Western Aesthetic Conventions and Valuation of the Artisanal Production of Non-Western Cultures

by

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Abstract

Western aesthetic convention represents an accrual of inherited societal perspectives on the artist, the artifact and its consumer. A review of its history and the etymology of its terminology discloses a twofold problem. The first aspect concerns the separation of the manufacture of aesthetic objects from their economic raison d'etre. The second involves the categorization of these artifacts into art or craft. This problem is compounded when considering Western judgements on non-Western aesthetics. Inuit handicraft provides an appropriate model to illustrate the fact that present convention and nomenclature prove inadequate in addressing both intra and especially extra-cultural concerns. A broader and more inclusive orientation is needed.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

There is a labyrinthine inter-relation between culture, economics and aesthetics as this example illustrates:

> The story of these exotic calico designs -- [illegible] thought to be typical of India itself -- is in fact very complex. The designs were often based on models supplied from Europe, and some of these were in turn chinoiseries, inspired by imported Chinese works of art. Indian versions of European chinoiseries were in due course exported to China, as the Indian textile industry did not confine itself to supplying Europe alone. In China, such Indian cottons sometimes served as the inspirations for embroideries on silk and these in were in turn exported to Europe. (Lucie-Smith, 1981,pp. 65,66)

This inter-relation has become the focus of an entire academic subfield "extending across the social sciences that now devotes itself with increasing clarity and thought to the study of 'person-object' relations"(McCracken, 1986, p. 71). Through analysis of materials drawn from the literature of anthropology, sociology, history, economics, and aesthetics, this inter-relation will be interpreted in the light of two associated cultures.

The current study examines the consequences of Western aesthetic convention on other cultures. Specifically, I will explore how the above paradox comes

to delimit the creation and subsequent valuation of the handiwork of the Inuit of northern Canada. As a review of the literature on Inuit aesthetic produce will suggest, it exemplifies the intersection between Western and non-Western aesthetic considerations with all its underlying problems and potentialities.

Given the West's global dominance within the past five centuries, one cannot fully comprehend the contemporary mores of any other culture, including the Inuit, without first accounting for the pervasive and confluent influence of Western values. Yet Western aesthetic convention is far from monolithic. Rather, a conglomerate of concepts constitute its orientation (Kris & Kurz, 1979; Maquet, 1986). Therefore its philosophic and economic roots will be traced and its constitution examined from a variety of perspectives --professional and lay, historical and current.

Compounding this task, however, is the problematic nature of a uniquely Western terminology which is utilized, generally, to classify aesthetic expression and categorize related objects of manufacture. For example, the following terms are often applied interchangeably: art, fine art, commercial art, decorative art, aesthetic object, craft, craft art and handicraft.

Consequently, in order to comprehend their substantive meanings, the above terms will be examined critically. Their relation to the larger context of the language of general manufacture will be assessed and their etymologies will be examined. Thus the underlying social conventions responsible for the terminology's decontextualization will be isolated and analyzed. In turn, I will explain why this culturally-charged nomenclature in artistic production affects how manufactured articles from diverse non-Western cultures are perceived, categorized, and subsequently evaluated.

Western artists this century have been acutely aware of the dichotomy between perception and categorization -- between what is crafted 'artistically' and how it is therefore evaluated (Danto, 1986). While the seminal work of Marcel Duchamp, as early as 1917, addressed this conundrum, the more recent contributions of the artists Jeff Koons and Haim Steinbach reveal it as yet unresolved (Joselit, 1988).

To enfranchised Western artists operating within the secure boundaries of cultural convention, this exercise is an intellectual game. Copies of Duchamp's ready-made snow shovel -- In Advance of a Broken Arm -- rest in Western museums. Jeff Koons' silver-plated vacuum

cleaners and coffee pots are avidly purchased as art by Western collectors. This dilemma, however, as to what is and what is not considered art, has very tangible, and often undesirable, cultural and economic ramifications for non-Western artisans and their creations. This is to be explicated as well.

In addressing the germinal causes of the Western concepts responsible for contemporary terminology, several additional factors will emerge. The first to be delineated concerns the unrecognized or unstated paradox concealed within the Western notion of art's supposed non-commercial impetus and motivation. That constitutes the singular and critical core from which stem culturally biased judgements made by historians, aestheticians, anthropologists, critics and dealers who constitute the aesthetics-commodity network (Alloway,1984).

It will be demonstrated that the art object is but a specialized class of manufacture, and therefore subject to the general dynamics informing all utilitarian objects. Therefore, it must compete with all commodities in the marketplace.

This Western socioeconomic-aesthetic model, with its built-in paradox, has been appropriated by non-Western artisans. One cannot understand the latter without fully

understanding the former. The Inuit culture has had a well-documented pre- and post-Western experience. Each era has manufactured its particular genre of artifacts. The former were utilized intra-culturally while the latter are intended for extra-cultural trade. Each, respectively, is reflective of prevailing social and ideational norms (Swindler, 1986).

Within the West, the recent class of Inuit artifacts has been the center of controversy as to its exact nature. Some consider it to be fine art (Houston, 1952) while to others it is craft (Carpenter, 1973). The debate has continued over forty years. It is exactly this divergence of professional opinion, however, which reveals the contradictions and limitations innate within contemporary convention. The historical component of this thesis will explain the origins of the aforementioned debate and implications for Inuit concepts and produce.

The primary market for Inuit handiwork is Western. Given prevailing Western notions of what constitutes Inuit culture and experience there is a very narrow margin of identity and acceptance allowed for Inuit goods by the Western consumer. This is restrictive for the Inuit culturally, economically and aesthetically. In

turn, such restrictiveness ultimately impoverishes the market the commodity is meant to serve.

2.0 FORM, FUNCTION AND VALUE

2.1 Introduction

Consider two objects manufactured in the paleolithic era. One, a chert hand-axe, is an object perfectly suited to its function. Its angles, modulations, form, and heft all fit together harmoniously.

The other is a miniature carving made from the tusk of a mammoth. It fits into the palm and is worn easily. Its exaggerated curves and volumes exquisitely capture the fecundity of the pregnant woman portrayed. The very surface grain of the ivory is ingeniously utilized to highlight the figurine's human features. Unlike the self-evident utility of the axe, the carving's function may only be construed through conjecture. It is thought that objects like it were utilized in religio-magical rituals as talismans (Burland, 1973).

Thus we are presented with two distinct classes of objects. Both required mastery of a necessary set of production and design skills. One was utilized for a physical end and the other for a psychical end. It is possible that, for their users, the distinction was solely in type but not in kind.

Today, however, one would be classified as craft and the other as art. Yet these terms are quite arbitrary. The current review will explicate the cultural and historic shifts and their attendant nomenclatures which underlie the semantics of contemporary aesthetic conventions.

2.2 The Useful Thing

No taxonomic table of manufacture exists which would classify and situate the diverse objects created by humans since prehistoric times. Yet all these objects are expressly fabricated for utility or "usefulness" (Sykes, 1985, p. 183). What constitutes usefulness and its contingent value is dependent on context. For, it may be argued that various cultures have always created and utilized objects for life maintenance and social intercourse.

2.2.1 Design

The contemporary term "design' singularly embodies all the facets implicit in the creation of the utilitarian object. Its etymology begins with the French 'designer'. Through this Gallic form, it may be further reduced to the Latin origin 'signum' --to mark and

'designare' -- to mark out (Weekly, 1967). Of note is that the Latin "signum" is the root not only of design but also of sign, signature and signify. Thus design's fundamental sense has to do with the specifically physical act of altering a surface with marking for some purpose.

Design's present English form has several associated meanings. The first is "mental plan" (Sykes, 1985, p. 259). This begets its second import as "purpose...(or) adoption of (a) means to (an) end" (Sykes, 1985, p. 259). More so, it can refer to the "established form of a product; (its) general idea, (or) construction" (Sykes, 1985, p. 259).

The overall mental plan envisions the raison d'être of the object in its usage and context; as well as the specific markings required to finish the object, and may be summarized as the art of design. It is design which distinguishes and signifies the object for what it is. For example:

> Engineers imagine a bridge which is to span a river that someone wants to cross. They can make a drawing of the imagined bridge ... From the drawing the engineer can fabricate a maquette which shows in some detail the actual features of the bridge whose construction will be overseen. In consultation with others who

> have the appropriate skills and materials, engineers direct and control the construction of the bridge itself, and voilà, -- a bridge. (Kavanagh, 1990, p. 37)

Inherent in such design is consideration for how the object must appear visually. Its intended appearance is relative to and dependent on its nature. This principle applies equally to a simple clay brick and to a complex marble sculpture. The difference is in degree and not in kind.

2.2.2 Instrumental Form

Every created object is given a form, defined as a "visible mode in which to exist or manifest", logically congruent with its desired function, defined as the "purpose in which to be fulfilled" (Sykes, 1985, pp. 385, 399). An object's instrumental form is, therefore, expressed through "characteristics of shape, color, and texture required for proper operation in their usual context...(for example) the knife blade and its handle are shaped in a form that ensures (its) effective utilization ... for cutting (Maquet, 1986, p. 60). But it may be argued that a contemporary Inuit carving also has a form congruent with its function and so is instrumental in that regard.

2.2.3 Non-Instrumental Form

At the same time, the material quality of an object's form dictated solely by its requirements in usage, is often enhanced by an added dimensionality not fully understood, even today (Otten, 1971). The aforementioned example of a knife can display formal and structural elements of design including "perfect regularity...smoothness of the handle, ornamental engravings...(and) an application of a colored coating" (Maquet, 1986, p. 60). None are needed to ensure a knife's efficacy. Nevertheless, the criterion of instrumentality is applicable to, but not sufficient to classify aspects of, contemporary cultures.

> A sporting gun is made to fire on a certain type of game; silver engravings on the butt do not enhance its killing effectiveness. In the Canadian winter, a fur coat is a garment primarily made to keep its wearer warm; this goal is attained whether or not the pelts are perfectly matched in size and color. These formal aspects, not necessary for the proper use of the object in its context , have been added for their visual appeal. (Maquet, 1986, p. 61)

If it is the very intangible "impulse to perfection which lies at the heart of craftsmanship" (Osborne, 1972, p. 297) then, perforce, what results is a maximized enhancement of the object's instrumental form. In turn,

this heightened visual appeal, in its non-instrumentality, has been designed solely to bring satisfaction to its creator/user. Thus, a very particular quality of emotional response is enjoined. This goes much beyond the strictures that simple utility can offer. The instrumental, non-instrumental dichotomy is arbitrary and ultimately dissolves in a general concern for aesthetics.

This phenomenon was first framed philosophically in the eighteenth century, with the articulation and use of the concept of *aesthetics*. The term was adapted from the ancient Greek *aesthetikos aisthanomai*, meaning to perceive or to see (Maquet, 1986) and is currently defined as: "Belonging to the appreciation of the beautiful, having such appreciation, in accordance with principles of good taste. Philosophy of the beautiful or of art" (Sykes, 1985, p. 15). Given its relatively recent and deliberate coinage, this definition relates the original Greek conception of seeing and perceiving to those attributes deemed necessary for the appreciation of the non-instrumental aspect of any useful thing in its appearance.

Maquet (1986) asks if we may not assume that these non-instrumental forms reveal an aesthetic concern? He

answers affirmatively that "It is the object's visual quality which stimulates in us an aesthetic perception" as well as an appreciation of it (Maquet, 1986, p. 60). Therefore, "practically everything we see around us embodies some aesthetic intention and has some aspects that are aesthetically relevant"(Maquet, 1986, p. 60). Indeed, one might argue that there is an underlying aesthetic principle which frames our perception of all human-made things and contributes to their construction It is instructive to note the etymological relation between the meaning of *aesthetic* with that of *decorative* which stems from the Latin *decori* connotating beauty (Sykes, 1985).

2.3 The Useful Thing as Commodity

A commodity to be such must satisfy specific criteria as a "useful thing, article of trade and especially a product" (Sykes, 1985, p. 189). As the core within the concept of commodity, a useful thing may, in turn, be defined as "whatever is or may be thought about or perceived (including or as opposed to people)" which render "a sense of benefit and enjoyment"(Sykes, 1985, pp.1111, 1183).

