A highlight of this conference was the twelve individual videos being an official

selection of the Polar Film Festival. That was an amazing capstone of the international presentation phase. There was still one more IPY presentation in Inuvik in January 2011 that I have discussed before. It was the most important.

Unfortunately, it was exam week and the students could not attend and I was almost late and I had to hustle in from class. This presentation was the longest and the most important. The feedback was extremely positive and the applause very energetic. I handed out fifty DVDs and could have handed out more. The community people came to me first and told me about the people they knew in the videos and told me who they were giving the DVD to. The researchers came next and they commented on how I had done so much with so little, which was a little awkward but well intentioned. I also was invited to and wrote an article for the *Polar Record* around this time.

As this is a sociological work, it was also shared at the International Visual Sociology Association (IVSA) conference focusing on the Public Image at Goldsmiths University in New Cross, England in July 2013. This was an interesting intersection for me as it connected public sociology and visual sociology. I mostly attended the community video sections that made frequent mention to the NFB, *Challenge for Change* and the *Fogo Process*. It was very interesting to see an international perspective on where Canada fit in community video and visual sociology. My presentation was in an educational section chaired by Eric Margolis, who was the outgoing association president. He gave me a meaningful piece of feedback. He said, “I am so glad they studied the South. I have been saying that for years that we need to turn the camera on not just their world but also the other spaces

that hold power and privilege and see what they see into those spaces. But no one seems to be doing it”. That was extremely validating as I was worried at always being the different one and it was such a clear choice to him, as it was to me, rather than just novel. To complete the learning concept both aspects must be considered and analyzed to try and gain a more complete, balanced and fuller meaning.

I thought IVSA would be the last presentation but this was to be at the International Congress of Arctic Social Sciences in Prince George, British Columbia in May 2014. Actually the session organizer invited me to present after reading my Polar Record article. I was already going to present on some new work with my students using photo elicitation but was happy to present this work on more time. Again I was told the presentation was of mention and very well received. One of the conference organizers said to me after my presentation, “that is perhaps one of the most subversive pieces I have seen but it was so incredibly cheerful I almost didn’t notice”. That is an incredible compliment and reinforces that what we tried to do was communicated. As we were in the airport getting ready to fly home, I ran into a colleague and he asked me of my writing progress, to which I was abashed by my slow progress but explained I had been seconded to coordinate the Community Educator Programs, that included Aboriginal Language and Culture Program and the Teacher Education Program and we had just transferred to the Yellowknife campus as means of excuse. He said I should hurry up so I could get out of the college. I was shocked and said I wasn’t planning to leave the college and he seemed surprised. He then smiled and said, “Well you are happy there and look at the bunch of us fighting for jobs down South”. I wished him good luck in his career pursuits and realized how

fortunate I was. Many pursue graduate work to find something or pursue a new profession but I was mainly trying to improve myself in my teaching and to offer new learning opportunities for my students and increased academic acknowledgment and access for my students and community members. I am extremely fortunate that the college has supported the research and my studies, from tuition and dedicated time to write the final draft of this dissertation. Throughout it has been joyous exercise in place and in staying put and maybe that is different.

### **Video Research as Education**

The two chapters preceding this one are very dark as they outline the path that has wrought so much destruction and disruption in the name of society and education. In the polarity of light and dark introduced in the first chapter I hope this chapter has brought us into the light. The creation story raven stealing the sun for the people in the Western Arctic is shared in different forms down much of the Pacific Northwest coast. In the late Inuvik elder Ishmael Alunik's (1998: 26-30) version raven, *tulugak*, steals the sun from a chief who keeps it to hunt with only his people and gives it to all people. In many ways I feel that colonization took the sun from the Western Arctic to use only for them, but I feel the resilient Northern people waited out the dark and are in a process of taking back their sun. I see it in my students everyday. This chapter showed the progression of Northern film from Southern romantic gaze into a full Indigenous project for visual sovereignty. It clarified the high context cultural importance of the visual as an illuminative tool that can fully capture non-verbal communication. The research was centered in the Visual Sociological project of participatory community video and its long Canadian tradition. This work is added to

the Indigenous media practice of broadcasting with generous support from ICS. Through extensive work in finding funding and securing ethical review and scientific licensing, the research was able to be transparent and engage the community. The work developed from collaborative to co-research to collegiality. It was shared through many presentations across the circumpolar community and at a sociological conference. As a visual proof of concept it was verified successful. And research can be education.

**Plate 12:** Dennis Allen in Whitehorse, October 2010



(Photo by Author)

## Chapter 5

### Repatriating Northern Research – Aims and reflections

Our land has never been conquered. If it was, we would be wiped out of our culture. The minute we step out of our community we are in our historical environment. But not down south. Indian people have to cope with that. They were deprived of their wildlife, their land. But we have something that helped our people. Our environment is harsh. Who would want to live here?

- Tagak Curley (1988: 286)

Power is the ability not just to tell the story of another person, but to make it the definitive story of that person. The Palestinian poet Mourid Barghouti writes that if you want to dispossess a people, the simplest way to do it is to tell their story and to start with, "secondly." Start the story with the arrows of the Native Americans, and not with the arrival of the British, and you have an entirely different story. Start the story with the failure of the African state, and not with the colonial creation of the African state, and you have an entirely different story.

- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (TED Talk 2009)

### Thematic intentions and reflections on the video research

Adichie concluded “when we reject the single story, when we realize that there is never a single story about any place, we regain a kind of paradise.” This chapter is about stories arranged around the project themes: Northern perspectives on the North, the South and Newcomers to the North. It does not specifically analyse the films other than to share background, summary, context and response. Jasanoff (2004: 6) explains knowledge co-production ‘as an interpretive framework, co-production begs for illustration rather than proof’. The project videos stand on their own and should be



experienced as Northern stories celebrating narrative, culture and orality. However, as part of the chronicle of the project, this chapter includes brief summaries, sharing student goals, highlighting certain aspects of the video research and observations of the films to ensure they are included in the written work. Respecting the autonomy of the people who created the films is a critical part of this work. As a non-Aboriginal person, it is not appropriate or completely ethical for me to tell the reader what everything in the videos means. Even if that was reasonable, it does not fit as a Northern teaching mode, which privileges respect for the viewers' autonomy including interpretation:

Traditionally, Inuit children learned by carefully observing and following the examples set by their elders. An older person would spend time with a young person of the same gender and show them by example how to master various skills. As soon as the child gained a basic skill, his 'teacher' would encourage him to innovate and try to make things on his own. There was no particular time set aside for this education to take place. Teaching occurred when it was convenient and lasted as long as the child's interest held or until other business demanded the attention of the adult. The focus of Inuit education was learning by individual effort and observation rather than by instruction. Inuit children continue to learn all traditional skills by the attentive observation of an older, more experienced person.

(Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada 2006: 19)

The literature added throughout this chapter positions the work within academic discourses and situates the videos within other similar academic and critical projects. While this research seeks to connect to theory it is not a theoretical exercise in itself as its endeavours are based in the practical and contextual. The questions and themes of the research sought to engage students to pose questions and invite dialogue with the community member they interviewed. The videos shared the questions and then what people involved wanted to share, which invited more dialogue with their eventual viewers. Smith writes:

Research begins as a social, intellectual and imaginative activity. It has become disciplined or institutionalized with certain approaches empowered by others and accorded a legitimacy, but it begins with human curiosity and a desire to solve problems. It is at its core an activity of hope.

(Smith 2002: 202-203)

The first section outlines the videos that fit within Northern studies but it also describes how the whole project has been done in a Northern way. Students chose positivity, gentle messaging and humour to share their stories. Deloria (1969: 146) notes 'it has always been a great disappointment to Indian people that the humorous side of Indian life has not been mentioned by professed experts on Indian Affairs'. Southern Studies are done in a similar way though the content shifts to good-humored messages that call attention to white cultural power, privilege and position. The use of humour is meant to be amiable but also shows the complexity of South / North issues and challenges. North to South looks to build bridges of perspectives and communication while gently educating the South about the North. Jackson writes of 'the stories that shadow us':

We are dealing not simply with the human need for recognition, but with a deeper need for some integration and balance between one's personal world and the wider world of others, such that one's voice carries and one's actions have repercussions in the state, nation or community with which one identifies.

(Jackson 2013: 170)

The video research project was an attempt to include the often-excluded voices of Adult Education students and also many community members voices to academic discourse and the reflections of this chapter, within the larger dissertation, shows this was successful. Stories have great power to communicate, educate and represent and the North is a land of stories.

Viewing the videos can be done in any order. However, this list gives you a suggested viewing guide for the project videos as they are discussed in the chapter (section headings included for clarity):

**Power, recognition and perspective in the North**

*Northern Stereotypes* Tanya Snowshoe's

**Dumb Questions often asked of Northerners**

Intro – Student group film and project explanation

**Northern Studies – the land first**

*Goose Hunting* Shelly Andre

*Bekare Lake*, Rachel Nakimayak

**Northern Culture - adaptive and progressive**

*Our Modern North* Mariah Blake

*Cooking with Steen* Dwight Snowshoe

**Insider Research**

*Residential school* Kendra Tingmiak

**Northern Studies Interviews**

*Northern Voices, Northern Faces* edited by Kendra Tingmiak

**Reversal as (cheerful) subversion**

*Traditional School*

*Megan's Arrival* Megan McCormack

*Southern Studies Field Work* and *Inuk in West Edmonton Mall*

**Emic and etic**

*Brian's North* Brian Raddi

*Jen's Aklavik* Jennifer Greenland

*Northern Weather* Bobbi Jen Andre

*Mukluk Taste Test* Amanda Lennie and Thea Rogers

**Communicating North to South**

*North-to-South* edited by Rachel Nakimayak

## Seditious

inciting or causing people to rebel against the authority of a state or monarch. rabble-rousing, provocative, inflammatory, subversive, troublemaking; More rebellious, insurrectionist, mutinous, insurgent; treacherous, disloyal

(dictionary.com)

A colleague told me this research project was literally considered seditious by one government official on the International Polar Year funding committee. This colleague was also a member on the committee. I was extremely surprised as it was intended to be a feel-good and positive project that has enjoyed almost universally positive feedback. The question is why would a federal government official in Ottawa view this seemingly happy video project as seditious? That is a very specific word. Was it seditious for Northern people to repatriate northern research? Or was it the study of the South by Northerners? Or that Northerners themselves might have some advice for newcomers to the North? I was not expecting the project to be successful as we were a small project and adult education is not usually a main research focus, but in my mind we should try. Why would this word have specifically been used to deny us funding? How is this research rebelling against Canada? How is it against the Canadian national project to have a Northern perspective? Or consider its majority population from a Northern or minority perspective? Or to have comment on newcomers to their land? Or is the government so fearful of the gaze being directed at them?

This systemic exclusionary and suppressive compulsion plagues government and by proxy poisons mainstream media representations and taints education as has

been discussed in previous chapters. I was incredulous then and I am incredulous now because the word seditious makes my student's identity and expression literally a high crime. It makes improving education to better engage Northern students and create more equitable relationships with Northern students a crime. It makes their success a crime. However, given the foundational literature of this dissertation it shouldn't be such a bitter surprise but it still was and it still is. I was also told by my colleague on the funding committee that Zacharias Kunuk also applied for funding for a youth filmmaking project and was unsuccessful. Perhaps for the same reason; as he wanted to train youth to make videos and look at climate change from an Inuit perspective. It seems critical given the state of the Arctic ice and climate change. How might this be seditious?

In fairness, that federal official was one person, but he was on a committee and his opinion was perhaps sufficient to block funding. I am curious what the other people said or perhaps wanted to say or not. As you look at Figure 4 on the next page it shows the initial brainstorming with the research groups. You see the interest in trying to be critical and reflexive in understanding the North and what it means from a Northern perspective. It would seem the federal government would be interested in their Northern citizen's perspective. One of the Legion member's who had approved my project remarked that he wished our project had been available when he moved North, as discussed earlier. Indeed, most others we have talked with and presented to have been very interested in what the student researched shared through the videos.

**Figure 6: Research Terms and Foundational Thoughts.**

North:	Northern:	Northerner:
Freedom Above 60th parallel Above tree line Cold 9 months of the year 24 hour daylight Clean (cleaner) Arctic Ocean Polar bears/White Bugs Bunny Community connections Exploration Bush radios Permafrost Northern lights Informal The Northwest Territories The cold region of North America Land of the midnight sun North of 60 The Arctic Boreal Aurora Borealis Delta Permafrost Pingos Glaciers Tundra Drunken trees	The communities of the north Of or in the north Inhabiting the north Tradition Cultures Foods Identities Societies Clothes Survival skills	Bilingual Bi-cultural Homeland is heritage Spring fever Born and raised Keep traditional life Can be naturalised (half-lifer) Accent Sweat off suntan lotion Good tan in summer Naturally tanned Friendly Relaxed Delta-time (Throw away your watch) Good listeners Good natured Traditional knowledge A person or people of the north A native or inhabitant of the north One living in the north Inuvialuit Gwich'in Aboriginal Indigenous Native
South:	Southerner:	
Anything more south than us Up the river Somewhere they have four seasons Below the 60th parallel As far as Deline or as far as polar bears go Degrees Land limited to backyard Northerners are moving south	Race isn't as big a factor now 40-50 years ago white but not now Multi-cultural Generally taller No similar characteristics with northerners Busy bodies More concerned with appearance Formal Great fibbers (Gov't-wise) Raised in south	

Under the Southerner column in Figure 4., there are perhaps three items that could be considered negative to Southerners. Busy bodies and more concerned with

appearance both seems safely mild. So perhaps the “Great fibber” (government wise) is the seditious part, but as they have the *Paulette* Supreme Court decision, which was clear that the Aboriginal people signing Treaty 8 did not think they were ceding territory, but rather making an agreement of goodwill and peace-making. This decision, among many other legal examples, is proof that the government has not always been honest. If stating legal fact (which is not in any way the main focus of this project) is seditious then the challenges Canada faces are far greater than presented. The Territorial government did not think this research was seditious and funded it in four separate ways, promoted it in their newsletter and used part of it in their staff training. It is interesting to see the vastly different perspective and support.

### **Power, Recognition and Perspective in the North**

Power is an issue. Coulthard (2014) writes eloquently in *Red Skins, White Masks: Rejecting the colonial politics of power* that while the process of recognition has been crucial in many ways to Indigenous self-determination, it is doomed to fail if it is predicated on the power relationship of the colonial institutions maintaining the power to recognize. This is a simplification of Coulthard’s detailed argument but I wanted to focus on the idea in the context of this project. As part of the Truth and Reconciliation process, we are finally recognizing the residential school past and understanding that it has had lasting on the survivors. I work in an educational system that initially sought to assimilate Aboriginal people through the attempted diabolical destruction of family and child identities. Never in my educational life have I felt that I had to fight to just be recognized as a person. If the fight begins with just being seen

as a person then the real project of meeting the needs of that person will always be secondary. Coulthard contends currently:

recognition inevitably leads to subjugation, and as such much of what indigenous peoples have sought over the last forty years to assure their freedom have in practice cunningly assured it opposite.

(Coulthard 2014: 42)

Recognition is looking at the humanization of Aboriginal people. It is intrinsically a flawed process that cannot fulfill its purpose because the practical needs of the person become lost in the process. If the question is whether a person is really a person or a worthwhile person, which foundation is too precarious and the future will never be certain. Coulthard asserts:

empowerment that is derived from this critically self-affirmative and self-transformative ethics of desubjugation must be cautiously directed away from the assimilative lure of the statist politics of recognition, and instead fashioned toward our on-the-ground struggles for freedom.

(Coulthard 2014:48)

That is what I try to do with my classes; acknowledge what has happened before but then focus on building a classroom community that supports the students by focusing on their goals and future. I have spent a great deal of time criticizing colonial powers and as a white woman this is part of my project as it is part of the system and it is part of my responsibility to challenge and change that system.

However, for my students their focus should be on themselves as Indigenous scholar Simpson (2011: 266) emphasizes ‘I am not so concerned with...which theories we use to critique colonialism; but I am very concerned with how we (re)build our own



house or our own houses. Colonial power is constantly reinstalled when it is the focus, it is possible to put energy and focus elsewhere and that is my dream for my students. To build something for themselves and their community by creating videos they are proud of and are entertaining, representational and educational. There is a powerful freedom in telling stories and the acceptance, enjoyment and acknowledgement that goes with that.

**Plate 13:** Tanya Snowshoe Interviewing in Aklavik, April 2010



(Photo by Brett Purdy)

My dreams were realized many times over but specifically well captured with Tanya Snowshoe's personal project video. An initially very quiet and shy student she became very assertive when interviewing and filming. Her project's focus was trying to set the record straight on *Northern Stereotypes*. Parsons (1970: 29) in his *Arctic Suburb: A look at the North's Newcomers*, the eighth report of twelve, in the

*Mackenzie Delta Research Project* that was commissioned by then Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to research adaption of people in the region ten years after Inuvik was created, on Aboriginal stereotypes he writes:

Nearly 60 percent described them as cheerful, happy, friendly, extroverts. On the negative side many considered them lazy, poor workers, lacking initiative and without a sense of responsibility...comments evoked by this item were favourable somewhat more often than they were unfavorable.

(Parsons 1970:29)

Tanya's video begins with narration where she contextualizes the problem of Southern people having false stereotypes about Northern people. She says that youth across the North feel strongly about their culture and identity and "when hearing false allegations about the NWT the people tend to get offended and stand up for their people and most importantly their culture". The concerns she focused on are the perception that Northerners were not up-to-date and misunderstandings of their lifestyle. She interviewed high school students in Aklavik; Steven, Davie Edwards, Dawn Edwards and Brook Edwards. Tanya begins by asking what they think about stereotypes that Davie helps the viewer define as "an assumption that is wrong". Steven says we don't live in Igloos and he has even been asked this in Yellowknife. Davie has also been asked if he stays in an igloo and has polar bears for pets. Brook has also been asked this and Dawn laughs when Brook says I live in a house. Tanya asks Steven how this makes him feel and he says bad. Davie says he laughs but Brook says she thinks it is mean and Dawn agrees. Tanya asks what they say to these ridiculous remarks. Steven says he asks why they think that, Davie asks them to learn more about the North and Brook says tell them off and Dawn laughs. Tanya then asks them if then were a Southerner would they think the same thing? Steven says no as does Davie and when Tanya asks if he is sure and he nods and Dawn and Brook agree

with them. All asked are very serious about their answers, and their denial of not being the same as Southerners is genuine and rooted in the belief it is not necessary to be ignorant and therefore mean to another group. These high school students are sincere in their desire to set the record straight but also politely challenge whether it should be necessary. Finally, Tanya asks how they think the Southerners live. Dawn says “very different from us that they would not go on the land or go trapping or what not” and Brook says they eat different. When asked what the North is to them, and the students (including an unnamed student) all turn solemn and say the land and beauty. The video ends with Tanya summing up student responses and stressing that Northern Youth value their home. Tanya’s project is a microcosm of the larger project as it engages all themes and clearly shows the Northern perspective in an identifiable and approachable way. It is a strong foundation.

### **Binary of Self and Other**

Postcolonial Studies was born out of Said’s (1978: 39) exposing the stereotype of ‘the Orientals as inveterate liars’ and thereby the falsehood of the ‘other’. Parsons on overcoming stereotypes of newcomers to the Mackenzie Delta:

It is suggested, then, that the newcomer arrives relatively “uncontaminated” by stereotyped images and subsequently acquires these images, undergoing a kind of conversion over time to the perceptions and attitudes of his associates, learning in the context of a subculture to respond to natives in certain prescribed ways...this hypothesis might have significance for the staff training policies of government agencies operating in the north, for it would indicate a need to instil in new recruits an awareness of the mechanisms of “contamination”...it would be unrealistic to suggest that any educational measures to eliminate them could be more than marginally successful except over a very long span of time.

(Parsons 1970: 40)

Deloria (1969: 146) notes ‘the image of the granite-faced grunting redskin has been perpetuated by American mythology...people have little sympathy with stolid groups’. Smith (1999: 72) discusses the issue on the ‘authentic, essentialist, deeply spiritual other’ when a local paper arrived to take a photo at an international conference but was not satisfied with the jeans and tracksuits the Indigenous group wore rather than traditional garb and as a result no photo was taken. She asserts:

questions of who is a ‘real indigenous’ person, what counts as a ‘real indigenous leader’, which person displays ‘real cultural values’ and the criteria used to assess the characteristics of authenticity are frequently the topic of conversation and political debate. These debates are designed to fragment and marginalize those who speak for, or in support of, indigenous issues. They frequently have the effect also of silencing and making invisible the presence of other groups within indigenous society like women, the urban non-status tribal person and those whose ancestry or ‘blood quantum’ is ‘too white’.

(Smith 1999: 72)

Drew Hayden Smith (1998) sums up the “identity” challenge in his very funny collection of essays *Funny You Don’t Look Like One: Observations of a Blue-eyed Ojibway*. Sheila Watt-Cloutier (2015) writes that it has often been lamented that she does not look Inuk enough and she is very clear that people ‘need to get used to it’ and ‘this is what we look like now’. It seems like an impossible situation as the first challenge is to be recognized period, but then comes the colonial evaluation of who should be. Thomas King (2003: 31) explores the ridiculousness of outsider recognition first in his Massey lecture and essay *You’re Not the Indian I Had in Mind* and later returns to the issue in his very effective visual spoken word group dramatization (2007) of the similar name, *I’m Not The Indian You Had in Mind*, which features a wooden face store front Indian. Brody contents:

The modern individual Eskimo fails to achieve the standard of excellence implicit in the whites idea of the 'real Eskimo'...the paradox is brutal: whites criticize those who respond to pressures the Whites institutions are dedicated to exerting.

(Brody 1975: 86)

The peculiar paradox of the recognition of Aboriginal perceived identity and authenticity is poetically captured by Tlicho author Richard Van Camp's (2013) aptly titled short story collection *Godless but loyal to heaven*.

### **Situating the Visual – Northern Image, Identity, and Representation**

This chapter is about viewing the videos and complexities of their creation and consumption. The previous chapter was about the creation process, which was informed by these aspects. As a viewer/reader considering the videos, within the frame of the previous chapters, this chapter is a repositioning focusing exercise to engage the video messages. Duncum (2010: 6) writing on art education proposes the seven principles of visual culture are: (1) power; (2) ideology; (3) representation; (4) seduction; (5) gaze; (6) intertextuality and (7) multimodality. The first three: power, ideology, and representation, offer the most potential for challenge and perhaps conflict. Who has power? This is a complex question in the North, as the government does wield a great deal of power in attention but also in neglect. The student researchers are adults finishing secondary school. They were predominantly women and enjoy very little power in comparison to the government. However, as the population is predominately Aboriginal, there is an interesting dynamic of innate

agency that hasn't been fully disrupted. Are their differing ideologies? This dissertation outlines the polarity of the North/South ideologies but you can see thoughtful restraint in the student research videos and the responses of community members around Southern questions and representations. The student researchers and community members' exuberance and their focus were more fully on the North. When asking who and what are being represented, the conflict presented itself through Southern responses. This conflict will be explored through considering the white privilege and how that impacts representation and the white gaze perspective on reading representation. Northern representation was more straightforward, as students and community members talked to each other but had also clear messages for the South. Gaze was taken up with power, ideology and representation. The term 'seduction' is perhaps poorly entitled as we discussed this as audience appeal and engagement. Intertextuality is part of the Northern high context communication mode and is perhaps more readily read in this way. However, the dramatized sections and choices of interviews do challenge any viewer to see the video content within larger contexts, cultural, political, historical and within knowledge systems. The sharing of video and photography through YouTube, Facebook, and television brings another element of viewing. It was rewarding for students to share their work with friends and family. Students often said how much their friends and family enjoyed the videos. In all my years of teaching, no student has ever mentioned what their friends and family thought of their essays.

The main thrust of the student research was to share and show their North, as already seen with Tanya's project. The students and community members focused on

their love of the land, the people and their way of life. The videos clearly show the enjoyment of sharing that love. Students were clear that they wanted positive messages and their goal was a feel-good video project. They said that you can turn on the news any day and there is a terrible story about the North outlining why things are only worse in Nunavut (statistically speaking for educational achievement, poor health outcomes and high rate of violent crime. Indeed students say all the time at least we have Nunavut to be worst because when we were one territory it was always us). If that is the dominant media image the students see for themselves and their home: positive and happy portrayals are in their own way subversive given the way Aboriginal people are portrayed. That negative public image of Aboriginal People generated by the media and government is unfortunately part of the Northern story, but it is only just a part. Presenting predominately negative images of a people is very problematic as described by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie in the epigram quoted at the outset of this chapter; those negative images undermine the community and do not fully educate others about that community.

