

Doktori (PhD) értekezés

**From Arctic Wayfarers to Arctic Denizens: Inuit Cultural Identity  
and Its Textual Representations**

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and Its Textual Representations**

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**Plágiumnyilatkozat:**

Én, Nándori Rita, teljes felelősségem tudatában kijelentem, hogy a benyújtott értekezés önálló munka, a szerzői jog nemzetközi normáinak tiszteletben tartásával készült, a benne található irodalmi hivatkozások egyértelműek és teljesek. Nem állok doktori fokozat visszavonására irányuló eljárás alatt, illetve öt éven belül nem vontak vissza tőlem odaítélt doktori fokozatot. Jelen értekezést korábban más intézményben nem nyújtottam be és azt nem utasították el.

.....

This is for the memory of Kiakshuk, admired as the greatest Inuit artist, his art displayed at the entrance of the Pearson International Airport in Toronto, seen on Canadian postage stamps, and shown in countless exhibitions; he started his career as an artist at the age of 70.

[...] My true guiding principle [...] is the idea of peoples becoming brothers, becoming brothers despite all wars and all strife. I try to serve this idea to the best of my ability [...] that is why I do not withdraw myself from any influence, be it from Slovak, Romanian or any other source. Just let that source be clean, fresh and healthy! (Bartók qtd. in Demény 396-97; my translation)

<p>Volt egy öreg apó,          Volt néki, volt néki          Kilenc szép szál fia          Nem nevelte őket          Semmi mesterségre          Csak erdőket járni,          Csak vadat vadászni.          És addig-addig          Vadászgattak, addíg:          Szarvassá változtak          Ott a nagy erdőben.          És az ő szarvuk          Ajtón be nem térhet,          Csak betér az völgyekbe;          A karcsú testük          Gunyában nem járhat          Csak járhat az lombok közt;          A lábuk nem lép          Tűzhely hamujába,          Csak a puha avarba;          A szájuk többé          Nem iszik pohárból,          Csak tiszta forrásból.</p>	<p>Once upon a time there          Was an aged man, he          Had nine handsome boys.          Never has he taught them          Any handicraft, he          Taught them only how to          Hunt in forests dark.          There they roamed, hunted          All the year around, and          Changed into stags in          Forests dark and wild.          Never will their antlers          Enter gates and doors, but          Only woods and shrubs;          Never will their bodies          Wear a shirt and coat but          Only foliage;          Nevermore their feet will          Walk on houses' floors but          Only in the sward;          Nevermore their mouth will          Drink from cups and jugs but          From the clearest springs.</p>
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(excerpt from Bartók *Cantata Profana*; his own translation; emphasis added)



“Caribou Hunt” by Jesse Oonark, 1971; “Szarvassá változott fiúk” by László Marton, 2000

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## ABSTRACT

The primary aim of my dissertation is to examine a little-known field of research related to Canadian autochthony; in particular to Inuit cultural identity and the analysis of the effects of the paradigm shifts connected to contact and settlement in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, followed by the analysis of identity nestled in texts. In the first half of the dissertation, I build a novel theoretical framework, the Inuit Identity Composition and Change Analysis (ICCA) with the help of which I isolate the *inummarig* (“real Inuit”) concept. I identify three main aspects of Inuit identity: land-person relationship, settler cultural impact, and change over three generations of settlement. To study Inuit identity, I adapt and reshape ideas put forth in the realm of cross-cultural psychology, specifically Berry’s Fourfold Model, Weinreich’s sociocultural Identity Structure Analysis, and Fernando Ortiz’s concept of transculturation. Moreover, in studying land-person relationships, I apply the concept of spatiality and related concepts, such as territoriality, borders, and boundaries in relation to identity formation. Additionally, my analysis employs Bourdieu’s theory of generational difference including the concept of habitus and cultural capital; and the related notion of cultural memory according to Halbwachs and Assmann. Moreover, the dissertation presents an ethnohistorical survey, in order to place the study of cultural identity in context focussing on changes in lifestyle, economy, values, and the formation of the Inuit homeland. I specifically explore the significance of the paradigm shift of the 1950s and 60s when the Inuit Arctic wayfarers—due to a change in Canada’s geopolitical approach to her North—had become Arctic denizens, trading their nomadic lifestyle to village dwelling. This part of the thesis examines how sustained contact with the South and the resulting sedentism altered Inuit identity. My other main goal is the analysis of Inuit identity through texts, which I execute with the construction of a new literary framework with the introduction of the orature genre and the compilation of an anthology. My research proposes intellectual artifacts serve as cultural memory through which the evolution of Inuit identity and the nature and significance of transformation can be observed. I introduce the concept of *orature*, hence separating orally composed traditional texts from literature. My framework specifically aids the understanding of decontextualized song lyrics authored during the contact-traditional era. In analyzing orature and literature, I employ the Inuit identity composition change analysis, and information contained in the ethnohistoric record that helps illuminate cultural identity and its changes through the examined texts. First, I organize traditional orally composed lyrics by sub-genre and analyze them as texts, then I examine post-settlement literature, such as written song lyrics, spoken word performance texts, and poems focusing on

the alterations to cultural identity. ICCA and the Euro-Western-divergent orature framework offers a new, Indigenized, and decolonized Inuit literary theory through which the textual reflection of cultural identity is illuminated, and the traditional Inuit texts are evaluated and understood in their proper contexts. To sum up, I explore Inuit cultural identity through a unique theoretical framework, an ethnohistorical survey of the paradigm shifts of the past hundred years, and through the introduction of a new genre in the analysis of song texts and poems. Furthermore, as a result of my research and analysis I compile the first anthology of Inuit orature and literature from the first recorded Inuit song texts to present day poetry.

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## GLOSSARY OF MOST COMMONLY USED INUKTUT TERMS<sup>1</sup>

(with primary meaning indicated)

- anerca*—spirit
- anirniliit*—those who breath, i.e. the living, alive
- anirniq*—to breath
- anirniq piuliji pilirialik titaktinit*—the singing of spirituals that invite the Holy Ghost (Spirit)
- angakoq (angakkuit)*—shaman
- arviq*—bowhead whale
- iglerek*—song partner (as in *iviutiit*)
- ikiaktaq (pl. ikiaqtagait)*—adapted songs
- inuk (pl. Inuit)*—person, people
- Inuktut*—collection of dialects spoken by Inuit in the central-Eastern Arctic
- inummariq (pl. inummariit)*—genuine Inuk with land skills and cultural awareness
- inunnguiniq*—maturation, the process of gaining personhood
- isuma*—wisdom
- itsumaq*—wise man, leader
- iviutiq (pl. iviutiit)*—song of derision performed to publicly shame one’s opponent
- kakivaq*—walrus tusk spear
- kamaruaq*—louse-like
- kamiq*—Inuit animal hide boots
- kamutiq*—wooden sled historically tied after a dog sled, nowadays after a quad or snowmobile
- maligarjuat*—Inuit law
- nanuq*—polar bear
- nuna*—land
- nunangat*—land and waters of Inuit, homeland
- nunavummiut*—Nunavut residents
- pisiq (pl. pisiit)*—traditional song, also the lyrics of such a song
- pisukkaa*—the one who walks too much
- pisuqti*—walker

<sup>1</sup> Inuktut is best defined as the Inuit languages as they are spoken in Arctic communities throughout Nunavut but does not include communities in the Northwest Territories, Labrador, Yukon, Québec, Alaska, Greenland, and Siberia. Historically, Inuit lived in isolated camps where distinct dialects evolved. Communities close to one another generally have few problems communicating between dialects, whereas an Alaskan Yup’ik and a Labrador Nunatsiavummiuk would have trouble understanding each other. However, even among communities that share a common dialect, vocabulary and pronunciation vary, especially between generations. The reason for this is that when Inuit settled into permanent communities, speakers of varying dialects often became residents of the same hamlet. This mixing has intensified with the modern-day migration of Inuit in search of employment opportunities. The spelling of Inuktut words is not always consistent, as some words come from different regions in the North. This is especially so in varying styles of transcription used by researchers who collected the data which is analyzed by this dissertation. To sum up, there is no standard Inuktut spelling, thus, in each case I adhere to the spelling used in the source text.

*qaggiq*—song and feast house

*qallunaaq* (*pl. qallunaat*)—term of uncertain origin used to denote non-Inuit

*qaujimajatuqangit*—Inuit (traditional) knowledge

*qilaut*—caribous skin drum

*sakausiq* (*pl. saqausiit*)—sacral chants performed by the angakoq

*sila*—nature, the universe, the all-encompassing spirit, also understood as weather and climate

*tainmangannit*—times immemorial

*tiriganiaq*—arctic fox

*unikkaa* (*pl. unikkaat*)—story

*unikkaaqtuaq* (*pl. unikkaaktuat*)—folk tale

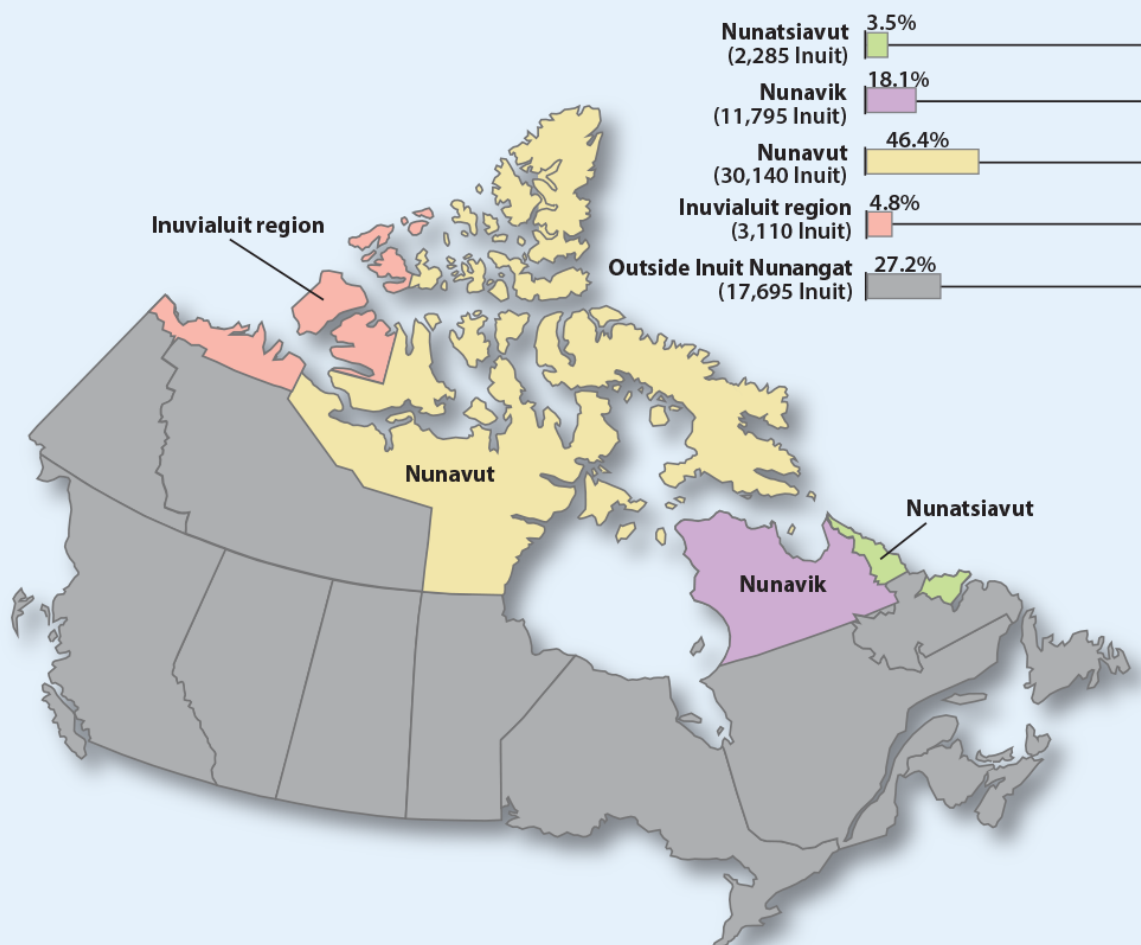
*unikkausivut*—sharing stories, storytelling

## MAP OF INUIT NUNANGAT

### INUIT POPULATION BY RESIDENCE INSIDE OR OUTSIDE INUIT NUNANGAT, 2016



**Total Inuit population :** **65,025**  
(Residence inside or outside Inuit Nunangat)



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2016



Statistics  
Canada

Statistique  
Canada

[www.statcan.gc.ca/census](http://www.statcan.gc.ca/census)

Canada

## I. INTRODUCTION: INUIT IDENTITY AND IDENTITY THROUGH TEXTS

“There is more to this lamp than the lighting of it.”  
(Norma Dunning, “Kudlik”)

### 1.1. Object of Study

This dissertation investigates the ways in which oral and written tradition reflect and engage the notion of identity. It examines how the Inuit understanding of identity has changed in response to contact with outsiders. In my dissertation throughout, the autochthonous and non-First Nations peoples of the Arctic are referred to as Inuit, rather than Eskimo, or Eskimaux—an older term of uncertain origin—even though some Inuit do use this term to this day. As per the recommendation of the Translation Bureau of the Canadian Government and Canadian customs in a scholarly setting, I use the word Inuit and other plural nouns without a definite article because Inuit means “the people,” thus, the definite article is already included in the inflection (Government, “Inuk”). European contact introduced modern commodities and heralded the end of the semi-nomadic hunting-based lifestyle, transitioning Inuit into permanent settlements which eventually led to the formation of the semi-autonomous Inuit *Nunangat* covering most of the Canadian Arctic Archipelago.<sup>2</sup> In my analysis, I use a composite theoretical framework that I call ICCA (identity composition and change analysis) that relies on John W. Berry’s Fourfold Model (1992), Peter Weinreich’s concept of Identity Structure Analysis (2002), and Pierre Bourdieu’s (1977) theory of generational difference, notion of habitus and cultural capital. Furthermore, I consider Maurice Halbwachs’ (1992) and Jan Assman’s (1995) works on cultural memory. Additionally, I examine the man-land relationship of Inuit within which I focus on the significance of spatiality, especially engaging the concept of borders and boundaries, de-, and reterritorialization. In the second part of my dissertation, I also develop an Inuit literary framework introducing the “orature” genre (traditional texts once composed and disseminated orally), which restructures how Inuit oral and written tradition are

<sup>2</sup> Inuit *Nunangat* translates to Inuit homeland consisting of the land (*nunat*) and waters of the North once serving as hunting grounds for Inuit.

categorized separately and in relation to one another. I examine traditional song lyrics from each genre, as well as hymns, folk and popular song lyrics, spoken word performance and slam texts, and poems from the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries for traces of cultural identity and changes to what is understood as *inummarig*. Finally, I present an anthology that includes orature as well as literature from the earliest times until present day.

Especially in regard to locating, studying, and anthologizing literature and orature (a term that I introduce in the discussion of so-called oral poems) my goal was to mitigate the problem of systematically recording oral, and in fact, written Inuit culture:

Research among the Eskimo and Aleut societies is desperately needed in order to save anthropological data which will be irretrievably lost within the very near future. The Eskimo and the Aleut cultures have already undergone considerable change... There still remains time to gather ethnographic data on the extant *remnants* of the ways of life of the groups. (Rubel 70)

A large body of English-language texts aid my study, and, additionally, I use sources written in French, German, Inuktitut, Dutch, and Danish in which languages I have varying degrees of passive competency; whenever the original Inuktitut of a contact-traditional song text is available, they are included (specifically in chapters 4 and 6).<sup>3</sup> I consult the songs composed in the modern era, the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in a multi-lingual format; texts authored in the English-speaking areas of Inuit *Nunangat* are amended by their Inuktitut form in case there is one, and I translate French-speaking Nunavik poets from French to English.<sup>4</sup> I read and understand French to an adequate degree, and have a basic conversational knowledge of North Qikiqtani Inuktitut, and an additional knowledge of literary, ethnohistorical, and cultural concepts in Inuktitut, which I apply in my dissertation. Inuktitut concepts especially are expected by both Inuit and the Canadian academia to be discussed in the language of the culture in which they occur, which is a general practice of Inuit scholarship. Also, through the use of the original terms, which oftentimes have no one-word English equivalent, I wish my research to be approachable and respectable towards Inuit scholars and people in general, as well as I mean to provide an opportunity for settler and international readers to get acquainted with Inuit culture.

<sup>3</sup> *Inuktitut* or *Inuttut* is used for the collection of related, sometimes markedly different, dialects spoken by different Inuit groups; specifically, variations of Inuktitut in the central-Eastern Arctic and Inuinnaqtun in the Western Arctic (Strong, “Talk to Me”).

Strictly speaking, the ‘contact-traditional’ time in the case of Inuit indicates the post-contact and pre-settlement time period, roughly from the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, however, in David Damas’s and other leading ethnographers’ use, it indicates the post-Boas era (turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) of ethnography until settlement. For the purposes of my dissertation, I adhere to the narrower timeframe.

<sup>4</sup> I could not locate poems in Inuinnaqtun (Nunavik Inuktitut); therefore, I translated French language poems to English.

Contemporary spoken word and written poems composed in English are also analyzed, thus, revealing the many ways in which the conceptualization of identity has changed since the dawn of the first ethnographical era in the 1910s. A close investigation of textual markers of Inuit identity provide a clearer understanding of how Inuit identity has been shaped and what identity—as conceptualized by the notion of *inummariq*, which directly translates as ‘true Inuk’—means for the twenty-first century Inuit residing in the Arctic and beyond.<sup>5</sup> By examining Inuit songs and poetry in both the oral and the written tradition, I explore the manner in which autochthonous identity is negotiated and constructed. *Inummariq* is in part manifested through *inunnguiniq*, the process of gaining personhood among Inuit.<sup>6</sup> Key elements of this facet of identity relate to good hunting skills, land survival skills, adhering to traditional law called *maligarjuat*, abiding by the instruction of the elders, respecting the teachings of traditional Inuit knowledge.<sup>7</sup> Inuit knowledge based on tradition is also referred to as IQ or Inuit *qaujimajatuqangit*; IQ carries the traits that signify what is traditionally accepted as Inuit. The examined texts are expected to reflect IQ, the degree of which carries considerable significance as it shows how identity has changed.<sup>89</sup>

Investigations covering the ethnohistoric record reveal that Inuit communities in the Canadian North have experienced tremendous change, which resulted in the nomadic hunters’ adoption of a sedentary lifestyle and settling after World War II in hamlets across the Arctic. Hamlets are also referred to as settlements, a term that reflects modifications to lifestyle. In spite of cultural and social change apparent in food sourcing, the introduction of commerce, prevalence of salaried work, a strong continuity exists between the traditional past and the modern present. Many born and raised on the land now occupy leadership positions in the semi-sovereign Inuit homeland that relies on governance and social structure borrowed from the

<sup>5</sup> The plural of *Inummariq* or *Inummarik* is *Inummariiit*.

<sup>6</sup> *Inunnguiniq* is the process of making a human being (Karetak et al. 3).

<sup>7</sup> *Maligarjuat* literally means “big things that must be followed.” These ethical principles are as follows: working for the common good and not being motivated by personal interest or gain, living in respectful relationships with every person and thing that one encounters, maintaining harmony and balance, and planning and preparing for the future. Failure to abide by these ideals has serious consequences.

<sup>8</sup> *Qaujimajatuqangit* can be best understood as Inuit wisdom, and is often translated as Inuit traditional knowledge, although many Inuit dispute the addition of “traditional” (Karetak et al. 1) The foundational ideas of IQ are:

Respecting others, relationships and caring for people.

Fostering good spirit by being open, welcoming and inclusive.

Serving and providing for family and/or community.

Decision making through discussion and consensus.

Development of skills through observation, mentoring, practice, and effort.

Working together for a common cause.

Being innovative and resourceful.

Respect and care for the land, animals and the environment.

<sup>9</sup> Traditional is anything not European-influenced, either before or after settlement, e.g.: activities, moral codes, elements of intellectual and material culture.

South. Most Inuit accept progress, and make changes to their lifestyle in order to thrive out on the land and in the city. In fact, the nearly tenfold growth of the Inuit population since the establishment of the settlements in the North proves not only the success of the administered policies, but the underlying Inuit philosophy that relies on the acquisition and adoption of survival skills, techniques, and tools that allow for an easier life. Such borrowing does not contradict traditions, as continuous progression is perceived as natural and desirable. Inuk carver Jacopoosie Peter observes this general tendency by proclaiming that “tradition [is regarded] as being dynamic and [he] know[s] that [his] father looked at tradition in the same way.” Additionally, he quotes his father, mentioning that traditions should be kept in the past; whenever newer ways of doing things are available, they should be adopted. He does not doubt that this has always been the Inuit way (qtd. in Rosenthal 33).

Prior to contact with European culture—which eventually led to settlement—Inuit in Arctic Canada had a highly developed oral tradition including but not limited to songs and stories. Missionary teachers who travelled to the Arctic and stayed to establish congregations first learned the language of Inuit in order to communicate with them and eventually translate and teach the Bible. Literacy, education, and the improved healthcare provided by missionaries complemented rather than replaced traditional ways of learning (Alia 46). Initially, the adoption of Christianity was concurrent with the retainment of old beliefs, and the addition of new skills, such as reading and writing. Through this new medium, oral tradition slowly began to develop into a written one. Consequently, writing has become a tool in preserving Inuit intellectual culture. As a result of the work of missionaries and those Inuit who were open to integrating a new skill into traditional knowledge, so there is now a body of Inuit literature in Canada available in Inuktitut, English, and French. Regardless, traditional Inuit culture today still seems in danger of vanishing. According to Markoosie, author of *Harpoon of the Hunter*, the first Inuit novel, “much of [Inuit] oral history has been lost or no longer told by those who possess such knowledge of [the] past” (37). Writing, therefore, is essential; and with its aid, a part of Inuit culture has been salvaged. Therefore, there is more to my dissertation than researching Inuit culture, it is the lighting of the *kulliq* to spread the word, to perform scientific *unikkausivut*, hence, participating in keeping Inuit culture alive.

To carry out authentic research concerning ethnography be it material or literary, as in my case, field work is an absolute must, as shown by all the literature I have consulted. Thus, it is fortunate, that I spent time in the Canadian Arctic Archipelago as a government employee (as a Canadian citizen with a then-primary residence in Vancouver) working in the Qikiqtaaluk

Region of Nunavut, in the hamlet of Igloolik at Ataguttaaluk High School, as a Senior English Language Arts teacher (the equivalent of “magyar nyelv és irodalom tanár”) teaching the high school subject English. It was my expressed intent to not only study their culture, but live among Inuit (my interest in their culture goes back to a time when I was a preschooler), hoping that my first-hand experience can feed into the work put towards a scholarly monograph, if I ever embark upon the completion of one such endeavor, which happened three and a half years after my time in Nunavut.

## 1.2. Thesis

Tracking the nature of identity change and consolidation is the main focus of my research, especially the analysis of the degree of reinforcement and oftentimes confusion displayed in song lyrics and poetry that implicitly contain Inuit identity. Inuit embrace novel things as long as they ease their circumstances, evidenced by elders in Nancy Wachowich’s in *Saqiyuq*, a set of interviews that appeared in print in 1999 and also by carver Jacobsie Peter in Caroline Rosenthal’s 2009 study “Locations of North in Canadian Literature and Culture.” Yet, various negative autochthonous cultural identity components may be present at any time in someone with confused cultural identity, such as not seeing oneself as Inuit, or seeing oneself as Inuit but disliking it, and even considering oneself as a helpless victim incapable of agency.<sup>10</sup> In examining various texts, I seek to locate and analyze such instances in which identity and its development may be evidenced. Identity relies on traditions and values present in cultural memory, which I aim to define. Since the manner in which we appreciate the past is influenced by the present, cultural memory is not static, but manifests as a dynamically changing phenomenon, therefore, the Inuit notion of identity allows for alterations between the past and present. This flexible quality of memory is key to studying cultural changes and through them understanding identity and its transformation.

In my quest for significant traces of identity in song lyrics, I identify themes and tropes that serve as extensions of the *inummarig* concept. The term *inummarig*, is solely employed to

<sup>10</sup> The Greek-origin word ‘autochthone’ and its derivations are used in place of the synonymous ‘Indigenous’ or ‘Aboriginal’ in order to avoid misunderstandings. While ‘Indigenous’ tends to replace ‘Aboriginal’ in most recent English language texts, French speaking Inuit— such as those traditionally residing in Nunavik—and other French-Canadian speakers may identify a negative connotation with this word. Autochthone is the preferred word in French, and as I do use French language texts and represent the entire culture of Canada, believe that autochthone is the optimal word to refer to Inuit.

describe marked shifts in Inuitness as observed through an in-depth study of identity, cultural history, and intellectual culture (song texts and poems in particular). Through applying the lens of social psychology and literary anthropology, I treat identity as a marker that reveals culture through literature. Identity is understood as a specific set of *inummariq* characteristics, a concept closely linked to acquiring Inuit *qaujimajatuqangit* and *maligarjuat*, two principles that presuppose the knowledge of *sila*.<sup>11</sup> Such knowledge includes land and sea skills, such as predicting caribou migrations, superb abilities to fish and hunt—also known as land skills—with a now contact-reliant set of tools. Such individual and generational conceptualizations of Inuit can be revealed through texts showcasing tradition, encounter, settlement, education, language skills, and cultural revitalization in the community. Inuit identity keeps changing constantly, which is evidenced by the adoption of Christianity, writing, trapping, nine-to-five lifestyle, media, and Western technology into the body of Inuit daily life, cultural identity, and knowledge. Land skills today mean not only navigating the tundra via *kamutiq* rather driving a quad (called ‘Honda’ by Inuit).<sup>12</sup> Many of the changes are due to what is called in Northern studies as Southern culture, the Western-style cultural heritage and norms of the Canadian provinces below the treeline. *Inummariq*, therefore, is understood as a dynamic concept that is simultaneously traditional and modern itself and within the Canadian cultural framework. This notion of duality is exemplified by the way Inuit orient themselves on the tundra: they look not only forward but backward to see both the direction of their starting point and the end goal. By seeing where they came from, they remember how they got there and also know the way back home.

The title of my dissertation consists of a literary title (*From Arctic Wayfarers to Arctic Denizens*) in the first part, which indicates the overall direction of identity change in Inuit culture. Since the herein used two nouns are literary, I added a specific, scientific title (*Inuit Cultural Identity **and** Its Textual Manifestations*; emphasis added) that explains the two main parts of my dissertation and how they are connected. First and foremost, this is a study of identity, and in the latter half of the dissertation I call forth orature and poetry to see how the characterized identity is reflected in them. Additionally, my literary title pays hommâge to Canadian ethnographer David Damas, and his seminal work *Arctic Migrants, Arctic Villagers: The Transformation of Inuit Settlement in the Central Arctic* (2004), a detailed archival study of settlement documents. However, my change of his wording is purposeful; once Inuit used to be the prime wayfarers of the Arctic, magically prevailing and finding their way and livelihood

<sup>11</sup> *Sila* is the personified environment, climate, and nature itself; sometimes it/she can also mean knowledge, all-encompassing spirit, and the universe.

<sup>12</sup> A *kamutiq* is a wooden sled tied after a dog team, quad, or snowmobile to transport goods.

in the most inhospitable environment on earth, in this sense, they personify the character of a wayfarer, rather than a migrant, a term Damas used to emphasize the paradigmatic changes occurring in the 1950s and 1960s putting an end to the nomadic and semi-nomadic contact-traditional lifestyle. Although Inuit hamlets can be called villages, they are officially termed either a hamlet or a settlement. The reason I refer to Inuit as denizens is to highlight their precarious situation. A denizen, as opposed to a citizen, is characterized by dispossession from rights, such as the representation of interests (Lea, "From Denizen" 4). Denizenation at one point in history represented a process of gaining citizenship in England, such as in the case of Flemish painter Anthony Van Dyck. The term denizen may also refer to any national of a country, whether citizen or not, with a right to remain in and return to that country. Before the creation of Arctic settlements, citizenship for nomadic Inuit was not realized, similarly as in the United States, where unassimilated Native Americans, although born in the U.S., were not citizens but a domestic dependent nation within the United States (the Indian Citizenship Act in 1924 made all Native Americans born in the United States American citizens). Wayfaring describes the self-reliant Inuit of contact-traditional times, while denizenship alludes to the loss of agency produced by post-World War II settlement.

My dissertation, therefore, is made up of three balanced parts. The first one (chapters 1, 2, and 3; pp. 1-91) describes one of the primary goals of my research, which is to design a framework that is specifically suited to examine the changing Inuit identity. I include this framework, that I call Inuit identity composition and change analysis (ICCA), in my theory section (Chapter 2), which as a consequence, in scope and length goes beyond what is usually expected in a theoretical chapter. I also provide a solid ethnohistorical background to the framework (Chapter 3). ICCA is not only a way of examining how identity changes through generations and in different enculturative settings, but as an extension, it is a lens through which orature and literature can be analyzed, which connects the reader to the second part of the dissertation. The second part (Chapters 4, 5, and 6; pp. 92-181), represents my other main objective, which is to use song texts and poems to further analyze the changes in Inuit identity and to categorize Inuit texts introducing the new terminology orature in the analysis of contact-traditional song texts. The ICCA framework and the notion of calling oral tradition texts as orature, with modifications, may be applied to Canadian and other autochthony in general, further investigations of which belong to the realm of future research.

As literary theory is the practice of theoretical, methodological and sociological reflection that accompany the reading and interpretation of literary texts and it explains the relationship between literary and other texts, inventing categories in which texts are organized, I deem my addition as a new kind of minor, ally-driven theory that reflects the effects of the shift that has taken place against the dominance of the high theories of previous decades providing a different form of engagement with the text and the methodology by which it is categorized, especially that in recent years both identity politics and a reinvention of poetics have been in the focus.

In the third part of the dissertation (Chapter 7; pp. 181-255), the literature compiled for my identity-sensitive analysis created the foundations for such a scholarly and up-to-date anthology of Inuit orature and poetry that has not been attempted before. A blown-up, completed anthology is intended to be used as a much-needed reference book in both secondary and higher education settings, scholarship, and for the general public.

In more detail, after the introductory chapter, I devise the above-mentioned ICCA in the second chapter of my dissertation. The composite theoretical framework through which the analysis of Inuit cultural identity is carried out addresses three interrelated fields: intercultural psychology, sociology, and man-land relationship through human geography. Fused together they form a workable method to detect cultural changes to identity. From the field of intercultural psychology, theories regarding cultural identity introduced by John W. Berry and Peter Weinreich are contrasted and tailored to examine the Inuit context. Furthermore, from the scientific literature of sociology, Pierre Bourdieu's concept of generations, and the related notion of cultural memory as expounded by Maurice Halbwachs and Jan Assmann are employed to investigate the nature of change occurring in Inuit cultural identity and its manifestations in cultural texts. The science of human geography includes several notions relating to Inuit, such as those examining the significance of territory (the different manners of territorialization) and other man-land relationships including the reliance on the land and the manner of its occupancy are incorporated in the analysis of Inuit cultural identity.

In the third chapter, I propose that Inuit cultural identity can be understood through the principles of the constantly moulded *inummarig*, a special Inuktut term I translate as cultural identity. For the purposes of a cognizant gaze at the evolution of cultural identity I consult not only hard-to-find field notes of the most renowned anthropologists studying Inuit—such as Diamond Jenness, Knud Rasmussen, David Damas, and others—for the past hundred years, but

I examine Inuit history from first contact to contemporary times. Consequently, in this chapter, my dissertation investigates the recent cultural history of Inuit, focussing on the past hundred years, while dissecting changes in identity using an array of theoretical tools, which are introduced in the previous chapter.

In the fourth chapter, I devise a literary framework, organizing songs and poems into a genre-specific system for analysis regarding identity and conceptualize a new set of terminology for musical and poetic texts introducing the term *orature*. Based on hard-to-find material originally collected by Rasmussen, Asen Balikci, and Jenness between 1910 and 1965, and my own search for modern and contemporary poets, I conclude that song lyrics are the ideal genre for the analysis of the Inuit identity paradigm shift. I note that despite the tenfold population growth of the last hundred years and the creation of a bordered homeland, *orature* and literature remain scarce, but change in cultural identity is detectable in them. I present how and why my proposed system has improved upon previous assumptions about Inuit intellectual culture.

In the fifth and final chapter, I propose the fresh notion that modern Inuit musical texts (song lyrics and spoken words) and poetry are similar in style and theme to the traditional *pisiit*, but feature a modern environment therefore, I establish that they function as *pisiit* for the written era. Furthermore, contact-traditional cultural influences culminate in the settlement era, resulting in the new written and spoken styles of musical texts and poems that express an emerging amalgamated Inuit identity reflective of the multicultural sentiment of Canada. In short, in the fourth and fifth chapters—by reviewing pre-settlement and settlement lyric traditions respectively—I embark upon an analysis through a wide range of genres shedding light on identity markers first in songs—which form the richest area of Inuit intellectual culture—followed by a thorough examination of hymns, modern and contemporary song texts, spoken word poems, and poems.

### **1.3. The Current State of Scholarship Pertaining to the Study of Identity**

In this thesis, I devise a theoretical framework, through which my analysis of Inuit cultural identity is carried out. No previous monograph discussing Inuit identity in this manner exist, and due to the oral nature of much of Inuit intellectual culture, the literature I rely on is hard to find, and less robust than in the case of more well-known fields. Hence, in addition to

referencing some of the articles that drove my questions, I will survey the main concepts relating to identity and propose my stance and usage of vocabulary. Since the literary-cultural branch of Inuit studies is new, a substantial number of ideas relating to framework, terminology, and methodology is my own design. First, a thorough overview of the study of identity, especially the concepts, terminology, and works of scientists specifically engaged with autochthonous identity are explicated. Building on prior examinations of identity, I consult the work of scholars in the field and tailor some existing general ideas to the Inuit context, in which they have not been used before. By placing old tools to work new fields and connecting concepts in an unprecedented fashion a new avenue for understanding and examining Inuit identity opens up.

### **Terminology**

Firstly, every field employs its own terminology by which we name things we study. To be precise, thus, is of singular significance. Terminology regarding identity is often confusing. The term “ethnic identity” is used to denote Inuit identity emphasizing a distinct ethnicity, while the simultaneously used “national identity” focuses on political aspirations. Therefore, using the phrase “cultural identity” is most appropriate in terms of autochthonous identity as it signals that “aboriginal peoples in Canada share many cultural attributes, and frequently a common history in relation to the larger society, even though there are many specific cultures in the strict sense of the term” observes John W. Berry (3) in “Cultural Identity in Plural Societies” published in 1993. In my research, the term ‘cultural identity’ is used to refer to a complex set of characteristics that indicate how one thinks of oneself in relation to their cultural roots within the larger context of a multicultural country.

By exclusively using the term “autochthone” and its derivatives instead of Indigenous or other terms to describe Inuit, this study introduces terminology new to the field of literary-cultural studies, borrowing from anthropology and ethnography. I use this distinct phrasing while discussing identity for two reasons: firstly, to avoid a political tone where there is none, and secondly to be polite and precise. Cultural identity is investigated in this study among a diverse group of Northern peoples called Inuit. Inuit are regarded as one of the first autochthonous peoples in the land that is now called Canada due to their prior settlement on the continent approximately in 1000 CE. Instead of using constantly changing and politically charged expressions to denote such groups as Inuit, I apply the notion of autochthony, a phrase that is—in my view—solid, specific, and, yet broad enough to include several peoples. Since

in French, a language in which some of the original Canadian Inuit texts are written, some other forms of address for Inuit and First Nations are used pejoratively in the common parlance, autochthony serves as a neutral phrase.

Identity formations happen by conceptualizing autochthony, connecting the individual, to the group and a shared territory. Autochthony on an individual level represents descent from the place of birth where the individual still resides, whereas on the collective level, autochthony is manifested by evoking the past based on a shared culture. Indigeneity refers to cases of autochthony that demand special entitlements from the state (Zenker, “Autochthony”), such as in the case of land claims, tax free status, and other benefits for Inuit Canadians. Olaf Zenker, thus, suggests that autochthony is a broad, non-political term under which other related terminology may fall (“Autochthony”), and this is the manner in which I employ this term.

As the term “native,” to mean the people born in Canada before immigration from elsewhere, has been replaced by “aboriginal” and still later by “indigenous,” (eventually all of them have been capitalized), a proper understanding of differences in terminology is warranted. “Native Canadian” might be misconstrued to indicate an individual—regardless of ethnicity—born in Canada, hence, this term is not specific enough for a study that aims to examine a distinct people. Aboriginal as a term is too broad and does not address the fact that Inuit settled in North America several thousand years after First Nations had populated the land (Chartier “Social” 34). The term Indigenous is recognized by the the United Nations’ Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the most current terminology and is increasingly replacing previously accepted forms of address; however, among anthropologists, the use of autochthonous as a more proper adjective to mean the original inhabitants of a land has been used, primarily for its neutrality.

In theory, ‘aboriginal’ and ‘indigenous’ are synonymous, and both originate in Latin introduced to the English language in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The word ‘aboriginal’ comes from the Latin *ab* [from] and *origine* [beginning], the ablative case of the word *origo*, and translates to ‘from the beginning;’ while *indigena-ae* consists of *indu* [within] and *genuī* [to beget], the passive form of *gignō*, therefore, the term means ‘born within’ (C. Lewis). By examining the origin of these words, it is, therefore, plain that their meaning is identical with the English term “native” in the sense of being the original—as opposed to migrant—inhabitants in a specific

environment.<sup>13</sup> Given that each of these terms carry a secondary meaning that takes away focus from my intention of neutrally inquiring about cultural imprints of identity itself and the appearance of these in cultural-literary texts, evidencing a shifting understanding of ethnocultural habitus, I opt for using another word—autochthonous—that is not foreign to literary-anthropological studies, such as this endeavour.

The Greek ἀυτόχθονες [autochthonous] consisting of αὐτός [autós] indicating the self and γῆ [khthón], which refers to earth, giving the compound expression “sprung from the land itself,” a term used to denote indigenous in the Romance languages, such as French, where “autochtone” is the accepted and official term to mean a group of peoples, such as Inuit. Therefore, “Indigenous Studies” officially translates to “Études Autochtones” in French and the word autochtone and its derivatives are used to denote the documented first inhabitants of a country. In French, indigenous [indigène] has an offensive connotation tinged with ridicule, while in English, in some contexts, the Australian, “aboriginal” and “aborigine” tend to acquire this quality. Since Inuit in Nunavik and sometimes in other territories live and write poems in a bilingual Inuttut-French environment, I thought it prudent to use a term that is neutral and devoid of pejorative connotations in any context in both of Canada’s official languages.

Myriad approaches aid the conceptualization of identity, as it exhibits a manifold nature, such as cultural, national, ethnic, group, and personal identity with dynamic and performative characteristics. Classic studies of collective identity, like Ernest Renan’s 1883 Sorbonne address entitled “Qu’est-ce qu’une nation?,” and Benedict Anderson’s 1983 *Imagined Communities, Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, define identity as a social construct.<sup>14</sup> In my view, identity in this sense, is a collective and cohesive force that segments populations; it is a means of relating to others based on similarity as a member of a certain group and identifying oneself along differences when measured against other groups. Supporting this view, Richard Jenkins argues in his 1996 *Social Identity* that identity assumes a degree of conformity as one identifies with a certain group, such as Inuit. In my dissertation, identity is understood as a part of the self that is publicly displayed. Despite the plurality of the notion of identity, I solely focus on cultural identity, as it is a particularly cogent form of self-expression for autochthony within a multicultural setting.

<sup>13</sup> In the Canadian Inuit context, we may estimate a time and location from where Inuit themselves have migrated, which in their own culture is referenced as *taimanganiit* [‘time immemorial’].

<sup>14</sup> The title “Qu’est-ce qu’une nation?” translates as “What is Nation?” in English.

## Identity

The 19 pages of literature that I have consulted and engaged with in preparation for completing my research includes most of the major studies on identity and acculturation over the past 60 years; however, on Inuit identity and acculturation specifically research has not been vigorous. Starting in the 1960s, then again in the 1990s, eventually after the formation of Nunavut in the early 2000s, only a few researchers initiated a scholarly discussion on this field of inquiry. This relative lack of interest urged me to delve into a much-needed and neglected area of research within Canadian studies. Autochthony and acculturation have been in the focus of Canadian discourse, but a monograph-length study in relation to Inuit has not been published yet.

In the field of Inuit studies, the tradition of analyzing identity emerged from Asen Balikci's pioneering research on acculturation published in 1961. Balikci's initial observations on cultural differences regarding post-settlement and nomadic Inuit in his article "Some Acculturative Trends among the Eastern Canadian Eskimos" presents the first look at Inuit settlement life and contact-active changes. Inuit acculturation remained largely neglected until a new interest has emerged in the late-1990s. Donna Patrick's 1998 article "Inuit Identities, Language, and Territoriality" expanded the scope of examining Inuit identity to include first language use, and the hamlet as territory in the post-settlement era. Furthermore, André Légaré's milestone examination of Nunavut self-government in his article "Nunavut: The Construction of a Regional Collective Identity in the Canadian Arctic" published in 2002 touches upon the newly-constructed "Nunavummiut" collective identity based on the freshly created semi-autonomous Inuit territory of Nunavut, the most populous Inuit territory.<sup>15</sup> Additionally, Légaré identifies the land itself as a major source of Inuit identity (more so than seen in the case of most nations). The Wachowich-collected conducted and transcribed interviews with Inuit women entitled *Saqiyuq* (1999) is the only publication investigating the lives of Inuit women from different generations. David Damas's *Arctic Migrants, Arctic Denizens: Settlement in the Central-Eastern Arctic* is the only study discussing the paradigmatic shift of settlement based on archival documents. Additionally, Rasmussen's *The Report on the Fifth Thule Expedition* (1921-24) and Jenness' *Canadian Arctic Expedition* (1913-18), ethnographic writings form the basis of most later research.

<sup>15</sup> Nunavummiut means resident of Nunavut or people of Nunavut.

To sum up, regarding terminology and concepts, the herein mentioned authors, such as John W. Berry, Olaf Zenker, Ernest Renan, Benedict Anderson, and Richard Jenkins discussed identity, autochthony, and acculturation in general, while Daniel Chartier, Asen Balikçi, Donna Patrick, André Légaré, and Nancy Wachowich examined Inuit identity in particular. Other works discussing trends and ideas relevant to my thesis are detailed at the beginning of each chapter where they are relevant to my reading therein.

#### **1. 4. Indigenous Research Ethics**

Since my research solely focuses on Inuit culture, the aid of “local knowledge of environmental conditions and socio-economic realities is an important source of insight;” in order to refine hypotheses, “research questions, and interpreting study findings...community residents have experiences that can provide valuable insights” (Nickels et. al (pp. 5-6). The foremost suggestions, mentioned first among many sub-points is *honesty*, followed by the use of Inuktitut during and in the research material (Nickels et. al (p. 8). For these reasons, I specifically mention the *honest* conversations that informally aided my understanding and helped formulate my hypotheses. Inuktitut terminology is required in most serious scholarship regarding Inuit culture; therefore, I employ a fair amount of Inuktitut vocabulary that could not, in many cases, be translated into one precise English term.

The toolkit for Northern researchers in Inuit communities allows for great flexibility regarding the relationship between community and researcher, expanding from a very formal to a contract-based, informal partnership, which was the case in my field trip:

Researchers are increasingly encouraged to engage Inuit communities in northern research. This requires both sides to negotiate a research relationship whereby they jointly define their respective roles and responsibilities, outlining mutual benefits and expectations. Research relationships mean different things in different contexts. In some instances, where the research fieldwork requires direct community involvement and where the community wants to be involved, both parties may wish to draw up a formal research agreement. In other cases, where local involvement is not possible or not desired by the community, informal arrangements may be sufficient. (Nickel et. al 8)

Overall, Indigenous research methodologies diverge from the regular practice, “the process of making local contacts, gaining ethical approvals, and acquiring a research license can [...] take over a year” (Nickel et al. 17).

In scientific literature pertaining to Inuit culture and literature, it is to be expected to use the Inuktitut terms accepted within the culture. It is good form to introduce the Inuktitut term and then explain it within the text or in a footnote, and henceforward adhere to using the Inuktitut term. This is partially because of the decolonizing and Indigenizing attitudes of modern science, and for also precisely conveying information, as opposed to translated terms that do not always correspond to the Inuit ones. The overall stance of my research follows the Indigenizing efforts espoused by both autochthonous people and international academicians. The one occasion when a new English word *orature* is introduced, it is done so with the purpose of decolonizing the manner in which Inuit intellectual culture is compartmentalized because instead of relying on Euro-Western frameworks, it is appropriate to place songs in an Inuit framework.

## 1.5. Sources

The oral culture of pre-literate Inuit in its now-recorded format, along with contemporary writing in various genres constitute the bulk of intellectual culture, the non-material legacy of Inuit. Relics from the past and the new Inuit voices together provide a source for identifying subtle alterations to identity across the decades, evidencing the cultural transitions that had taken place. Oral tradition songs are an endemic genre to Inuit culture, which aptly transitioned to spoken word performance in the contemporary scene and to an extent to popular song lyrics and poetry. The subtly changing lyrics of the spontaneous traditional song genres—unlike folk tales, also known as *unikaktuat*—are highly individualistic, and, therefore, express characteristics of Inuit identity. Their close reading provides an authentic source for the study of the nature of change to identity. Written tradition poetry also suggests that alterations have taken place regarding the understanding of Inuitness, and what a genuine Inuit character, spirit, customs, and identity might mean.

It is possible to observe the life of past generations through songs recorded by ethnographers even in the absence of writing. Changes to socialized norms that govern Inuit thinking and behaviour may be discerned by an informed close reading of the text of song lyrics and poems. Additionally, an honest dialogue (see 1.4.) with elders are crucial in establishing

the notion of identity as it was experienced by the people themselves. In order to achieve this, I relied on my conversations with locals from diverse generational cohorts during my stay in Igloolik from August to December 2016. All of the individuals I refer to in this dissertation are members of the Iglulingmiut community equipped with the oral history of the hamlet. In each case then, as it is now, my goal was to establish respectful channels of dialogue, so that people may open up and relay their genuine experience. In essence, my objective was to ask the right questions, and, therefore, arrive to conclusions that are the result of an authentic, unbiased, and source-heavy (song and poem texts collected through official primary and secondary research) and data-driven (regarding acculturation, identity, and land-related data) research. To complement this intention, my inquiry relies on a plethora of primary and secondary sources, many of which are Indigenized. Names of some of the informants are not public due to the rigorous requirements of the Indigenous Research Ethics Board of Canada and its related tribal advisory boards (Government, *Research*).

Song lyrics and poems are more abundant and applicable than other genres. The novel is still new for Inuit, and folk tales allow for less individual variations in their story, and, thus, are more static in nature and reflect change to a lesser extent. Inuit texts in general are available in long out-of-print anthologies, archived government documents, and field notes by early twentieth-century ethnographers, such as Vilhjalmur Stefansson, Jenness, and Rasmussen. Early sources, such as Captain Charles Francis Hall, who in search of the Franklin expedition visited Qikiqtaaluk and even (until recently) had a hamlet named after him, or geologist Joseph Tyrell, who although contacted the Ihalmiut, did not facilitate a study of oral tradition songs (at least there are no publications as proof) could, therefore, not be used as sources. Obscure poems published in now-derelect bilingual Inuit magazines also provide data based on which it is identifiable in what direction identity has shifted. The fact that some of these poems are written by authors who may have only ever published but one poem does not necessarily take away from the validity of the information derived from them. Inuit publications in general are scarce; when a piece is chosen for publication, it is typically done so by Inuit editors because of the value of the poem for the Inuit community who themselves are the primary target audience. Inuit magazines represent a fair percentage of the sources where later anthologized poems typically first appear.