However, the useful thing, initially, is still only a commodity in potential. Two parties must, through negotiation, establish and agree to the worth of the thing. Its value must be quantified in some manner and some equivalent thing must be offered in its place. Thus, through this transaction, the "useful thing" becomes an article "exchanged for money or other commodities"(Sykes, 1985, p. 1135). This is the basis and definition of trade.

Once a useful thing becomes established as an article of trade, demand generally increases proportionally. Efforts to meet this demand involve reproducing the "thing or substance through natural process or manufacture"(Sykes, 1985, p. 821). Generally, a useful thing becomes a commodity when it is replicated in quantity, as a product, by deliberate manufacture, to meet widened demand for its benefits through trade. This encompassing perspective precisely delineates the ground from which all commercial possibilities emerge.

2.4 The Value of a Useful Thing

The term 'value' derives from the French 'valoir' -- to be worth. However its prior Latin roots also connect it to the modern English esteem, estimate, appraise,

appreciate, praise and price and prize(Sykes, 1985; Weekly, 1967). Hence its fundamental meaning, as its etymology makes evident, is in the fixing of a worth (however characterized) to a thing (whatever it may be).

What has utility has value. Yet, like utility, value is also relative to context. A value is like a gradient in a spectrum, running from abstract to concrete or from spiritual to material. As such value is first a felt quality expressed through various forms of production and ultimately assessed in self conscious judgement.

In other words, we experience the world through the process of valuing.

As such, when value is discussed, unless otherwise stated, it will be used in relation to the evaluation of an object. In this regard, use will be considered the essential determinant of value.

2.5. The Evaluation of a Useful Thing

Consequently, while the utility of a specific object will be constant, what an end user pays may vary. Its worth is proportional to the quality of materials used, the quality of execution realized, and the subjective value arbitrarily attached. This last feature is usually termed 'desirability.'

Quality is defined as "degree of excellence"(Sykes, 1985, p. 843). Regardless of how excellence may be specifically construed, in general, the best that anything can be is usually the standard against which all other like things are measured - hence, the Platonic notion of the good and in accordance with its ideal (Jowett, 1973). It is in this sense that manufactured commodities are often referred to, in the vernacular, as "goods". Therefore, one may assume that the higher the overall quality of the commodity, the greater will be its worth. This is subject to the knowledge and appreciation of both the seller and buyer, but the converse is operable as well.

In considering any scale of value one begins with two questions: a) Why is this thing useful/desirable? and b) To whom is it useful/desirable? Answering these simple questions will aid in an understanding of the object as commodity. However, these judgements have both a subjective and an objective underpinning. To make intelligent evaluations, one must have appropriate knowledge and experience. Yet, an informed standard is derived from societal consensus. In turn, this is based on the mores of sustained cultural practice (Swindler, 1986).

> ...Green jades were the Aztec's supreme treasures; and this puzzled Cortez and his men, since jade had no great value in Spain in those days. However, as soon as the Conquistadores realized that a single "chalchihuital" -- the Aztec word -- could be exchanged for two mule loads of gold, the status of chalchihuitals changed significantly. (Asiep, 1982, p. 50)

There are two criteria on which a useful thing, as a manufactured object, is evaluated. The first relates to the quality of its (functional) form; and the second relates to the quality of its visual appearance. Furthermore, these separate but related scales are not coequal. One may be more fully realized than the other. For example, an object such as a knife, in its instrumental form will be rated as well made, but rated as only moderately pleasing to the eye. The value of the whole object is judged where the two evaluations intersect.

There are a number of variables at play in the complex process of evaluation. For example: Is the useful thing well made? Are the materials sturdy, long lasting and suitable to the function at hand? Will it stand the wear of repeated use? Does it look pleasing to the eye? Is its price consistent with its combined qualities?

2.5.1 Intrinsic and Extrinsic Value

The aesthetic factor is an integral aspect in the evaluation of the whole commodity. However, a well made functional knife or bowl, for instance, does not depend on a corresponding quality visually. The creation and consumption of many types of objects goes on apace with hardly any attention to aesthetic consideration.

Yet, the everyday useful object is often elevated to that of prestige object, for example:

> In ancient Greece, treasure, the prestige good kat' exochen was a form of wealth that circulated only among the few. It took the form of tool money -- tripods and bowls -- made of gold and silver. Disposal was either in return for other treasure or for items of prestige...(Polyani, 1977, p. 110)

In these cases, an object would be manufactured, by the most skilled artisans, according to the highest standards, using the finest materials and finished with great attention to visual detail. These commodities could only be possessed by those who had the means.

The Grecian bowl of gold, for example, would be evaluated as excellently made and very pleasing to the eye. Therefore, as a commodity, it would demand the highest price. The bowl's worth is dependent both on its utility and its beauty. Additionally, as a prestige

object, its value derives from the pleasure of its contemplation and possession, and in the acknowledgement of both these facts by others.

Thus the manufactured object as commodity is valued for itself, what it does, and what it represents. Commercial evaluation takes all these variables into account.

2.6 The Visually Useful Thing

The worth of an entire class of manufacture, such as jewellery or tapestry, is dependent on the primary utility of appearance. These objects are purposely produced to adorn, ornament and otherwise decorate. They are designed to please the senses, particularly sight, and are valued according to the degree of satisfaction engendered.

2.6.1 The Role of the Aesthetic Object as Commodity

The classical theory of manufacture was oriented to function or a means/end rationale. The *technitas* (craftsmen) or *demiourges* (artisan) created objects according to an ideal standard dictated by reason and guided by the philosophers. A pair of sandals created to

this ideal standard would be validated as good by the end wearer's judgement (Jowett, 1973).

This rationale held for all objects of manufacture. In ancient Greece the maker of aesthetic objects such as painting and sculpture was considered but a particular type of laborer. Plato placed low value on aesthetic objects as their social usefulness was suspect. The good of a well made pair of sandals was without question. But what was the good of a well made marble carving of an apple? This philosophy of utilitarian materialism has not only survived but, as stated earlier, is today, the basis for the measured determination of a commodity's worth.

Certainly, this important practical methodology is given its due within the purview of manufacture. Additionally, however, Plato's legacy, with its bias, has pervaded aesthetic considerations. This is an important issue for aesthetic education to address. The determination of the worth of an aesthetic object must, given its unique utility, transcend the rudimentary evaluative processes used for other object classes. If appropriate expertise is required to evaluate any commodity's worth, how much more so is it needed when utility is decided primarily through the efficacy of

appearance? Thus the manifold nature of the aesthetic object most definitely complicates its evaluation.

2.6.2 The Aesthetic Object Categorized

In the preceding sections a model of the aesthetic object was delineated. This included any artifact whose primary utility was tied to its appearance (Becker, 1984). A gold earring, for example, is worn to adorn the ear and the person. That it is also a form of portable wealth is a secondary, although important, function.

The question here is how this model has been applied, is applied and might be applied to the categorization and classification of the entire range of similarly considered objects. Since no taxonomy of manufacture or table of division exists, attempts to single out and analyze a particular group of products tends to be arbitrary and confused. Rarely considered is that,

> concepts and categories, and in general the language of any given metaphysics, are not incidental but intrinsic features of it, in the sense that they serve to articulate the world in a specific way, as the given metaphysic conceives it. A given language is specific to a given metaphysics. If we accept the language, we inadvertently accept the world view embedded in this language. One reason for our difficulties in overcoming the limitations of our present world view is that we use the

> language this world view has originated. (Skolimowski, 1979, p. 330)

There are, as stated, certain object classes whose primary worth is their aesthetic function. Within other product types, there may be found both aesthetic and non-aesthetic objects.

Two different and quite functional examples of jugs illustrate this point. One is mass produced clay, unremarkable in any way from hundreds like it, albeit its form and glaze have some minor visual merit. The other is hand finished, blown glass using unusual metallic colouration. It is translucent and opalescent and its form is organic and sensuous.

It is too facile to state that certain classes of object are aesthetic and others are not. Rather, certain classes are definitely created for their appearance, while others may not be so characteristic, but still produce aesthetic objects. This qualitativeness is hierarchical and subjective. Furthermore, the same object may have several different classifications and meanings dependent upon the specific nature of individual perception.

Therefore, what can be stated with certainty is that, dependent on context, there are objects of which the

primary concern is aesthetic and there are objects where this isn't so. Thus two broad, though not mutually exclusive, categories of product exist within the encompassing genus of manufacture.

2.6.3 The Craft Art Divide

Within this century the separation of art and craft is maintained in everyday understanding and in professional theory (Becker, 1984). Yet, this distinction did not exist before the 1700's (Fethe, 1982). The common view or "folk definition" asserts that craft is a body "of knowledge and skill which can be used to produce useful objects; dishes you can eat from" etc. (Becker, 1984, p. 273). Art, in contrast, is presumed to be "produced in response to problems intrinsic in the development of the art and freely chosen by the artist" (Becker, 1984, p. 281).

R.G. Collingwood (1977) typifies the philosophic approach which, in essence, underlines and informs conventional thinking. He made:

> a clear and deep distinction between craft making and art making. He defined them in such a way that no features of the one could possibly be features of the other, yet he stipulated that craft was a necessary (but not sufficient) condition...of art. (Kavanagh, 1990, p. iii)

Thus, both perspectives agree that "making art requires technical skills that might be seen as craft skills" (Becker, 1984, p. 272).

However, both conventional and academic thought, reveal that the terms are actually "ambiguous conglomerations of organizational and stylistic traits and thus cannot be used as unequivocally as we would want to use them if they were scientific or critical concepts" (Becker, 1984, p. 272). Yet, they are used as critical concepts. Typical of this ambiguity is a recent newspaper headline: "Craft of Quilting Now Seen as Art: (Montreal Gazette, March, 1990, p. F-4).

Depending on context, "the same activity, using the same materials and skills in what appears to be similar ways, may be called by either title" (Becker, 1984, p. 272). For example, the skills and materials of fine art are put to "uses which find their meaning or justification in a world organized around some activity other than art" (Becker, 1984, p. 296). Consequently within this semantic indeterminateness, "a craft becomes redefined as an art or, conversely an art becomes redefined as a craft" (Becker, 1984, p. 272).

An amalgamation of everyday and philosophical thought suggests three overlapping worlds: The first is the world of ordinary craftsmen. Within it things are made uniformly, for instance, clay bricks. Furthermore, these are crafts "in which the idea of beauty seldom enters" (Becker, 1984, p. 276). The second world is that of the "artist-craftsman" (Becker, 1984, p. 77). Accordingly, "some crafts generate from within their own tradition a feeling for beauty and with it appropriate aesthetic standards and canon of taste" (Becker, 1984, p. 275). The third world is inhabited by artists. Within it the "standard of utility is devalued (and) the uniqueness of the object is prized" (Becker, 1984, p. 279). Herein, artifacts are considered "objects of contemplation, as objects of collectors and...display.(Becker, 1984, p. 278).

Common to all three worlds is that their respective artisans "take pride in their skill and are honoured for it in the craft and sometimes by outsiders" (Becker, 1984, p. 275). As such, virtuosity is the arbiter of excellence and, as explained earlier, harks back to Plato's good or virtuous end of all manufacture. It is my contention that this issue of skill remains as the

sine qua non in the categorization of all manufactured things.

The original conceptions of art and craft as synonymous with learning and shrewdness are still in usage. They also meant skilled and these also are still in use. Ultimately they have become inextricably associated with particular classes of products created through the use of that learning and skill (Weekly, 1967; Sykes, 1985).

The problem in considering art and craft as overlapping concepts is that the present "separation has been so prolonged as now to be virtually in the nature of things. In each case the difficulty seems to be that we have saddled ourselves with a pair of spurious entities" (Kavanagh, 1990, p. 132). In other words, while Becker's designations are clear, they nonetheless obscure the fact that similar considerations are brought to bear in either case (of the designated art or craft).

2.6.4 Cultural and Historical Roots

In order to understand why objects are classified and valued in their prescribed manner, some knowledge of a prevailing culture's regard for the merits of labour is required.

