



Digging into My Past: Archaeology and Humanism in the Canadian Arctic

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SUMMARY *The legal battles ensuing from the discovery of the “Kennewick Man” brought mass media attention to a longstanding divide between the science of archaeology and contemporary indigenous peoples. In this essay, I reflect on this divide as experienced from the perspective of a student of archaeology who later became a cultural anthropologist specializing in the anthropology of Inuit/settler relations in Nunavut. Building on the concept of community-oriented approaches to archaeology, I examine how a humanistic approach to archaeological data can further unite indigenous peoples and professional archaeology. [Indigenous archaeology, Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, Nunavut]*

Introduction

In his book about the fate of a 9400-year-old skeleton found in 1996 in Kennewick, Washington, David Hurst Thomas captures well the saga of an ongoing legal and moral fight to control the fate of someone who died long ago (Thomas 2000). To a team of archaeologists and physical anthropologists committed to revealing the genealogy of humanity in the Americas, the Kennewick Man is the discovery of a lifetime that will greatly enhance and even transform our understanding of the past. To a group of Native Americans representing different tribes, some of whom trace their ancestry to the region where the Kennewick Man was discovered, he is “the Ancient One,” an esteemed ancestor who deserves a proper (re)burial. To the author David Hurst Thomas, the plight of Kennewick Man is not just a battle over material remains. It is a story about “control and power,” a tale about “who gets to control ancient American history—governmental agencies, the academic community, or modern Indian people” (2000: xxv).

The battle over the custody of Kennewick Man poured salt in old wounds that had developed between western-trained scientists and Native Americans long ago (Watkins 2012). Watching the Kennewick Man debate unfold from afar stirred my own memories of conflicts involving Inuit and non-Inuit crew members that I had witnessed several years prior. In 1994, I learned that a group of Inuit excavating with a team of Qallunaat (“white people”) archaeologists had grown increasingly frustrated and even belligerent towards their non-Inuit colleagues at the site. When I heard the story, I was halfway through a nine-month stretch of ethnographic research on

Baffin Island. I was researching material on Inuit youth and culture change, which became the basis of my doctoral dissertation in sociocultural anthropology at the University of Washington.

I have to confess, however, that the state of relations between native and non-natives portrayed in *The Skull Wars* and in the stories I learned about on Baffin Island surprised me. My experiences excavating sites with a mixed crew of Inuit and non-Inuit were largely positive and integral to my development as a student of arctic archaeology and later as a student of cultural anthropology. I watched Inuit enjoy their participation in these excavation experiences as well. My interactions working with Inuit on excavation sites made me want to learn more about them as individuals, and my experiences with them on our off days traveling and hunting for game enabled me to learn important survival skills that became very useful as I embarked on my own research project several years later.

As the battle over the fate and identity of Kennewick Man or “The Ancient One” reveals, archaeology can dig up more than just artifacts. It can expose serious fault lines between different groups and cultures as well as trigger bitter debates about the ethics and aims of anthropological research. But archaeological experiences can also create bridges between cultures, groups, and individuals with radically different backgrounds, interests, and aspirations.

Paying close attention to the human element that goes along with what archaeologists do in the field—the interpersonal dynamics and social relations that develop at a site—and to the humanity of archaeology crew members and to the social dramas that unite and divide them has the potential to reveal a vast array of information and insights that can be useful to ethnographers, archaeologists, and indigenous peoples interested in better understanding cultural and social processes. Unfortunately, this genre of narrative is largely untapped by archaeologists (see Mickel 2013 for an exception). In the same way that cultural anthropologists have chosen to expose the inner workings of fieldwork in order to help their readers better grasp the world as it is lived (e.g. Briggs 1970; Gottlieb and Graham 1993; Stoller and Oakes 1989), I aim to reveal how archaeology impacts the lives of Inuit and non-Inuit people (including myself) involved in excavations.

Mending the Gap: The New Indigenous Face of American Archaeology

The Native Graves and Repatriation Act of 1990 and the 1992 amendments to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 ushered in “a new era in American archaeology, one that has witnessed an ongoing shift in power and control and a greater inclusion of indigenous voices in the practice of the discipline” (Kerber 2008:88). The author of this quote is a Colgate University professor whose article about a series of summer archaeology workshops involving faculty, college students, and teenagers from a nearby Oneida Indian Nation reservation documents how this new era is taking shape in northern New York state. Kerber presents the workshops as mostly successful, not because they led to an increase in the number of Oneida who want to become archaeologists (they did not) but because they built trust between

archaeologists and indigenous peoples. Raised on stereotypes that equate archaeologists with grave diggers and bone collectors interested only in personal and professional gain (Watkins 2012), Oneida teenagers and elders apprenticed with archaeologists who treated human remains as sacred and who consulted regularly with tribal leaders concerning what should be excavated and how. Kerber attributed the success of the workshops to their emphasis on the process of archaeology (testing, digging, cleaning, and processing) rather than its products. The participants benefitted from the process-oriented approach because it inspired them to understand archaeology as a tool to connect to the past more personally and meaningfully: "Walking over the land where our ancestors walked... thinking 'Our people were here' ... helps us to bring our ancestors back into our souls, into our hearts, and the artifacts are real" (Oneida clan mother cited in Kerber 2008:96).