As a primary source for my investigation of identity, I use a variety of transliterations of oral song lyrics by several named performers, such as Aua, Orpingalik, Ivaluardjuk, Ikinilik, and Eqerqo, and unnamed Inuit singers whose work was collected by mainly Jenness and

Rasmussen between 1910 and 1925. Additionally, Jenness's 1913-19 Canadian Arctic Expedition yielded many songs that were melodically analyzed by Boas' student and pioneer ethnomusicologist Helen H. Roberts, whose personal copy of a rare collection of Copper Inuit (Kitlinermiut) songs helped my own research. To analyze Inuit identity through written poetry, I consult poems composed between the late 1960s and early 2020s by some of the most iconic poets in Inuit culture, such as Alooook Ipellie, Norma Dunning, Taqralik Partridge, Laakkuluk Williamson-Bathory, and lesser-known, accidental poets, albeit with a significant message like Dorothy or Luke Issaluk. All the texts mentioned and presented in parts in the body of the dissertation are included in Chapter 7 in their full format. The origin of texts is indicated and Inuktitut and French originals are included, thus, Chapter 7 provides the first anthology of oral and written poetry of Inuit.

## 1.6. Research Methodology

As a primary source for my investigation of identity, I use a variety of transliterations of texts from Inuktitut to Danish and, finally, to different verbatim and literary English renderings. Language is a crucial part of my investigation and I found it my responsibility to equip myself with a general understanding of Inuktitut in the roman orthography and in basic spoken North Qikiqtaaluk Inuktitut, the dialects of Qikiqtaaluk, also known as Baffin Island. Since a good portion of the texts is authored for an accompanying melody, wherever possible, the songs themselves were listened to in their Inuktitut original. I use different versions of the same text to highlight the kind of artistic freedom the habitual poets of the Inuit land once enjoyed and also to reflect upon the impact of word choices and that of the lack of cultural and multimodal context. In discussing identity and texts, generic foreign words appear in italics (e.g. *nunangat*) and newly-introduced words are in quotation marks when they first (e.g. "autochthony").

Even areas within Qikiqtaaluk that shares two common dialects, vocabulary and pronunciation may vary, especially between generations. The spelling of Inuktitut words, therefore, is not consistent (hence some nouns take a 'q' ending, yet others are generally spelled with a 'k'), and I made my best effort to generally use the form that is found in the primary or secondary source material that I refer to, and whenever many variations are present or words are introduced without an underlying source, I refer to the North Qikiqtaaluk (the communities

of Igloodik, Sanirajak (Hall Beach), Arctic Bay, Pond Inlet, and Clyde River) dialect and spelling conventions.

Specifically, Inuit cultural identity has not yet been examined applying a theoretical framework, although surveys have been conducted; for this reason, I studied identity in general and the scientific approaches that may be applied in its analysis. In designing the first complex system in which Inuit identity is examined, I narrowed down my framework—which is composite just like Inuit identity itself—to three main areas of approach: enculturational stance, generational cohorts, and relationship to the land. In the creation of the theoretical framework, I use several approaches that engage with identity, so as to receive a well-balanced system in which to sift through Inuit identity. Concepts and investigative ideas used for Canadian immigrant, Cuban, African, and European subject cohorts and historical contexts are adapted for the case of Inuit. Theories are selected for compatibility and relevance for Inuit as their history is known through the ethnohistoric record. Focus is placed primarily on culture as it is manifested in psychological, social, and behavioural changes; generational differences; and the location in which intellectual artifacts occur. I engage with Inuit scholars tapping into parts of this multi-layered framework applied towards the analysis of short lyric texts both from the oral and written era.

To examine Inuit identity through texts, my research method entails the close reading of song texts and poems. Most of the modern texts are published in Inuit-focused physical and online magazines and newspapers, such as *Inuit* or *Inukshuk*. Hard copies of single author collections along with original, ethnographic collections by Jenness and Rasmussen were also used. For the compartmentalization of texts into genres, a newly constructed literary framework was used, and while some European frames of reference are adhered to, they are expounded upon as Inuit intellectual culture has sprung into life from a uniquely insulated non-European source. Beyond text sources, my dissertation employs charts, some of which, such as the Fourfold Model, are from John W. Berry, others, like the “Reterritorialization Flow” are my design; in both cases sources are indicated accordingly. Additionally, I enclose each text in its full printed form wherever available in English, French, and Inuktut (including my own translation) in order to enrich the context of the excerpts used in the body of this dissertation.

To amend the verbal relay of my findings, I document my field work—as it is expected in a work of literary ethnography—on top of maps and graphs from primary sources and those of my own making, with the use of original photos both from ethnographical resources and a

great many that I took in Qiqiktaaluk, while being a denizen there. In my view, these photos greatly enhance the visualization of certain uncommon situations I refer to. Each photo is unique and is chosen from my photos to explain a circumstance that can be hard to fathom without a visual aid, given that Inuit culture and its physical place is an extremely difficult-to-reach part of the world. Whenever a concept (*angakoq*) or activity (*pisiq*) from the past was expected to be difficult to report in an authentic manner—given the physical and cultural distance from the European and most of the international readership—I located and included some hard-to-find field photographs not in circulation anymore. In order to visually describe my subjects and the acculturative impact of the South, I included some photos from Rasmussen and modern Inuit sources, which I indicated accordingly. Photographs also illustrate the space inhabited by Inuit as well as explain the places of settlement and traditional activities, as well as modern activities that I recorded on my field trip. In each case, the origin of print sources, photos, and charts are indicated appropriately, and all photos are properly labelled described in-text, under the photo, and on the “List of Photos.”

## II. INUIT IDENTITY COMPOSITION AND CHANGE ANALYSIS (ICCA): A THEORETICAL APPROACH

### 2.1. Overview of the Theoretical Framework Used in the Present Study

Firstly, presently, there is no one framework used to analyze Inuit identity, therefore, it was my main objective to lay down the foundations for a sound system that caters for all aspects of Inuit identity. I name the thus-resulting system as Inuit identity composition and change analysis (ICCA). Therefore instead of providing a review of already existing theoretical frameworks and justifying why they are selected, I embarked upon educating myself on the topic of identity from several fields of inquiry so as to design a framework that suits specifically Inuit, given their culture, national character, and history, which influenced the criteria for analysis. This chapter details how ICCA was formulated and is integrated into what is intended as the “theory” chapter.

In an effort to receive valid results and to adhere to Canadian scholarship norms of Indigenization, I approached identity from an Inuit viewpoint, that is I narrowed down the many angles from which identity may be examined to the two that most matter to Inuit in any historical time period, and that is generations and land. My choice was guided by my knowing how much each generation builds on the wisdom and knowledge of the last, how much elders are the healers and judges of Inuit communities, and also how fiercely Inuit identify with the land upon which they stand as the sole provider of life. As Inuit is a culture greatly affected by European colonial efforts, and for the purpose of delivering a balanced study, I found it pertinent to reach back to methods of identity analysis that incorporates theories from a hegemonic viewpoint as well. Canadian psychologist John W. Berry and British psychologist Peter Weinreich both tackled the notion of identity primarily from the vantage point of immigrant diasporic individuals and groups. In the case of Weinreich, in particular, his work is emphatically interdisciplinary integrating key insights from psychology, sociology, and social anthropology, in order to understand societal and psychological processes. Inuit represent a displaced people living in a larger diverse and multicultural environment that is rapidly changing from generation to generation, hence generations are an important factor in their identity. Land-related concepts, such as place, cultural space, and manner of residence, each of them a key feature of human geography, are crucial in a recently post-nomadic culture. My own framework, similarly to the

composite nature of Inuit identity—my object of analysis—is purposefully multidisciplinary so that a broad, detailed, and all-encompassing study of Inuit identity could be carried out for not only the purpose of this dissertation but the future analysis of works of literary and visual arts.

Specifically, in my analysis of identity, I utilize the tools of intercultural psychology and human geography, with special interest in the areas these fields consider, such as enculturation, territoriality, and generational difference. In characterizing the nature of change to ethnocultural identity in a multicultural setting, I employ frameworks of intercultural psychology designed by Berry in 1989 known as the Fourfold Model, and Weinreich's addition to the concept in 1991. As Inuit life, therefore, identity relies upon the relationship to the land, to examine cultural identity, I use the ideas inherent in some of the key concepts of human geography; these relate to spatiality, such as: territoriality (both de-, and reterritorialization), boundaries, and borders. Spatiality and the manner in which land utilization has changed throughout the time researchers have studied Inuit help in defining identity. Spatiality has a strong influence on constructing Inuit cultural identity evidenced by the frequent references to land in Inuit poetry in both in its oral and written forms.

Borders and boundaries are imaginary but agreed-upon restrictions that carry significance beyond their physical and intellectual representations. Border creation and boundary removal, two geopolitical actions relating to identity, highlight the connections between identity and physical versus soft demarcations. Nunavut's becoming a hard boundary goes against the current trend of lifting borders and erasing cultural boundaries in other parts of the world. I regard *inummarig* as a cultural boundary irrespective of physicality, and as such, its congregation within the newly-appointed hard boundary of Nunavut—and in the other three areas of the Inuit homeland—creates a soft boundary. Therefore, I concur with Ansi Paasi who asserts that ethno-regionalism establishes new boundaries, reterritorializing the land ("Boundaries and Social Practice" 669). Additionally, in their physical and geographical understanding, Inuit boundaries are reinforced by the climate and unique environment of Canada north of the 66<sup>th</sup> parallel.

Pierre Bourdieu's theory of generational difference focuses on the alterations of habitus and cultural capital in each generation. His theory can be utilized as a means of explaining cultural change independent of acculturative processes. Generational struggle seems to be especially significant in major shifts in taste and practice (Edmunds et al. 13) which naturally get amplified when customs and habits of a different culture arrive to a new location with

autochthonous cultures already present, such as in the case of Inuit and settler cultures. In Bourdieu's 1972 publication entitled *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, he explains how members of a generation share a distinct generational habitus unique only to them, upon which members of upcoming generations build, leading to alterations to the system and, in an ideal case, advancement (Fig.1; Fig.2.). An example for such generational change is that of Jacopoosie Peter's, who reminisces about a conversation with his father as follows:

I look at tradition as being dynamic and I know that my father looked at tradition in the same way, where he grew up using a kayak and dog teams and at a later age when snowmobiles came and the outboard motors came, to him, they were just tools. And I asked him 'why don't you start a dog team again?' 'Been there, done that, keep it there in the past' [he said]. Actually, that is a very Inuit way of looking at things. Your tradition lives on, for example, using at one time a harpoon to kill a bear and then firearms came, and it was just as manly to kill a bear with a rifle. Anything that makes your life easier, you adopt, and that is what we have done, we have adopted things (Jacopoosie Peters qtd. in Rosenthal, 33)



Figure 1. Discarded *kamutiq*; in the old days Inuit dogs—*qimmiit*—used to pull these when travelling from winter to summer hunting grounds or when families visited (own photo).



Figure 2. One of the last Inuit dog teams in Inuit *Nunangat* pictured in Igloolik (own photo).

Inuit dogs, *qimmiit*, are not used as the standard manner of travel, the enculturative impact and generational change are both palpable. Igloolik, once famous for its dog teams across the homeland, has but one professionally run team. History, which itself is the playground for mutually acculturative processes, reveals changes in the outward presentation and inward yearnings of different generations. Since Inuit exhibit marked cultural specificity, Bourdieu's theory can be utilized for an identity-sensitive study of Inuit poetry.

## 2.2. The Enculturative Pattern of Inuit Identity Formation

Alterations to cultural identity may only present a significant concern in case of continuous intercultural contact or cohabitation (Berry "Acculturation" 691), which occurred primarily after the establishment of Inuit settlements. In Canada, the most significant culture-specific changes happened primarily through sustained contact with the rest of the country in the post-war years, and not because of sporadic encounters with European explorers. Some changes, mostly relating to hunting economy, are only observable in Inuit culture from the early

20<sup>th</sup> century contact-traditional era (1900-) on, while marked changes manifest only through internalizing sedentary lifestyle in the second half of the last century (1950-). Changes as to how cultural identity is negotiated and experienced may be traced back through the analysis of song texts and poetry, which are the primary media of Inuit intellectual culture.

People naturally regard themselves as part of their cultural community, collectively they belong to a group, however, the matter of identity gains significance when they experience intercultural contact as individuals. Acculturation, a process that indicates changes that happen as a result of direct and sustained contact between groups of culturally dissimilar people was first described in 1936 (Redfield et al. 149). In the case of acculturation, the impact of cultural change is one-directional. Transculturation, a concept formulated by Fernando Ortiz in his 1940 essay “Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar” accentuates the trading element and the mutual internalizing of received cultural elements. The notion that people are the primary agents of their own cultural transformation also gains importance, since collectively or individually they may refuse certain external ideas or integrate them in a reinterpreted manner. Enculturation is yet another process of cultural ownership, in which an established culture teaches an individual the accepted norms and values of society. Enculturation, therefore, is originally used to describe the maturation of children in the country of their birth. However, unlike assimilation or acculturation, the enculturation process can precisely describe the experiences of minorities in the Canadian multiculturalism, a system based on a kaleidoscopic presentation of cultures as equals. Ideally, enculturation ensures that each individual retains their agency and may choose to accept or reject certain elements of the reigning culture in which they live without suffering ostracism.

The cultural context for Inuit Canadians is unique as they are peoples whose arrival prior to settler Canadians places them in a cultural situation similar to those of First Nations.’ In general, acculturation literature primarily examines psychosocial phenomena relative to immigration-based acculturation; yet little research examines acculturation as it pertains to autochthonous peoples. Based on large-scale studies, Peter Weinreich proposes that in most cases it is enculturation—a less impactful process—that transforms autochthonous identities upon contact with other cultures (“Enculturation” 124). Weinreich’s statistical system of analysis does not, but his proposed notion of enculturation does rely on Ortiz’s concept of transculturation. However, transculturation suggests a mutually integrative process, while enculturation more precisely reflects the primary direction of cultural loan, hence it is especially relevant in the case of Inuit in Canada.

Although acculturation was first identified by Robert Redfield in 1936, the concept of psychological acculturation was introduced by Theodore D. Graves in 1967 (“Psychological Acculturation” 337), applying the term to refer to new behaviors that individuals use in cultural contact situations. While vast individual differences exist in how people deal with acculturative change (Berry “Immigration, Acculturation” 5), I observed that usually two issues are predominant in most cases: firstly, the decision whether one’s own cultural identity should be retained; secondly, the degree of mainstream culture acquisition. By examining the manner in which cultural adoption takes place, two distinct types of processes may be observed. The exponential type presents a unidimensional acculturation model which assumes that cultural change takes place along a single continuum. Such process may be observed when the ability to speak one’s native tongue is expected to decrease as proficiency in the language of the mainstream culture increases (Gordon 234; 241-245). However, the other, bidimensional acculturation model regards cultural maintenance and adoption as two independent dimensions (Arends-Toth and van der Vijver, “Assessment” 144). I conclude that such a domain-specific model assumes that individuals retain their culture differently, depending on a given situation. My conclusion is supported by studies that suggest that this assumption is correct as the acculturation strategy people use in private can differ from the public areas of their lives (Arends-Tóth and van de Vijver, “Multiculturalism” 249). For instance, individuals may reject the values of the host culture in their private life, thus, differing from the mainstream culture; nevertheless, they adapt to the majority culture in their work life, resulting in the occurrence of either integration or assimilation. My example in the case of Inuit is when English is used to get ahead in life but Inuktitut is preferred in all other cases.

Berry’s fourfold model of acculturation categorizes adaptation strategies, along two dimensions and four strategies providing a framework for a thorough analysis of identity forming processes (*Acculturation* 20, Fig. 3). The first dimension of the model concerns either the retention or the rejection of one’s native culture (indicated as issue 1 on Berry’s chart in Fig. 3), while the second dimension addresses how the individual regards the host culture by either adopting or rejecting it. I adapted Berry’s four acculturation strategies for the Inuit situation; the strategies that may emerge in the case of Inuit are assimilation (Canadian), integration or biculturation (Canadian Inuit), marginalization (confused identity) and segregation (Inuit, not Canadian). Assimilation as a strategy deems minority cultural identity as irrelevant, and marginalization implies that the individual cannot identify with the majority culture. Marginalization may eventually lead to total rejection of the host culture, leading to segregation. The biculturation strategy implies a positive orientation toward the maintenance

of the cultural integrity of the non-dominant group, such as Inuit, therefore, the group can become an integral part of the larger societal framework (Berry, "Immigration, Acculturation and Adaptation" 8). I observed that when this process occurs, a large number of distinct cultural groups cooperate within the larger society, resulting in a diversity of cultures promoted in Canada since the early 1970s. This idealistic system, however, is often overridden by reality. I find that Inuit who are capable of achieving biculturalism on the individual level are those with superb mental health, which in many cases is a problem area in some autochthonous communities (Berry et al., "Comparative" 491). Regardless of excellent mental health being tied to success rates, studies in a number of aboriginal communities reveal a general preference for the bicultural strategy of acculturation (Berry, "Aboriginal Cultural identity" 10). An acculturation study by Catherine T. Kwantes and Twiladaw Stonefish also supports my finding that maintaining or learning about heritage (depending on the generational cohort) is manifestly endorsed, while a strong connection to the mainstream culture is also preferred by Canadian Indigenous communities participating in this project (63).

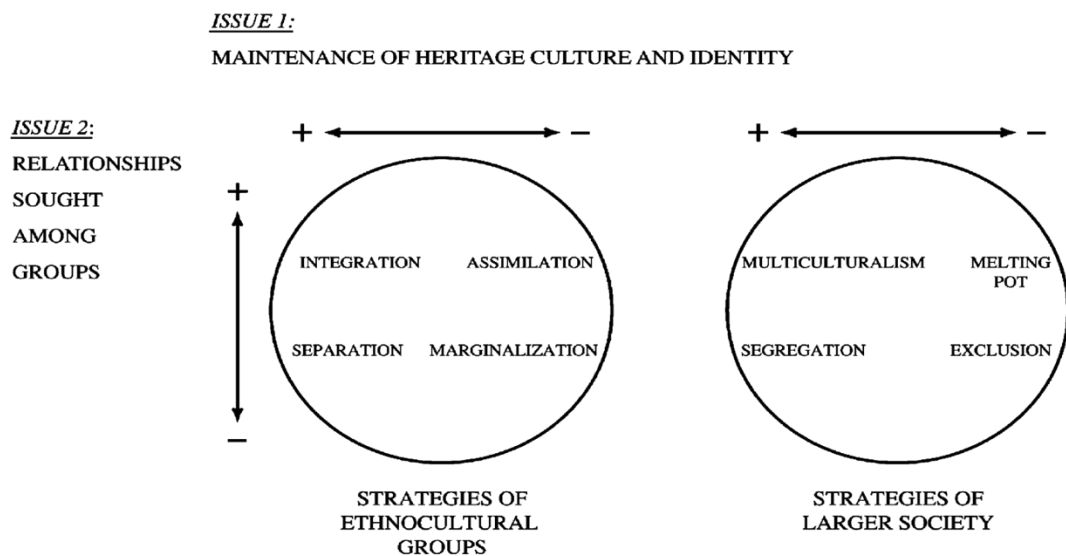


Figure 3. Berry's Fourfold Model (*Acculturation* 20)

Using Berry's scheme as a starting point, Weinreich considers the relationship between heritage culture, such as Inuit, and mainstream—in this case, Canadian—culture as one that is flexible. Weinreich's identity structure analysis [ISA], which employs a large number of questions and computerized data management, critiques Berry's acculturation model, arguing that enculturation is a fitter term to describe the relationship between autochthonous and settler populations in Canada. Enculturation, in this case, represents soft acculturation. While enculturation is primarily used to describe, as indicated above, the process of socialization within one's own culture, the proximity of two or more cultures within a multicultural context

allow for owning both cultures—the ethnocultural minority and the mainstream majority—in a manner similar to a child being raised in a monocultural environment. In a multicultural context, therefore, I believe that the psycho-social impact of ethnocultural minorities due to exposure to the mainstream culture result in a process that can be referred to as enculturation, which is my preferred term for the purposes of studying Inuit cultures.

I assert that unlike immigrant communities, autochthonous cultural groups in a multicultural setting represent the host culture, even though both regarding size and culture they belong to a minority; therefore, it is likely that they possess a certain measure of agency. In fact, studies relying on identity structure analysis as a conceptual framework show agency on the part of the minority group indicating that the process experienced by the studied groups is enculturation, rather than acculturation, which would entail the loss of control over one's destiny (Weinreich, "Enculturation" 124). ISA distinguishes between two distinct perspectives: primordial perspective showing ethnic continuity, traditionalism, and continued respect for the minority culture; and situational perspective, which amplifies cultural revival while appreciating the majority culture (Weinreich and Saunderson 115). Additionally, Weinreich introduces a third perspective, which shows a composite of the two models described above. Such a mixed perspective may be so to a varying degree depending on whether the observed individual or group decides to lean toward primordial or situational perspectives in a given situation. I postulate that from the perspective of the individual, rather than acculturating and establishing an entirely new personhood, enculturation of certain elements of the majority, or in the case of Inuit, settler culture may be an easier process as is evidenced in interviews with Inuit subjects in Caroline Rosenthal's 2009 study of the North. Enculturation becomes relevant in this case as the existence of mixed identities reveal that people cherry pick which facets of their autochthonous cultural identity is worth retaining. Thus, I consider the main difference between the above discussed two approaches that while Berry's model identifies different manners in which minorities live within a multicultural society and how society reacts to them, Weinreich's ISA analyzes levels of enculturation that may occur when the individual has a minority cultural identity.

Acculturation, as defined earlier, is a process involving continuous and direct contact between two or more culturally different groups (Fox et al.). In the case of Inuit, however, I deem these two specific characteristics, namely, "continued" and "direct" forms of contact to be less significant than in those host cultures south of the 66<sup>th</sup> parallel. This, I posit, is mainly due to the remote location of the Inuit homeland, and its costly and limited access that involved

a treacherous and burdensome journey in the past. I claim that acculturation until the digital age—which arrived in Inuit *Nunangat* in the 2010s—was weakened primarily by three factors: the attachment of Inuit to their homeland, the unwillingness to be immersed in Southern culture, and the distance any influence arriving from the outside must travel in order to reach Inuit.<sup>16</sup> Considering this fact, in the case of contact-related identity change in Inuit culture, it is more plausible to speak of enculturation, in which case the individual may choose to adopt certain elements of a received culture and decide to reject others. This is not to say that enculturation, with time, may not present pervasive alterations to cultural identity, which I think is a valid risk.

Although as of 2024, heavily acculturative channels, such as network TV, the Internet, and social media are accessible in most Inuit homes, their contents are largely irrelevant to a lifestyle tailored to the Arctic desert. Nonetheless, the entry point of acculturation with sustained changes to the subsistence hunting lifestyle of Inuit can be traced back. I identify this point with the introduction of a mixed economy based on commerce relying on arctic fox trapping for pelt and the provision of advanced hunting tools that made such activity possible and yielded sufficiently large number of goods to trade and changed Inuit life for good. It was unforeseeable that trapping would lead to the loss of appetite for hunting altogether (Damas 20, 21, 31), even after the desire for pelts had dissipated. Based on the Hudson's Bay Company's [HBC] and government records of the time, it is, however, suggested that “the trapping industry accommodated itself to subsistence economy rather than conversely” (Damas, *Arctic* 24). Nevertheless, it is safe to say that a shift towards mixed economy led to sedentarization and a neglect of hunting and interest in store-bought commodities, outcomes that eventually bred various social ills. Albeit proto-Inuit lived in fixed settlements during the Thule era, at the dawn of the contact-traditional decades a nomadic (or semi-nomadic in some cases) lifestyle was practiced across the Inuit tribes of the Arctic. The fallout of trading and the accompanying sedentarization, thus, brought the Inuit populace closer in lifestyle to the rest of Canada, yet still Inuit remained more traditional than most of the rest of the country. I find it evident that this modified lifestyle affected the land-person relationship, alienating the individual from his or her surroundings, but not completely eliminating the bond between the two. It is I am convinced that enculturation, rather than acculturation, is evidenced in the survival of such

<sup>16</sup> South and Southern with a capital 's' refers to the cultural region within Canada south (not capitalized indicating the direction) of the 66<sup>th</sup>. In the past, the Euro-Western ethos reigned this part of Canada, now it is multicultural. Whereas Western with a capital 'w' refers to Western culture including Southern and other European, American, etc. cultures.

activities as hunting and sharing ‘country food,’ sewing *kamiq* and *amautiq*, and travelling on *kamutiq*. Oceanic harvest—that I observed myself—remains a communal activity complete with the sharing of the catch among the members of the hamlet. (Fig. 4).<sup>17</sup>



Figure 4. Sharing a catch of *arviq* [bowhead whale] among Iglulingmiut (own photo).

Apparently, over the documented past decades, the isolated nature of Inuit existence has aided the survival of ethnoculturally marked, relatively intact practices. At the same time, I conclude that the spatial characteristics of the manifestation of Inuit culture contribute to the cultural integrity of Inuit, the formation of Inuit cultural identity that also presents as Canadian becomes hindered by the spatially bound characteristic of Inuit.

Balancing cultural identity in terms of a multicultural country with a considerable segment of its populace being bicultural has been problematized since the birth of the Canadian nation. Most famously in recent history, culture has been discussed by former Canadian Prime Minister, Pierre Elliott Trudeau in his 1971 parliamentary address about introducing the politics of multiculturalism. The Prime Minister applies the context of multiculturalism as a framework

<sup>17</sup> *Kamiq* refers to a type of caribou or sealskin boot, *amautiq* is a hooded parka for women to carry infants in, and a *kamutiq* is a wooden sled.

that assures the cultural freedom of Canadians emphasizing that “[n]ational unity [...] must be founded [...] in one’s own individual identity; out of [which] can grow respect for that of others and a willingness to share ideas, attitudes and assumptions” (*Announcement*). In 1971, the context was that of a divided Anglo- and Francophone nation, however, in the current era, this approach can be extended to all ethnocultural groups in Canada. Most of these groups juggle two cultures, a European-based, mainstream Canadian identity that functions in some official situations, and an ethnocultural identity that is often experienced in private settings, such as celebrations and other family events. I believe that the balance of minority and national identity allows cultural groups like Inuit to retain a unique culture within the one nation of Canada. Recent surveys, such as those conducted by independent sources, which rank multiculturalism as essential in terms of values that epitomize Canadian national identity, illustrate this fact well (Angus Reid Institute). Although Indigenous nationalists heavily criticize Canadian multiculturalism for its shortcomings, such as not being aligned enough with Indigenous goals, multiculturalism unites various segments of society, such as those of the autochthony, historical settlers, and recent immigrants more than the notion of separation based on identity, which may lead to an eventual dissolution of the country itself (Nandori “Inuit”). Canada’s multicultural approach highlights the importance of different cultural identities, additionally acknowledging a Canadian identity shared by all of its citizens regardless of their ethnocultural background.

Identity structure analysis demonstrates the situation of those ethnocultural minorities that live in multicultural societies. ISA distinguishes between the tradition-reliant primordial and the adaptive situational perspective of cultural identity (Weinreich and Saunderson 115). As the study mainly focuses on immigrant populations, by using Weinreich’s method as an investigative tool for studying changes in cultural identity, I place Inuit in the position of ethnocultural migrants that live as a minority in a settler-immigrant society. According to identity structure analysis, heritage-cultural practices, values, and identifications that are uniquely Inuit and those from the received, Southern culture shape an ever-emerging identity (Schwartz and Szapocznick 237).<sup>18</sup> Processes involving cultural change have both beneficial and detrimental psychosocial outcomes. Ethnic identity can be redefined in an enculturative environment (Weinreich and Saunderson 21), thus, the manner in which Inuit identity is experienced can vary.

<sup>18</sup> “Southern” in the Canadian Inuit context means everything south of the tree line; as for culture, it refers to mainstream Canadian values.

Based on the principles of ISA, I ascertain that cultural specificities that identity construction closely depends on are retained, while elements of the mainstream culture are gradually acquired, selecting for the optimal. This process characterizes the presence of primordial perspectives in everyday Inuit life that I observed in the form of maintaining traditional activities tied to forming social bonds, such as sharing the spoils of a hunt, adhering to the traditional Inuit diet, and sewing home-made boots and parkas. A situational perspective may be layered on the primordial Inuit identity. Sandra Katsak, a Qikiqtani-region Inuit young woman interviewed in the 1990s along with her mother and grandmother, loves playing video games and ice hockey (qtd. in Wachowich 212)—mainstream Canadian hobbies for young adults—while she also sews traditional clothes as a strong confirmation of her Inuit identity, thus constructing an enculturated heritage-received mixed identity. In Sandra’s case, a relative balance is established between the primordial and the situational aspect of her identity. Inuit children have incorporated the Canadian national winter sport of ice hockey in their everyday sports activities so much that many play it regularly out on the streets of the hamlet—which I observed in the afternoons from my window—while adults prefer to watch *Hockey Night in Canada* (Fig. 5.).



Figure 5. Ice hockey: a Southern pastime in Nunavut (own photo).

The cultural shift that impacts Inuit identity is indicative of the natural flow of history as Inuit progress from the Paleolithic proto-Inuit Thule culture (200 BCE-1600 CE) through the contact-traditional period arriving to the modern/contemporary era. Both acculturation and enculturation happen along multidimensional models (Ryder et al.); cherished values are passed on by subsequent generations exhibiting changed behaviour. The way in which Inuit negotiate the enculturation process is nuanced and complex, therefore, a different experience of cultural change may be elicited from individuals across diverse populations and vast geographical locations. Typically, changes to Inuit identity vary according to the amount of Southern influence a certain individual receives depending on whether one resides in the North or in a southern city hub. Based on my research, on the group level, communities differ in the frequency of Inuktitut use, adherence to traditional activities, and exposure to the majority culture. I conjecture then that enculturation does not necessarily mean the eradication of ethnic identity as individuals may maintain multiple cultural identities, retaining their original ethnic roots and simultaneously adopting a mainstream identity to gain membership into the larger society, thus, creating a new, amalgamated identity. Such duality of tradition and renewal is detected in the acculturation patterns in Inuit music, which shows Western influences, such as the choice of brass musical instruments and melodies while traditional components are also retained (Nandori, "Nunangat and Beyond" 109). Poul Roving Olsen observes that "the [Inuit] attitude has been either one or the other . . . two or more different styles are living side by side without influencing each other in any conceivable manner. This duality may exist as an active social phenomenon" (37). Olsen's projections indicate that duality might be a social phenomenon that is apparent in the way Inuit are open to new elements of the majority culture while they preserve their ethnic identity apparent in performative cultural acts, language use, and the manner of social interactions. The openness of Inuit in general towards different cultures has been observed by several researchers, such as Rasmussen himself. This attitude can be beneficial if acquired customs are naturalized in the host culture, such as using a skidoo and a *kamutiq* together.

Implements of material culture borrowed from the South and the West generally are interlinked with intellectual culture. The building of wooden houses and the use of skidoos, for example, allowed for two things: have a year-round existence and live within a fixed community with the ability to go out and hunt and then return to the family at the end of the day. Similarly, I surmise that with living in houses with electricity in a stable community, the typical intellectual traditions organized around the polar night *qaggiq* festivities of various visiting communities was affected.

In addition to cultural impact, acculturation rather than enculturation may cause biological and psychological problems to a segment of the Inuit population. Wage paying work, store-bought foods, and year-round houses with amenities seem as a benefit of Southern culture, however, as less activity is needed to sustain life, the lack of fitness is becoming a problem that has reached the Arctic (Rode and Shephard 217). The ownership of snowmobiles has increased by almost an order of magnitude in just ten years in the seventies alone. Snowmobiles and quads are used not only in the process of hunting and fishing-related activities but instead of walking, leading to a loss of fitness; as a result, village-dwelling generations grow up less physically fit (Rode and Shephard 228). Moreover, acculturation may generate psychological problems, especially in young adults, who are more susceptible to anxiety, having to simultaneously meet the standards of two worlds, and due to fears of failing to meet such expectations. Acculturation-induced anxiety may be the leading cause of increased cases of substance abuse, self-harming, and suicide in northern communities, its root cause being low self-esteem in a confused state based on comparisons to either successful elders from earlier generations or the perceived easy success of Southerners. Excessive alcohol consumption, drug abuse, and engaging in violent or criminal behaviour are unfortunate coping mechanisms for the diminished self-esteem and negative self-image a portion of the Inuit population have been experiencing at least since the late 1970s (Seltzer 173). The seriousness of the problem today can only be highlighted by tragic case of beloved young Inuk singer Kelly Fraser's loss to self-harm, and my own experience in a professional role with Igloolik youth; the number of graves of young people cut in the permafrost speak for the seriousness of this issue (as of 2016 when I witnessed it in Qiqiktaaluk). I see the loss of confidence and emotional chaos reflected in such outer manifestations of identity as the land, which is oftentimes disrespected with an overflow of trash (Fig. 6.).



Figure 6. Trash scattered around Igloolik (own photo).

### 2.3. The Impact of Generational Difference

Generational difference is largely dependent on the fading cultural memory and the changing *cadre*, or frame of reference, in which generational cohorts socialize. Cultural memory—*kulturelles Gedächtnis* in German—introduced by Jan Assmann and originally used in the interconnected fields of art, literature, and sociology (*Cultural Memory*, Foreword) presents a concept that I utilize in examining Inuit cultural identity, especially when analyzing texts.<sup>19</sup> Cultural memory connects two different concepts: ‘memory culture’ or *Erinnerungskultur* and ‘reference to the past’ or *Vergangenheitsbezug* (Assmann, *Cultural Memory* 19). Memory culture is the way through which societies ensure cultural continuity by preserving collective knowledge from one generation to the next, rendering it possible for later generations to reconstruct their cultural identity by referring to the past (Holtorf 310).

<sup>19</sup> Introduced in Assmann’s essay “Kollektives Gedächtnis und kulturelle Identität,” originally published in *Kultur und Gedächtnis*, 9-19, Frankfurt am Main, 1988.

In Inuit culture, intergenerational connections are made through oral dissemination, therefore essential data regarding cultural shift can be extracted from observing the intellectual objects of Inuit cultural memory. Generally it is 40 years that is regarded as the threshold beyond which collective memory that informs cultural identity begins to fade (*Cultural Memory*, Foreword). References to the past beyond a *saeculum* although become blurred, evoke a shared past and a sense of identity distinctively rooted in culture.<sup>20</sup> The temporary nature of identity solely based on recollections manifests in the marked difference of the cultural memory and the generational ethos between generations; an example for this phenomenon occurs in the difference between the impressions of the past via oral history from Sandra Katsak's vantage point and the recollections of her grandmother's generation, which experienced the past as present (Wachowich 224). Culture influences experience by providing certain perceptions, while experience affects culture as it becomes transmittable, and, therefore, part of the collective. An individually built stone cairn, such as an inukshuk, for example, can represent a shared meaning for all Inuit.<sup>21</sup>

Cultural memory is part of the collective domain, and a medium through which historiography displays the narratives examined in cultural studies. Our perception of the past is always influenced by the present; therefore, it is prone to change. The manner in which the past is held in our memory may deviate from earlier times. I believe that the flexible, presentist nature of memory remains foundational to why changes to identity may be understood through studying the alterations relating to culture which occur between the past and present time. I maintain that the fluidity of culture allows for individual and collective alterations to what—in the case of Inuit—is perceived as *inummarig*. Genuine in the contact-traditional era meant hunting with *kakivaq*, or traditional spear, while today Inuit rarely use hunting methods that are deemed antiquated.

Due to the limitations of memory, in an oral tradition, all cultural representations are easily remembered ones, because those ones that are hard-to-remember are quickly forgotten (Sperber, "Explaining Culture" 74). In the case of Inuit, a large number of representations are widely held by most Inuit, albeit, a certain level of divergence may be examined, whereas some representations are recognized by only a single settlement. This feature I deem as the crux of unity within the community and forms the basis of identificatory determination, a form of

<sup>20</sup> *Saeculum* is the maximum lifespan of those who remember a generation via experience.

<sup>21</sup> An inukshuk (not in italics as it has entered the common parlance, in Canada, especially) is a stone cairn used to signal danger or cache spots for hunters. The term means 'likeness of a person,' as these stone markers fashioned after the image of a standing man or woman with usually legs apart.

othering outsiders either within or beyond Inuit cultures. Culture is the collage of widely understood, long-lasting, if not permanent representations (Sperber, “Anthropology and Psychology” 74), which may be defined as ideas. Ideas are shared through social interaction and create a symbolic universe inhabited by those within a culture. I regard the Inuit *Nunangat* experienced and formulated by Igloodik Inuit as different to my own, *extra cultura* experience regardless of my place of residence being identical to theirs at the time of speaking.

The binding effect of cultural cohesion manifests itself in a common expectation, experience, and action; however, it is merely temporal (Assmann, *Cultural Memory* 2; Berry, “Aboriginal Cultural Identity” 127). I see this temporality in the ever-expanding past of Inuit, since collective memory fades as it enters in the state of a cultural event horizon, the identity it aids is bound to change over time. *Unikkausivut*, the Inuit way of sharing stories, creates an oral history (Bourdieu; Assmann) encapsulated within songs, poems, and other cultural artefacts that mediate culture through communicative memory. These mementos of intellectual and material culture form islands of time constituting memory spaces of *Besonnenheit*, or retrospective contemplativeness (Assmann, “Collective Memory” 129).

The collective nature and spatial importance of cultural memory are shown within a certain *cadre* or frame of reference (Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 22) which is represented in the individual songs and poems in which similar reactions and recollections are observable within a culture. Based on their temporal structure and transient nature, I conclude that such intellectual artifacts as Inuit songs are adequate media to preserve the past, but the identification of *inummariq* through them does not extend to the present for identity becomes reconstructed in each era within its contemporary *cadre* leading to a changed manifestation of who *inummariit* are. Songs are, however, adequate in mediating those elements of the past that were selected to remain in the cultural memory; this preservation through songs is understood from the present era, therefore, the *inummariq* quality is understood differently than in the era contact-traditional songs were authored. The changed way generations engage with the notion of *inummariq* is represented not only in intellectual (songs) but material (modes of transport, hunting, fishing, etc.) culture as well, both of which influence Inuit cultural identity, hence will be addressed in detail.

In the examination of how different generations of Inuit express cultural identity and understand the *inummariq* concept, Pierre Bourdieu’s work on generational difference published as *Outline of a Theory of Practice* in 1972 is applicable. Generations within the same

culture, according to Bourdieu, negotiate as to what should be culturally significant (“Cultural Production” 88-90). What one generation values may be viewed by subsequent generations as unimportant. This shift is directly connected to cultural identity, as changing cultural norms are reflected in the identity construct, which in turn I see as visible in the poetry—its content and form—a generation produces. Berry also emphasizes that the identity of a person may change throughout the personal evolution of becoming an adult and may differ based on social situations. In an acculturative environment, such as that of Inuit in Canada, the individual chooses which traditional cultural element they retain and which they drop (“Aboriginal Identity” 7).

Habitus, one of Bourdieu’s most influential concepts, refers to the innate habits, skills, and dispositions, such as taste, food, and art that people acquire having been raised in a certain culture (*Outline* 78), therefore it serves as one of the foundational elements through which generational difference manifests. A thorough examination of Inuit texts with the aid of Bourdieu’s theory of generations and habitus along with Berry’s notion of changing cultural identity reveals the many ways in which the notion of *inummarig* is conceptualized by generations. An ample example is Sandra Katsak’s case from Igloolik, who while collaborating with Nancy Wachowich for the collection of interviews called *Saqiyuq*, confided in her explaining that:

I always tell elders that they are lucky that they grew up that way, in *kamiks* and skins and stuff like that. They always say negative things about stuff back then. They talk about having lice in their hair, or they say that it was too cold, or that they didn’t have enough wood. They are always saying negative things about the way things were. I’ve always wanted to tell them that I wish that I were given the chance to live that way. (Katsak qtd. in Wachowich 224)

When change from one generation to the next is reflected in the examined texts, the concept of *inummarig* is equitable with habitus. *Inummarig* is the ingrained segment of cultural identity that manifests in art but does not show in the public acts and social functions of modern life. Generational difference explains why Inuit value traditional ways in private but elect for progress in outward situations. Katsak’s private hobby of traditional *kamiq* (boots) sewing exemplifies this attitude coupled with having no problem with adapting to driving all-terrain vehicles or doing Southern style groceries in public.

For the purpose of generational study, I separated Inuit who are alive today into three generations: “the elders,” who were born during the time of the policy of dispersal (before World War II) and are octogenarians in the 2020s; “the hamlet folk,” who were the first born

in arctic hamlets established in the 1950s and 60s, thus, retain merely second-hand knowledge of the nomadic lifestyle of their forbears; and finally, “the young generation,” the first one whose parents do not have personal experience as an arctic hunter-gatherer. Given the vast difference in knowledge and life experience, it is natural that tension arises between generations, especially if members of the young generation are unhappy with the results of the decisions made by those that came before them. I found that the discrepancy between how different generations reference the pre-Canadian era is surprising. Katsak, a member of the young generational cohort idealizes the nomadic past, acknowledging that those elders who experienced the harshness of life before houses, hospitals, or stores were built, “always say negative things [about the era without government aid]” (Wachowich 224) The first-hand experience of elders and explorers who made contact with them provides insight into life before and after the formation of settlements and the paradigmatic introduction of welfare state policies. I conclude that such differences in habitus between the elders’ and the young generation implies that other elements in cultural identity may also vary and may be traced down in the text of songs and poems crafted by different generations.

Inuit who are elders in the 2020s were toddlers at the time of massive change in lifestyle, while the generational cohort from purely nomadic times is not alive anymore to share their personal stories and experiences. This circumstance does not allow for the manifestation of unchanged cultural identity because the habitus of a generation survives by cherishing the memory of the ancestors. However, the settlement generation embraced the novelty of Western comfort while forgetting about the fundamental value of *unikkausivut*, sharing stories, which in fact was the Inuit way of mediating culture. Some elders like Lucassie Nutaraaluk complain that seeing the success of Southern inventions, many of the young do not listen to them even when they try to share their wisdom (K. Martin, *Stories* 55). For Inuit culture was purely oral until the mid-twentieth century, the creation of a substantial historic record remains amiss, which means that unlike Southern culture, there has never been a recorded Inuit history written by Inuit scholars to rely on as a crucial source of culture. Therefore, I consider the extensive collection of folk stories, myths, and songs gathered by Knud Rasmussen during his seven arctic expeditions from 1912 to 1933 represent a significant source to be relied on to decipher *inummarig* as the contact-traditional generations once understood it and utilize the concept for comparisons with contemporary Inuit identities. Moreover, David Damas’s expansive and detailed research (*Arctic*) on Inuit ethnohistory and culture during the transitional period between the Second World War and the 1970s is of singular importance in gaining cultural information about the actual lives of Inuit.

Generational difference between cohorts is primarily a result of the changed circumstances of Inuit. I assert that the young generation retains the cultural memory of the nomadic, land-based past lived by the elders by conceptualizing *inummariq* in either a traditional fashion or in a dynamic way by merging the wisdom of past generations with the identity concept and realities of their own cohort. For instance, Mary Elizabeth Piercey-Lewis's research on Inuit music identifies drum dancing and the accompanying songs as representatives of Inuit identity (178). Yet, these traditional songs are not the staple of today's youth, rather they are markers of the difference in attitude between two cultural contexts: on the one hand, that of the subsistence hunter and countryless free ranger, and on the other hand, the salaried worker or beneficiary of government funds, Canadian citizen, and resident of an established Inuit territory.

I deem songs and poems as reflections of the changing realities of a people; they are individualistic sources in which the mores and values of the times are illuminated. Traditional song lyrics that are called *pisiq* represent not only *inummariq* values but—as a key feature of their nature—are transmitted orally.<sup>22</sup> The question remains as to how ready school-age children are to be taught their culture via the traditional word of mouth. Some youth in Piercey-Lewis's focus group exhibited difficulty when faced with having to rely on their memory instead of being aided by worksheets. Such an outcome, I propose, is the direct result of the adoption of written culture and creates a gap between the elders' oral tradition-based cultural dissemination and that of the writing-based or rather digital young generation (178).<sup>23</sup> Using print culture to disseminate oral intellectual culture might appear anti-traditionalist, but at the present moment it seems to be the only viable method to sustain the old unwritten song lyrics, incantations, myths, and stories.

Although I placed Inuit age cohorts into three generational groups, the system is yet more complicated. Inuit are not a homogeneous people: linguistic-cultural sub-groups differ by geographical location. Diversity within Inuit culture is well represented in the highly individual nature of the *pisiq*, since songs belonging to this genre can only be performed by their composer, therefore, a sort of song ownership exists, which, appears as a typical feature of magic words as well. However, beyond the manifold structure of Inuitness based on localities, the young

<sup>22</sup> *Pisiq* (plural: *pisiit*) is a lyric song accompanied by drum dance.

<sup>23</sup> Several scholars have touched upon the fact that by the time literacy had become widespread, Inuit found themselves in the digital age. Now both cellular phones and internet access are widespread; those who do not have Wi-Fi at home, can use a computer in the school building. My classroom had a small library of physical books, six computers, and a movie screen. Most students who stayed after school remained to use the computer.

generation with its new skills and experiences adds to the various understandings of *inummarig*. For school-age children—lacking the social context of their elders’ childhood experiences—the language and meaning of traditional poems is abstruse. Subjects of Piercey-Lewis’s study are school-age children, “young people [who] do not understand the texts of traditional songs as their elders do, nor do they understand the places that these songs talk about in the same manner” (195). The divide between the generations is manifested—as suggested by sociologist Pierre Bourdieu—in the way they are cognizant of the world around them and play out the roles of identity in the social practices acknowledged by their generation. As Piercey-Lewis observes, “[this] has resulted in an understanding which values the ‘old ways’ of ‘real Inuit,’ but, due to completely different life experiences, conceptualizes them differently from the older generation (195).

The generation of the first hamlet folk, who are—to varying degrees—becoming the new elders, experienced the paradigmatic shift from year-round migration between summer and winter hunting grounds to fixed settlements as children. The settlements that now, after some 75 years, are called hamlets are secluded from the rest of the world and from one another with no roads to connect them, yet enculturation has found its way to each community (Fig. 7).



Figure 7. The settlement of Igloolik as seen from the nearby hill (own photo).

As a result, they have become the first parents to have no guidance as to how to raise a family in the new settlement environment, nor did they have tangible connection to the old, semi-nomadic, traditional life. In contrast, young adults of the 2020s are growing up in a digital age amidst a paradigm shift that affects personhood and furthers the detachment from traditions. Young people express identity and their own generational habitus by visiting the Co-Op or the Northern Store, wearing fashionable apparel, such as Fox Racing outfits, and consuming fast food. In the meantime, the spectre of the past is present in the geography of the Arctic homeland, creating a situation in which the young generation negotiates a new Inuit identity simultaneously belongs in two distinct worlds. Thus, I conclude that the poetry that resonates with them might be different in themes from that of the generation of the elders' and even the hamlet folk. Notwithstanding, contemporary spoken word performances of Taqralik Partridge and Laakkuluk Williamson-Bathory and the free verse of Norma Dunning (all three artists reside in the South) echo themes and forms similar found in oral tradition song texts.