> The words we call expressions of aesthetic judgement play a very complicated role, but a very definite role, in what we call a culture of a period...what we now call cultured taste perhaps didn't exist in the Middle Ages...What belongs to a language game is a whole culture. (Wittgenstein, 1966, p. 8)

Within the West in the past six centuries, three cultural revolutions compounded the perception, evaluation and categorization of aesthetic object classes. The first, the Renaissance, occurred between 1400 and 1600 C.E. The second, the Industrial Revolution occurred between 1700 and 1900 C.E. The third, Colonialism, spanned the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries.

The powerful social transformations each engendered were played out against the prevailing cultural leitmotif permeating the entire six hundred years. The dual influence of ancient Greek philosophy and the Judeo-Christian ethos sustained deep "prejudices against 'matter' and the human 'body', as distinct from the 'spirit' or 'mind'" (Kavanagh, 1990, p. 21). These, in turn, obviated corresponding and contradictory attitudes towards things made and to the labour and labourer responsible.

From antiquity through the Middle Ages and to the Renaissance, persons obtained "an income from selling or

exchanging what they...(made) in their specialized occupation" (Maquet, 1986, p. 194). A professional artisan provided the "expertise needed for creating sophisticated forms...expressed in regularity and finishing; and media requiring specialized techniques"(Maquet, 1986, pp.194-195). Objects of their skill became articles of trade.

However, European societies were highly stratified by occupation into a hierarchy of social prestige. The maker of things was accorded slightly more status than the lowly held agricultural labourer or peasant. The qualitative difference between classes was viewed as "between intellectual and purely physical endeavours...intellectual activity always being superior to and governing the rest" (Lucie-Smith, 1981, pp. 159-60). The ideological antecedents of this orientation, as stated above, are found in the writings of Plato and Aristotle. The Church, as purveyor of Greek learning continued this distinction between scholar and artisan until the Renaissance.

The generic term used for a skilled artisan in ancient Greece was technikon. Their produce, in turn, was "the result of ordered work (techne)" (Kavanagh, 1990, p. 32). On the other hand, "those human actions

devoid of ...(skill)...the nontechnical 'atechncs'...(were) activities...(construed as) a mere knack or routine way of operating" (Kavanagh, 1990, p. 32). Therefore, the qualitative character of the actual work was responsible for the categorization of the worker and the produce. The degree of skill or its lack, determined the terminology.

The etymology of craft begins with the Teutonic 'craeft' meaning strength, skill and ingenuity (Weekly, 1967, p. 378). It is possible that the Northern European artisans were called "men of craeft" or "craeft's men". However, the label was a consequence of their ability. The object per se was secondary and might have been anything manufactured with skill. Yet, the usage of craft to denote this particular class of material object "arose elliptically from some such phrases as 'vessels of small craft', (meaning) small power and activity" (Weekly, 1967, p.. 378).

The word *art* originated with the ancient Indo-European languages. The Sanskrit irma, meaning *fore-quarter,* is the root for the Greek appos as well as the Latin artis, both meaning joint (Weekly, 1967). Current analogous English words include arm, artery, are, and article.

A scholar, in the Middle Ages or Renaissance, who commanded the mandated several joint branches of learning was deemed a Master of Arts. In its most fundamental sense, art, like craft, refers to the skill of the artisan rather than to his or her produce. How then did this term come to categorize specific classes of manufactured objects? The process was circuitous. Like craft, it is apparent that anything that was created with 'art' came to be considered art.

Therefore, the example of the hand-made glass jug, discussed earlier, given the skill required to produce it, could be labelled either craft or art, depending on culture, time and context. What of the example of the clay jug? Would it also be labelled craft or art accordingly?

The differentiation between the two jugs was qualitative; one was an aesthetic object and one was a non-aesthetic object. Yet, both were utilitarian -- they could both hold and pour liquid. A consummate skill was needed to produce both. Therefore, the mass produced, unremarkable jug is equally to be classed as craft or art. It could be argued that the hand-made glass jug required more skill in fabrication and so would be judged greater craft or art.

The following integers summarize the discussion thus far. There are two broad categories of manufactures. One is composed of aesthetic objects and the other [illegible] - aesthetic objects. In turn, both may be classified as either craft or art according to cultural norms. These appelations are suggestive of the degree of [illegible] inherent in their production. Both categories are evaluated according to the criteria set forth previously. All were treated and traded as commodities.

This binary nature of manufacture -- non-aesthetic and aesthetic, was altered by the aforementioned cultural revolutions or shifts. The Renaissance affected the status of aesthetic objects. The Industrial Revolution and Colonialism affected both categories.

2.6.5 The Renaissance

With the Renaissance came a re-evaluation and redirection of societal norms and mores. At this juncture, leading artisans, practicing the trades of painting, sculpture, and architecture, argued that what they manufactured was quite distinct from other types of aesthetic objects.

Their produce did share the same primary utility -- a pleasing appearance meant to provide enjoyment. However,

they reoriented this utility and function in a new direction (Maquet, 1986). Their artifacts enjoined a specific type of response -- contemplation was considered a rarified and higher use of the senses than mere pleasure, which was deemed a debased sensation. The aesthetic participant was expected to attain the realm of pure ideation associated with Platonic doctrine (Maquet, 1986). As such, the artifact was designed to serve the same function as philosophy, mathematics and the other arts of the Trivium and Quadrivium.

Therefore, instead of arguing against the pursuit of mimesis, as Plato had done, these artisans maintained that it could be used as a stepping stone to higher pursuits. Raphael's painting "The School of Athens' is a propagandistic paen to this effect (Maquet, 1986). In time their doctrine came also to be accepted as a School of Arts. Since their produce was judged finer in nature than other forms of aesthetic craft/art, this new branch came to be called the 'Fine' Arts.

Maquet (1986) labels this new class of aesthetic artifact as "art objects by destination" (p. 17). Responding to the argument that "fine art by destination" could generate contemplative ends, philosophers began studying these Fine Arts. Particular interest focused on

perception, taste and notions of beauty. This enterprise occupied, to some degree, the best minds of Europe over the ensuing six centuries (Beardsley, 1966).

2.6.6 The Industrial Revolution

While a contemporary understanding of manufacture generally assumes the production of things using machinery, it is also defined as the "making of articles by physical labour" (Sykes, 1985, p. 617). Its oldest signification, in fact, stems from the Latin -- manufactum, meaning made by hand (Weekly, 1967). As such, "for most of recorded time, all processes of making were hand processes,everything made was essentially made by hand" (Lucie-Smith, 1981, p.12).

Yet, within the ancient world, sophisticated workshops and factories were established to facilitate the large-scale production of commodities for local consumption and trade. Occasionally, simple machines were used to aid this process (Lucie-Smith, 1981). For the most part, however, the non-aesthetic object, the aesthetic object and the fine art object by destination were all the result of skilled handiwork.

With the advent of the Industrial Revolution, in Great Britain, during the late 18th and early 19th

centuries, the use of machinery in the production of commodities intensified to an unparalleled degree. This resulted in the manufacture of mass produced standardized objects in quantities never seen before. This also generated an unprecedented degree of social upheaval.

The skilled artisan who took a long time to manufacture an artifact by hand was replaced by a machine that could do it faster and for greater profit. Consequently, within decades, entire classes of artisans became redundant. Deprivation, and poverty resulted.

Thus, with this new cultural phenomenon, the inclusive genus of all manufactured things became irrevocably divided between hand-made and machine-made goods. Within each division, the production of non-aesthetic, aesthetic and fine art objects continued. The machine-made fine art object was typified, for example, by photoengraving.

Industrial manufacture fragmented "the functions of the craftsman between the engineer, who plans the machine, and the industrial designer, who plans the programming of the machine. The old unity of craftsmanship...(had) broken up" (Osborne, 1987, p. 141). Entirely new strategies were required for the design of both mass-produced non-aesthetic and aesthetic objects.

By the 20th century, within the industrialized nations of the West, most useful things were created largely by machine. So much so, that in these societies, the high cost of individual labour put hand-made things out of reach for most consumers. However, in areas where industrialism was too costly, hand produce still dominated as cottage industry.

Increasingly, a premium was placed on the hand-made versus the machine -made as exemplifying quality and skill. In the 1860's:

> the industrial revolution and its increasing use of automation, machine labour, highly routine and deadening, repetitive work, the design of objects for the means of production with its consequent elimination of variety and innovation, was simultaneously, a statement about the place and value of human participation in the creative making process. (Kavanaugh, 1990, p. 142)

The concept of craft became increasingly associated with all "handiwork used for making objects" (Lucie-Smith, 1981, p. 7). In turn, the idea of art became inextricably identified with "a precise conception...demarcating itself to pictorial and figural or architectonical artifacts and visual surroundings" (Jonsson et al., 1984, p.14). This relatively recent development, which was a consequence of the Industrial

Revolution, has tended to obscure the actual and logical classification of the utilitarian objects thus far discussed.

2.6.7 Colonialism

A colonial relationship is primarily economic and unbalanced in nature. This was representative of the pattern of societal interactions caused by the global expansion of the West from 1500 C.E. to the First World War. Subjugated societies during this span were administered by Western colonial cadres and they appropriated cultural artifacts as booty, curios and souvenirs. The sack of the African Kingdom of Benin by the British in 1897 is an example. The punitive expedition "brought back to London a huge quantity of works in bronze and ivory" (Maquet, 1986 p. 195).

These objects were generally created for utilitarian function whether religious, political or agricultural. As such, until the emergence and expansion of colonialism, they usually stayed situated within the societies which manufactured and utilized them in accordance with their function.

In Europe, divorced from their moorings, such artifacts remained mute and unheeded, except as

curiosities, until the turn of the century. At that time, Western culture was shaken by the theories of psychoanalysis, quantum physics and Marxism. All challenged the existing social order.

The now fully entrenched domain of Fine Art was not immune to the changes rocking the West. From the 1400's to the late nineteenth century, the underlying aesthetic conventions informing the fine art object by destination stood relatively intact. This conception itself, however, came under attack by the Avant Garde, a diverse group of fine artists. Its leaders, such as Picasso and Duchamp, were searching for alternative visual systems of expression. They discovered the non-Western artifacts in the aforementioned collections and were intrigued by their unfamiliar non-Western design modes. These objects were also discovered by academics within the new discipline of anthropology.

Clifford (1988) connects the work of these two groups. Non-Western artifacts came to be considered as aesthetic objects and simultaneously as objects for scientific study. However, while some of these artifacts may have had a primary utility vis-à-vis their appearance, and so could be categorized as aesthetic objects, they were not produced expressly to be

contemplated as fine art objects. Most colonialized societies did not even have a term for the concept of 'art by destination' within their languages (Pakes,1987). Yet this is precisely what the European Avant Garde labelled them.

Clifford (1988) calls for a serious analysis of this phenomenon: "the fact that rather abruptly, in the space of a few decades, a large class of non-Western artifacts came to be redefined as art is a taxonomic shift that requires critical historical discussion"(p. 16). Maquet (1986) labels these as "art objects by metamorphosis" (p 70). This is an appropriate description. Indeed, taking any manufactured thing, even an aesthetic object, out of its cultural milieu and placing it in a new but prescribed context to be appreciated solely in a certain manner for particular ends is metamorphic and metaphoric.

Within many non-Western cultures, their respective artisans began manufacturing a variety of aesthetic objects that represented a hybrid or fusion between their indigenous and newly discovered Western conventions. These were primarily designed for export and were produced for economic gain. This sub-class has become the focus of study for many anthropologists. They have labelled these particular artifacts as 'acculturated' or

'tourist art' (Graburn, 1976). These terms have many many derogatory connotations.

2.6.7 Conclusion

The following recapitulates the perspectives of this first chapter. These semantic guidelines will be adhered to through the balance of the study:

* There is an all-inclusive genus of manufactured things.
* It has two broad divisions -- hand-made objects and machine made objects.
* In turn, each division has two categories of artifact. They will be categorized as non-aesthetic or aesthetic dependent on their primary utility.
* The classes or sub-classes within each category will be stipulated as such and classified accordingly. That is , the "fine art object by destination" is a particular class of aesthetic object. As such it may be either hand-made or machine made.