Silliman and Sebastian Dring's (2008) article about organizing summer field schools with members of the Eastern Pequot nation on their reservation land in Connecticut also stress the virtues of a process-oriented archaeology, including the processes by which relations between faculty, students, and tribal scholars develop and are maintained. Emphasizing that "archaeological field methods are not just research practices, but also *social* practices with *social* consequences [emphasis in original]," the authors describe how they worked with Eastern Pequot members to create an archaeological methodology and pedagogy that are collaborative to the core, fusing Eastern Pequot cultural traditions with conventional archaeological customs (2008:80). Most relevant for this essay is how their article explores a "central but often neglected feature of collaborative archaeological research: *relationships*. Everyone knows that archaeological fieldwork is an inherently social endeavor, but the collaborative and indigenous environment offers unique challenges and possibilities" (2008:84).

A lot has changed in North American archaeology since the mid-1990s when I was last active in the archaeology of the eastern Canadian Arctic.¹ Many professional archaeologists who serve as principal investigators of large-scale research projects are now more intentional in their efforts to include indigenous voices, perspectives, and practices at all points of the research process, from the earliest conception to the publication of final results. But a lot remains the same. Although I am recalling events that occurred two decades ago, what I observed to be true of the social and cultural dynamics that affect Inuit-settler relations then is still true today. Despite arguments to the contrary, different (and sometimes competing) cultural definitions of time (including history), place, and personhood continue to mediate the ways in which Inuit and non-Inuit people understand themselves (Graburn 2006; Searles 2008), their relations to others, their relations to place (Searles 2010), and their relation to the past, present, and future.

The experience and expression of these differences are neither uniform nor universal. Some believe that the differences that distinguish Inuit from Qallunaat (non-Inuit) reflect more the perspectives of academics rather than Inuit themselves (e.g., Wenzel 2001). Others maintain just the opposite to be true, that ideological and cultural differences separating Inuit and Qallunaat are powerful, persistent, and influential (e.g., Searles 2008; Kennedy 1982;

Paine 1977; Plaice 1990; Rasing 1999). These differences, which are really generalized claims about the identity of two cultures (Inuit and Qallunaat), produce multiple, variable, and uneven effects on social group identity, individual psychology, and interpersonal relations. To some, they enable Inuit people to maintain a sense of who they are as a culturally sovereign and historically distinct people seeking to transform a legacy of colonialism and assimilation into evidence that Inuit society is resilient and Inuit culture is thriving. To others, they confine culture to a popular list of traits that invariably make one group (Inuit or Qallunaat) superior to the other.

One example goes like this: Inuit share food freely, but Qallunaat do not. Therefore, Inuit are better than Qallunaat. Another one is that Inuit do not take school seriously, but Qallunaat do. That is why the average Qallunaaq (singular form of Qallunaat) gets better jobs and earns more money than the average Inuk (singular form of Inuit). Neither of these stereotypes is entirely true, but neither is entirely false. More importantly, they are not necessarily textbook examples of culture as defined by cultural anthropology. They are generalizations gleaned from a larger narrative involving various people, power, places, and history. These generalizations create a system of symbols whose meanings are limitless except in those instances when groups and individuals try to harden those such symbols into something more fixed and permanent (e.g., symbols of identity and difference). They are what some cultural anthropologists refer to as strategic essentialisms, generalizations made by indigenous peoples about themselves that both “Orientalizes” and empowers them (Lee 2006:470).² Regardless of whether these symbols reflect an authentic Inuit or Qallunaat culture is less important than how they are key to understanding the native’s point of view (Geertz 1973).

Although much has been written about the importance of implementing “Indigenous, collaborative and community-oriented approaches” that will further archaeology along the path of decolonization (e.g. Supernant and Warrick 2014:563), not enough has been written, I think, about how indigenous and nonindigenous “cultures,” in their various guises, influence the structure and sustainability of these communities (for exceptions, see Silliman 2008; Griebel et al. 2013; Piccini and Schaepe 2014). Although each community of collaboration forms its own culture, and individual members of that community bring different cultural backgrounds to the community—professional and amateur, student and professor, indigenous and nonindigenous—it is unclear how these multiple cultures and often competing ideas about culture mediate the social relations and social dynamics of an excavation team at an archaeological site. I aim to show that these multiple constructions of culture both nourish and harm social relations by empowering some individuals at the expense of others. While developing a common culture among the excavation crew can create a bridge that unites separate and divided groups of individuals, culture can also be used as a weapon to destabilize the structures of cooperation and collaboration that make community-based archaeology projects sustainable.