Positive stories could be seen as a rebellion against the unrelenting negativity and focus on the bad. If you type “positive and Indigenous” into a journal search you get positive HIV and drug use for most of the hits and very few articles on positive representation. Black writers have often used Aboriginal Peoples as an example of a worse situation. Chris Rock in *Bigger and Blacker* (1999) brings the idea to the popular culture:

No one has it worse than the American Indian....they got it bad...they got it the worst...when was the last time you met two Indians? I went to the Macy's day parade and they had a bunch of pilgrims and only three real Indians and the rest were Puerto Ricans with feathers in their hair.

(Chris Rock 1999 in *Bigger and Blacker*)

Dave Chappelle has also discussed American Indians in a similar fashion in more recent years. Going back in time, the Ethiop (William J. Wilson) in 1860 wrote on the white treatment of the Indigenous people in America:

the first victims to their cupidity. They took advantage of them in every conceivable manner. They robbed them of their lands, plundered their wigwams, burned their villages, murdered their wives and children. This may seem over-drawn; for in some instances small purchases of land were made; when once gained, the work of ravage and devastation would commence. Thus, step by step they advanced, until now they have almost the entire possession of the continent.

(Ethiop – William J. Wilson 1998: 58)

Indeed, I have written before in this dissertation that the state of Aboriginal Canadians is worse than that of Black Americans and the state of the North the worst of all. *Maclean's* is blunt in their article 'Canada's racism problem? It's even worse than America: For a country so self satisfied with its image of progressive tolerance, why isn't this a national crisis? (Gilmore 2015).

Many times, I have been asked why students did not do hard-hitting videos about 'important' issues. Jackson writes of 'the prose of suffering':

*Whose* experience is to be prioritized – the sufferers or ours? And do we privilege what is at stake for the liberal spectator or what is at stake for the sufferer – for the issues are rarely the same? With the best will in the world, it is difficult to distance oneself from one's own assumptions as it is to embrace the experience of the other.

(Jackson 2013: 222)



The answer is they did do hard-hitting videos, but positive ones. The negative is over-covered, it is not the only story, and it isn't the full story. Also, they do not need constant reminders that there are problems because that is their reality. What they wanted to focus on were the good things and they wanted others to see them too. Positive images of Aboriginal people should not be seen as subversive but they often are. They are also the best way to challenge the power inequalities as they can gently educate Canada about who they are.

First Nations artist Paul Seesequasis is currently working on a photo book of positive Aboriginal images at the request of his mother who was tired of sad and negative Aboriginal visual portrayal. His Facebook page is very inspiring and he posts images daily. Also, the High Arctic values conflict avoidance, which has been discussed in earlier chapters and is documented in Briggs' aptly titled (1971) *Never in Anger*, which details the Inuit importance of mastering emotions and dealing with people in a positive, friendly and constructive way. The Iñupiaq Cultural Values: Iñupiat Ilitqusiat (2006) taught 'with guidance and support from Elders, we must teach our children':

Knowledge of Language,  
Sharing, Respect for Others,  
Cooperation,  
Respect for Elders,  
Love for Children,  
Hard Work,  
Knowledge of Family Tree,  
Avoidance of Conflict,  
Respect for Nature,  
Spirituality,  
Humour,  
Family Roles,  
Hunter Success,  
Domestic Skills,

Humility,  
and Responsibility to Tribe

Our understanding of our universe and our place in it is a belief in God and respect for all of his creations.

([Alaska Native Knowledge Network](#))

It does not mean the North is a utopia and that people are always in accord but it means that Northern people engage in communicating and problem solving in other ways first. A gentle voice with gentle redirection and always with humour, is often the preferred method. It is ironic given the tone of some of my writing but my approach to the project was done calmly, with that humour and gentle voice, focusing on the good and if I forgot the students always gently redirected me.

If it is seditious to see Aboriginal people as healthy, happy and funny then ‘inciting or causing people to rebel against the authority of a state’ is perhaps a good idea, especially if it can be done nicely. The fact that the Government of the Northwest Territories adopted some of the video content as a means of training public servants means that we were successful. Keifer-Boyd, Amburgy and Knight (2007: 19 and 22) on teaching visual culture state ‘it is based on understanding cultural practices as ideology, social power and constructed forms of knowledge’ and ‘gaining knowledge of both the positions we occupy and the positions from which we speak enables us to take responsibility for and transform our beliefs and action’. One friend commented to me when we were chatting about the project that it was like our own little Coke commercial. She said “You know the one where you would like to buy the world a coke and keep it company”. She said that was what she wanted to watch, something about how we can all get along and something happy that people would

remember about the North. She laughed and said that is really what we are like anyway. I told her that was what we were trying to do.

### **Northern Perspectives on Research and the North**

This section deals with the research that fits under the theme of Northern Studies but it also positions how the total project was approached, in terms of the context and the perspective of the research and videos. The main goals the students identified for creating the videos were that they be seen as relevant and modern (not been seen as out of touch or behind the times) and the second was to pursue their own personal interviews and projects to show their North; its beauty and uniqueness. It is a paradox of being similar to the South but also very different, but it is very understandable considering the images they see of themselves on the news and the stereotypes portrayed on television and in the movies and the interactions they have had with Southern people (further detailed in later sections). Indeed the desire to be seen as equal and modern was very important to every student research group that I worked with. The anxiety they communicated by being seen as less than they are to the South was very tangible. To this end they hoped to never again be asked these questions:

#### **Dumb Questions Often Asked of Northerners**

1. Do you eat raw meat?
2. Do you live in an igloo?
3. Have you ever seen a Polar Bear?
4. Do you own a dog sled?
5. Are you an Eskimo/Indian?
6. Do you have running water?
7. What kind of heating system do you have?

8. Are all Eskimos 5 foot or shorter and slanty eyed?
9. Do you think Aboriginals get everything for free/schooling/medicare?
10. Do you think our transportation consists of strictly dogsleds?

The very first short film the students made as a group was addressing this Southern view of the North being romantically situated in the past. It begins in black with just the sound of feet crunching through the snow and then it comes up to black and white showing a young woman (Shelby) walking to set her traps. As she is burying them in snow we hear a ringing. She goes to investigate and digs out a Blackberry cellular phone and the black and white image changes to full color. Another woman walks by (Esther) and asks her what she is doing. Shelby cheerfully says checking her traps and Facebook. In a short film using clever story and visual techniques the students' group film challenges the view to see the North in the present with a blending of the traditional and modern. It is playful but unflinching in demanding that the North be seen not as some past but as a present that still values subsistent skills and the land but is also up-to-date and connected to the rest of the world. This very short clip was always included in presentations and was very well received by both audiences. Famous Cree singer and political activist Buffy Saint Marie (2017) spoke on Canada needing to decolonize and how to approach decolonization. She explains:

You have to be brief and you have to be engaging. The only thing that's important is being effective. You don't necessarily bludgeon people with the information. You make it palatable. "Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee" is a rock 'n' roll track for a very good reason. That's because the information is so new and disturbing to most people who have never heard of it before. You want them to be dancing, you want them to be feeling good before they realize they're listening to a protest song. So there are ways to do it and there are ways that are just going to turn your audience off.

(Saint Marie 2017)

This research had to be something that people would watch and engage in. Students and community members were effective at communicating their messages in a palatable and entertaining way.

### **Northern Studies – The Land First**

Many individual projects highlighted the connection to the land and showcased the North and its infinite beauty. *Goose Hunting* was made by Tsiigethchic student Shelly Andre. It has excellent footage, panning the rivers confluence, up the bank and throughout town, that showcases the smallest community in the region. Shelly explains that the former name of the community was Arctic Red River but was changed to Tsiigethchic, which means ‘mouth of the iron river’. Much of the footage is shot from the perspective of her driving around town and you can hear her children in the truck. This is a wonderful eye into Northern life as driving around is a big part of community life and children are a part of all aspects of life. She explains the transportation links and cuts to the footage of a bear and then to the land in spring thaw. The view then changes to personal footage in full spring showing a snow machine being taken off the back of a pick-up truck that will be used to go geese hunting 45 minutes from town. The video shifts to her dad explaining how important going on the land is to him. Then the video cuts to people skipping their snow machines in the spring wet moving into closer footage of the hunting party. Shelly tells her audience of the importance of staying warm and bringing extra clothes in case you get wet but assures the viewer it is not that cold. She states it is

important to bring guns and extra shot and extra gas. Then video and narration then goes on to show the construction of blinds to shield them from the geese's view before the hunters are ready to begin calling. Shelly explains, that you should shoot when the geese are flying low towards you and how you can use the geese you have shot as decoys. She explains how she loves going on the land and that geese are really good to eat. We cut back to her father and she asks him if he has any crazy stories about hunting; he shares the story when he went swan hunting with his son. He unsuccessfully shot but his son shot twice and got two swans. He told his son "I guess I should hang up my gun" laughing and Shelly joins him. This video captures the community, community life, the love of the land and the importance of humor and humility.

Rachel and Brett first travel to Paulatuk by plane and then by skidoo 80 kilometers southwest of the camp at Bakere Lake. It took almost 7 hours. They are accompanied by Rachel's father Jonah Nakimayak, her brother Herb Nakimayak and the Wolkis, Bill and Frances. The land is featured predominantly and Jon and Herb describe the building of their family camp that is also used as a base for guiding and on the land programming. Rachel describes how her brother helps her father and how they work together. Herb describes the difficulty of hauling all the materials to build the camp. Rachel then interviews Frances who describes others experience of the camp as being a long journey but worth it as you can feel at peace on the land. Frances continues with explaining how important it for young people to go on the land because so many elders are leaving and we need to gain every bit of their knowledge. Rachel returns to the narration to explain why she wanted to share this

family place with a Southern audience. She cuts to her father who says “Northern Culture is where we live and how we teach the younger generation to live off the land”. Rachel concludes that she want to show Southern people how important the land is to her people. The final scene is of a skidoo moving across the tundra. Rachel, her father, her brother and Frances are very explicit in their messaging and Rachel’s choice of visuals support their main message of the importance of the land. This video was possible because I traded the cash equivalent of \$400 airfare to Tutoyaktuk for a gift certificate for two flights anywhere Aklak Air flies. The cost of flying to Paulatuk is over \$2000 and would not otherwise have been possible. Brett donated his time and I covered his one night in the hotel and other costs. Herb is now the current Vice President of the Inuit Circumpolar Polar Conference and the Nunakput Member of the Legislative Assembly. This is a special video as Jonah and Frances have left us.

### **Northern Culture - Adaptive and Progressive**

*Our Modern North* is also from the mini film school projects and is by Mariah Blake from Tsiigehtchic and Katherine Lennie from Inuvik. It directly engages with showing Southern people proposing that the western Arctic is not that different from the South. Mariah explains “We live in houses with running water. Using video montage with music overlaid, they show a house with running water and the lights turning off and on. They then switch to showing that they have the same technology as in the south, iPods, cell phones, computers and wireless internet. Next items to be shown are clothes as Mariah barely contains her laughter when she says we all don’t wear caribou skin pants. They show footage from the Northern store to feature

electronics, clothing and finally food as they assure the viewer “They do not eat seal meat and muktuk for breakfast, lunch and dinner”.

In the second half of their video, they interview Brett Purdy. They have modified the research questions to fit their focus. The first question is what did he expect and he answers that the North has many more amenities that he thought. Inuvik has a rec centre, three grocery stores and flights everyday. Their next question is what do you think a year later? He answers that he likes the small town feel and the ability to talk to people he knows in the grocery store. The next question is what would you tell Southerners about the North? And he says that everyone should experience it as it is a huge region and a “piece of the puzzle” of Canadian identity and history. Katherine and Mariah make their point about similarities and putting Brett on the ‘hot seat’ is very effective to communicate to the Southern audience.

*Cooking with Steen* is a cooking show. Initially, the idea of a cooking show puzzled me, but Dwight reminded me “you said we could do whatever we wanted and we want a cooking show” and I was abashed. The resulting video is one of the most memorable, effective and fun. It begins with Ashlyn Allen explaining the importance of tradition and traditional cooking to Northern culture. She explains that bannock was introduced to Aboriginal peoples from the fur trade but is something that is enjoyed and shared by all Aboriginal peoples. She clarifies that it can also be fried to make the local delicacy of Eskimo donuts. It then cuts to their cooking show featuring her partner and fellow student Dwight Snowshoe and their friend Mathew Steen (also Shelby’s brother). Mathew narrates the recipe but a good deal of the video is silent as



the camera captures the bannock making process. I discussed the importance of silence culturally before and it is perhaps even more utilized by Northern men. Matthew and Dwight have a brief discussion about the dough in the middle of the video. The balance of the rest is putting the bannock in the pan, setting it to bake and waiting with clever use of the clock quickly counting forward. They then enjoy their bannock mostly in silence but do clarify for the viewer that “it is good”. Ashlyn concludes the video by saying it is a way for them to enjoy their culture and for the viewer as well. This is a poignant video as Mathew took his life a few years after filming.

### **Insider Research**

This research project was from the inside. Student researchers were working in their home communities, interviewing friends, family and each other and the videos were shown extensively in the community and some on television. Smith writes:

insider research has to be as ethical and respectful, as reflexive and critical, as outsider research. It also needs to be humble. It needs to be humble because the researcher belongs to the community as a member with a different set of roles and relationships, status and position.

(Smith 1999: 139)

This research was approached with humility, reciprocity, humour and used gentle redirection always keeping the land and people at its forefront. There are topics that were chosen as a desire to have a “private” discourse on the subject. Of course, this is a public project but often the videos did not include much exposition as the main

intended viewers were keenly aware of the topic. The late Robert Alexie, Gwich'in leader, photographer and author, wrote the devastating *Porcupines and China Dolls* (2002:12) for a Northern audience with limited exposition, when residential schools were just beginning to be discussed. The title describes the children who upon entering residential school, bathed and the girls powdered like china dolls and the boy's hair shorn into buzz cuts like porcupines. His prose was so powerful; King (2003: 116) invoked it in his Massey lecture, in his describing sorrow of the children in the residential school dormitories as 'a million porcupines cry in the dark'.

Kendra Tingmiak focused on residential schools as her individual summer project. She interviewed three former students from Aklavik, Tutoyaktuk and Inuvik. These three experiences were different but made connections to the larger experience of residential schools in the Western Arctic.

Jimmy Omiglituk, from Aklavik, attended the longest period of those interviewed, first in Aklavik but then in Inuvik (Grollier Hall), entering when he was only four. His mother had tuberculosis and was sent to Edmonton and he said there was nowhere else safe for him to go. He is unflinching, sharing that when his mom returned and he was reunited with his family, he didn't even know he had parents and siblings. His experience was so bad that he says he does not remember it very well and is only beginning to remember things now all these years later. He is candid about his pain leading him to alcoholism and credits his wife for helping him overcome his drinking and that he is over twenty years sober. There is no shame in his interview and the group were grateful and humbled by his candour.

The interview in Tuktoyaktuk was with Trace Voudrach, she entered school in Inuvik when she was eight, she stayed in Grollier hall as well and attended for nine years. She shared the pain of not being able to see her brother, even though he was also at school (this is an unfortunate situation that occurred often). In being asked to describe the experience she said “sad, angry, like holding a grudge” and then she asked, “why did it happen”.

Denise Kurszweski (now MacDonald), holds a Bachelor’s and a Master’s of Education and currently serves as Superintendent of Education in the Beaufort Delta. She spent the least amount of time at a residential school. She spent just over a year in the Stringer Hall ‘hostel’ (what the residential school was more commonly called locally). Her experience was positive. Kendra was firm in her decision to want to show the full experience and that some had good experiences. It is a bold choice and she defends it as some people did have good experiences but was very clear that this was not her message but rather an inclusion to balance the interviews. Denise herself is very clear her positive experience was not like the terrible experience of so many others and she is very specific that she was fortunate that she responded well to the structure and she did better academically. She is also candid that her mother needed the help when Denise’s father became ill and her mother was drinking a lot. Being from the community was also an advantage as Denise was allowed to stay in Brownies and her older sister was able to visit her. She qualifies that this was during the late sixties and things were less strict. She says she was grateful that her mother could get help and did not have to give her up. As an educator, Denise said that from

a child development perspective, residential schools did not provide the hugs and love that are critically required for proper growth and development of children.

This video was created for the North and it is an intimate project that engages the insider in an even manner that allows each story to stand on its own, but creates a continuum that invites the viewer in to contextualize residential school experiences in their own way which is predominantly assumed to be one with experience. Smith (2012: 226) describes the complexity of insider research, but also all Indigenous activism and research is charged with the dual difficult task of ‘getting the story right and telling the story well’. However, this does not limit the video to an insider audience but gives the outsider a rare inside view and invites them to learn from that insider perspective.

### **Northern Studies Interviews**

The research questions that the students created for Northern Studies focused on the land and culture. The land was the first consideration: questions were focused on going out on the land, the regularity of hunting/trapping, eating of traditional food, and the sharing of successful catch. There were concerns about how the price of gas and ammunition/food affected their chances of going out on the land, preferences for living out on the land or in town and whether it was possible to live a traditional lifestyle in today’s society. Culture was the next main focus: questions were asked around Aboriginal language, traditional medicine, and traditional clothing. The questions shifted to the next generation, their hopes for the future, keeping culture

alive, and the importance of teaching the next generation; traditional knowledge and skills. There were concerns of the next generation having less traditional knowledge and whether the younger generations would take Aboriginal culture seriously.

Climate change was the next big concern, (although we used the term global warming) questions were asked about Northerner's feelings about global warming in the North, the migratory change in animals, the proposed Mackenzie Valley Pipeline will affecting the animal migration routes (caribou) and what people could do to help change global warming. Concerns about education came next: encouraging the younger generation to finish their education, is the Northern curriculum is up to the standards with the rest of Canada, do Northerners take school as seriously as Southerners and should cultural education be practiced more? There were some more general questions like at what age do you consider a person an elder, how would a Northerner recognize another Northerner and the open-ended what are you most concerned about in the North. The last group of questions asked was about the government: do you like how our current government is run, how does it compare to the South and who do you consider your leading government (federal, territorial or Aboriginal). The topic distribution of the questions clearly shows the focus and interest of the students: land, culture, environment and government.

**Plate 14:** Kendra Tingmiak Editing Video, August 2010



(Photo by Author)

The theme video begins with *Northern Voices*, *Northern Faces* after a stylized montage of Northern footage includes: images of dancing, skidooing, hunting caribou, going to whale camp and showcasing the varied landscape of the region. Kendra Tingmiak headed the editing but discussed her goals and choices with the group. She tried to include as many questions as possible, to honor the choices the group had made, and the work they had done. Interview responses were included to be representational of all responses, to provide emphasis, and to include unique responses. Kendra approached the editing as a collaborative task whereby she was charged with communicating for the group not just herself. To make an analogy to drum dancing: dancers are very careful to share whose song they are performing, how it came about, how they learned it, to acknowledge their thanks and explaining that this is their interpretation of that song. Drum dancing is a singular and collective event and this was the intended approach of the summer research interns when editing

the group work. The video includes responses from over forty people. It follows Northern communication norms with a short introduction where people introduce themselves and then moves into the questions around Northern identity:

Debbie English : As a Northerner you should know where you are from. Each day I know where I am from.

Esther Ipana: Lived here my whole life, born and raised and go out on the land as much as I can

Georgina Ogina: Going out on the land & doing traditional things like hunting, trapping, cleaning fish and cutting caribou

Mary Okeena (mirrors these responses and adds) The city is too big that is how I know I am a Northerner

Marion McGinnis (non-Indigenous Northerner) – I have lived here for over 25 years, November 1983. I am one of those people that where I am, is home to me.

In clarifying Northern culture:

Debbie English: My experience has always been that us Northerners are very friendly, courteous, very kind. We give from the heart. We open our lives to the other Southern people. We have always shown we are very hospitable people. People have always said many things about us, that Northerners being one of the greatest people they have met in their lifetime. I hope the younger generation respect that and continue the tradition of being a very human person.

Mary Okheena: You have to be very tough to live in the North because it is very harsh in the wintertime. The climate is cold and can change rapidly. In the summer it is hot. When you are growing up you have to live a traditional life with the language and everything. So when you grow up you can know it and understand it.

Esther Ipana: I would say Northern people are friendly. We are easy to get along with and we encourage outsiders to get along with us.

Patrick Joe: It is respect no matter where you go

Abel Tingimak: Northern Culture is the way we live. The way we teach the younger generation to live off the land.

Nellie Pokiak: Our Northern Culture talks about the language but also our skills. It could be sewing all the traditional clothes and caring for them and the traditional foods in the Arctic

Non-Indigenous student raised in Tuktoyaktuk: Northern culture is rich with hunting, sewing and it is also magnetic...it draws people in, its very kind...the very atmosphere is you want to get up and participate in what is happening.

Frances Wolki: Our culture is a strong one. And traditionally do all of the things out on the land: People need to go back on the land to regain their culture and some people don't go out as much due to whatever and they seem to lose themselves until they come back out to somewhere on the land.

Aklavik students: the language. Learning it. Go in the bush. Jiggle. Tradition.

Herb Nakimayak: Our culture is changing a lot. We are losing out language. It is discouraging to see Nunavut and Nunatsuiat doing well with their language and that is one department we are lacking in. When we are going to lose it...it puts a lot of insecurity in that. By not being able to speak it right now. You feel very intimidated by other Inuit. It has affected everyone in our generation. In a few generations if we can't preserve our language at least we can practice our culture. As least we have those values that we can practice each and every day whether it be at home or on the land.

In answering what the North means to them:

Jim Macdonald: The North to me is home. I guess you could say it is everything to me.

Tuk interview: We live freely and wide open spaces around us.

Nellie Pokiak: The North means a lot of things. But first of all I would like to say my culture. I do a lot of hunting and fishing. I enjoy the weather and the different seasons. We love the North...it has a lot of different meaning to me.

Tuk student: After living in Tuk for 14 years. Obviously it means home to me. A lot of people are welcoming and making a very vivid and rich culture.

Angela Young: The most significant thing for me in the North is that unshakeable feeling of community. We have had tragedies. We have lost students and significant people but at that time I am thankful to be here to be part of the support network.

Trace Voudrach: The traditional way of living.

Dennis Allen: The North means to me...Number one is home. Its security. Its familiar in a lot of aspects. It is predicable. Its comfortable. It is a place I always know I can come back here and survive here. We have a big family network. We can depend on and fall back on.

Johnah Nakimayak; The North means to me everything. Life. The way it is. The way I raised. It means the life to me.

Jimmy Omigoituk; The North is my home. Where I was brought up. It was where I brought up my children. My grandchildren.

Holly and Steve. It is home. Where I have lived and grown up my whole life.

Wilma Hendricks: The North is very important to me. It is where I grew up. Where family is.



Steven: Winter, Having fun, driving skidoos

Herb Nakimayak: It is obviously home. A lot of my friends are here too. Mostly family. I enjoy the North. I grew up trapping in the trees. I did grade 5 and 7 in the bush. I'll always come back no matter what....I want to be on the land...it is my situation.

These answers are full and passionate. They contrast with the incomplete answers in the next section where Southerners respond to what the South means. The rest of the video attempts to include the breadth of responses in a little over another half hour. Kendra chose limited exposition that privileges the Northern viewer and this video is first for the North but it does have enough information to invite the Southern viewer in with fuller interview responses and interesting but unqualified cover images. The video moves across topics from the financial challenge of going on the land to traveling on the ice road. The balance of the second half focuses on worries about the future and the passing on of tradition, language and culture to the next generation.

The interview participants shared concerns of the difficulty and importance of going on the land due to challenges of finding the time because of the need to work. Living off the land completely is no longer possible due to changes in wildlife and the very high costs of fuel, equipment and supplies. Kendra skilfully chooses to move from more stressful questions and answers onto something more positive. The responses to drumming and drum dancing are particularly poignant:

William Greenland: with our Gwich'in people we don't have our drum. We have our drum but very few people are using our drum. In Alaska and parts of the Yukon territory, the drum is effective but here in the Northwest Territories it is something we don't talk about but we need to do this. We need to talk about our drum. Inside our drum is our language. We learn our language if we

learn the songs because it is our language because it is our words. You are doing two things at once; leaning to use the drum and to learn the language.

Abel Tingmiak: It is an important thing for us. We were losing it before and we tried to revive it back and we did. When I went to school in Aklavik my language went from me. But after I started drum dancing it came back to me.

The last two sections focus on climate change and then education. The land and environment are of central and visceral importance to the people and the threat that climate change poses to the land is perilous to the future of Northern life and culture. However, Kendra chooses to end with education and to end the video with hope and images of Northern Success. It is an effective edit of the material in a Northern way.

### **Researching in a Northern way**

This research is not just about the Northern content and context but also Northern perspective, approach, worldview and deductions. Research students approached the work in a Northern way, focusing on the positive, being inclusive, building consensus as a group and always considering the place of the research and the people. It was a calm, collaborative and fun activity filled with humor and humility. Consider this example to better understand the research students' perspective, context and approach. Northern secondary students write the Alberta standardized grade twelve English exam. It is not without its issues as it is Southern exam administered to Northern students, but the exam gives the students a nationally recognized English secondary exit course and that has value for educational mobility and preparing students for post secondary education that is predominately in the South or Southern taught.