Thus, in searching for a taxonomic schema which would clarify relationships between object types and so identify and situate the art object, one comes to articulate a model that subsumes all manufacture. The

diagram illustrated in Figure 1 is such a model. It delineates the division of the encompassing genus of manufacture, as well as corresponding object categories, classes and sub-classes.

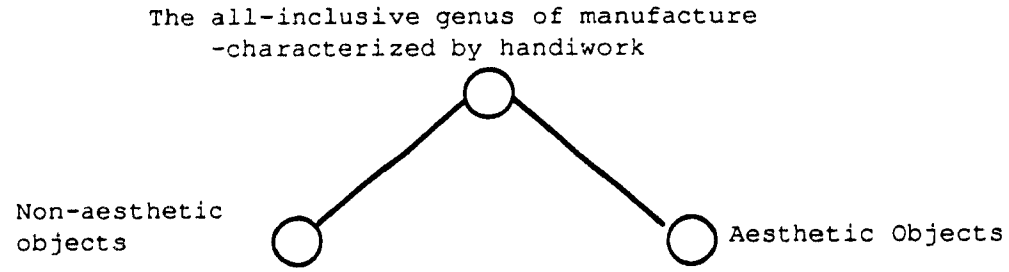
This simplified model is cross-cultural and historic in scope, as all societies at all times have created objects for use, however 'use' may be defined. The advent of each new stage precipitated the production of new object classes. However, objects from the preceding stages continued to be produced as well. In the third and contemporary stage, all object classes are produced concurrently.

What has compounded an articulation of this model and had encouraged the semantic confusion, is that in the last fifty years the contemporary inter-cultural art commodity market, and its supporting network (Jules-Rosette, 1984) has appropriated the output of the entire model as an inventory source. Whether an object originated in Stage One, Two or Three, often regardless of its division, category, class or type, it may be thought of, marketed and consumed as "art". Added to the stores of historic and contemporary "fine art objects by destination", are innumerable hand-made and industrial non-aesthetic objects, historic and modern, whose primary

function has been displaced and replaced with an extrinsic value that is wholly aesthetic and commercial.

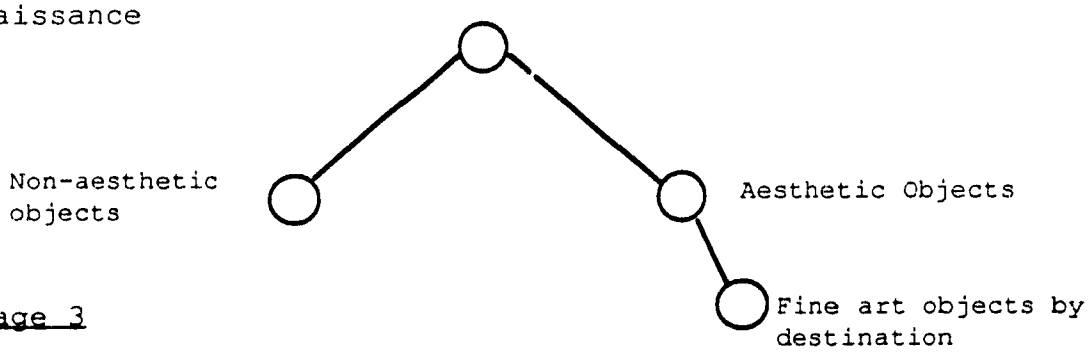
Stage 1

Pre-history to Middle Ages



Stage 2

Renaissance



Stage 3

Industrial Revolution and Colonialism to the present

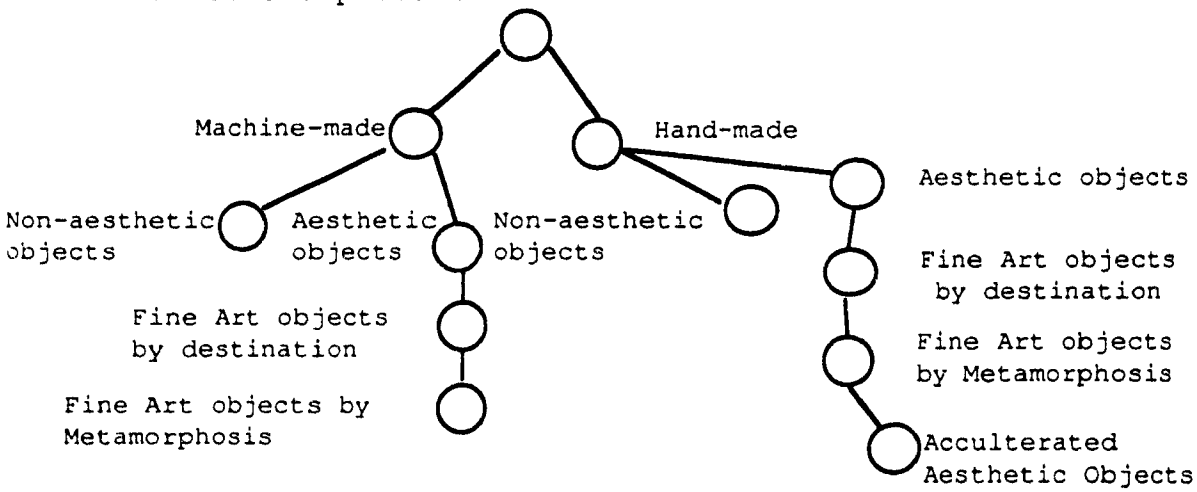


Figure 1. A General Taxonomy of Manufacture, Historic and Contemporary

3.1 Introduction

The intra and extra-cultural forces and economic necessities influencing the production of these objects within their many settings must be accounted for. In doing so, the labyrinthine interrelation between culture, economics and aesthetics begins to unravel and its inner logic begins to clarify. Thus, this chapter is a necessary preamble to the subsequent discussion of the specific interrelation between the West and the Inuit.

3.2 The Universal/Relative Dialectic of Culture and Aesthetics

At present, two broad schools of thought exist on the relation between culture and aesthetics. The first holds that aestheticism emerges and can be understood only within the context of society. A given society's language can supply certain clues to a culture's orientation:

> The presence in a language of ordinary words referring to visual quality, and of aesthetic reflections on the aesthetic experience, indicates that the aesthetic potentiality has indeed been developed in many societies,

> literate and non-literate, simple and complex, ancient and modern. (Maquet, 1986, p. 160)

Language usage must be seen in conjunction with the fact that different cultures will select only certain idioms from possible visual configurations for the purposes of expression. These are the result of the cumulative data base built over extended time and of numerous individual responses to qualitative experience (Hamblen, 1984). In this regard, Fisher (1961) suggests the appropriate question is not what influence an environment has on the creation of aesthetic objects, but rather why various peoples embody within their conventions certain aspects and ignore others. Examination of these values requires an "understanding of the forces resulting in the internal consistency of specific cultural idioms, styles and process; (along with) the centripetal energy which holds them to their unique cultural configurations" (Otten, 1971, p. xiv).

The second approach to culture and art assumes there to be a universal, intercultural raison d'être which may be recognized in such transcultural features as symbolism and properties of expression (Osborne, 1974). Hamblen (1984) believes that a dialectic exists between the two

views. Both are valid modes though not necessarily contiguous.

A carver contemplating a block of wood must be constrained in some manner to a fixed, though wide, set of responses and activities available within the carving process. It matters not the time, place or culture in which the carving occurs.

However, the particular mores of every specific time, place and culture cannot but help to limit the artisan's choice of carving matter. Consequently, what occurs in much of the literature is that generic commonalities are overshadowed by the specificity of each different cultural inquiry. The example given, of a wood carver, is but one particular feature of a myriad existing in the continuum of interplays within and connecting production, distribution and consumption modes associated with aesthetic objects.

3.3 Culture and Aesthetics in Action

Aesthetic productions are, in essence, active responses to changes occurring intra- and extra-culturally. These changes are generated from many quarters. Maquet (1986) has examined the environmental,

economic and technological changes that alter aesthetic orientation.

Maquet (1986) reiterates one of the central points of his thesis, and mine, by stating that both aesthetic and art objects "are submitted to the same production process as other items produced in the society" (Maquet, 1986, p. 180).

The productive level of a society dictates its ability to maintain a specialized network of artisans producing aesthetic objects (Maquet, 1986). An example of such a societal network is found during the European Middle Ages with its "master builders and craftsmen, stone cutters and masons, cabinet makers and goldsmiths organized in guilds and corporations" (Maquet, 1986, p. 202). Societies with subsistence production are more limited materially in aesthetic production. Accordingly, aesthetic productivity is diffused among non-specialized individuals and this becomes "conducive to folkstyle" (Maquet, 1986, p. 204). A more affluent society's aesthetic objects "are always more expensive...require superior skills and often better materials and tools and it takes more time to make them" (Maquet, 1986, p. 207).

Additional dimensions of this socio-environmental productive interplay are found in the "influence of the

medium on the forms" (Maquet, 1986,p. 186): Soft stone used by artisans "makes possible a large repertory of shapes. Carvers have the advantage of this potentiality ..."(Maquet, 1986,p. 186). In the carving of wood, the cylindrical but strongly vertical tree trunk again initiates a process where "materials and techniques are conducive to certain forms" (Maquet, 1986,p. 193).

In a slightly different context is found the influence of the environment on the medium and on an aesthetic canon -- for example, short lived African wooden masks. They experienced deterioration due to an extremely destructive African climate. This inhibited an overly and overtly rigid aestheticism from developing "Every sculptor could give free rein to his inspiration within the limit(s)" of officiating norms that could not last more than a generation (Maquet, 1986,p. 191).

Certain innovations in the productive processes of a society will also affect its aesthetic forms, "New techniques open new formal possibilities" (Maquet, 1986,p. 191). The nineteenth century Western development of prefabricated iron led to the glass and metal architecture style exemplified by the Crystal Palace in Great Britain. In the mid-twentieth century, the creation of the synthetic chemical acrylic enabled

painters to use the new pigment in a variety of novel approaches, i.e. staining the canvas or applying precise geometric markings (Maquet, 1986).

3.4 The Global Aesthetics Network

Jules-Rosette (1984) views "the function of art as a communicative system across different settings and traditions" (Jules-Rosette, 1984, p. 8). It is the producers, critics, dealers and consumers who "conjointly created the artistic climate through aesthetic judgements and commercial exchange" (Jules-Rosette, 1984, p. 176). Therefore, understanding this complex function requires "a grasp of all sources within it" (Jules-Rosette, 1984, p. 4). These sources are fully described in Alloway's Network: The Art World Described as a System (1984). He delineates "the complex whole that connects works of art and reproductions, critical, historical and informational writing, galleries, museums, and private collections (with the sum) of persons, objects, resources, messages and ideas" (Alloway, 1984, pp. 4, 5).

Moreover, "it is a communications network of great efficiency" (Alloway, 1984, p. 1). Like a canal, a railway track or a river bed, it acts as a conduit through which forms may move from station to station.

The infrastructure itself is stable, but the forms themselves may vary. (Though this variance of form must be congruent with the overall medium of the conductor. For example, electrical current flows through a wire and water through pipes.)

As artworks travel through the network, they acquire a record or "aura of aesthetic interpretation" (Alloway, 1984, P. 1). This may entail a move from a studio to a gallery in the same city or "wide distribution can separate the work from its producers" (Alloway, 1984, p. 1). Consequently, while "art may be a private act in its origins...art becomes part of a system of public information" (Alloway, 1984, p. 8).

As an aesthetic object passes from hand to hand, it accrues a "density" (Alloway, 1984). A metaphor for this journey through time and space may be found in the production and ownership of Chinese painted scrolls. The artist affixes a "chop", composed of ideograms representing his or her name, to the surface of the painting. Each subsequent and respective owner also affixes her/his own chop to the scroll. Eventually, the surface becomes covered with a host of red rectilineal markings, all co-mingled. They become an integral part of the painting's overall gestalt. This same process,

labelled "provenance", occurs with all aesthetic objects, although less graphically and more subtly. An object's provenance, or a change in it, has direct bearing on its commercial value (Grampp, 1989).