Documenting and analyzing the episodes of conflict and cooperation of an excavation season can also provide a therapeutic function in much the same way that ethnography can. Although providing a humanistic account

of the people who participated in the excavations and their relations to each other through revisiting stories from the field cannot necessarily heal old wounds or reconcile wounded parties, or transform failures into successes, such portrayals can humanize people and places in ways that archaeology as an academic discipline is not designed to do (see Wolcott 2005:213–228; cf. Griebel et al. 2013). Exploring and embracing cultural differences at play at an excavation site can provide important educational, professional, and personal opportunities for all participants, regardless of one's ethnic, professional, or personal identity.

In what follows, I recount observations made while participating in separate archaeological excavations along the coastline of Frobisher Bay in 1990 and 1991 (see Fitzhugh and Olin 1993). I also draw on field notes I wrote while providing logistical support for an excavation team based on Qallunaat Island (referred to as "Kodlunarn Island" on earlier maps) in the Northwest Territories (now Nunavut Territory) during the summer of 1994. I also include excerpts from correspondence (in October 2013) with a member of that excavation team (now a professor at Laval University). Although I was not a member of the Kodlunarn Island excavation crew, I had worked with and befriended various members in previous summers and during the spring and winter of 1994. Later that summer, the principal investigator of the project hired members of my Inuit host family to transport equipment and supplies from their base camp on Kodlunarn Island to Iqaluit, the major regional hub for commercial travel.

Inuit Qaujimatuaqangit and Contemporary Inuit Identity

In the 1990s, in workshops held throughout Nunavut, a team of anthropological researchers began to document the memories of Inuit elders, male and female, many of whom grew up in an era when their families had little contact with non-Inuit and who therefore had to live primarily off the land. These workshops provided the basis of a body of wisdom referred to by the Government of Nunavut as *Inuit Qaujimatuaqangit* (IQ), a concept that means, "that which Inuit have long known" (Henderson 2007:190). IQ "encompasses all aspects of traditional Inuit culture including values, worldview, language, social organization, knowledge, life skills, perceptions, and expectations" (Wenzel 2004:241). One Inuit leader defined it as "a living technology" through which Inuit "thoughts and actions," "tasks and resources," "family and society," are organized (Arnakak quoted in Wenzel 2004:243). IQ is "the Inuit way of doing things: the past, present and future knowledge, experience and values of Inuit society" (Nunavut, IQ Task Force cited in Henderson 2007:191). IQ reflects the importance of remembering the past as a vital force in securing the future of Inuit people and culture (Stevenson 2006:168–169). Although the elders consulted to identify IQ "deliberately resisted an easy checklist-inspired definition of the concept" (Henderson 2007:191), many attempts have been made to fashion it into a set of principles that can be integrated into public government and other realms of social and public life (Wenzel 2004).

The development of IQ as a politically important (and potent) concept reflects increased awareness of the importance of the past in determining the destiny of indigenous groups such as the Inuit of Canada, Greenland, and Alaska. In a postcolonial, post-land claims settlement present, the Inuit past is not just a set of subsistence practices and settlement patterns that can be reconstructed through the recovery of material remains buried in the ground. The past has become a contested set of truths bound by one essential message: maintaining a strong and vibrant connection to local and regional history is essential for the ongoing vitality of a culturally distinct and politically self-determining Inuit society. In many contexts, IQ has become synonymous with Inuit culture, or at least Inuit traditional culture, and it continues to influence the way Inuit and non-Inuit alike understand Inuit culture and history (see also Graburn 2006; Dorais 2005).

Outpost Camps, Hunting, and IQ

After graduating from college in 1989, I accepted an offer from the Arctic Studies Center of the National Museum of Natural History for a nine-month contract to help curate and catalogue selections of the arctic collections stored in the museum. The Center then hired me to join a three-month Smithsonian-sponsored expedition to survey the coasts of Labrador and southern Baffin with a team of archaeologists, filmmakers, and local historians to find evidence of contact between Inuit and Vikings and to more recent waves of Europeans. The highpoint of my summer occurred after we arrived in Iqaluit (currently the capital of Nunavut) and I befriended several young adult Inuit hunters.

Pauloosie, one of the Inuit guides hired by our crew to help with navigation and logistics, piloted our ship safely through many hazards and around many potential disasters, including rough seas, gale force winds, and endless miles of sea ice that threatened to crush our hull and strand us hundreds of miles from the nearest settlement. He also provided our crew with ample supplies of fresh seal and caribou, some of them shot from and butchered right on the deck of our expedition ship. Although IQ as a political concept did not come into existence until the early 2000s, Pauloosie was already learning an embodied way of knowing and learning about the world that would later be referred to as IQ. Although we met Pauloosie in town, his real home was at an outpost camp hundreds of miles from Iqaluit that his family called Kuyait. Although the official outpost camp movement began with government support in the 1970s (as a remedy for overcrowded living conditions in Arctic towns and hamlets), outpost camps are contemporary versions of more historical living practices that were typical of Inuit families prior to the period of sedentarization that began in the 1950s. As pressure to relocate to government-run towns and hamlets grew more intense, more and more Inuit began to live year round in one place, creating increasingly overcrowded housing conditions and municipality infrastructures stretched beyond their limits (Searles 1998).