Traditional forms and themes are well-liked by the young generation, such as in the films produced by Inuit production company Isuma Productions, based in Igloolik. Although film as a genre is modern and Southern, the stories of Isuma are those one might hear in *pisiit* and folk tales.<sup>24</sup> Legends from Igloolik, such as *Atanarjuat* (2001), or the dramatized version of Rasmussen's arrival to Igloolik in *The Journals of Knud Rasmussen* (2006) were filmed by an all-Inuit cast and crew gaining popularity among Inuit and beyond. The popularity of Isuma-produced films among the youth suggests that young Inuit can relate to traditional *inummarig* values. In 2016, at the screening of the Inuit "northern" entitled *Maliglutit (Searchers)*, Inglulingmiut—denizens of the hamlet of Igloolik—represented themselves in large numbers. Hardly anyone skipped the opportunity to watch the movie with director Natar Ungalaaq present in the gym of Ataguttaaluk Elementary School.<sup>25</sup> The film features local actors in a story set in the oral tradition period but following the western genre. The result is a composite story achieved by relying on the Southern genre of western films, but instead of American cowboys, prospectors, marshals, and bandits, it follows an Inuit hunting party in the pre-contact Central-Eastern Arctic.

While Bourdieu suggests that the ethos of each generation is altered due to progressive change and modernization (*Outline* 32), there is a collective memory and identity all members

<sup>24</sup> *Pisiit* pl., *pisiq* sing. refers to words orally composed for a traditional form of Inuit song, and also used to refer for the song (words, melody, and performance) as a whole.

<sup>25</sup> The story is based on the 1956 John Ford western *The Searchers*. The author of this dissertation was present at the 2016 screening in Igloolik with some of her actor students in the audience.

of a group—regardless of which generation they belong to—can identify with. In the case of *inummariq*, I observed that the digitally literate young generation regards these qualities differently than the elders' generation—noticeable in their appreciation and inclusion of popular Southern culture in their lives—nevertheless they tend to identify with certain traditionally valued characteristics, such as good hunting or sewing skills as the basis of being a true *Inuk*. Bourdieu claims that through intergenerational relationships youth can learn the traditions from their parents and grandparents (*Outline 32*) if they are open to it. While some elders complain about young people not listening enough (Martin 55), the acquisition and inclusion of features of traditional identity in a modern setting is exemplified by Inuit singer Riit's music, consisting of popular Southern songs containing traditional *katajjaq*.<sup>26</sup> I conclude, therefore, that tradition lives on, but conceptualized in a novel way, creating a new outlet for tradition for the upcoming generation.

Due to the motions of history, technological advancement, and the input of each generation, conceptualizations of identity differ. A more homogenous modern Inuit identity is internalized irrespective of the geographical location of one's community, a feature new to today's adult (those who matriculated between the 70s and early 00s) Inuit generation. Both the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and the Inuit Circumpolar Council emphasize Inuit unity across borders and cultural and linguistic sub-groups.<sup>27</sup> Additionally, the habitus of the young generation (those who entered the K-12 system after 2000) is exhibiting yet another paradigmatic shift incorporating not only a written, school-based knowledge into Inuit *qaujimajatuqangit*, but by becoming digitally literate. Although Inuit life has changed markedly since first contact, I maintain that the epitome of genuine Inuit qualities remains unchanged. Regardless how the three generations of present-day Inuit that I establish contest and negotiate cultural identity in their own idiosyncratic way, Inuit in all observed generational cohorts typically equate songs, storytelling, throat singing, and hunting-related activities with the fundamental marks of being *inummariq*.

The theory of generational difference observes changes regarding habitus and cultural capital, that is to say, cultural norms from one generation to the next. The natural habitus change is amplified by enculturation and is evident in most aspects of life, such as code of conduct, living arrangements, nutrition, and education. As far as Inuit society is concerned, traditionally

<sup>26</sup> Inuit throat singing practiced by two women facing each other and taking turns singing in a guttural voice.

<sup>27</sup> The Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami [United Inuit of Canada] is the premier representative body for Inuit, while the Inuit Circumpolar Council represents all Inuit regardless of borders.

authority rested in the hands of elder relatives. Based on this arrangement, people knew who had authority over them within the family, the extended family, and larger community that ranged between thirty to fifty and sometimes even a hundred individuals. Disputes were resolved via *iviutiit*, song contests, featuring songs of derision which were performed as song duels.<sup>28</sup> Disruptive elements were subjected to gossip and public ridicule and eventually ostracized by the community, which was the most severe judgement upon an individual as this in the Arctic meant certain death. The introduction of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to the Arctic at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was welcomed by most elderly Inuit, as it reduced the rate of feuds and violent crime the community had to deal with among themselves (Irwin 21).<sup>29</sup>

Recently the traditional line of authority has been weakened, which made managing crime internally increasingly challenging. Reasons are mainly due to the change of generations, namely, in cultural capital between the elders' generation, and the young one; also the introduction of knowledge is different from that of the elders through new media. Additionally, by being provided for by the Canadian government, young Inuit are not frightened by the prospects of being ostracized, ridiculed, or gossiped about in their own community (Irwin 12). Due to public education, more respect goes to Southern teachers who are apt in the ways of the modern world as opposed to elders whose authority has been eroded by the introduction of law via the installment of RCMP camps in the North.

I believe that fuelled by the newly constructed habitus, the young generation established divergent notions of *inummariq* attributes. Although there is a substantial variation between families within communities across the homeland, the young generation leads a noticeably different lifestyle from their elders. In the field study conducted in the late 1980s by Colin Irwin, parents complained a fair amount about their children sleeping in all day and spending the night out in the company of strangers. Not knowing everyone in the community was a result of the settlements in which people sometimes mingled from several areas (Irwin 12), which was not an Inuit custom. As from a hunting party of thirty to fifty, the hamlets grew to 300 to 2500 people, crime has become rampant. The keeping of traditions, such as hunting, has become

<sup>28</sup> *Iviutiit* pl. *iviutiq* sing. are songs of public scolding, ridicule, and derision to teach a moral lesson to folks who do not abide by the unwritten code of Inuit.

<sup>29</sup> In 1913 two Inuit named Sinnisiak and Uluksak murdered two Oblate priests by stabbing, axing, and shooting them to death and partially eating them. Inspector LaNauze led an investigation extensively travelling the North by dog sled. He brought both men to trial in Edmonton in 1917, but surprisingly they were found not guilty. However, they were retried in Calgary the same year and were found guilty. At that time a guilty sentence carried a death penalty, however, again, the two Inuit escaped this sentenced and instead helped RCMP build a camp and were released as soon as 1922. Other Canadians for similar offences had no such luck under the law. (Stern 149; Jenkins 45; "rcmp-north").

uninteresting for Inuit that have grown up in a hamlet environment where a varied diet is available along with government benefits on which one might purchase them even if the individual is unemployed or not interested in hunting.

Once traditional Inuit education was delivered by the family out on the land. Persistence was a must, as exemplified by the saying “a hunter could never be a quitter,” as the survival of the community depended on him. A girl, when she successfully sewed her first mitts and boots; a boy when his first kill or catch was relied upon for food by the extended family, were ready to be married in their early teens (Irwin 15). Missionaries in the 17<sup>th</sup> century arrived at this educational setting that served subsistence economy well, however, oblates brought not only Christianity but the skill of reading, writing, and mathematics to amend the basic skills of a hunter and mother. Additionally, the opportunity remained that a child may spend summers out on the land with their family learning traditional skills. Therefore, children attending missionary schools spent their formative years in a bicultural immersive environment a reason why the bicultural model of identity was discussed earlier on in this chapter. Colin Irwin, whose family is part Inuit, conducted research studying the discrepancies between generations and summarized the situation in 1980 as follows:

... in practice then these children spent their school years alternating between a “white” immersion education and enculturation experience and an Inuit immersion education and enculturation experience...The Inuit who went through the residential school system in the late 40s, 50s and early 60s believe they have received a better education than the Inuit in the modern G.N.W.T. school system.<sup>30</sup> They believe their success in becoming the native leaders in the Arctic of today is largely attributable to their rigorous education (16).

In the 2020s, however, schools across the homeland do not produce a sufficient number of high school graduates, even fewer of them pursue higher education. Inuit frequently quit when they are required to attend school or work on a regular basis and maintain standards or achieve a set of goals that are not in the immediate future. A typical situation leading to failure may be well-summarized in Irwin’s own words:

In personal terms, the plight of one newly married Inuk, who I interviewed in Rankin Inlet, illustrates the danger of lowered standards. He quit school when he was about 15 when he was in grade 8. As he is now starting a family he decided to go to Adult Education for upgrading. With grade 10 he could get a Government job. But unlike the school, Adult Education use T.A.B.E. tests. He tested out at grade 4. Making it from grade 4 to grade 10 was too much for him to comprehend. He feels cheated. He has

<sup>30</sup> G.N.W.T is short for Government of Northwestern Territories

given up for the present and his family are on welfare. He told me he won't let his kids quit school. (16)

In the late 2010s, the problem remains; many girls get pregnant, have babies, and leave school never to return.

Irwin faults the lowering of standards as the cause of failure; however, advocates cannot speak often enough about the severity of missionary schools.<sup>31</sup> One might wonder if—as suggested by Irwin— both strict adherence to the rules and leniency are faulty approaches to Inuit education, what method could successfully be employed. My personal observation based on my prior teaching experience in Nunavut is that rigorous teaching either regarding the material or pedagogic approach would result in young adults completely avoiding school. It is altogether a conundrum which this dissertation hopes to tackle and serve as a catalyst to generate ideas, especially from the Inuit side, so that the situation may be amended internally, which is the expressed wish of most communities (Nandori, “By the Light of the Kudlik” 5). Fortunately, the present Inuit *Nunangat* is nowhere as depressing a place to live as foreseen by Irwin, who imagines:

[Inuit] will probably have lost more of their language, culture, and land skills. If this description is correct then most of the Inuit living in the Arctic in the year 2025 will probably be second generation wards of the state living out their lives in ‘Arctic ghettos’ plagued by increasing rates of crime. As long as current trends persist most of the people living in the Arctic with professional and university qualifications will be white and they will continue to dominate the higher levels of management in both the private and public sector. (Irwin 25)

Irwin’s forward-thinking analysis can be seen in his assessment to urge education professionals to develop a curriculum in which Inuktut, Inuit poetry, and mythology are taught (25). He also seems to place the blame for the declining success of education outside Inuit leadership by claiming that “failure to develop a curriculum and adequate numbers of Inuit teachers to do this, since the establishment of settlements and community schools some twenty years ago, is surely quite unacceptable” (25). I agree with Irwin’s point about urging Ottawa to implement “policies that will encourage those Inuit who wish to get out on the land to be out on the land actively involved in the subsistence segment of the Arctic economy” (Irwin 25). However, it is questionable as to how many Inuit are actually interested in such an activity, if given the opportunity. As a teacher in Nunavut, I was expected to adhere to the Alberta curriculum, which

<sup>31</sup> Both in publications intended as scholarly and in the mass media stories about residential schools. Suffice to say, Prime Minister Stephen Harper issued a public apology on June 11, 2008, on behalf of the Canadian government.

does not include Inuit literature. Moreover, Southern teachers do not possess the prerogative to develop a specialized Inuit curriculum about Inuit to be taught in schools across Inuit *Nunangat* any less than prescribing by fiat that Inuit should hunt and enjoy it. Although initiatives such as the “First Canadians, Canadians First” curriculum development strategy by the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami has been devised, successful implementation of a feasible curriculum is still in the realm of future aspirations.

Besides the context of the K-12 curriculum, the language in which it is delivered is of key importance when generational and individual differences in identity are analyzed. Language in which knowledge is mediated plays a crucial role in the largescale survey carried out by Louis-Jacques Dorais, in which respondents plan to implement bilingual education to varying degrees in K-12 education. Elders would like to see a truly bilingual school, while most young Inuit would put more emphasis on English due to its practicality. This naturally would result in art, such as poetry, to be written in English, rather than orally composed in Inuktitut. Respondents explain their answer with the practical usefulness of English. One man says that “Maybe they should combine them [Inuktitut and English education] together, because sometimes [Inuit] don’t have terms in English” (Dorais and Colette 43). Another reason to learn English (other than its being one of the official languages of Canada) is that it enables people to communicate more readily: “We are always using English and we understand each other better in English, plus in Inuktitut,” explains a young woman (Dorais and Colette 43).

Bilingualism is encouraged for Southerners living in Inuit *Nunangat* as well: “If both languages are used it is fine. *Qallunaat* should also be taught in Inuktitut. If you are from Nunavut and are an Inuktitut-speaking Qallunaaq, then you and the Inuit would be able to communicate in either language” (Dorais 44).<sup>32</sup> Also, English is perceived as necessary for travelling outside the homeland. A middle-aged parent interprets the language question as such: “... English is necessary too. If my child moves out of Nunavut and goes to school, he/she would have [...] to speak in English. They need to know that, it is necessary” (Dorais 44). Finally, as an Inuit man in his late twenties identifies, “regardless of your mother tongue [...], if you have a working knowledge of two languages, you’re better off. Because there are more opportunities for you to learn, and if you were to travel outside of Nunavut, you would have

<sup>32</sup> *Quallunaaq* (pl. *qallunaat*) comes from *qallu*, meaning eyebrow, although it has been suggested that originally Inuit might have meant *qallunartak*, store-bought or manufactured material) and not *qallunaaq* (Freeman, 86). *Qallunaaq* first appeared in Sir William Parry’s writings as *ka-bloo-nan* and in Franz Boas’s works as *qadlunait*, both translated it as ‘European.’

difficulty if you weren't fluent in English as well" (Dorais 44). Most importantly, English is a way for identifying oneself as a Canadian, as one Inuk puts it: "This is Canada" (Dorais 44).

## **2.4. The Significance of Spatiality**

### **2.4.1. The New Borders of an Old Place**

Modern-day Inuit are descendants of the Thule people who replaced the previous Dorset, otherwise known as Tuniq culture circa 1000 C.E. and subsequently spread across the Arctic, thus all Circumpolar Inuit, Kaaallit, Iñupiat and Yup'it are related to the proto-Inuit Thule. Although at one time each proto-Inuit group lived in fixed settlements, at first contact, they built only temporary shelters: igloos for the ice fishing season in winter and spring, and caribou hide tents for summer and fall when Inuit were occupied with either hunting sea mammals (Rasmussen, *Across* 131) or tracking caribou close to water crossing sites. The general pre-settlement living arrangements, according to scientists engaging in field study in the first ethnographic era of the Arctic (that started with Franz Boas' visit to Inuit hunting parties in 1883 and finished with the last of the Thule expedition of Knud Rasmussen in 1933), were made up of hunting parties of about fifty individuals that were closely related; intermarriage between groups was encouraged during the winter song festivals, when distant relations within the same sub-group division with identical customs and speaking an intelligible dialect could meet. Given the expanse of the tundra and the simple methods of travel, people could expect to live their entire lives without meeting outsiders, in some cases including Inuit from other cultural-linguistic communities. The barren ice fields and the permafrost over the short arctic summer were everything: home and provider of sustenance and one and the same with Inuit themselves. Intellectual culture—the medium of this research—therefore, is interlinked with representations of land and the thus emerging Inuit identity.

Frequent references to the land both in common parlance and in art point to the fact that spatiality has a strong relation to constructing Inuit cultural identity. Song lyrics and poems studied in this dissertation originate from the Central-Eastern Arctic, Greenland, Nunavik, and diasporic locations collected between 1919-2023. The text of the herein examined songs and poems reveal the intimate connection a people have to the space they occupy (Nandori, "Arctic Songs" 18), highlighting that not only cultural identity, but Inuit "literary traditions are deeply

rooted in geography” (I. Martin 123).<sup>33</sup> Representations of places—whether in our minds or on a map—are abstractions that emerge from a particular cultural context (Giles and Middleton 106). Spaces, such as the Inuit homeland, are the result of specific conditions, thus, they carry cultural meanings that constitute the documentary record of the communities residing there. Spaces, therefore, are the outcome of an activity which although involves the economic and technical realms, also extends beyond them, for spaces are also political products, and strategic places of action (Lefebvre 84). Consequently, the Inuit cultural space is chiefly located in the Canadian Arctic and partially beyond, to where Inuit and their cultural capital disperses.

I opine that geographically bound nature of Inuit cultural identity necessitates that concepts relating to spatiality, such as territoriality, de- and reterritorialization, boundary and border creation affect identity construction in a marked way. Spatiality—the manner in which space is utilized by human components and the effect it has on the actions of individuals, the social cohesion within a group, and interactions between groups—has largely shaped Inuit cultural identity. Accordingly, I propose that the way Inuit relate to the land provides a useful lens through which identity may be examined, understood, and defined.

For Inuit, territoriality, the attachment to a domain, such as what is called today homeland, or *nunangat* in Inuktut, *nunaat* in Kalaaliisut and Iñupiaq, is a significant component of self-definition (“Inuit” 105). Due to the origins of Inuit culture lying in subsistence hunting, Inuit identity is intrinsically tied to the ability to harvest the resources offered by the land and the surrounding waters. Characteristics of traditional Inuit, the so called *inummarit* are tightly connected to land skills and defined by Inuit themselves as the ability to survive and thrive ‘out on the land’ like no outsider would be able to (Nandori, “Imagined Homeland” 161). Although the land is synonymous with life and the characteristics by which a person is measured within the community, historically, bordering was unknown to Inuit. Given the fact that the nomadic lifestyle has been traded for a sedentary one within the confines of hamlets, the need for setting up limits for those both inside and outside has been found necessary. Generally, territoriality is expressed via borders, a physical and intellectual concept that can reinforce the notion of ‘us,’ ensuring a sense of belonging within post-settlement Inuit culture. It is, therefore, pivotal where borders are located, how they are established, and to what extent they are internalized through collective identity construction (Légaré 110).

<sup>33</sup> Examined texts range from Rasmussen’s collections to contemporary artists.

The new land-related formations of the 21<sup>st</sup> century performed acts of reterritorialization, a means of obtaining sovereignty over the land and filling it with cultural meaning connected to Inuit. The land claims negotiated in Canada between 1993 and 2007 provided Inuit with a beneficial boost concerning cultural identity expressed through a newly emergent agency via self-government and language rights. Nunavut, the most prominent and largest in size of the recognized Inuit lands, was created in 1999 by chopping off a substantial part of the Northwest Territories, thus reterritorializing the Arctic Archipelago. This landmark decision redrew the map of Canada, which to date has been the most definitive act of reterritorializing the land by any group within Canada. The contemporary geopolitical stance according to which cultural borders worldwide are in the process of disappearing (Popescu 17, 45) as cultures cross-pollinate one another through the facets of globalization is, thus, questioned by a nomadic people's defining act of ethnocultural identity by negotiating and inserting a new physical and cultural border in order to protect Inuit culture through the ensuing policies introduced rather than allowing Inuit characteristics to be further influenced and possibly dissolved in a mainstream Canadian culture. By 2007, other successful land claims followed, and Inuit *Nunangat* was officially acknowledged (Fig. 8).



Figure 8. Inuit *Nunangat* (in courtesy of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami).

These nation-forming acts have brought about the use of symbols on flags, government buildings, and official documents with the effect of the unification of an inherently diverse Inuit

populace. The introduction of Inuit national holidays, the use of logos, and Inuktitut geographical and socio-political names—such as *Qikiqtaaluk*, replacing Baffin Island in official documents—strengthened the manifestation of Inuit identity within the homeland (Légaré “Inuit” 110).

Although Inuit once were a semi-nomadic people, traditional hunting grounds and thus theoretical borders were established as per custom for each sub-group division that formed a cultural and geographical unit within the broader context of Inuit culture. Borders, if in fact serve their purpose effectively, also indicate where certain groups of people traditionally reside, notwithstanding the fact that an area may be home to various peoples.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, instead of precisely separating cultural groups, borders often end up being arbitrary, merely denoting economic or political agreements, therefore creating complex situations for those residing within. This, I believe, is apparent in the case of Inuit, who by forming an official Inuit territory have separated from the South, but not from other Northern cultures with whom they have shared the land since times immemorial. Nunavut, formerly part of the Northwest Territories, traditionally had the joint custodianship of Inuit and Dene, but since the formation of Nunavut it has been recognized as belonging exclusively to Inuit, resulting in the loss of Dene lands (Légaré “Inuit” 112) known as *Denendeh*, in other words, “the land of the people,” presenting unique problems of territoriality, such as Dene First Nation becoming a minority not only in Canada, but within the territory they have resided in from times immemorial. When complicated ownership claims are attached to just one territory, especially if cultural heritage is concerned, a zero-sum result, namely, the gain of Inuit causing the loss of the Dene, seems likely. This outcome, in my opinion, indicates that borders separating geographical regions which form unique cultural boundaries can be best understood as transition zones rather than exact lines dividing two cultures evidenced by several non-Inuit minorities residing along the borderland and in the hinterland. I suggest that the multicultural nature and traditionally shared history of the land by the regional border between the Northwest Territories and Nunavut is an example for the existence of such a buffer zone in Canada.

Further dispute regarding Inuit-claimed lands within provinces, such as Labrador, complicates issues relating to land ownership. On September 19, 2021, the Inuit Nunatsiavut government in the province of Labrador rejected the NunatuKavut community council’s claim

<sup>34</sup> Regarding merely the First Nations and Inuit population in a settler-colonial setting, borders may still function as a demarcation of a cultural divide. In geographical locations, such as Europe, where the land and its people have never been colonized, wars still ravaged and pollenated across borders in such a manner that the situation is equally challenging.

to land exemplifying the kind of difficulty land acquisition efforts create for a contemporary, multiethnic society. NunatuKavut is an unrecognized land in central Labrador inhabited by descendants of Inuit, French, and Basque whalers. The Nunatsiavut government in Labrador represents Inuit who reject the NunatuKavut Community Council's claim based on their opinion that it is culturally invalid. In a statement, the NunatuKavut Community Council "rejected the opinion of the Nunatsiavut government, arguing that it 'blatantly undermines' the self-determination of NunatuKavut Inuit" ("Nunatsiavut"). Such disputes illuminate the significance of land, borders, and cultural boundaries in the construction of Inuit cultural identity, while they also reveal the Venn diagram-like, layered pattern of identity formation of Inuit and other peoples who they share their land with.

I found the answer to why several ownership claims to one territory arise in the pre-contact nomadic past of the autochthonous populations of the Arctic. Prior to regular Southern contact beginning in the early twentieth century, there were several migrating Inuit and First Nations groups in the Canadian Arctic (Damas 17) in size varying between 30 to 100 individuals. Since groups migrated in a seasonal pattern, relocating as needed, historically, neither Inuit nor First Nations tribes owned land separated by borders. Contact with the Hudson's Bay Company changed the purely subsistence culture into that of a mixed economy. After World War II, the Canadian government intervened in Inuit nomadic life in an effort to create year-round settlements where access to public education, healthcare and welfare was provided. These permanent settlements heralded the end of the era of migrating subsistence hunters. Most Inuit moved from previous hunting grounds voluntarily due to the fear of famine even when calculating with regular food supply drops from the government (Damas, *Arctic* 91). The creation of fixed settlements meant the end of constant hardships in the process of resource procurement and an easier means for the government to deliver aid and welfare needs, such as health centres, community schools, and general stores.

Initially, settlements were formed in order to open up an accessible avenue for government aid to reach those in need. The lack of game to hunt and the end of an era based on commerce involving Arctic fox pelt changed the circumstances of the Inuit, as a result most Inuit recognized the advantages of living in settlements built for year-round stay. The resulting sedentism, new technological inputs, and the fluctuating wage and hunting-trapping economies forced Inuit to alter their subsistence patterns and general economic strategies (Collings 73). Ultimately, the man-land relationship and ecological dynamic of Inuit had changed;

subsequently, shifting from migrating, seasonal campground-based cultural sites, Northern hamlets became the primary locations of maintaining collective Inuit identity (Fig. 9).

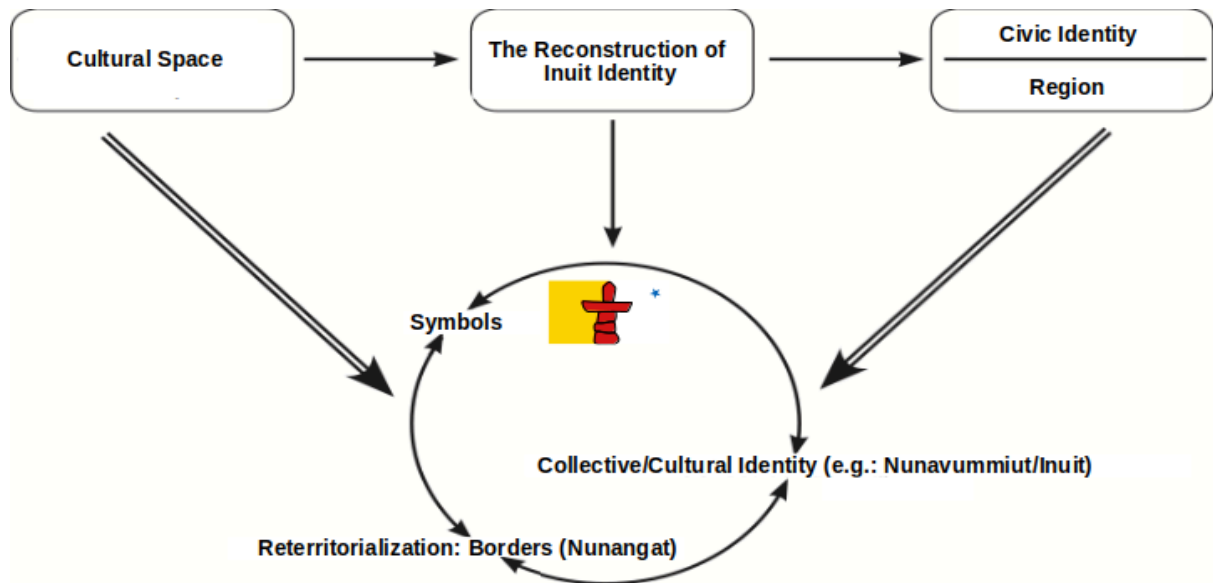


Figure 9. The reconstruction of Inuit cultural identity (Reterritorialization Flow)

Not only have settlement Inuit set up borders around themselves to denote a collective homeland for all Inuit, but also borders themselves have facilitated the assertion of Inuit identity by including all who identifies as such. For the entire Inuit homeland, the use of Inuktitut toponyms, the establishment of *Nunavummiut* and other regional identities, the official use of the red inukshuk flag and the polar bear logo reinforce Inuit cultural identity, and by territory, a regional sub-group affiliation as well. Inuit sub-group identity in the pre-settlement era was emphasized by naming smaller groups—with often distinct linguistic and cultural practices—by their geographical location with an addition of the suffix *miut*; for instance the word *Iglulingmiut* designates Inuit living in the vicinity of Igloolik. Although today's Inuit *Nunangat* separates those residing within from the rest of Canada, thus, bringing Inuit together, this communal space utilization, however, does not entirely eliminate the sub-group division inherited from the pre-settlement generation, which identified with hunting grounds occupied by distinct *miut* groups (Irwin 39). Igloolik today is divided into two parts: the “hill,” the part of town where Catholics live, and the other side of town mainly settled by Anglicans. The hamlet system typically hosts people from several different sub-groups; therefore, I find that it

echoes the living arrangement of the *qaggiq* celebrations of the nomadic past at which several hunting parties gathered and united for a portion of the year.<sup>35</sup>

Despite the newly created borders, various technologies—such as the Internet— cross these borders and influence those residing within, without the inhabitants of an enclosed land ever crossing a border. In addition, yearly sealifts arrive, to make local shopping and Southern goods available, while traditional land-based practices, such as hunting and fishing are still part of Inuit life, albeit at a diminished capacity. Sealift, especially, is a vital part of yearly restocking, without which modern Northern life would be impossible (Fig. 10; Fig. 11).<sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup> *Qaggiq* or song, dance, and feast house is a communal igloo, built for the gathering of Inuit hunting parties over the winter months and where traditional Inuit songs were performed after eating fresh or stored meat.

<sup>36</sup> Annual re-supply cargo ship, a so-called sealift arrives each year before pack ice (a mass of ice floating formed by smaller pieces freezing together eventually creating a travelable extension of the land) forms and fills the Northern and Co-op stores with a variety of merchandise while personal yearly supplies are delivered as well.

**Calendrier préliminaire 2023 / 2023 Preliminary Calendar**  
**Desserte maritime de l'arctique / Arctic Sealift**

Nous préparons le calendrier de navigation (horaire des navires) en fonction des différents volumes de cargo à livrer dans chacun des villages. Nous vous demandons donc de nous faire parvenir vos réservations d'espace le plus tôt possible, ceci nous aidera à établir l'horaire 2023.

We prepare the Sealift schedule according to the different volumes of cargo to be delivered in each community. In order to better plan the Sealift schedule for 2023, we therefore ask you to please send us your booking forms as early as possible, this will help us establish the 2023 Sealift schedule.

1 <sup>er</sup> DÉPART / FIRST DEPARTURE			
DATES LIMITES DE LIVRAISON / DELIVERY CUT OFF DATES			
MATIÈRES DANGEREUSES / DANGEROUS GOODS (DG): 8 JUIN / JUNE 8			
CARGO À EMBALLER / PACKAGING: 8 JUIN / JUNE 8			
CARGO PRÊT À CHARGER / CARGO READY TO LOAD: 15 JUIN / JUNE 15			
NUNAVIK		NUNAVUT	
Akulivik (AKU) Aupaluk (AUP) Inukjuak ((INK) Ivujivik (IVU) Kangiqaquljuaq (KAJ) Kangiqaquljuaq (KAQ) Kangirsuk (KAN) Kuujuaq (KUU)	Kuujuaaraapik (KIK) Puvimittuq (PUV) Quaqtaq (QUA) Salluit (SAL) Tasiujaq (TAS) Umiujaq (UMI)	Arviat (ARV) Baker Lake (BAK) Kinngait (Cape Dorset) (DOR) Chesterfield Inlet (CHE) Coral Harbour (COR) Iqaluit (IGA)	Kimmitut (KIM) Pangnirtung (PAG) Rankin Inlet (RAN) Sanikiluaq (SNQF) Whale Cove (WHA)
Autres destinations du Nunavik et du Nunavut disponibles sur demande et assujetties à certaines conditions. Potential stops for other destinations in Nunavik and in Nunavut communities available upon request and subject details.			
2 <sup>e</sup> DÉPART / SECOND DEPARTURE			
DATES LIMITES DE LIVRAISON / DELIVERY CUT OFF DATES			
MATIÈRES DANGEREUSES / DANGEROUS GOODS (DG): 13 JUILLET / JULY 13			
CARGO À EMBALLER / PACKAGING: 13 JUILLET / JULY 13			
CARGO PRÊT À CHARGER / CARGO READY TO LOAD: 20 JUILLET / JULY 20			
NUNAVIK		NUNAVUT	
Kuujuaq (KUU)	Arctic Bay (ARB) Baker Lake (BAK) Cambridge Bay (CAM) Clyde River (CLY) Eureka Gjoa Haven (GOH) Grise Fiord (GRI)	Hall Beach (HAL) Igloolik (IGL) Iqaluit (IGA) Kugaaruk (KGA) Kugluktuk (KGL) Nanisivik (NAN)	Pond Inlet (PON) Qikiqtaaluaq (QIKQ) Rankin Inlet (RAN) Nauyasat / Repulse Bay (RPB) Resolute Bay (RES) Taloyoak (TAL)
Autres destinations du Nunavik et du Nunavut disponibles sur demande et assujetties à certaines conditions. Potential stops for other destinations in Nunavik and in Nunavut communities available upon request and subject details.			
3 <sup>e</sup> DÉPART / THIRD DEPARTURE			
DATES LIMITES DE LIVRAISON / DELIVERY CUT OFF DATES			
MATIÈRES DANGEREUSES / DANGEROUS GOODS (DG): 7 SEPTEMBRE / SEPTEMBER 7			
CARGO À EMBALLER / PACKAGING : 7 SEPTEMBRE / SEPTEMBER 7			
CARGO PRÊT À CHARGER / CARGO READY TO LOAD: 14 SEPTEMBRE / SEPTEMBER 14			
NUNAVIK		NUNAVUT	
Akulivik (AKU) Aupaluk (AUP) Inukjuak (INK) Ivujivik (IVU) Kangiqaquljuaq (KAJ) Kangiqaquljuaq (KAQ) Kangirsuk (KAN) Kuujuaq (KUU)	Kuujuaaraapik (KIK) Puvimittuq (PUV) Quaqtaq (QUA) Salluit (SAL) Tasiujaq (TAS) Umiujaq (UMI)	Arviat (ARV) Baker Lake (BAK) Kinngait (Cape Dorset) (DOR) Chesterfield Inlet (CHE) Coral Harbour (COR) Iqaluit (IGA) Kimmitut (KIM) Pangnirtung (PAG) Rankin Inlet (RAN) Nauyasat / Repulse Bay (RPB) Sanikiluaq (SNQF) Whale Cove (WHA)	
Autres destinations du Nunavik et du Nunavut disponibles sur demande et assujetties à certaines conditions. Potential stops for other destinations in Nunavik and in Nunavut communities available upon request and subject details.			

- La fréquence et les destinations pourraient être modifiées sans préavis. *Number of stops along with actual destinations could be modified without notice.*
- Pour le port de Churchill ou autre besoins spécifiques, vous pouvez nous contacter. *For Churchill or any other specific shipping needs please contact us.* [www.arcticsealift.com](http://www.arcticsealift.com)

Figure 10. Annual sealift schedule in Nunavut and Nunavik (arcticsealift.com)

My experience is that even with a solid link to Southern culture, the strong bond between identity and homeland translates to a general lack of interest in moving away from one's birthplace and even larger cultural region within the homeland to a distant place. Therefore, the amalgamated use of English and Inuktitut although common, the widespread consuming of English language entertainment and schooling has a limited effect on Inuit who overwhelmingly prefer life in the Arctic hamlets. This trend is evidenced by data collected by Statistics Canada in 2020, according to which the vast majority of Inuit lives within the bounds of Inuit *Nunangat* (primarily in Nunavut), and 23.3 percent of the population lives outside the homeland as of 2020 (Lochead).



Figure 11. Sea lift arrives to Igloolik (own photo).

The results of first language retainment due to preference for living on the land are especially substantial if Inuit *miut* groups are compared to First Nations, whose lands are often located in the vicinity of southern city hubs, allowing bands to send their children to school off-reserve. Thus, Inuktitut is the most well-preserved autochthonous language in Canada largely owing to the spatial location of the Inuit homeland.

#### 2.4.2. Cultural Boundaries: The De-, and Reterritorialization of the Land

Pointing beyond physical borders, within a larger cultural space, such as Canada, I propose that boundaries are imaginary restrictions imposed by a community within bounds or an agent of authority; as such, established boundaries by different parties do not necessarily correlate with one another. I posit the concept of “real Inuit”—*inumhariit*—itself as one such cultural boundary. I assert that regional boundaries play a key role in the manifestation of Inuit identity through territoriality, particularly through the territorialization of meaning or content, such as that of homeland and citizenry. Such acts of territorialization—a process by which a

social relation to the land is established via altering its current organization and context (Deleuze and Guattari 145-6; Hernandez 92-93)—become actualized when Inuit act upon their territorial needs through land claims and by setting up housing projects and managing their territory through sovereign governing bodies. In the Canadian context and from an Inuit point of view, deterritorialization—the loss of cultural impact over a territory—may be observed in the country’s formation partially over a geographical area where a priori Inuit land use existed, although without expressed bordering.

Territorialization may occur systemically through education, politics, and governance (Paasi 701) within the Inuit homeland, and it is apparent in the relationships Inuit maintain with both Canada and Inuit outside Canada. As an example, Canada is sometimes alluded to as a country separate from Nunavut (Obed qtd. in Madwar; my own conversations in Igloolik), while Inuit across the globe tend to form coherent cross-territorial organizations with a pan-Inuit grasp, such as the Inuit Circumpolar Council representing all Inuit in every country they inhabit. Territoriality is displayed through the process of both deterritorialization and reterritorialization, through which cultural boundaries may be removed or readjusted, such as the boundaries representing the South invading the North through the media and commerce, and those signifying the North travelling to far-off places in the South, primarily through the arts. Land claims, and the establishment of Inuit *Nunangat*, on the other hand, represent acts of reterritorialization, or at the very least (although the existence of prior sovereign nationhood is debated) territorialization of the land—through its autonomous management—and a manifestation of cultural identity by administering cultural meaning to the land.<sup>37</sup>

I suggest that deterritorialization on the level of Inuit land/identity—the loss of the Inuit homeland by its merging with the larger homeland of Canada, both in a cultural and geopolitical sense—implies the increasing presence of standardized social forms of contact between peoples, a process described on an international scale by Gil-Manuel Hernández í Martí (92). This change brings along a preference for all-Canadian to Inuit codes of conduct, which in turn transforms *inummarig*.<sup>38</sup> In my opinion, this suggests that the basic pillars of Canadian

<sup>37</sup> A nation is a large body of people bound by either common descent, history, culture, or language, inhabiting a particular country or territory (although e.g.: the Kurds are a stateless nation). A nation may often be multicultural in its make-up and may or may not include several ethnic groups; it has its own government, laws, languages, traditions, etc. recognized by the world at some point in time. (*Oxford Dictionary* and *Cambridge Dictionary*). In the contact-traditional Inuit setting the concept of nation was not defined as Inuit (people) lived on the *nuna* (land) without concerning themselves with such concepts; naturally bordering was not practiced either.

<sup>38</sup> Unlike the Deleuzian concept of deterritorialization involving a power struggle, I examine the concept as a cultural change to a geographical location. Felix Deleuze’s deterritorialization concept involves control being taken away from a country or other geopolitical formation. In the case of Inuit, due to their subsistence hunting

multiculturalism—especially those relating to equal appreciation, inclusion, and integration—are the very notions that oppose the autochthonous special status of Inuit by offering allochthonous people identical station in society. Thus, I conclude that multiculturalism alters the relationship between autochthonous inhabited places and cultural activities and identities experienced through residing within them. If the majority culture is a technologically advanced society, such as in the case of Canada, it may be difficult to maintain a distinct cultural identity beyond a Canadian one as daily life becomes increasingly intertwined with influences of remote origin. I believe that this dynamic allows for Inuit to become one of the significant cultural peculiarities, functioning as a common denominator superficially internalized by most Canadians, regardless of cultural background.

I propose that boundary removal—the idea that boundaries are constantly changing (Newman and Paasi 198-200)—is also an act of deterritorialization, a way of weakening the ties of the people to the culture of their homeland. By removing cultural boundaries and expanding the accepted, contradictions between the Canadian multicultural ethos and the significance of cultural boundaries are illuminated, specifically in the concurrent internalizing of Inuit and Canadian cultural identities. Through urban exposure, which I count as another form of boundary removal, and by mingling with non-Inuit who work in the North, Inuit socio-spatial identity—the feeling of belonging to a region—is affected resulting in a loosening bond between the notion of home and the individual. At the same time, Southern space becomes territorialized by the collective culture and memory of Inuit individuals. This change in identity formation and self-identification may culminate in the birth of a new, culturally dualistic, Canadian Inuit identity. This process is aided by the elimination of cultural boundaries between the North and South initiated during the paradigmatic shift of the contact-traditional era, which was signalled by the non-interventionist policy of dispersal approach. From the 1950s on, Southerners have been more involved in Inuit life as teachers, doctors, police officers, and other welfare staff, and in turn Inuit life has been affected by more Southern influence.

By the 21<sup>st</sup> century, urban Inuit have become a significant minority within the Inuit population and their experience has become a part of the contemporary composite Inuit identity. According to the statistical survey conducted by the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami [United Inuit of Canada], an Inuit non-profit organization, in 2018, about 17 000 of the 70 000 Inuit in Canada live outside the homeland. For the minority off-land Inuit, Southern influence has become more

lifestyles, neither established control over the land, nor certain borders of it existed. We, therefore, cannot speak of deterritorialization in the Deleuzian sense, rather a cultural deterritorialization has occurred.

pronounced, and the keeping of traditions a challenge. The South has a profound effect on Inuit, for it is not only a geographical location, but a place where Western values are propagated and internalized, embraced and vilified at the same time by its population and sustained by the memory culture inherent in the Southern cultural space. Hardships endured by Inuit include the lack of those living circumstances and cultural venues that are not transferrable to outside of the homeland, such as availability of fresh game to hunt and, therefore, “country food,” the widespread use of Inuktitut dialects, and a sense of belonging and intimate knowledge of the homeland. Despite these cultural challenges, the easy access to food, shelter, and entertainment makes it hard to leave the South once Inuit have experienced it.

To counteract the alienation from the mainstream and the othering effect of implicit cultural differences, access to federally and provincially funded services, such as Native Friendship Centres and the Inuit-specific community service, the Tungasuvvingat Inuit (TI) Community Centre, has been granted to all Inuit living in the South. These venues function as pivotal players in fostering identity retainment for urban Inuit avoiding the erosion of cultural identity, while in the North, the land itself performs a similar function. I agree with Donna Patrick that urban settings expand the horizons of Inuit artists (101), best exemplified by Alootook Ipellie, whose career took off after his relocation to the South. The distanced vantage point allows artists to gain a partially outsider vantage point into their own cultural heritage, thus making it more accessible to the mainstream South. The recognition of Inuit culture in the South draws attention to them. I find that urban experiences work quite like a sieve, through which culture is filtered and becomes part of Inuit identity.

In an attempt to territorialize the inhabited environment, the ideas, symbols, attitudes, and narratives of the homeland detached from their original space (Voytiev 32) travel to the South. This process can shape Inuit identity creating a fertile ground for connections with the North for diasporic individuals in the South. Elders play a crucial role in the success of identity preservation via memory and knowledge about the homeland; through these avenues I reckon that Inuit cultural identity can survive in both a culturally deterritorialized environment and a foreign one. From an Inuit perspective, diasporic settings, such as Québec and Ontario can be territorialized, as seen from the active presence of Inuit in these provinces. In some cases, I maintain that urban Inuit form stronger ties to their roots than those residing in the North, where their cultural sub-group identification is not contested. The significance of experiencing cultural minority may gain momentum as individuals hold on to the primary factors of their identity with more intensity than in a state of a monocultural equilibrium. This process may be observed

in the case of mixed-heritage Inuit, many of whom reside in the South. As Southern Inuit poet Norma Dunning observes, urban Inuit “walk inside two worlds, but regardless where they are, they are Inuk” (“Writing”). The success of Natan Obed, an Inuit politician of mixed heritage who grew up in a Southern setting and now serves as the current president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, shows how a strong claim to Inuit ancestry can revitalize identity and achieve a territorializing effect regardless of the location of upbringing and residence.

On the contrary, outside influences within the northern homeland may yield a deterritorializing effect, which can involve the loss of social organization, cultural context, and meaning through the extensive use of English language and Southern cultural frameworks. Inuit identity construction is specifically language-tied (Patrick “Inuit”105) with a mother tongue quite unlike English, a language that functions as a *lingua franca*. Inuktitut dialects, however, are virtually unknown outside the homeland. In a Southern context—whether it is a transplanted cultural territory in the North, such as schooling or housing, or it is in fact located in the South—I deem it likely that older Inuit may become detached from their roots. The elders’ generation may lose their primary cultural identity due to activities that perform a cultural function alien to their traditional way of life and are exclusively conducted in English (or French, in some areas of the homeland, like Nunavik). Both the hamlet folk and the young generation cohort’s relationship to their own culture shows signs of diversion as foreign influences are internalized through schooling coupled with the lack of elder-based teaching beyond the curriculum.

In their homeland, most Inuit are only indirectly affected by urban culture. In polar spaces, a strong connection to both Inuit culture and the land is observable in the low rate of intermarriage between far-off groups or Southerners, and the lack of desire to leave one’s hamlet, let alone the North, unless a beneficial study or work opportunity arises.<sup>39</sup> Although the unwillingness to travel is considered as traditionally Inuit,<sup>40</sup> it is in fact a recent development if we consider the constant movement which the traditionally nomadic Inuit culture used to be based on (Damas, *Arctic* 91). The 20<sup>th</sup>-century change from a culture rooted in transient residences across the tundra to a sedentary lifestyle was followed by a yearning by politically-

<sup>39</sup> A verbal survey conducted by myself with the emerging young generation in Igloolik clearly shows this trend.

<sup>40</sup> Attachment to one’s birthplace is well-known and self-proclaimed across the Canadian Arctic and seen in historical instances such as the returning of Inuit to Ennadai from where they were relocated from for economic reasons. In my daily conversations while a resident of Igloolik, it has often come up that travelling around like I did at that point in my life was strange for Inuit, who told me that even infrequent trips to the ‘big city’ of Iqaluit (7000 people) cause stress.

minded Inuit as early as the 1970s to insert a hard boundary around culturally Inuit spaces in the form of a territorial border.

#### 2.4.3. Ethno-Regionalism: Toponymic Revolution and the Retainment of Traditional Activities

The evocation of land through an intimate knowledge is paramount to the retainment of Inuit cultural identity (Irwin 7, 15, 17), even though it is more of a nostalgic sentiment to present-day Inuit than reality. Land-based notions of identity are, however, more ingrained in the elders' generation consisting of the last generational cohort made up of individuals born outside the safe confines of post-war settlements. After the creation of northern settlements, which included spatial displacements, "ethnicity was supported and guided by descendance and kinship networks, language, locally grounded economic activities and the intimate relation with the land" (Müller-Wille, "Cultural Identity" 290). Starting in 1993, with negotiations to geographically assert Inuit cultural identity, the Arctic has become the stronghold of an Inuit nationalist sentiment, wishing to redraw the map of Canada and rename the settlements set up by the Canadian government in the 1950s and 1960s. Cultural space point beyond a bordered territory but incapsulates that physical dimension as well (Hall 168). Traditional Inuit cultural spaces today are protected by the inserted hard boundaries within the North, demarcating Inuit, Southern, and other territories as cultural sub-divisions of Canada.

As space is being reorganized in the North, ethno-regionalist principles govern the way in which land and settlements are presented. Boundaries between neighbouring groups are formed in the minds of the people (Correll 173) not necessitating clear and physical demarcations, rather it is the use of locally derived names that point to the location of cultural boundaries. Therefore, I affirm that the official status of locally known Inuit names is crucial in reclaiming ethnocultural identity and as part of it, reterritorializing the land. Reterritorialization in the Inuit homeland takes place using ethnocentric language, logos, and symbols that were first introduced in the early land acquisition era between 1993 and 2007. This process—that I call a toponymic revolution—is attached to Inuit cultural revival and erases Anglo-Canadian place names while introducing a new map of Canada that shows primarily Inuit-inhabited locations renamed and indicated in Inuktitut. Since there is an inherent link between culture and land, efforts regarding the use of Inuktitut place names signify an expressed intent to draw ethnic boundaries around spaces culturally defined by Inuit (Müller-Wille, "Nunavut Place Names" 146-147; Légaré "Inuit"114). The cultural reterritorialization of the

Eastern Arctic is being actualized in a growing renaming project (seen through the erasure of non-Inuit hamlet names off documents and websites, even though most hamlets were built by Southerners, hence the English naming) as exemplified by the visitor who arrives one day to Hall Beach and leaves Sanirajak the next day, and more importantly, it signals the first step towards an Inuit nation-building effort.