As a social shift in taste occurs, there will also be a perceivable shift in the nature of the aesthetic objects designed to reflect the new. This has various consequences. A limited case in point is represented by the nineteenth century French painter Bouguereau. At one point within his career he was lionized for his work. At a later point his stock was utterly devalued, aesthetically and commercially, with the advent of the modernists (Grampp, 1989).

Thus, the entire industry network demonstrates the "expressive and adjustive relationship between popular culture and economic change. It is a semiotic system in which signs also function as the media of economic change" (Jules-Rosette, 1984, p. 31). If "art objects constitute a system of communication between producers and consumers, it is possible to regard the various methods in which these communications take place as symbolic environments"(Jules-Rosette, 1984, p. 219). The art object, therefore, has a tripartite value which is at

once aesthetic, symbolic and commercial, depending upon context.

Jules-Rosette(1984) centers her exposition on the contemporary aesthetics industry of several African nations, while Alloway (1984) is primarily concerned with Western art as it functions within the contemporary West. Yet both discourses are complementary. They describe aspects of a multi-billion dollar market which intersects essentially all cultures and embraces practically all forms of aesthetic production. The mechanisms of Western contemporary aesthetic production find parallels or equivalents, sophisticated or not within non-Western settings. Collectively these comprise the global aesthetics industry network. Thus, this inter-referential network exists as "a general field of communication within which art has a place...as a part of a spectrum of objects and messages" (Alloway, 1984, p. 8).

3.5 The Impetus for Collecting

The common denominator which validates and justifies this social enterprise of artistic production and exchange is the phenomenon of collecting. Furthermore, the many levels and aspects of the global aesthetic

network all coalesce around its impetus. Aslop (1982) has developed a schema to explain aesthetic object collecting. In doing so, he explicates "the integrated, closely interacting cultural-behaviour system with (its) frequent and far-reaching effects on art itself" (Aslop, 1982, p. 1).

Aslop (1982) postulates that wherever and whenever the following "eight fairly distinct phenomena" (p. 15) are to be found, there, one will find an integrated cultural-behavioural system of art production and collecting: a written art history, an art market, art museums, art faking, revaluation of art, extremely high prices.

These phenomena of the art collecting systems are, in turn, governed by certain "laws" which Aslop(1982) has enumerated. Collectors specify the object categories deemed collectible and then create and control its market. In turn, they classify these object categories into hierarchies according to their desirability. At one end are those objects deemed rare and at the other, those objects not worth having. Art history is utilized to establish hierarchies, authenticate what is on the market and to establish provenance.

Finally, an art collecting system evolves through stages: At first, a small core of "pioneers" purchase objects in the newly targeted, but generally unrecognized, category of collectible. They pay relatively little since only they are interested in its worth as a collectible. However, in the second stage this awareness finds a wider outlet and this initiates greater competition and correspondingly higher prices. Finally the category of collectible is so well established that many more collectors contribute to high demand and reduced supply.

Concurrent with and underlying the entire collecting system, are shifting paradigms in taste. Consequently, where and when these shifts occur, a valued category of aesthetic objects will become devalued or vice versa.

3.6 Conclusion

The systemic whole that is the intersection of culture and aesthetics is dynamic in its diversity and changeability. As one dimension shifts, the other will come to reflect a new context as well (Swindler, 1986) Yet there are both universal and culturally relative facets of this phenomenon (Hamblen, 1984). Within each culture, and what binds one culture to the next, is an aesthetic network. This is comprised of a number of

inter-related social structures and processes all centered around the aesthetic object and providing its definitional context (Alloway, 1984). Therefore, in order to understand any particular aesthetic development, one must take into account the inter-relatedness of a given society's operative modes.

What characterizes the aesthetic network is its relation between commercial exchange embodied in trade and communications (Jules-Rosette, 1984). The aesthetic object is valued culturally, aesthetically and economically. As such, it is possible to consider that all the above integers operate in tandem in regard to the producers and consumers of aesthetic objects. Finally, the underlying and most concrete manifestation of the relation between culture, aesthetics and economics is to be found within the integrated cultural behavioural system called collecting (Aslop, 1982).

4.0 THE PARADIGM OF WESTERN AESTHETIC RELEVANCE

4.1 The Portrait of the Artist as A Social Construction

If as Maquet (1986) states: "Art is not an individual entity but a mental construction agreed upon by a group of people"(p. 4); then how much more does this apply to Western notions of an artist's identity? What building blocks of social convention have been used to construct the portrait of the artist as typified by such monumental icons as Michelangelo, Van Gogh and Picasso? Surprisingly few, but they are used again and again, with a persuasive power that results in a culturally ingrained monolith of perception. A more fundamental problem concerns artistic appropriation of the mimetic function itself. The consequent cultural bias here is that the act of creation is considered the prerogative of divinity:

> We can distinguish two groups of ideas; God as the builder of the world, and God as the modeler of man...the idea of God as the world's architect (also) underlay the mystic tradition of the medieval lodges, and that the idea of the divine smith was still alive in the natural philosophy of the sixteenth century...The most wide-spread image, however, is that of God who, like a sculptor, forms mankind out of clay. Over and above its usefulness as an elucidation of the divine process of creation, the metaphor

> of God as an artist possessed an inherent cogency. (Kris and Kurz, 1979, p. 54)

In either its positive or negative manifestation, the artist and the creative process are equally misunderstood and, ultimately, to be feared. The consequence of each, therefore, sets the 'maker of images' apart from society. This, then, is the second legacy. As such, not only was the human creator held apart, but what was created was perceived by society as having power. Power itself was both alluring and frightening. Thus philosophers like Plato held it to be dangerous. While the mimetic ability was decried by Plato, it also simultaneously gave rise "to the idea that the artist creates like God, that he is an 'alter deus'"(Kris and Kurz, 1979, p. 61). As such, "the task of the artist, in accordance with Plato's theory of art, (is to) surpass the model of nature and, by improving on nature, to realize an ideal beauty in his works" (Kris and Kurz, 1979, p. 61).

Consequently, and mistakenly, within the West, "the eye (has) become the arbiter of the artistic excellence and optically the criterion of artistic structure" (Danto, 1986, p. 31). Furthermore, a naive, everyday, popular perspective has transposed this to mean that "the artist deserves praise for faithfully copying nature"

(Danto, 1986, p. 100). This well entrenched viewpoint is the third sustained Western Ideational legacy contributing to an artist's cultural make-up. However, in the transposition of depth to surface value, something critical was lost within this third cultural inheritance.

Initially the fine art object by destination was generally manufactured for a particular context or environment. This included church, palace, guild hall, town square or affluent home. Over the ensuing centuries, the fine art object came to be produced without a specific end in sight. Instead it was created for its own sake. This was in keeping with Platonic ends and this independence came to be considered a prerogative of the fine artist. Freedom of choice, the fourth legacy, came to be enshrined in the credo "art for art's sake", especially over the past 150 years, as a prime distinction between artists and other artisans (Becker, 1984).

Yet, the gulf between them was quite narrow. In fact, there was no practical difference at all. The fine artist continued functioning just as every other type of labourer. They continued to be defined as "mechanic(s), skilled (especially manual) worker(s)" (Sykes, 1985, p. 49). Even as they rose socially, and their product was

elevated philosophically, they remained technicians "skilled in the techniques of art or craft" (Sykes, 1985, p. 1098).

Concurrent, however, with historical and contemporary notions of the artist as "both admirable and dangerous" is the final and most problematic legacy. The West --

> still retains the belief that renunciation and poverty are the lot of the genius. This concept of genius is by far the most common one and seems to be connected with the expectation of an ascetic way of life which the religious fervor of the Middle Ages demanded of the hero of its beliefs and which the Renaissance transferred to those blessed with genius...(Kris and Kurz, 1979, p. 90)

Thus, the materialistic, commercial underbelly of the aesthetic network comes to be laid bare. "The economic side of art is said to be necessary or inescapable. What is denied is that it has anything to do with art itself -- the goal, purpose, objective or end sought" (Grampp, 1989, p. 16). Yet, "(art) is not demeaned by treating it this way any more than religion is demeaned by noticing it requires the materials of the earth as well as those above" (Grampp, 1984, p. 52). However, the rift between the Platonic and the practical widened with each passing century so as to become almost invisible.

There are definite disimilarities between the manufacturer of specialized commodities, such as fine art, and "businessmen in their enterprises" (Grampp, 1989, p. 6). The artist as entrepreneur is involved with all the intergers of commerce: Diminishing returns on their work, product differentiation, division of labour, cartelization in guilds and salons, etc. (Singer, 1990). There is a "central tendency in aesthetic appreciation whereby aesthetic value and price converge" (Singer, 1990, p. 98). As such, artists have always recognized that their creations "are economic goods (and) that their value can be measured by the market" (Grampp, 1989, p. 8). The fine art object, in this regard, had more in common with a mass produced clay brick than with an academic treatise or discourse or poem. All of the latter may be considered purer expressions of Platonic endeavour.

Compounding this schism is that the fine artist is judged a professional only when his or her produce is sold on the market. Thus, the criteria for being deemed a Master of Fine Arts is bound to commercial considerations. In this regard, Renoir stated "there's only one indicator for telling the value of paintings, and that is the salesroom" (Grampp, 1989, p. 15). He

meant that there is always a correlation between aesthetic and economic value.

What might be made of the American painter Gilbert Stuart? He was:

> ...heavily in debt and put off his creditors by telling them 'I hope to make a fortune from Washington alone'. He did a portrait of him as a commission from Martha Washington and although he never finished it, he made seventy-five replicas that he sold for $100. each. (Grampp, 1989, p. 80)

Rubens responded to the complaints of a collector who had found his purchase had been partially painted by a studio assistant by responding "if the picture had been painted entirely by my own hand, it would be well worth twice the amount paid" (Grampp, 1989, p. 83). Yet, Rubens was the exception. The lives of most fine artists are subject to low incomes and high levels of unemployment. This does not diminish the effort fine artists invest in their work. The Romantic painter "Salvator Rosa in the seventeenth century...kept a stock of finished paintings in his studio...so that he would have something to show prospective buyers when they called" (Grampp, 1989, p. 49). The fine artist, like any entrepreneur, takes a calculated risk in his or her enterprise. As such,

> they can be perfectly sensible to decline to follow course A which has a desired outcome that is certain and instead to choose course B which has a desired but uncertain outcome. B is the more sensible choice if there is 1 chance in 100 of its yielding the desired outcome and if that outcome means more than 100 times as much as the desired outcome of A. (Grampp, 1989, p. 86)

If Rosa did not carry an inventory of goods on hand, or maintained an insufficient one, a client's choice could be so constrained as to limit a purchase. Rosa invested time, labour and money to manufacture his 'line' of merchandise. In this he did what any intelligent merchant does.

4.2 The Aesthetic Object and Its Shifting Frame

Each epoch of Western history reveals through its visual imagery a particular quality of social fabric. Yet, each societal change weaves a new paradigm which is then taken as the only reality. However, the accumulated material culture of previous periods, and their corresponding gestalts must still be accounted for within the new dispensation. While perceptions about them may alter, socially inherited visual images are relatively immutable.

When Christian institutional authority replaced that of Imperial Rome's, the legacy of the classical image creators was accounted for on two fronts. The first appropriated the images:

> Fourth century pagans becoming Christians were drawn to the Christian faith by its visible splendor; they were instructed by its imagery, a visual program that deliberately and skillfully included and set in a new context of meaning a broad spectrum of cultural inheritance. (Miles, 1985, p. 57)

That is, images of Christ began appearing with the symbolic accoutrements of Apollo and Dionysius.

The second front disavowed them. Up to the fourteenth century the general belief was that "classical works of art were demon-tainted pagan idols" (Aslop, 1982, p. 316). Conventional thought of the time held that a visual encounter could be dangerous if the seen object was "unsightly" (Miles, 1985, p. 7). By the late Renaissance, the predominantly Christian West had come to terms with the 'idols' of classical Greco-Roman culture.