A number of government officials and Inuit leaders believed that an effective way to relieve overcrowding was to create incentives for Inuit

families to move back to the places where their parents and grandparents once lived. After spending several decades in Iqaluit, Pauloosie's adopted parents moved to Kuyait in 1977, taking with them ten children ranging in age from six to twenty-three. With financial assistance provided by the territorial government and the Iqaluit Hunters and Trappers Association, the family built two hunting cabins that they lived in year round.

With no access to indoor plumbing or electricity, stores or hospitals, mechanics or schools, outpost camp residents had to relearn what it was like to live without many of the conveniences of contemporary village life. *Qanuqtuurunarniq*, one of thirteen principles associated with IQ, translates as "problem solving and creative improvisation," (Wenzel 2004:241). Relying almost exclusively on immediate family members enabled (even required) outpost camp Inuit to develop other aspects of IQ, including *pijitsirniq* ("serving, use power to serve others"), *surattittailimaniq* ("hunt only what is necessary and do not waste"), *piliriqatiginngniq* ("cooperation; work together in harmony for a common purpose"), and *akiraqtuutijariaqangninniq nirjutiit pijjutigillugit* ("no one owns animals or land so avoid disputes") (Wenzel 2004:241). Outpost camp residents were responsible for producing their own food, repairing their own homes, fixing all their own hunting equipment, and attending to many of the emergencies and problems that were handled by trained service professionals and technicians in town. Although developing IQ was not one of the motivations that inspired the creation of outpost camps, outpost camp family members were forced to learn and apply IQ on a regular basis. For Pauloosie and his family, developing and using IQ was neither a means of recognizing and celebrating the ways of their ancestors nor a manifestation of contemporary Inuit identity politics (which it later would become); it was, rather, the best way to stay alive in a perilous environment.

Pauloosie's extensive knowledge of hunting and fishing conditions of thousands of square miles of coastline and adjacent bodies of water in southern Baffin Island made it difficult to believe that he was raised in poverty on the streets of Iqaluit. Growing up there in the early 1970s, Pauloosie had little if any access to the hunting and fishing opportunities enjoyed by his parents and grandparents. Economic conditions took a turn for the worse following the crash of the global trade of seal pelts and furs in the early 1980s, making full-time hunting simply too expensive for most Inuit families (Wenzel 1991; Condon et al. 1995). As with many other Inuit his age, Pauloosie sold drugs to make money for himself and/or his family, activities that gave him a criminal record of which he was not proud. An Inuit couple who had a distant family connection to Pauloosie and who recently built an outpost camp asked Pauloosie's parents if they could take him with them to Kuyait. The parents agreed, and Pauloosie's life changed forever.

Although I was not aware of it at the time, daily life that summer, surveying hundreds of miles coastline in southern Baffin Island and digging test pits, provided numerous opportunities for problem solving and creative improvisation, for the development of my own IQ as a future ethnographer of Inuit culture and student of Inuit identity. Just as with outpost camp

residents, our crew also lacked access to stores, hospitals, repair shops, and emergency response crews. The members of our excavation team had to rely on each other's ingenuity and cooperation to solve problems. My experiences as an archaeologist working with fellow crew members who were Inuit provided ideal conditions for a cultural immersion that I would build on later in developing my thesis on the role of outpost camps and hunting culture in the expression of Inuit ethnic identity and cultural difference (see Searles 1998).

That summer in Baffin Island I also got to sample a number of Inuit delicacies—the back fat and partially digested stomach contents of a caribou, the intestines of a seal, the eggs of an eiders—which would later prove to be critical in my understanding of how much Inuit identity is expressed through the consumption of certain Inuit foods and their impact on the body (Searles 2002:64).

From Archaeologist to Cultural Anthropologist

After the summer of 1990, I moved to Seattle to begin my journey as a graduate student in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Washington (UW). Although my application emphasized my background in arctic archaeology, I was hoping to bridge those experiences with cultural anthropology in examining the role of history and archaeology in the identity development of young Inuit living in urbanized spaces like Iqaluit. Because the department had divided into three separate tracks/programs for graduate students—archaeology, physical anthropology, and sociocultural anthropology—I learned that it would be difficult and unprecedented to combine my interests in archaeology with sociocultural anthropology. Concerned about completing my course work and pre-dissertation requirements in a reasonable amount of time, I opted to focus exclusively on sociocultural anthropology.

Looking back, I think it was difficult to let go of a dream of being an arctic archaeologist. Not only did I enjoy my experiences apprenticing with various excavation teams, but I thought I had experienced a north that was accessible to an increasingly smaller percentage of Inuit. I learned later that many Inuit Pauloosie's age and younger had never had the opportunity to hunt for seal or walrus as Pauloosie and his siblings did on a regular basis (and which I had witnessed on many different occasions). As a student of archaeology, I had the opportunity to develop many personal and professional ties to individuals who were incredibly knowledgeable about the Canadian north.