I find that using English placenames may be contested for mainly two reasons. Firstly, before embracing modernity, walking large distances was out of the question due to the harsh circumstances of fifty Celsius below zero temperatures and a polar night for a good portion of the calendar year. Therefore, the basics—such as the lack of geographical knowledge beyond the immediate surroundings owing to not having the means to travel along with not being able to read and write—rid Inuit of the possibility to participate in the systematic and official naming of the Arctic at the time when Canadian cartographers completed this task. Secondly, the names of geographical locations before the formation of Nunavut were far from uniform. Rather, names given to a location by a certain *miut* group carried crucial information for those that knew them within a hunting party or family unit (this has substantially changed due to the altered man-land relationship), especially when we consider that the land and the people were once inseparable in Inuit communities (Alia 122). Many government-formed settlements had English names because they were not close to original, pre-, and early-contact seasonal meeting points of Inuit, rather they were formed around HBC drop-off sites where in-gathering of Inuit was observed. Although Inuktitut toponyms have been used on maps since first contact with Europeans in cases where locations coincided with transient Inuit residences, due to differences in the use of placenames and language itself among various Inuit groups, only the use of standardized English names made maps and orientation possible (Müller-Wille, “Nunavut Place Names” 148).

The inclusion of Inuit into the Canadian cultural framework through policies, especially from the 1950s onwards, crossed cultural boundaries, further altering the characteristics of Inuit identity. Interethnic relations are a result of transplanted Southern professionals to Inuit *Nunangat* in order to help build a sustainable welfare economy. However, I suggest that by relocating Euro-Western systems of governance, an outlander or *qallunaat* way of cultural development was set in progress. Thus, Inuit ethnic identity has been receiving influences that altered the conditions (Müller-Wille, “Méthodologie 51; Dorais, “Language, Culture” 296-301) for internalizing and actualizing the notion of *inummarig*. Therefore, for the hamlet folk, the sedentary generation of Inuit raised in the settlements, *inummarig* evokes a different set of skills

and characteristics than for the prior generation, who belong to the decreasing group of elders today. The *inummariq* of the past is idealized as a mythic hunter, while current trends (and my observation) show that a mixture of municipal work and part-time motorized hunting with rifles on rare weekends appears closer to what fills the days of Inuit men.

Standardization made the delivery of the welfare state possible and therefore was a very much needed effort. In an archived study by J.G. Wright in 1945, in preparation for the introduction of the welfare state to the North, it was noted that at the time 7700 Inuit lived in Canada dispersed across the Arctic (“Considerations;” Damas, *Arctic* 116) in an area the size of Europe. The purpose of the study was to show that between 1929 and 49 only 1800 Inuit were in any way reachable by healthcare, and the situation needed to be mitigated. A clear geographical distribution and uniformly appointed maps were a must in order to reach Inuit living without any form of healthcare. Wright’s study highlights that the Inuit homeland is a vast area within which Inuit groups scarcely travelled long distances. This was probably due to a lack of motorized vehicles, towns for stopping during a long-haul travel, and the general unnavigability of the land, rather they stuck to what in most cases was a seasonal pattern between inland and coastal hunting grounds. It is worth remembering that before the introduction of snowmobiles in the 1970s, Inuit used *qamutik*, a wooden sled pulled by dogs (and sometimes by people) for transportation and travel on both land and sea ice. However, since most of the Inuit homeland is above the tree line, wood was transported from the South. Therefore, the actual traditional manner of Inuit hunting—the primary reason for travelling—was done on foot—thus limiting the distance a hunter might have travelled—and without the aid of snowmobiles, boats, rifles, dogs, and other tools and commodities introduced to Inuit culture by early European whalers and travellers. All of these facts illuminate the situation of generational differences between what is considered as traditionally Inuit, and how the past is perceived beyond experiences and the reach of collective memory.

Reterritorialization through the use of names that had not previously been used by Inuit, thus, may be questioned as such. Traditional naming practices do not, however, counteract the South-influenced lifestyle taking root in the ancestral homeland of Inuit. Inuit culture has been shaped by new traditions arriving North, such as the annual re-supply ships, so called sealifts, that mark the passing of each open water season, and air travel when possible. Hunting, once a livelihood for Inuit, is but a hobby to augment store-bought staple foods and a business activity in the branch of niche tourism. The manner in which Inuit traditional activities are fading is apparent in the need for hunters like Chris Pudlat Sr. of Kinngait (known as Cape Dorset until

2020), Qikiqtaaluk Region (formerly Baffin Island) to educate youth inexperienced in traditional activities such as hunting. Pudlat regularly takes local children seal hunting admitting that “too many in Nunavut have nothing to do, not enough...hunting in our communities...one of the young men had never gone boating before in his life” (qtd. in Neary). It must be mentioned, however, that boats themselves are a Southern influence as the first Peterheads, a kind of small fishing boat, were introduced to Inuit by the HBC in 1920 (Fig. 12). Pudlat acknowledges that a substantial number of the first generation of Inuit born in the settlements was not taught the traditional ways by their parents. Tradition, as a movable feast, changes as without literacy, stories are forgotten, and practices fade into oblivion. This is how a clearly loan practice, such as boating on board of a Scottish Peterhead whaleboat, can be regarded as tradition (which is also on its way to extinction).



Figure 12. A Scottish Peterhead Whaling boat in Qikiqtarjuaq in 1984 sold to Eastern Arctic Inuit by the HBC (photo courtesy of newberryphotoarchives.ca).

Generally, elders were enchanted by the comfort of Southern inventions, such as wooden houses, Peterheads, rifles, and nets that were brought to their daily lives. Life in the North is substantially more difficult and income types differ from Southern ones and tend to be more meager, hence poverty is more apparent. Comparing welfare statistics, such as mortality and income per capita, to prior settlement times reveals why hamlet life was embraced by Inuit. In the presence of new technology and an easier sustenance, elders ceased to be invested in

teaching the old ways to the young generation. The same outcome is observed by Peter Collings on Coleman Island, NWT (now Ulukhaktok, Inuvik):

[Inuit men] were educated in schools rather than hunting camps, they socialized primarily with each other, and they were exposed to a set of values seemingly incompatible with those held by their parents and grandparents. All of these factors, we felt, effectively prevented the transmission of the knowledge necessary to hunt effectively, although, and perhaps more importantly, there was a decided lack of practice too. When men like Charlie were in their teens, the market for sealskins collapsed, and many families simply gave up seal hunting and began staying in town even during the summer months. Hence structural conditions stunted their growth as hunters. In the 1993 sample, only one of the men I interviewed was hunting in a manner that resembled the style of the older generation. (358)

About the activities of contemporary Inuit men who claim to be hunters Collings observed that “[t]hese men were not producing much food. Some hunted hardly at all, their activities are better understood as ‘driving around’ rather than hunting...[t]hey *talked* [sic] about hunting, but they did not *do* much of it. Or so it seemed to me” (360). This indicates that while cultural traditions and the traditional skillset are fading, increasing nostalgia for pre-contact life appears. Idealization of the life and skills honed by the nomadic ancestors along with a lack of knowledge concerning life as a subsistence hunter is apparent in the interviews conducted with the 1990s youth in Nancy Wachowich’s *Saqiyuq*, a study of three subsequent generations of *Nunavummiut* women. Only the youngest generation raised in Southern-like comfort shows a newfound zeal for traditional activities, while older generations welcome Southern inventions more readily. Indeed, the move off land in the 1950s and 1960s substantially changed Inuit life about which current generations do not have first-hand knowledge. Spending days over a breathing hole might sound as romantic from a house featuring central heating, but it is yet another cultural dimension to live such a reality.

Beyond urban centres, alienation from the land and the traditional way of life is present in the North as well. The reason why Inuit may not feel at home even in the North is that many sub-groups had to be merged due to the depletion of hunting grounds. Transport of people off areas where game had become scarce into areas where circumstances were ideal for hunting and fishing (Damas, *Arctic* 46-47) was a well-meaning intervention in the final, transitory days of the policy of dispersal, but caused distress to some, apparent in the trickling of populations back to areas, such as Ennadai Lake, where subsistence livelihood was not possible any longer. Although the primary goal of the moves initiated by the Canadian government was to facilitate the delivery of government services and to improve living conditions, Inuit soon had become plagued by social ills, such as alcohol and drug use, unemployment, and dependency on

government benefits, losing all desire to hunt or independently sustain themselves (Damas, *Arctic* 46, 50). Colin Irwin aptly describes this dichotomy of Inuit life in the title of his 1988 report on settlement and economic change by calling Inuit “lords of the Arctic, wards of the state,” borrowing the reference from Asen Balikíi.<sup>41</sup> A case of such composite cultural identity, as Berry’s model suggests, may place individuals outside both cultures, rather than including them in both, leading to festering social problems.

#### 2.4.4. At the Intersection of Culture, Place/Space, and Time

Reterritorialization typically enforces the revitalization of cultural identity, palpable especially in the case of Inuit, who are one of the most traditional autochthonous communities in Canada. Studies focusing on cultural shift indicate that participation in traditional activities has been diminishing due to an acquired Western lifestyle, and Inuit has become distanced from their own culture (Fletcher 146). Cultural changes due to de- and reterritorialization are observable as early as in the 1970s in the modernized Repulse Bay, now renamed Naujaat. (Müller-Wille, *Nunavut* 31). At the foundation of Naujaat, Inuit numbered about 200 to 10 Euro-Canadians, the latter of which represented a variety of cultural backgrounds, and constantly fluctuated in their composition due to reasons of availability of short-term work in the territory. Under these conditions, the ethnocultural identity of Inuit was “fully and vitally expressed within their own community as the local majority, parallel to the quite illusive and vaguely defined “qallunaaq” ethnicity based on external networks and on the pervasive imposition of English as means of communication” (Müller-Wille, “Cultural Identity” 290).<sup>42</sup> Therefore, the spatial displacements that occurred due to relocations left cultural identity largely intact and supported by well-defined characteristics, such as “kinship networks, language, locally grounded economic activities and the intimate relation with the land,” which hold a powerful symbolic status in the expression of Inuit cultural identity (Müller-Wille, “Cultural

<sup>41</sup> In Irwin’s own words, “the term ‘wards of the state’ has been used by Balikíi to describe the contemporary Netsilingmiut. He [Balikíi] was probably using the phrase in what may be considered its weaker form in as much as most Inuit, directly or indirectly, receive their income from a government agency. However, in addition to this meaning of the term ‘wards of the state,’ I also wish to imply a stronger meaning when I discuss future generations of Inuit being on welfare unless thousands of new jobs are created or unless welfare programs are changed into programs of ‘productive activity.’ If this kind of welfare society can not be avoided then my use of the term ‘slum’ may also be appropriate as slums are associated with overcrowded housing, welfare, poor levels of education and social problems such as alcohol abuse” (*Lords* 45).

<sup>42</sup> I must contest the delegation of the Inuktitut term “*qallunaaq*” as an ethnicity as it means outlander, foreigner, stranger; it is not an ethnicity but a signifier of relationship to Inuit (‘the people’). *Qallunaaq* is better understood as an adjective for non-Inuit of any ethnic or cultural background (First Nations, English, Iraqi, Burkinabé, etc.).

Identity” 290). With the establishment of Nunavut—and Inuit *Nunangat*—the reterritorialized Arctic has been restructured as a new cultural and political entity that encourages traditional sentiments and belonging across kinship groups and geographical barriers. Nevertheless, increasing intercultural relations between Inuit and the Canadian South via political goals—such as those of land claims and economic development—established a network through which the distinctness of Inuit culture has eroded. Even with the achieved reterritorialization, Inuit ethnic identity has been influenced in such a manner that the conditions for being Inuit have changed (Müller-Wille, “Cultural Identity” 290; Dorais and Collette, *Advent of Nunavut* 56).

This notion is supported by identity-focused studies carried out in Inuit *Nunangat* in the mid-2000s by Louis-Jacques Dorais that emphasize the plurality of meaning when it comes to identity. The older generation of Inuit insists on cultural and linguistic diversity among Inuit across the homeland. They envision the homeland as a multicultural state giving home to several Inuit sub-groups from markedly different cultural, linguistic, and geographical dispositions. This stance contradicts the very reason for claiming a separate homeland in the first place, which was based on a uniform Inuit identity distinct from the South.<sup>43</sup> As one elder admits: “because [Inuit] didn’t live together in the same place, even if we were close to each other, we were different” (Dorais and Collette, *Advent of Nunavut* 48). Another respondent in his seventies explains that “[Inuit] are all different. People from Iqaluit and Pangnirtung are different. [...] We are different because we can’t live in one community” (Dorais and Collette, *Advent of Nunavut* 48). This opinion was echoed by members of my Iglulingmiut community upon living in Nunavut. Pond Inlet and Pangnirtung specifically were mentioned as culturally, linguistically, and geographically foreign places even though they belong to the same larger linguistic and geographical area of Qikiqtaaluk.<sup>44</sup>

Young people, however, emphasize the unity of Inuit, implying that living in Nunavut preserves Inuit languages and cultures better. Compared to the last generation that was raised by parents living part of their lives in the traditional way, the young generation takes an opposing stance when conceptualizing cultural identity. Instead of closing in, many wish to widen the notion of home, as one young man interviewed explained that *Nunavummiut* Inuit are “like the Alaskans, they go hunting and trapping. This is a sign of being Aboriginal” (Dorais

<sup>43</sup> Due to large-scale immigration since its foundation as a state, the current cultural make up of Canada has long diverged from purely Euro-Western traditions and backgrounds. However, Inuit *Nunangat* was formed to appreciate the autochthonous people of Canada called Inuit and their traditional hunting grounds (which do not function as such any longer) as a separate, semi-sovereign entity within Canada.

and Collette, *Advent of Nunavut* 48). Another interviewee observes that “[he is] an Inuk because [his] mother is Inuk. It will never change even if [he] goes elsewhere in Canada. Inuit can come back anytime. They have their choice. If they do not want to live here, they have their choice” (Dorais and Collette, *Advent of Nunavut* 48). This opinion, rather than building on the reterritorialization of the traditional homeland and closing off the outside, moves towards expanding the cultural space to all of Canada without fearing to lose one’s ethnocultural identity, which approach in fact coincides with the Canadian multicultural ethos.

Such different opinions between two age cohorts highlight the diverging reactions to how Nunavut—the emblem of the Inuit homeland— is regarded by Inuit themselves. To one generation it is a constructed space for cultural cacophony of various peoples, to another, it is a naturally multicultural Inuit territory. In this sense, both the Inuit homeland and Canada are multicultural, insofar as multiculturalism is regarded as the sustained occupation of space by culturally diverse populations, a vision that aligns with—as it appears—both entities. As one 77-year-old Inuk puts it, “now Inuit and Qallunaat are getting together more. It seems they are merging into one” (Dorais and Collette, *Advent of Nunavut* 47).

Spatiality, especially the function of borders and boundaries facilitate the de- and reterritorialization of the Inuit homeland. The use of region-specific language, conduct, and symbols reinforce Inuit cultural identity. Regional boundaries are crucial in experiencing *inummarig* identity through the territorialization of meaning, along with the ethno-regional approach to culture reinforced by the toponymic overhaul of the Inuit Arctic. While hamlet life creates an alienating boundary between the human-built settlement and the land, the treeline demarcates a natural cultural boundary, chiefly that of the Inuit culture. Boundaries present a crucial investigative lens in human geography, and, as Paasi points out, in geopolitics, they are typically perceived as empirical entities which divide space into bounded units that change mainly as a consequence of conflicts (4). The construction of borders and boundaries organizes social life, explicitly maintaining territoriality. Its main objective is to hold on to power and express the sovereignty over a certain territory and exert a cultural distinction for those within. Although—whether or not they or some political opponents acknowledge it—all individuals reside in a country geographically represented by borders, sub-groups that produce political, cultural, and oftentimes physical boundaries may exist within a nation; Inuit are such a sub-group forming Inuit *Nunangat* as a distinct cultural entity.

Boundary insertion within a multicultural nation, such as Canada, fulfills obligations towards the expression of ethnocultural identities. Boundaries allow for the free manifestation of ethnocultural identity, while territoriality occurs through education, politics, and governance and builds a burgeoning ethnic solidarity. Territoriality harkens back not only to the free roaming days of competing subsistence hunting groups but stems from the desire to assert a separate autochthonous identity. While settlements sprung out of the expressed goal to enable Inuit Canadians to participate and reap the benefits of the welfare state, it may be understood as the deterritorialization of the Inuit homeland, therefore, reterritorializing it is an act of building Inuit spaces. In the case of urban spaces, traditions travel, and islands of Inuit culture aid the retainment of cultural identity.

For Inuit, a people with marked cultural specificity, spatiality has a strong influence on constructing one's cultural identity, therefore homeland and the people's connection to it hold a symbolic status. Since Inuit denizens of Inuit *Nunangat* are Canadian citizens, there is an administrative-spatial duality inherent to Inuit identity: while distinctly Inuit identity is retained, a Canadian identity is adopted as well (Dorais, "Language, Culture" 302) without necessarily obliterating either, by this fusing a composite cultural identity into one. The remoteness of the Inuit homeland limits Southern influence, and curtails acculturative processes, allowing those people remaining in their local community to develop their identity based on the history, geography, languages, and practices performed on the homeland, but not unaffected by the South. The findings of the cross-cultural models referenced in this chapter illuminate that identity can be fluid and reconstructed, and, as such, it is possible for Inuit cultural identity to survive as well as to expand in a multicultural context. Aiding this endeavour, adaptation once more becomes one of the main foci of Inuit life. As a result of this attempt, the material and non-material aspects of the culture practiced on the land are amended by Southern comforts. In the meantime, interest in traditional activities, such as the harvesting and consuming of country food, and engagement in traditional activities, decreases. Changes as a consequence of modernization and enculturation have implications to Inuit identity, altering its manifestation, but not eliminating its existence and importance for Inuit. Keeping vital facets of intellectual culture alive—such as singing and storytelling, amended with the adherence to the tenets of traditional knowledge—fosters the preservation of Inuit cultural identity.

### III. THE END OF THE HUNTER: AN ETHNOHISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF CANADIAN INUIT

#### 3.1. From the Preservationist Stance to the Welfare State Approach

Inuit lived a mostly nomadic existence before World War II. In yearly cycles, animal-derived food source was harvested. Inuit followed game, such as caribou drives, in *ilagit*, an extended family unit, that functioned as a small hunting party of approximately fifty people. People adjusted to the formation of pack ice or the melting ice floes and built igloos in the snow or, after thawing, erected caribou hide tents on the exposed rocky terrain. In the dead of winter—including the approximately forty days of pitch black—social ties were strengthened when people gathered around the sites of cached meat and built a *qaggiq* to entertain themselves through the harshest time of Arctic winter without daylight. This equilibrium of existence—without knowing about the outside world beyond casual acquaintance with Dene and Innu, whose hunting grounds overlapped those of the Inuit—was disturbed by the arriving European whalers and, later, Arctic fox traders, missionaries, and explorers.<sup>45</sup>

The transition from nomadic to sedentary lifestyle in the Canadian Central Arctic has been documented by David Damas relying on archival work based on a vast number of primary sources and his own field work that I regard to be of singular significance. Participation in trapping created an income from the pelts and was exchanged for modern hunting tools and commodities that made both hunting and winter survival easier. Inuit representatives from the times before settlement had already acknowledged this, stating that the old way of life was passing (Damas *Arctic* 50). Inuit were open to new options that accommodated their life and naturally left behind customs that were based on the lack of technology turning to ownership of guns and boats instead. The hardships from the constant moves were alleviated by the advanced hardware provided for Inuit by the Hudson's Bay Company [HBC] in exchange for trapping fox, and outside of commerce, in the form of government reliefs from the 1940s on (Damas, *Arctic* 39). As family units were largely autonomous, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police [RCMP] rarely deemed it necessary to visit Inuit camps.<sup>46</sup> Attracted by the goods stored

<sup>45</sup> Innu are formerly known as the Naskapi-Montagnais Nation, who are an Algonquian-speaking people whose hunting grounds are called Nitassinan, located on the eastern portion of the Québec-Labrador peninsula. Innu means 'people.' Dene, also known as Athapaskan, are from the Northwest Territories (part of which was given to Nunavut) and Alaska; altogether forming the Denendeh, meaning 'the land of the people.'

<sup>46</sup> The Royal Canadian Mounted Police is part of the Canadian police force.

inside HBC trading posts, an increasing number of people started to congregate around them, leading for some to employment with either the HBC or the RCMP. Although some jobs were secured by Inuit who were interested in doing so, by and large, Inuit were not interfered with as a policy of dispersal was endorsed (Damas, *Arctic* 42) in order to not disturb traditional life, and at the same time dispersal discouraged Inuit from staying close to trading posts. The Canadian government aimed at a policy of non-interference and encouraged Inuit to stay in their camps and live on the land in a traditional fashion unless they had pelts to trade at the post. Traders supported Ottawa's preservationist policy since it benefited their trapping economy (Damas, *Arctic* 190).

Since keeping Inuit away from the posts was eventually unsuccessful, contemporary archived documents reveal that this political approach was slowly changing, and in the 1950s an increasing number of Inuit camps were being formed around HBC posts. Eventually, the Canadian welfare state policy already practiced in the South was extended to the Arctic. This policy reversed the previous non-interventionist stance and regarded Inuit as Canadian citizens who need healthcare, education, and a job opportunity. To deliver such a policy to the North to a minuscule and dispersed population in an area roughly the size of the remainder of the country, I believe that centralization was unavoidable. Similarly to the city hubs in the South, hamlets were created around trading posts where Inuit had already congregated, and churches, schools, and healthcare facilities were built from wood and metal containers shipped from the South to serve the needs of the newly-formed Inuit community. Some additional relocations took place in the 1950s to avoid famine and move people away from hunting grounds where game had become scarce. Although the reason was officially communicated and necessary, some Inuit still trickled back to the area of their birth. However, these moves—where people were relocated to a distant area of the Arctic—were very small in number compared to the natural formation of villages in the vicinity of a post located on the hunting grounds of a community maintaining seasonal habitat in the area (Damas, *Arctic* 190). It can be concluded that overall most settlements were initiated by independent migration to areas where an HBC trading post had already been built and Inuit visited not only for trading purposes, but to permanently remain close by. Additionally, moves were also organized by Ottawa in order to lift people from congested or game-scarce areas to places where fewer Inuit resided, but more game was available (Damas, *Arctic* 46). Points of interest where there was a natural desire to stay on—such as HBC trading posts—cannot be considered forceful means to relocate; in fact, dispersal was encouraged well into the 1950s (Damas, *Arctic*, 194). The Inuit-operated Inuit Housing Committee, however, was found to pressure some of the campers who still pursued a traditional

lifestyle while staying close to the hamlet of Igloolik to move to the settlement which was itself designed to resemble contact-traditional life (Damas, *Arctic* 54; 194). In spite of discouraging efforts, a large number of Inuit congregated around trading posts, during which time they relinquished their traditional hunting activity, as a result, the policy of dispersal proved unsuccessful and was gradually abandoned. The last generation of free-ranging Inuit in Canada—despite the efforts of HBC and RCMP staff—did not want to disperse, they rather wanted contact with Southerners.

The new policy that proposed the expansion of the welfare state to the North was driven by a humanitarian consideration but was hindered by the obstacles of finding Southern workforce that was willing to take a post in the Arctic. To serve the Arctic communities, the idea of travelling doctors and teachers was teased, so as not to disrupt the nomadic lifestyle practiced, but no applicants were found for such a dangerous post to be carried out in a harsh climate, and generally under highly inclement weather conditions and no steady connection to the rest of the country. Luck ran out in dealing with Inuit as well, since they were primarily hunters, not workers (Damas, *Arctic* 44); furthermore, language barriers and cultural differences with Inuit made work arrangements difficult. During this time, housing programs that allowed settlement residents to build houses from wood transported from the South to above the tree line secured Inuit better living conditions. At the time of settlement starting in the 1950s, 7700 Inuit lived in Canada (Damas, *Arctic* 117), as opposed to the nearly 70000 in 2024s. These numbers go to show that improved living conditions facilitated a community that thrived. Nevertheless, the dwindling number of full-time hunters reveal that from the contact-traditional era on, Inuit have been losing the commitment and interest in subsistence hunting and fishing, which I believe contributed to the change in which Inuit identity is realized. Adaptation to the changed economy that introduced trapping and modern hunting and fishing tools, proved to be a difficult process. Since settlement, Inuit have complained about lack of funds to buy equipment to hunt, lack of training and time due to wage work, as well as addiction to organized sports and television (Condon et al. 32). Based on my Arctic experience in 2016, during which time I functioned as the Senior English Language Arts Teacher of Attagutaaluk High School in Igloolik, I observed a considerable degree of unemployment, while truancy and high drop-out rates plagued my classes filled with young adults entranced by modern life. As of 2020, the unemployment rate is close to 60 %, thus, only the minority of the population participates in the labour force. Both the data and the complaints of Inuit suggests that the guidance of the elders would be beneficial, as some lived in an age when they were said to have

successfully relied on their land skills without needing anything in the form of compulsory education and jobs.

I argue that teaching and learning the traditional way although often expressed as desired, has subsided as members of different generations struggle over what is regarded as a defining element of their identity. What one generation fights to achieve and value may be viewed by subsequent generations as redundant, such as Arctic life skills related to hunting. This suggests that not only different individuals, but subsequent cohorts understand Inuit values differently. Habitus, or socialized norms, govern thinking and collective practices, but habitus can be varied as people experience identity differently depending on the nature of the context within which it manifests (Bourdieu 78). This explains, for example, how Inuit resist Southern culture in one context, such as education, which is not seen as useful, evidenced by poor school attendance and academic achievement, in the meantime they express support for Canadian values in other contexts, such as adopting the use of modern hunting tools and vehicles to hunt, fish, and move about on the land. The dual nature of habitus also clarifies why most Inuit value tradition, yet they insist on the need for progress and development in the Arctic.

Generations understand Inuit identity differently apparent in their lifestyle partially facilitated by settlement. The elders' generation—Inuit who lived on the land as children during early contact times in the first half of the twentieth century and came into contact with missionaries, HBC company workers, government officials, and explorers—is the one closest to what once was an insular hunter-gatherer society unaware of the outside world. The transitional generation who attended residential school and witnessed or was born in the first settlements after World War II is culturally placed between two realities, in neither of which they are completely proficient. Finally, the current generation of adults who were born in the newly created Inuit *Nunangat* and reaped its benefits in the form of public education, governments funds, benefits, socialized healthcare, and comfortable houses, is the first generation raised by parents who have never practiced a purely nomadic lifestyle. The three generations each embody different Inuit identities, which is apparent in how Inuit negotiated Southern influences such as Christianity, mixed economy, technology, literacy, and media into the same body of Inuit traditional knowledge as hunting caribou, oral tradition, and survival on the land. Thus, the manner in which Inuit conceptualize *inummarig* identity in their new living arrangement is diverse and complex and recognizable not only in everyday life but in art as well, especially in the endemic genre of traditional songs.

The primary influence on Inuit identity relies in contact with other cultures, not only European, but First Nations, such as the Innu or Dene Nations, as well as history, the passing of time and the change of values themselves. Since, in the case of European contact, the outside influence comes from a highly industrialized civilization that lends applicable tools to Inuit, change is unavoidable. I stress that, in many cases, change is welcomed by subsistence cultures because the human species is singularly encoded to covet more than mere survival. It is clear to me that Inuit of the contact traditional era wanted to thrive, hence Southern improvements, such as snowmobiles, rifles, wooden houses, were embraced while traditional and less comfortable means of hunting and dwelling were cast aside. This act of willful and voluntary change is part of the natural process of progress. The integration of the inventions of other cultures and adaptation to a settled form of life, however, yield cultural transformation in both intellectual and material culture. The snowmobile is one of the bigger transformative technologies internalized by Inuit completely replacing dog sleds, while television and recently the internet, introduced a new form of fun that sent song contests as a means of entertainment into oblivion. The reason why skidoos are preferred by Inuit is noted in a general observation about men in Ulukhaktok:

The young men were increasingly enamoured of the more powerful, liquid-cooled engines that begun appearing in the early 1990s...they could go faster and pull a heavier load [than dogs]...they could travel further and still get back to town in time for dinner and *Hockey Night in Canada*.” (Collings 359)

Such eager replacement of traditions with progress results in a successive generation with only rudimentary knowledge about the lives of their ancestors (Collings 367). I assert that the rapid embracement of cultural loans, such as in the case of the snowmobile and the television coupled with a neglect of traditions, yields non-negligible outcomes severely widening the gap between generations. My fear is that such a break in the link in the chain of oral tradition does not merely stunt the cultural growth of the one generation but obliterates oral culture.

The culture and habitus of a given generation survives if the collective memory of its origins and traditions are remembered and practiced. Hence, the continued intellectual endeavours of Inuit, be it traditional *pisiit* song or modern poems, is an integral part of retaining identity. Urban Inuit who were born and raised off land do not have an immediate connection to the land-based collective memory, therefore, internalizing *pisiit* is more of a challenge than for hamlet residents. I argue that despite the partially severed connection to the land, and the immense cultural changes in the last hundred years that connected a Paleolithic people to a

modern industrialized society, Inuit cultural identity is markedly present in not only those Inuit who are denizens of Northern settlements, but among those in Southern urban centres.

As seen so far, Inuit identity is not uniform in any one generation as several linguistic and ethnic sub-groups exist within the broader term Inuit meaning “people.” In the current era, markers, such as spatial location, religious affiliation, generational cohort, and language spoken in the family all influence the manner in which identity is internalized and expressed. The phrase *inummarig* itself carries solid and never-changing characteristics, which in fact contradict the Inuit notion of adaptation to one’s changing environment and circumstances in order to survive. The concept of the true Inuk is referenced in connection with traditional knowledge, wisdom, hunting, and survival skills. I maintain that it is also extended to mean Southern-received customs that are a result of contact, such as metal harpoons, hunting rifles, Peterhead boats, ATVs, and skidoos that have become internalized by Inuit culture and have become part of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century Inuit identity.

Instead of living out on the land that is loosely understood as hunting grounds or *ilagiit* belonging to different *miut* groups, the Inuit in 21<sup>st</sup>-century Canada inhabit Inuit *Nunangat*, which is made up of four regions: Nunavut, the autonomous territory that accounts for the majority of the Canadian Inuit population; the autonomous Nunatsiavut, a part of Newfoundland and Labrador; Nunavik, within Québec; and the Inuvialuit Settlement in the Northwest Territories, and the Yukon Territory. These large and distant locations are sparsely populated with linguistically and culturally diverse Inuktut-speaking peoples. For example, the related Western Arctic Yup’ik is not easily understood by most Eastern Arctic Inuit; in fact, Alaskan Yup’ik and Iñupiat identify as such or ‘Eskimo’ rather than using Inuit (Dorais “Inuit Identity” 23). I propose that what makes these peoples all Inuit is the remarkable wealth of shared stories, many of which emerge in songs, or sometimes referred to as oral poetry, a foundational genre in Inuit intellectual culture. Shared narratives reinforce a common Inuit origin as well as history that emerges in the poems people have been singing for generations. The stories of the different Inuit tribes convey values and traditions that are similar (“5000 Years” 3), thus they forge the Inuit together in the concept of *inummarig*.

Early Inuit culture relied on an oral tradition, with the first detailed written description collected by Danish missionary Hans Poulsen Egede (1686-1758) in the eighteenth century. While Hans Egede was living among Inuit, he attempted to learn Kalaallisut and publish the first “Esqimaux Bible.” His work was completed by his son, Poul Egede (1708-1789), who

maintained an excellent relationship with Kalaallit remarked by Rasmussen as an early cultural connection that was definitively positive (*Across* 125). Poul Egede also published an Inuktut dictionary and grammar book, *Grammatica Gronlandica Danico Latina* published in 1760; his writings represent one of the great early achievements of Dano-Norwegian attempts at connecting with the Inuit culture. Following on their path, part-Inuit Danish explorer Knud Rasmussen—also regarded by Inuit as an “Inuk ethnographer” (“5000 Years” 3) and nicknamed by Kalaallit as Kunūnguak (Chartier, *Inuit* 1)—built on these early findings to further explore Inuit culture in the early twentieth century in the context of seven successive research trips called the Thule expeditions. Addressing his fellow academicians, he states his calling as follows:

Having myself the honor...of addressing you this evening, I should like first of all to point out how...For generations past, we have all been engaged in... exploration...and in the course of this work we have all helped to procure information as to the life and customs of the Eskimo with whom we came into contact. (Hogarth et al. 125)

Rasmussen was intrigued by the extent Inuit tribes are connected to one another—beyond their ancestral past originating in the later so-named Thule culture that lived in the Arctic between 1000–1850 CE (“5000 Years”)—and are regarded as the predecessor of modern Inuit. Having grown up among Inuit in Greenland, Rasmussen’s Kalaallisut language skills and youth spent among Kalaallit in Greenland aided his research across the North and resulted in an unparalleled literary and ethnographical collection of songs, stories, and traditions of Inuit, discovering that the autochthonous peoples of the circumpolar North of Canada, Denmark, the United States, and Russia share a similar cultural history, all foundational information I built on when devising my own study.

Firstly, it must be mentioned that even before the Thule expeditions, a young Rasmussen was taken on by Danish ethnologist Ludwig Lylius-Erichsen’s expedition to the Western Arctic (1902-04) where he distinguished himself with his excellent language skills. Upon his return to Denmark, he published *Nye Mennesker* (1905) titled in English as *The People of the Polar North* (1908). The book was an instant success in scientific circles, with Franz Boas highly regarding its description of the people living in the visited parts. Having, thus, proven himself as an ethnographer, Rasmussen established the Thule Trading Station in northeastern Greenland (now Qaanaaq) in 1910, named so after the northernmost location mentioned in ancient Greek literature and cartography. The Thule Trading Station became the home base for a series of seven expeditions between 1912 and 1933 known as the Thule expeditions. The first excavation site of proto-Eskimo nearby was, therefore, named Thule (excavated by Rasmussen’s party,

namely his archaeologist Therkel Mathiessen after George Comer's earlier attempt). Now scientific literature refers to the ancestors of modern-day Inuit as Thule culture.

The first Thule expedition (1912) established Peary channel and mapped out the land. The second Thule expedition (1916-18) mapped the most northerly coasts of Greenland and explored them from a geological, botanical, as well as ethnographic point of view. The third Thule expedition (1919) was the laying out of depots for Roald Amundsen. The fourth Thule expedition (1919-20) took up investigations of the isolated Ammassalik in East Greenland (Thalblitzer 587). The fifth Thule expedition (1921-24), known by Arctic ethnographers as a milestone, crossed the entire Arctic to gather ethnographic data including songs, origin stories, folk tales, and religious texts on all Inuit groups in the whole of the Danish, Canadian, American, and Russian Arctic, the complete circumpolar homeland of the non-First Nation autochthonous peoples living there. The sixth Thule expedition (1931) was designed to consolidate Norway's claim on a portion of Greenland, and the seventh Thule expedition (1933) was meant to continue efforts started in on the previous trip (Thalblitzer 587), however, Rasmussen's death due to pneumonia and *kiviasq* (or auck, an Arctic bird used as filling in seals that are fermented over season) poisoning cut the trip, the exploration of Inuit culture, and his scientific career short.

Rasmussen's visit punctuated the first major wave of research into Inuit starting with Diamond Jenness on Vilhjamur Steffanson's visit to the North in 1910, however, the Fifth Thule Expedition (the first four expeditions were not of ethnographic nature) finishing in 1924 also signaled the threshold character of Rasmussen's expansive study of Inuit (Damas, "Journey" 141). I regard his work in recording Inuit culture as fundamental to the preservation of Inuit oral traditions as at the mid-1920s Inuit culture started receiving the first significant influences from the outside. European whalers, explorers and missionaries had reached the Arctic prior to the 1910-30 exploratory era; however, it is Rasmussen's Fifth Thule Expedition (1921-1924) that later Inuit research is generally based on. I hold Rasmussen's work as especially unique because it reveals a people in transition, showcasing an era when Inuit were not quite nomads anymore, but neither were they settled.

Although the Inuit are not a homogenous people, language varieties are mostly intelligible (Rasmussen, *Iglulik* 10), therefore, stories spread orally link different Inuit groups together. Inuit were surprised to hear a stranger like Rasmussen relate Kalaallit stories to them that were known to several groups in Canada as their own (Rasmussen, *Iglulik* 17). Inuit living

in opposing directions of the tundra share such stories as “Kivioq,” which is found both among the Qikiqtaaluk region Iglulingmiut that used to roam areas north of the Northwest Passage and in the west of Hudson Bay in Kivalliq, among the Kivallirmiut. Epic tales, such as “Kagsagsuk” or “The Raven who Married a Snow Goose” are known both among the Eastern Nunavut Iglulingmiut and the Netsilingmiut from the Kitikmeot Region in the northwest. A finding such as this suggests a shared culture regardless of the vast geographical dispersion of—in the 1920s—only a few thousand Inuit. I regard this cultural connection as the epicentre of the uniting force, the concept of *inummarig*, the genuine people of tradition that various Inuit sub-groups remember with a familiar reverence. *A mari usque ad mare* Inuit understand the notion of *inummarig* as their legacy upon which a distinct ethnocultural identity is built.<sup>47</sup>

### 3.2. Enculturation and Inuit Education

Most teachers both before and after the building of settlements in the 1950s arrived in the North with a Southern concept of education and a great deal of interest in Inuit culture. Cultural and language barriers encountered were overcome by most. Overwhelmingly, “Inuit were very eager to have their children learn English and looked forward to the benefits of these programs” (Qikiqtani 30). An Inuk parent, Taqtu, remembers:

Later on the children had to go to school, which was all right too—they had to learn if they were not going to be staying out in camp. They had to take jobs, which was also all right. There was really no choice, and I accepted it gladly because our children had to learn. I wanted them to learn English so that they can have good jobs when they [grew up]. (Qikiqtani 30)

However, I believe that schooling itself presented an acculturating effect, as language teacher Mick Mallon’s thought illustrate it in 1977:

Our school system is alien not only because it has been developed and is being run by non-Inuit: it is alien because it is a system. There were no places in traditional Inuit culture where children were herded together for a set number of hours a day to learn how to become functioning adults; there was no sub-set of adults who devoted their

<sup>47</sup> *A mari usque ad mare* is the Latin for ‘from sea to sea’ (often translated by Canadians as “from coast to coast to coast” referencing the three oceans bordering the country) and it is the Canadian national motto. The motto is an excerpt from the *Nova Vulgata*, Psalm 72:8, “Et dominabitur *a mari usque ad mare* [emphasis added], et a flumine usque ad terminos terrae” [He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth].

lives to instruction . . . To put it as extremely as possible: the mere building of a school could be said to be an alien act of cultural aggression. (Qikiqtani 35)

Inuit had a special situation due to their transitory lifestyle. Throughout the 1950s, in the early years of public education, the most pressing questions were that of the great distances within the North, the nomadic way of Inuit life, a lack of teaching candidates, and the roles of English and Inuktitut languages (Qikiqtani 18). The finding of teachers who would accommodate the camp was near impossible, however, some experimented with their methods of delivery. I found rare notes on Margery Hinds, a teacher in the 1950s in Cape Dorset, who visited the *ilagiit nunagivaktangit* teaching the children igloo by igloo.<sup>48</sup> Travelling with her own supplies and setting up her school in a moving tent in the harsh Arctic environment and without any aid was rather difficult. It was worth, nevertheless, as her students were eager to attend school in the newly built settlements (Qikiqtani 17). The wandering teacher system was, however, not sustainable and another form of standard education, the so-called “residential school,” was proposed. I found the 1954 report written by the Department of Northern Affairs Subcommittee on Eskimo Affairs in the Qikiqtani Inuit archives referencing the “nomadic character” of Inuit stating that,

The residential school is perhaps the most effective way of giving children from primitive environments experience in education along the lines of civilization leading to vocational training to fit them for occupations in the white man’s economy. (Qikiqtani 17)

The majority of students were, however, educated in day schools and housed in small hostels run by Inuit couples. The intention of these hostels was to be less disruptive to families and to allow a relatively smooth transition to modernity. Delving into the archives of the Truth Commission, Mosesee Qappik and his wife stand out as they testified in front of the Qikitaani Truth Commission that they had hosted students at the Pangnirtung hostel which they ran from 1964 to 1967. Qappik explained that he was responsible for eight children for three years throughout which time they loved them as their own children (Qikiqtani 19). Inuit children were often sent away or given to relatives or acquaintances (as was the practice once in Europe), so I presume the intention was to create a similar situation, so as not to overly stress the children. Summers were spent living a traditional lifestyle and speaking Inuktitut back in the camp of the student’s own family.

<sup>48</sup> *Ilagiit nunagivaktangit* translates to “extended family living together out on the land.”

I find the significance of the thus-received education in its perceived acculturative value, which also seemed to solve a socio-cultural problem boiling. A government memorandum in 1949, a few years prior to the Subcommittee's suggestion noted that,

In this task of interpreting the Canadian way of life, education is certainly the key point. In order that the Eskimo may accomplish the adjustment to civilization successfully, the education set-up must afford understanding of, and practice in, Canadian and democratic ways of living. Development towards citizenship should be the chief criterion in judging the success of our educational program, and other factors such as the development of specific skills or techniques, while important, should be subordinated to this end. (Qikiqtani 27)

The Department of Northern Affairs attempted to not only meet the standards of a Southern-style curriculum but to protect Inuit culture. The same memorandum commented that:

The Northwest Territories Administration has the opportunity to bring these people into civilization without the maladjustment and loss of independence and initiative which have resulted in many parts of the world when a similar task was attempted amongst other primitive races. (Qikiqtani 28)

It was argued that an Inuit-amended provincial curriculum would allow Inuit students to pursue further education in the Southern provinces. In fact, however, most Inuit students would never continue their studies in Southern Canada due to attachment to the community and the reduced standard of grades that could not compete with those of Southern students. However, I think, the importance of being an adequate Inuk in the Arctic was not lost on the government. This notion is suggested by a note written in 1955 by J.V. Jacobson, Superintendent of Education, which describes the two main reasons for revisions to the curriculum so as "to prepare the pupil to return to his own native way of life" and "to prepare a student for occupations in the white man's economy" (Qikiqtani 28). To accommodate this goal, classes in game conservation and trapping were proposed with the involvement of Inuit as teachers.

Starting in 1978, schools were to be staffed so that Inuit traditions were practiced more preparing the young for life not only in 20<sup>th</sup>-century Canada but in what was essentially the past. According to the petition drafted by Inuit parents in Igloolik, the Igloolik Education Committee was asking for an Inuk teacher who would teach throughout the school year to basically teach the skills of the past. This teacher should be classified as a regular teacher and should make the same salary as a qualified teacher (Qikiqtani 31). To match unqualified support workers on a moving scale depending on credentials was a hard ask. Furthermore, home skills in nomadic Inuit culture were typically acquired at home by children watching their parents, not taught by strangers in a school environment. Regardless, by the 1980s, due to pressure from

parents who themselves neglected the role of passing on mother-father skills, the number of Inuit teachers and teaching aides was growing (Qikiqtani 34).<sup>49</sup>

The acculturative effect of schooling on Inuit was and is to an extent marked, as most Inuit are bilingual and bicultural, that is to say, well-versed in both Inuit and all-Canadian aspects of culture and conversant in both some dialect of Inuktitut and English or French. Aspects of tradition are altered or lost primarily not because of education but in spite of it. It is to be hoped that the present generational cohort remains more active in keeping the light of the whale-oil lamp alive, even if electricity in the North is abundant.

### 3.3. Meeting the West: An Act of Cultural Exchange

Although the first meetings with westerners were not devoid of cultural *faux pas*, Inuit generally characterized the presence of *qallunaat* in the North as an exchange. Rasmussen's meeting an Inuit couple echoes this sentiment: "She [Takornâq] had moved down [from Igloodik] to Repulse Bay [today's Naujaat] with her husband, Padloq, expressly in order to be near white men and all the wealth which one could obtain by bartering with them" (Rasmussen, *Iglulik* 21). The notion that the relationship of Inuit and Westerners was that of barter is reiterated in Padloq's wife, Takornaq's explanation of Inuit customs to Rasmussen:

It is quite a common thing among us to change wives. And when a man lends his wife to another, he always lies with the other man's wife. But with white men it was different; none of them had their wives with them to lend in exchange. So, they gave presents instead, and thus it was that many men in our tribe looked on it as only another kind of exchange. (qtd. in Rasmussen, *Iglulik* 25)

Intellectual and material trade between cultures impacted the process of identity formation as well. Modern tools, foods, and customs altered the way Inuit subsistence society functioned; the first such novelty introduced was the earlier-mentioned fox trapping, which initially allowed Inuit to trade and purchase goods that they could not hunt for, such as tea, pots and pans, rifle shells, and other modern items needed in daily life. The ease with which Inuit adapted initially to the North is subsequently apparent in how "Southern economic influences and other penetrations offered an example of the adaptability of subsistence societies to new and

<sup>49</sup> I was informed by a former student of mine, who is now a teacher aide, that in the past 8 years, the number of Inuit teacher aides in Igloodik have doubled.

ostensibly disruptive technological, economic, and social inputs” (Wenzel 182). However intrusive the introduction of motorized vehicles that can travel hard terrain and long distances aiding a successful hunt might seem, the archival footage that remained from the early contact era shows the extreme hardships Inuit had to go through just to sustain life, therefore, it is to no surprise that such technological intrusions were embraced (Nandori, “Imagined Homeland” 159).

The sudden population boom after the introduction of Southern commodities heralded a safer age with longer lifespan and comfortable living. Many of the old practices, such as *erinaliutiq*, the use of a shaman’s magic words, were discontinued due to their uselessness in the face of medicine and technology. Prior to the introduction of writing in the late-18<sup>th</sup> century by Moravian missionaries equipped with a proselytizing purpose, Labrador Inuit retained their tradition through oral means. Oral dissemination of traditional knowledge remained the de facto method of recordkeeping for another 150 years throughout most of the North. Oral tradition continued well into the twentieth century, as Jenness recounts:

[s]torytelling is one of the most favorite past-times whenever three or four natives are gathered together, especially in the long evenings of winter. The old tales and traditions are repeated again and again...until they become almost as familiar to the young men of twenty as they are to the old men of fifty or sixty (1).

Songs, myths, epic, and folk tales do more than teach the young; they also show how culture functions. Listening to the traditional songs of a people as performed by them is the most authentic way of learning about a culture (Younging 1). The personal stories inherent in the Inuit song tradition serve as significant mediators of identity and peoplehood (Nandori, “Imagined Homeland” 157). While *unikkaaqtuat*, stories, form the basis of Inuit folklore and expresses the origin and morals of Inuit as a people (Dundes 150), the highly individualistic traditional *pisiit* songs reveal the nature of *inummarig* identity within just one person. Hearing life experiences sung in the form of a *pisiq* paints a vivid picture of *inummarig*. I regard those who recognize the stories within the songs because they know them and live by identical traditions as *inummarig*. I argue that the knowledge, or in other words, *quajimajatuqangit* serves as the crucible of identity. Thus, sharing stories, also referred to as *unikkausivut*, is the primary method of laying the groundwork for the expression of the characteristics of Inuit identity. For the purpose of sharing in an unrecorded culture, elders have served as the beacons of oral dissemination of culture since the dawn of time. The act of singing *pisiit* connects young Inuit to their roots from *taimannaganit*, times immemorial. This connection is perceived as an integral part of individual mental health, identity formation, and nation building. The

fundamental principles of life and the manner in which various Inuit groups reacted to outside influence was observed as highly similar (Rasmussen, *Across* 320) uniting Inuit across the circumpolar North despite their many linguistic and cultural differences and geographical dispersity.

