

Inuit and Scientific Ways of Knowing and Seeing the Arctic Landscape



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Master of Landscape Architecture by Research
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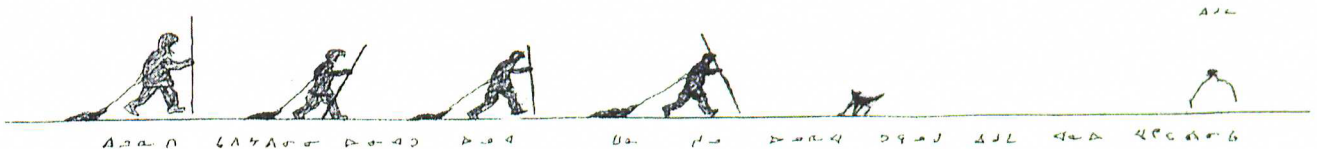
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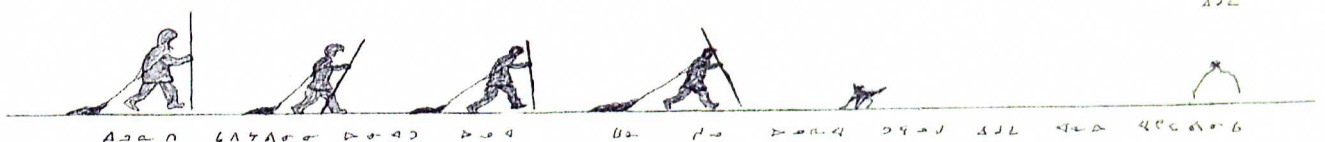
Inuit and Scientific Ways of Knowing and Seeing the Arctic Landscape

By

Scott Alexander Heyes
B.Des.St, B.L.Arch (Hon)

Thesis submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
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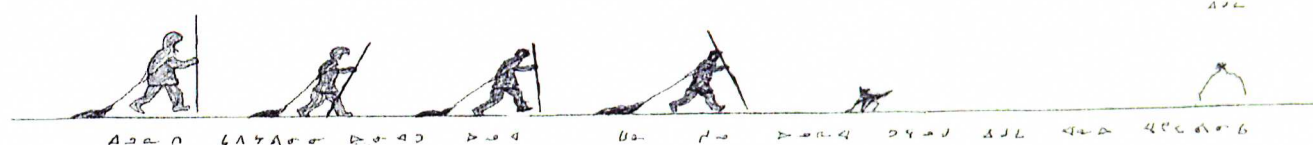
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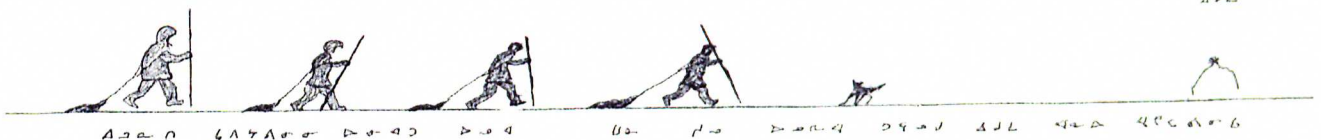
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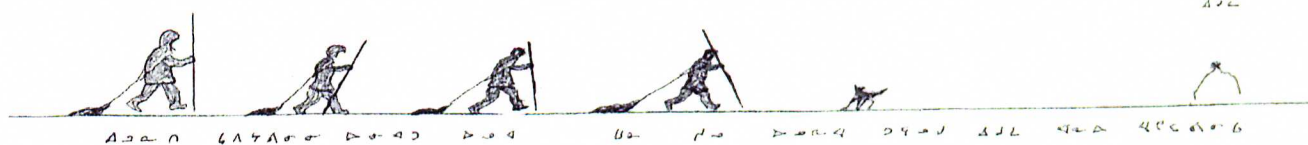
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Certificate of Originality

I certify that the substance of this thesis has not been and is not currently being submitted for any other degree or qualification at any other university or institution.

I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, any help received in preparing this thesis and all sources used have been acknowledged.