Yet I was relieved as well. Life seemed to be easier and certainly less costly for a sociocultural anthropologist. I did not need to purchase and outfit a ship nor hire and feed a support crew. Although I needed to obtain local permission to conduct my research (I received the first ever research permit from the Baffin Regional Inuit Association—an Inuit land claims organization), the permits I received were for researching the culture and beliefs of contemporary Inuit not permits to excavate sites that many thought should not be excavated by non-Canadians and/or non-Inuit. I could study the politics of Inuit identity and cultural heritage as a

sociocultural anthropologist rather than as an archaeologist who needed the support and sponsorship of well-connected insiders.

I returned to Iqaluit, in January 1994, to conduct dissertation research in sociocultural anthropology. My fiancé (now wife) accompanied me to the field and we became informally adopted by Pauloosie's extended family. I served as Pauloosie's personal hunting assistant. We joined Pauloosie and his younger brother Ooleetoo on many of their hunting and fishing excursions around Iqaluit and in the outer reaches of Frobisher Bay. With the first installment of my research grant, I purchased a low-end snowmobile, which I then loaned to Pauloosie's father, the head of the Kuyait Outpost Camp.

Pauloosie's family introduced us to the dangers and excitement of hunting in mid-winter, something I had only dreamed of before, as we encountered polar bears, walrus, seals, and various waterfowl on, below, and adjacent to the sea ice. Pauloosie showed me how to drive a snowmobile in concentric circles around a breathing hole after he spotted a seal's nose surfacing for air. I helped drive the seal back to the hole, where Pauloosie was waiting with his rifle and harpoon.

I never mastered the art of hunting, nor did I learn to drive a snowmobile confidently on sea ice. I did not become adept at repairing motors or learn to navigate my way independently from Kuyait to Iqaluit. I did, however, learn to understand the importance of these skills for young men like Pauloosie and Ooleetoo, two young Inuit who were growing into manhood at a time when the roles and relations of Inuit men and women were being redefined and rearranged by social, economic, and political forces (Collings 2014).

As a first mate on a ship carrying a crew of archaeologists, Pauloosie loved to make people laugh. He loved to sneak up behind me and yank beard hairs from my chin before I could stop him. He always held up his catch for me to see, a few hairs locked between his forefinger and thumb, as if my shrieks of pain were not enough to convince him I was aware of his success.

Reuniting with him in Iqaluit two years later, I was relieved to learn that little had changed between us. Although we no longer shared the experience of being fellow crew members on an archaeological excavation, it was easy to find a common set of interests and activities on which to renew our friendship. But I was glad I had all those experiences in previous summers learning about him and his family and learning to trust his knowledge and skills as a hunter and traveler in the arctic. I entrusted him with my life and the life of my fiancé on numerous occasions as he transported us far and wide over difficult and dangerous terrain to obtain food and to see different places. On a freakishly warm day in early spring while hunting walrus I fell through rotten sea ice concealed by a fresh layer of snow. Pauloosie's brother and another Inuit youth responded with cat-like quickness to pull me to safety in a matter of seconds.

Having learned in a wilderness survival class that wearing cold, wet clothes in cold weather will invariably lead to hypothermia and even death, I wondered if Pauloosie was going to take me back to Kuyait so I could change my clothes. Instead, Pauloosie asked me, "Do you feel cold?"

"Not yet," I replied.

"Then let's work," he told me as I helped him butcher a thousand pound walrus he had just killed not far from my accident. Ten hours later we returned to Kuyait. I changed my clothes, and we feasted on fresh walrus meat.

Conflict and Rescue at Kodlunarn Island

When the Kodlunarn Island (referred to locally as "Qallunaat Island") archaeology team recruited Pauloosie to work for them during their 1994 summer excavation season, I thought he was an excellent choice. I knew what a skilled hunter, mechanic, and boatman he was and how much he enjoyed the company of Qallunaat. He had decided to ignore the cultural, ethnic, and class divisions that fueled social tensions in Iqaluit. He had recently returned from a month-long trip to Newfoundland to visit the family of the skipper who captained our summer research vessel in the summers of 1990 and 1991.

When I later heard that at least one Inuit member of the 1994 excavation team wanted to leave the project that summer, I knew it could not have been Pauloosie. But the fact that there was tension between Inuit and non-Inuit on site surprised me. My memories working alongside Inuit and non-Inuit on summer excavations were mostly positive. I remembered how effectively multiethnic (Inuit and Qallunaat), multinational (American and Canadian), and multicultural (Inuit, Québécois, Newfoundlanders, Americans, Albertans) crews could work together, even enjoy each other's company, in often arduous and stressful conditions.

The story of the social dynamics at the excavation site grew even more mysterious when I learned that the team of Inuit men recruited to transport crew members and their supplies to Iqaluit at the end of the summer season suddenly backed out of their agreement with the archaeologists. Was this an intentional snub—retribution targeting the non-Inuit archaeologists for mistreating a disgruntled Inuit crew member? Or was it simply a matter of miscommunication—one or both of the parties got their dates wrong? What did Pauloosie think of all this? Later I learned the Inuit men did, in fact, intentionally change their plans at the last minute but for reasons that to this day remain unclear to me.