The incredible rate of efficiency by which incoming cultural loans allowed Inuit to survive and thrive can be most clearly understood in light of the preceding Arctic culture's fate. Dorset culture, the giants of *Tuniq* (Dorset) stories—also called “first people” or *Sivullirmiut*—had made the Arctic their home before the proto-Inuit Thule arrived. *Tuniit* appear in oral stories told by Inuit markedly different from Inuit. Their othering is apparent through the use of the term *Tuniq*, differentiating them from Inuk, which simply means person or human being, therefore, alluding to the fact that those who are not called Inuit, are in fact, not human. The emergence of the Thule marked the end of the Dorset culture and I propose that the situation resembles the sociohistorical changes that took place among Inuit with the arrival of the European settlers to North America. While the *Tuniit* have altogether disappeared, the Inuit have not. Resilience and adaptability were demonstrated in the easiness with which Inuit habitus was broadened with incoming customs, while *Tuniit* might have been less capable to adapt. Forbearance in a written and digital age, with adopting and utilizing Southern establishments, such as regional associations that participate in national politics, and the eventual formation of Inuit *Nunangat* conveys the strength of Inuit. Through the formation of such Western-style interest groups, I suggest that politics has become the primary tool for Inuit in renegotiating their identity within Canada, while traditions are sustained through intellectual and material culture.

Global migrations have changed how nationhood is experienced and interpreted, especially in settler societies, such as Canada. The multicultural ideology and accompanying policies have emerged in the 1970s, proclaiming that different ethnicities must live together sharing the bond of land, country, nation, and home. I regard the idea of nation as a group of people linked by things in common, which may either derive from a common descent or a common cause in agreement with Ernest Renan's nation-concept expounded in his iconic 1882 Sorbonne lecture and subsequent publication *Qu'est-ce qu'une Nation?* [*What is a Nation?*] (1). Thus, nation, in this sense, means an imagined political community as detailed by Benedict Anderson in 1983 in his *Imagined Communities, Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (1) tethered together by a common interest in a shared home. Within this political formation, Inuit—as one of the first of Canada—are now Canadians but maintain a distinct Inuit

identity. Canada's current political philosophy aims at creating a kaleidoscopic picture of many cultures within one nation resulting in a multitude of sub-identities within one unifying Canadian identity built on markers based around all-Canadian symbols.<sup>50</sup> Rather than operating under assimilationist directives, Inuit live autonomously in Inuit *Nunangat*, while as Canadians they are entitled to the benefits of the Canadian welfare state.

Contrary to this sentiment dissenting voices exist; Partha Chatterjee, with whom I disagree, in critiquing Anderson's theory, contends that European colonialism imposed such limits to nationalism that "even [Indigenous people's] imaginations must remain forever colonized" (5), implying that a newly imagined political nationhood simply accepts rules posed by non-autochthonous people. The idea of unwelcome colonialist intervention and its long-term effects is echoed by Keavy Martin, who adds that "the fur trade was declining, and more and more Inuit were being forced to move into permanent settlements [after World War II], where the government could provide them with welfare services" (*Stories* 50). Indeed, sedentarizing Inuit in order to ensure that their well-being matched Southern standards through systematizing the delivery of national policies, such as those related to education, healthcare, and housing, adversely effected those Inuit whose attachment to a semi-nomadic life was believed to be crucial to the formation of their cultural identity. Inuit, however, welcomed change that mitigated their circumstances as shown in previous examples by today's elders, such as Jacopoosie Peter, and the Katsak family. Canada today is a multicultural nation with equal rights to all; she is home to many distinct ethnicities of Indigenous, settler, and immigrant backgrounds forming a nation based on a common cause.

### **3.4. Inuit Cultural Identity in the Post-World War II North**

The Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), a non-governmental organization founded in 1977, has been acting on behalf of the Inuit in the United States, Canada, Denmark, and Russia, indicating a joint origin and a sense of belonging across borders. The organization proclaims the urgency for unification as "Inuit...must speak with a united voice on issues of common concern and combine their energies and talents towards protecting and promoting their way of life (ICC, "Aims and Objectives") to strengthen unity among all Inuit throughout the circumpolar region. Across the North, divided by borders, the existence of the Inuit homeland,

<sup>50</sup> Hockey, snow sports, outdoorsmanship, poutine, and so on.

although primarily located in Canada, is fueled by loose linguistic and cultural kinship that is utilized to achieve cultural cohesion. Through this hard-sought unity, a special relationship may be attainable with the respective countries where Inuit reside.

Besides cementing the relationship of international Inuit, the nature of connections to the rest of Canada are of great importance to Inuit culture and economy. The primary go-between used to be the church, but since its foundation in 1971, the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the premier Inuit Organization of Canada, has become an intermediary between Canadian Inuit and the government of Canada. European Norsemen have been postulated to have made contact with the *Tuniq* (Dorset) culture in 986 C.E., which was prior to the appearance of the Thule, the ancestors of the present-day Inuit. However, some, like Northern scholar and anthropologist Robert W. Park disagrees with this hypothesis that is based on the later-identification of *Tuniit* as the eponymous *Skrælingja*—inhabitants of Greenland—that the Norse met in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Park's stance is based on his radiocarbon dating results of *Tuniq* sculptures that were suspected to have European influence ("Contact" 196-97). In any event, the *Tuniit* had vanished by the 1100s C.E., and the much different Thule (the ancestors of present-day Inuit) culture appeared (more detail about *Tuniq* sod houses and sedentary life as opposed to the igloo- and caribou-hide-tent-dwelling nomadic Thule can be obtained from archeologist Therkel Mathiessen's volume forming a part of Rasmussen's *Fifth Thule Expedition*; see Works Cited), yet some sources identify the Thule as the mysterious *Skrælingja* (Gulløv 16). In either of the four scenarios (Norsemen met either *Tuniit*, or Thule, or both, or neither), as I see it, Norse culture did not influence the autochthonous inhabitants of the Arctic to a significant degree.

Visitors from Europe, particularly since the 17<sup>th</sup> century on, brought their culture to the Thule North when they first came as whalers, then fur traders followed in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, until those businesses collapsed. The influence of Europe continued between the 1830s and 1990s in the form of Christian missions that functioned as hospitals, churches, and eventually schools. From a European point of view, I see the start of the 1940s with the creation of hamlets and the replacement of the nomadic lifestyle Inuit traditionally practiced as an opportunity for the *Qallunaat* visitor/settler incoming culture to build more churches and assist already stable parishes. Rather than traveling across borders following game, the polar populace became a sedentarized member of the Canadian citizenry. To represent such newly minted Arctic denizens, today the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami [ITK] presents itself as a governing body speaking for all Inuit both on the homeland and in the South. ITK, as the premier Inuit organization of

Canada, maintains an ongoing dialogue with the Canadian Government on issues of importance, such as land claims and welfare (“Aims and Objectives”).

Western visitors introduced Inuit to commodities that were novel in the Arctic and to a mixed economy based around traditional hunting and fur trade, which followed the purely subsistence hunting system. From a financial viewpoint, after World War II, once trade had collapsed, Inuit found themselves living in permanent settlements relying on government benefits with a diminished proclivity to hunt. These changes made it apparent that Inuit needed representation in national politics. The constitutional formation of Nunavut in 1999 as a semi-autonomous Inuit territory along with the acquirement of several Inuit lands and numerous government funds, I argue, are proof that Inuit are exceptionally well-equipped to adjusting to a new living situation as members of a multicultural society, all the while retaining their cultural integrity, which is one of the prime directives of the Canadian multicultural ethos. Still, the story of Inuit is marred by a period when Canadian governments attempted to manage the Far North first in the ethos of non-intervention into traditional life, then through the inclusion of Inuit in the Canadian welfare state. Having lived through difficulties, the current president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami reflects hopefully on life in a shared home as he explains:

We wanted to share this [Inuit *Nunangat*] with Canada. We pushed for it just as much as any other entity, and we didn't have to. We could've made this into our Inuit lands, and we could've cordoned it off and tried to keep people out, but we see ourselves as Canadians. This land is ours, but also something we want to show the world as long as we do it in a way that's respectful. I hope Canadians get excited about that, too—are appreciative of the fact that Inuit want to be Canadians. We want to share our land, we want to have this relationship. (Obed qtd. in Kylie).

The significance of Obed's words rests in the acknowledgement of Canadian identity concurrent to an Inuit one, evidencing the existence of the kind of composite identity I described in the “Theory” chapter. Obed's signifies not only a Canadian identity but citizenship. If the notion of Canada is internalized, then Inuit become not only Canadian citizens legally but functionally, morally, and culturally as well. Such a change to a nomadic sub-group-based identity is significant, and I argue that psychological imprints of this evolution may be represented in intellectual culture. In the spirit of fostering Inuit cultural identity along with an all-Canadian one, the inclusion of Inuit knowledge, often referred to as *qaujimajatuqangit*—or basic Arctic living skills along sometimes in the form of Inuit cultural stories and customs—is now regarded as a must in the school curriculum. Especially so as hamlet-born generations are not taught land skills in the traditional manner by elders and family members. I suggest that

successful self-governance is likely to be achieved across the Inuit homeland if more locals are trained as doctors, teachers, police, and other professionals.

Beyond efforts to include Inuit oral tradition based on materials primarily collected by Rasmussen and also writing in the school curriculum, the Inuit oral tradition of the past is now added to the Canadian literary canon along with Inuit literature. Regarding material culture, archeological evidence discovered by Therkel Mathiassen, the archaeologist on Rasmussen's Fifth Thule Expedition shows that village-dwelling Arctic cultures prior to modern-day Inuit vanished altogether when the nomadic forebears of Inuit appeared in the North (Mathiassen 399; Rasmussen, "The Fifth Thule Expedition, 1921-24" 132) leaving their orature in the shrouds of oblivion, and this is certainly an outcome to be avoided in the future. Inuit author Mini Aodla Freeman quotes the pitfalls of oral dissemination—its need for a consistently excellent memory across the generations—as one of her primary reasons for writing her autobiography:

In my culture, we are not 'writing people'; we memorize everything: everything what people say, everything of where we went, everything what we plan to do. You know, it was all done by memory. And all our culture, our rules, our laws, our games are all from memory, passed on from one generation to another. And I said to myself, "One day, somebody is going to forget." So that's when I decided to write the book. (xiv)

I regard the work of Inuit poets and writers as significant not only for its literary merit, but its importance in recording culture. Beyond literacy, the creation of Inuit Nunangat safeguards the inheritance of Inuit intellectual culture in order to escape a similar fate as the *Tuniit*.

The main objective of literary-ethnographic field work in Canada is to locate forgotten works and include them as foundational texts while subjecting these texts to analysis, therefore, the suggestion that Indigenous literatures are not part of the multi-lingual and multicultural Canadian literary canon, such as espoused by Gregory Younging (15) remains an isolated opinion. Nevertheless, the accuracy of representation may be disputed, given that autochthonous cultures are largely written about by non-autochthonous authors (Younging 2). Research relating to studying Inuit has mostly been carried out by non-Inuit, the most authoritative study of Inuit culture being that of the part-Kalaallit Rasmussen's (Burch, "The End" 155). Without his arduous quest in the Arctic and earnest inquiries aided by his extensive knowledge of Kalaallisut—which came in handy when visiting communities across the Arctic—Inuit oral tradition would have likely been not retained as extensively as it is today. Although language skills and shared culture are valuable assets, the necessary precursor to

legitimate research is adherence to scientific principles, data gathering, and the drawing of unbiased conclusions. Therefore, it is not merely Rasmussen's part-Inuit ancestry that authenticates his research, but his well-informed outset and the enormous body of work he collected from primary sources through ground-breaking systematic fieldwork. Additionally, the reason why I especially appreciate his collections is because they largely lack *interpretation* and present Inuit culture as it is, leaving a knowledge gap for the researcher like myself to address.

In the same vein, beyond its utility as a tool for cross-cultural understanding, “comparative literature counteracts the tendency to claim national superiority” (Durnin 2), therefore, it is beneficial for the maintenance of Canadian multiculturalism. The presupposition that literary criticism involves asserting the author's correctness, claims Katherine Durnin, is a mistaken approach as it only provides a proposed reading that may be accepted or rejected by peers (3). I agree that while the subjective and inside knowledge of the Indigenous scholar undoubtedly provides intimate understanding of his or her own culture, the vantage point of the objective observer carries an inherent value. It is, therefore, possible, and necessary to venture out and connect with different cultures, adds Durnin (5). Reflecting this view, over the past two decades, the attitude within the Indigenous publishing community has shifted towards collaboration (Cheung). As a result, concerns about the validity of research done by non-Indigenous scholars have been re-evaluated (Durnin 2; Szklarski), especially since there is ample evidence for “good collaborations and respectful work” (Younging xiv). Analysis provides a platform for sharing, dissemination, and ultimately better understanding, which is the cornerstone of not only mutual respect but Canadian multiculturalism itself. This approach is most adequately explained by Keavy Martin in saying that “we [have] transformed literature into a shape that can nourish us, [and] have...been changed by th[is] interaction...then we may have successfully entered into a relationship, one that we then accept the responsibility of honoring, maintaining, and reciprocating for” (“Northern Lights”). Suggestions that North American autochthonous writing should be edited and published based on different criteria than those for the rest (Younging; Martin, *Stories* 62) may be less advantageous than desired and could appear patronizing.

Similarly, missionaries from various backgrounds and—after the formation of settlements—Southern teachers appeared in the newly-build Northern schools contributing to rising literacy levels and creating ground debates over editing autochthonous writing become relevant in the 2020s. The text of traditional songs elucidates the Inuit character of the era before

writing, while the art of post-World War II authors reflects the various changes that occurred over the paradigmatic decades leading from contact-traditional to modern life. The study of songs and poetry composed in the last hundred years, at the cusp of change from traditional to modern, is quintessential to understanding Inuit. Identity—as Inuit orature reveals it—delivers culture down generations since times immemorial. However, as elder Markoosie laments, few elders pass on their traditions anymore (1). Curious young Inuit ask questions their Southern educators can answer, elders, thus, may find that the youngest generation does not seek out their wisdom (Lucassie Nutaraaluk qtd. in Martin, *Stories* 55).

The reason why orality is key to being *inummariaq* is because “Inuit people do not read and write and ingest culture the way non-Inuit do... [nor do they] place a high value on the written word. Instead, [they] come from a culture with roots that lie within the passing on stories orally” (Dunning “Writing”). On paper, songs might lose their elusive and unique nature without the spirited performance of the singer, and the atmosphere of the communal igloo, the *qaggiq*, where the performance is taking place, or the storyteller’s relationship to the audience. Even so, the inclusion of song texts into the fold of Inuit literature solidifies Inuit intellectual tradition (Martin, *Stories* 45) placing it in a continuum of development, which is a reaction to divergent practices both internal and external. Writing is a natural and necessary component of a culture that made it to the 21<sup>st</sup> century in an industrialized country. For Inuit youth, especially those living in urban areas, I believe that written tradition might provide the only means of reconnecting to their roots. Young readers might be reminded of *inummariaq* principles if song texts that are rich in tradition are made readily available in a print form. Since sharing is the essence of Inuit culture, be it food or stories, availability of the complete original Inuktitut-language material from Rasmussen’s Fifth Thule Expedition would help fostering *inummariaq* identity through providing access to cultural heritage. A connection to the present can be made with the inclusion of transitional, modern, and contemporary texts in an anthology embracing Inuit lyric texts from the first recorded song lyrics to present day poetry, which is one of my goals to achieve in order to provide schools, universities, scholars, and the general public with a tool to remember and engage.

In investigating intellectual traditions—whether they are oral or literary— language gains primary significance. The given mother tongue is one of the most significant markers of an ethnic group and it is a channel through which identity is manifested. Thus, the language in which news, information, and literature are consumed is significant in the process of identity construction. In a multicultural, acculturative environment language is often impacted (Berry,

“Acculturation: Living” 698). Bilingual print media, and other written resources are typical features of Canadian communication within and outside the Inuit homeland. Several Inuit poets write in English for a Canadian audience, without composing or publishing an Inuktitut version of their poems. Authors Mini Aodla Freeman and Mark Kalluak saw their writings first published in English presumably for a wider readership; however, publication in the local dialect would be important even if the audience is significantly smaller.

Interviewees in Igloolik and Quaqtuaq expressed that Inuit view their language as an essential part of their identity (Dorais, “Language, Culture” 302). Participants in the survey expressed that English or French language skills are primarily regarded as a tool for achieving goals in life, such as a well-paying position (Dorais, “Language, Culture” 295). However, Inuktitut is fostered at home, at cultural functions, and social gatherings. As a result of inclusive public education, culturally enriched programs primarily in the elementary grades but in secondary school as well have been introduced in order to raise Inuktitut literacy level. Based on the latest census, approximately 70 percent of Inuit speak Inuktitut; a little above 50 percent of those under fourteen years of age speak it as their primary language of communication. Currently, Inuktitut is spoken in 61 percent of Nunavummiut families, a drop from the 76 percent of a similar survey conducted in 1991, (Martin “Inuit Language Loss”). Albeit this drop is apparent, such numbers may be better understood if put in the context of autochthonous language retention in Canada, in which case Inuktitut is the most well-preserved language (Chartier “The Social” 32).

Although cultural identity is linked to native language fluency, it remains intact even if one’s mother tongue is not perfectly spoken. “The fact that I don’t have fluency in Inuktitut is only one small part of who I really am,” argues Natan Obed, the president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami; while Jesse Mike, a colleague of Obed remarks that Inuit identity should not be solely based on language skills (qtd. in Madwar). Obed also observes that:

There’s so many young Inuit now that are not completely fluent in Inuktitut, that have grown up with one parent who’s not Inuk and one parent who has grown up outside of [Inuit culture]. [There is an opinion] that if you don’t have [adequate] Inuktitut [language skills], [then] somehow you can’t be an advocate for [the Inuit and] you are not ever going to be a good one [if you try]. (Obed qtd. in “I’m an Inuk”)

Inuit identity, therefore, might be regarded as a composite of cultural skills, one of which is Inuktitut fluency.

Present-day Inuit identity rests on the interplay between heritage and new influences. As identity is negotiated by Inuit, it is wise to remember that many culturally insulated Inuit groups existed at the time of the birth of the modern nation of Canada and albeit settlement mixed these groups to a certain extent, linguistic and cultural differences prevail. Inuit identity as publicly managed primarily by political organizations can manifest multiple identifications on pan-Inuit, territorial, and cultural sub-group levels (Nandori, “Nunangat and Beyond” 108).

As mentioned above, the Inuit Circumpolar Council, founded in 1977, represents Inuit across the globe, regardless which country they live in, and even such ethnic groups are members as the Yup’ik that do not refer to themselves as Inuit. The Inuit Tapiriit (formerly Tapirisat) Kanatami in turn speaks for Inuit living in Canada, and several territorial boards and corporations stand for Inuit from Nunavut or other parts of the homeland within Canadian territories and provinces. I suggest that on a sub-group level, not only linguistically, culturally, but regarding local political aspirations, there is a difference between communities. Linguistically, North and South Qikiqtaaluk, Innuinaqtun, Nattilik, Aivilik, Paalliq, and Nunatsiavut are separate dialects; within them hamlets stand for yet another level of cultural differentiation, and within settlements like Igloolik, lies a historic distinction between the Roman Catholic and Anglican part of town. Ethnic—but not necessarily pan-Inuit—representation is important for all Inuit superseding territorial, local (within the region, province, or territory), or sub-group identifications based on language, tribe, or religion.

As far as intellectual culture is concerned, people are locally oriented (Chartier “The Social” 61), and in Greenland a preference is shown for reading Danish authors in Danish, especially among the young (Chartier “The Social” 58). Although celebrated Kalaallit poet Aqqaluk Lyngé supports the pan-Inuit concept, what the majority might wish differs from the ideas represented by intellectuals (Chartier “The Social” 58). The difficulty of literary dissemination within Inuit culture is best exemplified by the virtually unknown status of *Sanaaq*, the first Inuit novel, primarily because it was written in French in the Nunavik area of Québec. The fact that many Inuit use English, French, Danish or possibly Russian as their means of artistic expression is just one part of the problem; even within Baffin Island such dialectal differences exist that the understanding of song lyrics is at times challenging.<sup>51</sup> Tackling the difficulties of cross-dialectal dissemination might need a concerted effort from the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami.

<sup>51</sup> Information based on personal conversations from Igloolik Inuit.

### 3.5. Nunavut Territory: An Experiment in Reasserting Cultural Identity

Nunavut was first conceived in 1971 by the then representative body of Inuit, which was then called the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada. The reason behind the desire to create a fully Inuit territory was twofold. Firstly, there was the absence of any land treaty between Inuit and the government of Canada, and Inuit Aboriginal title could still be asserted; and secondly, the Inuit of the Northwest Territories possessed an absolute demographic majority in the Central and Eastern Arctic. Additionally, it was theorized that a sovereign Inuit territory would allow Inuit to control their own social, political, and economic goals (Légaré, “Canada’s Experiment” 336). Nunavut aimed to function as a culturally fully Inuit territory that reflects Inuit values and perspectives (for a detailed account of the creation of Nunavut, see Légaré, “Canada’s Experiment”).

Throughout the process of advocating for the detachment of the western part of Northwest Territories, activists described Inuit as a distinct people, which in turn justified their claim for a separate territory. The geopolitical boundaries for Nunavut were drawn according to the spatiality of historical Inuit land use and cultural practices (Légaré, “Nunavut” 74). However, prior to settlement, usage of the term “Inuit” was less a form of ethnic identification than understanding the word verbatim i.e. “person,” or “people” as opposed to animals or spirits (Dorais “Inuit Identity” 24). This approach to identity left little sense of loyalty on a pan-Inuit scale (Williamson 31) and allowed *miut* groups to operate on an individual level when representing their economic and cultural needs. This circumstance, however, did not prove advantageous when claiming group rights based on identity, belonging, and joint land occupancy. I propose that the formation of a distinctly collective Inuit identity can be attributed to a desire for joint representation in national politics, while historically it is supported by the growing sense of Inuitness in a gradually expanding world filled with First Nations and European peoples. After more than two decades of discussions, in 1993, Inuit and the Canadian government signed the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement that in effect created Nunavut Territory. Nunavut was created from the eastern part of the Northwest Territories on 1 April 1999 and, thus, became the single largest land claim agreement settled in Canada. It has been labelled by the Canadian government as the most advanced model of Indigenous self-determination, while Inuit leaders argued that control over their people would solve the social problems that afflict the region.

Forming an autonomous territory, functioning well, and tackling problems are a challenge in an Arctic environment, even if upon its creation, the Nunavut Territory had become the biggest political unit of Canada consisting of an extensive marine area which includes the Hudson Bay and most of the Canadian Arctic Archipelago up to the North Pole (Fig. 13). Nunavut's area is so large, that if it functioned as a fully independent country, it would rank as the world's 12<sup>th</sup> largest. Nunavut has an Arctic climate and winter lasts nine months, with parts of the Arctic Archipelago frozen even in summer, forming pack ice several meters thick. Permafrost and the positioning of the land above the treeline makes agriculture inviable. Lichens, plants, and arctic game (including fish) serve as a source of sustenance, and anything built needs to be shipped in. Blizzards and windchill are the regular feature of the mostly flat environment.

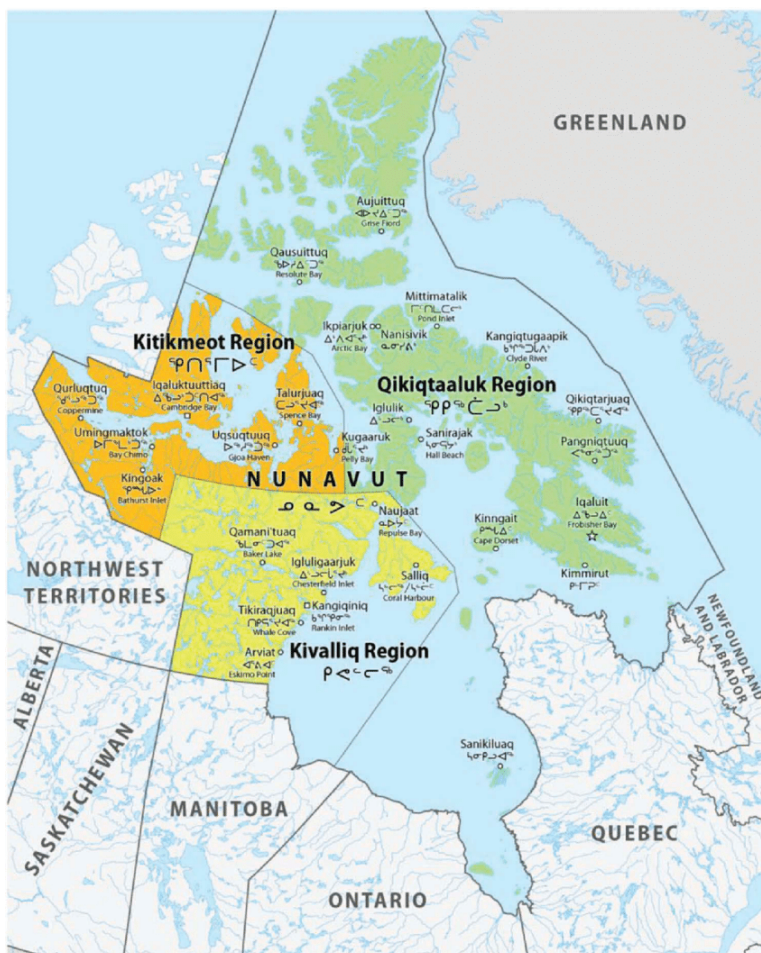


Figure 13. The map of Nunavut (courtesy of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami)

In this challenging environment, only about 36 thousand residents live in Nunavut, 85 percent of whom identify as Inuit (Légaré, “Canada’s Experiment” 367). These Inuit live in 28 communities with great distances between them—except for Igloolik and Hall Beach [Sanirajak]—with no road infrastructure linking the settlements to one another or the territory

itself to the rest of Canada. Goods flown in by plane or sealifted can cost two to three times more in Nunavut than they do in Southern Canada.

The climate conundrum, cultural yearnings, and Nunavut's general statement of purpose was issued in the *Bathurst Mandate* in the form of principles and priorities developed in 1999 by the government of Nunavut to address issues relating to health, housing, and economy. In the case of health, especially mental health, the main problem is that many young Inuit report a feeling of boredom due to the lack of intellectual stimulation. This leads to drugs (that inexplicably *can* reach the high Arctic), crime, and suicide rates increasing; smoking and nutrition-related diseases as well as mental illnesses are prevalent. Most Inuit in Nunavut live in social housing that is said to be overcrowded, although it must be noted that according to Statistics Canada, four people per home qualifies as overcrowding.<sup>52</sup> Some people expressed living along with three other people—their family—that they cannot sleep and do their homework. Many complain about the long waiting lists for social housing; however, the average two to three years are, in fact, represents a shorter time than in the South (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami “Backgrounder” 6). Most government employees and other professionals are non-Inuit due to the low number of Inuit recruits. Interestingly, Johnny Kusugak, the Languages Commissioner of Nunavut argues that to mitigate this problem, Southern workers in Nunavut should learn Inuktitut (Younger-Lewis 5). Another complaint from Inuit officials is that the level of education has deteriorated since 1999. Altogether, many Nunavummiut are not satisfied with the way Nunavut is run; some believe that Yellowknife (the territorial capital of NWT) provided better services than Iqaluit (*Nunatsiaq News* Editorial, 2).

The territory attempted to manage its own affairs independent of the Canadian government and nation; however, Nunavut's fiscal dependency on the federal government along with the territory's socio-economic problems remained. In fact, André Legaré argues, that the only real success of the ‘Nunavut Project’ has been the Inuit reassertion of their collective identity (“Canada's Experiment” 367) through sovereignty and management of the land as symbolized by the Nunavut inukshuk flag (Fig. 14). However, I presume that political and cultural autonomy cannot be an end in itself, as seen from Nunavut's example: a majority Inuit territory with its own government will not solve the most pressing and inherent problems of the region, whether it is called Northwest Territories or Nunavut.

<sup>52</sup> I too lived in three different typical Inuit houses that were excellently built and furnished and above the means of an average teacher in well-off British Columbia.



Figure 14. The Nunavut flag

#### IV. SONGS OF ICE: CULTURAL IDENTITY IN INUIT ORATURE AND TEXTS

“All my being is song and I sing as I draw breath.”

(Orpingalik qtd. in Rasmussen, *Netsilik* 16)

##### 4.1. Orature and Literature: How Terminology Informs Us

The majority of texts within the Inuit intellectual tradition derive from the age of orality, encompassing many generations, therefore, it is an ideal field of study for Inuit identity and its paradigm shifts. Oral literature is a notion that conveys a unique intellectual practice endemic to Inuit culture. The pairing of the two words to form the term “oral literature” itself is contested (Finnegan, *Oral Poetry* 2), considering how words based on two distinct modes of engagement are placed together to form one genre. If discussed as literature, the multimodality of oral performance gets easily sidelined as the term oral literature primarily focuses on literary merit, while oral tradition implies folklore. I want to employ a term that does not run into either of these blind alleys. The concept of literacy—having the ability to read and write—is derived from the word literature and its spoken opponent is oracy. Because literature serves as an umbrella term for various written genres, it is, therefore, my first task to identify an expansive term for sub-genres that are orally authored and based on oracy. This term should logically reflect that it is the modal counterpart of literature. Additionally, the term that I want to employ represents oral authorship and performance, and, thus, is a fitter term to categorize orally authored Inuit song lyrics and stories from the contact-traditional era.

Firstly, the word literature originates from the Latin *litterae* (letters, writing), thus, oral literature would mean ‘spoken letters’ or ‘spoken writing.’ One might wonder if such a dichotomous term is best suited to describe a genre that was practiced, as in the case of Inuit, well into the established written era of Canada. The odd pairing of oral literature suggests that a purely oral endeavour—despite the lack of a written form—is placed into the fold of writing. Writing is a pre-meditated activity involving the process of drafting ideas and editing the text to its final, polished form that is not further changed. Although for some occasions, poems are read out loud or memorized, the manner of their conception and recording in writing remain. Meanwhile, spoken word poems are pre-written, but when performed—especially at slam

events—retain an improvisational quality as they are performed in front of an audience. Poems, however, are contemplated for a period of time before being cast unto paper; after multiple edits they appear in a print form for the quiet and mostly solitary enjoyment of an intended audience. The performance is part of the spoken word poem, and the text—especially before it receives a print form—may vary from occasion to occasion. Spoken word poetry employs a relatively casual diction and often fragmented syntax as it captures the failings of common speech; in print it often resembles personal notes rather than poetry. In the case of orally composed poems, the act of writing standardizes the text. Writing in general differentiates writing-based intellectual activities from those involving only memory, which due to its failing nature allows for inconsistencies and variations to a composition having no written form to rely on.

In the case of oral tradition songs, such as *pisiit*, the situation is even more complicated as the element of multimodality plays a significant part. It is not only the lack of written notes, and editing, but the added element of performance, musical melody and instrumental accompaniment together that elevate performative forms of entertainment into a whole other genre that is not aptly described by the pairing of “oral” and “poetry.” Since previous iterations of terminology including the “oral” component are excluded, I decided to examine a continent rich in oral tradition and consult African scholars on the subject. Only after very meticulous research did I run into a concept that I thought could be rekindled and expanded to Inuit (and, in fact, First Nations cultures and certain others as well). The term “orature” proves to be a more adequate description for the type of art in question than the other aforementioned options, as suggested by early 20<sup>th</sup> century Ugandan scholars Pio Zirimu and Austin Bukenya in the 1960s. Zirimu and Bukenya defined orature as “the creative and imaginative art of composition that relies on verbal art for communication and that culminates in performance” (Mugo 40; Mwangola, “Completing the Cycle” 28). Although I have never discovered primary proof that the two are responsible for the coinage, partially due to a large part of their scholarship having been written in Kiswahili, some evidence through their students and later fellow-scholars proves this claim.

Some Inuit writers in the past espoused the word *titirarniq*, which means writing, for both orally authored and written texts (Martin, *Stories* 112), but this, I argue, does not describe the oral mode and the lyric nature of orature. Yet, I regard the use of *titirarniq* as a crucial step since the act of writing creates literature out of orature and the use of this verb would suggest that Inuit grasp this transformative process. However, by employing *titirarniq* for all artistic output, whether the authorship is oral or written, obliterates the modal, and cultural difference,

and thus, the term has a similar function to “oral literature,” by hiding orature within the term writing. Transmitted exclusively orally, the contact-traditional song lyrics I examine enjoy a significant appreciation from ethnographers, therefore, literature, a phrase highlighting textuality—beyond its opacity—may not be the most suitable term to emphasize the importance of these texts from the angle of traditional knowledge, ethnic history, and identity passed down generations relying on memory only.

Orature, as a descriptive term, highlights the fact that verbal and written traditions are not mutually exclusive, nor are they hierarchically positioned, rather they employ different modalities representing comparable cultural functions. It lays emphasis on the transfer of auditory aspects of spoken discourse to writing and escapes the structural expectations that define literature. As the oral counterpart of literature, orature is a clear term indicating the manner of composition, performance, and in some cases non-performative dissemination. And to me, most importantly, orature frees itself from playing second fiddle to literature by using the forced collocation of “oral literature,” which I find unseemly given its significance in human culture. Although, across cultures, terminology describing unprompted, non-written, and short compositions sometimes performed to a monotonous tune varies: orature, oral poetry, oral tradition, and orality are employed as descriptors; oral literature, a more contradictory term, is also used (Finnegan “Rewards” 18), for its clarity of description and its creation of an independent category, I deem orature as the most appropriate term to use as an umbrella term for all non-written and orally performed compositions in order to denote orally authored texts, such as the Inuit oral tradition song texts that I examine in this study.

Orature, instead of specifying a sub-genre like oral poetry does, highlights a general modality, which differentiates all sub-genres within it from those of literature. Although intended as part of a musical performance, it is possible to study contact-traditional and popular songs independently of their musical component as stand-alone texts, so as to analyze them as one would a poem. Both the Diamond Jenness and the Knud Rasmussen collection and other publications that source these texts offer textual basis for a non-musical study. In order to compartmentalize, I prefer the use of specific terms, such as song lyrics, especially in a performative context, or song texts for the textual analysis of both orature and the words for contemporary popular songs. Within the genre of poetry, the term spoken word and slam are used for particular kinds of performance poetry, depending on whether or not the performance was competitive in nature, such as in the case of slam, which is similar to the the contact-

traditional *iviutiq*. I view Inuit popular songs—both in the country folk style and those blending current Western influences like dub step, pop, and others—as the successors of Inuit orature.

Beyond poetry and song lyrics, prose genres have also emerged in the footsteps of traditional *unikkaat* and *unikaaqtuat*—stories and legends—albeit these are rarer. Legends, national folk tales, and origin stories are fixed as culture itself is rooted in them. The homeland-wide well-known story of *Sedna*, that was probably thought out sometime in the traditional period and it represents *inumhariit* in that period. As Inuit say, since “times immemorial” the story has been told exactly the same way, not changing its recognizable elements. The function of stories like *Sedna* is to represent Inuit values and create origin myths, which they do well, but the present time and the changes in Inuit identity in the times in between are not recognizable in them. Many folk stories, such as “Kivioq,” were noted to have existed virtually identically across *miut* groups (Rasmussen, *Iglulik*, 14) and remained so ever since. Unlike in poems, in the case of legends, it is not the personal or cohort-based experience that is in the foreground, but a sort of story-set, fictionalized version of the origins of a people. Furthermore, the legends that were told in the contact-traditional period were recorded—typically by an ethnographer—survived oblivion and became fixed in their written version. Writing, therefore, eliminated even the small chance of non-crucial differences in story telling to occur. Since, as we can see, Inuit legends typically remain constant throughout time, they are excluded from my analysis of identity *change*.

In contrast, I argue that songs and poems function as expressions of a supple identity mould. My dissertation shows how the mores and attitudes of generations and the individuals who are responsible for them are altered. Traditional singers come from a variety of *miut* groups, age, gender, and other backgrounds and even the time of recording within the contact-traditional era greatly differs. The texts reflect the decades of changing settlement cohorts and the individuals with varied backgrounds who authored poems and songs. It is, thus, easy to see why the endemically Inuit song tradition (and as a continuation, poetry) provides an excellent opportunity to examine the change of cultural identity. I will, therefore, analyze traditional and modern song texts along with contemporary poems as the character of these texts proves ideal for an investigation focused on identity change; whether said change is minor or major will be revealed through the close reading of the texts keeping by the investigative elements of ICCA in mind.

Inuit oral tradition has gained worldwide recognition through its transformation into writing, which in turn cemented long-forgotten song texts into the cultural memory of Inuit. The early 20<sup>th</sup>-century transcription of orature established a significant part of the Inuit literary canon, which was, as typically, formed in retrospect. As a result of meticulous ethnographic research, Inuit orature as a whole has undergone a transformative process that yielded literary significance. Oral tradition, in their textualized or otherwise recorded form, however, is a unique and lesser-known segment of literature. Pre-contact Inuit songs were exclusively transmitted verbally. Jenness' 1910 gramophone recordings and, to a larger extent, Rasmussen's multi-volume chronicle of his four-year-long dogsled journey across the Arctic aimed at studying Inuit intellectual culture, were the first forays into studying Inuit orature and introducing it to a Western audience. The ten volumes in the *Report of the Fifth Thule Expedition* each represent a different field of science; within each volume there are several books numbered between four and nine. In the volume regarding ethnography, each single Inuit group in the entire Arctic is reported on, which is one of the reasons why Rasmussen's research is such a scientific feat (for lack of space all the books within the volumes, each one the length of an encyclopedia, are not named by title here). Parts of his gargantuan study were published separately as well, such as in the form of *Snehytens Sange* or *Across Arctic America*, but song texts appearing in these are all borrowed from the original *Report*.

*Intellectual Culture of the Iglulik Eskimos* is an ethnographic study that functions as one of the main sources for traditional song texts and is discussed in this dissertation as it deals with the most culturally active group at one of the oldest camp sites (hence, Igloolik has never had an English name). The volume on Igloolik details Rasmussen's contact with the Inglulingmiut—the people living in the vicinity of Igloolik Island—while other volumes introduce different Inuit communities. A Danish-language source and texts from long-derelict or hard-to-find Inuit journals, news sources, and magazines helped the collection of source material upon which my research is based. Using primarily Rasmussen's works, only a handful of scholars have touched the collected material in any way and a literary-ethnographic study of cultural identity from contact-traditional times to present day—to my knowledge—has not been performed as of yet.

Only a few anthologies have been compiled based on Rasmussen-collected material, most notably song texts were featured in Penny Petrone's (1988) now out-of-print anthology on Inuit writing, Robin McGrath's (1984) anthology on Inuit oral and written tradition that is not in circulation anymore, and Keavy Martin's (2012) monograph on Inuit literature. Further

Inuit-led research is a prospect of future ethnographic and literary aspirations. This pronounced lack of robust scholarship in the field of Inuit orature and literature, especially with focus on cultural identity, allows me to engage with a niche segment of Inuit culture examining it with an interdisciplinary approach. My intention beyond addressing the knowledge gap in the area is to move Inuit orature and poetry from the context of ethnographic literature, in which it has primarily been mentioned to date, and include it in the Canadian- and world literary canon (to the extent such canon is recognized).

In undertaking research focusing on both traditional and modern Inuit orature and contemporary poetry, I hope to stimulate interest in both songs and poems, thus shed light on alterations to Inuit identity in a swiftly changing Inuit world. Additionally, examining orature goes beyond the study of pre-writing intellectual tradition. A thorough look at orality also illuminates the people who created and disseminated a tradition through the ages without ever committing a word to writing. The study of a tradition based on verbal delivery and memory holds the key to understanding Inuit identity before European contact, and it also provides clues as to how identity has formed since 1867 when Canada officially became a country by forming the confederation. Contact-traditional Inuit songs reveal more than the life of the individual singer, they also allow readers to observe cultural changes occurring throughout the transitory period of Inuit history from the pre- to the post settlement era. Netsilingmiut singer Orpingalik explains the manner in which an occasional poet is born as such: “There are many occasions in one’s life when a joy or a sorrow is felt in such a way that a desire comes to sing [...]. All my being is song and I sing as I draw breath” (qtd. in Rasmussen, *Netsilik* 16), expressing how widely singing was practiced among Inuit during the contact-traditional period (the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century).<sup>53</sup> Going beyond the scope of social psychology, literary history, and politics, it is humanity itself that we encounter.

An accurate picture of what the 1920s Inuit used to be like can be obtained from the careful study of songs recorded during his Fifth Thule Expedition (summer of 1921-1924). The reason why this text is especially useful lies in the special circumstance that its making: a three-year long series of on-site Inuktitut language interviews form the basis of the collection, during which time Rasmussen—or Kunuunnguaq, as Inuit called him—returned to his childhood Inuit lifestyle. A wide variety of themes derived from Inuit daily existence, such as starvation, hunting, conflict, and humor are manifested in song texts along with the morals of Inuit, origin

<sup>53</sup> Orpingalik was a Netsilik Inuit shaman or *angakoq* who came into contact with Rasmussen.

stories, and personal histories that form a silhouette of the people whose identity is hidden in the text of the songs composed to be performed exclusively for a pre-literate community based on a subsistence hunting economy. The term orature, approaches song texts as a form of art appreciating compositions before the birth and practice of writing. In “the beginning—a beginning now so remote from our own experiences that we have a hard time grasping it—the only word was the spoken word” (Riesman 419), and this is the period to which Inuit oral tradition draws back. Contact-traditional orature speaks of a time when words were magical, and when recited by a skillful performer, they could win battles and charm game into prey. In the distant past, the singer had a powerful voice that his or her audience would listen to in reverence. Inuit songs were filled with stories, thoughts, and emotions that spoke of the culture and experience of the people; songs were more than a form of casual entertainment, they were the bedrock of cultural identity.

Key cultural texts, especially stories of origin treasured as part of the official canon, are based on orature, such as narratives that later constituted the *Bible*, *Beowulf*, *Kalevala*, or the *Iliad*. Researchers working in remote areas, far from institutions of written scholarship, understand the significance of recording orature, which in some cases may be the key to getting to know the character of a people. Although writing has introduced an apparent sophistication to both thinking and expression, there is a trend espoused not only by philologists, such as Hector Munro Chadwick from the 1930s, but some scholars today as well, suggesting that “millions of people throughout [the present world] practise the art of literature [and] have no knowledge of letters” adding that “writing is unessential to either the composition or the preservation of literature” (Chadwick and Chadwick 77). The limits of memory, however, indicate it otherwise. Writing at one point was sacred, precisely because the significance of committing something to stone, animal hides, paper or some other carrier was understood. Writing ensures widescale survival of even obscure charms without change. Through the act of textual recording and decoding, Inuit song texts are moved from their natural platform of entertainment and placed in the realm of orature. Several variations of a song text exist for a limited audience, while writing records one such iteration, but grants a large audience and longevity.

Contact-traditional Inuit songs were typically created through improvisation and when they were recorded by ethnographers, the possibility of change was removed. At the same time, their textual component was, thus, saved from the inevitable oblivion as a consequence of the temporality of oral performance. Studying orality draws a myriad of seemingly unanswerable

questions: What does a fully authentic contact traditional song sound like? Which rendition is the authoritative one? Does it matter which variation is selected for recording? Does recording itself eventually annihilate orature? Undoubtedly, collecting and recording traditional songs preserves the oral culture of Inuit. Memory may not be sufficient alone after all, as Freeman warns (*Life Among the Qallunaat* xiv).

Contrary to my own convictions, extreme opinions exist that recording and translating are acts of devaluation, misrepresentation, and critical response to orature (Kennedy 32; Henitiuk 17, 21-24). However, Freeman's own words about the risk of using only memory speak for the importance of keeping written records. Recording stores one authentic text out of many equally authentic variations. Instead of destroying, it saves at least one of the variations of a text. Also, writing extends the text from its original culture to everywhere; acknowledging and respecting Inuit culture and making it knowable for the world. It is clear that "confident claims that oral literature is somehow intrinsically insulated in some pure oral sphere uncontaminated by other media" (Finnegan, "Rewards and Issues" 23) seem naïve.

Since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Inuit songs have undergone translations, gramophone recordings, and later they were captured on film, and these circumstances, procedures, and the participants on both ends equally influenced the performers and the outcome. The observer effect known to be present in ethnography describes the idea that the presence of the observer changes the performance of the material to be recorded due to the self-awareness of the subjects. Therefore, no one knows what a fully authentic Inuit song must have sounded like, unless we accept the observer affect as part of the authentic experience, since observers in the form of audience have always been known for affecting the singer, even before contact with ethnographers. Jenness' gramophone recordings provide an example for this phenomenon. Jenness attempted to record songs in an igloo, but due to technical circumstances, performers had to relocate to the warmth of the trading post. The foreign atmosphere spooked the singers and resulted in an unserious and atypical performance. A decade later, Rasmussen also struggled with his recording instrument and instead of using it, decided to listen to a song performance in an igloo and take notes of the lyrics and the manner of delivery to provide context (*Iglulik* 227-50). Recording only the lyrics of a song, thus, leaves us with a stand-alone text. Thus, devoid of their multimodality, Inuit songs can be regarded as poetry by textualization, allowing Rasmussen to refer to the recorded material as poems and songs interchangeably. However, their original intention was that of pure entertainment; therefore, referring to the transcribed song lyrics as such is most appropriate.

Examining texts without the accompanying music, however, implies the risk of losing the multimodality of oral delivery, leaving the cultural cues of active performance hidden from us. It is, therefore, prudent to emphasize that songs are intended to be delivered in their original context, in the community they were born. Thus, for the sake of the preservation of songs, difficult decisions have to be made about how performances are reproduced in writing. Regardless of the manner of record keeping, source materials are best understood when amended by a written text which eventually lifts the transcribed texts from the domain of entertainment and places them in the realm of the arts.

Today's literary approach puts more emphasis on the individual performer than the earlier wide lens of ethnography, therefore, it is apt to clarify—when possible—who the performer was, and how the song was collected to avoid ethical fallacies, such as Jenness's lack of providing the name of the singers to his 1912 audio recording of Inuit songs, which has been criticized by some settler scholars (Martin *Stories* 76). Writing, as Jenness proved more than a hundred years ago, is not the only medium through which songs may be collected. Today, by being able to capture performances through audio, video, and text, the multimodality of song-poems can be preserved through more than mere notetaking. Therefore, using the current audiovisual technology can mitigate the problem of missing context.

Orature, as a product of intellectual culture, displays its dynamic nature influenced by alterations to the structure of the community from within and through cultural interaction with the outside. Translating and editing the textual record of Inuit orature form a part of its preservation effort, especially so in the case of traditional song texts, a genre which heavily features adaptation as an endemic feature of Inuit tradition. In the "Theory" chapter, I discussed Bourdieu's generational change, and Assmann's notion about the selection of cultural memories. The two concepts blended together can explain why certain Inuit songs survive. The idea that orature remains unchanged through the stewardship of the elders, from one generation to the next, without the apparent need for literacy is valid for only a certain number of texts, while many become lost as generations randomly select as to which oral text to pass on. However, pre-literate 'modernization' coming from within an oral-based community does not disqualify orature as contaminated by writing cultures (Finnegan "How Oral is Oral Literature" 56). The inevitable change in wording, emphasis, and performance in different generations, individuals, and even the same person at different occasions (Bourdieu 78) all alter orality without record-keeping ever taken place. The complexity around the collection, presentation,

and preservation of the elusive subject of orature indicates its deep cultural significance, which necessitates its protection from fading into oblivion.

