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2004 *Furs and Fabrics. Transformations, Clothing and Identity in East Greenland*, Leiden, Leiden University, CNSW, 269 pages.

Studies on clothing, its significance and role in Inuit society have burgeoned over the past two decades. The publication now of a Ph.D. dissertation on East Greenland (Greenland is now known as Kalaallit Nunaat) clothing is a most welcome and exciting addition to the literature in an area little known to scholars, both Inuit and non-Inuit, and the general public alike.

The author is eminently qualified to enlighten readers on the subject. Netherlander Cunera Buijs has degrees in cultural anthropology from Leiden University and from the Netherlands Institute for Scientific Research of Social Systems. In 1990 she was appointed Curator for Circumpolar Cultures at the National Museum of Ethnology (Rijksmuseum voor volkenkunde). As well, the School of Asian, African and Amerindian Studies, Leiden University, appointed her as a research associate in 1996. Since 1982 she has made many visits to East Greenland to continue her research including a stay of six months. The appointments at the Rijksmuseum and as CNSW research associate are ongoing.

The book's focus is on the meanings of the transformations in Tunumiit (East Greenland Inuit) clothing as seen in the social, cultural, economic, and political changes in that society. After the Introduction, it is divided into three chapters that discuss East Greenland dress during the main historical periods: the end of the 19th century, the first half of the 20th century, and the second half of the twentieth century into the 21st century. The final chapter presents results and conclusions of the research. Throughout the book the author uses Inuit terms and in one of the indices lists East and West Greenlandic terms with a corresponding English translation.

The author intertwines Greenland history with a meticulous exposition of men's, women's, and children's apparel. Surprisingly, East Greenland was only "discovered" in 1884—by Gustav Holm, a Danish Lieutenant—as compared to western contact with West Greenland, for example, during the Norse Period AD 1000 to 1400 or the

Danish-Norwegian government expeditions 1605 to 1608<sup>1</sup>. East Greenland then had a self-sufficient economy. But it began to be seriously affected by European fishermen, especially the Norse, who reduced the whale population and devastated the large seal herds, resulting in periods of starvation for the Tunumiit. Norse fishermen took four million seals from 1851 to 1926 (p. 110).

The trading post established in 1894 provided East Greenlanders with European goods—rifles, textiles, tobacco, food. During the Danish colonization period and the 1960s, the population was centralized into eight permanent settlements to provide services: prefabricated housing, electricity, a water supply in winter, schools, churches, trading and medical posts, shops, modern transportation that brought tourism. Another development in the 19th century was the establishment of relations between East and West Greenland that began to overcome the relative isolation of East Greenland from the Western part.

During the World War of 1939 to 1945, Americans took over the organization and administration of the country and after 1945 development programs from Denmark began. Greenland achieved the status of Province of Denmark in 1953 and thereby was no longer, at least legally, a colony. In 1957 the thirteen-member District Council of East Greenland was elected by the local population in cooperation with the Council of Hunters. Self-government for Greenland (Hjemmestyre) was proclaimed in 1979. Of course inequalities persisted, particularly seen in wage differences between the salaries of East Greenland Inuit and of Danes and West Greenlanders. Later the government leveled the salaries by giving subsidies. The many ways in which these changes—political, economic, educational, religious, social—affected and transformed East Greenland clothing is at the core of this work.

The author examines these changes to Tunumiit clothing from the end of the 19th century to modern times. She explores which identities were important and how they were expressed in their apparel, concentrating on the social, symbolic, and spiritual aspects. She is assisted in her discussions of identities by Louis-Jacques Dorais: “[...] The specific way in which a human collectivity perceives and represents its position in the universe in relation to other collectives of human beings [...]” (p. 4).

Chapter one, “A tradition of furs. Clothing in East Greenland at the end of the nineteenth century,” starts with a description of Tunumiit society. We see its commonalities with other Arctic communities: the hunting and fishing cycle; semi-nomadic life using kayak and dog-sled; egalitarianism; some communal ownership revealed in exchange patterns and food-sharing systems, the extended family; and cosmological beliefs. As elsewhere in the Arctic, clothing, tools, transport, housing, food, all came from the animal kingdom, from the land, sea and sky. Names for some of the clothing resemble Inuit words in Canada, for example, *amaat* for *amauti*, *qartiit* for *qarliik* (trousers), *kamik* and *umiaq* are the same, and *akuilisaq* (kayak shirt of gutskin), the word used by Nunavimmiut for gutskin coats.

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<sup>1</sup> Actually W.A. Graah, in the first quarter of the 19th century was one of the first Europeans recorded as travelling to East Greenland. Ejnar Mikkelsen mentioned baptisms that took place between 1822 and 1832. Nonetheless, lasting changes to the culture of East Greenland appear, according to this study, only after the Holm expedition.