In the beginning of the first research group's work I was called by Alberta Education in Edmonton where the January exams were being marked. The essay question had been about achieving self-actualization (and in my view the question was unnecessarily cumbersome) and students were supposed to use examples from the literature they had studied in the course to construct an essay answering the question. The marker was perplexed, they had pulled all my students exams and she was carefully trying to find out more information without compromising the exams. My heart seized as I had supplemented the suggested literature with Northern titles and I said, "Let me guess. They all mentioned going on the land. And everyone used *Ada Blackjack* (2004)" (one of my Northern books, a true story of an Inupiaq woman who was the only one to survive the doomed Stephenson expedition to Wrangel Island in Siberia in 1921 and she was rescued in 1923). She was surprised and asked how I knew that. I literally put my head on my desk and said "For my students it was a self evident truth that would not need explanation". She asked for more information about the book (which I gladly sent) and assured me that only the most experienced markers would assess them and she was going to suggest that from now on our students' exams always be assessed this way (for which I was extremely grateful). My students thought I was having a medical event as I was incandescent red but I was so worried their exam marks would suffer due to my choice in literature (no matter how appropriate) and that their perspective wouldn't be valued. The exam marks came back fine, but I have shifted my exam preparations for students to prepare students to be more explicit with their locality and life experience (I was also asked if the students were writing about metaphoric children or real ones but in their defense the majority of students writing the exam are white, urban, seventeen-year-olds).

My point is that my students are different and should be different. The only time I taught Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* (1996) was in my first year and it was not my choice but had been pre-ordered (it is a standard play suggested for study by grade twelve students in Canada). Middle-class angst, as depicted in the play, does not translate well into a Northern classroom. It yielded such responses as: Willy Loman's life was great, none of his kids were in jail, he didn't have kids with his mistress, his drinking was not a huge problem, he had a job, he had a house and I have no idea why he would kill himself. They were very serious and they were also joking. As First Nations Canadian comedian Drew Hayden Taylor explains:

Native humour comes from 500 hundred years of colonization, of oppression, of being kept prisoners in our own country. With legalized attacks on our culture, our languages, our identities and even our religion, often the only way left for Native people to respond to the cruel realities of Fourth World existence was in humour. Humour kept us sane. It gave us power. It gave us privacy.  
(Hayden Taylor 2006: 69)

Deloria explains:

one of the best ways to understand a people is to know what makes them laugh. Laughter encompasses the limits of the soul. In humor life is redefined and accepted. Irony and satire provide much keener insights into a group's collective psyche and values than do years of research.  
(Deloria 1969: 146)

Indeed as I frame the literature, systems and histories, I am angry. I know in a Northern context it shows my immaturity and I need to master this in some ways but within my own Southern context and that of this writing I am comfortable with my

anger though I endeavour to temper it. The project was intended to be positive and gentle and it challenged viewers to consider culture, perspective, power and context in an accessible way that belied its subversion and critical stance. Perhaps it is seditious to laugh at authority or the government, but is also very funny and if you can get everyone laughing, you have gotten everyone thinking.

## **Southern Studies**

Southern Studies has been the most commented on theme. Many think it fun/amusing, some consider it offensive and others thought it quietly critical. Brody did make a study of whites living in the Arctic in the 1970s. He (1975: 14) describes the majority of them as, 'they lived on the edge of Eskimo society, distanced from it by their purposes, by their life-style and their central interest in transforming rather than adapting to the people they encountered'. Our idea was to try and level the playing field, after Southerners had studied Northerners for so long. It is also an important learning exercise to engage in a full spectrum of analysis of both groups, deepening the learning experience and the research project data. It was done in a light-hearted way and the students were always extremely concerned with not wanting to cause offense. At times there were painful memories that came up, specifically of residential school. Memories were shared with great honesty. Mostly it was thoughtful observation about the differences in Southern culture and always some humour but with everyone being in on the joke. The question this section is looking at is what is Southern culture? Returning to the writing of the Ethiop (William J. Wilson) in 1860 (Wilson: 1998: 66), he opined, 'and in view of the existing state of things around us, let our constant thought be, *what for the best good of all shall we do with the White People*'. It still is interesting and provocative that this was posed so long ago but the actual formal consideration of White or Whiteness studies is very new academically. White studies, in a

Canadian context, is more precisely framed as a manifestation of settler-colonial studies. Indigenous-Settler relations are grounded in the differing perception and power politics of land use and ownership that inevitably results in inequality, racial tension and hegemony of government, industry and settler-culture. The noun settler and the verb settling does fully not translate in a Northern context as it does in South but it is the dominant paradigm used in Canada. In time Northerners will likely propose a more appropriate term. In this research we have used Southern specifically and generically. However, the literature used in this section draws from the discourse of White, Whiteness, White Studies and white privilege but the reader should orientate themselves back to the Canadian and Northern colonial paradigm.

To situate the videos, white privilege, gaze and culture are explored and then other projects of the reversed gaze are considered. This excerpt from the student researchers' interview of CBC media personality Rick Mercer encapsulates the Southern Studies aptly:

Rick Mercer: I have never been the subject of a research project before. I am excited.

Katherine Lenny: What does the South mean to you...symbolize to you.

Rick Mercer: The South...well by South you think about where I live. Which when you live in the South in Canada everyone thinks they are living in the North. They don't think of themselves living in the South. When I think South, I think the United States of course but I know when you say South you mean what I think of as North. Toronto is where I live now. I think cities, that is what I think.

Southerners did not always welcome the video research during the interviewing and often Southerners were at a loss as to define their culture. Chambers asserts:

whiteness is not a classificatory identity but just the unexamined norm against which such identities are defined, compared and examined...white people as a group are just the unexamined. But there is more political strength in that than all the identity politics in the world.

(Chambers 1997:197)

This fits within white as unexamined but limited to Southern people as an interesting phenomenon because Northerners interviewed always came up with something constructive to say about the South and when asked about their own cultures, they all had thoughtful and full answers. To try and bridge the gap and engage the idea of what is Southern culture and the power of perspective, the student researchers created narratives or dramatized to challenge the viewer, invite dialogue and to tease. The group project of Traditional School and individual project of Megan's arrival are meant to be funny and invite the viewer to laugh along but also to consider the issues of residential schools, Southern culture and Southern interactions with other cultures. It is critical to consider all sides, especially when one side is largely unexamined.

### **White Privilege**

White privilege has allowed Southern Canada to trivialize the North and Northerners' perspective, identity and rights by not engaging with the people and their claim to the place. The example given in the introduction by Kimmel (2010) is that white privilege is like the wind, powerful but invisible to those who benefit from it. The student videos were an attempt to reveal the white or Southern privilege from a Northern perspective. My first real visceral understanding of my white privilege was when I studied in the south of France in my second year of university (over twenty years ago). We were taking the train to Oktoberfest to visit my host family in Germany from when I was an exchange student. My travel companion Tina, who

became and remains my closest friend, was from Montreal. She had got a hold of an English newspaper and it was my turn to read it. The Austrian border officials came in and I waved my passport never looking up. A few minutes later Tina kicks me and says “Go and get my passport from them”. I never look up and say, “Go get it yourself”. She kicks me again and I look up and she is fighting tears hard. I am totally confused because we are both Canadian. She says “Suzanne I am brown (first generation from India), please go do something”. Still utterly befuddled but obedient, off I go with no real idea what I am going to do and not comprehending why it is even necessary. The border patrol officials are laughing and it seems to me they are enjoying themselves keeping Tina’s passport and scaring her. I ask for it back, they refuse still laughing and people start looking. Realizing I might need crowd support, I start to get upset and the people intervene to help the little Canadian get her little Canadian friend’s passport. Tina sat alone in our cabin, miserable and afraid. Suddenly being white was not just a thing but it was a privileged status and a power.

At the end of that academic year I traveled to Israel with another friend, Claudette, who is first generation from Grenada. She is extremely fit, served in the military, is almost a foot taller than my four feet eleven with gorgeous ebony skin (she did not get severe second degree sun burn in Cypress unlike my pale self). I now knew my role when Claudette encountered issues at borders or security points: first a little loud and a touch obnoxious about why they don’t like Canadians and if that didn’t work, becoming visibly upset with the possibility of tears. People always seem to want to help the tiny flustered white Canadian. It was chilling to me. Claudette is a much more capable person. She carried my backpack most of the time (and hers) and



honestly there were times she considered just picking me up so we could move faster, but in those moments she kept her eyes down and felt she could do nothing, it was up to the tiny white girl. I would sometimes say I wanted to confront the issue to which my friends of color would firmly say please do not and shook their heads at my ignorance. My students love these stories (I tell them as examples of white privilege and perspective at the beginning of courses) and request them often as they seem to find them uproariously funny, but they are terrifying to me. It is forever a mystery and revelation to me, because I am usually the smallest, weakest, least coordinated, most allergic, can sunburn through a window and my land skills are equivalent to an extremely enthusiastic toddler/pre-schooler with a camera. Honestly, it is not hyperbolic as I usually have two students “assigned” to keep me upright and with the group when we go on the land. Everyone is very supportive and unfailingly patient with helping me and teaching me but my job is limited to logistics and bureaucracy, to get us on to the land and to write the report after. Once we were simply on a walk near town and I accidentally slid down a hill (I am clumsy and I was fine) and the group literally scolded each other to as to how they had not watched me properly. The students tease me that I can be extremely ferocious looking over my glasses when displeased ‘in that teacher way’ but that is hardly a superpower. The power ascribed is a twist of fate due to skin tone. I am a handy reader, champion talker and friendly, but in most practical matters I rely heavily on others. Yet I am often cast as the white buffer or advocate or ‘protector’ for friends and my students. My fear is what if I am not enough to smooth the situation? or I wonder what the hell happens when I am not there.

The balance of this dissertation foundation has been the history, politics and context of Canadian power and that can be understood as an extension and result of ‘invisible’ white privilege. Kimmel (2010: 5) contends ‘there are consequences to this invisibility: privilege remains invisible, and it is hard to generate a politics of inclusion’. Kimmel continues ‘it is imbedded in the social architecture that surrounds us...inequality is structural and systemic as well as individual and attitudinal’. Even in attempting to do so can go amiss. Smith writes problematic project of the post colonial:

the idea that colonialism is over, finished business. This is best articulated by Aborigine activist Bobbi Skye, ‘What? Post-colonialism? Have they left?’ There is also, amongst indigenous academics, the sneaking suspicion that the fashion of post colonialism has become a strategy for reinscribing or reauthorizing the privileges of non indigenous academics because the field of ‘post-colonial’ discourse has been defined in ways which can still leave out Indigenous peoples, our ways of knowing and our current concerns.

(Smith 1999: 24)

It is a riddle and a power conundrum to be me but a real problem for Indigenous people and people of colour.

### **White Gaze and Perspective**

Part of white privilege is who gets to look, the importance of that look and who is looked at. The gaze and its power is described by Foucault in his work on prisons (and ultimately schools) He describes the:

machine for dissociating the see/being seen dyad: in the *périphérie* ring [of its structure where the prisoners reside], one is totally seen, without ever seeing; in the central tower [reserved for the watchman], one sees everything without ever being seen.

(Foucault 1975: 202, 187 & 224)

This corrections mode of panoptic surveillance came to stand for a form of looking without being looked at in which ‘the codified power to punish turns into a disciplinary power to observe’. The description and its context imbue the white gaze with a great deal of power. Roediger expands the concept by contending:

looks frame and capture power relationships. They at once express racism and privilege, valorizing tropes that grow out of and alter how classes within the imperialist powers see both the colonized and the one another. Not merely the symptom of imperial exploitation, the imperialist gaze is a shared social activity of imperialist domination and consciousness.

(Roediger 1997: 37-38)

This connection of the white gaze to the imperial gaze is of particular importance considering the power dynamics at play in the North. Montage writes:

whiteness does not speak its own name. It may be nothing more than the principle in relation to which all (other) races, nations, and peoples are classified and hierarchized, the principle of perfection, to use Rousseau’s phrase, established to measure the degree to which all (other) races have fallen short of it, a definition of the human that renders them subhuman. Whiteness itself the human universal that no (other) race realizes. In theory, no (other) race is, or need be, inferior (it is only the contingent and the accident that makes them so). In fact, all (others) are inferior, having fallen short of the universal and therefore humanity...it is the gaze of a universal that stumbles on what it has left out, on the remainder that it cannot acknowledge except for projecting it beyond the limits whose existence it is designed to mask. We are, of course, still imprisoned in these limits. To reveal their existence is the first step.

(Montage 1997: 291)

### **The Reversed Gaze**

Ntarangwi (2010) proposes a ‘reversed gaze’ in his similarly titled book in which he conducts an African ethnography of American Anthropology. It is an

evocative term and critical project and perspective. Too long the gaze has gone one way. Brody (1975) did write extensively on Whites in the Arctic and there is a small degree of separation there as he is a British man coming to Canada and his critiques are interesting and still hold merit, but his perspective are limited due time, scope and position. Indeed the late sixties and seventies saw a great deal of interest in White people in the Arctic or newcomers, Paine (1977), Parsons (1970, and Vallee (1967) to name a few. Unfortunately, this course of inquiry was not continued or expanded despite its limitations as only white researchers did it. However, there is an opportunity now that perhaps was not available then to fully engage the work. Reversing the gaze is a step towards correcting the situation of white invisibility, of the unexamined status and the privilege of white gaze that is permitted to look, examine and observe relatively unfettered. Consider the observations of Gwich'in leader Phillip Blake from Fort MacPherson:

We have lived with the land, not tried to conquer or control it, or to rob it of it riches. We have not tried to get more and more riches and power, we have not tried to conquer new frontiers or outdo our parents or make sure that every year we are richer than the year before.

We have been satisfied to see our wealth as ourselves and the land we live with. It is our greatest wish to be able to pass on this land to succeeding generations in the same condition that our fathers have given it to us. We did not try to improve the land and we did not try to destroy it.

That is not our way.

I believe that your nation might wish to see us, not as a relic from the past, but as a way of life, a system of values by which you may survive in the future. This we are willing to share.

(Preceding this is a pledge to share with the developing world but the question of why they must share with one of the richest nations in the world.)

(Phillip Blake 1977: 7-8)

The observations on his own Gwich'in culture are apt as are the implied observations of Southern or white culture. He is clever and careful in his wording and

heartbreakingly generous in his offer to share his way of life and system of values for the future. I have discussed Nungak's Qallunology (2001) previously and it is also extremely clever but also even in its criticism as he delineates Qallunat habits and accomplishments "as the most useful and useless". BabaKiueria (Barbeque Area) (1986) is an Australian film that poses the Indigenous reversal of the colonized and the colonizer having discovered the white barbeque area that becomes the name of the new land. The video is extremely astute especially as it pokes fun at the researcher and I wish I had known of it when doing this project but plan to use it in the future. For example, the Aboriginal researcher is very comically earnest while doing her fieldwork living with a white middle-class family. The viewer is challenged to gaze at white culture in a way that is rare, novel and engaging A resource I have used extensively with classes is *Deh Cho: Mom we have been discovered* (Dene Cultural Institute 1989). It tells the history of the Deh Cho (Mackenzie River) including its discovery by Europeans and the encroachment of the resulting Canadian government, systems and industries but all from a Dene perspective. The illustrations are particularly witty with my favourite being a Dene man paddling up to the London Bridge proclaiming 'Today, July 10, 1989, I'm the first Dene to paddle my canoe on this river. Now and forever, it will be called Kitchina River' (Dene Cultural Institute 1989: 34). It is amusing and informative, full of Dene Elders sharing history and wisdom and at times heart-breaking, specifically Paul Voudrach's words on Dene hospitality which is in stark relief to treatment of the Dene by newcomers and their institutions. The reverse gaze is startling, effective, at times hilarious and extremely necessary.

## Reversal as (Cheerful) Subversion

Southern studies turned the tables in effective reversals. The best feedback about these thematic narrative pieces was from a conference organizer who said, “I never even saw you coming. You were very challenging and it felt okay. Even now I am reeling at the subversion but comforted by your big smile.” The second group film the students made was *Traditional School* where they round up several college instructors who are going to be shipped off to the land. It is a comical beginning with the instructors, (played by myself, Anne Church and Janet Boxwell) exclaiming how busy they are and fretting about the time, their work and their day-timers. The students roll their eyes at the instructor’s incessant chatter (but we were directed by the students to keep the constant talking up the whole time). Rachel explains they are going off to school and will be back sometime in the spring. The instructors are given traditional clothes and taken outside. Brian explains our most important teacher will be the land and everything we need is on the land and introduces our instructor Shelby. All technology is taken away. (I accidentally took off my hat and put in the bag, which makes the students groan when we watch it because why couldn’t I have a cute hat in the bush? In my defence, I had bronchitis and we had to film that day due to the melt and I was a bit delirious which makes us all laugh to remember, including when I coughed up in a snow bank. Thankfully we did not film that part, much to the group’s regret.) One instructor has her Mountain Equipment Co-op (a popular Canadian Company) gear taken away as it for the south, she also asks about eating beans on the land, and if the clothing is vegetarian approved. Once the instructors are traditionally suited up they are handed bags, a trap and a rifle in a bag. There is

always great hilarity as I carry the gun like a purse as I trek off at the back of the group. This is a complex piece that inverts the concept of residential school. It also purposefully positions the land and traditional knowledge/ skills not only on the same level as college skills but above. It also challenges the viewer to consider cultural conceptions of time, chatter, and commitment to living in the North and learning Northern skills as newcomers to the North.

Megan McCormack's is the only dramatized individual project, *Megan's Arrival*, and she is also the only non-Indigenous student. She grew up in Fort Macpherson and is of Japanese and Euro-Canadian descent. She conceived the entire film. She created all the props and made all the filming decisions. The opening scene is in the post office and we can read over her shoulder that she has been offered a job in Inuvik with an enclosed plane ticket. This cuts to her beginning to pack to move up North beginning with a parka. The next scene is her reading a book entitled "Northern Translator" with a picture from the Disney film *Pocahontas* on the cover and with her sitting down to watch *Nanook of the North*. Following that she returns to where we see her contemplating packing her bikini, sunglasses and sun tan lotion that she decides she doesn't need. The next scene is a small plane landing at the airport (which is not the Boeing 737 she would have actually flown to Inuvik in) on a snowy day. She comes through the gate in her parka and big snow boots to meet a man in a fleece holding a card with her name on it (played by her boyfriend). She stops, holds up a hand, refers to her Northern translator and then begins talking to the man very slowly saying hello and asking him if he speaks English. He looks confused and says 'Meagan?'. She continues very slowly and asks "when is the next dog sled will be

coming to the airport “ with her hand mimicking a plane landing (she is visibly barely controlling her laughter). The man says “don’t worry I will give you a ride in my car”. She mimics manipulating a steering wheel and says in exaggerated tones “car”. She asks if “this is one of his sled dogs” he says “no it is just a dog”. Once in the car she asks him what do you do in the North for fun and he turns to her and says well and it cuts to an energetic montage of personal footage of being on the river, playing volleyball, duck hunting on river, skipping skidoos, fishing in the river, driving on the highway, driving in town, driving ATVs and finally the Tsiigehtchic ferry in the dusk of the midnight sun with upbeat music overlaid. This is a particularly interesting video as it is assertive but gentle in its criticism of Southern people by a Southern person that clearly shows the amazing North.

**Plate 15:** Out of Order – No Muktuk, Edmonton Fieldwork, July 2010



(Photo by Author)

The last narrative video was a collaboration of the summer student interns, myself, and Brett Purdy (media professional). It came out of the idea of trying to do



traditional things in an artificial environment (West Edmonton Mall). It begins with Shelby dressed in a traditional Mother Hubbard Parka with full sunburst fur ruff and wolf mitts trying to jiggle (fish) in the pirate lagoon. It then cuts to her walking down the mall, trying to go up the down escalator and just smiling/reacting to the stares of the curious shoppers walking by her. She then spots a whale (sculpture) and goes to investigate. The scene cuts to her going down the escalator properly and beginning to shop for sunglasses where she ultimately chooses ornamental snow goggles. The next part shows her walking into the Fantasyland Hotel (connected to the mall) and checking out its Northern theme room. Then we move to the aquarium where she spends some time with a penguin and sharpens her ulus (traditional round women's knives) while looking longingly at some fish. Next she tries her hand at ice fishing at the Ice palace without much success but does enjoy some skating. Shelby returns to the whale (sculpture) to post an out-of-order sign as there is no muktuk. This is part of the video that is used in the NWT staff training. It has been a crowd favorite. Shelby is excellent in front of the camera inviting the viewer to be part of the fun. The summer student interns enjoyed the fieldwork but were very happy to go home as the artificial world was getting to them and the lack of freedom in the South was restrictive. Humor can invite the viewer to challenge their perspective and appreciate another point of view.

**Plate 16:** Ice Fishing in a Hockey Rink – Edmonton Fieldwork, July 2010



### **What is Southern Culture and Why are You Daring to Ask?**

A lot of Southern/white people got mad at me when we were interviewing them in Inuvik. Not at the students but me specifically. They asked me what I was trying to do and said that they didn't want to be shown in an unflattering light. It was unpleasant as hostility always is, but I was surprised. These parts were never caught on tape and we likely would not have used them anyway. This was not about making Southern people look bad or being mean. The interviews were voluntary and they did not begin with anything other than "what is the South to you?" and "how would you describe Southern culture" and subsequent questions were designed to invite dialogue. As people were in control of their answers it did not seem like a problem.

Not one Northern person got mad when asked about the North or what Northern culture was. Indeed people usually smiled special smiles when they said “the land” and then gave deep and interesting responses on their culture. When asked about Southern Culture they were unfailingly polite always bracketing a remotely critical comment with praise for Southern technology and accomplishment. Early in this process the students decided that they did not want to use satire like Nungak did in his *Qallunology or Why White People are Funny*. They felt it was too mean but they did express respect for his perspective and considering all he had experienced it made sense but it wasn’t for them.

It is always a matter of perspective. Treaty 8, and later Treaty 11 including Gwich’in territory, as per the *Paulette* decision discussed before were proven to be viewed as agreements of peace and harmony by Aboriginal peoples and not seen as land contracts with the government. That is a very profound difference of perspective. Also mentioned before, white people were initially seen by some Inuit as dog children who had come home rather than invaders. Both examples demonstrate desires and a willingness to live together agreeably. But to many of the white people I asked in Inuvik the question of “who they were” and “what they thought their culture” were perceived as some kind of trap or judgment. That is a telling response. Seemingly innate hostility after being asked about yourself brings up defensiveness is a damning response as perhaps they do not want to admit to what they think their culture is. Or perhaps facing the realities of white privilege is frightening and ignorance or the unexamined it easier. This is a problem. For Canada to move forward and dismantle colonial systems and power structures, we need to ask these

questions. White people need not fear the answers but should embrace them as it will be their emancipation too, because as we all go forward we can choose the direction, dispelling the darkness moving into the light. Consider the questions the student researchers developed about the South. There were only ten: What is the South?, Define a Southerner., How do you define Southern Culture?, What do you think is important to Southern people?, What does the South symbolize to you?, Are there any important contributions that the South has made to the North?, Would you invite a Southerner to live with you for a year or so to experience the North?, Do you think that education and healthcare are better in the South than in the North?, Do you think the meaning of religion is different in the South than the North? and What is your cultural background? (e.g. Inuvialuit/Gwich'in). I would be willing to answer these questions and even the most reluctant could answer these.

### **Southern Studies Northern Interview Responses**

Time is a definite theme. You cannot escape some mention of bedtime in any Northern research. Brody sees it as 'delicious' that kids can stay up. As someone who has lived in the Arctic, your body clock shifts. It is something that just happens in the summer and winter. The phrase used in the Beaufort Delta is "getting backwards" meaning as time progresses, day and night loses meaning unless one is created. Which makes the return to the clock after winter holidays and summer holidays a rough week. The clock is a construction but perhaps a powerful Southern symbol and constraint. Consider the following responses:

Mary Okheena: They have to have supper at a certain time. They have to have meeting at a certain time. Their children have to go to bed at a certain time. It is like time like that is important to Southern people. (Laughter)

Jimmy Omigilgoituk: Down South you have to look at the time all the time and be somewhere at a certain time. It isn't for me. (Laughter)

Herb Nakimayak: Very busy culture. A lot going on. Very minute to minute. Where as in the North we are going day to day. Slow pace. We enjoy that. (Smile)

Steven: They are city people. Busy life. (Laughter)

Always there was good humor as shown with theses responses:

Esther Ipana: The South is to me anywhere past Yellowknife. They are always on schedule. They always have a schedule. They are always rushing here and there. (Laughter)

Debra English: I hate to say it but shopping. (Laughter)

Tuktoyaktuk woman: Very busy. Hot. I complain about that a lot. (Laughter)

Frances Wolki: The South needs Northern people. (Laughter)

The next responses are very thoughtful and carefully worded. Respondents did not want to be critical. Each response was unfailingly polite. They invite the viewer to consider the Southerner to see their Northern perspective:

Edwards girls: Different from ours. They don't go on the land. They don't eat meat...traditional food. They wouldn't be able to go trapping and what not.