#### **4.2. From Orality to Textuality: Transcribing and Translating Inuit Orature**

Poetry and song lyrics with archaic diction—as is the case in oral tradition songs—are one of the most difficult to translate because with oral composition two simultaneous translation processes are performed: from one language to another and from an oral to a written mode. There is a tendency to assume transcribed orature as lost (McGrath 82), however, collection and translation do not necessitate its destruction. If Inuit culture remained purely oral, contact-traditional songs and sacral chants (i.e. magic words) would have been transmitted only by those who still remember them in some variation, but the last generation with second-hand knowledge about the wealth of traditional Inuit intellectual culture is all but gone. Undoubtedly, certain songs would have been lost without some form of recordkeeping other than memory. Not yet transcribed orature is transmitted exclusively by elders who remember and perform them usually for a scholarly audience in the context of a research interview. In the past, outsiders, such as ethnographers, were involved in changing the modality of songs, while presently, an additional in-culture record keeping is taking place. However, Inuit professionals yet have to enter academia in such numbers that substantial Inuit-led research can take place. Throughout the collection of secondary sources for this dissertation, the Indigenizing aspect of the project was limited due to the lack of Inuit scholarship in the field. Fortunately, in the case of primary sources, a comprehensive search resulted in a nearly complete survey of all published Inuit orature, poetry, and modern song lyrics in some dialect of Inuktitut, English, French, and Danish.

Several contemporary entertainers, such as spoken word artist, Taqralik Partridge in her “After an Argument” published in 2020, foster the fluidity of orality in their own art. The use of a verbal genre such as slam or spoken word tradition remains connected to the contemporary topics of these modern texts. Her transcribed words in lower case address the existence of an amalgamated urban Inuk identity, the experience of two cultures being fused:

calling up seals  
 .....  
 bobbing on waves and peeing in pots  
 with stars and aurora overhead

heading home after weeks and weeks away from town  
 .....

Everything tasted so good.... (“After an Argument” qtd. in *Curved* 18; see App. 177)

Roughing out on the land is romanticized, emphasizing the oneness with nature, when a hunter could “call up seals” and did not need a fancy apartment, but only the stars of the night and the green mist of the aurora dancing about in the Arctic sky. Despite the described beauty of traditional life, Partridge’s persona yearns for the taste of flavourful Southern dishes. The parallel and dichotomous life experience of an Inuk both from the North and the South poses the question if she is an Inuk, a Southerner, or both? A question only she can answer.

Non-verbal elements of oral poetry, such as atmosphere, emotion, vocal, and musical components are lost in written translations; and to a lesser degree it is apparent in the printed text of contemporary spoken word performances and slams. This is even more significant in the case of songs, where the remaining text is bereft of the accompanying melody and the sound of musical instruments which carry certain moods that may influence the listenership. Oral performances vary depending on the performer and the individual performance: the style, manner, and even wording of the song lyrics might be different on each occasion. When rendering oral poetry, the collector and translator must be immersed in the source culture and language; the aid of dictionaries may not be sufficient, rather it is ideal if the translator has an experience living in the source culture (Yai 68). In this regard, Rasmussen is not only the collector and editor of the first and most extensive anthology of Inuit orature, but the most authoritative as well; opening a platform to primarily ethnographic scholarship based on his research, such as that of Mircea Eliade, Mihály Hoppál, and several other scholars. However, in terms of literature as a container and mediator of culture, the collections based on the Fifth Thule Expedition are largely unused. Yai’s criteria for an ideal researcher is fully met in Rasmussen’s person as his native fluency in Kalaallisut, which is generally intelligible across the Central-Eastern Arctic, as well as his familiarity with Inuit culture, having spent most of his formative years raised in it, makes him an authentic and knowledgeable researcher, which is why his collection serves as a primary source of traditional song texts for this dissertation. Rasmussen’s serious approach to authentically preserve the text of Inuit songs is best reflected in his own words:

Every time I have written a song down, I went through it, word for word, with the composer of it in order to be quite sure in the way to translate it. My questions on these occasions gave the composers opportunities of supplementing their songs with some brief additions and explanations [...] it is these that I have endeavoured to put into the free translation, which, by the way, is no other than an attempt to reproduce the words,

spirit and feeling of the songs in our own language; a comparison between my translations and the original texts will show to what a slight degree I have taken liberties. (Rasmussen, *Netsilik* 509)

Ikinilik, the Utkuhikjalingmiut hunter from the Keewatin (now Kivalliq) region, who was the best singer in Itivnârjuk, discussed his song with Rasmussen after his performance, thus, shedding light on the circumstances and meaning of the words (Fig. 15). The performance possibly took place in 1923, and when Rasmussen left the Iglulingmiut, his dogs were directed toward the Melville Peninsula in order to reach inland groups, such as the Utkuhikjalingmiut. For the purposes of showcasing Rasmussen's process, I included the singer's Inuktitut original, as it was noted down by the ethnographer during Ikinilik's performance, along with Rasmussen's attempt at a word-for-word translation shortly after the event. Upon further contemplation, Rasmussen's return to his notes resulted in a more poetic rendering of the text of the song that he titled "The Song of the Trout Fisher:"

<i>Taiva uterpakaluariga</i>	
Thus, I often return	Oft do I return
<i>Piseruna</i>	
To this song	to my little song
<i>Aklugsama qulanche uterpakaluarabko</i>	
My fishing hole above it I often return to it	and patiently I hum it above the fishing hole in the ice.
<i>Utertarpaijatnanga</i>	
I, who otherwise am not good at going back to and waiting for.	this simple little song I can keep on humming
<i>Eqaluitqarjorshakut</i>	
The trout with the hook	I, who else too quickly tire when fishing.
<i>Pavunaja pavunaja</i>	
Upstream up	up the stream. (qtd. in <i>Netsilik</i> 509-513; see Ch. VII. pp. 187)

In their core, the two texts are similar, however, the appearance, diction, and syntax of the latter version shows deliberate literariness, which causes an alienating effect. One might wonder which version is closer to Ikinilik's original rendition? Can a certain dialect of Inuktitut be precisely translated to English even if we presume the translator possessing a multilingual background and native proficiency? Are cultural knowledge regarding Inuit and literary skills also necessary to accomplish an authentic rendition of Ikinilik's performance? What seems to have happened is that through Rasmussen's literary inclinations, he truly embellished the recorded words with a poetic depth transferring Inuit song lyrics into poetry through modal and subtle stylistic changes. I regard both translations valid, albeit having different areas of

scholarship in which they function, namely ethnographic and literary. For the purpose of textual recording in ethnographic research, the rough translation is preferred along with notes in the source language, while the poetic transliteration belongs to the realm of literary history. Rasmussen's bicultural background has shaped his approach to Inuit texts and their presentation to the public, therefore, regarding authenticity, it can be established that considering that no direct Inuit source exists (performed, recorded, and published by Inuit), from the available sources, his is the most authentic. Song texts made available by a mediator well-versed in both cultures made song texts more approachable for both the Inuit posterity and those outside Inuit culture, especially if sidenotes are read along with the song text.



Figure 15. Ikinilik, the Utkuhikjalingmiut singer (Rasmussen, *Netsilik* 508)

Indicating the circumstance in which the words were performed, as Rasmussen did, is essential to aiding understanding. It is worth considering what should be expected of readers, should prior cultural knowledge be assumed, as might be in the case of leaving certain Inuktitut words, such as *kamiq* for Inuit animal hide boots untranslated in the text. Should the translation be literal at the expense of poetics? To appreciate the significance of translation differences even when a supposed word for word translation takes place, I cite Ivaluardjuk's "Cold and Mosquitoes" as an example. In 1929, William E. Calvert and William Worster translated

Rasmussen's original Danish textual recording of Ivaluardjuk's song on paper from 1921, only four years after its inclusion in the ethnographer's volume on Iglulingmiut:

Ai! but songs  
 Call for strength,  
 And I seek after words.  
 It is I,  
 Aja, aja - haja - haja. (qtd. in *Iglulik* 18-19; see C. VII. pp. 188)

As a comparison, Tom Lowenstein's 1973 translation found in *Eskimo Poems from Canada and Greenland*, originally a collection by Rasmussen entitled *Snehytens Sange (Songs from the Snow Hut)*, not only changes the wording, but adds a few lines in an attempt to provide context:

Aj! But songs require strength, and I search  
 for words.

Here is the song.  
 Here is the memory.  
 It's only I who sings.  
 Aja-aja-haja-haja! (qtd. in Rasmussen, *Eskimo* 25-26; see Ch. VII. pp. 190)

The language of traditional Inuit songs, as well as contemporary performance poetry, is not arranged into a fixed form, thus, the more print-related elements of poetry, such as syntax and visual appearance, do not play a crucial role in the quality of the text. Orature is mostly an archaic form, if we consider that it was and still is used in societies where literacy is either non-existent or low. Modern spoken word poetry, however, reaches back to oral roots, but this genre is not as all-pervasive as Inuit orature once was in the age of oral tradition. Instead of literariness, oral tradition in its intended mode fulfills an inevitable social and religious function (Finnegan, *Oral Poetry* 111), and, as such, it is best appreciated as tribal, rather than linguistic memory. It is especially so in the case of *erinaliutit* (also called *sakausiit*) or magic words spoken by the *angakoq*, the Inuit shaman (who although can be both female and male, would be more typically male), which constitute a separate genre within Inuit song tradition. Unlike other type of songs that both man and women practiced, magic words were incantations performed by only a shaman. These incantations transcribed as short poems often feature sacred and feared animals as the polar bear.<sup>54</sup> In shaman language, for animals and certain concepts

<sup>54</sup> *Erinaliutiq* sing, *erinaliutit* pl; *sakausiq* sing, *sakausiit* pl.

and situations, the use of euphemisms and highly allegoric expressions was the norm. These words had either a symbolic meaning or they were so archaic that the original meaning was entirely lost. Although some Kalaallisut and Inuvialuit dialects continued to use sacral words in everyday parlance until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Boas qtd. in Vassányi 96). Sometimes *angakkuin* made up words to the effect of ‘abracadabra,’ similarly to Western magicians, therefore, the meaning of those words remains unknown even for the shaman.<sup>55</sup> Examples for the usage of circumscriptive vocabulary is *kumaruaq* or ‘louse-like’ for caribou (*tuktu* in standard Inuktitut), *pisukti* or ‘walker’ for polar bear (*nanuq* in standard Inuktitut), and *pisukkaa*, ‘the one that walks too much’ for arctic fox (*tiriganiaq* in standard Inuktitut). In *iviutiq*, a sort of songs of derision, the goal is to mock, such as in Orpingalik’s song. Orpingalik was a high-standing member of the community playing the role of the healer, medicine man, wizard, and shaman, yet he asks his audience in a self-deprecating tone: “[h]ow shall I go to compose this important song/ [...when] I’m wholly ignorant” (qtd. in Petrone 27).

An essential element of oral delivery is performance. Both the delivery and the auditory quality of the chosen words are elemental to the enjoyment of the songs. Besides the melody and the presence of an accompanying music, songs differed from one another in the occasion in which they were performed; some were composed for a contest, while others were sung at a small family gathering. Additionally, the way the audience receives a performance can change the manner of delivery itself and the wording. As the singer perceives the level of engagement coming from the audience, he or she might change their own style and even content during the performance or from one event to the next. A song contest provides an audio-visual experience in which the singer and his audience are joined together in the awe of the spectacle, those gathered witness as the performer weaves words into a story. Rasmussen details several song contests in which the emotional rapport built between the performer and his or her audience drives the singer to excellence and those who hear the song for the first time into a spiritual frenzy (*Iglulik* 19). Song contests moved the whole community; besides the entertainer, a chorus of women sang the rhythmic ‘ayaya’ chant, while others beat the *qilaut* drum and danced or interrupted with playful comments (just like at Jenness’s trading post recordings). This manner of spontaneous interruption is still customary today.<sup>56</sup> Memorization was not absolutely necessary as the song lyrics varied from time to time converging around the same theme embellished by the performer. Since words were believed to evoke reality, it is understandable

<sup>55</sup>Angakkuin pl., angakoq sing.

<sup>56</sup>I observed this practice at school events in 2016, when guest speakers and performers were casually and continuously interrupted by their audience.

why stock phrases, such as ‘the big white one’ denoting the polar bear, were used instead of its common noun equivalent of *nanuq*. Life in the Arctic has a certain set of reoccurring events, and overall unique and diverse experiences are rare, which, however, limits the kinds of themes presented in songs. Situations such as caribou hunting, or a snowstorm reappear in several of the songs evidencing that originality was not necessary for a given performance to be successful.

Typically, Inuit songs were sung slowly in a monotone, so that the audience could familiarize themselves with the story conveyed. The inconsistencies and variations that occur in an oral performance, due to a sometimes failing memory, also provided a certain degree of uniqueness, because the singer did not have the luxury to rearrange his or her thoughts into the most appropriate syntax, impeccable logic, and reasoning. What the listener got in turn is the most honest thoughts of the performer at the time of delivery. The words could not be recaptured in exactly the same manner; thus, the audience felt privy to a unique presentation and the transmission of songs bearing resemblance to their formation.

Each performer functioned not only as a composer but also as a transmitter of tradition (Hodgart 14). The role of unintentional poets, such as Aua, Ivaluardjuk, and Orpingalik, who were hunters and shamans in their community, is no less than single-handedly transmitting Inuit song tradition to the next generation, and through contact with an ethnographer, to many coming generations (the tradition of orally composed songs have nevertheless died out). This is especially true in the case of recycled songs, in other words, *ikiaqtagait*, in which case someone’s *ivnerut*—the melody of the *pisiq* or traditional song—is rendered anew with the special permission of the singer. Adaptations can travel through generations and can serve as the living memory of the ancestors. Song texts available today carry in them the philosophy and atmosphere of an age, and the mannerisms and morals of the people who composed, sang, and listened to *pisiit*. Therefore, studying Inuit orature in the form of songs along with contemporary poems in order to identify the concept and gradual change of *inummariaq* is essential.

### **4.3. Decontextualization: From Song to Poem**

This sub-chapter explores oral tradition as part of Inuit intellectual culture. Orally composed, performed, and stored songs collected in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century reveal an immense amount of information about Inuit identity. As Elaine Keillor observes, the stories

inherent in these songs “were and remain a constant factor in how the people of the Arctic relate to their geographical space” (44), showcasing a profound connection between the Arctic and Inuit cultural identity. Since traditional songs in their original, musical, form remain inaccessible, stacked away in the memory culture of Inuit, it is their textual features that warrant a closer observation aiding the analysis of identity.

At the start of Rasmussen’s Fifth Thule Expedition, in 1921, he was pleased to find that the people in the Eastern Arctic were “entirely primitive in their views and unaffected by outside influences” (*Iglulik* 16). Rasmussen, who was the son of a missionary and a part Greenlandic Inuit woman, grew up among the Greenlandic Kalaaliit (*Across Arctic America* xxxii), where he managed to find several groups within Inuit culture who were untouched by the measure of modernity pervasive in the South. His *Report on the Fifth Thule Expedition* is, therefore, not only his work but a singularly important collection of Inuit cultural heritage. In the song chapter of *Report*, Rasmussen uses the term poem and song interchangeably for the words and melody—that is, *pisiit* and *ivnerut*—of the captured songs. The performer is sometimes called a poet, even though Rasmussen’s interview subjects repeatedly refer to themselves as entertainers. For the purpose of this thesis, orature, song lyrics, and song texts are used as synonyms throughout denoting an oral composition with no fixed words sung to a melody and performed in front of an audience as I examine songs in their textual form, devoid of their original musical context.

Inuit songs are especially unique in the manner they are crafted: they were verbally constructed and memorized by their composer who was the only person allowed to perform them in that fashion. Someone else’s song could be borrowed and performed with the agreement of the original composer of the melody. In the case of *ikiaqtagait*—usually translated as “adapted songs”—the new performer would make modifications to the borrowed *pisiq*, but not the *ivnerut*, acknowledging the original author within the lyrics of the song. Inuit did not consider authoring a song an art form, rather believed that composing words to a well-known *ivnerut* or coming up with an entirely new melody were both a gift possessed by all (Rasmussen, *Iglulik* 233).<sup>57</sup> Lacking singing talent was likened to that of poor hunting skills and manly demeanour, both a misfortune. The performance of songs was a part of polar night festivities or a simple evening entertainment with the participation of guests. Knowing the circumstances of the close-knit community that hosted the event was beneficial to understanding hidden

<sup>57</sup> *Ikiaqtagaq* sing.; *ikiaqtagait* pl.

meanings and references specific to an extended family that hunted together. During dark season, hunting parties from far-off lands feasted and performed together. At these occasions, the opacity of the words was palpable for Inuit who were not from the same area, similarly to ethnographers or later the Southern readers. Although some song lyrics were understood generally, many were rather specific to a community, and insider information was necessary to grasp the intention of the performer, which—just like the contemporary audience—many lacked.

Moreover, the accessibility of the originally collected and also the herein selected texts is influenced by the circumstance of being far removed from the context in which they were once understood. *Pisiit*, the words to a song, were bound to change as they were meant to be individual to their composer, unlike most melodies, therefore, they are unique voices from a tradition that is displayed in a more generic and foundational manner through its origin stories. *Pisiit*, as literary-cultural texts, are divorced from the festive performance and devoid of the beating of the drum at communal events in the feast house. Since these songs are tied to the conditions in which they culturally function, to present them without the occasion in which they once occurred makes them less accessible to both the present-day Inuit audience and beyond. Although Rasmussen's notes on the performances are specific, he agrees that no description substitutes experience, therefore, the difficulty presented by modal change and missing context cannot be entirely alleviated. It is, thus, with the aid of ethnography that readers might embark upon relating to these texts, although it is not entirely impossible that some intended meanings are misconstrued by Southern scholars (Murray and Rice xi-2).

The kind of decontextualization that comes from transferring words onto paper as text allows for oral tradition to be preserved for the written age; however, this transfer presents its own challenges as to what extent the resulted texts represent the Inuit voice heard in the songs intended for a *qaggiq* audience.<sup>58</sup> The problem with understanding Inuit songs as poetry lies with taking the poems out of the control of the community (Martin, *Stories* 67), which is why I treat song lyrics from the oral tradition era as not only texts, but words originally intended to be sung to a melody, acknowledging that they lack a crucial component. A tune, or *ivnerut*, may be either original or previously heard, but new words that express the singer's thoughts and emotions are composed before a feast, or at any moment the urge to sing arises (Orpingalik qtd. in Lewis 11). This manner of composition was described as a "long considered and

deliberate oral composition prior to performance, as in the case of certain [African] oral lyrics” (Finnegan, “How Oral” 61) and deemed sometimes as excluded from orature due to its lack of spontaneity. I argue that spontaneity is not a precursor to oral tradition songs only, but to any genre—traditional or modern—composed in the oral mode, and at any event when writing is excluded from the process of composition, orature is the correct term to employ.

In an attempt to minimize the decontextualization, Rasmussen presents his written records of the attended performances in his *Report* both in Inuktitut and Danish, with an explanation of the events in order to mitigate the songs lacking a performer, melody, and accompanying music. Calvert and Worster’s translations were picked up in several anthologies (that are not in circulation anymore) based on Rasmussen’s work, such as Robin (Gedalof) McGrath’s *Paper Stays Put: A Collection of Inuit Writing* (1980) later entitled *Canadian Eskimo Literature: The Development of a Tradition* (1983), John Robert Colombo’s *Poems of the Inuit* (1981), and Penny Petrone’s *Northern Voices: Inuit Writing in English* (1988). In *Eskimo Poems from Canada and Greenland* (1973), Tom Lowenstein provided a different, and now established as authoritative English translation of Rasmussen’s song texts.

Songs were also compiled by Diamond Jenness, who was a member of Vilhjalmur Stefansson’s Canadian Arctic Expedition (1913-18), which visited the Western Arctic ten years prior to Rasmussen’s Fifth Thule Expedition, but not before Rasmussen and Peter Freuchen had set up the Thule post in 1910 in Western Greenland, establishing the starting point of major expeditions to the Arctic. Published nearly a decade earlier than Rasmussen’s collection, Jenness’ *Report of the Canadian Arctic Expedition 1913-18*, authored together with the pioneer ethnomusicologist Helen H. Roberts (now an extremely rare find), includes notations for Inuit songs and is the quintessential collection of sheet music based on gramophone recordings on the field. Subsequently, Jenness’s *Songs of the Copper Eskimos* (1925) was published in the same year Rasmussen’s research trip ended. All of the unique sources mentioned so far containing essential information require substantial investigation to be discovered, which is a reflection of the neglected state of research targeting Inuit orature and literature.

Unlike Rasmussen, Jenness’ focus is on the songs themselves, providing little background information on the singers, he highlights that talking and joking were typical behaviour during the presentation of the songs (Jenness and Roberts 7). Due to the malfunctioning of the wax phonographic cylinders in the extremely low temperatures in winter time, the location of the recording was transferred to the nearest trading post. Presumably, this

change from the song house to a Western environment must have contributed to the lack of trans-like performances thoroughly described by Rasmussen. Jenness's experiences with the performers confirm Rasmussen's prior suggestion that songs served as a means of entertainment rather than a form of literature (*Iglulik* 233).

The ever-changing nature of oral delivery is reflected in the different manner and wording of the presentation of songs at different occasions. Inuit songs from the oral tradition have no final or fixed form, therefore, Jenness's audio files and written collection represent—as he reveals through acknowledging that the songs were numerous modified—but a certain rendition of the songs at a particular time (*Eskimo Poems*, 1924). The characteristic feature of immediacy and spontaneity of both the choice of words and performance of the songs corroborate the notion that singing used to belong in the realm of recreation rather than serious artistic endeavour. This view is supported by the shaman Ivaluardjuk's apparent surprise at hearing that the Danish have poets whose only task is to write poetry. In *Intellectual Culture of the Iglulik Eskimos*, Rasmussen describes the Inuk's reaction as follows: "I shall never forget Ivaluardjuk's astonishment and confusion when I tried to explain to him that in our country, there were people who devoted themselves exclusively to the production of poems and melodies" (233).

Although Knud Rasmussen uses the term 'poems and melodies' to distinguish the language used in them from everyday speech, he, as I, regards Inuit *pisiit* as songs; therefore, the words accompanying contact-traditional Inuit songs are song lyrics when part of a musical performance and song texts when enjoyed in a decontextualized form. Song lyrics are intended to function in the context of music, and this dependent and secondary nature makes them different from poems. Hence, I argue that Keavy Martin's assertion that "Rasmussen refers to the song as a "poem" and often refers to the singers as "poets" and, therefore, "he frames Inuit performance as a literary tradition" ("Sovereign" 7) misguidedly suggests a deliberate literariness. Rather, the melody is accompanied by words, which are the song lyrics, text, or simply put: the poem for the tunes. While *ivnerut*, the melodic part, can be borrowed and inherited as is shown in the case of the recycled character of *ikiaqtagait*, words never can, which highlights the primacy of the melody. Rasmussen's numerous mentions of "songs" and his own collection of Inuit songs published separately from his other "intellectual culture" series under the title *Snehytens Sange* (Songs from the Snowhut) in 1930 clearly establishes his stance. This does not lessen his respect for the craft of song-making at which he had tried his hands and found it excessively difficult:

I never found any difficulty in making up a song that should fulfill the ordinary requirements, though it was not easy to equal the natural primitive temperament in its power of finding simple and yet poetic forms of expression; but as soon as I tried to accompany myself on the drum, with the very precise movements of the body that go with it, I invariably got out of time, and thus lost my grip of those whom it was my business to inspire as my chorus. (*Iglulik* 230)

A “poetic form of expression” may occur in everyday speech, which seems to be Rasmussen’s usage of the phrase rather than denoting poetry in its writing-based definition. The playful nature and entertainment value of Inuit songs do not diminish their significance, rather they clarifies their nature. The notion of a poet supposes conscious art, while writing poems was not known to Inuit singers, therefore, they could not have thought of themselves as poets (Rasmussen, *Iglulik* 233), unlike Martin implies.

Given their function and characteristic features, oral tradition songs are meant to be songs, but their lyrics can be studied devoid of their musical context, acknowledging that their intended function is verbal accompaniment to a given melody. Recordings from the first and second ethnographical era exist (from the 1910s until the 1960s), as well as Roberts’ and other ethnomusicologists’ notations are available to consult in order to receive a well-rounded picture of the context of the songs, bearing in mind that the occasion for which these songs were composed influenced the choice of diction and themes. Although Rasmussen’s conversation with Ivaluarjuk suggests that oral tradition Inuit songs are not consciously artistic (*Iglulik* 234), their decontextualization, modal change, and transliteration rather than translation explain Martin’s assessment, which echoes Boas’ evaluation.<sup>59</sup> However, categorizing orally authored and ever-changing song lyrics as poetry can only be appreciated if the recorded words are considered not in their original, but rather in their now-accessible format, even though this stance would disregard the original intention of the author-performers.

Albeit Jenness’s own contribution to studying and translating Inuktut is undoubted, Rasmussen’s bicultural view of Inuktut dialects elevated his efforts in authentically preserving traditional songs, allowing posterity to look beyond the ethnographic and attempt to discover poetic value. His interest in the singers, participation at song festivals, thorough note-taking and in-depth interviews with the singers as well as his attempt at honing the Inuit singer’s craft produced a rather authentic and unique collection of texts that are oftentimes filled with literary merit (Damas “Journey” 136). However, Rasmussen himself struggled with working his phonograph in sub-zero temperatures (*Iglulik* 230), therefore, Jenness cannot be blamed for

<sup>59</sup> Boas’ notes, “[a]mong the arts of the Eskimo poetry and music are by far the most prominent” (240)

having to resort to recording performances in the heated trading posts as it was an optimal environment for his recording equipment. Nonetheless, it is without a doubt that Jenness—highly regarded by Rasmussen himself—eventually managed to record the original performances with a gramophone leaving the only audio memories of songs from Inuit oral culture until the second ethnographical era in the 1960s, when Balikí and other researchers returned to the polar North.

Jenness' audio recordings present Inuit songs in their pure, decontextualized form. Along with his explanations of the texts and Helen H. Roberts's notations, a thorough understanding of Inuit songs is possible if amended by Rasmussen's interviews with the singers and detailed description of the festivals and the content of the songs. Both ethnographers add to the body of Inuit orature available for analysis regarding the Inuit character in such a way that my own study can utilize their field work and build upon the collected texts to systematize them and analyze them. Rasmussen's familiarity with the context within which the songs occurred and his uncanny ability to relay the information to his readers is significant. The fact that he understood the words and did not need a translator helped him transmit the essence of the songs.<sup>60</sup> The significance of this circumstance may be properly appreciated if we consider Martin's suggestion that "the practice of close reading [...] is rendered problematic by the reality that most academics will have to read the stories in translation" ("Sovereign" 7). The postulation that translation is a critical evaluation (Kennedy 32) argues along the same lines. I argue that the consequence of this notion would render translation a meaningless pursuit, since—according to this logic—translation as an act is impossible due to information being purely culturally coded. If such a far-fetched side-effect to translation and transliteration existed, however, cultures would be insulated and impregnable.

The arduous task of preserving song lyrics as they were once heard in their native environment using transcription in Inuktitut, translation, and transliteration carries ethnohistorical significance and allows for the study of song texts today. Rasmussen confides in his readers that a number of songs "presuppose a thorough acquaintance with the events described or referred to and would thus be untranslatable without commentaries that would altogether spoil the effect" (*Iglulik* 235). The choice is difficult to make and ultimately hangs on whether the collector wants to produce an ethnographic feat or achieve artistic beauty. Rasmussen humbly admits in *Snehyttens Sange* that "the words of the songs are only part of the

<sup>60</sup> Oftentimes Inuit translators, though native speakers of an Inuktitut dialect and competent in English, lacked the proper depth to translate not only language but culture across languages.

whole intended effect... Whatever I did, I finally lacked all the things that gave the songs life in their country of origin” (Rasmussen, *Eskimo Poems* 107-09). I find that the difference between mediating culture and aiming at being artistic is observable in the differences in Worster’s and Lowenstein’s translations of the same song text, the latter aiming to sound like a poem rather than focusing on verbatim translation. By placing himself into Inuit environment, Rasmussen had altogether altered the performance to a degree. Eventually, in their print form without drums, chorus, dance, and a familiar audience to receive them, the song lyrics rendered in Kalaallisut and Danish can best be understood as the textual part of a musical performance notwithstanding that transliterations, such as Lowenstein’s, read as poetic in comparison to verbatim translations, still, the original intention of the singers must be appreciated.

To sum up, adapted from Inuktut to English and from a performative mode of delivery to a textual, songs appear in a decontextualized and fragmented form. They survive as transcribed texts and still function authentically as adapted songs—*ikiaqtagait*—which are an endemic form of Inuit song tradition. Inuit singers recycled melodies of *pisiit* fitting them out with new words, a custom that can be observed within a familial environment. Arguably, Rasmussen’s textual and poetic rendition of Inuit song lyrics with footnotes about their background and performance changes them into song texts or if context is altogether disregarded, then poems. This detachment, along with the manner of transliteration, allows for a certain opacity resembling poetry. *Pisiit*—arctic songs—have become not only Inuit entertainment anymore, but a form of art from the past. The sharing and changing of songs were natural to Inuit; Rasmussen traded some of the *Qallalisuut* stories to learn the songs of the Iglulingmiut and further bartered the newly collected songs with those of the Netsilingmiut with the full knowledge and participation of Inuit. Thus, adaptation and decontextualization are familiar concepts and practices in Inuit culture (*Iglulik* 17; *Netsilik* 13), placing the manner and result of the collection of oral tradition songs acceptable within the realm of Inuit intellectual tradition.

#### 4.4. Arctic Songs

“There really is no such thing as Eskimo poetry; there are only poetic acts by individual Eskimos. The poetry-making matters, not the result. And since the forms of poetry are traditional, known to everyone what need is there to keep examples?” (13) writes Edmund Carpenter in his foreword to Richard Lewis’s 1971 collection of Inuit song texts by the title *I*

*Breath a New Song*. Several important factors are hidden in Carpenter's characterization of Inuit songs. Firstly, his observation of individual acts is on point. Even in the written era, some anthologized poems come from accidental poets; Dorothy is such an example, whose full name eludes the reader, while her four lines picked by Robin McGrath to be included in her thesis memorialized the elusive Dorothy as a poet, even though her contribution to Inuit poetry is slim. Understanding the arbitrary nature of the inclusion of Inuit song compositions and in fact poetry in anthologies and academic essays allows for Lewis not to indicate the name of the singers whose song lyrics he collected for *I Breath a New Song*. I propose that the traditional nature of the song genre creates a definite limit for creative capacity, oral tradition songs are so alike because they are meant to be, in this sense they are rather closer to folk tradition than to individualized, personal songs. Additionally, the act of performance—whether individual or in a form of a song duel—was the highlight of the song. The title of Lewis's collection of song lyrics references the act of drawing breath and singing as this was the set phrase used in Inuktut for composing a song. This well-chosen title, citing the singer Orpingalik, exemplifies the essence of Inuit song tradition. In giving the title *I Breath a New Song*, Lewis appears to reference *anirniliit* or “those who breathe,” a fundamental Inuit concept referring to all terrestrial beings. The naming reveals the significance of taking a breath in representing life. In Inuit culture, breathing is not only associated with the physical act of inhaling and exhaling, but also with one's spirit. The verb *anirniq* for “to breathe” and “to sing” are both derivatives of *anerca*, the sacrosanct word for the eternal soul. The equation of breathing with singing elucidates the important place song tradition occupies in Inuit life.

Going further, this chapter explores song lyrics as a part of Inuit, and in a broader sense, Canadian literary tradition. As Inuit are represented by the Inuit Circumpolar Council—an organization that transcends borders—some texts that are outside Canada but within Inuit culture, will be included in this part of the dissertation. Oral delivery was a significant social force prior to the introduction of writing and Western lifestyle to Inuit communities living in the Far North. In the few hundred years before World War II, Inuit lived a Neolithic, hunter-gatherer lifestyle little influenced by outside cultural influences coming from First Nations, European, and Southern sources: this was the era of Inuit song tradition. The act of chanting words was believed to have a special power to make things real, and the magic of words presided over the living, the dead, and the inanimate. People would listen to the singer in reverie inside stuffy igloos throughout eternal winter nights with the aurora borealis playing across the wide jet-black skies.

Inuit song tradition, whether it comes from land-locked snow deserts or coastal ice fields, is singularly unique in its representation of life in the Canadian Polar North. The distinctiveness of the vocabulary and images display the notions that engaged the contact-traditional Inuit mind. Since the first ethnographical era, the first three decades of the twentieth century, subtle changes in expression and theme can be traced even in a mode-transitioning form. However, the transcribed words of Inuit song tradition can hardly be likened to poetry as it is broadly understood; Inuktut “words are like the knife of the carver: they free the idea” (Carpenter 16; Martin 75); from its dormant state, which means that they are random instead of being pre-meditated and are nearly identical to everyday speech. Inuktut speech has a natural rhythm and musical quality to it which lends itself to singing rather than telling a story; however, song tradition typically lacks poetic imagery, figures of speech, and rhyme.

Song tradition is focused on breathing out loud, thinking aloud in front of an audience; instead of an inner dialogue—which would be the product of literacy (Carpenter, “The Eskimo Language” 472), Rather Inuit live out their thoughts in public in the form of unwritten songs. It is, therefore, curious how the personal pronouns and agency itself are missing from the language, resorting to employing the word “one” (translated as ‘I’ by Lowenstein and others) where they speak of themselves (Carpenter, “Eskimo ” 473), creating a dichotomy with the act of singing itself since it is at the most individualistic Inuit can get given that personal *pisiq* songs are performed only by their composers.

Pre-contact intellectual culture was transmitted by the people themselves from generation to generation through word of mouth. The vast majority of Inuit songs until the middle of the twentieth century was composed in Inuktut. Song making was a dynamic genre, the words to a melody changing at each recital. Song texts gained a solid format by the work of ethnographers and not the introduction of writing itself (Inuit did not record their oral culture). In translating the texts to English, a few different approaches were used: as mentioned before, English translations of Rasmussen’s Danish field notes are available through the work of Tom Lowenstein, who focused on poetic rendition; and the Rasmussen-collected song lyrics were also translated by Edward Field, W.J. Alexander Worster, and W.E. Calvert who used a more verbatim approach. All of the English language translations are based on Rasmussen’s Inuktut field notes and Danish translation of the song lyrics acquired during the expedition between 1921 and 1924. Beyond songs, other facets of intellectual and material culture, language, and

other areas of cultural preservation are stored in a gargantuan ten-volume collection made up of twenty-seven series of reports on the Thule team's findings.<sup>61</sup>

The collection, in general, is rather useful, albeit extremely hard to access and only in parts, which is why I focused on the report entitled *Intellectual Culture of the Iglulik Eskimos*. *Iglulik* is written about Rasmussen's first contact with the autochthonous people living on Igloolik Island and its vicinity; further volumes discuss his meetings with tribes, such as the Kivallirmiut, Netsilik, and others as he travelled across the Canadian tundra. As I managed to obtain a reprint of *Iglulik*, I found—as I suspected—that it contains a fair amount of songs, more than in other reports (some of which I found in fragments), and as such is the most useful to examine song texts within the ethnographic narrative. Also, as most songs tend to recycle themes, I do not feel that Igloolik singers are less representative of Inuit as a whole than others. In any event, singers and poets from many other areas were read and included in this dissertation. The significance of Rasmussen's contribution lies in the fact that he gathered and recorded cultural material that had previously not been known to the world and with the advent of writing and a concurrent disinterest in keeping traditions alive would have likely disappeared entirely.

The reason behind this apparent lack of interest in maintaining the song tradition of the oral era might partially stem from the arrival of Christianity via different denominations prior to what is regarded as the contact-traditional era. During the second half of the nineteenth century, expansive evangelization took place in the Eastern Arctic. Preceding regular contact with the South and before ethnographic research could have taken place, several different Christian missions had reached the Arctic. The Moravian Brethren from Bavaria, the Church of England, and the Roman Catholic Church primarily from France all established outposts in the North. Their efforts led to new beliefs and the weakening of the song tradition, as charms and drum dance that accompanied the performance of a *pisiq* were explicitly discouraged as un-Christian acts. The fact that nearly a century later Rasmussen could still find a plethora of traditional songs performed in the feast house shows that the gradual lessening of interest which might have been initiated, but not directly caused by missionaries took several decades. As we will see, not until settlement, will the *qaggiq* celebrations and the songs performed at them begin to eventually fade more rapidly.

<sup>61</sup> The name of the expedition is derived from the Northwestern Greenlandic settlement Qaanaaq established by Rasmussen in 1910, which he named Thule after the expression "ultima Thule" denoting a land beyond the known, originating in ancient Greek literature.

A sort of cultural mission took place between missionaries and Inuit in the *ilagiit nunagivaktangiit*, which in part introduced a new tradition but also allowed for the old to survive via writing (although this option was left for the ethnographers to complete). Christian missions focussed on the introduction of writing to Inuit in hopes of printing an Inuktut Bible that the congregation could read; at the same time, they were keen on learning Inuktut through which they were able to teach the Bible and the tradition of Christian songs that would replace shamanism, animism, and the celebrations held in the feast house. *Pisiit* were a communal event in an igloo built for the purpose of getting together and celebrating life, hymns are sung in a church, a building also specially built for the purpose of bringing the community together while singing, and in this case, as a part of public worship. Some Inuit, however, incorporated Christian doctrines into their existing worldview so as to complement it, not to cast aside old traditions. Also, Inuit were taught either English or French (Danish in Greenland); this kind of conversion through literacy started in some places such as Greenland as early as the eighteenth century. The de facto beginnings of Christian-led literacy in Nunavut have started in the early twentieth century at about the time of Rasmussen's ethnographic expedition there.

Literacy throughout the North has been the foundation of (written) poetry, and as an extension, the expression of shifting Inuit identity. Writing generated by Inuit authors from the second half of the twentieth century, starting with the first journal entries and later on including poetry and stories, laid the foundations of a newly literate era. Oral tradition—songs and stories—could have been far less accessible today if not for the work of ethnographers. It appears so that the line of storytellers and singers was broken, Inuit lost interest in maintaining the oral song tradition and did not recognize the significance of recording the old songs and stories in order to salvage past traditions for posterity, almost as if oral tradition existed only because writing was not invented. Once many learned to read and write, the old songs were not recorded in writing, nor has there been a marked interest in writing new ones. I propose that the shifting habitus of Inuit—as described by Bourdieu's theory of generational difference—can be observed in acts of neglect and disaffectedness towards their own past. In both the written- and the subsequently digital age, interest in oral tradition had weakened to a degree that my recent conversation with Inuit academics yielded the observation of an Inuk colleague that “[she has] little understanding of *pisiq*...not many young people sing *pisiq* anymore...*pisiq* language is different from everyday language, it is very old and not used anymore” (May 2022

conversation with M. T.).<sup>62</sup> This observation represents a general tendency and hints at how dynamically Inuktitut dialects are changing as well as how the transformation from an oral to a written mode is complete. Due to the above circumstance, my analysis of Inuit song tradition is based on the work of researchers outside of Inuit culture, and an arduous hunt for primary material through physical and digital archives, some of which store derelict magazines with Inuit poems in print form from the first few decades of the settlement era life and are only accessible by using search terms in Inuktitut, whereas contemporary texts were more readily available via their publishers.

Having studied the slim volumes of collections from a distant time and place with communities counting sometimes only a couple of dozen individuals, it is a fair question whether these transmodalized texts can be deemed as poetry. Keavy Martin attributes the idea of Inuit poetry to Rasmussen (165); however, Inuit did not know what poetry was at the time (Rasmussen, *Iglulik* 233) unless the words ‘poet’ or ‘poem’ were used in a metaphorical sense (323). The melodic delivery accompanied by a *qilaut* or Inuit drum and sometimes dance and the friendly heckling of performers by the audience during feast time in the communal *qaggiq* building brings this genre closer to the self-professed entertainment and song genre. As mentioned earlier, the words to a song could be changed from generation to generation as in being borrowed by a relative or sometimes even a stranger, the melody remained intact. This fact too speaks for the primacy of melody. *Pisiit* are, therefore, song lyrics, and as such they are no less significant in their ability to unveil the Inuit character in the contact-traditional era, when these songs were still authentically performed.

The bulk of the song lyrics collected during The Canadian Arctic Expedition from 1913-1918 and the Fifth Thule Expedition from 1921 to 1924 are remarkably individualized, considering that typically personal pronouns were not used in the text. Topics would be limited to a repetitive set drawing from the pool of experiences throughout a traditional arctic life, such as hunting, bad weather, old age, fear of famine, and sexual desire. Each member of a family unit crafted and performed a *pisiq*, that expressed the character of the individual meanwhile it also provided entertainment for the community who was privy to the dealings and nature of the performer. The high significance of singing is especially curious if we consider that Inuit, who lived in a subsistence culture focussed around hunting and extreme weather survival, had no notion of being a professional poet or entertainer (Rasmussen, *Eskimo Poems* 127), rather

<sup>62</sup> Name protected under Inuit research ethics principles.

crafting song lyrics was a desired skill to successfully function in the community.<sup>63</sup> All the members of the tribe were self-proclaimed singers who were ready to showcase their talents at the communal feast and song house. Although they are collected by explorers to the region in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, songs authored by members of a community are the best mementos of the life in the Arctic from the contact-traditional era, and a way to observe Inuit identity unfold. Similarly, based on the existing song texts and the accompanying notes, deductions can be made about life before the contact-traditional era.

Many songs collected by Jenness remain without the author named and all readers are privy to is the story contained within, but do we lose something essential? The missing names are partially due to the fact that Inuit did not consider themselves professional poets, rather habitual singers, therefore, Jenness' approach to indicate a singer's place of origin rather than the name is understandable, albeit ethically questionable. Asen Balikci-collected songs (predominantly from the Netsilik of Pelly Bay, present-day Kugaartuk) are available via Youtube, and it is clear that the melody and song lyrics are a fair bit repetitive: this could be another reason why Jenness did not include the names of the singers, as originality was overshadowed by the tight-knit community whose members unwittingly influenced one another.

Song lyrics were designed exclusively for the community of the performer; therefore, they function as a window to a narrow sliver of Northern life encoded in sometimes-unintelligible texts. In Inuit oral tradition, the delivery of songs was the primary motive for the creation of the song as opposed to our modern sensitivities where crafting, printing, and the posterity's quiet enjoyment are all included in the overall goal. Although the words were simple, the performance enhanced their meaning driving the audience into a trance, especially when the singer delivered an inspired performance. It is worth noting that sometimes unconscious changes in wording or in the manner of delivery altered the reception of the song as well (Rasmussen, *Iglulik* 227). For a better understanding, Rasmussen recommended a rough English or Danish translation along with the enjoyment of the live performance for the poems to take their full effect (Rasmussen, *Iglulik* 233). Unfortunately, outside of the communities, only a rare few could have ever enjoyed such a performance with specific language and cultural skills to embellish the experience. The text and context of the songs, as well as familiarity with

<sup>63</sup> I use community throughout to mean different Inuit groups migrating together, either meaning a large hunting party or an extended family. Society, as it is generally meant, did not exist in the subsistence hunting culture before the formation of hamlets. There were no single chiefs with a governing body and no economy or any sort of visual impact, such as permanent buildings, that Inuit have created (Jenness, "Copper" 86)

Inuit traditions and with the specific community the song originated from are all necessary to fully appreciate them. Lyrics taken out of their musical and cultural context can only be understood and analyzed as fragments, especially because they are delivered in a translated form. Away from their proper contexts in an Inuit cultural environment, texts are hard to decipher, but still carry enough transparency that information regarding identity can be extracted. Moreover, by paying attention to not only what the lyrics say, but what they do not, much can be learned about the people who crafted them.

As it is noted in *Eskimo Poems from Canada and Greenland*, there is a great variety in the kind of song lyrics people would make up, whether they were joyful or filled with sorrow, whether they welcomed Spring or celebrated a successful hunt (Rasmussen 123). In fact, hunting and survival in the harsh Northern environment are two of the main themes of oral tradition songs. Contact-traditional songs collected in the early twentieth century were authored by the hunters and mothers of the North, and, thus, tell the tales of the relationship between *Sila* and people.<sup>64</sup> The Inuit character is revealed through reactions to the elements which people struggle with for survival, the only goal of subsistence cultures. However, in the South, survival is insufficient (Mandel 119), rather the ideal outcome is well-being, comfort, and thriving, but these themes are not well-represented in Inuit intellectual culture in any era, including this one. The lyrics instead report back on proper survival skills for a hunter, albeit also evoke the emotions of the people living above the treeline in the tundra. The frequent addressing of the surroundings, the close observation of the land and the game migration patterns, as well as opening a window to the hunter's state of mind are all key components of the songs. In the following chapter, I detail the sub-genres in which these themes appear.

## **4.5. Sub-Genres of the Inuit Song Tradition**

### **4.5.1. Overview of Songs**

All Inuit singers whose songs were collected by Diamond Jenness and Knud Rasmussen belong to the contact-traditional era, hence they were composed and recorded before the three main generational cohorts laid out in Chapter 2. Most performance dates are approximations as Rasmussen himself did not record them beyond the year, and sometimes even that is unknown, but we do know that his fifth, and only research trip in the Thule series aiming to focus on

<sup>64</sup> *Sila* is the term for nature, environment, and weather in Inuktitut.

intellectual culture that lasted from 1921 to 1924. My primary source of investigation in this sub-chapter are the texts of Inuit songs collected in Diamond Jenness and Helen Roberts' *Report of the Canadian Arctic Expedition 1913-1918, Volume XIV: Eskimo Songs, Songs of the Copper Eskimos, Southern Party-1913-1918*, Knud Rasmussen's *Report of the Fifth Thule Expedition 1921-1924, The Danish Expedition to the Arctic North America in Charge of Knud Rasmussen, Ph.D., Vol. VII. No.1., Intellectual Culture of the Iglulik Eskimos, No. 2., Observations of the Caribou Eskimos*, and later collections using Rasmussen's aforementioned volume and several books contained therein indicated next to each analyzed song text within this chapter. Rasmussen's collection in particular serves as the basis for anthologies of Inuit intellectual output by a variety of editors, such as Penny Petrone, Richard Lewis, and Edward Field. The Igloolik area, located in and around the vicinity of Baffin Island, otherwise called Qikiqtani Region or Qikiqtaaluk, is considered by both researchers and Inuit as one of the most ancient and culturally active hamlets in Inuit *Nunangat*. The reason for singling out this specific geographical area is manifold. Firstly, Igloolik and its vicinity is the location of Rasmussen's most robust collection of songs in many different genres, but the examined song texts are also from other groups (always noted in the text), such as the Netsilingmiut, Utkuhikjalingmiut, Aharmiut, and Angmagssallingmiut. Secondly, Igloolik is the community that graciously shared their home with me for the duration of an Arctic summer to winter season in 2016. While living among the Iglulingmiut, I was able to experience the clash of Inuit traditional knowledge and modernity, along with the nature of shift in identity as it emerges through daily life; in this regard, additional field experience complements my secondary scholarly sources. Also, having met some of the descendants of the great songsters of the past and some recent cultural figures, such as actor and director Natar Ungalaaq, director Zacharias Kunuk, and actor Apayata Kotierk (all in 2016), my knowledge of Igloolik Island in particular, and Inuit in general aids the authenticity of my research and my ability to analyze identity, texts, and draw sensible and scientifically accurate conclusions. Since I have spent some time on the field, which is a necessary requirement for most scholarly publications touching the field of ethnography.<sup>65</sup>

Author John Robert Colombo appreciates Inuit writing as a valuable part of the Canadian literary mosaic, while ethnographer Edmund Carpenter asserts that Inuit literature does not exist (13), only ethnographic findings do as part of Inuit culture and entertainment. Between these two opposing opinions, I examine the oral tradition in more detail through a variety of song texts. Inuit orature and literature employ a highly descriptive, yet simple

<sup>65</sup> Iglulingmiut are Igloolik folk, and Qikiqtani is South Baffin in Inuktitut.

language representative of the arid landscape of origin. The straightforward language invites the reader to take a peak into the core of Inuit thinking. If we examine the melodic environment in which song texts function, the rhythmic nature of Inuktitut dialects explains the performative significance of lyrics that do not impress on the page. The Iglulingmiut elder Ivaluardjuk explained that at the time of contact-traditional semi-nomadic tribes, most “men knew so little of things apart from their food and sleep and rest” that their theme could not have been anything beyond these everyday concerns. Ivaluardjuk clarifies that a state of ignorance is desired as “happy folk should not worry themselves by thinking” (Rasmussen, *Iglulik* 19). Therefore, it is no wonder that most songs are concerned with daily life, such as preparing for a hunt or building an igloo.