A telling, succinct, and more concrete example of he phenomenon of shifting social paradigms centers on classical sculpture. Ancient Greek marble statuary was polychromatic. Through the long centuries and through incessant weathering, the paint disappeared and only the

marble base undercoat remained. This gave rise to the fallacious aesthetic inclination, still remaining today, which associates the works as marble creations to be viewed in their pristine state. It could be argued that carvings done by Renaissance sculptors like Michelangelo were also influenced by this lack of knowledge.

It was not until the eighteenth century that European cognoscenti and collectors became aware of the seminal and archaic Greek sculptures which had influenced all of the ensuing Greco-Roman culture. Until that period, what was understood to be the embodiment of classical art was, in fact, the plethora of inferior Roman copies. Consequently, these works became devalued and the new class of more authentic sculptures became the object class of choice (Aslop, 1982).

A particular cultural shift requires its own distinctive period of gestation. The Renaissance transmutation of classical religious idols into "fine art objects by metamorphosis" required several hundred years of incubation. In the case of the colonially appropriated booty from Africa, Asia and the Americas, from their first appearance in Europe in the 1500's it required four hundred years. Not until the nineteenth

century were they in turn considered "fine art objects by metamorphosis".

To conclude, one aesthetic category has the ability to generate successive and numerous perceptual responses from the originating society through time to its latter day descendents. Generally its initiating raison d'être and original function is lost in the process. This is the case with the Greco-Roman marble idols. Yet, this is not always so. Religious paintings by Fra Angelico or Raphael, for example, have maintained their doctrinal utilities well into this century. That is, the theological messages underpinning their aesthetic expression are still relevant for many who view them.

Often it is difficult for contemporary populations to understand fully the efficacy of aesthetic objects from preceding eras. The original impact of their aesthetic elements is often too remote to be grasped. In lieu, theories are based on the objects' more accessible universal idioms. This process and its results are similar to those of the children's game of broken telephone. Yet, right or wrong, historically, these theories beget new applications in the aesthetic network of the prevailing era. Thus, the nature of perceptual

and paradigmatic cultural shifts is a subtle and often elusive element to fathom.

4.3 The Appreciation of Aesthetic Objects

What social agency informs the attitudes of the user of art objects? Through apprehension of the several societal and perceptual shifts that have occurred from Plato's time to the present, it becomes evident that one must "determine the objects of art by the experience of art, not the experience of the objects" (Berleant, 1970, p. 7). A definite affective and cognitive state has been articulated for perceiving works of art (Berleant, 1970). While that have been innumerable types of art produced, the social prescription for their experience has remained more-or-less constant for a number of centuries, and up to the present.

Accordingly, an aesthetic is called for that is "initially a phenomenological account" (Berleant, 1970, p. 10). In this Berleant(1970) follows Dewey who "insists that we go from the aesthetic in daily experience to the aesthetic in the work of art. He rejects the isolation of fine art from the body of human experience, and emphasizes that aesthetic characteristics may appear in all kinds of experience" (Berleant, 1970,

p. 11). Yet this has been the mainstream of contemporary art "history".

Berleant (1970) provides an empirical framework for Ortega y Gasset's metaphor whereby aesthetic convention is a garden only to be viewed through the window of culture (Hamblen, 1984).

> It can, in fact, only be defined by making reference to the total situation in which the objects, activities, and experience of art occur, a setting which includes all three denotata and more. This...(is called) the aesthetic field, the context in which art objects are actively and creatively experienced as valuable. (p. 48)

This, then, is the tool by which the thread of experience of contemporary and historical Western peoples may be tied together. Hence "the object is drawn back into the traffic of human intercourse" (Berleant, 1970, p. 48)

We may view our Western heritage with this interrelation in mind. For most of the past 2,500 years the aesthetic object and/or the fine art object, has been inextricably bound in a religious context.

> Religion, as a prominent aspect of culture, is construed as providing ideas and images that "keep body and soul together", that is, that enable individuals to manage -- though not

> necessarily to articulate -- a unified psycho-physical process. (Miles, 1985, p.3)

In fact, the fine art object has only been liberated from the ecclesiastical fold for less than 200 years. Therefore, even though this social constraint is no longer what it was, it is still operant within the deeper strata of the Western collective psyche. As Miles(1985) states "(t)he perception and interpretation of an image or a building...(is) governed not by the intention of its creator but by the vital interest of the viewer" (p. 6). "The traditional notion of experience as passive has retained its hold on aesthetic theory" (Berleant, 1970, p. 55), as the following illustrates:

> For the notion of distance is a manifestation in modern aesthetics of the Aristotelian ideal of the contemplative attitude as men's greatest good, and of the Judeo-Christian ideal of the contemplative life. In Platonism, Neo-Platonism and Renaissance Platonism, the contemplative ideal possessed an aesthetic dimension. Moreover, the contemplative attitude was undoubtedly a major factor in the classical selection of the distance receptors of sight and hearing as aesthetic senses. (Berleant, 1970, p. 57)

Thus, "a proto-museum was described as a "temple of art" as long ago as the early 19th. century by Goethe" (Aslop, 1982, p. 19). Even "the payment of super prices for works of art is widely taken as proof of art's

essential sacredness" (Aslop, 1984, p. 19). Therefore, the attitude expressed by a congregant in a place of worship was and is expected to be the same within the precincts of a gallery or museum. In this regard, it is important to note that etymologically "museum" originates with the "muses", first recorded in Hesiod, the goddesses believed to inspire poets (Weekly, 1967).

Medieval theological literature "concerning the use and value of images...indicate an awareness that a powerful tool is always double-edged, capable equally of providing valuable help and of providing addiction to the tool itself" (Miles, 1985,p. 5). The crux of these views is that the image creator and the image consumer are both part of a powerful, transformative context.

Through contemplation of the art object, its consumer desires to experience affectively and cognitively the same motivating inspiration expressed by the artist. Thus, when one hears today 'I may not know anything about art, but I know what I like', what one is truly hearing is that 'I may not understand the arcane language that art now speaks, however I do know that I can be moved by a spiritual experience and that this has been historically associated with the experience of art'.

When image creators and their creations were

subservient to the religious ideology of the institution of the church, the illiterate would, by viewing these images, begin to understand something of what the priests were attempting to teach. However, in today's museums and galleries, the images stand mute except for those lettered initiates of art's language. There are no priests present to connect aesthetic ideology, the image and the everyday experience of the individual.

But in the past century religion itself has been increasingly losing its authority. The aesthetic object and the "fine art object by destination", once conveyors of spiritual values, became their sole purveyor. Thus could Kenneth Clark state, "The fact remains that in a godless age and in what we call a free society, art is the only escape from materialism" (Grampp, 1989, p 67).

Recently, I had occasion to visit the National Gallery in Ottawa. I stood in front of the gallery's latest and most topical acquisition, The Voice of Fire, by the American painter Barnett Newman. During the twenty, or so, minutes I spent before it, no less than six individuals also passed by to engage and be engaged by the painting. One man could not get over the irregularity of the supposedly geometrically straight painted lines, or that hair from the paint brushes, used

in its fabrication, were left embedded in the acrylic. He decried the painting's overall "sloppiness" of execution. Most of the others walked away just shaking their heads in wonder at the million or so dollars paid for the piece.

The Voice of Fire is typical of many fine art objects which have become dysfunctional. While it may "work" for a knowledgeable and trained élite --

> something like Voice of Fire...is doomed not to have a large audience, just due to the nature of the discourse that Barnett Newman was constructing. We're talking about a very rarified kind of intellectual understanding. (Carr-Harris, 1990, p. 22)

It cannot hold for the broad populace who have inherited all the accumulated notions, the true, the false and the mythic, on art and artists. As an exemplar of dysfunctionality, the Voice of Fire, sadly, reprises an all too common aesthetic non-experience for the majority of Western peoples today. This itself is a consequence of the mis- and/or non-education of society at large.

4.5 Conclusion

It becomes apparent that an ideological divisiveness disrupts a supposedly seamless interchange between the maker of art and the perception of art. This chapter

does much to clarify why Western fine artists, in fact all fine artists, are held to such very exacting standards and expectations by society. In doing so, the complex and often confusing tripartite nature of the fine art object as cultural, aesthetic and commercial should become clearer.

An accrual of "the flotsam of ancient conceptions of the artist (and art) carried forward in biographical waves (and) entirely corresponds to the attitude" with which professionals and laity still approach this topic (Kris and Kurz, p. 31). Therefore, it would appear that, at the ideational level, our current Western conception of aesthetic relevance is like Yeats' "center which cannot hold".

If our own Western ideations can 'metamorphosize' in the manner they do, this should inculcate a greater tolerance for emergent cultural change and its concomitant aesthetic expressions. In this regard,

> Ernest Gombrich's clever remark that we see what we paint is not, really, a thesis about optics, but of the manner in which the theories about life and the world affect the way we respond to the world" (Danto, 1986, p. 30).

As stipulated throughout this thesis, a Western aesthetic canon has been the informative model for much of what transpires globally.

If the originating model is itself not clearly understood in all its implications, how then can one hope for any degree of objectivity or clarity in the study of much more complex situations that meld Western and non-Western aesthetic canon?

5.0 INUIT CULTURE AND AESTHETICS

5.1 Introduction

The perception, categorization and evaluation of Inuit aesthetic object production raises a number of complex, subtle and inter-related issues. Inuit work represents an example of a relatively successful adaptation of intrinsic and extrinsic cultural aesthetics by an indigenous people.

The Inuit are a circumpolar people living in several Western nations. Within each, their orientation has been affected differently according to the constructs of their enveloping macro societies.

The Canadian north, which is composed of the Yukon, the Northwest Territories, parts of northern Quebec and Labrador, consist of the seven million square kilometers of which 2.6 million lie north of the tree line. As of 1982 its total population was approximately 57, [illegible] of which approximately 20, 000 were Inuit (O'Neil, 1983).

While the term 'Inuit' evokes the concept of a homogeneous people, there are actually many different groups that share "Inuitness" and these can be defined by

age, gender, physical locality as well as level of acculturation.

> The 'tradition' of the Inuk elder which is constructed from symbols of camp life, dog teams and shamanism, is certainly different from the tradition of the Hamlet Council member whose focus is on the Church and trapping; and different again from the 'tradition' of the youth who considers snowmobiles and carpentering as symbols of traditional ethnicity (O'Neil, 1984, p. 290).

Yet this diversity is measured by a complementary pull to unity. Inummerik, i.e. 'a genuine Inuk' is an identification that is very important in most strata of contemporary Inuit society. Among themselves, the term has become used increasingly as a political rallying point in reaction to an ever-encroaching internal Canadian colonialism (Kienetz, 1986; O'Neil, 1984).

What is striking about the Inuit is their formidable capacity to adapt, not only to an extremely inhospitable environment, but to a dominating Euro-Canadian cultural entity as well. That the 'victims of progress' have progressed to their own empowerment as a "first nation" in less than 20 years is evidence of this adaptability (O'Neil, 1984).

5.2 Inuit Social Psychology

Unsettled societies such as the Inuit respond to changes in subsistence patterns by a change in socio-political organization. Political realities and their corresponding necessities required a cultural leap from an egalitarian society to one based on hierarchy. Boldt and Long (1984) ask how ideas of authority, hierarchy and a ruling entity contained in the Western concept of sovereignty can relate to aboriginal traditional mores. Contemporary Indian and Inuit leaders "are reconstructing and reinterpreting their tribal history and tribal culture to conform to the essential political and legal paradigm and symbols contained in the Euro-Western concept of sovereign statehood" (p. 547). Graburn (1978) elucidates this:

> Taking the structural position of definition by contrast, the Inuit have embodied the diacritical features of a self-view (Barth, 1969, p. 14) with reference to what they are not in the white world and conversely by what the white world tells them vis-à-vis whites. (Graburn, 1978, p. 195)

In contrast, O'Neil (1984) states: "Contrary to the expectations of earlier observers, the ethnic groups no longer seek a legitimacy from dominant groups but are instead embracing their own traditions and definitions of

reality" (1984, p. 46). Paradox permeates all perceptions of cultural difference and becomes particularly pronounced when considering Inuit aesthetic objects in relation to Western concepts of fine art.