Denis Allen: We kinda have two different value systems I think, The definition of success is how much you can acquire. That is all good and dandy as that is the environment they live in. We look at currency differently. If someone has a big wad of cash in their wallet. It is like having a bunch of meat and food in their wallet and what they are going to do is give it away. And they lend it to people and a lot of people that come up from the south and they say "what are you doing/ Why don't you put it in the bank and let it build interest" But that isn't how a lot of (northern) people look at money. They look at it as a resource. If someone needs it to pay bills, buy food for their children or buy fuel for their vehicle. They give it to them. It is really difficult for (Southern) people to wrap their head around it.

Nellie Pokiak: The south means to me the opening of doors and understanding of knowledge. Informing us of the different things in life. How to see in a different perspective. Southern Culture there is more understanding of technology. Their life is completely different for ours.

Majorie Baetz: I find they know little of the North. The South is more isolated than we are. For example if I go south and someone finds out you are from Inuvik and they try to locate Inuvik. Where is Inuvik? They don't know where Inuvik is. We know where other cities and towns are and a little of their history. (Laughter).

Herb Nakimayak: Southern culture is a lot of rules and regulations. A lot of our regulations say where you hunt, caribou or fish. The regulations brought from the federal government. Rules and regulations we have to live by to preserve and maintain our culture. You have all these regulations set upon you. It leaves a lot of frustrated Inuit everywhere. You see it on the news. It is a contributing factor on how we live our lives as Inuit.

In Edmonton, where we conducted our Southern fieldwork, the white people being interviewed were just so seemingly bemused and mystified to be talking to real Northerners that their non-responses about Southern culture were not tense. Except for the Aboriginal people we interviewed in Edmonton who had more full answers on the South and also the North. Honestly most of the white answers were just blank

with them first struggling to understand the question and then struggling harder to come up with an answers:

Busy/Impersonal

I don't know

I have no idea

I really don't know

What is Southern Culture? That is a difficult question

What is considered South

When I think of myself I consider myself more Western

I am more from the middles so I don't consider myself either.

(Edmonton interview excerpts)

They had never thought about and never really been asked. Except one woman who had by chance grown up in the North and was very careful to give full answers but even she admitted it was tough to come up with something.

The anger or non-response are examples of white privilege, of not having to justify your identity and not having to fight for it. Even a Southerner who has lived in the North for over 25 years was positive but struggled with the questions. "Not really sure what you are talking about unless you are talking about cities. Different schedules I don't know". She did not struggle to express her admiration of Northern culture. The reality that so many did not know what to say is an example of the power of the white gaze and privilege; not having to examine yourself or your culture. This is not about white guilt either. Tim Wise says in his video *On White Privilege:*

*Racism, White Denial & the Costs of Inequality:*

I want you to know this has nothing to do with guilt. I realize that none of the people in this room or none of the other people in other rooms to which I speak to every week in this country somewhere are themselves, individually or collectively responsible for this system of inequality of privilege, of oppression, of marginalization. It is up to us to get busy. It is up to us to take responsibility. Not because we are guilty but because we are here.

(Wise 2008)

I am not scared to look in the mirror, or to be looked at. I do not feel guilty but I am sad, mad and anxious. I am not sure where the generosity, hospitality kindness and seemingly unlimited patience Northern people have for Southern people comes from other than resilience and adaptation, but I would like this time to be one of change, reconciliation, and finally reciprocity. Clark concluded in 1965 in his opus *The Dark Ghetto* change in America would require similar resilience and grace:

Negroes will not break out of barriers of the ghetto unless whites transcend the barriers of their own minds, for the ghetto is to the Negro a reflection of the ghetto in which the white lives imprisoned. The poetic irony of American race relations is that the rejected Negro must somehow also find the strength to free the privileged white.

(Clark 1989: 240)

## **The Northern Gaze**

I thought this section was going to be longer and more in-depth. It could have been as there has been vigorous interest in Whiteness or White Studies since the 2016 American election of Donald Trump. However, I realized that much of this dissertation is already White Studies; the actions and programmes of the Canadian government from the crimes of residential schooling and the continued problems and mistakes of systems and programmes that are simply not meeting the needs of



Northern people or Aboriginal Canadians. Despite the real and continuing issue of white cultural hegemony, there are ways to try and overcome this obstacle. Indeed, when we consider the kindness and humour of the Northern gaze demonstrated by the Southern Studies video narratives and interviews it seems possible and inviting. In Drew Hayden Taylor's *Redskins, Tricksters, and Puppy Stew* (2000), Thomas King spoke of his work on the *Dead Dog Café Comedy Hour* CBC radio show saying:

I am dealing with cultural humour and occasionally I am going to hold that mirror up to White Canada and say see this is what it feels like... You can get into their front door with humour, you can get into their kitchen with humour. If you are pounding on the front door they won't let you in. They might gather the kids around and watch you on the front stoop making a fool of yourself. It isn't that I don't believe in that confrontational social activism. It just isn't me. It isn't what I am good at. I am better at humour...it makes me laugh to... Those things that hurt in life about being Native in North America. I can handle those in humor I can't handle them in anger... The anger consumes me and I have to get back to my safe position of humor and I think I make more of an impact

(King in *Redskins, Tricksters, and Puppy Stew* 2000)

Kaplan (1997: 326) is optimistic for change when noting 'in humanities scholarship as white male (female) scholars begin to relinquish their cultural capitol', in favour of a less homogenous perspective for a more pluralistic viewpoint.

### **North to South and Newcomers to Their land**

I have taught English Literature my entire time at the college. When possible I try and let students have some choice in what we study. One year the class chose Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1990) from a list. They choose it for a number of

reasons, it was short (despite my cautions it was a challenging read), and that we would explore decolonization as one of the themes. Honestly, I also think a big draw was watching *Apocalypse Now* (1979). It was a difficult unit for a variety of reasons: the age of the text, the pre-reading from essays on African decolonization that were very assertive and made some students very uncomfortable given the aggressive wording. I think it was mostly that it was towards the end of the year when geese were flying and we all wanted to be outside. We eventually got through the book; the movie was a hit and we all rejoiced at the end of the year.

However, it was in the middle of that unit, that I had one of the most important learning experiences about perspective and meaning. I was trying to get us through the introductory essays and set the stage. The main idea I was trying to build came from an essay by Chinua Achebe in the Preface of the *Heart of Darkness* that criticized the idea of primitive and how it was uncultured, racist, colonial and prejudiced. It was a quiet morning and I was a bit distracted as instructors sometimes are when they are concerned with pace and getting everything done. So in the midst of me hustling us through a student says. “Suzanne...you say primitive is a bad thing. Now I can see what you are getting at, but I disagree. I know how they meant it and I know how that is wrong but I think primitive is good. To me it is strong. I am proud to be primitive.” This stopped me. Honestly, I was very intrigued but also in my distraction really worried I had been unclear.

He went on to explain by asking me a question. “Have you every killed anything with your bare hands” My answer was no, I had never killed anything other

than running them over with my car by accident on the highway. To which the class laughed as my softness on this issue was well known. I was always being chided by community members that I should never brake on gravel, as it is very dangerous. Indeed with this class I had shown part of the documentary series *Planet Earth* (2006) earlier in the year and there was a scene where wolves end up separating a baby caribou from the pack. I was quietly sad at my desk and the student who was currently explaining why primitive is good teased me saying that “Suzanne, wolves gotta eat”. So Russell explained to the class that killing an animal with your bare hands is primitive and powerful and to him it was a strength and responsibility. He talked about a hunting trip where he was out of shot (ammunition) for his shotgun and then his rifle jammed after wounding a caribou. He said it was very cold and he had to run hard up the riverbank with his knife to kill the wounded caribou. It was his responsibility to end the animal’s suffering and he had to be quick. He described how hard it was to run in 40 degrees below zero and how steep and slippery it was. He explained how intimate it was to have to slice the caribou’s throat and how important it was for him to do it and fulfill his responsibility as a hunter. He said, “Suzanne, it is primitive. And I see what you are saying but being primitive is good and makes me feel strong and connected to the land”. We abandoned what I had planned and discussed this instead. I learned more in that morning on decolonizing my mind and the importance of perspective, than I ever had from any article or book I have read. The standard criticism of primitive in *Heart of Darkness* is not wrong but it is not the whole story. It is but one. Russell was one the students I asked for advice when considering the feasibility and planning for this video research project and he said “go for it”.

## **Primitivism to civilization to modernity to development to...**

A legacy of anthropology in the North and other 'studied' places is an obsession with primitivism. Indeed in Tromsø in 2010 I listened to a leading Norwegian scientist invoke the myth of the 'noble savage' in an international auditorium. The President of the Saami Council aptly handled his ignorance, but the scientist honestly seemed unconvinced and unembarrassed despite the horror of most people in the room. However, as with Russell these negative imposed myths can be reclaimed, reimagined or perhaps just finally properly understood. Taussig writes:

So it has been through the sweep of colonial history where the colonizers provided the colonized with the left-handed gift of the image of the wild man--a gift whose powers the colonizers would be blind to, were it not for the reciprocation of the colonized, bringing together in the dialogical imagination of colonization an image that wrests from civilization its demonic power.

(Taussig 1987: 467)

Sociology has its own dubious legacies as Zuberi and Bonilla-Silva assert:

Rather than 'civilization (the language of sociology in the early years), 'modernity' the language of sociology from the 1940-1960s) or 'development' (the language of sociology since the 1960s), people of color enduring colonial, neocolonial and internal colonial domination have historically demanded freedom, equality and respect as the way out of the bubbling cauldron.

(Zuberi and Bonilla-Silva 2008: 331)

Defiantly and decisively Du Bois wrote in 1940 (1998: 36) 'lions have no historians' in response to the challenge of his 'white friend' as to the contribution of other races.

Sociologists Zuberi and Bonilla-Silva contend:

Sociological hunters still parade the game they collect (data and arguments about people of color) with their objective rifles (White methods) and it is very likely they will continue doing so in the near future. However...the prey had a

chance to tell the tale of the hunt. And the “prey” (“prey” from the perspective of the hunters) showed the weakness of the hunters as well as the calibration of their rifles.

(Zuberi and Bonilla-Silva 2008: 329)

## Emic and etic

Both the insider (emic) and outsider (etic) perspectives are critical as is their relationality and interaction. If unequal, it can become voyeuristic and even be used as a tool to reinstall inequalities as explored in earlier sections of this chapter. However, if mediated correctly can lead to clearer communication and understanding. Many of the individual student video projects invite the viewer in and want to share the North with them. *Brian's North* came from his idea of creating a travel advertisement video to entice people to visit the North. He said he was very proud of his home and was excited to share it. He breaks the video into themes; the first is *rich in culture* with an explanation of drum dancing as an intergenerational process celebrating traditional language. *Abundant in wildlife* describes the importance of hunting and using all parts of the animal featuring the muskox and video of hunting geese. His last theme *Untamed* shows Tuktoyaktuk's famous pingo and explains how the animals and birds adapt to the beautiful landscape. The most poignant is the beginning when he says the land is everything and when he ends with the North is a *home, a sanctuary, it is everything*. Brian's video highlights images from both communities he grew up in, Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk.

**Plate 17:** Brian Raddi filming in Aklavik, April 2010



(Photo by Brett Purdy)

*Jen's Aklavik* is Jennifer Greenland's informative love letter to her hometown. She begins with a demographic overview and proudly shares the history of the town that wouldn't die. She then tells the viewer of the hunt for the Mad Trapper Albert Johnson, which was staged from the community. Then she explains the relative isolation of the community that is accessible by small plane from Inuvik, or the river in the summer, or ice road in the winter. The footage of the ice road is always a crowd favourite, North to South she returns to the history, explaining the initial establishment of a Hudson Bay trading post and uses lovely historic photographs moving to footage of the graveyard with more details of the mad trapper hunt. My favourite part is of Jen next to the J. Greenland street sign where she talks of her

family; her mother from McPherson and her dad from Aklavik. She beams as she explains how her aunties tell her she is related to 2/3 of Aklavik and she is always learning more as the family visits often. Her narration was filmed in my office and in the last part she describes visiting her family after Christmas while the credits roll. This video is wonderful example of non-verbal communication as you have a much fuller understanding of her message as you watch her face. The best part is when she does what the students call ‘pretty eyes’ at the very end to emphasize her joy at talking about her family.

**Plate 18:** Jennifer Greenland in Aklavik, April 2010



(photo by Brett Purdy)

Another mini film school video was Bobbi Jean Andre's *Northern Weather*, which focuses on the Mackenzie River that meets at a confluence with the Arctic Red River below her home community of Tsiigehtchic. She wanted to show Southern Audiences an authentic view of the North. She narrates on camera and the first main shot is of an auger testing the thickness of the ice road on the Mackenzie river that goes to Tuktoyatuk. Then the focus shifts to spring break-up using panning of still photography for the balance of the seasons. Moving to summer she make the comparison that it is just like the south and can get up to 30 degrees. It is myth that bothered the student group that Southern people think it is always cold in the North. She concludes with two images of the ferry. The first, a beautiful image under the midnight sun and the second on the North shore informing the viewer that the ferry connects the summer traveller to roads to the South. This short video is effective, accomplishing both student researcher's group goals for Northern messages and in communicating Bobbi Jean's North to the viewer but also emphasizing the North connecting and having similarities to the South.



**Plate 19:** Bobbi Jean Andre Filming on Ice Road, January 2010



(Photo by Author)

*Mukluk Taste Test* was filmed during the mini film school and was the idea of Amanda Lennie and Thea Rogers. They wanted to interview new people and offer them Mukluk at the Inuvik Airport but it is a collection of interviews with people mostly long-term northerners (who kindly agreed to be interviewed), a mix of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. Questions asked “what should Southerners know about the North” and “advice for newcomers” based on the basic main questions of the research. They got people to try mukluk (whale blubber with HP sauce for dipping) at the airport and this continued back at the college. Despite many people being long term Northerners, many people had not tried it before, but people were mostly eager to try and to share their experience. Mukluk is very rich and filling.

There was an unfortunate moment when a wildlife officer came to me as we were leaving the airport and said sharing the muktuk was illegal as it was only to be consumed by Indigenous people. The samples were very small and he scared the students, which was unfortunate. I felt it was unnecessary and there is room in law for Aboriginal peoples sharing. Unfortunately, government control and comment still extends to seemingly every aspect of life in the Western Arctic. This is why we kept filming back at the college, which was not the original plan: to recover from that negative experience and end the filming experience in a positive way. They were happy with their product and it was ultimately a good student experience. Offering food is a deeply rooted cultural practice in the North, like many cultures, and the offering of country food is very special and generous. The choice of the airport was for a welcome and even though it was mostly people known to the group, the support the group received was validating.

### **Communicating North to South – Inviting Dialogue**

**Plate 20:** Interviewing at Moose Kerr School, Aklavik April 2010



(photo by Brett Purdy)

This was the largest section of questions developed by the student researchers. They were organized into three subsections. The first was *Northerners Speak to Southern Newcomers*: If Northerners could say anything to Southern people coming to the North as visitors, researchers and professionals, what would they say? The first questions were basic: What advice would you give Southern people coming to the North? What would you want Southerners to know about the North? and How do you spot a newcomer to the North? (South/Winter) Then the questions became more playful: What is the funniest misunderstanding/miscommunication error you have had with a Southerner? What is the funniest observation a Southerner has made about the North? The only critical query in the group was: Do you believe that Southern people discriminate against Northern people?

Then the questions became very practical: What do you think about Southerners who've lived half or more of their lives up North? How do you think Southerners would adjust to raising their children in the North? How do you think Southerners would adjust to 24 hour daylight? How do you think a Southerner would adjust to ten months of winter and two months of summer? How would Southerners go about limitation and access to Southern products (ex. Fresh produce, clothing, vehicle maintenance, limited video release, accessing doctors and limited healthcare)? Give an example of Deltanese language and the meaning (e.g Alapaaa!! It's cold) Do you know what a Delta braid is? What is or do you know what an Eskimo donut/ice-cream is? Do you think Southern clothing is warmer than traditional clothing? When Southerners come to the North, do you think they become overwhelmed by the clean and fresh air. When you come up North, do you think the land becomes more vast?

Why do you think this is? Do you see the North as a good place to work? The students designed the questions to elicit a response and then invite dialogue on adjusting to and learning about the North. They are designed to show the interviewee in a good light.

The next subsection was about *The Northern Land*. Participants were asked: When you picture the North...What do you see? How is the Northern homeland connected and affected by the rest of Canada and the world? Do you speak/understand your language? Would you find the North an expensive place to live compared to the South? Do you speak/understand your language? Would you find the North an expensive place to live compared to the South? And with the North being a harsh climate would you consider living here rather than South? The questions then turned towards concerns about the environment: How is the Northern Climate a unique and vital place to live and thrive? Are Northerners still connected to the land? Do you believe in Global warming? Do you see global warming affecting the North? How is climate change and unpredictable weather affecting Northern people? How do you think the North needs to be protected in the future? The shift was then to resource development and its impact on the North: What do you think of the recent Polar Bear sightings in Deline and Fort McPherson? Who do you think is being affected the most by global warming? (Examples: Animals, people of the North/South?) Do you think the recent discussions of building drill rigs affect animal migration? How does permafrost affect our land? The mining and exploration is getting more and more common. Do you think it is affecting the hunting and fishing of the people of the North? Southerners have experienced having a pipeline system in

the past. We might in near future have one of the largest in Canada, how would you suggest we go about handling it? And What do you think of the North-West Passage opening up? Thoughtful questions again designed to invite dialogue.

The final subsection was *The Northern People* asking: Who are Northerners? How would you define Northern people? The student researchers' original goals for Northern Studies are mirrored with How is Northern life developing and adapting in this fast ever-changing, interconnected world? And How is Northern culture and history both ancient and alive? Southern Studies were revisited as well with: Do you think Northern people are difference from Southern people? Would you consider Northerners nicer people than Southerners? Do you believe all the stereotypes you hear about the Northerners and Do you think Natives are free to hunt wherever they please?

Inevitably the focus returned to asking about the land and culture: With 24-hour daylight or darkness how does it affect your everyday life? Would you like to experience going out on the land in winter/summer? Do you consider Aboriginal carvings to be expensive? Do you think traditional medicines make good remedies? The last question was interesting as it invites dialogue but in a way that poses Northern issues as shared challenges: Do you think police/government should do something about underage drinking in the North and South? All the questions from this theme reflect and support the questions from the previous section. They also reinforce the responses in interviews as topics and ideas Northern people wanted to talk about. The questions show real pride in the North and a desire to discuss their North but also a desire to hear the responses from the Southerners.

**Plate 21:** Rachel Nakimayak filming at Northern Games, August 2010



(Photo by Author)

The theme video for North-to-South was edited by Rachel Nakimayak. It runs a little under a half hour. She was very detail driven to invite newcomers into the video. The intro was the same as with Kendra, but she opted to have the Red Rover Jig as musical overlay that shifted into drum dancing. After Rachel introduces herself and the topic, the video moves right into advice for the newcomer to the North:

Nellie Pokiak: I would ask them to sit with elders. To sit and understand that our life is different and to be able to see in my lifetime. To do it by storytelling by letting them know that culture can be different and that they can gain knowledge from that.

Jimmy Omigoituk: You can just...once you go into a community you go the whole...try and take part in everything that you can and they do. Don't stay home and be alone. Get to know the people in the community. The life will be

easier for you then you don't have to stay home and do nothing. You know how to be yourself.

Jim Macdonald; Experience the culture and not only is it good for them but things will go easier and better for them in the North and they will also enjoy it

Herb Nakimayak: Go out to the smaller communities. Go out fishing, canoeing, kayaking whatever. Get involved and that will open your door to any community.

Advice then shifted from South-to-south where long term southerners in the North offer advice to newcomers:

Tim Fifield (RCMP): Learn as much about the community and culture before you come so you can understand when you get here and you are not shocked by the differences. And expect differences when you get here. I tell you that would be my best advice. Expect differences. Not wrongs and rights but differences. And be willing to accept difference. If you do that you will do fine.

Caroline Nichols: The advice I would give is to talk to people. And more than talking to people listen to their stories. Because there are some amazing stories in the North.

Larry Robertson: Southerners. Yeah. Come with an open mind and not a closed mind. We have these ideas about the North. About the backwardness of the North while we are the most technologically advanced part of Canada as far as I am concerned. Come with an open mind and learn. Be part of a community because that is what we are.

Marion McGuinness: If you are coming to the North come with an open mind. If you are coming to a place like Inuvik or somewhere else in North and expect to find shopping malls and Walmart. You can't expect to find things like that. You have to understand that everything is smaller and costs more. It costs a lot of money to bring things to the North. So if you are coming here to be entertained then you have come to the wrong place. You need to be ready to do your own entertaining. You need to be adaptable and go with the flow. And make sure you aren't always saying "Down South we do it this way" Right. You have to learn to live the Northern lifestyle.

Angela Young: I'll talk from a teacher's standpoint maybe. I was doing some research for my masters on teacher turnover. And the Beaufort Delta Education Council region has the highest turnover at 31%. Elsewhere it is 18%. At least the research I did. I found a really interesting line from the NWTTA website and it said

Don't be pushy. You know let things happen. Be aware that people have been in communities for along time and seen a lot of turnover and don't be offended but you are another newcomer and perhaps people who have been there for a while are like just calm down you aren't here to bring all this new education we don't have. It is a delicate balance wanting to get involved but being very aware at their environment hopefully you aren't feeling too pushy

Kim Johnson: My first advice would be I wish more people would go up North and find out about the people and land. I think it is a shame that so few people travel up from the south to the North and that Canada is so large that it costs so much money to get here. If more people came up and saw how beautiful it was here and then more people would come up.

Tim Fifield: There are lots of great people here that are hardworking and just good people. That we are not unlike people in the South. That they just want to work and raise a family and do what is best for their kids. That is what I have found. There is not the stereotypical North that people have down south that have never come up North. Otherwise I probably would not have stayed as long. I would have come up for one year and that was enough. As it is I have stayed, my wife and I and had 3 kids and I brought them back. That ought to say something about the North and if it was that bad I probably wouldn't have brought my kids into the situation. But I have no problem where I am, what I am doing and where I am living.

William Greenland: I guess through my experience of talking to Southerner, talking with people from the States...overseas. A lot of Southerners know very little of the North. I am talking about American. American I always say are very naïve. They don't want to know much about anyone else but themselves. The North to them is a frozen land and no one wants to go there type of thing. And what you see is American/Southerners don't know very much. They need like education. They need to put it in their curriculum and study the North. Learn about Aboriginal people in the North. Not just where they are from but up here to....when you talk about Southerners they need to study us more than they have been.

Herb Nakimayak: Work Hard. Play hard. We are pretty much the same. We are just born in different geographic locations.



Twenty-four hour sunlight is discussed for almost ten minutes as it always a popular topic for newcomers to the North. There is also some talk of the dark but other than it being a time of lower energy the sun is seen as more disruptive. This section is playful and brackets more serious topics. It is interesting that the long-term Southern residents of the North are much more stern and forceful in their comments compared to the Northern respondents.

Violet Doolittle: when I think of the North there is a lot of freedom and it is clean and people can let down their barriers. They don't have to worry about some of the fears they have in the south. I have lived South too. Up here I can say hi to anyone. Down South even if you said hi they would not respond to you. So the North to me is a real place of freedom and opportunities. Lots of opportunities. Even going for a walk is a traditional experience, a cultural experience, a spiritual experience. And the spirits of all the plants and animals and insects and even some of the people who live here all the time are very, very beautiful

Mr. Auffice: The north means cold, large, different, rich. It like the North is a huge white soul. I can't say enough words on what it is and says to me. It is like a relaxation of the business of the south. It is still.

Climate change was the final section of questions and long-term residents shared the fears for the environment. The land and environment are critical to all who live in the North.

## Relativity

I am often asked a question by people in the South or newcomers to the North: “Are you a Northerner?” and the answer is yes and no. I have come to understand that identity is situational, contextual and relative. Very early on, the research project looked into trying to come to working definitions of what is North and South. What became very clear is that it is more of a rippling out effect of degrees than one or the other. I am a Northerner as I live in the North and I have taught here for almost twenty years and most curiously to me because my partner is from Inuvik. Indeed when I taught in Tsiigetchic during my second year with the college, I was repeatedly assured by the community people doing the community statistics that I was being counted as an indigenous non-Aboriginal person because of David. At the same time I am not a Northerner because I am originally from Calgary: have a Southern worldview (though that is shifting) and I am non-Aboriginal. For another sketch we can look at my partner who is a Northerner because he was born, raised and schooled in Inuvik; he went away to university and came back (with me in tow) and has also taught mostly in the classroom next to me. He is not Aboriginal, which is a factor but as one student researcher said, “He is still a Northerner, but I am just a little bit more of one as an Aboriginal” with laughter. When I asked if David was a Southerner at all the students were very firm that he was not. I do not include these personal examples for any other reason than it is my habit to use David and myself as experimental examples and provide context.