Desperate to get his crew and supplies to Iqaluit in time to catch a flight to Ottawa, the lead archaeologist (R.⁵) contacted other Inuit families he had worked with in previous summers. R. called one of the brothers of the Inuit family we were living with at the time, and he agreed to help. The brother (U.) asked me to accompany him in his freighter canoe to R.'s excavation site, and I consented. His younger brother would take their father's boat, and we would travel together as a convoy as soon as the tide enabled us to get our boats in the water.

It took several hours to prepare for the journey; we needed to purchase fuel, spare parts, and other supplies for the 350-mile trip. The trip between Iqaluit and Qallunaat Island was quick and without incident thanks to favorable weather and the absence of pack ice. We also managed to ferry the two remaining crew members (the rest had returned to Iqaluit by charter

planes) and excavation supplies back to Iqaluit with plenty of time to catch their flight.

As we neared the halfway point on our return journey to Iqaluit, U., my Inuit host brother, told me that if we encountered rough seas, we would have to ditch the crates of artifacts stacked in the mid-section of the canoe. He knew what the crates contained—the oldest known fragments of a well-preserved handmade wicker basket ever found on Canadian soil—but he was not going to risk our lives to save them. He said this as we had already intentionally slowed our return journey to Iqaluit to make several detours to hunt ringed and bearded seals that we spotted along the way; there were no clouds, no wind, and no waves to cause concern. He made this announcement within earshot of the two excavation crew members who traveled with us, including a professional conservationist who worked for the Museum of Civilizations in Canada. Their mission was to ensure that the crates and other material artifacts were safely transported to Iqaluit.

The Multivocality of Cultural Heritage

I was flattered that U. asked me to assist him with the trip to the excavation site; it signaled that he trusted me and respected my abilities to operate a boat. It also helped to solidify my transition from archaeologist to ethnographer of Inuit lifeways, a transition I found difficult at first as I watched a number of my former archaeology friends and colleagues pass through Iqaluit on their way to research sites. It also felt strange to witness the sudden arrival and departure of waves of research scientists as a resident of Iqaluit. Living in southern Baffin Island for nine months repositioned me to view the archaeology I had done in previous summers as a science as well as a strange sort of vocation in which strangers from southern Canada (and other parts of the worlds) suddenly appear in town only to disappear just as quickly at the end of summer at sites on topics that seem to have little impact on the lives of locals. My host mom in Iqaluit referred to summer as “the silly season,” a time when strangers swarm the streets of Iqaluit like mosquitos, only to disappear with the first snows of fall. I was once one of those mosquitos!

Part of me wanted to reprimand U. for his comment about the necessity of ditching several crates of artifacts or at least make him aware how that view would be disheartening to most archaeologists. Part of me was disappointed that he seemed uninterested in learning more about what the archaeologists did that summer and why. I knew that this excavation cost tens of thousands of grant dollars and involved hundreds of hours of time in terms of preparation and execution (see also Wachowich 2006).

As I pieced together the perspectives of the various parties who were involved in the rumored conflict described above, I learned one version of the story; insurmountable divisions had emerged between Inuit and non-Inuit members of the crew involving different opinions about how best to manage the time and resources of the entire excavation team. I also learned that in an attempt to resolve the conflicts, the lead archaeologist, R., consulted with Inuit elders who lived at a neighboring outpost camp. Speaking

by two-way radio, they urged Pauloosie and the other two Inuit members of the excavation team to “follow orders and figure out how to work with [the rest of the crew]” (Allison Bain, personal communication 2013).

As I was writing this essay, I wanted to know if my field notes and memories of that summer matched the accounts of those who witnessed the drama unfold in person. I contacted Professor Allison Bain of Université Laval. She participated in the excavation that summer as a graduate student specializing in archaeoentomology. She explained that one of the Inuit members of the crew “regularly stirred the pot” and was at the “center of pretty much all of our problems” (Bain, personal communication 2013). She also admitted that this Inuit man (not Pauloosie) “was a really bright guy” who had “real issues” with certain members of the crew. These issues involved, among other things, control of access to communal supplies of food, control of personal hygiene, and control over access to equipment and supplies (e.g., the boat, fuel, motors) that the Inuit members of the team wanted to use for hunting.

I also learned that one of the non-Inuit crew members, a friend of Pauloosie’s from previous summers of excavation, ran the base camp on Qallunaat Island that summer. His mission was to prepare meals for the crew and ensure that their supply of food and other resources (e.g., fuel) would last throughout the summer. In Allison’s words, he “organized our water, showers, menus, coffee breaks” (Bain, personal communication 2013). Although his style of leadership was not always popular with the Inuit, Allison remembered it as being extremely effective: “I would take him ANYWHERE in the field,” she added (emphasis in original), as “he took his job really seriously” and he “was there to help R. have a good field season and . . . take over all the responsibilities he could” (Bain, personal communication 2013).