Scott Heyes



Abstract

This thesis explores traditional Inuit and Western scientific ways of knowing and seeing the Arctic through a number of cultural expressions of landscape. Inuit and Western perceptions of the Arctic are analysed by examining a series of thematic and cognitive 'maps', drawings and satellite imagery. The study focuses on how these forms of landscape representation and methods of navigation shape the way in which the Arctic is perceived. Centred on Inuit coastal villages in Nunavik, (Northern Quebec) Canada, the study illustrates different and converging ways of reading the landscape through maps.

The Inuit, as with many traditional semi-nomadic societies, developed a variety of ways in which to orientate and navigate through the vast landscape of the Arctic. Through apprenticeship learning and living on the land for 4000 - 5000 years, the Inuit developed acute perceptual and accurate mapping skills – an exceptional ability applauded, and at times, mimicked by early occidental explorers. Inuit systems of navigation are based upon natural features, celestial bodies, place names and landscape interventions. Similarly, early Western explorers observed the wind, moon, sun and star constellations as travel guides.

Contrastingly, modern Western navigation relies heavily on cartographic conventions and universal measuring tools. With increasing technologies influencing and informing Western means of navigation, the use of natural cues as way-finding aids has reduced significantly. Modern navigation aids and electronic devices have effectively replaced nature with science. Battery powered, pocket-sized devices now claim navigational supremacy whereas way-finding aids in nature have become supplementary.

The legacy of Inuit way-finding techniques will only prosper if traditional navigational knowledge is transferred to younger generations. The potential remains that nature may become further abstracted and removed for the Inuit. Perhaps the loss of traditional Inuit way-finding skills effectively spells the end of inherent connections with the land.

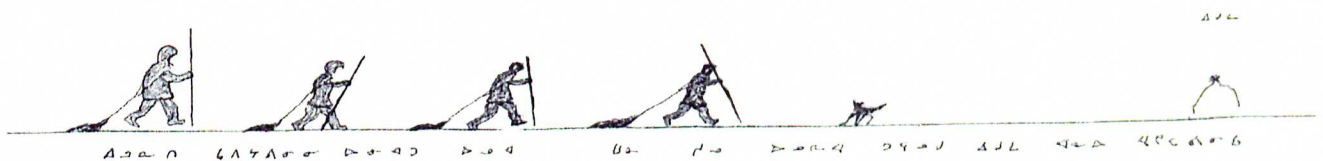
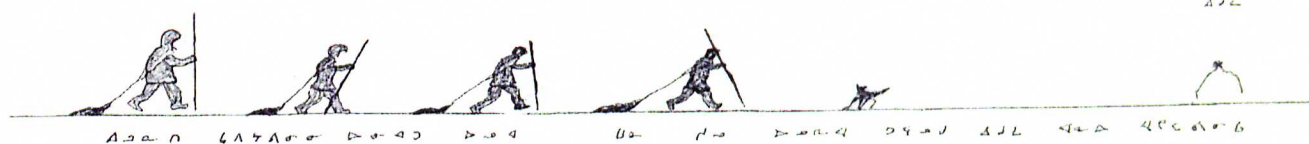
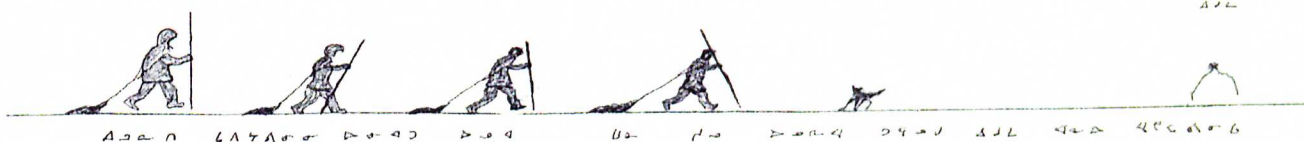


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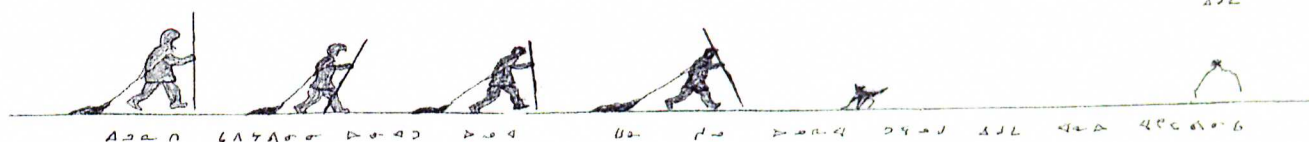


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