I have found in this work that identity can be a tricky subject. Interestingly, it has been more problematic and contentious for Southern participants. Northern participants were ready and eager to talk about the North and very polite and careful when they talk about the South. One elder smiled at the student researcher and myself and said, “I am glad you asked” and that was a common response. Northerners are interested in dialogue, sharing their knowledge and illuminating their perspective. Some Southern participants were also happy to talk, though many did not have very much to say about the South other than generic urban descriptions. However, some Southern participants living in the North got angry when asked about the North and South and confronted me later and wanted to know why they were being asked such difficult questions. They wanted to know if this video was about how Southern people had no right to live in the North. I was very grateful that they got angry with me and not the student researchers but I was confused by their responses. The student researchers without fail wanted to create a positive product. I was also confused. As a Southern woman living in the North, it would be a curious project for me to be creating something that insisted I leave as one person insinuated. But their anger and unease is important as it underscores the conflict and tension that exists in the North. The Mackenzie Delta is a confluence of waters and cultures but it can also be a clash. This clash was a main inspiration for this project although its balance has been focused on the positive and the North. We wanted to see if we could try and talk about culture to try and stop or soften the clash. It should not be us and them but you and me. Never in all my years in the North have I been asked, “to go home” but rather been welcomed into the community as a valued member. Ervin (1968: 21) writes of the rise of the term Northerner in his *New Northern Townsmen in Inuvik* that was the fifth report, of twelve, in the *Mackenzie Delta Research Project* that was

commissioned by then Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to research adaption of people in the region ten years after Inuvik was created. Ervin notes:

Ethnic factors alone no longer have primary importance in determining the nature of social interaction, or in defining of tight grouping in the Delta. Faced with the growing threat of dominant southern transients assuming positions of power, Eskimos, Indians, Metis and long term white residents are realizing they all have interests in common. The “Northerner” category has arisen as a response to this threat and an opposition of the “Southern” category...if the Northerner grouping becomes more powerful, its members develop a greater awareness and pride in their identity, realizing that they have the most realistic and permanent stake in the North.

(Ervin 1968: 21)

Indeed, as we have now needed to move to Yellowknife I get asked all the time when we are going to come home to Inuvik and we answer “in our dreams”.

This dissertation, to borrow an engineering term, is more of a proof-of-concept, meaning it is a small-scale experience to determine the viability of larger scale research. The main concept being tested is co-research and co-knowledge production using video. The balance of it sets the stage for why it is necessary, why it was done in the way it was and the project was outlined but the films stand for themselves. Jackson writes of ‘the stories that shadow us’:

Every person’s story remains, therefore, irreducibly his or her own, imperfectly incorporated into the collective realm. Yet it is precisely because personal experience remains on the margins of state discourse and ideology that it may become, in any society, a critical force that perennially unsettles received wisdom and challenges the status quo. Contrary to the naïve view that stories are isomorphic, it is this indeterminate, noniconic relationship between stories and experience that makes it possible for storytelling to bring us back and bear witness to the reality of how we really live.

(Jackson 2013:188)

This chapter is about goals/intent and reflections rather than analysis. Those lay with the video creators and the viewers. Perhaps in the future I would include written responses on the student analysis, but perhaps not. The purpose of a good story is the listener interpreting it and the interchange should be directly with the teller. Maybe the future is on the internet, where questions could be asked. And yet I think the viewing and interpretation is the living thing that is exciting about storytelling. It is listening and looking and listening to and looking at. Society is not a zero-sum game. Difference should not negate one society for another. It is possible for all people to be heard, respected, understood, and for us all to be better off. Discussion, dissent and ultimate consensus making can be accomplished without aggression, divisiveness and the necessity of one side losing. Northern methods of education and communication were based on collaboration, consensus, gentle guiding, and most of all humour and goodwill. Known for his biting wit, Native American scholar Vine Deloria Jr. (1969: 169) reminds us that ‘when a people can laugh at themselves and laugh at others and hold all aspects of life together without letting anyone drive them to extremes, then it would seem to me that the people can survive’. Despite that intention there are challenges to be addressed in why such a project is necessary and any negativity is my inclusion for context. Indeed, it is a shame that the building of this dissertation had to find itself in so much darkness when the project was so much light.

## Chapter 6

### Conclusion

It is not knowledge we lack. What is missing is the courage to understand what we know and to draw conclusions

- Sven Lindqvist (1992: 2)

And I think that's the way it will go, until what I call a balance of stories is secured. And this is really what I personally wish this century to see—a balance of stories where every people will be able to contribute to a definition of themselves, where we are not victims of other people's accounts. This is not to say that nobody should write about anybody else—I think they should, but those that have been written about should also participate in the making of these stories.

- Chinua Achebe (2000)

This project is a proof of concept, meaning that that is not the solution in and of itself but a means to try and achieve a solution. Wade Davis said in his 2003 TED Talk that 'stories can save the world'. This video research has tried to tell its stories in as full a way as possible and to share the North across the top of the world but also with the South. Students and community members were dedicated in not only sharing but also inviting the reciprocity of dialogue and engagement by challenging the viewer to think and see their Northern perspective. Moving forward it is critical to all Canadians that we hear Aboriginal and Northern stories. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie eloquently states:

Stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity.

(TED Global 2009)

As this writing is concluding, Canada is celebrating 150 years as a nation-state. It is a complicated concept but it is also an opportunity to reflect and ask the questions that prompted us (myself, research students and community members) to embark on this research journey. Canada's centenary was a time that saw the birth of Northern Aboriginal language reclamation, political advocacy, the modern land claims movement and the groundwork for the evolution of Aboriginal Self Government. Perhaps this sesquicentennial will see further and greater Northern transformation, harmony and reconciliation. Recently there were *Walrus Talks*<sup>14</sup>, on March 7, 2017, in Yellowknife as part of an across country schedule of speakers. The theme of the talks is 'We Desire A Better Country'. The following is a lengthy quote, but I believe the words merit as full a representation as possible. Kyla Kakfwi Scott, daughter of Stephen Kawfi, shared these inspiring thoughts:

I'm here to talk about interpretation...

My great aunt Mary Wilson was an expert in her Dene language. She worked for years as an interpreter...I once referred to my aunty as a translator, and my

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<sup>14</sup> The Walrus is a respected Canadian magazine focusing Canadian and International affairs including some literary content that hosts speaking events to further engage their audience.

mom was quick to correct me. Translators take words or text from one language to another, interpreters explain the meaning of something. Effective interpretation is not only the explanation but also the way of explaining; it requires a commitment from the speaker and the audience to hear more than words, more than ideas; to question the assumptions that feed the place you are listening from and push yourself towards understanding the place from which they are spoken...

In this era of capital 'R' reconciliation, Canada has expressed a desire for better relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Relationships must be built on understanding, and the burden of interpretation required to achieve that cannot be carried by Indigenous people alone...

The reality is that we do not exist as depicted in museums, or books, or archeological sites, and that is fine. We continue to carry that history, that knowledge, that way of life, but our culture also lives where we do; sometimes in cities. Sometimes in rooms like these. My indigeneity, my culture, is defined and redefined by my daily practice and application in all things; in how I speak to you, in how I hear you, in how I work, and in how I learn. For Indigenous people the master class is always on the land, but the practical exam is wherever we're standing...

Striving for a better country won't be simple or easy. It will require a lot of interpretation to move beyond understanding what better means to you, or to me. Being better demands that we come to appreciate what better means to each other, and how and why those understandings are meaningful. This is hard work and it's okay for it to feel that way. Be gentle with yourself, and don't be disheartened by the magnitude of the challenge. But know that gentleness is not the same as complacency, and complacency is not an option...

What I love about the idea of a better country is the liberation and challenge that comes with working towards something without an end point, something that infinitely calls for more. This work demands tolerance, patience, and deep personal commitment. It asks us to bring our best selves, to hold each other up, and to embrace the discomfort of real transformation. It is a recognition that a better country is what we collectively make it to be, and that our work as interpreters is to seek understanding, not as an accomplishment but as a practice and commitment and way of being through every step of that journey.

(Excerpted from Kyla Kakfwi Scott's *Walrus Talk* Yellowknife)



This is a beautiful summation of everything we were trying to do with this research and what I am trying to say in this dissertation. Interpretation as dynamic and collective action is co-knowledge production. Its importance to all Canadians cannot be overstated and it must be done. She is clear about the difficulty of transformation, but optimistic, gentle and supportive in her expectations. Going forward from this sesquicentennial we can perhaps finally achieve the peace, friendship and harmony sought by Aboriginal Northerners since the newcomers arrived.

In summary I will consider the research questions and provide some final thoughts on their answers. Their answers are more fully understood in the videos and they are questions this dissertation has begun to answer, but the work will continue, as the questions need constant engagement. The first three questions were specific in what this research project was trying to understand:

**How can we, researchers, teachers and non-Aboriginal people, gain better communication and understanding across differing cultures and perspectives?**

The Arctic is first a homeland. The distance between the Canadian conception of the North and Northern peoples' perceptions of themselves and their homeland can be as vast as the Arctic landscape. Inuvialuit leader Nellie Cournoyea succinctly captures the disconnection:

They glamorise and romanticise the Inuit...and give us status the others don't have. Canadians like to talk about us eating frozen meat and living in the cold. It gives Canada something other countries don't have. Everyone likes the Inuit.

(Cournoyea 1988: 286)

There is a lack of knowledge and engagement from Southern Canadians with the North that can result in stereotypes at best and complete ignorance at worst. The North is on every map and is a significant geographic part of Canada. It should not be a mystery or a surprise for Canadians. Ignorance, wilful or otherwise, is unacceptable unless Canada is planning to give up its claim to Arctic sovereignty. Ironically the Canadian government could not claim Arctic sovereignty without the people living there and the Canadian Rangers whose expertise is critical to the military to navigating and surviving on the land. Conversely Northerners are inundated with Southern media, information, policy and procedure. The North knows the South far better than the South knows them. Northern produced media and research can share, educate and invite dialogue. Reciprocal communication is imperative to achieving effective understanding across cultures and to appreciate difference and knowledge. Humour has been used very effectively, by student researchers and community members in the videos to help to facilitate this. The process of the South learning about the North can be enjoyable and the dialogue that has been long awaited can become a positive one.

**How can we better understand our own perspectives and innate biases as things that must be questioned, and interfere with our understanding and communication with others?**

The Jewish faith has a concept that when you are very active in your faith you have gone back to the answer and when you are inactive you have gone back to the question. Holocaust survivor, author and teacher, the late Elie Wiesel said "To teach is to sensitize. To words. To problems. To ideas. To anguish and humanity. Anguish is a strong word, but there is much anguish in the world. And humanity is what you

do in response to anguish (Freedman, 1982)”. I often teach his book *Night* to my English students. It is a difficult book to study, but in watching videos of Wiesel speaking, the students find comfort and inspiration after the anguish. Life in the North is hard and can be tragic but that is not the full story and it is not the only story. Wiesel speaks of humanity and this is that: a decolonizing process to celebrate the difference and beauty of humanity and with this recognition, humanity is regained, not just for the North but the South as well. The engagement of the North, the South and the North-to-South tried to create videos that would answer the unasked questions of what the Northern cultures, peoples and perspectives are and the strengths in those differences. Student videos proudly showcased their home communities, their ancestral territory, their culture and traditions. Student interviews with community members reinforced these ideas by inviting the viewer to think and hopefully engage with this desired dialogue.

**How challenging and critical it is to be rigorous with yourself by accepting how little you may know or understand, and how much your truth and reality is completely subjective.**

Canada is a nice country that has a history of doing not nice things. I have always had a real interest in Africa and the North, which is shown in the literature of this dissertation. My quest for a good unit for my English class lead me to Beah’s book *A Long Way Gone* (2007) and two films *A Long Walk to Freedom* (2013) and *Invictus* (2010). The relationship of South Africa and Canada is long and complicated. Members of the South African government came and studied the Canadian reservation system, which South Africa then used it as a model for

apartheid. The Toronto Star is overly generous in their timeline investigation calling it 'A History of Missteps' in which it reports:

Inspired by what it has read about Canada's Indian Act and its legal classification of "status Indians," the South African government examines Canada's Indian reserve system and later models elements of apartheid after the Canadian system.

(Popplewell 2010)

This history is not generally known by many Canadians. The 1886 Canadian government report is shocking:

Our Indian legislation generally rests on the principle, that the aborigines are to be kept in a condition of tutelage and treated as wards or children of the State. ...the true interests of the aborigines and of the State alike require that every effort should be made to aid the Red man in lifting himself out of his condition of tutelage and dependence, and that is clearly our wisdom and our duty, through education and every other means, to prepare him for a higher civilization.

(Department of the Interior: 1877: 16)

Then, much later, the Canadian government went to South Africa to learn about their truth and reconciliation process after apartheid. Indeed, there are many Africans now making with homes in the North. One student told me that she likes it here as it like Africa, like village life, as you are known here and know others. Nelson Mandela spoke of his dreams and goals when he said:

I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society . . . It is an ideal which I hope to live for and achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.

(Mandela 1964)

On the passing of Mandela in 2013, Commissioner of the TRC Murray Sinclair

released this statement:

The memory of Nelson Mandela belongs to everyone who aspires to truth and reconciliation.

The patience that he taught had nothing to do with accepting the unacceptable. It had everything to do with determination and principle, everything to do with commitment to justice in the long term.

As Commissioners of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, we continue to be moved by the courage and wisdom of both Madiba, and the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission that came into existence through him. Our understanding of the purpose and value of truth-telling, of reconciliation itself, owe a great deal to them both.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa was tasked with exposing and healing wounds sustained over centuries of inequity between the Indigenous black peoples of South Africa and the settlers who dominated them. The parallels with our own mandate – to inform all Canadians about the Indian Residential Schools and their devastating legacy; to guide and inspire a process of reconciliation based on trust and renewed relationships – are obvious.

We are deeply grateful that Madiba's vision of reconciliation lives on despite his passing.

(Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada)

As discussed and referenced throughout this dissertation, Canadians must learn more of their unfortunate history, like the use of Northern uranium in the first atomic bombs, the relocation of the Inuit, the residential school system and who Aboriginal people really are. Only with real understanding can justice and reconciliation be achieved. You only need to live in the North for a short time and then return to the South to realize how shockingly little Canada knows about the North. But even though the questions asked are cringe-worthy, there does seem to be genuine curiosity. The government, educational programming, media and researchers must work in concert with Northerners to bridge the knowledge divide and reveal the full Canadian story.

The next three questions of the work provide a model of how Northern research can be approached. They provide a meta-frame that tries to articulate and engage how research should be done in the North:

- **How can research be conducted in a collegial and equitable way with Indigenous people through knowledge co-design and co-production?**
- **How can the academic research in the North make room for recognition of diverse and outside voices?**
- **How can academic discourse recognize and honour indigenous voice, worldview, perspective and leadership?**

These questions must be answered together with the concept of knowledge co-production because that participatory and interpretive process allows all aspects of the questions to be addressed and acknowledged. Collegiality and equity can only be achieved when Indigenous people are not objects or subjects but rather team members. Only by working together can we move forward. This cooperation and co-knowledge production by its nature requires a multitude of viewpoints and therefore naturally privileges them as the co-operative process is pluralistic and makes it difficult for any one viewpoint to dominate. And by integrating Northern Aboriginal people and perspectives within academic discourse and process, research leadership is also inevitable. It is about truly working together with humility, generosity and humour. It is not about competing or even fighting but about committing to really working together towards comprehensive viewpoints, equality and justice. This is simply an additive approach rather than the one of reduction and privilege that has been too common in colonial contexts. Society, culture and knowledge are universal rights.

## **How can a white person ethically and effectively research and teach in an Aboriginal community?**

This writing has been my work towards understanding the complex history of education in the North and its complicated present. My personal act of reconciliation is to rededicate myself to my teaching by striving to create environments where my students can learn and opportunities for them to be themselves in their educational journeys. Unfortunately, as this writing was concluding there was a controversy in the Canadian Senate. Canadian Senator Lynn Beyak said:

I was disappointed in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report in that it didn't focus on the good...

I speak partly for the record, but mostly in memory of the kindly and well-intentioned men and women and their descendants — perhaps some of us here in this chamber — whose remarkable works, good deeds and historical tales in the residential schools go unacknowledged for the most part...

Mistakes were made at residential schools — in many instances, horrible mistakes that overshadowed some good things that also happened at those schools.

*(CBC 2017)*

Despite the public outcry she stood by her words. Murray Sinclair, now also serving as a senator, responded to these comments:

If we can preserve that record (residential school system) for future generations, then these deniers will have a diminishing population of people who will believe them...

There are still some people resisting — not just in the Senate, but elsewhere...

People tend to forget that there have always been those who are deniers of history and they deny history for their own reasons. They deny, perhaps, because they're slow-minded and dim-witted, but more importantly it's because I think they believe in a certain delusion about our history that they are unwilling to give up...

We should never forget, even once they have learned from it, because it's part of who we are. It's not just a part of who we are as survivors and children of survivors and relatives of survivors, it's part of who we are as a nation. And this nation must never forget what it once did to its most vulnerable people.

(Sinclair, 2017)

Beyak's remarks caused an outcry that shows that Canada is beginning to come to terms with our past, but the fact that a current Senator made these comments at all shows how far we must still go as a nation. Denial did not sit well with the Canadian public, but the real test will be to not minimize the residential school history and thereby fail at this need for reconciliation. As a white woman in the North I am frequently disturbed by the number of other white people who come to me with casual racist comments about "these people" thinking I share their prejudiced views. It is heartbreakingly common in everyday professional and social life even in Inuvik and Yellowknife. I desire a better country for my students, my children and myself.

Even this conclusion finds itself trying to continue telling the story. It falls into a teacher's compulsion to keep explaining and attempts to find new examples to reach the reader. Summation is difficult as this work was dynamic and organic. Its method focused on progression, empowerment and collegiality: privileging function rather than form. My role and responsibilities progressed from initially leading/mentoring and organising the groups through functional administration, support and finally this documentation. We started with group work that developed into personal projects and theme editing with the students moving into leadership and self-directed roles. Collaboration and full participation takes time and change from all involved. This is a participatory research project emphasizing co-knowledge production through engaged co-research, where students played a leading part in the designing, implementing and evaluation of the project. The strength of the research IS the



process, the content and ultimately the people. It is set against the Canadian history of Southern/Western dominated representations of the North and challenges stereotypes bringing Northern perspectives and experiences to the forefront. It might be difficult for research, education and government to allow time, agency and the release of control to allow collegial and ultimately work with Indigenous people like this to occur, but we must find the will, resources and time.

As I have written before, this project was designed, executed and completed by and for Northerners, it is not limited by words in a textual vacuum, but comes directly from the source. Northern Indigenous culture has a rich and deep tradition of storytelling and new media can be a tool to share it and give it a new life. Research relies mainly on text even though other forms of communication may be better tools in the North. Northern communities are not waiting for research reports: rather they are waiting for engagement and dialogue. Video is a path towards communication; it allows for more ideas and voices to be shared and heard by more people. Researchers concerned with practical reciprocity and reconciliation should consider video as a primary research tool.

The underlying Northern philosophy of sharing and storytelling inspired what stories students wanted to create and what the community members wanted to share about their North, the South and newcomers. This project sought to engage students on what they thought of the issues and also what their community thought. Almost 50 students took part in this video research project that focused on a community based appreciative enquiry, participatory research and co research and almost 100 people are featured in the films. It is fair to say the films have been seen by thousands, which

exceeded our wildest dreams. The breadth and scope of the work perhaps begin to move the work from interdisciplinary to trans-disciplinary as it has been many different things to many people. This writing, like the films, invites and challenges the reader to engage, question and be an active participant. This engagement not only honours the student's and community member's contribution of wisdom and generosity but also contributes to the Canadian and Northern project of reconciliation. I hope it might inspire other research and its story provide a pathway for other projects that might be allowed to grow and become what that group and community need. What I learned and would most like to communicate on this research was to let people go where they want to and you will be in for an amazing ride.

Kawfi-Scott is optimistic, wise and gentle in her hope for the future, not just in the North but also in Canada. Akhavan (2016) concluded his law journal article *Cultural Genocide: Legal Label or Mourning Metaphor* with a story from Knud Rasmussen that I had also read years ago. During his 1920's expedition across the Arctic, Rasmussen recorded the words of Orpingalik, a shaman priest from the Kitikmeot region in the Central Arctic neighboring the Western Arctic:

Songs are thoughts, sung out with the breath when people are moved by great forces and ordinary speech no longer suffices.

Man is moved just like the ice floe sailing here and there out in the current. His thoughts are driven by a flowing force when he feels joy, when he feels fear, when he feels sorrow. Thoughts can wash over him like a flood, making his breath come in gasps and his heart throb. Something, like an abatement in the weather, will keep him thawed up. And then it will happen that we, who always think we are small, will feel still smaller. And we will fear to use words. But it will happen that the words we need will come of themselves. When the words we want to use shoot up of themselves—we get a new song.

(Rasmussen 1931: 321)



### To the top of the world

I hope this research has included the narrative of the vibrant and vital Western Arctic at the top the world. It is not a simple story but one that is complicated and needs to be heard. So it is back to dark and light. Back to the polarity and the paradox but perhaps it is full circle. Despite the bad, the global problems then answers are there, waiting at the top of the world.

My response to it all is to try again. I plan to ask about winter next and what it means to Northerners (born and newcomers) and what they think it means to Southerners. If that works, we will continue on with the Northern summer, at the student's laughing request. They always remind me to lighten up. I will continue trying to get it right and then try again, but maybe it just the story that matters, to keep asking to hear it and trying to tell it. The North is a land of stories. For my students, my children and myself. I will end this research's story with the words of Thomas King:

Take this story, for instance. It's yours. Do with it what you will. Tell it to friends. Turn it into a television movie. Forget it. But don't say in the years to come that you would have lived your life differently if only you had heard this story.

You have heard it now.

(King 2003: 29)

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Please note: In accordance with the Regulations, I acknowledge this dissertation builds on my Master's thesis work, two previously published papers and several academic presentations on this research, however this writing has been extensively revised and expanded.

## AURORA COLLEGE

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### Procedure for Applicants

1. Application for approval of research procedures is made by submitting five copies of the Ethical Review Application form to the chair of the Ethical Review Committee.  
*Note: researchers intending to use animals in their research must contact the ERC chair for the appropriate forms.*
2. The application will be forwarded to the ERC members for their review. The members will work individually and only in special circumstances will they convene a meeting. Each member will complete an Ethical Review Certificate and forward it to the chair.
3. The ERC will normally arrive at a decision through consensus. The chair will inform the researcher in writing of the ERC's decision and of any conditions stipulated by ERC members. Applicants should allow three weeks for the processing of applications.
4. Applicants may reapply with an amended application.
5. In the event that there is no consensus or the researcher disagrees with conditions imposed by the ERC, the chair may call a teleconference meeting of the ERC, to which the researcher may be invited.
6. The applications and review certificates will be kept confidential and filed in the researcher's licence file.

Contact Information    Chair of the Ethics Review Committee  
Aurora Research Institute  
Aurora College  
Box 1450, Inuvik, Northwest Territories    XOE OTO  
Ph. (867) 777-3298    Fax (867) 777-4264  
Email: [licence@nwtresearch.com](mailto:licence@nwtresearch.com)

# AURORA COLLEGE

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## Application for Ethics Review of Research Procedures (Please fill in the form provided)

### Identification and Purpose

1. Date: December 11, 2007

Name of Applicant(s): Suzanne Robinson of Inuvik Literacy Circle and Inuvik Learning Centre

Address: 117 Gwich'in Road P.O. Box 1156

Phone: 777-4830 (w) 777-7810 Fax: 678-2876 E-mail:  
srobinson@auroracollege.nt.ca

Title of Research: **Take it from the Top Northern Perspectives on: Southern Canada, Newcomers to the North, and their land and people.**

2. If the project is part of a course, academic programme, or contract, give the name of the instructor or supervisor:  
Linda Flynn (Inuvik Learning Centre Senior Instructor)  
Campus: Aurora Campus, Aurora College
3. Purpose: Involve Learning Centre students in primary research with community involvement through interviewing.

I hope to document this project as a case study and may use this case study as part of personal study in the future.

(Give a brief outline of the main features and variable of the research problem. Include a brief statement which describes the significance and potential benefits of the study).

After hundreds of years of being the object of Southern research, the voice of Northern people needs to be heard not only on the North, but also on the South. The Inuvik Literacy Circle, with Aurora College's Inuvik Learning Centre's staff and students, will conduct a three part video research project focusing on Northern



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Perspectives and we would like to hear what you have to say! We are looking for volunteer participants to help our Learning Centre students to record voices and images of the North. Now it is your turn to be heard.