The sections on clothing have detailed descriptions, some patterns, and an account of clothing and customs that include areas such as protection from evil, the newborn, rites of first passage, decoration, celebrations and festivities. The social, spiritual, and economic features of the apparel expressed societal values. There were clear differences between the clothing of successful and poor hunters' families, but tempered by leveling mechanisms within the culture through sharing. There was a close connection between humans and the spiritual world of the animals that died to clothe and feed the Inuit. Some items are exclusive to East Greenland and now are found only in museums. Others resemble those of the Inuit universe of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

In chapter two, "The West Greenlandic and European impact, East Greenlandic clothing in the first half of the twentieth century," we learn that in the first decades of the century Western goods and clothing became available at the trading posts, the first of which was established at Tasiilaq (Ammassalik) in 1894. Although expensive, anything European was greatly sought after. As the Tunumiit became more accustomed to barter with Westerners, the prices fell somewhat. The Inuit in the 1920s and 1930s lacked large sealskins (see note on foreign overfishing) needed for tents, kayaks, clothing, boots, so that they welcomed cloth to supplement their meager supplies. A mixture of furs and textiles appeared in the clothing, often made at home, and traditional Inuit skin clothing even began to disappear.

Religious influences on the dress were powerful. As early as 1886 a memorandum of the Danish administration suggested that "Angmagssalikers" should be Christianized and trade relations established (p. 137). In 1925 the Danish Government put education into the control of the Lutheran ministry and usually church and school were in the same complex, sometimes the same building. Lutheran clergymen and catechists were successful first in the baptism of women and children, then of *angakkit* (shamans). Shamanism and other indigenous practices were prohibited, with a lasting effect on the clothing. With the new "morality," bare skin was covered, Sunday dress and other religious garments were introduced, infants wore christening gowns for baptism, and the Tunumiit received Christian names from the Church. Skirts, blouses, dresses, woolen tights and cloth underwear, adopted from Europe and West Greenland, became preferred among younger women. Hair was cut at the behest of the Church and to emulate European styles. But personal choice and the adaptability of Inuit meant that no strict rules applied. There was, among the changes, continuity shown in the use of furs, sealskin boots, patterns, and decorative motifs using the traditional beads and skin mosaic.

When West Greenlanders and Danes settled in East Greenland in the first decades of the 20th century, they played a dominant role in the economic and political structure. As compared to East Kalaallit, they were better educated, bilingual, and had higher incomes. Their clothing expressed their high status in the wearing of, for example, suits, jackets, ties, shirts, caps, and shoes. Kalaallit would be hired for temporary jobs and as servants, yet hunting continued to be the main form of sustenance.

East Greenlanders naturally were influenced by the dominant culture. They shortened the anorak, now often made of cloth. Women's anoraks sometimes were made of silk with a black seal collar and decorative edging. The length and colours of boots changed; the tops of inner boots were covered with homemade lace. They developed the very deep, astonishingly beautiful bead collar. Trousers replaced the short breeches. The changes led to the development of the national costume as part of the evolution of an overall Greenlandic identity. The revitalization and reinvention of East Greenland material culture and clothing signaled continuity and change (a major theme in CNWS research and publications).

Chapter three, "Transformation and integration, East Greenlandic clothing in the second half of the twentieth century" takes us into the 21st century. Today the total number of inhabitants in Kalaallit Nunaat is close to 56,000, and of these nearly 3,000 live in East Greenland (figures for 1996). This relatively tiny group orients itself to global realities at the same time as being true to Kalaallit values and systems. The patterns of hunting, fishing, and other subsistence activities endure. Dog sleds are used during the hunt, for example, since hunting with snowmobiles is legally forbidden. Costs of hunting have escalated so that East Greenlanders in need of cash income sell the majority of their skins to the Greenland Trade Company (KNI—Kalaallit Niuerfiat) at Qaqortoq, South Greenland. The KNI in turn sells tanned and dyed skins to sewing workshops all over Kalaallit Nunaat or to independent companies such as Eskimo Pels. Since prices for skins dropped dramatically due to the actions of the North American anti-harvesting lobbyists such as the World Wildlife Fund and Greenpeace, the Danish Government wisely decided in 1994 to maintain prices artificially by subsidizing hunting. East Greenlanders, of course, abide by international regulations in their hunting and fishing activities.

Nevertheless, there are hardly any full-time hunters left now, whose hunting is the only source of income. These hunters are licensed by a board consisting of government appointees and representatives of the Inuit Hunters and Fishers Association. Despite the diminution of East Greenland identity as a society of hunters and gatherers, when they face the world, they have become proud of their Kalaallit heritage as a unique, sophisticated, rich culture, a culture where traditionally hunters and their spouses honour the animals and spirits by wearing beautiful well-sewn garments. This outlook has led to a sense of national identity expressed, among other things, by the evolution of a national costume.