Igloolik Inuit had little contact with missionaries until the 1930s Roman Catholic Mission by Oblate Father Bazin (Rasing 167) and were reluctant to share their beliefs with outsiders. However, due to Rasmussen’s Inuktitut fluency, he was trusted enough so that some of the most treasured songs were performed in his presence (*Iglulik* 19-20).<sup>66</sup> *Pisiit* are especially a precious ground for investigations regarding the Inuit character as they retell not only the everyday errands and adventures of the singers but showcase Inuit mentality and relationship to their ancestors and their way of thinking.

In *Eskimo Poems from Canada and Greenland*, a collection of traditional song lyrics based on Rasmussen’s extensive collection and edited by Tom Lowenstein features several types of song lyrics represent the Inuit song tradition. The original title of this collection, verbatim translated is “Eskimo Songs from the Snow Hut” [*Snehyttens Sange*]. The dialectical opposition between approaches to written record-keeping achieved through changing modality is reflected in the translator’s decision to substitute the word “song” with “poem” in the title. Nevertheless, in his introduction to the volume, Lowenstein opens with a statement about his purpose in editing Rasmussen’s notes so that each text is followed by some notes aimed to provide information about the *singers’* [*sic.*] character (Rasmussen, *Eskimo Poems* xv).

Generally, I divide Inuit songs chosen for this collection into sacral and popular. The majority of the song texts belong to the popular category, which in turn is further sub-divided. Folk songs that vary by *miut* group and are accompanied by dance and games for children and adults alike—similarly to folk tales and origin stories—have mostly been unchanged

<sup>66</sup> Umik, an Inuk *angakoq* and evangelist preached Christian beliefs; arriving from Pond Inlet, he set up a mission in Igloolik in the early 1920s. After the 1930 Roman Catholic mission by father Bazin, an Anglican mission followed in 1959 practically dividing the hamlet into two antagonistic parts.

throughout history, therefore, they are less a candidate to detect the alteration of the *inummarig* character. However, further categories exist that are personal in nature and do exhibit marked changes. These songs are connected to present-day genres. Rasmussen uses several different names for songs performed to a different effect, such as joy, sorrow, nuisance and categorizes texts into “mood songs,” “hunting songs” and “songs of derision,” (*Eskimo Poems* 123); while Jenness and Roberts discuss some of these songs as “dances” in the *pisiq* and *aton* category with several sub-types (*Eskimo Songs* 9-15), applying the methods of ethnomusicology.

#### 4.5.2. *Erinaliutit*: The Words of the *Angakoq*

The most ancient of orature is the sacral words of the shaman used to evoke the spirits. The compositions of the shaman are charms, or *erinaliutit* in Inuktitut. Rasmussen also uses the term ‘magic words’ (*Netsilik* 157-168); they are also referred to as *sakausiit* and incantations by Jenness and Roberts (14). *Erinaliutit* represents a small segment of Inuit orature; I propose that their significance lies in their continuity in the form of Inuit-written Christian songs, forming a bridge between the traditional and the modern, orature and literature revealing the transformation of *inummarig* identity. Apparent from the words of these short texts is their purpose, which is mainly to influence weather, disease, or some other form of hardship. Contact-traditional Inuit believed that the true meaning of magic words is left behind in an age when animals could talk to humans (Rasmussen, *Iglulik* 157). Chants were always regarded as special and secret, their words and meaning truly revealed only to the shaman who received them through a trance. Today some of these texts seem to be jumbled sentences devoid of meaning. *Erinaliutit*, as suggested by Rasmussen, are possibly the predecessors of *pisiit*, that are entertaining and variably more personal in nature (*Iglulik* 234). I aspose this connection as the notion that *erinaliutit* form the foundation of *pisiit* is supported by close inspection of the language used in both. Quite untypically for Inuit orature in general, they are filled with metaphorical expressions and epithets for certain animals: terms such as ‘the great white one,’ which indicates the polar bear and ‘the one who has no breath’ which represents a corpse (Jenness and Roberts, *Eskimo Songs* 110) are used throughout to separate the language of songs from the casual style of everyday utterances. Although figures of speech are not often used in Inuit texts, special animals and entities present an exception, thus, this similarity in using vague or compound terms for certain entities suggests that the language of *pisiit* originates from the purposefully evasive sacral language of the shamans. I find *erinaliutit* special for another reason

as well: they were the only Inuit songs that were for sale at a high price or given away as a legacy gift upon one's death, but only the *angakoq* or the one who paid for the incantation could sing them or else the magic words would lose their force (Rasmussen, *Iglulik* 157).<sup>67</sup>

Rasmussen collected some of the only remaining *erinaliutit* which are known today, particularly from elder and shaman Aua (Fig. 16), specific dates of the performance of each single song on the nearly four year-long journey are unknown, albeit it is known that the Iglulingmiut were the first of communities visited. Rasmussen puts the date of his arrival at the Iglulik camp in the year 1922 (Rasmussen, *Iglulik* 17), hence the textual recordings of Aua's incantations are from that year. Some examples of Aua's craft were published in the Petrone collection:

This is blood from the little sparrow's mother.

Wipe it away!  
This is blood  
That flowed from a piece of wood.

Wipe it away! (qtd. in Petrone 7; see Ch. VII. p. 185)

Aua's "Words to Stop Bleeding" has four curtly crafted sentences that were believed to deliver a healing effect. The meaning of the incantation is not known, and, as it often happened, to the *angakoq* either. There is no one specific god these words are pleading to, rather the very source of the problem, in this case bleeding, is addressed. Inuit believed in a list of things that could be healed or made possible by chanting incantations. To make heavy things light, the shaman would have used the incantation "Words Which Make Heavy Things Light:"

I will walk with leg muscles

Which are strong  
As the sinews of the shins of the little caribou calf.  
I will walk with leg muscles which are strong  
As the sinews of the shins of the little hare.  
I will take care not to go towards the dark.  
I will go towards the day. (Aua qtd. in Rasmussen *Iglulik* 166;  
Lewis 33; see Ch. VII. pp. 189)

<sup>67</sup> Inuit shaman



Figure 16. Aua, the Iglulingmiut *angakoq* and singer (Rasmussen, *Iglulik* 49)

Incantations used by shamans are examples for clarity in expression, such as the one aimed at healing one's knees after falling, collected during his visit to the Copper Inuit by Jenness at the Vilhjalmur Steffanson-led *Canadian Arctic Expedition* (1913-18) on which he was invited to be the ethnographer:

Falling tears  
 Falling tears  
 The old knee down there  
 The old knee down there  
 It splashes on it; it splashes on it. (Leechman 68; see Ch. VII. p. 189)

The shaman uses concrete language with clear wording. Notably any form of piety is missing, rather by verbalizing the problem, the shaman doctor wishes the ailment away: Aua speaks directly to the knee. Notwithstanding the straightforward style of incantations, certain things are implicitly addressed: animals, especially those that are feared, are referred to by euphemisms avoiding direct address. *Nanuq* or the polar bear, the prime predator of the Arctic, is never referred to directly, rather a host of expressions, such as: 'those who make one frightened,' 'the ever-wandering one,' 'the one who walks on ice,' and 'the great white one'

serve as substitutes. Single nouns and direct address were avoided in fear of making animals disappear. Even today, elders believe that the number of polar bear populations remains the same, but too much talk about them makes bears hide themselves from people (Therrien 251-284). Altogether, magic words represent a distinct category, and as the examples reveal, although *erinaliutit* display a similarity to *pisiit* in style, they are much shorter and never performed by anyone other than the shaman. The shaman's performance parallels the priest's in its role as a mediator between the people and the (holy) spirit(s)/ghost; the effect of the magic words on the person is similar to the healing a worshipper might feel after reciting a Christian prayer. A certain amount of syncretism—even if minute—can be observed between the two faiths, so, it is fathomable why Christianity was mostly well-received in the Arctic, and by the time of settlement in the 1950s and 60s the magic of *angakkuin* was gradually forgotten.

The Inuit character that unfolds through *erinaliutit* is that of the Paleolithic hunter without the concept of God as it is displayed in the Christian religion. Rather, the spirits populating shamanism, and a reverence towards the mediator who can communicate with them is inherent in the short chants and the secretive manner in which these *erinaliutit* are composed and regarded. Animals are especially respected not only because they feed Inuit, but they were believed to be so-called “skinchangers,” also known as shapeshifters who could turn into humans or vice versa and communicate with both species. In fact, contact-traditional elders believed that the elusive *erinaliutit* which lost their original meaning were heard from animals in a time when they were able to speak to humans (Rasmussen, *Iglulik* 157).<sup>68</sup> “The mode of thought and the logic of stone age” (Rasmussen, *Iglulik* 54) is seen in the depiction of the spirit of nature, the dead, and Takanakâpsaluk, the spirit under the sea. Magic words are filled with fear of hunger and sickness—very valid fears in a rhapsodic and harsh Arctic environment. Since most *erinaliutit* are lost due to their secret nature, those collected by Rasmussen are ethnographical treasures. While contact-traditional Inuit, whether they were Christianised or not, still respected the ancient spirits and the shaman's powers, those who grew up as the children of these adults recorded by Jenness, Steffanson, and Rasmussen expressed little interest in or need for shamanism.

<sup>68</sup> Skinchanger is the better term here, since Inuit culture is known for stories where animals put on human skin and vice versa, referred to in the cover art of Keavy Martin's monograph and in its title *Stories in a New Skin* (directly borrowed from the first chapter of Rasmussen's *Across Arctic America* entitled “Old friends in New Skins” (3).

#### 4.5.3. *Pisiit* and *Aton*: Varieties of Dance Songs

The most ubiquitous and well-represented category of songs is that of the *pisiq* (Fig. 17). Jenness refers to *pisiq* as dance songs, while Rasmussen calls them ‘ayaya’ or mood songs that sometimes feature themes of hunting, in which case they are termed as hunting songs. Furthermore, a *pisiq* may be called a *qilaujjarusiit* (Imaruittuq, qtd. in *Tradition-Orale*), a formal dance song accompanied by a drum; in this case the emphasis is on the movements of the singer. Another type of dance song is the *aton*, in which the focus is on the melody called *ivnerut* and the words invented by the performer (Jenness and Roberts 211); *atons* tend to be less formal, although Jenness’ 1913-1918 collection features several formal *atons*. A further difference between the two types of dance songs is the movements performed while singing; both *pisiit* and *aton* feature a specific style of dance (Jenness and Roberts 9). Calling *pisiit* and *aton* “songs” neglects their non-vocal performative element: dance and music together in front of an audience, and the term “poetry” is usually understood as a non-musical, non-performative, written genre. It seems that poem, song, dance song, *pisiq* have all been used by various collectors. Wherein the focus of my analysis is on the recorded words, highlighting their textual element and calling them song lyrics seems the most fit for my investigative purposes.



Figure 17. *Pisiq* performed near Bernard Harbour in 1921 (Rasmussen, *Across* 278)

Musically, songs have four sub-varieties with a varying number of verses, and distinctive in their inclusion of chorus and musical preludes (Jenness and Roberts 209) and are not the property of any individual but belong to the camp (Jenness and Roberts 12), unlike the lyrics made up by individuals who may claim ownership for them. *Pisiit* showcase the Inuit character through revealing the emotions and personal experiences of the poet. The words to the *pisiq* “Cold and Mosquitoes” performed in 1922 by Igloodik elder Ivaluardjuk from Lyon Inlet illuminate many of the significant characteristics of this song genre (Fig. 17):

.....

The cold is bitter,  
The mind grows dizzy  
As I stretch my limbs  
Out on the ice.

It is I,  
Aja-aja-ja.

Ai! but songs  
Call for strength  
And I seek after words,

I, Aja-aja-ja.

Ai! I seek and spy  
Something to sing of  
The caribou with the spreading antlers!

And strongly I threw  
The spear with my throwing stick  
And my weapon fixed the bull

In the hollow of the groin  
And it quivered with the wound  
Till it dropped  
And was still.

Ai! but songs  
Call for strength,  
And I seek after words. It is I,

Aja, aja—haja, haja! (qtd. in Rasmussen, *Iglulik* 18-19; see Ch. VII. 191)



Figure 18. Ivaluardjuk, the Iglulingmiut elder and singer (Rasmussen, *Iglulik* 17)

Inasmuch as hunting was the essential sustaining activity and sole occupation for Inuit, it is often visited in song lyrics, therefore, Ivaluardjuk's words represent the much-experienced situation of an elderly Inuk. Moreover, the skill one needs to hunt is often paralleled with that of being a wordsmith. Ivaluardjuk's song about hunting caribou, *tuktu* in Inuktut, parallels the two activities: the difficulty of the hunt and the prowess of the hunter are likened to that of the skill one needs to conjure up words that truthfully reflect the events described. In the last stanza, big game hunting is compared to hunting for words as the singer is seeking for the appropriate vocabulary and caribou at the same time. As a comparison, an alternative translation by Tom Lowenstein, allows a peek into the travails of working from translation. Based on Rasmussen's Danish translation of the original Inuktut, Lowenstein gives the befitting title "A Hunting Memory" and adds some extra lines in order to illuminate the circumstances of the song:

Aj! But songs  
require strength  
and I search  
for words.

*Here is the song.  
Here is the memory.*

*It's only I who sings. Aja-aja-haja-haja!* (qtd. in Rasmussen, *Eskimo Poems* 26;  
see Ch. VII. 192; emphasis added)

Lowenstein's translation with the addition of the last three lines gives the final stanza a different meaning, evoking the elusive nature of memory and as an extension, oral culture. Ivaluardjuk is referencing both the individuality of his *pisiq* and the transient nature of orature and a culture based on it. As Lowenstein observes:

[t]he struggle to create form was . . . largely the poet's own responsibility: an imperative which was keenly and often crushingly felt, as is indicated by the frequent allusions to the difficulties of composition and a fear of failure—failure to perfect the song itself, and then to perform it in the feasting-house without forgetting the words. (qtd. in Rasmussen, *Eskimo Songs* xvi)

The urgency of the song is manifested in the unadorned linguistic environment. Listening to the performance, the audience in the *qaggiq* could smell the excitement of the hunter chasing after the caribou, sharing in the familiar act that represents the very essence of arctic life. Inuit identity emerges through the songs as that of the fearless hunter, which is the core of contact-traditional Inuit identity.

Although the meaning is only partially captured, the reverence with which the audience received this song (Rasmussen, *Iglulik* 18) shows the presence of spiritual layers hidden within.<sup>69</sup> Inuit listeners would relate to such songs because of their first-hand experience hunting and living off the land, while those foreign to Inuit culture can only marvel at the strangeness of the song. To thoroughly appreciate the nuances of the song beyond the written mode, however, Ivaluarjduk's actual recital is necessary. As Rasmussen confirms, "when sung, it produced an altogether extraordinary effect on those present. And anyone who understands the Eskimo tongue will be able to appreciate the great power of expression and the elegance of form in its original text" (*Iglulik* 232). The song undergone a modal transfer and read as a translated text is but a fragment of the original, albeit it conveys cross-cultural concepts to the readers addressing the collective us nestled beneath our modern realities. As Rasmussen observes in his *Eskimo Poems from Canada and Greenland*:

<sup>69</sup> Caribou skin drums used to accompany *pisiit* performances.

These poems don't arrive like fragile orchids from the hothouses of professional poets; they have flowered like rough, weather-beaten saxifrage which has taken root on rock. And they ought to matter to us. For do we not hear through them something that reminds us of the original features of our own old songs—the same life-giving warmth—the same teasing humor, the same quiet melancholia—and sometimes it glimpses a simple, but grandiose pathos that grips us by virtue of its immediacy. (109)

The most anthologized singer of the Ahiarmiut is Akjartok, whose hunting song (no date of original collection) from the beginning of the past century is found in John Robert Colombo's 1981 collection entitled *Poems of the Inuit*. Following Ivaluardjuk's example, in "Cold and Mosquitoes," Akjartok includes the act of composition as part of the theme in "When I Call to My Mind":

I call forth the song  
I draw a deep breath  
My breast breathes heavily

As I call forth the song.

When I call to my mind the olden days  
When I had strength enough  
To cut up mighty bulls  
I call forth the song

While the sun was on its upward way (qtd. in Colombo 44; see Ch. VII. p. 193)

Traditionally, breathing and singing are equated according to Inuit thinking. The elderly singer struggles with his poem in which the past is portrayed as preferable to the present, the hunter appears as stronger and younger; for Inuit, youth generally implies superb hunting skills. The image of the sun represents the coming spring, the time of plenty, the season for resuming the hunting activity that follows the famine of the last weeks of the polar night. The approaching spring opens up the oceanic hunting grounds and the journey into midnight sun begins as the hunter forges his words of longing for times past both on his personal timeline and his people's. It is worth noting that albeit this poem was composed in the contact-traditional era, in a nearly fully nomadic and undisturbed period in Inuit culture, yet a sense of nostalgia for the past could be detected. -Similarly to modern times, the idolization of prior generations existed in contact-traditional Inuit culture, though it is precisely this contact-traditional era that is regarded by many contemporary Inuit as an ideal, traditional time. From the elders' point of view, the younger generation is changed, and difficult to connect with, as "young people no longer listen to elders" (Lucassie Nuraaaluk qtd. in Martin, *Stories* 55). Reminiscing about spring and summer when "the sun was on its upward way" at the dead of winter in utter darkness, bitter

cold, and no opportunity to hunt brings out nostalgia for the speaker's own youth, for the generation before, and for the plentiful bounty of the past summer. In its essence, the poem reveals the core of Inuit life: how excellent survival and hunting skills are appreciated and knowledge of *Sila* is respected.

More earthy tones, such as sensuality and physical love appear among the Rasmussen-collected songs, but spiritual love is not among the themes as marriages were typically of convenience (Jenness and Roberts 13-14). Few are as explicitly composed as the passionate and straight-forwardly entitled, "Love-Making" from the South Greenland near Umanatsiaq collected either on the fourth of the Thule expeditions between 1919 and 1920s—although at that time Rasmussen focussed on the Angmagsallik from East Greenland— or from 1921, the beginning of the fifth expedition:

Ajaija-ja  
 my playmate  
 ja-ja-jai-ja  
 fingers me  
 between the legs  
 hajajaja  
 she gives her body  
 haijaijaja-jaija  
 and tears the leather bracelets  
 from my wrists (Rasmussen, *Eskimo Poems* 53; see Ch. VII. p. 198)

Using such an unabashed and natural language about private acts in a publicly performed song might be surprising for modern readers. However, discussing and practicing sex used to be less private than nowadays as privacy was limited due to the scarce space in igloos and tents used as dwellings, if others (the elderly or children) were sent outside. Sexuality was most often discussed in descriptions of the practice of wife swapping, which used to be common among Inuit; in the present dissertation songs about wife swapping among Angmaggssallik are analyzed in sub-chapter 4.5.4. *Ivviutiit*: Songs of Derision. In the Qiqiktani/Qiqiktaaluk region, Iglulingmiut *angakoq* Padloq and his Aivilingmiut wife, Takornâq who hailed from Repulse Bay (Naujaat) discussed the practice with Rasmussen's research team (*Iglulik* 25). Wife-swapping, as an act of friendship and hospitality, was a widespread cultural phenomenon among Inuit until the adoption of Christianity, which affected different communities and even within them individual families at a different time. Generally, we can assume that by the time of settlement in the 1950s, the practice was discontinued. I presume that since Southerners in the North might have also disrupted this practice as they arrived without a mate, hence the bartering nature of the act could not be satisfied, unless the Inuit man was given goods instead of the

Southerner's wife. Due to wife-swapping being a natural part of Inuit social life, mentioning it within lyrics was to be expected, as affirmed by Takornâq:

[...] it is quite a common thing among us to change wives. A man does not love his wife any the less because she lies with someone else now and again. And it is the same with the woman. They like to know about it, that is all; there must be no secrets in such matters. *And when a man lends his wife to another, he himself always lies with the other man's wife.* (Takornâq qtd. in Rasmussen, *Iglulik* 25; emphasis added)

It is likely that reticence regarding the mention of intimacy was formed only after exposure to Christianity.

Additionally, performers moved beyond the physical excitement of hunting and explored metaphysical themes. An example featuring a hunter pondering the basic questions of life, is Ahiarmiut singer Akjartok's "An Old Woman's Song" collected by Rasmussen at one point between 1921 and 1924, accessible in the delightful little book *Songs Are Thoughts: Poems of the Inuit*

I have grown old,  
I have lived much,  
Many things I understand,  
But four riddles I cannot solve.  
Ha-ya-ya-ya.

The sun's origin,  
The moon's nature,  
The minds of women,  
And why people have so many lice.  
Ha-ya-ya-ya. (Philip 26; Rasmussen, *Eskimo Songs* 33, see Ch. VII. p. 194)

The second stanza poses profound questions, such as the origin and the nature of the universe, and the quintessential question of how the mind of the other sex works. The riddles are never answered, rather the singer's thoughts abruptly turn to practical matters. The remark about lice is a matter-of-fact reference to a very real problem in the contact-traditional era, about problems caused by the lack of proper hygiene. Sandra Katsak in talking about elders remembering camp life before the formation of settlements mentions that "they [elders] always say negative things about stuff back then, they talk about having lice in their hair" (qtd. in Wachowich 224). The otherwise lofty song, thus, closes in a humorous tone that projects both philosophical and superficial observations. The lyrics reveal that people yearn to know more, though Iglulingmiut

Inuk Ivaluardjuk believes that Inuit in the contact-traditional era knew only of their immediate surroundings, little beyond “their food and sleep and rest” (qtd. in Rasmussen, *Iglulik* 19).

The innate desire for more than the ideal state of ignorance, the ability to evoke ideas beyond the concrete, along with the presence of a pensive state of mind are apparent in Ulivfak’s song about spring. The song, collected during the Thule expeditions almost a hundred years ago, recalls the past “in the thaw of younger days” as the poet Ahiarmitut Ulivfak (songs performed by him were collected between 1921 and 1924) reminisces about his own youth in “The Spring of Youth:”

Sadly, I recall  
the early spring of my youth...

hunting in the wake  
of swimming bulls,  
I had no match.

Thus, I still re-live  
the early spring of youth.  
Old men seek strength  
in the thaw of younger days. (qtd. in Rasmussen, *Eskimo Poems* 37; see Ch. VII. p. 195)

Before pervasive all-terrain vehicle ownership in the North, Inuit used to hunt caribou near their water crossing paths, which the singer chooses as his subject. Ulivfak reflects on his younger self and an older, technology-free Inuit culture, attempting to gain strength from his memories. Memory is the foundation of oral culture and as such the carrier of what at some distant past *inummariq* used to be.

The poem is also published with the alternative title “Ulivfak’s Song of the Caribou” and a different English rendition:

I call to mind  
And think of the early coming spring  
.....  
In my younger days

Was I ever such hunter!  
.....  
With many spear-slain caribou in tow

And an old man, seeking strength in his youth,  
Loves most to think of the deeds  
Whereby he gained renown (Lewis 112; see Ch VII. pp. 195)

The version in the now out-of-print (as most of the orature and poetry sources cited) Lewis-collection features a different translation (translator unknown) similarly to what we see in “Cold and Mosquitos” and “A Hunting Memory,” two very different translations of the same song text, one of them including extra information inserted for the reader’s better understanding. In the case of Ulivfak’s song, the dotted lines in the above excerpt represent the additions, as in this case, they are not only words, but run the length of entire lines.

A different kind of thaw is referenced in the anonymous “I Was Out in My Kayak.” Rasmussen explains the circumstances of the birth of this song as such:

Winter has been long and hard, and the people of the village have suffered privation. Everyone is exhausted and many believe that they’re not going to live until spring. Then a man goes out along the coast in a kayak, where the first open water is beginning to appear. He comes to a hillside, which he climbs, so as to have a view of the opening in the ice where he can hunt seal. Weak and faint with hunger, he labours up the hill, until he discovers a snowdrift which the warmth of the sun is loosening from the mountain. He feels such happiness that he bursts out in song:

Aja-ha aja-ha  
 I was out in my kayak  
 Making towards land.  
 Aja-ha aja-ha  
 I came to a snowdrift  
 That had just begun to melt.  
 Aja-hai-ja aja-hai-ja  
 And I knew that it was spring:  
 We’d lived through winter!  
 Aja-haj-ja aja-hai-ja  
 And I was frightened  
 I would be too weak,  
 Too weak  
 To take in all the beauty!  
 Aja hai-ja  
 Aja-hai-ja  
 Aja-ha. (qtd. in Rasmussen, *Eskimo Songs* 47; see Ch. VII. p. 197)

The unnamed singer is overjoyed that he or she is strong enough at the end of winter to appreciate the coming spring. Physical strength was a serious concern not to be trifled with, since prior to the establishment of hamlets, in the last days of winter, even with frozen foodstuff, such as *muktaaq*, *igunaq*, and *kiviaq* available, many families were regularly emaciated.<sup>70</sup> In fact, famine was a very real fear, as evidenced by not only Uvavnuk’s plight, but other Caribou

<sup>70</sup> *Muktaaq* is raw bowhead whale blubber; *igunaq* is fermented walrus or seal; and *kiviaq* is fermented auk (a kind of arctic bird species).

“Eskimo”/Inuit of Ennadai Lake, also called Ahiarmiut or Ihalmiut (both pronunciations are written as ᐃᕐᕐᕐᕐᕐᕐ), a group of 55 people, whose case (dramatized by Farley Mowat in his 1951 novel *People of the Deer*) ended in a community-wide starvation and eventual relocation in 1957 (Damas, *Arctic* 91).<sup>71</sup> The very same people (Ahiarmiut, Ihalmiut or Caribou “Eskimo”/Inuit) must be mentioned here from the vantage point of generational cohorts. As Ahiarmiut is a rarity among Inuit communities, since they have never participated in the residential school project, hence their cultural attitudes remain closer to the contact-traditional Inuit than coastal *miut* groups or otherwise settler-affected *nunagivaktangit* (Piercey-Lewis 134).

Similarly, the anonymous “Winter’s Exodus,” whose date of composition and performance is not known, but the song lyrics were translated to English in a print form by Rose Pamack in 1982, joy is expressed over the passing winter. The use of invocation is typically an Inuit feature; winter is understood as an extension of Sila, the breath of the world. Sila is a spirit of the climate, weather, seasons, sky, and the wind; and in a broader sense it is a binding force, the spirit of the universe. This concept is similar to that of “logos,” (but not in the Christian sense) and in popular culture can be likened to *Eywa* in the Pandoran universe of *Avatar*. Although *Sila* is consistently translated as “weather,” “climate,” or “environment,” it is, in fact, a much more complex concept and can mean intellect, wisdom, earth, cosmos, and spirit. Sila is “arguably the most important concept in classic Inuit thought [...] *Sila*, Qitsualik argues, is a “super-concept, both immanent and transcendent in scope,” (29), therefore, it cannot be reduced to solely environmental phenomena (Leduc 249). As such, he—as Sila personified has male attributes—is indifferent to humankind and at times even displays a malevolent streak in his ability to lure people out to the tundra never to be seen again, therefore, it is no wonder that his parting is celebrated:

Winter, let’s get divorced  
Your parting, truly,  
Holds little sorrow  
I don’t care if you distance

Far, far away  
If you don’t leave,  
The spring thaw shall destroy you  
You winter,

<sup>71</sup> Further names for the ‘miut’ group are ‘Barren Ground Eskimo,’ ‘People from Beyond’ and recently Kivallirmiut due to their traditional grounds of Kazan River north of Ennadai Lake, Dubawnt Lake (Kamilikuak), and north of Thlewiaza River (Big River) formerly of Keewatin, the Northwest Territories was rebordered and moved to Kivalliq (literally ‘Barren Lands’), Nunavut. Ahiarmiut were first encountered by Franz Boas in 1901, and then Knud Rasmussen and Kaj Birket-Smith who named them ‘Caribou Eskimo’ for their exclusive dependence on the animal (Burch 1).

Let's be parted. (Petronne 50; see Ch. VII. p. 198)

Inuit were enormously dependent on good weather, which was a prerequisite for a successful hunt, therefore, the deification and personification of Sila is a mark of *inummariq*. “Winter’s Exodus” similarly to Iglulingmiut Uvavnuk’s “Song of Joy” or alternatively titled by Rasmussen as “Moved” was recorded in 1922 in the larger Igloolik Inuit hunting- and campgrounds, possibly the island itself. Both song texts are relatable for modern audiences as they express the pure joy felt over the beauty of nature and the coming of spring:

The great sea  
Has set me adrift,  
It moves me as the weed in a great river,  
Earth and the great weather  
Moved me,  
Have carried me away  
And moved my inward parts with joy. (qtd. in Philip 22; Rasmussen,  
*Eskimo Poems* 27; see Ch. VII. p. 194)

“Song of Joy” was reported to send Uvavnuk into a trance as the magnificence of nature in the Arctic was almost too fierce to behold (Rasmussen qtd. in McGrath 81).

Overall, through the song texts of contact-traditional Inuit orature Inuit life is displayed with its joys and hardships. The cultural identity manifested in it displays individuals in turbulent times ripe with paradigmatic shifts as mixed economy takes over subsistence hunting and settlement occurs at the end of the contact-traditional era and again when modern media are introduced to northern communities. Thematically, the pride over excellent hunting skills, fear of hunger, lamentations over old age, joy felt over the coming of thawing season, and occasionally sex are discussed. The lack of provisions, however, turns out to be one of the most significant problems and a major concern that makes its way into song lyrics. The famous story of Ataguttaaluk, who had to eat her entire family when stranded out on the land between Igloolik and Pond Inlet, memorialized across several media was a real life Igloolik resident, whose misfortune is an example for the sort of hardships living in the Arctic meant for Inuit before the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and Canada’s involvement in the North.<sup>72</sup> While traditional *pisiit* celebrate the prowess of the hunter, and *erinaliutit* are employed to heal, the generation after the adults

<sup>72</sup> Ataguttaaluk was an Inuit woman who during a failed hunting trip was forced to eat her dead family members until she was found by other hunters.

recorded by Jenness and Rasmussen express a dwindling interest in and need of shamanism and a diminished ability to live up to the hunting and survival skills of the ancestors.

#### 4.5.4. *Ivviutiit*: Songs of Derision

Just like *pisiit*, which can be performed in the form of a song duel between friends, *iviutiit*, also called songs of derision, can be used to settle disputes as two opponents reprimand and ridicule each other (Rasmussen, *Netsilik* 323), but these songs are not to be confused with song duels in which an *iglerek*, or song cousin (not a real cousin) humorously battles another. *Ivviutiit* always assumes a prior grudge between the parties, and duelling resembles the speeches attorneys make in court while the audience in the *qaggiq* plays the role of the jurors. Lacking a social structure organized in a manner found in tribal cultures, such as those of First Nations, or the South, *iviutiit* was invented as a rather public means of dealing with disputes. Despite its duelling format, it forms a distinct category from the songs performed in song duels (Rasmussen, *Iglulik* 132). One cause for discord between parties occurred frequently due to problems around wife-swapping, thus, when it did come up, both *pisiit* and *iviutiit* handled sex and lust openly, discussing a personal problem in front of the community while providing entertainment. Romance is not mentioned, in *iviutiit* either, which is not surprising in a world where early marriages of convenience were the norm, and partner swapping a regular event.

Angmagssallingmiut Kilime and Eqerqo's "The Abduction" deals with love, lust, and multiple sexual partners at their core. As sexual prowess is closely related to the theme of hunting, failure as a lover is linked to being an inefficient hunter (McGrath 98), which is a serious business in any Inuit camp as every member of the hunting party relies on the hunter's skill to harvest the land and survive. Kilime's insults directed at his former friend in order to express distaste at Eqerqo taking up with Kilime's wife do not spare Eqerqo:

.....

this loud mouth's  
ravished her, belittled her:  
a wretched cannibal  
who loves to eat men's flesh,  
in times of scarcity! (qtd. in McGrath 98; Rasmussen, *Eskimo Poems* 75;  
see Ch. VII. pp. 199-200)

The cries of Kilime after losing his wife to another man profess his anger illuminating that under the perceived casual act of multiple partners hides a desire for a monogamous relationship and a sort of ownership of the romantic partner. Also it highlights the practice of ceremonial divorce among Inuit. The use of cannibalism to a derisive effect shows the singer's anger, as eating a man's flesh was taboo even to save one's life and usually the price paid for it was expulsion from the community, which meant certain death. Exceptions told to Rasmussen and his travel companion Peter Freuchen show that in certain cases cannibalism was forgiven, however, it was rarely talked about (Qitsualik). When eating of another's flesh occurred, the situation warranted the shunning of the individual, which eventually led to starvation and death. An exemption from this fate is the celebrated Igloolik Inuit woman Attaguttaaluk for whom even a school is named after in which the writer of this thesis worked as a teacher.

The playfulness of Inuit, which was observed by both Jenness upon recording songs with Copper Eskimo and Rasmussen during his Fifth Thule Expedition, is apparent in most *iviutiit*, even though the songs function to embarrass. Kangitsuaq and Kuitse's "Song of Derision About Wife Swapping" (Rasmussen, *Eskimo Poems* 71) collected between 1919 and 1921 on either the fourth or at the beginning of the fifth of the Thule expeditions in Angmagssalik is about the very act in the title. Steffanson observed on his Canadian Arctic Expedition (1913-18) that Komallik Inuit "wives are exchanged but for seldom more than one night at a time, and seldom except upon the two families meeting after a protracted separation. This practice seems to be seldom indulged in except by close friends, partners, sort of blood brothers" (Steffanson 164). This brotherly bond, especially between two friends from two different *nunagivaktangit* is strengthened when one of them visits the other, in which case ethnologist Edward Nelson describes the custom among Bering Strait Inuit in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century as such:

he s received as the bond brother's guest, and is given the use of his host's bed with his wife during his stay. When the visit is returned, the same favour is extended to the other, consequently neither family know who is the father of the children...but the children know each other by a special term" (292).

As they proceed to address each other, Kangitsuaq and Kuitse retell the unsatisfying nature of their wife-swapping experience exchanging some mocking words about each other over their grievances. However, instead of criticizing the custom itself, an *ad hominem* attack takes place, and each other's character is insulted. The older of the two men, Kangitsuaq, tells the audience while facing Kuitse, that his opponent is a terrible hunter with an untrained dog team. This is an allusion and belongs to the issue of wife-swapping because in Inuit culture,

hunting skills represent sexual prowess. He also lets the listeners know that Kuitse embellishes his own abilities as a hunter:

.....  
 This is how my song of mockery turned out.  
 I hope it reaches folk  
 Who want a bit of entertainment!  
 .....  
 Look at him!  
 .....  
 Listen to his rant,  
 And how he uses that great mouth (qtd. in Rasmussen, *Eskimo Songs* 71-74;  
 see Ch. VII. pp. 200)

Kuitse, as the younger of the hunters, is more careful and merely criticizes the nonchalance and pride of the other. He ends up insulting Kangitsuaq by sharing a hearsay about him regarding the killing of a disabled person and ridiculing his opponent for only being able to pick a fight with a someone weaker, therefore, hinting at the fact that his boasting and proud demeanor is uncalled for. *Iviutiit* function well if it ends in reconciliation while providing entertainment for the assembled camp. *Iviutiit*, such as the one acted out by Kangisuaq and Kiutse, display the manner in which Inuit took control of settling disputes without the court houses of the South evidencing the self-reliant nature of *inummariaq* present in how a hunter carries himself and also makes amends in an entertaining fashion.

Another type of *iviutiq* deals with family squabbles. Piuvkaq, an Utkuhikjalingmiut hunter, whose uncle steals his meat cache at a time when everyone is starving, motivated him to sing his disappointment and anger in a song of derision entitled “The Wide Road of Song” (collected between 1921 and 1924 by Knud Rasmussen):

Eager to breathe out,  
 I have prepared  
 this little bit of song,  
 along the wide road of song:  
 .....  
 But here I am  
 to douse you with my mockery  
 .....  
 Fist-fighting is more my style  
 Then shouted tongue-disputes.  
 Words all too often disappear.  
 ..... (qtd. in Rasmussen, *Eskimo Songs* 68-70;  
 see Ch. VII. p. 196)

As typical, breathing and singing are equated by Piuvkaq but also his eagerness for a physical fight is expressed. Here, the cause of the quarrel is not the theft of Piuvkaq's wife, but of his provisions.

Instead of the travelling courts of the present day, *iviutiit* present how Inuit showed their agency through social traditions of the contact-traditional era. Lacking a police force or civil courts, or even a jury of elders, public quarrelling through singing was thought to solve the problem. *Iviutiit*—whatever dispute they meant to settle—reveal the Inuit character as one that is more willing to sing the problems than be litigious or aggressive. Furthermore, the lack of desire for secrecy is shown in the public display of familial and personal affairs, along with the ability to be introspective and self-deprecating. However, with the introduction of Southern practices within the confines of the settlement, arctic hamlets had to give up their judicial autonomy. Nevertheless, skills honed at performing *iviutiit* live on in such competitive performance arts as slam, a genre appreciated within the contemporary Inuit art scene, although spoken word performances are meant to provide enjoyment, more in the vein of *pisiit* once did, slam contest echo the competitive nature of *iviutiit*.

#### 4.5.5 Adapted Songs: *Ikiaktagait*

The fourth category of songs, *ikiaqtagait*, or adapted songs, is not an entirely independent category as these are already popular songs (from a former *qaggiq* gathering) outfitted with new lyrics. The idea of recycling within or outside the family with the acknowledgement of the original author is endemic to Inuit poetry, and it is the foremost tool in facilitating the survival of many of the songs. “A Little Song,” collected by Rasmussen in Southern Upernivik between the years 1919 and 1923 is one such example, in which borrowing itself is the theme:

A little song,  
Someone else's worn little song,  
But I sing it as if it were my own,  
My own dear little song.  
In this way, I play  
With a second-hand song  
And give it life again. (Rasmussen, *Eskimo Poems* 54; see Ch. VII. p. 199)

The highlight of the poem is in the last two lines “...I play/With a second-hand song/ And give it life again” expresses the high regard in which song adaptation was held in Inuit culture, and

also explains why the recycling of already heard tunes and rhythms takes place. Borrowing something, not only intellectual but material culture as well, is another feature of *inummariq*, and it is not limited to taking something from within the culture, but is extended to the products of other, such as First Nations or Southern, cultures. This trend is evident in the adoption of survival tools and techniques from the South—rifles, sleds, and wooden houses, which now are blended with prior cultural elements and are the feature of “traditional” Inuitness. While song adaptation is always remarked upon within the song text, facets of intercultural adoption are not mentioned, thus, the enculturative change in the Inuit skill set is not detectable in many *ikiaktagait* that exclusively address the personal sphere.

The philosophy behind *ikiqtagait* reveals that not only did ethnographers help save oral tradition from fading into oblivion but they did so in apparent harmony with Inuit ideals about adaptation. It is so despite the fact that some—such as Greg Younging in his *Elements of Indigenous Style: A Guide for Writing by and About Indigenous Peoples*—espouse the notion that if the recorder is non-Indigenous, collecting in order to preserve culture for posterity is regarded as stealing or ruining the original work, even though nothing is consciously added or changed in the process. Through the work of scientists, typically, the original words of the singers are preserved, and as most precious writings, they might be also translated to different languages. However, Younging’s idea of seeing the work of the ethnographer and treating the natural interconnectedness of world cultures as cultural appropriation has some followers among Inuit. Upon a Cree artist incorporating throat singing in their repertoire, some Inuit expressed that it “is a uniquely Inuit creation, not to be performed by other groups” and as a consequence some Inuit singers have pulled from festivals where non-Inuit were set to perform throat singing (Rogers, “Should Non-Inuit”). In turn, the offence some singers felt over throat singing outraged many other Inuit, among them elders:

She does heavy metal throat sing but not in traditional way where other people are not okay with it! Maybe Inuit should boycott about Kelly’s and Tanya way of singing and go against it like they are right now about non Inuit doing throat sing... I am an inuk but I’m okay with non Inuit people to do throat sing, they feel like they want to do this! (Elder #1 qtd. in Rogers, “Should Non-Inuit”)

These ladies complaining are no good at it . The sounds they makes are not original throat singing. [Name] has embarrassed us older folks with her interpretation of throat sing [ing]. If a non-inuk isn’t allowed to throat sing, why are [names] and other people boycotting about this live in the southern land? Go to the north and boycott about this and be a total inuk! (Elder #2 qtd. in Rogers, “Should Non-Inuit”)

Has anyone reminded [Name] that what she does it not throat singing either? When was the last show she put on in Cambridge Bay, her hometown? Years ago. You should have seen the looks of our Elders while she gyrated and moaned on the floor...Also, [Name] became famous by culturally appropriating songs that she translated into Inuktitut, e.g. “Diamonds”. People in glass houses shouldn’t throw stones. (Elder #3 qtd. in Rogers, “Should Non-Inuit”)<sup>73</sup>

However, knowledge of the area one critiques is evidently the crux of forming an educated opinion as throat singing is not unique to Inuit women, but practiced among Tibetan monks, the Tuva in Central Asian Russia, and South African Xhosa women, therefore, a line of thinking based on exclusivity and real or imagined insults appears to be flawed.

#### 4.5.6. The Significance of Songs

*Erinaliutit*, *pisiit*, *ivviutiit*, and *ikiqtagait* are sub-genres within the broader genre of songs within Inuit oral tradition that I term as orature. Each of the sub-genres reveal a different segment of Inuit way of life and manner of thinking. The significance of the songs lies in the opportunity their study provides by allowing us to capture Inuit identity in the contact-traditional heyday of Inuit orature. Generally, the goal of collecting songs is their appreciation, raising awareness about their existence, and a desire to get to know a culture, and close a knowledge gap within science. Whether their intended meaning can be deciphered is a highly debated issue not only regarding Inuit orature, but poetry in general. What Inuit themselves thought of their songs is explained by Netsilik singer, Orpingalik, as follows:<sup>74</sup>

Songs are thoughts sung out with the breath when people are moved by great forces and ordinary speech no longer suffices.

And then it will happen that we who always think we are small, will feel still smaller. And we will fear to use words. When the words we want to use shoot up of themselves—we get a new song. (qtd. in Philip 8)

In the time of orature, words were believed to have a special power as revered *angakkuit*, hunters, and elders sang to the beat of the *qilaut*. This was the time of the *inumhariit* before regular contact as described by ethnographers (mentioned in this dissertation) studying the era before World War II. As tool use developed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, orality persisted, but subtle changes appeared in the habitus of each succeeding generation, intensifying in the second half

<sup>73</sup> The names of Inuit elders and artists are held back as per Inuit research ethics principle

<sup>74</sup> Netsilik are Inuit living in today’s Gjoa Haven and Kugaartuk hamlets in the Kitikmeot region of Nunavut.

of the twentieth century with the trading of the nomadic lifestyle into a hamlet-dwelling one. The majority of songs that are available to be examined are from a time when Inuit lived in small nomadic hunting camps across the tundra, spending their lives in search for meat resources. Most Inuit would have met no more than one or two hundred people in their entire lifetime. The members of such a tight-knit community would have understood the stories behind the songs, as they were based on their limited shared context. Inuit outside of their reach would have struggled no less to understand a song than readers today. This sheds light on how insular family groups within *miut* groups once were within Inuit culture. The difficulty some Western readers may have in trying to grasp the essence of traditional songs is shared by many Inuit as well, hence the opacity of meaning is not due to a cultural divide between Inuit and Southern, rather it is due to the private experiences reflected in the songs.

Fortunately, early Arctic ethnographers such as Rasmussen, Jenness, and Stefansson observed and recorded the peculiarities of traditional songs, another noted ethnographer Franz Boas mentions that the musical element in Inuit song lyrics is at least as important as the words themselves (*The Central* 649). Boas' claim that the appreciation of the poems is possible without knowing the words, on a purely auditory level (Rasmussen, *Eskimo Poems* 102), even when meaning evades the listener confirms a crucial feature of traditional Inuit songs, however, he discounts the fact that few people had ever the chance of listening to a *pisiit* performance. Although Inuit songs are such that "a Westerner only comprehends [them] with extreme difficulty" (Rasmussen, *Eskimo Poems* 108), now they are definitely available in a textual form to multilingual readers. Due to their auditory nature, printed collections cannot fully reflect what songs meant in their context of music, dance, and community, yet they can still capture something for the modern reader: the core of Inuit identity, which is hidden in them in the shape of a naïve yet strong culture. Although music and dance divert our attention from the words, they allow listeners not fluent in Inuktitut to connect with the song at an elemental level. Inuit were not only hunters, wordsmiths, musicians, but great dancers as well: "The person reciting the ditty jumps up and down, to the right and to the left, with bent knees, the hands hanging down, the palms touching each other. When crying āx, āx! He jumps high up," recounts Boas (49).

The special diction employed by the now altogether archaic-sounding songs used vocabulary in some sub-genres, such as in *erinaliutit*; about the meaning of certain fanciful words even some contact-traditional performers were unsure about. Inuit song tradition is essentially orature, therefore, comparisons to poetry seem to miss the point. Songs that were

salvaged by ethnographers are mementos of a time when Inuit were living a subsistence economy, secluded from most of the world in the barren stone and ice fields of the Arctic. Orature celebrates and narrates the life of the Arctic hunter and, thus, it should be understood and categorized as such.

## V. CHANGING IDENTITY THROUGH THE EMERGENCE OF WRITING

“[...] we have lived ourselves out of the old customs. We forget our magic words [...] We forget what we no longer have use for [...]”