How do you see the South?  
How do you see Southerners?  
What would you like Southerners to know about the North?  
What would you like to say about your North?  
Who are you as a Northerner?

Building on Zebedee Nungak's groundbreaking work in Qallunology, Rasmussen's Qallunology: Pedagogy of the Oppressor while considering Critical Whiteness Studies this will be an investigation into Northern perceptions of the South, Southerners in the North and also the North and the Northern land and people. Employing primary research techniques with anthropological and sociological theory, students will interview each other and community members. They will draw on the Vertov and Fogo Island models of using video as an educational method of dialogue and community development. The project will use collaborative research design, interviews, video and reflective assignments to explore the South and the North. As advocated by Freire, Giroux, hooks, Linda Smith and Graham Smith, student researchers will use their voices in a project of reclaiming and expanding Northerner research and learning from a distinctly and uniquely Northern place.

### Southern Studies

- *Northerners on the South* - Northerners have a wealth of experience and lengthy contact with Southern Media, Southern Institutions and Southern Canadians who come North to work and live. It is time to tap into this Northern expertise and consider Southern culture from Northern perspectives. What observations and conclusion have Northerners made about Southern habits, mores, and the culture and social organization of these newcomers ( ie: language, economic and political organization, law and conflict resolution, patterns of consumption and exchange, [kinship](#) and family structure, gender relations, childrearing and socialization, religion, symbolism, etc).
- *Northerners Speak to Southern Newcomers* - If Northerners could say anything to Southern people coming to the North as visitors, researchers and professionals what would they say?

### North to the South

The North is now very much in the spotlight of the world. Northerners need the opportunity to share their views, thoughts and perceptions of their North. Northerners will speak to the South about their homeland and their people

- *The Northern Land* - Southern Canada needs to see the North through the eyes of the Northerners. How is the Northern Climate a unique and vital place to live and thrive?

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How is climate change and unpredictable weather affecting Northern people? How the Northern homeland connected and affected by the rest of Canada and the world? Are Northerners still connected to the land?

- *The Northern People* – Who are Northerners? How is Northern culture and history both ancient and alive? How is Northern life developing and adapting in this fast ever-changing interconnected world?

### Northern Studies

- *We are Northerners* – From their own perspective, who are Northerners? How do students see Northern habits, mores and the culture and social organization of their people?
- *Northern Speak to Northerners* - If Northerners could say anything to other Northerners about the North and their hopes for the future what would they say? Student researchers will interview each other and community members to find out what Northerners really what to say to their community about living, working, and studying in the North.

The six segments will then be shown at various community events and focus groups. Ultimately, the video series will be shared with schools and Learning Centres throughout the Territories. If funding permits, they will also be shared with Southern educational institutions. Educational materials will also be developed and included with the segments on DVD so that the videos can be more readily used in the classroom. This project is not only an excellent learning opportunity for Northern students but it will create an important educational tool for both Northern and Southern classrooms. The North has long been an object of study but this project will allow Northern students and community members the opportunity to contribute their too-often absent voice to Northern and Southern Studies.

### Subjects (If no human subjects are required, skip this section.)

1. Briefly describe the number and kind of subjects required for data collection.

Students (approximately 20) and community participants (20-40) to be determined by research team

2. Describe any potential risks to the subjects.

There is the possibility that a student or community member might feel uncomfortable with a question but they do not need to answer the question.

## AURORA COLLEGE

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3. Describe any potential benefits to the subjects.

All students will receive class credit in CCP 160, Traditional Knowledge and/ or Special Projects. The benefit to students will be to develop research skills and to be part of a large research project. Students will be able to use the video project as part of their portfolios and put this on their resume. If funding can be arranged there is also the possibility of presenting their work at a conference in the future.

4. What information about the research problem and their role in the project will potential subjects be given?

A plain language summary has been developed to introduce the project to students and community participants to give full information on the project and their roles. This is a collaborative research project where all participants will contribute to the project. The participatory research design allows the students and community participants to guide and shape the project.

5. How will consent of the subjects to participate be obtained? Attach a copy of the consent form(s) being used. (Consent forms should have the researcher's name and contact information).

Please see the attached consent forms (students, community participant and focus group)  
Please see the attached release forms (student and community participant)

6. What will the subjects be required to do in the course of the project?

Community participants will basically being interview subjects and then view the finished product to approve. The time commitment will vary depending on interview length and how many segments the participant is in. Estimated time commitment of 30 minutes to a few hours.

Student participants will have course work with written assignments to build background on the research topic. Assignments will be mostly short and long paragraph answers, but there will also be some internet research and personal response essays) Students will help

## AURORA COLLEGE

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form the questions that will be asked of all video participants. There will be opportunities for students to write, narrate, interview, film, edit and facilitate focus groups. All will participate in design and organization but the different tasks and activities will be allocated based on interest and skill set. Class credit will be awarded based on time contributed to the project. The basic time commitment will be 45 hours. However, students who are very interested and want to take on more research can earn credit in other courses.

7. What assurances will the subjects be given and what precautions will be taken regarding the confidentiality of the data or information which they provide in the study?

All information (assignments, interviews and responses) will be kept under lock and key. Students and community participants will sign a release form indicating whether they want their names used or not. In the research I have done in the past it has been very important for some participants to be identified and their words attributed to them due to problems they have had with researchers in the past. However, if the student or participant does not want to be named their responses will be anonymous in the documenting of this project. (Please see the consent and release forms.)

Students will be involved in the editing process. All the video participants will have the opportunity to view the final edits at community viewings to have opportunity make sure they are happy and comfortable with the edit will it be shared before the video series is showed to other groups

(Please see the attached release of video edit form)

8. Will children be used as a source of data? Yes X No \_\_\_\_\_  
If year, indicate how consent will be obtained on their behalf.

Permission from parent or guardian in a written form.  
(Please see attached release and consent forms.)

9. Will the researcher or any member of the research team be in a position of power or authority in relation to his subjects? (For example, a teacher doing research and using her class as subjects, or a counsellor collecting research data from his clients).

## AURORA COLLEGE

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Yes   X   No       

If yes, indicate how coercion of subjects will be avoided?

Linda Flynn will act as project supervisor so the students will have a separate person to go to in the event of a problem or concerns Linda is the senior instructor.

There will be alternate course work available to students if they choose to not participate in the project.

10. Will deception of any kind be necessary in the project: Yes        No   X    
If yes, explain why and indicate how subjects will be debriefed after the study.

### Community Values and Access to Data and Findings

1. How will you respect the community norms and values?

The project is designed to be collaborative and participatory to allow it to reflect the interests and comfort levels on students and community members. Community participants will of course be voluntary. All interviews will be conducted in a manner that respects the interviewee and community. The final edit will also be constructed in a fashion that is respectful to all participants. This is a community project designed to be directed and reflect the community and its members.

2. Who will have access to the original data of the study?

The unedited footage will be archived with the Inuvik Literacy Circle.

3. How will subjects access the findings of the study?

Subjects will be notified when a written case study of the project is available and can request a copy.

## AURORA COLLEGE

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4. What will be the final disposition of the original data after the study is completed?

Copies of the video will be shared with all the libraries in Inuvik and participants will also receive copies. Any written analysis of the project will also be shared with the local libraries.

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Signature of Applicant(s)

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Signature of Advisor, Instructor or Supervisor

*Mail to: Chair of the Ethics Review Committee, Aurora Research Institute,  
Aurora College, Box 1450, Inuvik, NT XOE OTO*

*Phone: (867) 777-3838 Fax: (867) 777-4264 email – [licence@nwtresearch.com](mailto:licence@nwtresearch.com)*

# AURORA COLLEGE

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## Statement from Ethics Review Committee Members

Title of Research:

Name of Applicants:

Committee Member Decision (underline one):

Accept

Reject (provide explanation in space below)

Conditional Acceptance (specify the conditions in the space below)

Explanation:

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Signature of ERC Member

---

Print Name

---

Date

**Take it from the Top**  
**Northern Perspectives on:**  
**Southern Canada, Newcomers to the North, and their land and people.**

After hundreds of years of being the object of Southern research, the voice of Northern people needs to be heard not only on the North, but also on the South. The Inuvik Literacy Circle, with Aurora College's Inuvik Learning Centre's staff and students, will conduct a three part video research project focusing on Northern Perspectives and we would like to hear what you have to say! We are looking for volunteer participants to help our Learning Centre students to record voices and images of the North. Now it is your turn to be heard.

How do you see the South?  
How do you see Southerners?  
What would you like Southerners to know about the North?  
What would you like to say about your North?  
Who are you as a Northerner?

Southern Studies

- *Northerners on the South* - Northerners have a wealth of experience and lengthy contact with Southern Media, Southern Institutions and Southern Canadians who come North to work and live. It is time to tap into this Northern expertise and consider Southern culture from Northern perspectives. What observations and conclusion have Northerners made about Southern habits, mores, and the culture and social organization of these newcomers ( ie: language, economic and political organization, law and conflict resolution, patterns of consumption and exchange, [kinship](#) and family structure, gender relations, childrearing and socialization, religion, symbolism, etc).
- *Northerners Speak to Southern Newcomers* - If Northerners could say anything to Southern people coming to the North as visitors, researchers and professionals what would they say?

North to the South

The North is now very much in the spotlight of the world. Northerners need the opportunity to share their views, thoughts and perceptions of their North. Northerners will speak to the South about their homeland and their people

- *The Northern Land* - Southern Canada needs to see the North through the eyes of the Northerners. How is the Northern Climate a unique and vital place to live and thrive? How is climate change and unpredictable weather affecting Northern people? How the Northern homeland connected and affected by the rest of Canada and the world? Are Northerners still connected to the land?
- *The Northern People* – Who are Northerners? How is Northern culture and history both ancient and alive? How is Northern life developing and adapting in this fast ever-changing interconnected world?

Northern Studies

- *We are Northerners* – From their own perspective, who are Northerners? How do students see Northern habits, mores and the culture and social organization of their people?
- *Northern Speak to Northerners* - If Northerners could say anything to other Northerners about the North and their hopes for the future what would they say? Student researchers will interview each other and community members to find out what Northerners really want to say to their community about living, working, and studying in the North.

The six segments will then be shown at various community events and focus groups. Ultimately, the video series will be shared with schools and Learning Centres throughout the Territories. If funding permits, they will also be shared with Southern educational institutions. Educational materials will also be developed and included with the segments on DVD so that the videos can be more readily used in the classroom. This project is not only an excellent learning opportunity for Northern students but it will create an important educational tool for both Northern and Southern classrooms. The North has long been an object of study but this project will allow Northern students and community members the opportunity to contribute their too-often absent voice to Northern and Southern Studies.



**Take it from the Top Northern Perspectives on: Southern Canada, Newcomers to the North,  
and the Northern land and people.**

**Consent Form for Participation in Research Project**  
**(Used with Student Researchers)**

I am inviting you to participate as a student researcher in a research project to create a video on Southern and Northern Studies. During the time of **February 1, to June 26, 2008**, you, \_\_\_\_\_, will be participating in the community video project as part of your Developmental Studies coursework and you will earn course credit.

After hundreds of years of being the object of Southern research, the voice of Northern people needs to be heard not only about the North, but also about the South. As a student researcher you will be looking for volunteer participants to help our team to record voices and images of the North. Now it is your turn to be heard.

How do you see the South?

How do you see Southerners?

What would you like Southerners to know about the North?

What would you like to say about your North?

Who are you as a Northerner?

Your participation as a student researcher will involve completing class assignments, research question design, setting up an interview, interviewing and conducting other tasks related to this project. This project is designed to document the process of making a collaborative project. The goal is to provide an opportunity for local people to have a venue to voice their thoughts and experiences and to create a local product of relevance and importance. The video will be for the community, but by documenting the process we hope to create an example of how similar projects can be conducted by other communities. In order to do this, we need your consent.

All researchers in the Northwest Territories are required to obtain informed consent for those who participate in research projects. You should know that the information shared in interviews that are not filmed is strictly confidential and you will have the opportunity to view the edited video segments at community viewings. You are aware that you are free to withdraw from the project at any time. Before we begin, you will need to know how this project is being planned and you need to consent to the plans.

You are a voluntary participant and can withdraw at any time. There are alternate assignments to earn class credit.

- All unfilmed and text data collected is in strict confidence.
- Any filmed interview or other footage will be used in a video project that will be ultimately be viewed by the community and other audiences.
- No one will see the research interview notes, transcripts or other text data but the student research team and staff advisors, Suzanne and Linda.
- This project may be used as a case study which will be available in the public libraries of Inuvik upon completion of the compiling the data.

If you agree to participate in this project, you agree to the following:

- You have read this form and you have had all your questions about the project answered. You agree to participate in this project and may choose to be interviewed.
- You understand that you can refuse to answer any questions during the interview or during our communication.
- You are aware that you can contact me at 777-7810 or 777-4830 if you have any problems with anything that is happening with this project.
- You are aware that you can also contact Linda Flynn, Inuvik Learning Centre Senior Instructor, at 777-7841 if you have any problems with anything that is happening with this project.
- You are aware that if at any time you wish to withdraw from the project, you may do so and will not suffer any consequences for having discontinued your participation.

If Participant is under 18: I, \_\_\_\_\_, am the parent/legal guardian of the individual named above, I have read this release and approve of its terms.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**I want to be recognized by name** as a participant in this research project. **I want my name to be used** when using quotes from the video project in any written documentation of this research project

**Please also sign here \_\_\_\_\_ to indicate if you want your name used in the documentation of this project.**

**Take it from the Top Northern Perspectives on: Southern Canada, Newcomers to the North, and the Northern land and people.**

**Consent Form for Participation in Research Project**  
**(Used with interviews)**

We are inviting you to participate in a research project to create a video on Southern and Northern Studies. After hundreds of years of being the object of Southern research, the voice of Northern people needs to be heard not only about the North, but also about the South. The Inuvik Literacy Circle, with Aurora College's Inuvik Learning Centre's staff and students, will conduct a three part video research project focusing on Northern Perspectives and we would like to hear what you have to say! We are looking for volunteer participants to help our Learning Centre students to record voices and images of the North. Now it is your turn to be heard.

How do you see the South?

How do you see Southerners?

What would you like Southerners to know about the North?

What would you like to say about your North?

Who are you as a Northerner?

Your participation will be an initial filmed interview with the possibility of a follow-up filmed interview. You will be able to view these interviews at community screenings to review the final versions of video segments. This project is designed to document the process of making a collaborative project. The goals of this project are to allow students to develop research skills and to provide an opportunity for local people to have a venue to voice their thoughts and experiences and to create a local product of relevance and importance. The video will be for the community, but by documenting the process we hope to create an example of how similar projects can be conducted by other communities. In order to do this, we need your consent.

All researchers in the Northwest Territories are required to obtain informed consent for those who participate in research projects. You should know that the information shared in interviews that are not filmed is strictly confidential and you will the opportunity to view the edited video segments at community viewings. You are aware that you are free to withdraw from the project at any time. Before we begin, you will need to know how this project is being planned and you need to consent to the plans.

You are a voluntary participant and can withdraw at any time.

- All unfilmed data collected is in strict confidence.
- The filmed interview will be used in a video project that will be ultimately be viewed by the community and other audiences.
- No one will see the research interview notes or transcripts but the student research team and staff advisors, Suzanne and Linda
- This project may be used as a case study which will be available in the public libraries of Inuvik upon completion of compiling the data.

If you agree to participate in this project, you agree to the following:

- You have read this form and you have had all questions about the project answered. You agree to be interviewed for this project.
- You understand that you can refuse to answer any questions during the interview or during our communication.
- You are aware that you can contact Suzanne Robinson at 777-7810 or 777-4830 if you have any problems with anything that is happening with this project.
- You are aware that you can also contact Linda Flynn, Inuvik Learning Centre Senior Instructor, at 777-7841 if you have any problems with anything that is happening with this project.
- You are aware that if at any time you wish to withdraw from the project, you know you may do so and will not suffer any consequences for having discontinued your participation.

If Participant is under 18: I, \_\_\_\_\_, am the parent/legal guardian of the individual named above, I have read this release and approve of its terms.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**I want to be recognized by name** as a participant in this research project. **I want my name to be used** when using quotes from the video project in any written documentation of the this research project

**Please also sign here** \_\_\_\_\_ **to indicate if you want your name used in the documentation of this project.**

**Take it from the Top Northern Perspectives on: Southern Canada, Newcomers to the North, and the Northern land and people.**

**Consent Form for Participation in Research Project**  
**(Used with focus groups)**

We are inviting you to participate in a research project to create a video on Southern and Northern Studies. After hundreds of years of being the object of Southern research, the voice of Northern people needs to be heard not only about the North, but also about the South. The Inuvik Literacy Circle and Aurora College's Inuvik Learning Centre's staff and students will conduct a three part video research project focusing on Northern Perspectives and we would like to hear what you have to say! We are looking for volunteer participants to help our Learning Centre students to record voices and images of the North. Now it is your turn to be heard.

How do you see the South?

How do you see Southerners?

What would you like Southerners to know about the North?

What would you like to say about your North?

Who are you as a Northerner?

Your participation will be as a focus group participant. All focus groups' responses will be in strict confidence, and at no time will names be used in written work pertaining to this project. . This project is designed to document the process of making a collaborative project. The goal is to provide an opportunity for local people to have a venue to voice their thoughts and experiences and to create a local product of relevance and importance. The video will be for the community, but by documenting the process We hope to create an example of how similar projects can be conducted by other communities. In order to do this, we need your consent.

All researchers in the Northwest Territories are required to obtain informed consent for those who participate in research projects. You should know that the information shared in interviews that are not filmed is strictly confidential and you will the opportunity to view the edited video segments at community viewings. You are aware that you are free to withdraw from the project at any time. Before we begin, you will need to know how this project is being planned and you need to consent to the plans.

You are a voluntary participant and can withdraw at any time.

- All unfiled data collected is in strict confidence.
- The filmed interview will be used in a video project that will be ultimately be viewed by the community and other audiences.
- No one will see the research interview notes or transcripts but Suzanne Robinson.
- This project may be used as a cases student which will be available in the public libraries of Inuvik upon completion of the compiling the data.

If you agree to participate in this project, you agree to the following:

- You have read this form and you have had all questions about the project answered.
- You understand that you can refuse to answer any questions during the interview or during our communication.
- You are aware that you can contact Suzanne Robinson at 777-7810 or 777-4830 if you have any problems with anything that is happening with this project.
- You are aware that you can also contact Linda Flynn, Inuvik Learning Centre Senior Instructor, at 777-7841 if you have any problems with anything that is happening with this project.
- You are aware that if at any time you wish to withdraw from the project, you know you may do so and will not suffer any consequences for having discontinued your participation.

If Participant is under 18: I, \_\_\_\_\_, am the parent/legal guardian of the individual named above, I have read this release and approve of its terms.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**A Community Video Project:**

**Take it from the Top Northern Perspectives on: Southern Canada, Newcomers to the North, and the Northern land and people.**

Community Participant - RELEASE FORM

For good and valuable consideration, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, I hereby consent to the photographing of myself and the recording of my voice and the use of these photographs and/or recordings singularly or in conjunction with other photographs and/or recordings for advertising, publicity, commercial or other business purposes. I understand that the term "photograph" as used herein encompasses both still photographs and motion picture footage.

I further consent to the reproduction and/or authorization by **the Inuvik Literacy Circle and the Aurora College Inuvik Learning Centre** to reproduce and use said photographs and recordings of my voice, for use in all domestic and foreign markets. Further, I understand that others, with or without the consent of \_\_\_\_\_ may use and/or reproduce such photographs and recordings.

I hereby release **the Inuvik Literacy Circle and the Aurora College Inuvik Learning Centre** and any of its associated or affiliated companies, their directors, officers, agents, employees and customers, and appointed advertising agencies, their directors, officers, agents and employees from all claims of every kind on account of such use.

If Participant is under 18: I, \_\_\_\_\_, am the parent/legal guardian of the individual named above, I have read this release and approve of its terms.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Take it from the Top Northern Perspectives on: Southern Canada, Newcomers to the North, and the Northern land and people.**

**Student Participant - RELEASE FORM**

**Paragraph One**

During the time of **February 1, to June 26, 2008**, you, \_\_\_\_\_, will be participating in the community video project as part of your Developmental Studies coursework.

This video Project is being made by the Inuvik Literacy Circle and the Aurora College Inuvik Learning Centre for educational purposes, to promote broader understanding of Northern perspectives. As described below, the Inuvik Literacy Circle and the Aurora College Inuvik Learning Centre is seeking your permission to make copies and other such uses of the recording from time to time, as it deems appropriate. If you consent to the copying and use of the Recording as described below, please indicate your approval by signing and dating this letter in the space indicated.

**Student Participant Video Consent and Release**

By signing below, I grant permission for the Inuvik Literacy Circle and the Aurora College Inuvik Learning Centre and any other person or entity authorized by the Inuvik Literacy Circle and the Aurora College Inuvik Learning Centre to make copies in any form or media of the Recording made of me and described above, including digitized copies or written transcriptions. I further grant permission for the Inuvik Literacy Circle and the Aurora College Inuvik Learning Centre and any person or entity authorized by it (i) to edit or alter the Recording (any such edited or altered Recording is referred to in this Consent and Release as an "Altered Recording"), (ii) to distribute, broadcast, publish and/or transmit all or any portion of the Recording or an Altered Recording via any media including computerized means for the purposes described in paragraph one of this consent and release form, (iii) to incorporate all or any portion of the recording or an Altered Recording in derivative works or compilations in any form or media and (iv) to use my name, likeness and biographical material in connection with any of the foregoing, all to the extent and in such fashion as they deem necessary or desirable to accomplish the purposes described in paragraph one of this Consent and Release form.

I understand and agree that the Recording and/or Altered Recording may be used in the Inuvik Literacy Circle and the Aurora College Inuvik Learning Centre own publications and/or released to the public information media or general public.

I understand that I will receive no compensation for any use of the Recording or an Altered Recording.

I hereby release the Inuvik Literacy Circle and the Aurora College Inuvik Learning Centre, its individual members, and those members' home institutions from any claims or liability regarding any use that may be made of the recording or an Altered Recording in accordance with this Consent and Release.

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE





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25 February, 2008

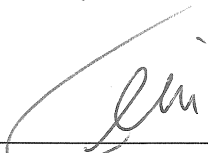
Suzanne Robinson  
Inuvik Literacy Circle and Inuvik Learning Centre  
117 Gwich'in Road P.O.  
Box 1156  
Inuvik, NT  
X0E 0T0

Dear Ms. Robinson,

Attached please find a copy of the Aurora College/Aurora Research Institute Ethical Review Committee's decision regarding the project *Take it from the Top – Northern Perspectives on: Southern Canada, Newcomers to the North, and their land and people*. The ERC, through consensus, found the project to be acceptable in accordance with Section G.17 of the *Aurora College Policy and Procedures Manual*. Thus, the project has received full ethics clearance.

Please note that this project must be carried out in accordance with the description in the application for which full ethics clearance has been granted. All subsequent modifications to the application must be brought to the attention of the ERC before they can be initiated. You are also advised to report immediately to the Chair of the ERC should there be any events related to the procedures used in the project that have negatively or unexpectedly affected participants.

Sincerely,



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Paulo Flieg  
Manager, Scientific Services





# AURORA COLLEGE

## Aurora Research Institute

### Aurora College Ethical Review Committee

**Project Title:** Take it from the Top – Northern Perspectives on: Southern Canada, Newcomers to the North, and their land and people

**Applicant:** Suzanne Robinson (on behalf of the Inuvik Literacy Circle and Inuvik Learning Centre)

**Date of Review:** January – February, 2008

#### Committee Members:

Aurora College

Andrew Applejohn, Director, Aurora Research Institute  
Or  
Paulo Flieg, Manager, Scientific Services, Aurora Research Institute

Dr. Pertice Moffitt, Health Programs Instructor,  
Yellowknife Campus

Alana Mero, NWT International Polar Year Coordinator,  
Aurora Research Institute

External Reviewer(s) -

---

In accordance with Section G.17, Aurora College Policy and Procedures Manual, the undersigned members of the Research Ethics Review Committee grant approval of this project.

Andrew Applejohn \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

OR

Paulo Flieg \_\_\_\_\_

Date: FEB 25, 2008

Pertice Moffitt \_\_\_\_\_ BY EMAIL

Date: FEB 25, 2008

Alana Mero \_\_\_\_\_ BY EMAIL

Date: FEB 25, 2008



## Aurora Research Institute – Aurora College

P.O. Box 1450 Inuvik NT X0E 0T0

Phone 867-777-4029 Fax 867-777-4264 Email: [licence@nwtresearch.com](mailto:licence@nwtresearch.com)

12 410 611

Thursday, March 27, 2008

### NOTIFICATION OF RESEARCH Scientific Research Licence No. 14314

I would like to inform you that Scientific Research Licence No. 14314 has been issued to:

Ms. Suzanne M. Robinson  
Inuvik Literacy Circle and Aurora College Inuvik Learning Centre  
Box 1156  
Inuvik, NT  
X0E 0T0 Canada  
Phone: 867-777-7810  
Email: [srobinson@auroracollege.nt.ca](mailto:srobinson@auroracollege.nt.ca)

to conduct the following study: "Take it from the Top Northern Perspectives on: Southern Canada, Newcomers to the North, and their land and people.".