> The Arctic environment is considered by many to be a barren, empty land, largely comfortless and desolate. The endless tundra stretching from sea to horizon has an austere, monotonous charm, a certain cold, clean edged beauty" (Carpenter, 1973, p. 6).

Although sedentary and generally acculterated to some degree, the Inuit define themselves in relation to this land. Hunting is still an essential, if not the essential component of Inuit life. While their social patterns may have changed, the environment has not. It is still shaping Inuit experience, and the aesthetic objects the society produces.

Berry (1966, 1976) analyzed the development of perceptual skills required to survive in the Arctic. He suggested that an Inuk must have the ability to isolate slight variation in visual stimulation in a featureless vista and organize these details into spatial awareness. There is a definite correlation between ecological demands, cultural practice and perceptual skills. As cultural and psychological development are congruent, cultures with differing ecologies will: "tend to develop

and maintain different sets of skills, (therefore) the concept of intelligence, or its equivalent, is bound to be defined somewhat differently by each society" (p. 229).

The linguist, Gagné (1966) suggests that insights can be gained into Inuit thought and perception through a study of Inuktitut. The Inuit ability to function in seemingly undifferentiated terrain is due to the sum of cognitive maps which are exemplified by the language. Berry (1966) learned that the Inuit "possess an intricate system of words, termed "localizers", which aid in the location of objects in space. These localizers form an integral part of the word; the use of them, and hence the distinction, is obligatory" (p. 212). Consequently, "an analysis of the Inuit language reveals a geometric spatial system as complex as that of western technical man" (Berry, 1966, p. 213). Graburn (1967) also considers that the highly developed mental and linguistic conceptions of space and form are necessary for visualizing and communicating locations and shape in a virtually featureless landscape.

Researchers (e.g. Berry, 1976) have suggested that members of societies which are fixed and hierarchical such as agriculturalists, tend to be field-dependent

whereas individuals in egalitarian subsistence societies, tend to be field-independent. The field-independent individual is considered to be careful to note details, to be able to sift those that are relevant from those that are not so they may be applied to whatever task is necessary, to know the precise limits of their bodies and minds and, finally, to be analytical keepers of their own counsel (Gamble; Ginsberg, 1981). Furthermore it has been conjectured that the advantages of field-independence aid in the development of social skills, global processing and inferring spatial relationships (Clark; Halfons, 1983).

Inuit society is field-independent. This is borne out in comparisons of Inuit spatial cognition characteristics with attributes of a field-independent personality ((Berry, 1966, 1976; Carpenter, 1973, et al ; Gamble; Ginsberg, 1981, et al.). Their social conventions have all been conditioned by its environmental forces. This, then, is the "centripetal energy which holds them to their unique cultural configurations" (Otten, 1971, p. xiv).

Over the span of centuries, these psycho-social qualities have been reflected in a distinctive material culture. Pre-Western Inuit manufactured "many things,

often of great beauty, but they were [illegible]

practical objects" (Burland, 1973, [illegible])

> Their finest work was the result of [illegible] patience, using stone tools and sometimes burnishers of polished stone. They developed forms of scrapers and knives. They [illegible] carved in soft driftwood and bone, but also wonderful things from ivory. The ivory [illegible] the narwhal, the great tusks of the walrus and teeth from the seal all formed marvelous material...Bones made longer figures, such as were needed when making arrow straighteners. Hard stone was...used for flaking the fine flint. Soft stone was used to make the lamps and dishes which were used as lamps and [illegible] stoves. (Burland, 1973, p. 34)

In turn, Inuit manufacture has been informed by a distinguishing aesthetic convention. This convention is usually seen to be a response to the exigencies of Arctic life.

5.3 Historical Contexts

The interactions between the members of both Inuit and Western society, as they have occurred in Canada in this century, reflect the economic and political asymmetry of these societies. In the opening decades of this century, the wearing of Arctic fox fur was a popular Western fashion. In order to encourage the trapping of fox, enterprises such as the Hudson's Bay Company

established permanent sites throughout the North. At these posts, Inuit trappers traded their pelts for guns, ammunition and other luxuries. Extended trapping expeditions necessitated increased supplies for longer periods because of accompanying families and larger dog teams. To meet this need, hunting patterns were altered. However, declining Caribou herds, on which they relied, forced the Inuit to become increasingly dependent on imported food, bartered for at the posts (Graburn, 1978). Caught between a credit system and ever-changing consumer demands, the Inuit fell victim to the inevitable market downturn. Between the Depression and the Second World War, the price of fox pelts plummeted and the Inuit were forced into accepting a continually falling price. Finally they could no longer afford to hunt, trap and barter. Destitution and starvation resulted. The Hudson's Bay Company also reacted to the market change by closing many of their posts, further contributing to Inuit misery.

The war years brought some respite. The Canadian and American military reinforcement of the North brought in its wake jobs and discarded material, both valuable to the Inuit. Even though the price of fox fur subsequently

rose, trapping was never reestablished as [illegible] activity of the Inuit (Graburn; Strong, [illegible]).

In the late forties, the Inuit were drawn further into a pattern of dependency. Having been [illegible] the Family Allowance System, Inuit children [illegible] subject to the Compulsory Education Act and were [illegible] forcibly resettled. The consequence was [illegible] living, as parents did not wish to be separated from their offspring. Wage earning when labour was [illegible], was undertaken to subsidize the ever-increasing [illegible] hunting, a still vital and necessary activity ([illegible], 1984).

By 1950, the Inuit relied on the Canadian [illegible] for sixty percent of their livelihood (Graburn, [illegible]). At this time a minor event occurred that was to become as significant to the Inuit as trapping had been forty years earlier.

In 1948, the Euro-Canadian artist James Houston visited Port Harrison and Povungnituk on the east coast of Hudson Bay. The ancestors of the Inuit that Houston met once formed two distinct societies, the Dorset Culture (700 B.C.E. to 1300 C.E.) and the Thule Culture (1200 C.E. to 1700 C.E.). Both were nomadic hunting groups distinguished by their unique ivory carvings.

Between 1700 and Houston's visit, much of this carving had diminished but for toys made for Inuit children or souvenirs for the occasional interested Westerner (Meldgaard, 1960; Maartgin, 1964). Houston was intrigued with the carvings he saw and purchased some (Houston, 1952). The literature reviewed does not indicate whether the carvings purchased were antique or contemporary.

Houston returned the following year with a 'mission', "to find out whether the Inuit on the east coast of the Bay could produce carvings in quantity and of a quality that would sell" (Houston, 1952, p. 103). In conjunction with the Canadian Handicraft Guild and the Hudson's Bay Company, a chit system was established that enabled Inuit carvers to exchange their work for necessities at Hudson's Bay Company. posts. As sales and production rose, the Federal Department of Northern Affairs became interested in the project's success. It was thought that a government investment would help develop an economic alternative to welfare payments. This was to become onerous to both parties, albeit for different reasons. The result was that carvings were sold in Hudson's Bay Company retail stores and in government outlets in southern Canada.

In 1950, Houston had spent $3,000 on carvings. In 1952, 2,000 carvings were purchased. The following year, 3,000 carvings were bought. By the end of the decade the project had become an enterprise worth hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Yet, as in the preceding phase of dependency on a 'foreign' consumer market, the Inuit were still involved in a fickle demand cycle. In 1957, without warning, the Hudson's Bay Company suddenly stopped purchasing carvings due to an over-inventoried market. Once again, Inuit were adversely affected. Demands for welfare increased substantially and the government was forced to buy the surplus carvings as an aid measure.

However, the Inuit were neither as vulnerable nor as isolated as they had been in the 1930s and 1940s. By the end of the 1950s, the character of the North had changed substantially due to a series of events. It began with the construction of the Arctic Dew Line and the importation of technology and personnel on an unparalleled level. In addition, a growing world trend for better treatment of minorities and colonized peoples had been noted by the Canadian government (Kienetz, 1986). It responded by providing higher levels of financial and material aid to the Inuit. Finally because

of these changes, the original Hudson's Bay Company posts became nuclei attracting church missions, police offices, Federal schools, nursing stations and respective administrative support personnel required for their functioning (Graburn; Strong, 1973).

Despite the setback created by the Hudson's Bay Company, carving still remained the primary economic mainstay of the Inuit in the central and eastern Arctic. By the 1960s nearly all Inuit adults were carving soapstone. Sales resulted in millions of dollars in revenue. At this time Houston introduced the additional art industry of printmaking which also became highly successful (Graburn, 1967, 1976, 1978).

The financial and psychological rewards the Inuit derived from this work, combined with increased educational and travel opportunities (often in connection with its promotion), enabled Inuit elders to consider options unavailable previously. This resulted in an increased desire for autonomy and self-determination (Graburn, 1978).

Through the late 1950s and early 1960s, co-operative institutions were formed that enabled the Inuit to assume many of the functions for which they had been previously dependent on Euro-Canadians. While these co-ops were

created for various industries such as fish [illegible] and housing development, many were actually [illegible]. However, the revenues from art manufacture [illegible] others. These co-ops became the social and [illegible] agencies for community and regional development [illegible], 1976, 1978).

In 1973, the Federal Government sponsored the "[illegible] of the Inuit Conference". At this meeting representatives of Eastern Inuit artists co-ops and federations demanded to take over ownership and [illegible] of the Canadian Arctic Producers, Inc., a Crown corporation responsible for marketing various Arctic produce manufactured by the Inuit.

5.4 Artistic Production and Inuit Cultural Revival

By the 1940s and 1950s, the colonial stage the Inuit occupied as considered within Graburn's (1978) framework, suggests they were poised for severe cultural decline having no longer anything of value to offer. However, their relative geographic isolation slowed the acculturation process, which under more favourable conditions would have been already completed. This, of course, was fortunate for the Inuit, for by the time they became culturally jeopardized, several developments as

[illegible] had occurred which prevented the worst from [illegible] realized.

The timing was also propitious in that a growing market for ethnic aesthetic objects paralleled the [illegible] concern for cultural minorities. Consequently, Houston's project found a ready market. Although at the time, "it was seen as no more than a stop-gap measure with no foresight as to its eventual effects on revitalization and political movements and the eventual self-determination of Inuit identity" (Graburn, 1978, p. 190). Thus, for the Inuit their carvings symbolized self-determination through economic strength and for the Westerner it represented Inuit identity. This issue is an essential aspect of any discussion of an Inuit aesthetic convention.

That the Inuit culture is in transition is evident. Less clear, perhaps, is that the changes in their life patterns reflect 'strategies of action' (Swindler, 1986). In such unsettled periods established cultural ends may be jettisoned and new unfamiliar habits will be practiced until they become familiar. These are formulated, fleshed out and put into practice as new cultural habits. "In such instances culture may indeed be said to directly shape action" (Swindler, 1986, p. 279). Graburn (1978)

believes the Inuit example of "minority group ... their own affairs, ...(is) unparalleled in the ... world" (p. 192).

5.5 Intra- and Extra-Cultural Aesthetics

The modern Inuit art object as a symbol of ... political and economic identity is an unexpected ... of the process and consequence of acculturation, beginning in the early 18th century. Prior to ... contact, aesthetic production centered on the ... of utilitarian objects, some of which had ritual purposes. While such production continued, the ... were now also being traded as souvenirs with Western whalers, explorers and merchants. This activity is the antecedent of the third phase (Martijin, 1964). From the years 1850 to 1950, intra-cultural aesthetic ... dwindled due to a change in the Inuit socio-environment. The walrus and whale, which supplied the ivory material used in aesthetic production had been driven further and further from Inuit habitation through the effects of Western whaling (Ray, 1961). The reorientation of the Inuit from hunting to trapping also took them farther from these animals. The change from Nomadic to partial, and ultimately sedentary life reduced the necessity of

carving in miniature. Finally, the suppression of shamanism and its replacement with Christianity removed the religious raison d'être for carving the small figurines.

By the time James Houston arrived in 1948, very little carving in ivory was occurring except for the occasional toy (intra-cultural) or curio (extra-cultural). Soapstone, however, was still being used as the traditional material for carving portable lamps and stoves. With Houston's arrival, a new phase in the history of the Inuit aesthetic object was inaugurated.