Living with Pauloosie’s family for approximately nine months repositioned me to understand how this type of management structure at an excavation would have angered those Inuit who had little experience with non-Inuit. According to Allison, “I remember the Inuit complaining about the strict control M. had on food and other supplies (fuel, equipment, etc.) while at base camp down the bay. Of course it makes sense to want to ration supplies so that they last for the entire summer—so M.’s actions were justified. But I remember it created a rift between M. and some of the crew members” (Bain, personal communication 2013). I understood that M.’s decision to control access to food and to regulate the personal hygiene of everyone at the site, though well intentioned, would be interpreted much differently by the Inuit members of the crew.

The timing of this conflict coincided with broader events in which Inuit were seeking to reverse the relations of power that had existed in the Canadian Arctic since the arrival of a permanent presence of non-Inuit government officials, entrepreneurs, and missionaries. Inuit leaders in the Northwest Territories had already won a legal settlement to create a new territory (Nunavut) in which Inuit would form a majority voting constituency. Inuit would soon have the power to decide who ran the territorial government. Emboldened by the success and enthusiasm of their elders, a younger generation of Inuit felt empowered to criticize policies, programs,

and people that favored the non-Inuit way over the Inuit way. Refracted through the lens of Canadian indigenous political activism in the mid-1990s, M.'s decision to limit access to resources becomes another example of all that is wrong with Qallunaat and their culture—how they continue to treat Inuit as being incapable of managing their own affairs. Real Inuit do not prevent others from accessing food and other supplies, nor do they act in ways that undermine the autonomy of other individuals.

The notions of daily schedules also provided fodder for Inuit crew members complaining about unfair working conditions. M. managed the camp by creating “schedules, periodization or compartmentalization, and, above all, promptness” (Goehring and Stager 1991:672–673). Inuit who live on the land and spend their days hunting and fishing become accustomed to learning to adapt to daily, weekly, and seasonal rhythms regulated by timing (i.e., when opportunities present themselves) as opposed to being on time (Goehring and Stager 1991; Stern 2003). Such were the conditions of life at the outpost camp in the winter of 1994, when we traveled, hunted, and fished when weather, sea ice, and other conditions were favorable to our intended tasks. Although schools, businesses, and government offices function according to schedules, periodization, and promptness, this has come to be defined as oppositional to traditional Inuit notions of time and, by extension, a proper way of being Inuit. After all, *Inuit Qaujimaqatunqangit* (IQ), that body of knowledge that has become a powerful symbol of traditional Inuit identity, developed when there were no schedules, clocks, or calendars to control how Inuit thought about or experienced time.

Because Pauloosie lived in Iqaluit for many years, he was familiar with schedules and accustomed to the hegemony of the clock and calendar in places where Inuit and Qallunaat lived, worked, or studied together. But he was also eager to show us that his family refuses to live this way at an outpost camp. Aside from the tradition of not hunting on Sunday (a rule that can be suspended if supplies are low or if an obvious opportunity presents itself), Pauloosie's family did not follow schedules or use clocks to determine when they eat, sleep, work, and so forth. This philosophy was pressed upon us on numerous occasions.

One could argue that an archaeological excavation site involving a mixed crew of Inuit and non-Inuit, even if it is conducted on Inuit-controlled lands, should be allowed to develop its own culture, its own *communitas* (Turner 2012). It is a liminal space after all, a place that is a community unto itself, too small to be a town yet too large (and too ethnically diverse) to be an outpost camp. The purpose of this community is also multidimensional: to uncover the Inuit and non-Inuit cultural heritage found in the site and to use local resources for food. Perhaps a third priority should be to make it a place that acknowledges and embraces the ways of Inuit and Qallunaat—bicultural or even transcultural.

Conclusion

I began with a story of how relations between western-trained scientists and natives had become strained by the discovery of the Ancient One, also

known as Kennewick Man. In considering this particular conflict, I imagined how cultural anthropologists working with Native American tribes in Washington and Oregon were forced to choose between supporting the natives' point of view or the scientists', but not both. Such a predicament reminded me of my own experiences as a cultural anthropologist hired to help a team of Inuit and non-Inuit archaeologists transport supplies to Iqaluit from their excavation site two hundred miles away. I also thought how unfortunate the battle for custody over the Ancient One is, given that many of the parties implicated in the dispute have something to gain from each other's insights and experiences.

The saga of the Ancient One is perhaps not the best example of what has become the changing face of indigenous archaeology in North America. Case studies of successful community-based archaeological projects involving teams of indigenous and nonindigenous faculty, students, and tribal experts engaging in fruitful and long lasting collaborations continue to proliferate. The success of these collaborations is often attributed to an emphasis on the process of archaeology as opposed to its products—the experience of digging test pits as opposed to the refinement of archaeological theory and the history of North America.