Please contact the researcher if you would like more information.

#### SUMMARY OF RESEARCH:

This licence was issued for the scientific research licence application # 756.

The objective of this project is to train students to conduct primary research using video interviews and reflective assignments, to support learning and increased research by Northerners, and to create a high quality learning tool for students.

Student methods will be journaling, questionnaires, focus groups, and interviews (20-40 people) using video equipment. Approximately 20 students will discuss their thoughts on Southern and Northern Studies, construct interviews, select participants, conduct interviews, and review and edit footage.

The themes will be:

- 1) Southern Studies - Northerners on the South: Northerners have a wealth of experience with Southern people, it is time to consider Southern culture from Northern perspectives. What observations and conclusions have Northerners made about Southern culture?
- 2) Northerners speak to Southern newcomers: if Northerners could say anything to Southerners what would they say?
- 3) Northerners speak to Northerners: If Northerners could say anything to other Northerners what would they say? Students will find out what Northerners really want to say to their community about living in the North.
- 4) Who are Northerners? How do students see Northern culture and social organization?
- 5) Northern land: How is the Northern climate a unique place to live? How is climate change affecting Northern people? Are Northerners still connected to the land?
- 6) Northern people: How is the culture and history both ancient and alive? How is Northern life adapting in this ever-changing world?



## Aurora Research Institute – Aurora College

P.O. Box 1450 Inuvik NT X0E 0T0

Phone 867-777-4029 Fax 867-777-4264 Email: [licence@nwtresearch.com](mailto:licence@nwtresearch.com)

12 410 611

Thursday, March 27, 2008

### NOTIFICATION OF RESEARCH

Scientific Research Licence No. 14314

The six segments will be shown at community events and be shared with schools throughout the Territories and, if possible, with Southern institutions. Educational materials will be developed and included with the segments on DVD. Copies of videos and reports will be shared with local libraries and educational institutions. The final product will be shared with a community viewing and possibly with APTN through ICS and internet.

Fieldwork will be conducted from March 28 to December 31, 2008, in Inuvik.

Sincerely,

Paulo Flieg

Acting Manager, Scientific Services

#### DISTRIBUTION:

Chairperson, Inuvik Community Corporation, P.O. Box 1365, Inuvik NT X0E 0T0

President, Inuvik Métis Local #62, P.O. Box 2072, Inuvik NT X0E 0T0

Mayor, Town of Inuvik, P.O. Box 1160, Inuvik NT X0E 0T0

Nihtat Gwich'in Renewable Resources Coordinator, Nihtat Gwich'in Council, P.O. Box 2570, Inuvik NT X0E 0T0

Executive Director, Inuvialuit Community Development Division, P.O. Box 2120, Inuvik NT X0E 0T0

Executive Director, Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute, P.O. Box 30, Fort McPherson NT X0E 0J0

Land Use Planner, Gwich'in Land Use Planning Board, P.O. Box 2478, Inuvik NT X0E 0T0

**RESEARCH LICENCE APPLICATION**

**Date of Application:** December 2007

**Previous File Number (if applicable):**

**Principal investigator:** Suzanne Robinson

**Name:** Suzanne Robinson

**Address:** Box 1156

**City/Community:** Inuvik

**Postal Code:** X0E 0T0

**Affiliation:** Inuvik Literacy Circle and Aurora College Inuvik Learning Centre

**Telephone:** w – 777-7810 h-777-4830

**Fax Number:** 678-2876

**E-Mail:** srobinson@auroracollege.nt.ca

**Emergency contact telephone number:**

**Research supervisor's name** (if applicable): Linda Flynn (Senior Instructor 777-7841  
lflynn@auroracollege.nt.ca)

**Sources of funding:** Applying for International Polar Year Funding and other sources

**Other members of research team:** Inuvik Learning Centre Students

**Title of research project:** Take it from the Top Northern Perspectives on: Southern Canada, Newcomers to the North, and their land and people.

**Note:** Though this application is used for securing a licence under the Northwest Territories Scientists Act, it has been expanded to incorporate information required by the screening and review bodies formed pursuant to the **Inuvialuit Final Agreement and the Gwich'in Land Claim Settlement Act**. Please note that additional information may be required from either of these reviewing agencies.

**Date(s) of data collection in the Northwest Territories (NWT) this year:**

May this be a multi-year project?                      **Yes**                      **No**

(if yes, specify proposed duration) A workshop may be developed to gather feedback on the video series but this will be in the following year.

**Note: You will need to apply for a licence for each year of your research project.**

**Base camp location(s):**

(include name, longitude and latitude)

N/A

**Location(s) of data collection in the NWT: Inuvik**

(include place names, latitude(s) and longitude(s), and names of nearest communities. We also request that you attach portions of both a small scale map (eg., 1/250,000) with your general site area(s) marked and a large scale map (eg., 1/50,000) with specific site(s) marked. Any maps submitted must display a title, a scale, a drafting date, a north arrow, elevations, and, where applicable, bathymetric information. Latitude and longitude or grid reference points should be inserted in the margin. Symbols used on the map must be explained in a key or legend.

**Consultation:**

1. Have you entered into a dialogue with appropriate communities and agencies?  
                                  **Yes**                      No                      If yes, attach copies of any correspondence.
2. Has this project been submitted for an Ethical Review?                      **Yes**                      No
3. Has this project been approved by an Ethical Review Committee?  
                                  Yes                      **No**                      If yes, attach copy of approval
4. Have you applied for other regulatory approval/licences/permits in connection with this project?  
                                  Yes                      **No**                      If yes, attach copies of any correspondence
5. Has this project received any prior environmental impact screening procedures, reviews or assessments?  
                                  Yes                      **No**

***If "Yes" to any of the above questions, list contacts/agencies (with addresses) and provide details of current status. If "No", please provide reasons. If your research involves residents of the NWT as subjects or informants please see section in Guide on Community consultation and additional requirements.***

N/A

**Project rationale:**

(e.g., include objectives, importance of work, motivation behind work, reasons for the type of data being collected). For scientific licensing purposes less than 200 words are sufficient. For applications that involve land under Aboriginal land claim settlements, a more detailed description may be needed. See guide for more information. Attach additional page(s) if necessary).

Building on Zebedee Nungak's groundbreaking work in Qallunology, Rasmussen's Qallunology: Pedagogy of the Oppressor while considering Critical Whiteness Studies this will be an investigation into Northern perceptions of the South, Southerners in the North and also the North and the Northern land and people. Employing primary research techniques with anthropological and sociological theory, students will interview each other and community members. They will draw on the Vertov and Fogo Island models of using video as an educational method of dialogue and community development. The project will use collaborative research design, interviews, video and reflective assignments to explore the South and the North. As advocated by Freire, Giroux, hooks, Linda Smith and Graham Smith, student researchers will use their voices in a project of reclaiming and expanding Northerner research and learning from a distinctly and uniquely Northern place.

**Nontechnical summary of proposed NWT activities:**

(include such things as transportation and equipment to be used to and on site, description of any new technology to be used, itinerary(s) of research team, method of data collection, sampling sizes and species. Attach additional page(s) if necessary).

After hundreds of years of being the object of Southern research, the voice of Northern people needs to be heard not only on the North, but also on the South. The Inuvik Literacy Circle, with Aurora College's Inuvik Learning Centre's staff and students, will conduct a three part video research project focusing on Northern Perspectives and we would like to hear what you have to say! We are looking for volunteer participants to help our Learning Centre students to record voices and images of the North. Now it is your turn to be heard.

How do you see the South?

How do you see Southerners?

What would you like Southerners to know about the North?

What would you like to say about your North?

Who are you as a Northerner?

**Southern Studies**

- *Northerners on the South* - Northerners have a wealth of experience and lengthy contact with Southern Media, Southern Institutions and Southern Canadians who come North to work and live. It is time to tap into this Northern expertise and consider Southern culture from Northern perspectives. What observations and conclusion have Northerners made about Southern habits, mores, and the culture and social organization of these newcomers (ie: language, economic and political organization, law and conflict resolution, patterns of consumption and exchange, [kinship](#) and family structure, gender relations, childrearing and socialization, religion, symbolism, etc).
- *Northerners Speak to Southern Newcomers* - If Northerners could say anything to Southern people coming to the North as visitors, researchers and professionals what would they say?

**North to the South**

The North is now very much in the spotlight of the world. Northerners need the opportunity to share their views, thoughts and perceptions of their North. Northerners will speak to the South about their homeland and their people

- *The Northern Land* - Southern Canada needs to see the North through the eyes of the Northerners. How is the Northern Climate a unique and vital place to live and thrive? How is climate change and unpredictable weather affecting Northern people? How the Northern homeland connected and affected by the rest of Canada and the world? Are Northerners still connected to the land?
- *The Northern People* – Who are Northerners? How is Northern culture and history both ancient and alive? How is Northern life developing and adapting in this fast ever-changing interconnected world?

### Northern Studies

- *We are Northerners* – From their own perspective, who are Northerners? How do students see Northern habits, mores and the culture and social organization of their people?
- *Northern Speak to Northerners* - If Northerners could say anything to other Northerners about the North and their hopes for the future what would they say? Student researchers will interview each other and community members to find out what Northerners really want to say to their community about living, working, and studying in the North.

The six segments will then be shown at various community events and focus groups. Ultimately, the video series will be shared with schools and Learning Centres throughout the Territories. If funding permits, they will also be shared with Southern educational institutions. Educational materials will also be developed and included with the segments on DVD so that the videos can be more readily used in the classroom. This project is not only an excellent learning opportunity for Northern students but it will create an important educational tool for both Northern and Southern classrooms. The North has long been an object of study but this project will allow Northern students and community members the opportunity to contribute their too-often absent voice to Northern and Southern Studies.

### **Anticipated environmental impacts:**

(include impacts of species, people and/or land; species/human vulnerability and numbers affected; camp operations; use of firearms, aircraft or collection equipment. Attach additional page(s) if necessary).

N/A

### **Mitigation of environmental impacts:**

(include collection site and camp clean-up, reclamation and/or abandonment plans; storage of confidential information; species or artifact disposal; spill contingencies. Attach additional page(s) if necessary).

N/A

### **Emergency response capabilities:**

(include level of training, skill, contingency plan and equipment related to first aid, search and rescue, bear deterrents and survival. Attach additional page(s) if necessary).

N/A

### **Possible opportunities for local involvement in and/or exposure to your work: (include social, cultural, educational, employment and economic benefits. Attach additional page(s) if necessary).**

This video project will be a participatory research project. Student collection methods will be personal reflective journaling, questionnaires, focus groups, and interviews. The Fogo Island model of community development through video and the Vertov method will be the primary models used as guides throughout this project. To do this, approximately 20 students will discuss their thoughts, experiences, and beliefs on southern and Northern Studies. They will then

construct interview questions, select interview participants, arrange interviews, conduct interviews, and review and edit footage. The main research method will be open-ended questions and video-taped interviews. Our plan is to facilitate and provide a venue for local people to speak to their perceptions, their community and say what they want to say.

**From which of the following Research Centres will you be requesting support:**

Inuvik Research Centre	<b>Yes</b>	No
South Slave Research Centre (Fort Smith)	Yes	<b>No</b>

(Note: you are responsible for contacting the Research Centre to discuss support requested).

Signature of principal investigator

**Aurora Research Institute**  
**P.O. Box 1450**  
**Inuvik, NT**  
**X0E 0T0**  
**Phone: (867) 777-3298**  
**Fax: (867) 777-4264**  
**E-mail: licence@nwtresearch.com**

**\*Licence processing fee of \$100 should be enclosed with application**



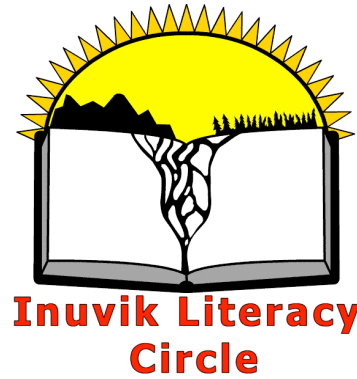
## Checklist for Researchers

- ☐ Copy of Research Licence Application sent to Community contacts
- ☐ Copy of Research Licence Application sent to ARI
- ☐ Map of research location(s) in the NWT
- ☐ Which of the following agencies have you contacted regarding your research?
  - Department of Resources, Wildlife & Economic Development (Wildlife & Forestry)
  - Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre (Archaeological research)
  - Aurora Research Institute (all research except wildlife & archaeology)
  - Department of Fisheries & Oceans (fish & marine mammal research)
  - Canadian Wildlife Service (bird research or access to migratory bird sanctuaries)
  - Parks Canada (access to National Parks)
  - Department of Indian and Northern Affairs (access to Federal Crown lands)
  - Municipal and Community Affairs (access to Territorial Lands: in & near communities)
  - Inuvialuit Land Administration (access to Inuvialuit Private Lands)
  - Gwich'in Land Administration (access to Gwich'in Private Lands)
  - Sahtu District Land Corporations - Deline, Tulita or K'ahsho Got'ine (Sahtu Private lands)
  - Environmental Impact Screening Committee (access to Crown Land within the Inuvialuit Settlement region)
  - Nunavut Research Institute (research activities in Nunavut)
  - Yukon Heritage Branch (research activities in Yukon)
  - Community organizations (please list) or other contacts:
- ☐ Licence Processing Fee of \$100
  - method of payment:
    - ☐ by cheque (payable to Aurora College)
    - ☐ by credit card
- ☐ If your research involves residents of the NWT as informants or participants ensure the following is included:
  - ☐ copy of approval from ethical review committee
  - ☐ copy of the consent form you are using
  - ☐ copy of questionnaire
  - ☐ method of maintaining confidentiality
  - ☐ long & short term use and storage of data collected
  - ☐ method of reporting information back to participants & communities

# RESEARCH GUIDE – STUDENT RESEARCH PROJECT

## TAKE IT FROM THE TOP

*NORTHERN PERSPECTIVES ON:  
SOUTHERN CANADA, NEWCOMERS TO THE NORTH, AND THEIR LAND AND PEOPLE*



### Traditional Language Terminology in Development

**Oonjit K'uu Gwik'itr'anjih** (White Ways Research) (Gwich'in)

(Inuvialuktun)

(Inunnaqtun)

(North Slavey)

Student Researcher Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Interview Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Interview Participant Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_

Interview Date/ Time /Location: \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ Consent Form Signed
- ☐ Release Form Signed
- ☐ Questions Asked Highlighted

## **INSTRUCTIONS**

### **Approaching an interview candidate**

- You should approach them in person and ask them if they would consider being interviewed for the video project. Give them the one-page summary of the project and describe how they would be participating.

### **Setting up an interview**

- Give the interview participant a copy of the research guide. You should have already selected the questions you would like to ask. They should have time to look them over and agree on the questions they are going to be asked. They can also look at some of the other questions developed and are free to pick from those as well. The final questions will be decided at the interview.
- Set up a time and a place for the interview. The participant can come to the learning centre or the interview team can go to them. We can also provide transportation if necessary.

### **Conducting the interview**

- Be early for the interview. Ask the interview participant where they would like to sit. Set up the camera and make sure the participant is comfortable. Use the view screen to show them what they look like on the camera. Make adjustments until they are happy with the image.
- Then go over the interview process. Look over the questions together. Make sure you are both clear with what questions you will be asking. The interview process will be you asking questions and then they will answer them. It is best if they include the question in their answer so it makes sense as a standalone statement. ie. Question: "Do you think the land is important to the North?" Answer: "The land is important to the North because...".
- Review consent form and have interview participant sign.
- Before starting remind that interview participant that they can start and stop at anytime, decide not to answer a question, or redo an answer. Their comfort is the most important consideration.
- Begin interview.
- At the end of the interview ask if the video participant has any final thoughts or something they wanted to share but did not get a chance.
- When the interview is over you can give the participant the choice to watch it then to approve the content or you can drop them off a copy on DVD the next day for their approval. If there is something that they do not like it will be erased and not used. They will then need to sign a release form indicating that they approve their interview content.
- Thank the interview participant and give them the Northern books as a thanks for being a participant in the project.

### **After interview**

- If the video participant wants a DVD Copy you will drop it off to them and follow up with the release form.

### **Final Assignment for this class**

- Set up time for face-to-face meeting with Suzanne. There will be some questions and discussions. The final evaluation of the research project can be done in writing or be a videoed interview with Suzanne.

**Take it from the Top**  
**Northern Perspectives on:**  
**Southern Canada, Newcomers to the North, and their land and people.**

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How do you see Southerners?

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#### Southern Studies

- *Northerners on the South* - Northerners have a wealth of experience and lengthy contact with Southern Media, Southern Institutions and Southern Canadians who come North to work and live. It is time to tap into this Northern expertise and consider Southern culture from Northern perspectives. What observations and conclusion have Northerners made about Southern habits, mores, and the culture and social organization of these newcomers ( ie: language, economic and political organization, law and conflict resolution, patterns of consumption and exchange, kinship and family structure, gender relations, childrearing and socialization, religion, symbolism, etc).
- *Northerners Speak to Southern Newcomers* - If Northerners could say anything to Southern people coming to the North as visitors, researchers and professionals what would they say?

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## STUDENT RESEARCH TEAM BRAINSTORMING

### Research Terms

#### **North**

freedom  
Above 60<sup>th</sup> Parallel  
Above Tree line  
Cold 9 months of the year  
24 hour daylight  
Clean (Cleaner)  
Arctic Ocean  
Polar Bears/White Bugs bunny  
Community Connections  
Exploration  
Bush radios  
Permafrost  
Northern Lights  
Informal

#### **Northerner**

Friendly  
Relaxed  
Delta-Time (Throw away your watch)  
Good Listeners  
Good Natured  
Traditional Knowledge  
Bilingual  
Bi cultural  
Homeland is Heritage  
Spring Fever  
Born and raised  
Keep Traditional life  
Can be naturalized (half-lifer)  
Accent  
Sweat off suntan lotion  
Good Tan in Summer  
Naturally Tanned

#### **South**

Anything more South than us  
Up the River  
Somewhere they have four seasons  
Below the 60<sup>th</sup> Parallel  
As far as Deline or as far as Polar Bears go  
Degrees

#### **Southerner**

Race isn't as big a factor now  
40-50 years ago white but not now  
Multicultural  
Generally taller  
No similar characteristics with Northerners  
Busy bodies  
More concerned with appearance  
Formal  
Land limited to back yard  
Great Fibbers (Gov't. Wise)  
Northerners are moving South  
Raised in South

### Anthropology Terms

Language  
Economic and Political organization  
Law and Conflict Resolution  
Patterns of Consumption and Exchange  
Kinship and Family Structure  
Gender Relations  
Child Rearing and Socialization  
Religion  
Mythology and Symbolism

### Cultural Artifacts and Images

What do you consider a Northern or Southern cultural artifact? What would consider a Northern or Southern image that represents their cultures?

# TAKE IT FROM THE TOP- RESEARCH QUESTIONS

## NORTHERN STUDIES

- *We are Northerners* – From their own perspective, who are Northerners? How do students see Northern habits, mores and the culture and social organization of their people?
1. How do you see Northern habits and values? How do you see the culture and social organization of Northern people?
  2. What do you consider a Northern Habit? Do you consider going out on the land a Northern habit?
  3. How do you consider yourself a Northerner?
  4. Do you speak an Aboriginal language?
  5. Do you hunt/trap on a regular basis?
  6. Do you eat traditional food on a regular basis?
  7. With a successful catch (caribou) do you distribute meat with others?
  8. Do you still wear traditional clothing?
  9. Which do you prefer living out on the land or in town?
  10. Has the price of gas and ammunition/food affected your chances of going out on the land?
  11. Do you like how our current government is run, compared to the South?
  12. Do you think it is possible to live a traditional lifestyle in today's society?
  13. Who do you consider your leading government (federal, territorial or Aboriginal)?
  14. Do you still use traditional medicine?
  15. Do you think the next generation will know more or less traditional knowledge?
  16. What age do you consider an elder?
  17. Can you explain the migratory change in animals due to global warming?
  18. From one Northerner to another can you spot another Northerner?
- *Northern Speak to Northerners* - If Northerners could say anything to other Northerners about the North and their hopes for the future what would they say? Student researchers will interview each other and community members to find out what Northerners really want to say to their community about living, working, and studying in the North.
1. How do you feel about global warming in the North?
  2. What would you do to help change global warming?
  3. What would you say to the next generation about what it means to be a Northerner?
  4. If Northerners could say anything to other Northerners about the North and their hopes for the future what would you say?
  5. What are your concerns of keeping your culture alive?
  6. Do you as a Northerner, in your own community think it is important to teach the next generation traditional knowledge and skill?
  7. Do you think cultural education should be practiced more?
  8. Do you think the younger generations take Aboriginal culture seriously?
  9. Would you encourage the younger generation to finish their education?
  10. Do you think the Northern curriculum is up to the standards with the rest of Canada?
  11. Do you think Northerners take school as seriously as Southerners?
  12. Do you think the pipeline will affect the animal migration routes? (caribou)
  13. What are you most concerned about in the North?

## SOUTHERN STUDIES

- *Northerners on the South* - Northerners have a wealth of experience and lengthy contact with Southern Media, Southern Institutions and Southern Canadians who come North to work and live. It is time to tap into this Northern expertise and consider Southern culture from Northern perspectives. What observations and conclusion have Northerners made about Southern habits, mores, and the culture and social organization of these newcomers ( ie: language, economic and political organization, law and conflict resolution, patterns of consumption and exchange, kinship and family structure, gender relations, childrearing and socialization, religion, symbolism, etc).

1. What is the South?
2. Define a Southerner.
3. How do you define Southern Culture?
4. What do you think is important to Southern people?
5. What does the South symbolize to you?
6. Are there any important contributions that the South has made to the North?
7. Would you invite a Southerner to live with you for a year or so to experience the North?
8. Do you think that education, healthcare are better in the South than in the North?
9. Do you think the meaning of religion is different in the South than the North?
10. Would you consider moving South? Or have you ever lived there?

- *Northerners Speak to Southern Newcomers* - If Northerners could say anything to Southern people coming to the North as visitors, researchers and professionals what would they say?

1. What advice would you give Southern people coming to the North?
2. What would you want Southerners to know about the North?
3. How do you spot a newcomer to the North? (South/Winter)
4. What is the funniest misunderstanding/miscommunication error you have had with a Southerner?
5. What is the funniest observation a Southerner has made about the North?
6. Do you believe that Southern people discriminate against Northern people?
7. How do you think about Southerners who've lived half or more of their lives up North?
8. How do you think Southerners would adjust to raising their children in the North?
9. How do you think Southerners would adjust to 24 hour daylight?
10. How do you think a Southerner would adjust to ten months of winter and two months of summer?
11. How would Southerners go about limitation and access to Southern products (ex. Fresh produce, clothing, vehicle maintenance Limited video release, accessing doctors and limited healthcare)?
12. Give an example of Deltanese language and the meaning (e.g Alapaaa!! It's cold)
13. Do you know what a Delta braid is?
14. What is your cultural background? (e.g. Inuvialuit/Gwich'in)
15. What is or do you know what an Eskimo donut/ice-cream is?
16. Do you think Southern clothing is warmer than traditional clothing?
17. When Southerners come to the North, do you think they become overwhelmed by the clean and fresh air.
18. When you come up North, do you think the land becomes more vast? Why do you think this is?
19. Do you see the North as a good place to work?

## NORTH TO THE SOUTH

The North is now very much in the spotlight of the world. Northerners need the opportunity to share their views, thoughts and perceptions of their North. Northerners will speak to the South about their homeland and their people. Southern Canada needs to see the North through the eyes of the Northerners.

### ➤ The Northern Land

1. When you picture the North...What do you see?
2. How is the Northern Climate a unique and vital place to live and thrive?
3. Do you speak/understand your language?
4. How the Northern homeland connected and affected by the rest of Canada and the world?
5. Are Northerners still connected to the land?
6. Do you believe in Global warming?
7. Do you see global warming affecting the North?
8. How is climate change and unpredictable weather affecting Northern people?
9. With the North being a harsh climate would you consider living here rather than South?
10. Would you find the North an expensive place to live compared to the South?
11. How do you think the North needs to be protected in the future?
12. What do you think of the North-West Passage opening up?
13. What do you think of the recent Polar Bear sightings in Deline and Fort McPherson?
14. Who do you think is being affected the most by global warming? Ex. Animals, people of the North/South?
15. Do you think the recent discussions of building drill rigs affect animal migration?
16. How does permafrost affect our land?
17. The mining and exploration is getting more and more common. Do you think it is effecting the hunting and fishing of the people of the North?
18. Southerners have experienced having a pipeline system in the past. We might in near future have one of the largest in Canada, how would you suggest we go about handling it?