In the 1980s the municipality of Tasiilaq established a sewing workshop called the Skaeven Atelier in order to call on the renowned skills of East Greenland women thereby creating jobs. Skaeven now leads the country in innovation and development of new clothing traditions (p. 159). With a reputation of producing highly fashionable clothes, they combine the best furs—seal, hare, fox, dog—with non-traditional materials including painted skins of ox or cow, cloth, synthetics, metal, plastic. The clothing is expensive and bought mainly by younger Kalaallit women, by Europeans working in the country, and by tourists. The majority, who have smaller incomes, make their clothes at home, or order from shops in other parts of the country and Europe, by catalogue and over the Internet. Save for people 50 years and older, now

East Greenlanders usually wear Western dress with some traditional pieces included, such as sealskin boots, to complete their outfits. At the same time, increasing numbers wear the national costume—white cloth anorak for men and boys; high dyed boots, sealskin trousers, deep beaded collar over a blouse or the traditional *amaat* in fur or cloth for women. These are worn on festive occasions, and at national and international political meetings and competitions.

The celebration of the mid-winter festival *Uaajeeneq* or *Mitaarrneq*, a time for feasting, jokes, and laughter, is an excellent example of the lasting connection East Greenlanders have with their ancient conventions translated into today's setting. As with the *Qailirtitaaq* of the Sedna festival, clumsy, masked, male figures disguised by ridiculous clothing tramp their way through the assembly hall, grimacing, frightening the children, sometimes making lewd gestures or beating the guests. Nowadays the apparel can consist of several layers of modern materials composed, say, of a man's long johns, a woman's dress, plastic raincoat, and odd mitts and rubber boots. The face of the actor is often masked or covered with soot. These performances, based on old legends and traditions, are now carried out in a present-day, sometimes religious, context such as on Twelfth Night, Greenland National Day, and International Women's Day.

The author concludes that during the second half of the 20th century, when Danish values prevailed, traditional fur clothing disappeared almost completely out of the material culture (p. 217). During the "Greenlandization period" the movements for autonomy sometimes exhibited antagonistic and confrontational attitudes. At the turn of the millennium there is increasing cooperation and equality between Kalaallit and Danes. There is also a growth of differences in the clothing of several sub-groups: a section who wear the casual dress of Europeans; young women who wear fur products designed by Skaeven workshops; East and West Kalaallit and Danes with well-paid jobs who buy expensive furs that show their wealth; professional and church officials in the uniform of their institution; and families who dress for occasions such as the child's first school day or a teenager's church confirmation.

The author summarizes the research in the final chapter and presents her conclusions:

Clothing has always represented an interface between outside and inside [...]. Greenlanders have never given up the essentials of their culture; they still conceive of themselves as hunters, sharing and exchange are still central values [...] and are still widely practiced. Traditional values continue to shape hunters' identities, [...] they know they cannot go back to the past. They are conscious of the fact that they need the relationships with outsiders [...]. We must not make the mistake to think that East Greenlanders want to become like these outsiders. They are intent on retaining and reshaping their own cultural identities [...]. Clothing and identities represent relationships that are continually designed, shaped and reshaped [...]. Modern furs and fabrics constitute transformations, rather than a break from the past (p. 228).

This outstanding publication may inspire, I hope, more writing about the clothing of other areas of Greenland such as the West Kalaallit and the Inughuit, the Polar Inuit. Several scholars have already made a start in this direction and their work is well represented by the author. While the book concentrates on the costume of East Greenland, the many references to and interviews about the dress and culture of West Greenland must already be of great assistance to anyone in need of the information. I, for one, have benefited from the book when conducting research about the West Greenland clothing in the McCord Museum collections.

The author has conducted extensive research into museum and photographic collections. She found there types of garments missing from museum collections and insufficient representations in photographs, especially in the periods 1910 to 1930, and 1940 to 1965. Nonetheless, she has discovered pictures never before published and gives information about the well-known photos so that we can understand some details that may have puzzled us in the past. The many museum collections that she examined were rich enough to allow her to document the changes into the 20th century.

I have some criticisms to offer. The translation of this work from Dutch into English, a formidable undertaking, makes for difficulties in understanding the text. The work has several repetitive paragraphs that could be overcome by better organization. A few pattern drawings are hard to comprehend since some pieces are missing. Instead of just mentioning transpiration (p. 56), it would have been useful to add an explanation of temperature and humidity control, key elements in Inuit clothing construction. A map of all of Greenland would have been of great help.

These minor defects are easy to understand in a publication by a small university press with scant funds and too few staff. The above comments aside, Cunera Buijs has given us a splendid first detailed overview of East Greenland clothing, skillfully interwoven with historical facts and insights into the apparel and culture of the Kalaallit.

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