

e) Lastly, STRUB (1954:32) perceives it as a "... style which is not self-consciously primitive but is in a living tradition". Expanding further along this line, PHILLIPS (1961:43) has argued "... what nonsense it is to talk, as some have, of the white man developing Canadian Eskimo art. An art, to be authentic, must be an expression of life and living, and to say that modern Eskimo art has been affected by the contact of Eskimos with the white man is to say no more than that the Eskimo is alive, receptive and sensitive – as he always has been".

Disquisitions by a second body of commentators tend to be more guarded. Some point out unmistakable evidence of Western influence in the style of the present day carvings, without necessarily denying the latter a true Eskimo character ⁷. Others have judged it to be an art of acculturation ⁸. After reflecting at some length on the question of when art ceases to be traditional, MELDGAARD (1960b:38) reasons that "the line should probably be drawn when works of art no longer play a traditional part in Eskimo culture ; in other words, when they are produced for trading purposes, and to meet a demand from outside". SWINTON (1958:41) has come to the conclusion that "... Eskimo art, or rather carving in stone, as we know it today is a new art, or at least a new phase of an age-old activity. Yet, it so markedly differs in almost every respect from previous developments that we are quite safe in calling it a new art".

Finally, at the opposite end of the scale there stands a third group whose members firmly disclaim the right of contemporary Canadian Eskimo carving to be called 'primitive' art. Such a position is attributed to PETER MURDOCH by SCHERMAN (1956:295) who quotes him as stating categorically that "... so-called (contemporary) Eskimo art was invented by the White man". This point of view finds support from CARPENTER (1960a:346) who maintains that "these new carvings, however, share little with Eskimo art, or even with Alaskan or Greenlandic souvenirs ... Can the word 'Eskimo' legitimately be applied to this art ? I think not. Its roots are Western ; so is its audience ... a new, delightful, non-Eskimo art" ⁹. Perhaps the severest commentary of all has been that expressed by MALAURIE (1958a:549). In his estimation, "une récente exposition d'art esquimau canadien contemporain a rappelé que l'art des civilisations mourantes est non seulement 'rabâcheur', selon le mot d'André Malraux, mais qu'il a aussi perdu sa valeur créatrice, c'est-à-dire sa portée. Tout ce qui n'est pas 'utilitaire' s'y révèle comme moins significatif, de style moins caractérisé, plus gratuit ... Stérilité spirituelle ; stérilité civilisationnelle. Elle constitue en effet la manifestation d'une démission devant le présent et l'avenir dans le vain espoir de préserver et de promouvoir le passé".

In order to properly evaluate all these diverse and often conflicting views which have been quoted above, it will be necessary to delve briefly into the history of Canadian Eskimo carving. The latter, for this purpose, has been div-

⁷ Anonymous (1961:1) ; CHRISTENSEN (1955:84) ; COLLINS (1961:27) ; DRIVER (1961:594) ; GUNTHER (1957:151) ; JENNESS (1964:113) ; and WEYER (1960:34).

⁸ ALTMAN (1960:356) ; Anonymous (1963) ; DALE (1958:35) ; MARY-ROUSSELIÈRE (1960b:14) ; RAY (1961:135) ; and REICHARDT (1962:22).

⁹ He subsequently tempered this view (CARPENTER 1962:12).