### ➤ The Northern People

1. Who are Northerners?
2. How would you define Northern people?
3. How is Northern life developing and adapting in this fast ever-changing interconnected world?
4. How is Northern culture and history both ancient and alive?
5. Do you think Northern people are different from Southern people?
6. With 24 hour daylight or darkness how does it affect your everyday life?
7. Would you like to experience going out on the land in winter/summer?
8. Do you consider Aboriginal carvings to be expensive?
9. Do you think traditional medicines make good remedies?
10. Would you consider Northerners nicer people than Southerners?
11. Do you believe all the stereotypes you hear about the Northerners?
12. Do you think Natives are free to hunt wherever they please?
13. Do you think police/government should do something about underage drinking in the North and South?

### **Dumb Questions often asked of Northerners**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Do you eat raw meat?                     | 8. Are all Eskimos 5 foot or shorter and slanty eyed?                   |
| 2. Do you live in an igloo?                 | 9. Do you think Aboriginals get everything for free/schooling/medicare? |
| 3. Have you ever seen a Polar Bear?         | 10. Do you think our transportation consists of strictly dogsleds?      |
| 4. Do you own a dog sled?                   |   |
| 5. Are you an Eskimo/Indian?                |   |
| 6. Do you have running water?               |   |
| 7. What kind of heating system do you have? |   |



**Take it from the Top Northern Perspectives on: Southern Canada, Newcomers to the North, and the Northern land and people.**

**Consent Form for Participation in Research Project**  
**(Used with interviews)**

We are inviting you to participate in a research project to create a video on Southern and Northern Studies. After hundreds of years of being the object of Southern research, the voice of Northern people needs to be heard not only about the North, but also about the South. The Inuvik Literacy Circle, with Aurora College's Inuvik Learning Centre's staff and students, will conduct a three part video research project focusing on Northern Perspectives and we would like to hear what you have to say! We are looking for volunteer participants to help our Learning Centre students to record voices and images of the North. Now it is your turn to be heard.

- How do you see the South?
- How do you see Southerners?
- What would you like Southerners to know about the North?
- What would you like to say about your North?
- Who are you as a Northerner?

Your participation will be a filmed interview with the possibility of a follow-up filmed interview. You will be able to view these interviews at community screenings to review the final versions of video segments. This project is designed to document the process of making a collaborative project. The goals of this project are to allow students to develop research skills and to provide an opportunity for local people to have a venue to voice their thoughts and experiences and to create a local product of relevance and importance. The video will be for the community, but by documenting the process we hope to create an example of how similar projects can be conducted by other communities. In order to do this, we need your consent.

All researchers in the Northwest Territories are required to obtain informed consent for those who participate in research projects. You should know that the information shared in interviews that are not filmed is strictly confidential. You are a voluntary participant and you are free to withdraw from the project at any time. You will have the opportunity to view the edited video segments at community viewings. After community viewings participants can contact Suzanne Robinson if they have any concerns, comments or would like their segment to be removed from the final production.

Before we begin, you will need to know how this project is being planned and you can decide if you will consent to the plans of this research project.

- All unfiled data collected is in strict confidence.
- The filmed interview will be used in a video project that will be ultimately be viewed by the community and other audiences.
- No one will see the research interview notes or transcripts but the student research team and staff advisors, Suzanne and Linda
- This research project will be have a final report which will be available in the public libraries of Inuvik upon completion of the compiling the data.
- If this research project is further analyzed as a case study by the Inuvik Literacy Circle, the principal researcher Suzanne Robinson (i.e. pursuit of future study) or by any other party it will be made available at all the public libraries in Inuvik

If you agree to participate in this project, you agree to the following:

- You have read this form and you have had all questions about the project answered. You agree to be interviewed for this project.
- You understand that you can refuse to answer any questions during the interview or during our communication.
- You are aware that you can contact Suzanne Robinson at 777-7810 or 777-4830 if you have any problems with anything that is happening with this project.
- You are aware that you can also contact Linda Flynn, Inuvik Learning Centre Senior Instructor, at 777-7841 if you have any problems with anything that is happening with this project.
- You are aware that if at any time you wish to withdraw from the project, you know you may do so and will not suffer any consequences for having discontinued your participation.
- You aware that this project and data may be used by the principal researcher, Suzanne Robinson, or the Inuvik Literacy Circle as a case study (i.e. for further study and analysis).
- You understand that this video series has the potential to be used as an educational material for classrooms and education programs in the NWT and Canada

If Participant is under 18: I, \_\_\_\_\_, am the parent/legal guardian of the individual named above, I have read this release and approve of its terms.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Printed Name      Participant's Signature      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher's Signature      Date

**I want to be recognized by name** as a participant in this research project. **I want my name to be used** when using quotes from the video project in any written documentation of the this research project

**Please also sign here \_\_\_\_\_ to indicate if you want your name used in the documentation of this project.**



**Take it from the Top Northern Perspectives on: Southern Canada, Newcomers to the North, and the Northern land and people.**

**Understanding Your Participation  
(Video Release Form - Community Participant)**

Thank you for helping us by working with us today. This interview will last from 15 minutes to an hour.

By agreeing to be interviewed and signing this form you are consenting to release this video interview to Suzanne Robinson of the Inuvik Literacy Circle and Aurora College to be used as part of a student research project.

You will be invited to view the video series at community viewing events. After community viewing events you will have the opportunity to voice concerns, comments or have your segment removed for the final production to Suzanne Robinson 777-7810 or 777-4830 or [srobinson@auroracollege.nt.ca](mailto:srobinson@auroracollege.nt.ca) .

If you need a break, just tell us.

You may withdraw from this project at any time.

If you have any questions, you may ask now or at any time.

By signing this form, you give your permission to Inuvik Literacy Circle and Aurora College Inuvik Learning Centre to use your voice, verbal statements, and videotaped pictures for the purposes of creating a video series that will be developed as an educational tool in classrooms and educational programs.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby release my video-taped interview to Suzanne Robinson of **the Inuvik Literacy Circle and the Aurora College Inuvik Learning Centre** to be used and distributed as an educational tool.

I understand that I am fully releasing my interview's video footage to Suzanne Robinson of the Inuvik Literacy Circle and the Aurora College Inuvik Learning Centre and I understand that I will receive no compensation for any use of the final production.

If you agree with these terms, please indicate your agreement by signing here:

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal Researcher's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

If Participant is under 18: I, \_\_\_\_\_, am the parent/legal guardian of the individual named above, I have read this release and approve of its terms.



### Application for Ethical Approval of Research Involving Human Participants

This application form should be completed for any research involving human participants conducted in or by the University. 'Human participants' are defined as including living human beings, human beings who have recently died (cadavers, human remains and body parts), embryos and fetuses, human tissue and bodily fluids, and human data and records (such as, but not restricted to medical, genetic, financial, personnel, criminal or administrative records and test results including scholastic achievements). Research should not commence until written approval has been received (your supervisor, Departmental Research Director, Faculty Ethics Committee (FEC) or the University's Ethics Committee). This should be borne in mind when setting a start date for the project.

Applications should be made on this form, and submitted electronically, to your Supervisor. A signed copy of the form should also be submitted. Applications will be assessed by the Supervisor in the first instance. In the event of uncertainty, the Supervisor should forward the form to the Research Director. A copy of your research proposal and any necessary supporting documentation (e.g. consent form, recruiting materials, etc) should also be attached to this form.

A full copy of the signed application will be retained by the department/school for 6 years following completion of the project.

1. Title of project: **Take it from the Top Northern Perspectives on: Southern Canada, Newcomers to the North, and their land and people.**

2. The title of your project will be published in the minutes of the University Ethics Committee. If you object, then a reference number will be used in place of the title.  
Do you object to the title of your project being published? Yes ☐ / No ☒

3. This Project is: ☐ Staff Research Project  
☒ Student Project

4. Principal Investigator(s) (students should also include the name of their supervisor):

Name:	Department:
Suzanne Robinson	SOCIOLOGY
COLIN SAMSON	SOCIOLOGY

5. If external approval for this research has been given, then only this cover sheet needs to be submitted

External ethics approval obtained

Yes ☒ / No ☐

Please see attached Aurora Research Ethical Review Approval and Scientific License

**Declaration of Principal Investigator:**

The information contained in this application, including any accompanying information, is, to the best of my knowledge, complete and correct. I/we have read the University's *Guidelines for Ethical Approval of Research Involving Human Participants* and accept responsibility for the conduct of the procedures set out in this application in accordance with the guidelines, the University's *Statement on Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice* and any other conditions laid down by the University's Ethics Committee. I/we have attempted to identify all risks related to the research that may arise in conducting this research and acknowledge my/our obligations and the rights of the participants.

Signature(s): Suzanne Robinsen

Name(s) in block capitals: Suzanne Robinsen

Date: Feb 18, 2009

**Supervisor's recommendation (Student Projects only):**

I recommend that this project falls under Annex B / should be referred to the FEC (delete as appropriate).

Supervisor's signature: .....

**Outcome:**

The Supervisor has reviewed this project and considers the methodological/technical aspects of the proposal to be appropriate to the tasks proposed. The Supervisor considers that the investigator(s) has/have the necessary qualifications, experience and facilities to conduct the research set out in this application, and to deal with any emergencies and contingencies that may arise.

This application falls under Annex B and is approved on behalf of the FEC



This application is referred to the FEC



Signature(s): Colin Samson

Name(s) in block capitals: COLIN SAMSON

Department: SOCIOLOGY

Date: 18 FEBRUARY 2009

The application has been approved by the FEC



The application has not been approved by the FEC



The application is referred to the University Ethics Committee



Signature(s): .....

Name(s) in block capitals: .....

Faculty: .....

Date: .....

### Details of Funding

1. Will this project be externally funded?

Yes X ☐

No ☐

If Yes,

2. What is the source of the funding?

Government of the Northwest Territories – Industry, Tourism and Investment

Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation

In-kind – NWT Literacy Council, Inuvik Literacy Circle and Aurora College

### Details of the Project

3. **Proposed start date:** The research fieldwork involving interviews and filming will be until July 2009 and there will be a workshop series from about January 2010 until January 2011

4. **Probable duration:** Several months of post-production and writing up, design of the workshop and then conducting several workshops.

5. **Brief outline of project** (This should include the purpose or objectives of the research, brief justification, and a summary of methods. It should be approx. 150 words in everyday language that is free from jargon).

After hundreds of years of being the object of Southern research, the voice of Northern people needs to be heard, not only on the North, but also on the South. The Inuvik Literacy Circle, with Aurora College's Inuvik Learning Centre's staff and students, will conduct a three-part video research project focusing on Northern Perspectives. The research project will use interviewing and other research skills to conduct inquiry into Southern Studies (the study of Southern Canadians) and Northern Studies from Northern people's perspectives. It is our intention to make a series of six twenty-minute segments that will construct a video snapshot and time capsule of the North and Northerners during this current International Polar Year, IPY. The ultimate goals of this project are to create a lasting video legacy capturing Northern voices at this important moment in Northern history and life.

### Participant Details

6. Will the research involve human participants? (indicate as appropriate)

Yes

x ☐

No

☐

7. Who are they and how will they be recruited? (If any recruiting materials are to be used, e.g. advertisement or letter of invitation, please provide copies).

They will be recruited through the co-operation of members of the student research team (approximately 30) and community participants (30-50) to be determined by research team. Students will design their own research questions and guides. Please see attached examples.

Will participants be paid or reimbursed?

No.

8. Could participants be considered:

(a) to be vulnerable (e.g. children, mentally-ill)? NO ☐

(b) to feel obliged to take part in the research? NO ☐

If the answer to either of these is yes, please explain.

Any children will have to have the signed and informed consent from a parent or guardian. Students can also withdraw from the course at any time without penalty. In this event there are alternate assignments already prepared.

### Informed Consent

9. Will the participant's consent be obtained for involvement in the research, orally or in writing? (Please attach an example of written consent for approval):

Yes X ☒ No ☐

How will consent be obtained? If not possible, explain why.

Student researchers will explain the process and the that all participant's co-operation is voluntary, that they are free to refrain from answering any question and that they can terminate the interview at any time. Participants will sign consent forms and release forms for their filmed interview.

None of this should be problematic. The student researchers will design the questions, choose participants and conduct the interview. Most student researchers will interview people that are know to them or a fellow researcher. I have been in Inuvik for ten years and I am fairly known and have conducted similar projects in the past. Filming is fairly well known in the region through the Inuvialuit Communications Society and other research projects.

Please attach a participant information sheet where appropriate.

### Confidentiality / Anonymity

10. If the research generates personal data, describe the arrangements for maintaining anonymity and confidentiality or the reasons for not doing so.

The object of the research is to document memories and personal stories. If individuals do not want their words on record, they will not be filmed or interviewed.

### Data Access, Storage and Security

11. Describe the arrangements for storing and maintaining the security of any personal data collected as part of the project. Please provide details of those who will have access to the data.

It will be stored on my computer and in my office, but because of the collaborative nature of the project will eventually be shared with regional schools, learning centres, band councils and community corporations and other agencies of local Aboriginal Government.

It is a requirement of the Data Protection Act 1998 to ensure individuals are aware of how information about them will be managed. Please tick the box to confirm that participants will be informed of the data access, storage and security arrangements described above. If relevant, it is appropriate for this to be done via the participant information sheet X ☐

Further guidance about the collection of personal data for research purposes and compliance with the Data Protection Act can be accessed at the following weblink. Please tick the box to confirm that you have read this guidance (<http://www2.essex.ac.uk/rm/dp/research.shtml>) ☐

### Risk and Risk Management

12. Are there any potential risks (e.g. physical, psychological, social, legal or economic) to participants or subjects associated with the proposed research?

Yes ☐

No ☒



If Yes,

Please provide full details and explain what risk management procedures will be put in place to minimise the risks:

13. Are there any potential risks to researchers as a consequence of undertaking this proposal that are greater than those encountered in normal day-to-day life?

Yes ☐

No ☒ X

If Yes,

Please provide full details and explain what risk management procedures will be put in place to minimise the risks:

14. Are there any other ethical issues that have not been addressed which you would wish to bring to the attention of the Faculty and/or University Ethics Committees

NO

## Funding Application

NWT



All applications must have this page completed to be considered for funding. Incomplete applications will be disqualified.

## Section A - Summary of Application

<p><b>PLEASE NOTE:</b></p> <p>The NWT Arts Council has revised its funding categories. These categories are described in the Guidelines Package.</p> <p>You must read the Guidelines to determine which category works best for your application.</p>	<p><b>Applicant's Name</b> Inuvik Literacy Circle</p> <p><b>Community</b> Inuvik</p>
<p><b>Type of project (check one)</b></p> <p>Audio Recording: Music and Voice _____</p> <p>Performing Arts: Dance, Music, Storytelling and Theatre _____</p> <p>Writing and Publishing _____</p> <p>Visual Arts _____</p> <p>Crafts _____</p> <p>Film and Media Arts <u>  X  </u></p>	<p><b>Funding category (check one)</b></p> <p>Professional Development <u>  </u></p> <p>Creation/Production <u>  X  </u></p> <p>Presentation <u>  </u></p>
<p><b>Project Title (25 words or less)</b> <u>Take it from the Top: Northern Perspectives on Southern Canada, newcomers to the North, and the Northern land and people through Northern eyes and voices</u></p>	<p><b>Amount requested (enter amt.)</b></p> <p>Up To \$5,000 _____</p> <p>\$5,000-\$10,000 _____</p> <p>Over \$10,000 _ \$14750.56 _</p>

## Section B - Personal Information (to be completed by individuals)

Last name	First name	Social insurance number
Mailing address		Telephone (daytime)
Community	Postal code	Fax

Number of years NWT resident	Ethnic origin (optional)	Age (optional)	E-mail
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**Section B - Group Information (to be completed by groups and organizations)**

Name of organization Inuvik literacy Circle	Contact person's name / position Suzanne Robinson-Chairperson
Mailing address Box 1156  Community Inuvik NT Postal code X0E 0T0	Telephone (daytime) 867-777-7892  Fax 867-777-2850
Type of organization  Non-profit <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal organization <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>	E-mail  <a href="mailto:srobinson@auroracollege.nt.ca">srobinson@auroracollege.nt.ca</a>
If you are a non-profit organization, please provide your four digit NWT Societies Registry number	SOC# 1595 _____  Year of registry 2004 _____

**Section C - Project Schedule**

How many months/weeks will your project take? 6 months	Start Date Feb. 2, 2009 _____  Completion Date July 31, 2009 _____
Will you be working on your project full-time or will you also be working, attending school or otherwise occupied? I will be working as an Adult Educator at Aurora College. The Project is integrated into some of the curriculum	

**Section D - Project Proposal (make a detailed description of your project on a separate page)**

<p>What is the artistic purpose or goal of your project?</p> <p>After hundreds of years of being the object of Southern research, the voice of Northern people needs to be heard not only on the North, but also on the South. The Inuvik Literacy Circle and the NWT Literacy Council, with Aurora College's Inuvik Learning Centre's staff and students, will conduct a three- part video project focusing on Northern Perspectives. All students will work on the larger group project but also individual film projects to further develop the project's themes. Film is the artistic medium to best share the students' artistic vision and research. There is also the opportunity to develop original music for the film project.</p> <p>How will it contribute to your ongoing goals and development?</p> <p>This funding will provide the opportunity for advanced film training, into to music recording and travel will enhance students' on-going work and expand the project into a truly regional film series. It will also help develop this project into a model we hope to be able to recreate with students each year with new themes and subjects. This phase of the project has 15 student participants.</p>
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What do you intend to do? (describe types of materials you intend to use, methods, how many works will be completed)

The initial workshop with Dennis Allen was so successful we would like to be able to have a to part two advanced training workshop so students' can have one-on-one training and feedback from an established film artist. During their first workshop students were inspired to branch out into personal film projects in addition to their larger project. Working with Dennis was such a wonderful learning experience it would be amazing be able to do that with students again. This funding will also make it possible for all students to be able to film in their home communities and have the support of advanced training to complete the group and personal projects. The high cost of travelling to Paulatuk, Uluhaktok and Sach Harbour make it difficult to create a truly regional video series. We have only been able to raise funds to travel to communities accessible by road. This phase of the project has 15 student participants but we plan to include students in the communities we visit and other community members. We project an additional 30-40 people to part of the project if we can visit these high Arctic communities.

Advanced Workshop part one – Dennis Allen would work with students to plan the next phase of the project, personal and group. We are working on a theme song for the project and so that students will have original music to use in their work. Dennis is also a musician and has agreed to work with students during both workshops on their theme song. This workshop also will include planning for filming in Inuvik and the greater region.

On-going film work – Students continue to film and travel to the Beaufort Delta communities to gather footage and interviews for the group and personal projects.

Advanced Workshop part two – Dennis would offer constructive critique of students' work and offer advice during this final stage of film editing. This is a critical phase to ensure students have full support to complete the project as they have envisioned it being completed. Dennis's expertise will be invaluable at this point and give the workshop series a fill and complete conclusion. This would also be opportunity to complete the theme song.

How will you complete the project: what are the project plans and timelines?

This phase would consist of on workshop in April, travel in the late spring and a final workshop in May.

#### Section E - Presentation to the Public

NWT Arts Council requires you to give a public performance or exhibition of your completed project. How do you intend to accomplish this? Examples: concert tour, performance at local school, library reading, community hall display, etc.

We will have an event to highlight the student's work- to-date in late spring at our first ever "Inuvik Snowdance Film Festival". Our goal is to have personal projects completed and the groups segments in draft form for the Great Northern Arts Festival. The completed video series will be ready to share in the fall. We will have other community viewings and will send DVD copies to each regional community but the dates and details will evolve over time.

#### Section F - Previous Support

List any previous funding that you have received from the NWT Arts Council.

Name of project	Year	Amount
Dennis Allen has received funding form the NWT Arts Council but this is the first application from the Inuvik Literacy Circle.		


**Section G - Assistance From Other Sources**

List any assistance you will receive from other sources – financial or in kind. Include your own contributions towards the project.

Name of source	Amount / In kind value
Local Fundraising (Lions/Legion/Ladies Auxiliary/Raffle sales)	13,188.15
Industry, Tourism and Investment (GNWT)	12,298.37
Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation	23,800.00
NWT Literacy Council (in-kind administration)	5,000.00
Aurora College (in-kind classroom space and instructional support)	18,000.00
Inuvik Literacy Circle (in-kind administration and staff support)	12,000.00
Total A \$ 84,286.52	

List any assistance you have requested from other sources – financial or in kind.

Name of source	Amount / In kind value
We hope to find funds to develop educational materials for the video series in the future	
Total B \$	
Add Totals A & B \$ 84,286.52 (enter this total in the budget on the next page)	

**Section H – Project Budget**

Indicate the funding category and amount that you requested in Section A - Summary of Application:

Funding category (check one)	Amount requested (enter amount)
Professional Development _____	Up To \$5,000 _____
Creation/Production <u>X</u> _____	\$5,000 - \$10,000 _____
Presentation _____	Over \$10,000 <u>\$14750.56</u> _____

Please make a detailed budget description on a separate page. Provide a breakdown of the costs of your project which describes what the expenses are for. List these, using headings like those on the worksheet provided below:

Budget Item Description	Budget Item Amount	Assistance from other sources (Totals A & B from previous page)	Amount requested from NWT Arts Council
<b>Materials and supplies such as camera, computer and sound equipment</b> (camera, two imacs, software, three microphones, a tripod and digital sound recorder)		13,188.15	
<b>Workshop or presentation costs, including facility and equipment rental</b> (Dennis Allen's fees and support costs)	5850.00	7200.00	
<b>Research related to the project (describe exactly what this will be)</b>			
<b>Production, studio and technical costs</b>			
<b>Documentation costs to ensure that completed works are properly recorded for your portfolio</b> (DVD copies of the entire project for students and to distribute to region)		1,500.00	
<b>Honoraria or artists fees</b>			
<b>Professional fees such as (instructors, editors, sound and lighting)</b> (Inuvialuit Communications Society and local consultant providing in-class instruction and technical support. The final video project will also need final technical mastering so it will be of the utmost quality for distribution and for student's portfolios. These fees are at a reduced rate as this is a student/non-profit project)		24,898.37	
<b>Travel costs within NWT that are related to the activities of the project</b>	8900.56 (Sachs Harbour, Paulatuk and Uluhaktok)	2,500.00 (Tuk, Aklavik, Tsiigehtchic and Ft. McPherson)	
<b>Shipping / freight costs to transport equipment or artwork</b>			
<b>Instruction program, course fees and training workshop costs</b> (Aurora College instructional staff support) and classroom space		23,00.00	
<b>Framing costs for art exhibits</b>			
<b>Administrative costs must not exceed 10% of the total requested</b>		12,000.00	
<b>Living allowance: see Section I - Employment Information below.</b>			

Applicants must itemize <u>only their share</u> of monthly living expenses (rent, food, heat, power, etc.)			
Budget total	\$14750.56	\$84,286.52	\$14750.56

## Section I - Employment Information (to be completed ONLY if applying for a living allowance)

What will be your employment status during the term of your project? full-time____ part-time____ self-employed ____ not employed____	If you are employed during the term of your project, how many hours per week will you work?
Name of employer during term of project	
If not employed during the term of your project, will you be receiving any other sources of income?  yes____ no____ If yes, amount per month \$ _____	Type of income

## Section J - Support Materials Summary

You must provide support materials with your application. All applications must be accompanied with the items listed in below or you may not be considered for funding.		
Resume (check one): Artistic resume (for individuals) ____ Group background info (for organizations) <u>X</u> ____		
You must submit examples of your work. These may be paper copy, CDs or photographs of your work. (Photos should be copies or e-mailed images. Do not fax photos as they will not come out legibly at the other end.) PLEASE DO NOT SEND ORIGINAL MATERIALS. The NWT Arts Council cannot assume responsibility for damages or loss.  Describe your examples (what form, how many e.g. 5 photos, 2 VHS tapes etc.) 2 DVDs (Literacy Lives here and The Inuvik Learning Centre) to be mailed separately. I will also email a copy of our poster and logo/poster.		
Letters of support: You must provide 2 or more letters of support for your project. They can be originals, faxes or e-mails. List those below who will provide you with letters of support.		
1) BDEC	2) Aurora College	3) Great Northern Arts Festival

## Section K - Applicant's Statement

The NWT Arts Council makes recommendations for financial support to the GNWT Minister of Education, Culture and
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**Employment, as well as recommendations on issues and policies associated with artists and the arts.**

**I agree to acknowledge the financial assistance received from NWT Arts Council in all public presentations of this project.**

**I hereby certify that the information contained in this application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief, and that I do not have any outstanding commitments from previous projects financed by the NWT Arts Council or the Government of the Northwest Territories.**

\_\_\_\_Suzanne Robinson\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_January 31, 2009\_\_\_\_\_  
Date