Shifting the emphasis from product to process means that relevant data is no longer limited to what is found in the ground. Relevant data becomes extended to include the stories of individual excavators and their experiences with each other in the field, which begs a humanistic approach that can contribute powerfully to the changing face of indigenous archaeology. Treating the biographies of individual excavators, as well as the stories that emerge from the intercultural spaces of excavations, as archaeological data can shed even more light on the challenges and opportunities archaeologists face as they strive to decolonize the discipline and become more inclusive of a wider array of perspectives and methods.

Another important feature of a process-oriented approach to archaeology is that it creates spaces for friendship building between academic archaeologists and the indigenous peoples and communities whose history is being recovered and preserved. Such spaces allow indigenous peoples to participate fully in the interpretation and preservation of the materials found in the excavations, and such relationships have shown been to attract greater interest, involvement, and even commitment from local residents, particularly those residents who have otherwise experienced being excluded and marginalized by a less inclusive academic archaeology. One such model worth emulating is the collaboration that was forged between professional archaeologists and local tribal members who worked together to excavate the Ozette site in Washington state. Archaeologists ceded control over excavation and interpretation of the materials recovered from the site to the Makah Tribal Council, and the excavation “ran continuously from 1970–1981, and was visited by up to 60,000 people each year” (Marshall 2002:212).

Such collaborations have inspired the emergence of a new era of indigenous archaeology and indigeneity (or what McGhee [2008] refers to as “aboriginalism” and Niezen [2000] calls “indigenism”)—the experience and

expression of an indigenous identity. Indigeneity mediates relations between individuals and groups at archaeological excavation sites in multiple ways. Rather than dismiss indigeneity as detrimental to the discipline of archaeology and to the fate of indigenous peoples themselves (McGhee 2008), it needs to be better integrated into the design and operating structure of archaeological field schools and excavations (Bruchach et al. 2010; Marshall 2002; Silliman 2008).

I often wonder if the disagreements about the use of camp resources that so divided the crew in the summer of 1994 might not have been mitigated if the disagreeing parties had fostered the opportunity to allow their cultural perspectives and beliefs to structure, in part anyway, the daily rhythms and routines of work and rest at the excavation site. What if the crew allocated time and resources to recognize and even celebrate the traditions and identities of various members of the crew (indigenous and nonindigenous)? What if R. and his crew decided to allow Inuit to control the excavation and the interpretation of the cultural objects found there? This might have inspired U. to want to save those artifacts from destruction rather than simply toss them over board had our boat encountered rough weather on the journey back to Iqaluit from Kodlunarn Island.

When relations of power between archaeologists and the host community are shared and negotiated, cultural differences can become resources for better cooperation and better analysis rather than as ammunition for competing factions. Even if ceding control of excavations to indigenous actors cannot be satisfied for practical reasons, sharing control would at least elevate indigeneity to an important resource for current and future collaborations between archaeologists and indigenous peoples, and between indigenous peoples and other kinds of researchers. My experiences traveling, surveying, and visiting with Pauloosie and his outpost camp family during a summer archaeological expedition enabled me to understand better what life is like for young adult Inuit with little chance of (and little interest in) becoming archaeologists but who nonetheless appreciate the opportunity to be researching the history of the places where their grandparents and great-grandparents once lived and traveled. Just as my experiences as an ethnographer enabled me to understand how and why Inuit possess such a disparate set of views about the practice of archaeology, so did my experiences as an archaeologist prepare me for the stresses and strains (physical, emotional, and intellectual) of fieldwork with an outpost camp family in the Northwest Territories of Canada (now Nunavut).

Archaeological excavations do not just produce evidence that can be used to reconstruct the history of humanity. They generate stories of collaborations, conflicts, and struggles that are critical to understanding the present and anticipating the future. Not only do they reveal the postcolonial perspectives of indigenous people in the Arctic, they reveal the contingent and contested nature of indigenous and nonindigenous selves, communities, identities, and historical knowledge.

Notes

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1. For those interested in specific case studies of community-based archaeological projects featuring indigenous and nonindigenous stakeholders, there is a growing body of literature detailing successful and unsuccessful community-based collaborations in the Arctic and beyond (e.g., Aatalay 2010; Bray 2001; Bruchach et al. 2010; Griebel et al. 2013; Hennessy et al. 2013; Jensen 2012; Loring 2001; Lyons 2011, 2013; Lyons et al. 2010; Marshall 2002; Martindale and Lyons 2014; Pullar et al. 2013; Rankin and Crompton 2013; Rowley 2002; Silliman 2008; Stenton and Rigby 1995; Stewart, Keith, and Scottie 2010).

2. Richard Borshay Lee (2006:470) writes: "In countering the bugbear of authenticity, indigenous groups have made excellent use of what has been aptly named 'strategic essentialism', reinventing themselves as First Nations and First Peoples. Here arises a serious point of conflict between anthropologists and 'natives'. While anthropologists critique the discourse of 'primitivism' that Orientalizes and distances indigenous peoples, the people themselves may be saying: 'Don't take that away from us. We can use it to our advantage!' Seen in this light, essentialism is here to stay, so we better get used to it."

3. Throughout the text I have used capital letters to stand as pseudonyms for some individuals in descriptions of my fieldwork.

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