The impetus for Inuit aesthetics is so deeply ingrained culturally that the propensity to create aesthetic objects must always be omnipresent.

> "Many traditions, languages, cosmologies, and values are lost, some literally murdered; but much has simultaneously been invented and revived in complex, appositional contexts" (Clifford, 1988, p. 16).

Consequently, the extra-cultural direction of contemporary aesthetic production in Phase Three must not be seen as a new form of 'acculturated' fine art, but rather a new direction with all its attendant survival strategies.

Since the Inuit themselves acknowledge that the raison d'être for their work is economic gain, this renders the entire class of produce as suspect. Therefore, rather than perceiving and acknowledging the holistic and creative cultural energies at play, Western cognoscenti have instead debated the categorization of this work (e.g. Carpenter, 1973; Ryan, 1975). The following questions essentially delineate the ongoing controversy on the contemporary Inuit aesthetic object:

- Is it art, commercial manufacture or both?
- Is the object in conception; in its symbolic, expressive and formal aspects, Inuit, Western or both?
- How do these questions implicate the issue of art versus craft?
- What standard of measurement is being applied to these questions?
- What standard of measurement should be applied to these questions?

Yet, this endless and often fruitless contention between what is art and what is craft, high art or low, is a consequence of the inherent problems within the contemporary Western aesthetic model. This process is

similar to the well known aphorism where the pot calls the kettle black. Therefore,

> At a time when revisionist art history is reassessing the traditional isolation of that discipline's subject matter from the fabric of social and cultural life, and at the same time when anthropology is delving more and more insistently into the nature of culture in modern industrial societies, we are also at a time when our quantitative division of world art into "ours" and "theirs" stands ready for a serious reappraisal. (Price, 1989, p. 126)

No single source has cogently addressed this reappraisal. Moreover, the literature is heavily weighted in favouring Western opinion and Western interpretation of Inuit opinion. There is very little direct Inuit opinion in available literature. In fact there may be none!

5.6 Inuit Art

"The process of the Inuit mind in its thinking about art must be the most primitive in the world" (Houston, 1956, p. 224). An evaluation decidedly indicative of the existing cultural bias of the time but stated by a trained Western artist with a deep commitment to the Inuit as made evident by the projects he initiated (Houston, 1960). The term 'primitive' is used positively and is related to the Avant-Garde's attitudes towards

non-Western aesthetic objects. As such, it had promotional value for the marketing effort that was underway. Houston believed that the "link between past and present in this art is as yet unbroken" (1952, p. 99). Yet he also recognized that this art was the "first step into industry" for the "clever and energetic" Inuit. For Houston, there existed a decidedly Inuit art characterized by a distinctively commercial quality. The following remark summarizes Houston's attitude concerning the Inuit and their art. Its paternalistic and self-conscious tone is also indicative of cultural attitudes of the time:

> With our increasing activity in the Arctic, the Inuit have an even greater need to express themselves. Their language is not the same as ours and we seldom see them in their own surroundings, but through their pictures they tell us they too are thinking people, aware of the joys around them. (Houston, 1960, p. 17)

This orientation was also the basis for governmental marketing efforts.

Ryan (1965), an associate of Houston's, raised two important concerns. He suggests that the Inuit were not interested in depicting in their work Western objects such as "horses, machinery or aircraft" (p. 30). Yet this was not true. Ryan's perspective is contradicted by

reports from this period of Inuit carvings of Edsels and kangaroos which had to be destroyed because they were not 'authentic' (Levine, 1975). What is more important is that his comment was made at all; it implies an aesthetics of reception in which the consumer of the artwork influences subtly and indirectly the work's content (Jules-Rossette, 1984). Clifford, (1978) also reiterates the discomfort of Western consumers in confronting 'impure' non-Western work which mixes references of the modern world into its composition. Underlying this bias are two conflicting impulses. On the one hand is the Romantic Rousseauian notion of the primitive as 'noble savage' symbolic of the Eden to which Western citizens would escape. On the other is the implicit attitude of Western superiority. Ryan also wrote that "(m)any Inuit artists have suffered from being grouped anonymously simply as Inuit" (1965, p. 30). This issue of anonymous art or art by ethnic identification is directly related to the development of "fine art-by-destination" which commenced in the Renaissance and was associated with the equally new and equally growing idea of individualism. There is no contention if one signifies a 'Canadian' art because subsumed under the category are individual artists who, if their work is in the

the marketplace, will by psycho-economic necessity be identified.

However, if one signifies an 'Inuit' art, that same process of identification cannot necessarily be guaranteed. This is also a consequence of market principles, albeit different ones. The Western notion of artistic identity being necessary is alien to the whole pre-acculturated non-western aesthetic tradition.

Ryan feels the Inuit artist 'suffers' from anonymity because by definition anonymous art, non-Western art, is judged by different standards. This relates back to the aesthetics of reception because implicit in the marketing of contemporary Inuit aesthetic objects was the idea that they were fully a fine 'art' in the Western sense. Thus, they had to fit all considerations of what fine 'art' represented, including the individual artisan's identity. Never addressed was that Inuit society as egalitarian and non-hierarchical would not value an 'individual' who had become 'valued' for his artisanal production (O'Neil, 1984). Yet, it is well to note that through the promotion of particular artisans, this is changing. However, the effort remains controversial.

Turner (1963) reported that graphics in Povungnituk were poor in quality because they were influenced by the

design and characters within Western comic strips. It is ironic that these should be considered poor when American Pop artists of this period were influenced by the same comic strips. This again relates to the aesthetics of reception. He too acknowledges that the Inuit aesthetic object is art, one that is distinctively influenced by the visual reality of the Arctic environment in its formal properties, that is, rounded sculptural shapes. This valuation based on expressive and formal features of representations of the artistic context is contradictory. Aspects of Western culture are real to the Inuit, but are not wanted in Inuit artistic work.

The individual most conscious of the inherent contradiction in the dialectic of the two societies was Edmond Carpenter (1973):

> We have called primitive man forth from his retreat, reclothed him as a noble savage, taught him to carve the sort of art we like, and hired him to dance for us at lunch. (Price, 1986, p. 11)

Carpenter (1961, 1973) was critical of the Inuit aesthetic object and used cultural, formalist and economic criteria as a standard for his reasoning. Inuit cultural experience which placed emphasis on act and ritual, form and function and movement in space was

denied. The objects disregarded these influences in their static appearance. As such, they were not truly culturally representative. Following from this, his formalist concerns contrasted design idioms of pre-European and modern objects. Earlier objects were characterized by having multi-point perspective, no background, visual puns, use of negative and positive space and x-ray design elements. In contrast, he characterized modern objects as having a fixed perspective with all its formalistic implications. From an economic vantage point, Carpenter thought that many Inuit carvers would stop their work if the market failed, thereby suggesting the inherent dishonesty of its representation as true Inuit art.

If Houston and Ryan did not grasp the essential issues, Carpenter did. But his views leave no room for the concept of a culture being able to change and to create new traditions from new realities, while still maintaining continuity of identity. He correctly saw that the forces of acculturation were, by and large, negative in their effects on the Inuit and consequently on Inuit modes of aesthetic expression.

Levine (1975), an American artist, cites the case of Kumakuluk, an Inuit carver who had studied at the

Skowhegan School of Art in Maine. He had incorporated into his work Western design elements influenced most notably by Picasso. The Canadian Arctic Producers' Association rejected the work because it did not look sufficiently Inuit, and it continues to do so.

An ethnic artist who produces non-ethnic art is seen as a problem. However, the dynamic process of acculturation implies a continuous adaptation of the dominant culture's mores. At some point, the desired content the market demands will be at such odds with the reality of its producers that something radical will have to occur. In this sense, an artist like Kumaxuliak represents both the best and worst outcomes of this inevitable shift.

6.0 CONCLUSION

With increasingly sophisticated travel and communication technologies, interactions between Western and non-Western cultures have increased exponentially. As a result, Western notions of aesthetics and art have become utterly intertwined with the intrinsic aesthetic valuations of non-Western peoples.

An entire subclass of art objects, a hybrid of "art-by-destination" and "art-by-metamorphosis" has come into being. This subclass of useful thing has become the study focus of anthropologists. Yet, as recently as twenty years ago, Otten was questioning:

> the total neglect accorded to the process of acculturation in art...systematic studies of the exact sources and nature of cultural pressures, the differential changes in various styles and functional categories, and the avenues and modes of transformation have yet been hardly attempted. Meanwhile acculturation goes on apace. (Otten, 1972, p. 65)

The literature on "acculturated art" ignores certain underlying issues which are fundamental to an analysis and a logical grasp of the general phenomenon of the art object as commodity. Typical are the writings of Graburn (1976) and Jules-Rosette (1984). Their examinations of the commercially motivated and Western influenced

contemporary art produce of other cultures offer invaluable insights into evolving cultures and their aesthetic productions.

However, they have failed to implicate the originating Western model of aesthetics -- its [illegible] canon, which provide Western society's generally [illegible] standard of measurement. The "fine art object-as-destination", as commodity, is particularly [illegible] entire social construct that authenticates the [illegible] of an art object is strictly a Western invention. Moreover, this construct, so central to our culture, [illegible] not itself a universal phenomenon, but rather a [illegible] category (Clifford, 1988). Through the impetus of colonialism and industrialism, this Western model, [illegible] hardly understood, has been, to a larger or lesser extent, appropriated by non-Western cultures (Maquet, 1986; Clifford, 1988). As such, these societies have been able to utilize their aesthetic produce as an entree into the global market economy.

The discipline of anthropology began by looking at other cultures. When it looked at art, as part of [illegible] examinations, it adopted Western bias as its standard. As Maquet (1986) states "the sin is to take one's collective reality for an external and independent world,

which then becomes the absolute criterion of correctness for other cultural views" (p. 10).

While the Western model of the art commodity was successfully transplanted, it was done without the congruent ideological concept -- that of the fine artist as creating purely, as an end in itself, without commercial motivation. Even more problematic is the fact that the work of many non-Western artisans is judged negatively by critics in the Western market-place due to its acknowledged role, by those selfsame artisans, as commodity (Ryan, 1965). Price (1986) states this problem forcibly -- "When Westerners incorporate the artistic expression of foreign cultures into their own conceptual framework, the asymmetry of the relationship between patron and artists and the tremendous power of asymmetry are rarely recognized" (p. 11). Artisans within these cultures cannot help but be affected both in outlook and in practice by these once external and now internalized Western values.

Western aesthetic and commercial values and biases have been positioned uncritically, as the standard by which all extra-cultural judgements are measured. The art-commodity produced by other cultures must be related to the Western matrix out of which the concept of art

originated and whose ever evolving model continues to arbitrate what is and what is not art, first philosophically and then commercially, within the West and concurrently within other cultures.

Therefore, the following questions must be [illegible] future study concerning cross-cultural aesthetic production: How do changes in Western definitions of art influence perceptions about artifacts created by other cultures? What changes in non-Western cultural behavior are likely to be brought about by changes in the attitudes of Western art dealers? What effect do changes in the Western art market have on non-Western art production?

Cultural groups, whether national entities or indigenous peoples within larger social fabrics, have become increasingly militant about their inherent identities and values. Furthermore, this appears to be a global phenomenon. As a logical reaction, the West's "aesthetic-anthropological object systems" are being challenged (Clifford, 1988, p. 209). Consequently, contemporary non-Western art has become more and more politicized by its creators (Clifford, 1988). The current clash of cultural and aesthetic sensibilities is an outcome of "strategies of action" and attendant "[illegible]

arts" are being drawn from heavily (Swindler, 1986). The Nigerian sculptor Chike C. Anikar states the position of many artisans who have become politicized in the face of the powerful bias of Western aesthetics, yet do not decry the profound changes it has brought about in the production of art objects for consumption by Western and Westernized populations in Third World societies:

> It is illusory to think that which we comfortably label "traditional" art was in an earlier time immune to changes in style and form; it is thus unproductive to lament changes that reflect current realities. Continuity with earlier forms will always be found; the present day persistence of family and community values ensures that the arts will thrive. (Clifford, 1988, p. 207)

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