(Ikinilik qtd. in Rasmussen, *Netsilik*, 500)

### 5.1. Religiosity in Inuit Poetry: From Shamanism to Christianity, from Inuktitut to English

For Inuit, the first step towards becoming a writing culture happened through the introduction of reading and writing in Inuktitut for the purposes of familiarizing themselves with the contents of the Bible. This process took place at different times throughout the Arctic between the 17<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> century as missionaries reached every remote area north of the treeline. Although missionaries and clerics were mostly fluent in Inuktitut, Inuit who showed an affinity towards learning to read and write in English, French, or Danish were given an opportunity and slowly, first by writing personal diaries, and later by producing short poems reminiscent of the lyrics of *pisiit*, Inuit started becoming a writing people. Not only did some Inuit start writing, but they did so in a foreign language. Literacy provided a solution against cultural practices and oral documents being forgotten, and additionally, new knowledge could also be acquired by reading and without having to leave the homeland.

Inuit *miut* groups Knud Rasmussen had encountered in the 1920s all reported about the customs of the prior generation fading into oblivion, observable in the change of beliefs, in the dwindling practice of orature, and in the lack of traditional hunting skills. Inuit men in each examined generation seem to assume that their forbears were far superior to them in their land skills and believed that their ancestors were the true *inummarit* (Laugrand 11). However, each subsequent generation of hunters expressed similar nostalgia for the lifestyle and prowess of the previous generation, thus the notion of *inummarit* is a relative one (Laugrand 11). The Utkuhikjalingmiutaq hunter Ikinilik explained to Rasmussen:

Now that we have firearms it is almost as if we no longer need shamans, or taboo, for now it is not so difficult to procure food as in the old days. Then we had to laboriously hunt the caribou at the sacred crossing places, and there the only thing that helped was strictly observed taboo in combination with magic words and amulets. Now we can shoot caribou everywhere with our guns, and the result is that we have lived ourselves out of the old customs. We forget our magic words, and we scarcely use amulets now. The young people don't. See, my chest is bare; I haven't got all the bones and grave-goods that the Netsilingmiut hang about them. We forget what we no longer have use for. Even the ancient spirit songs that the great shamans sing together with all the men and women of the village we forget, all the old incantations for bringing Nuliajuk [Sedna] up to earth so that the beasts can be wrested from her—we remember them no more. *Now with the hunting implements of the white men we live life without much difficulty.* (Rasmussen, *Netsilik*, 500; emphasis added)<sup>75</sup>

Rasmussen's opinion on this *miut* group was rather positive: "To me,"—he explains—"the Utkuhikjalingmiut will always be the most handsome, elegant and hospitable people I met on that long journey; indeed, the healthiest and happiest I have ever lived with" (*Netsilik*, 512). The change of traditions, again, appears as part of a natural process, accepted by Inuit; their happiness as expounded by both Ikinilik, a local *itsumaq* or leader, and Rasmussen reinforce this notion. Customs of the previous or presiding generation were kept as long as they aided successful hunting and the well-being of the local group, however, as soon as something that made life easier was introduced, Inuit seemingly adopted without much hesitation. The phenomenon that upon the availability of guns, quads, boats, fishing nets, and other devices the need for charms, shamans, and other such customs ceases to exist, as explained by Ikinilik, is aligned with Pierre Bourdieu's theory of generational change. On the spiritual front, the children of those interviewed by first wave ethnographers were exposed to sophisticated weaponry and medicine that superseded ancient chants. This shift in culture was not exclusively due to exposure to Christianity, but as Ikinilik expounded, to the lack of need for charms to hunt or get well.

When the Moravian brethren arrived in Labrador in the late eighteenth century, whalers, explorers, and traders had already been active in the North. The first Anglican mission was not established until 1894, in Cumberland Sound, and a Roman Catholic mission was built in Igloolik in 1931. Inuktitut-language Bibles had been available since the 1920s as few Inuit could already speak or read English. The arrival of Christianity meant the development of a new cultural tradition. This paradigm shift that eventually heralded the written tradition revealed an *inummariaq* changed in novel ways. The practice of *angakkunig* or shamanism was fading as

<sup>75</sup> Utkuhikjalingmiut resided in the Back River area and had 170 souls in their *miut* group; at the time of Rasmussen's arrival in the early 1920s they were living a completely secluded life, their contact with outsiders extremely limited.

Christianity was becoming prevalent in the North. As the language of *erinaliutit* was becoming too archaic to comprehend, hymns were getting increasingly more popular, and can be regarded as a means of filling the space *erinaliutit* used to occupy.

“Above each hut waved a little white flag—signs that the inmates had relinquished their old heathen faith and become Christian” (Rasmussen *Iglulik* 118), Rasmussen thus introduces his first encounter with Igloodik Inuit in their camp. However, as it is later revealed, this sign of adoption of Christianity did not mean that Inuit altogether relinquished their traditions. When asked if he believed in God, the Iglulingmiut shaman Aua—who not long after his meeting with Rasmussen converted to Christianity—answered that Inuit did not believe, instead they feared (Kleivan and Sonne 32). Aua’s description of Inuit beliefs is based on fear as a primary guiding force:

We fear the weather spirit of earth, that we must fight against to wrest our food from the land and sea. We fear Sila.

We fear dearth and hunger in the cold snow huts.

We fear Takánakapsâluk, the great woman down at the bottom of the sea, that rules over all the beasts of the sea.

We fear the sickness that we meet with daily all around us; not death, but the suffering.

We fear the evil spirits of life, those of the air, of the sea and the earth, that can help wicked shamans to harm their fellow man.

We fear the souls of dead human beings and of the animals we have killed. (qtd. in Rasmussen, *Iglulik* 56)

All of the things feared by Inuit—such as illness, famine, and a variety of hardships—are feared by Christians as well. While Christians believe that everything is governed by the will of God, Inuit are less certain about the origin of things and why life is a certain way (Rasmussen, *Iglulik* 129-130). Contact-traditional Inuit were convinced that the spirit world was intertwined with the material. Traditional teachings, just like Christian doctrine, rested upon proper behaviour and avoidance of evildoings (Piercey-Lewis 252-253), a complex taboo system, and order based on kinship.

In the twentieth century, several Christian denominations established missions in the Arctic in an attempt to proselytize its people: the Moravian, Pentecostal, Holy Alliance, Anglican, and Roman Catholic Church all sent their missionaries to learn about and evangelize Inuit (Whidden 1). In the settlement era, it was not atypical to have more than one Christian denomination present in one hamlet, unwillingly driving a wedge between the community members, just as in the case of Igloodik where, even today, the settlement is divided into a Roman Catholic and an Anglican part. In the case of the Pelly Bay (present-day Kugaartuk)

settlement, when Catholic missions reached the hamlet, the oblates of the Church were more invested in warding off Anglican influences than making sure that Inuit converts thoroughly understood their new faith (Remie and Oosten 109).<sup>76</sup> Assurance as to whether the converts believed and practiced religion according to the Bible was difficult, because Inuit customs prohibited one from openly expressing opposition. Many Inuit adapted elements of Christianity in a manner that suitable to them and concurrently retaining old beliefs as well. Due to the aforementioned cultural differences, missionaries in Kugaartuk were oblivious to the actual religiosity of the people (Remie and Oosten 3).

Religious fervor allowed for the swift acquisition of Inuktitut, after which missionaries introduced reading and writing to Inuit, making use of both Roman letters and Cree syllabics to convey Inuktitut dialects. The purely oral culture of Inuit, thus, transitioned into a written period, altering the manner in which Inuit traditional knowledge called *qaujimajatuqangit* is delivered and actualized. Religious hymns translated from German into Inuktitut by the Moravian Brethren were the first to be recorded. Since singing, drumming, and dancing are intertwined in Inuit oral tradition; thus, the hymns may be regarded as the first translated songs introduced to Inuit, performed with church music and as part of the service. While drum dancing as a practice was slowly fading due to the discouragement of missionaries, Christianity formulated a new Inuit tradition that not only incorporated a new kind of melodic singing accompanied by European musical instruments rather than a *qilaut* but introduced an altered approach to spirituality (Artiss 33).

Although Christianity was welcomed, for written culture to take root, more time needed to pass. During the nearly two-hundred-year long time period starting in the 1770s and ending with the establishment of the hamlets in the 1950s, many Inuit learned to read and write, and eventually the settlements provided free schooling for all, although this was not taken advantage of by all. Converts were inspired by European hymns and gospels (the latter is distinct in its tune and recurring chorus) but rarely ventured to write their own. Hymn 478, written by Anne Paedlo at an unknown date, is the only Inuit composition in the Anglican hymnal:<sup>77</sup>

My father in heaven  
Is my only source of confidence  
I am extremely happy

<sup>76</sup> In Christian monasticism, especially in Catholicism, an oblate is a person who is specifically dedicated to God's service.

<sup>77</sup> Hymn and prayer translations are not dated because their conception is unknown, however, all of the Inuit-written texts within this chapter represent the intellectual output of the hamlet folk cohort.

I have someone who feels for me

My father told me

How he was making a place for me

I am extremely happy

To be saved (qtd. in McGrath 62; see Ch. VII. p. 205)

With the change of the subsistence hunting lifestyle to modern economy, I propose that hymns took over the function of not only *erinaliutiit*, but to a lesser extent, *pisiit* as well. Contemporary community centres, on the other hand, stood in for the *qaggiq*, but neither communal feasting nor song dueling were practiced anymore, since they were tied to nomadic culture.<sup>78</sup> The need for *erinaliutiit* to ward off evil spirits dissipated as the government dispensed benefits, and other monetary help and most of the dangerous elements of arctic life were avoided as a result of modern economy. Paedlo's hymn, therefore, shows an emerging Inuit identity that rests on traditional values, but is touched by Christianity. The uncomplicated, happiness-focused approach of the text reminds the reader of the essence of Inuit thinking, while the prayer itself is addressed to a monotheistic concept of God, and the expression of firm belief rather than fear are signs of Christian influences. The brevity and simple diction are familiar, but unlike in *erinaliutiit*, instead of the problem being addressed, Paedlo calls on the heavenly father and expresses the protestant notion of a personal relationship with God, which brings happiness and satisfies those who believe.

Discrepancy between the original English and the translated Inuktitut texts evidence cultural differences and possibly a lack of linguistic prowess. It is necessary to be well-versed in both languages to appreciate how received language and culture become internalized. Hymns translated from English to Inuktitut, and back reveal marked differences between the two English texts, such as in the popular protestant gospel "Bringing in the Sheaves," written by Disciples of Christ evangelist Knowles Shaw. The difference in the two texts sheds light on Inuit thinking and the manner in which Christian concepts are understood:

We will come bringing things

And we'll be happy

With our Lord Jesus

We will come

We will come

We'll be happy

With our Lord Jesus (McGrath 61; see Ch. VII. p. 204)

<sup>78</sup> There is no evidence in any of the herein consulted (and those I familiarized myself beyond the literature in the Works Cited section) primary, secondary, and interview-based sources that would indicate my statement regarding song duels otherwise.

The acknowledgement of Jesus as Lord and Saviour is emphasized twice in the short text, announcing that the converts “will come” to Jesus through their new faith. In comparison, the wording, content, and length of the English original shows marked differences in its inherent theology:

Sowing in the morning, sowing seeds of kindness,  
Sowing in the noontide and the dewy eve;  
Waiting for the harvest, and the time of reaping,  
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves.

Bringing in the sheaves, bringing in the sheaves,  
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves,  
Bringing in the sheaves, bringing in the sheaves,  
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves.

Sowing in the sunshine, sowing in the shadows,  
Fearing neither clouds nor winter’s chilling breeze;  
By and by the harvest, and the labor ended,  
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves.

Going forth with weeping, sowing for the Master,  
Though the loss sustained our spirit often grieves;  
When our weeping’s over, He will bid us welcome,  
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves (*Hymnary*; see Ch. VII. p. 203)

The protestant gospel details the hardships of life through which faith can sustain the spirit and also lists the merits that lead to happiness, thus, proving the internalization of Christian morals, while the Inuktitut version simply establishes that Jesus will bring overall happiness in the life of the believer without going into much detail as to how that would happen. The original text features activities, such as “sowing in the sunshine” that are foreign to Inuit, therefore, it is understandable why the text has been modified in such a way that it is culturally relatable.

The process of translating and singing hymns is an enculturative act, however, Inuit Christianity—regardless of the denomination—is mixed with traditional Inuit thinking and beliefs, such as reverence towards particular animals, weather, and the observance of certain taboos, for example around pregnant women. Culturally coded naming practices also remained along with English-like traditions that allow for multiple names given as an Inuit name and as a baptismal name. English naming often establishes an Indigenized form, such as ‘Elisape’ for Elizabeth, or ‘Jacopoosie’ for Jacob. Furthermore, animism is typically retained in some form when organized religion takes root in a culture, this is clearly visible in the case of Inuit. The changed living circumstances of Inuit has allowed for the enjoyment and novelty of Christian

hymns and mass or Sunday service as community building occasions that took over the role of *qaggiq*, albeit occurring not cyclically but continually throughout the year allowing for a more tight-knit community. *Qaggiq* festivities, however, died out not (only) because of Christianity, but due to the formation of Inuit settlements, easy travel, electricity, and the availability of staple foods all year round.

Performing hymns at special occasions was overseen by Church elders (Artiss 19) and as mentioned before, I find them as a similar tradition to *pisiit* singing in the *qaggiq*, but with a deeper and received-culture-based spiritual layer. In fact, it has become so interwoven in present-day culture that upon having to decide what cultural group to send to the 2010 Winter Olympics to represent Nunatsiavut, the Inuit-governed part of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, instead of traditional throat singers or drum dancers, some elders seriously entertained the idea of sending the Moravian Church Choir (Artiss 1).<sup>79</sup> While the adoption of Christian gospels and Moravian brass music into Inuit culture is a cultural enrichment, the neglect of *pisiit* is an unfortunate outcome of modernization.

New-found religiosity is expressed via the hymns and popular, especially modern folk music. The late folk singer Charlie Panigoniak from Chesterfield Inlet (Igluligaarjuk), a hamlet of less than five hundred people with missions present from the Roman Catholic, Anglican, and Holy Alliance Churches is an example for the fusion of traditional and Christian influences. Panigoniak, a Leonard Cohen-like figure among Inuit, is a modern singer-poet who continued the tradition of *pisiit* singers in a novel way. In an attempt to express his faith, he adapted the Bible verse John 3:16, starting with “God so loved the world” as a contemporary, popular folk song. In an interview with William Tagoona, a fellow musician, Panigoniak emphasized the benefit that comes from the mixing of themes in his lyrics as they help Inuit keep their culture alive even in a modern setting (Whidden 1). Songs are composed as “you listen to mother nature, it’s like these spirits that go through your body and speak to you [...] that’s where those songs come from, in terms of the spirit world...it’s like a dream” (Panigoniak qtd. in Williams 252), which is practically identical to the way singing shamans explained their craft to Rasmussen in the contact-traditional era.

Another example for Inuktut lyrics of a hymn that rather serves as a different version of the original than a mirror translation is Hymn 219, called “What a Friend we Have in Jesus”

<sup>79</sup> Inuit throat singing is a form of musical performance consisting of two women who sing duets in a close face-to-face formation with no instrumental accompaniment using a variety of guttural sounds in a certain rhythm.

based on a poem written by Canadian poet and member of the Plymouth Brethren Church Joseph M. Scriven in 1855. If translated back from Inuktut, the meaning of the hymn slightly differs from the original to reflect the needs and beliefs of the local community; the side-by-side texts illuminate this tendency. The original text conceptualizes Christian doctrine in the form of questions:

Have we trials and temptations?  
Is there trouble anywhere?  
We should never be discouraged;  
take it to the Lord in prayer. (Scriven; see Ch. VII. p. 201)

The Inuktut version is altered and, again, focuses on happiness as well as on the importance of hearing the good news of the gospels because it ultimately leads to happiness:

Because they listened  
To Jesus  
All of them  
Left  
And they are happy  
Even in hard times (Matilda Sulurayok qtd. in Piercey-Lewis 283; see Ch. VII. p. 204)

One wonders about the nature and definition of happiness according to Inuit culture, but along with other concepts in this hymn, answers are not provided within the text. The Inuktut text references the core component of Inuit identity: the pursuit of happiness even in times of hardship with emphasis on resilience and reciprocity. The blending of traditional Inuit values and attitudes with Christian norms communicates a positive experience in which through Christ, sadness is turned into happiness (Piercey-Lewis 284), a crutch most Inuit needed at a time of intense cultural upheaval.

Similarly, “Never Failing” speaks about the love for the Saviour, a key component in Inuit Christian religiosity. With someone to pray to for forgiveness and for saving one’s soul, Inuit gained an important dimension in faith, as Jo Ellen Pameolik illustrates this notion in her undated early settlement-era poem:

Deep inside her heart she felt alone  
And the soul in her life faded like a light  
And the days seemed so long  
Even though she hasn’t realized  
That the dark side has told her not to go  
But all it takes to bring a heart of life to love  
Is a dream of hope to meet Jesus Christ

And here I am never failing (qtd. in Piercey-Lewis 112; see Ch. VII. p. 207)

The text that shows probably the most striking difference between the English original and the Inuktitut version is “The Old Rugged Cross,” a Methodist hymn written by George Bennard in 1915 and translated to Inuktitut as “Sanningayuq.” The original lyrics are embellished with the Christian symbols of the cross and the crown:

On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross,  
 The emblem of suffering and shame;  
 And I love that old cross where the dearest and best  
 For a world of lost sinners was slain.  
 So I'll cherish the old rugged cross,  
 Till my trophies at last I lay down;  
 I will cling to the old rugged cross,  
 And exchange it someday for a crown. (qtd. on *Hymnary*; see Ch. VII. p. 207)

However, the retranslated English version based on Arviammiut Anglican Inuit musician Sandy Okatsiak 2007 Inuktitut version reads like an entirely new text devoid of references to the story of the gospels, but retaining the spiritual essence of the New Covenant:

Saningayulingmi napaqtuvinirmit—A cross that is from the tree  
 Napartuvinirmit takuvunga—A wood from the tree that I saw  
 Jisusi takpani nivingalauqpuq—Jesus was hanging there  
 Silarjuarmiu piplugit—Because he loves people in the world  
 Saningayumit nuqaqpunga—I stopped near the cross  
 Piunginika manivaka—I give all my sins  
 Nagligimanga angiyumit—He loves me so much  
 Jesusi maligumavara—I want to follow Jesus (qtd. in Piercey-Lewis 134; see Ch. VII. p. 205)

I believe that the discrepancy lies in in the Inuit's avoidance of explicitly naming things that might bring bad luck to the singer. Also, knowledge of the gospel as well as particular Christian referencing might not reach everyone, but the message of the gospel does. Repeatedly, the idea of universal love coming from the Saviour is expressed, along with the notion of purification from sins. These are the basics of Christian faith in the Scripture, regardless of denomination and, thus, lie in the core of each and every hymn.

The examined traditional song texts as well as contemporary Inuktitut translations of well-known English lyrics suggest that the symbolic nature of expression that is present in poetry written in the English language is very difficult to translate to Inuktitut in any meaningful way. Edward Sapir, who started out as Boas' student, builds on the Humboldtian idea that language itself is the key to understanding the worldview of a people. Sapir espouses the

viewpoint that no two languages are similar enough to allow for perfect translation nor do they represent the same social reality (209), which may be applicable in the case of translation difficulties of English to Inuktitut and back. Furthermore, Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, or linguistic relativity, argues that language is the tool that mediates thoughts; its structure as well as our cultural background and belief system impact the way we speak and write, which according to this line of thinking appears to be the reason for the difference between the original English hymns and their Inuktitut translation. Robert G. Williamson, while conducting interviews in the 1970s Keewatin region, agreed that Inuit speech, thinking, and reality collided in such a way that words meant reality (23), which is why *erinaliutit* must have been believed to have magic power to conjure reality. The language of hymns is the medium through which Inuit thinking is observable (Rodgers 49), however, ideas that are not formed cannot take shape. The Inuktitut translation is actually an act of transliteration: rendering the words in a manner that makes sense for speakers of Inuktitut who live in the Canadian Arctic. The difference between the English wording and the one translated back to English shows that even in an enculturative situation, Inuit cultural identity prevails, because ideas could not be fathomed otherwise or seem out of place in an Inuit context (such as activities involving sheaves of crops, which is clearly not meant to be written for parishioners on the tundra).

The cause of a possible translation of ideas between Christianity and Inuit spiritual tradition is illuminated by an elder who explains that “ancestors, although they had never heard of God, they were taught to always do what was good” (Suluk 18) thus providing an example for the kind of syncretism between Christianity and Inuit beliefs. Both traditions fear an omniscient entity, God or Sila, with whom the mode of communication carried out in the form of prayer or *erinaliutiq* with the help of a priest or *angakoq* (Piercey-Lewis 188). Also, Inuit, who looked up to the shaman who acted as a medium between the spirits and the living (those who breath or *anirniliiit*) connected to Christ’s ability to heal and drive out “demons” as is referenced in Matthew (Matthew 7: 22). Both traditions engage the central theme of death and rebirth; in the case of shamans, a journey to the other side and a spiritual rebirth is necessary to become one (Rasmussen, *Across* 23), while in Christianity, it is through Christ’s love that one may be saved. Naturally, the concept of the Judeo-Christian God is a complicated one that I do not propose to discuss here in detail, however, certain basic parallels between the cosmogony of the Christian faith and the Inuit beliefs have certainly been used at times by missionaries in order to help prospective believers connect to the new faith. In the religious scene, music and lyrics both in the oral and the written tradition provide the medium for communicating with God/the spirit of the land and help come to terms with mistakes and bad fortune to relieve the

singer of guilt, which can be considered a form of confession (Nandori, “Akutaq” 69). Another resemblance between Inuit beliefs and Christianity is the ability of the *angakoq* to cast out evil (Suluk 43). *Angakkuin* were believed to have been able to reach a special spiritual trance in which they were able to leave their body while chanting *erinaliutit*. The act of the *angakoq* resembles exorcism and the ensuing deliverance. Calling on the Holy Ghost (Spirit) by singing a “spiritual song” is called an *anirniq piuliji pilirialik titaktinit* and a prime example is the singing of gospels with that theme, such as those authored by Keith Gordon Green (Piercey-Lewis 231). Considering this cultural cue, the popularity of Anglican hymns, such as “Create in Me a Clean Heart, O God,” written in 1983 by Last Day Ministries pastor Green based on Psalm 51, in which similar spiritual states are addressed is not surprising:

Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
And renew a right spirit within me.  
Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
And renew a right spirit within me.  
Cast me not away from Thy presence;  
Take not Thy holy Spirit from me.  
Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation;  
And renew a right spirit within me. (*Hymnary*; see App. 207)

Martha Nutarasungni of Arviat explains the Christian hymn tradition as such: “Singing comes from the heart; it comes from our soul; we use our voices to speak to God; when we all make beautiful music together, the Holy Spirit comes around us and we can feel it” (qtd. in Piercey-Lewis 208). While it is a rather naïve approach to faith, not focussed on complicated aspects of theology, it certainly appears to be genuine.

To better appreciate the mechanisms that reshape and form identity, one must look at song tradition, which has always been linked to music, dance, and sharing meals. It is then no wonder that Christianity managed to reach Inuit through these channels. The turn from the shaman’s *erinaliutiit* to hymns/gospels and prayer allowed worshippers to gain agency within their religious practice and participate in the singing of words with attributed spiritual power. “In the span of 200 years, a music that arrived as a form of colonial imposition evolved into an expression of Inuit spirituality and aesthetic values. Understanding this legacy and responding to community interest in promoting and encouraging its continued development” (“Inuit Music and Musicians in Moravian Labrador” qtd. in *Arctic Focus*) is necessary in order to appreciate the emergence of a modern, composite Inuit identity in music, spoken word, and poetry. Fusing performance and orature as in the song tradition, Moravian Inuit brass music, Inuktitut Christian

hymns, gospels, and hip hop katajjaq songs—as discussed in the next chapter—aid the continuity of the community and reinforce the living spirit of *inummaritit*.

## 5.2. Finding the Hunter in the Song: Building on *Pisiit*

### 5.2.1. Contemporary Inuit Poetry

Inuit poetry largely draws inspiration from the ancient song tradition both textually and thematically. With the gradual loss of interest in *pisiit*, and with the emergence of hymns, eventually, poetry and singing appeared separately in the mid-1970s. Regarding the genres, I see a similarity between the oral and the written tradition. Instead of a clean break with tradition and *inummaritq*, certain genres have developed in the written tradition by building on the forms of orature practiced in the pre-writing period of Inuit intellectual culture. Close inspection reveals that “[Rasmussen’s] division of Inuit song tradition translates well to modern Inuit poetry” (Duvicq 56).<sup>80</sup> Poetry written from the mid-1950s on observes traditional activities and notions typical of *pisiit*, such as themes of longing, recalling experiences of great importance to the poet, retelling captivating personal stories. Similarly to expressions in orature, the concept of *inummaritq* remains present in the poems of this period, albeit set against a modern backdrop of villages and even Southern cities (Nandori, “Akutaq” 72). Inuit poetry receives a mention “only [in] Rudy Wiebe’s article, ‘Songs of the Canadian Eskimo,’ and a handful of articles by the anthropologist Sven Frederiksen make any attempt to examine this aspect of Inuit culture” (“Reassessing” 19), writes McGrath in an attempt to rectify the situation in 1990. In the intervening decades, Inuit poetry has not been found in anthologies or written about in much detail. In the following analysis, the majority of authors are from the hamlet folk cohort, unless noted otherwise.

The few pages of Inuit poems published in print media and in anthologies of Northern writing, such as Petrone’s *Northern Voices*, recycles the same poems, many of them by authors who only ever penned but one poem. Some of these poems are lifted from now-defunct Inuit magazines. From the vantage point of the relic-like existence of these poems, Willy Keatainak’s

<sup>80</sup> Translated from the French: “Rasmussen...classait les textes selon catégories...Ces catégories sont applicables à la poésie moderne inuite...”

melancholy piece entitled “Lost in Time” and published in 1974 in Inuktitut, then English is relatable:

.....  
 I’m still young but life is a fatigue  
 I don’t recall much of the past life  
 .....  
 Right now I don’t care if  
 I’m a bum, a thief or a pharaoh  
 .....  
 But I’m bound to live in sorrow. (qtd. in Duvicq 57; see Ch. VII. p. 208)

Keatainak, who belongs to the hamlet folk generational cohort, wrote this poem in Inuktitut first, however, writing in English is a prevailing phenomenon for Inuit poets, which itself is a manifestation of a cultural shift. What strikes the reader is the absence of references from Inuit culture in the line: “I’m a bum, a thief or a pharaoh.” The introduction of an Egyptian king rather than an Inuit elder, or successful hunter as a symbol of riches elucidates the level of enculturation, although the image of the pharaoh is not Southern, but one that is outside of Inuit culture.

Multilingual writing itself has been a historical constant since ancient times. Authors thousands of years prior to the birth of modern multicultural societies such as Canada, “have chosen to write much of their work in a language other than their own for a variety of reasons, and the process, like translation, has inevitably involved a certain degree of transculturation” (Hazelton 226). However, literature as the upholder of cultural memory celebrates age-old customs and values. Inuit inner landscapes are brought to surface through the depiction of traditional activities on the tundra. Lucy Evaluardjuk’s “In the Spring When the Sun Never Sets” (1969) exemplifies how poetry is rooted in orature, although the poet belongs to the generational cohort of the hamlet folk:

In the spring when the sun never sets  
 And the calm glassy waters roam the morning seas  
 Oh, those were the happy times.  
 When the birds and seals,  
 Lived only for playing,  
 Oh, those were the happy times.

When we would stay up all night,  
 Looking for birds’ nests,  
 Oh, those were the happy times.

When the sun began to warm the morning air,

And my sister could no longer keep her eyes open,  
Oh, those were the happy times.

When I, too fought the coming of sleep,  
But my dreams would win in the end,  
Oh, those were the happy times. (qtd. in Lewis 108; see Ch. VII. p. 208)

The apparent nostalgia for the times before the foundation of settlements is present in the rueful words of the poet. It is surprising how passionately Lucy Evaluardjuk writes about times before her birth, since her knowledge based on the “stored memory” (Assmann and Czaplicka *Collective* 137) of her people is inaccessible through memory culture and is separated from her own experience.

Lucy Evaluardjuk’s soulful recollection of the warm spring days captures the uniqueness of Inuit life. The very title of the poem references the excitement over the approaching food-rich hunting season culminating in the merry twenty-four-hour daylight, the time of the “midnight sun.” This time of year—as the poem describes—is a brief period for joyful rejuvenation in the closely-knit Inuit hamlets that provide more security and time for leisure and play than the previous era of migration when at this time, hunting parties were on the land vigorously following game on an empty stomach. During the time of continuous daylight, children are known to play all night as Inuit parenting does not condone limiting or punishing children. Everyone—including children—is reluctant to sleep when the sun is up all night and the community is in festive spirits.<sup>81</sup> The poem is saturated with the charming modesty of Inuit life. Evaluardjuk’s spring poem is by far more literal than singer Ulivfak’s rendition of the same theme in which spring does not only stand for the season but it signifies one’s youth (discussed in subchapter 4.5.3.). In both texts, the fervour in which Inuit reminisce about and anticipate spring draws upon Inuit identity that is connected to the physical environment, the land (without a built environment), which literally used to be the home and homeland of Inuit before settlement. The strong bond, ingrained territoriality, and spatial nature of cultural identity remain inherent in modern texts. The psychological challenges caused by the polar night continue to affect Inuit despite the availability of technology. Only from the standpoint of Inuit life can one really appreciate spring in such a joyous manner as Ulivfak and Evaluardjuk do: after long and dark days of hunger, thawing comes, opening the waterways for hunting and

<sup>81</sup> Beyond the scientific literature, based on my personal experiences, as well, that I gained while living in the Inuit hamlet of Igloodik, Qikiqtani Region, Nunavut.

allowing for darkness to dissipate. The experience remains, therefore, there is little difference in the joy over the coming spring season in orature and in literature.

Further weaving the theme of the arrival of spring as a significant time for Inuit, and a cause for celebration in “The Dancing Sun,” (1990) Alootok Ipellie, renowned multimodal artist from the late twentieth century and another member of the hamlet folk having been born in 1951, addresses the topic as such:

The Inuit would sit and admire the smiling sun.  
The animals too, it’s been known, would do the same ...  
All the Inuit would join hands and dance ... (qtd. in W.H. New 272; see Ch. VII. p. 214)

At the end of winter, the sun is certainly smiling as are the people who had just experienced about 90 days of night. Especially in Arctic deserts, such as much of the Inuit homeland, the tiniest sunrise between the end of December and mid-February (depending on the location) gives hope for the entire community. The warmth and light of the sun provides the hunter with vision to hunt and beckons the animals to frolic in the open and, thus, offer the hunter an opportunity to stock up the dwindling winter meat caches.

Another of Ipellie’s poem entitled “One of Those Wonderful Nights” (1974) recalls the atmosphere of gatherings in the *qaggiq*, the eponymous location of song contests in the past. As Ipellie was born in 1951, the start of large-scale movement into settlements, he could not have experienced *qaggiq* performances. Rather than speaking from a personal experience, Ipellie’s poetry serves as a tribute to Inuit identity, traditions, life, and customs in the traditional era. Ipellie fantasizes about the old ways, imagining it as the epitome of *inummariq* identity:

... everyone laughed and danced ...  
The great drums were booming,  
Hands were clapping ...  
The hazards of the land were  
Forgotten (qtd. on *inuitartofcanada*; see App. 215)

However, such a Halbwachsian, memory-based notion of identity as expressed in Ipellie’s poems above, romanticizes tradition. Poet Nellie Cournoyea, on the other hand, explains that “when someone says, ‘I want to practice my own culture,’ it doesn’t mean going back to freezing in igloos and hunting with bows and arrows.” It means—she suggests—autonomy, which Inuit possess. Her acknowledgement that the government “give[s] us status the others don’t have” reveals insights into how Inuit regard their own situation in the contemporary setting of the satellite of arctic hamlets (“Everybody” 286). Ipellie also contemplates the difficulty of living

a dual and composite identity in “Walking Both Sides of an Invisible Border,” (1992) knowing that the Iqaluit-born artist lived most of his life in Ottawa, his poem clearly speaks of the hardships of being both Inuit and while living life as a Southern:

It is never easy  
Walking with an invisible border  
Separating my left and right foot  
I feel like an illegitimate child (qtd. on *poetryinvoice*; see Ch. VII. p. 215)

The poem reveals the stress and insecurities the experience of an amalgamated cultural identity brings. Ipellie, who was born in the North, but moved to the South, seems at a loss while attempting to own both worlds as home (Duvicq 187) coming close to what Berry’s fourfold model calls marginalization: not feeling comfortable with neither his ethnic nor his national identity.

Ipellie feels as illegitimate in the North due to leaving it for the South, and he believes himself inadequate, not exactly Southern, different, an outsider in Ottawa. This way, no matter where he lives, his sense of belonging is destroyed by the plural identities he assumes.

Along with spring, mating animals inspire the poet, but instead of the steamy overtones of some traditional *pisiit*, romantic love emerges as the subject of ‘I See Your Face’ (1969) by elder generation member Luke Issaluk (1944):

I will see your face.  
Only wait. When spring birds fly  
Home to nest and mate, so shall I  
And I will see your face (qtd. in Lewis 85; see Ch. VII. p. 212).

Despite the supposed discontent of missionaries about the topic, sexuality was often featured in some *pisiit*, such as in Ulivfak’s racy song, however, the imprint of transculturation becomes apparent in poetry. In “I See Your Face,” instead of physical desire, Issaluk expresses the romantic longing for the face, the soul of his sweetheart. Returning home and building a family with one mate for life, just like the birds in Issaluk’s poem, express the strong bond Inuit have to both family and homeland, things that are always on an Inuk’s mind, even in the South.

As in many *pisiit*, *Sila* remains a recurring subject, exemplified by the late Jimmy Naumelauk’s (1951) “Wondering in Silence” (1974). Naumelauk conveys the sharp contrast between past and present, although as a member of the hamlet folk generation, he had no experience of the nomadic life of Inuit :

A seagull if flying high in the summer breeze,  
 A seal is swimming the calm, cool sea,  
 A caribou feeds on the mossy tundra,  
 And I'm sitting here wondering about yesterday.

A jet plane flies high in the winter breeze,  
 A ship travels the stormy sea,  
 A snowmobile crosses the stormy tundra  
 And I'm sitting here wondering about today. (qtd. in *Inukshuk*; see Ch. VII. p. 212)

Naumelauk presents the natural environment connected to the old ways as an eternal summer, while the second stanza is in the present day, set in winter, which is associated with technology conquering the hardships of the Arctic. Stuck in between two worlds: the old and the new, Naumelauk is searching for his identity. He appears to be passive, only “sitting,” and “wondering,” instead of acting and making connections between the two worlds to forge ahead. This inactive approach appears to be representative of the Inuit way inherent in the *ajurnarmat* or “it can't be helped” attitude evident in such historic steps as embracing change instead of holding on to the traditional way of life. The passing of the traditionalist *cadre* and the bystander approach of the succeeding generation allows for a certain measure of progress, but it is a double-edged sword that erases past customs and presents individuals with new challenges that can be actualized in solidifying new cultural norms and traditions.

Another theme found in both *pisiit* and contemporary poems is that of aging, which also features in many hunting songs when past prowess is reminisced about, such as in Netsilingmiut Orpingalik's hunting poem. Human concerns over looming death go back to *taimmanganit*, times immemorial. Dorothy (probably from the hamlet folk generation), who signed her one published poem with her first name only, writes matter-of-factly, knowing the inevitable, *ajurnarmat* nature of growing old in “Old Woman's Song” (1974):

I am old, I must die  
 Death is waiting for me outside  
 Old I am, old, I am  
 Death is here (qtd. in *Keewatin Echo* 67; see Ch. VII. p. 213)

The unadorned style, flat tone, rueful mood, and the theme itself harken back to times when ancestors went by one name only (Nandori, “Arctic Songs” 31). The poet, whose unspoken longing for more time is evocative of *pisiit*, laments the brevity of life. Her art mirrors reality as she only ever publishes but one poem in the now defunct (along with the name of the geographical area the title of the magazine bears) *Keewatin Echo*. Such now-obsolete Inuit magazines and newspapers as *Inukshuk*, *Inuit*, *Inuit Today*, *North*, and *Isumavut* (Freeman qtd.

in New 271) were typical venues for emerging and habitual poets in the first decades after settlement. The short poem also reminds the reader of the pre-settlement Inuit custom of leaving the old behind (discussed in many works of ethnography, such as Damas's). The aging members of a group could not hunt, but consumed meat, so in times of scarcity some either walked out of the snowhut or were left behind, both of which meant certain death.

Alexis Utatnaq (1951), who is yet another representative of a culturally active generation, that of the hamlet folk, presents a short poem with a metaphorical meaning. "Blood-thirsty Enemies" (1974) reads just like *erini lautit* in its naming a physical enemy and asking for lifting the curse of its presence:

Our enemy  
 Our enemy  
 They're so many  
 Our blood they spill  
 They make us ill  
 Help us, oh god  
 From their piercing rods  
 Our sworn foes  
 The mosquitoes (qtd. in *Keewatin Echo* 8; see Ch. VII. p. 213)

Also, the poem might refer to the settler presence on Inuit lands, and the overbearing cultural magnitude of the South taking over the age-old culture of Inuit. Utatnaq's 1984 poem "Heed Your Parents' Words" (McGrath 108) somewhat functions as an *iviutiq*, but instead of ridiculing, it teaches how to settle disputes using a didactic tone (McGrath 108). Despite Utatnaq's message, many young people no longer listen to the elders (Martin 55), even the term "elder" increasingly signals age rather than wisdom in a modern society where the young generation believes the knowledge of the previous generations inapplicable to their own lives and circumstances. The reluctance to keep song traditions, and elder-driven oral guidance alive as a method of both teaching and entertainment shifted Inuit identity into a new direction, meshing old values with new habits. Post-Nunavut generations, especially the present generational cohort of young adults that are the first to grow up on social media, find wisdom in each other rather than in their elders, while their interest in traditions dwindles.

Nunavik-born (Puvirnituk) poet, Emily Novalinga (1954) from the hamlet folk generational cohort paints a monochromatic picture of the North that hides all the colours under the surface in her poem published in 2005 in Inuktitut, translated to French as "Étincelante" and the titled appeared in English as "Sparkling Igloo:"

I was born in an igloo  
 The snow is just like me: white  
 But when the sunshine breaks on the surface of the ice, I see all the colours  
 As the yellow sparkles, I was born for clarity  
 As the white sparkles, I was born pure  
 As the blue sparkles, I was born for an embrace  
 The red sparkles so that I'm offered roses that don't prick  
 (qtd. in Duvicq 186-87; see Ch. VII. p. 221, my translation)<sup>82</sup>

The poem was written in support of abused women (Avataq Cultural Institute). Novalinga's home appears to be "white," but a closer look reveals "all the colours" of her composite heritage, the prime colours of light that bring hope. The sparkling red refers to blood and violence that is contrasted to the colour of roses that do not prick, given to her as a token of love by a respectful, loving man.

"L'Echo du Nord" ("The Echo of the North") published in 2005 in Inuktitut and French offers an almost shamanistic communion with Sedna, here acting as nothing less but the personified spirit of the sea representing the North itself. Novalinga—similarly to Norma Dunning—assumes special abilities and remains Inuit as long as the spirit of the land, an echo of the North, is present in her. She hears the ancestors and the community in the land itself, the *inummarig* becomes the land and together they perform the rite of life in a symbiotic relationship:

Listen because I hear  
 Your sounds, my sounds  
 The sound of the wind, the noise of the thunder  
 I hear everything, I hear good luck  
 Since I hear the northern lights  
 They call me the echo of the north (qtd in Duvicq 187; see Ch. VII. p. 222,  
 my translation)<sup>83</sup>

The good luck she hears reverberates off every rock and crevice of the Northland, each nook and cranny of the settlements. The Inuit sentiment that the culture survives and even thrives is hinted at, but only as long as the 'echo,' the Inuit self, is preserved in each individual. The duality of the cultural identity and the primacy and foundational force of Inuit identity is emphasized by Novalinga who, just as Sila, becomes the weather in this poem.

<sup>82</sup> Translated by myself from Jean Désy's French translation of the Inuktitut original included in *Histoire de la littérature inuite du Nunavik* by Nelly Duvicq. The full French version is available in the Anthology.

<sup>83</sup> Translated by myself from the French original included in *Histoire de la littérature inuite du Nunavik* by Nelly Duvicq.

Vicky Simigak, possibly of the hamlet folk generational cohort, also employs the beauty of the untouched Arctic land as an expression of Inuitness, however, she acknowledges the differences between assumptions and reality in her untitled poem written in 1994 published in *Tumivut Magazine*:

It doesn't match the pristine model  
 on the cover of the magazine  
 You wake in the morning;  
 feel the cool, hot air in your room  
 Wind going through your window  
  
 you look out and see a unique,  
 magnetic, beautiful scene  
 Nothing is *in* your mind  
 except the beauty  
 Shopping is forgotten  
 Meeting despised  
 Dust swept off by the hanger;  
 for the rare gift of nature (*Tumivut* 88, Duvicq 123-124; see Ch. VII. p. 209)

Although the North is not quite identical to how it is beheld by the Canadian mind, it is a place of wonder, and home to Inuit. In the light of the pristine hinterland, the modern city gets discarded and forgotten as the core of Inuit is *inummarig* and the Southern self can easily be forgotten out on the land. Even if shopping and meetings may be part of life, the land is the place of complete identification. But Inuit life is not exactly as it is presented “on the cover of the magazine” writes Simigak, although does not specify in which way is real Inuit life different to how pictures—presumably taken by ethnographers—portray it. It is clear though that meetings and shopping are not preferred by her, rather she is captivated by the beauty of her homeland and feel satisfaction by not having to bother with anything at all: “you look out and see a unique/...scene/Nothing is *in* your mind /except beauty” Simigak explains the real Inuit life emphasizing the duality of timeless nature versus the scheduled nature of city life.

Southern life and part-Inuit heritage allows for a very specific point of view for Norma Dunning (1959), whose multi-genre writing engages the notion of experiencing Inuit cultural identity. Dunning's generational cohort would be that of the late hamlet folk, but she is Southern-born (Québec) and raised in a bicultural household. Her predecessor, Orpingalik, would be astonished today upon learning that not only being a poet is a profession but one practiced by an Inuk woman. Dunning is a prolific author with multiple publications. Regarding identity, I find her poems published in 2020, under the title *Eskimo Pie, a Poetics of Inuit Identity* a significant collection, that brings the experiences of Southern-born urban Inuit in the

foreground. Identity, its composite nature, and the bemoaning of change and pining for the return of the imagined North in its bygone glory is a theme running through her poems. Consequently both thematically and tonally, her poetic voice is closer to that of the young generation. In “Polar Opposites” (2020) Dunning introduces the bicultural child’s world: the Inuit “auntie” and the Southern “mommy,” describing them as “their heads tip to the same side when they laugh, but they are different” (Dunning, *Eskimo Pie* 22, see App. 195-96). The experience of mixed-race families is a new issue for Inuit. In “A Stand-Alone Inuk,” (2020) Dunning declares that the only way to remain *inummariq* is “to be who [she is] without anyone’s blessing or nod” (Dunning, *Eskimo Pie* 18). She ponders the meaning of tradition and the manner in which Inuit may judge one another for not being traditional enough while themselves break tradition using foreign condiments to make their traditional dish more palatable:

Can I be rejected for not being “traditional?”  
What does that word mean?

I do not eat muktuk, and remember, our ancestors did not  
dip it into Soya sauce or Ketchup. (“A Stand-Alone Inuk” *Eskimo Pie* 18; see Ch. VII.  
p. 220)

The inner struggles of successful urban Inuit remain a core problem for many Inuit who suffer from what is referred to as intergenerational trauma or PTSD caused by cultural clash. In “I Don’t Want to Know,” (2020) Dunning presents an illuminating picture of the many choices Inuit have today in connection to Southern life and the willful disengagement with Inuit realities and the past:

.....  
I don’t want to know what it’s like to be an Eskimo  
I live in a world of iPods and iPhones,  
All my communication is done in text.

I wear D&G glasses in my high tower apartment  
Where I can look out over the city.  
I got PS1 and PS2, Xbox, and I love you Mom,  
But I don’t want to know what it’s like to be an Eskimo. (Dunning 29;  
see Ch. VII. p. 218)

Attraction to comfortable life in the South and Southern commodities in the North have been a recurring topic among Inuit, often identifying inventions that make life easier or more entertaining as the main cause of leaving traditions behind. This line of thinking blames the change of habitus between succeeding generations on outside influences. The electronic gadgets and fashion items, all symbols of Southern modernism, clash with traditional Inuit

values, but both layers of identity lay nested within the Inuit of today, clothing the “old friend in a new skin.”<sup>84</sup> Dunning acknowledges her attachment to the ways of the South and her mixed upbringing in “South of It.” Her poem captures the considerations around enculturation and Inuit identity lamenting the missed land-based maturation:

I grew up in the north  
 But not in the north north  
 Other Canadians would call it north.  
 Not Inuit though ...  
 [my father] was a good hunter  
 our main food was land food ...  
 moose, deer, caribou ...  
 This was how we lived  
 but we were not in Nunavut.  
 We were south of it. (Dunning 41; see Ch. VII. p. 219)

The curious notion that only Inuit understand the North, whereas the rest of Canada, “other Canadians,” as Dunning puts it—have no grasp of what that really is. This notion reappears in the essay “Everybody Likes the Inuit,” in which author Renée Hulan references pro-seal hunting and trapping activist Nellie Cournoyea’s words that emphasize that practicing Inuit culture does not mean “going back to freezing in igloos and hunting with bows and arrows” (qtd. in Mcleans, 14 July 1986, 25). Similarly, the idea that a deeper and truer understanding of the North can only be achieved by Inuit is presented in “Locations of North in Canadian Literature and Culture” by Caroline Rosenthal. Some authors—both Inuit and non-Inuit—highlight that Inuit politics usually address Canada on a nation-to-nation basis as seen in John Amagoalik’s 1984 speech in which he promises that he will “continue to have discussions with the government of Canada on Nunavut” (Hulan 76), fails to see that Amagoalik merely refers to the federal government as opposed to local organizations such as the ITK. Dunning’s poem oozes nostalgia for an imagined homeland she never encountered and so do some activists who see separation and antagonism where (sometimes) there is none.

Composite identity pushes Dunning’ fascination with modernity while she also emphasizes tradition. In “Kudlik,” (2020) she uses the soapstone whale oil lamp as a symbol of tradition: “there is more to this lamp than the lighting of it,” reminds Dunning (*Eskimo Pie* 14; see Ch. VII. p. 220). As long as the lamp is lit, the old ways are alive, but nowadays there is “no qulliq to warm our spirits, [and] warm our hearts” (Dunning, *Eskimo Pie* 14) laments

<sup>84</sup> Reference to Knud Rasmussen’s first chapter in *Across Arctic America* describing his first encounter with Canadian Inuit, his ‘old friends in new skins,’ who understand his Kalaallisut, but on the surface appear different for they wear a novel attire.

Dunning, blaming the arrival of Southern visitors and Ottawa bringing Southern updates to the traditional North, and eventually, her own leaning towards the staples of modern life that come from the South. Interestingly, Dunning spells the lamp “kudlik” in the title and “qulliq” within the body of the poem. Inuktut has no standard spelling and the poet’s choice might refer to the many different Inuit *miut* groups and manners in which *inummariaq* is internalized.

Instead of contrasting traditional with contemporary culture, Inuit with Southern ways, elders’ generation activist Mary Carpenter Lyon (1943) discusses in her poem “Nunavut? - Denendeh? = Northwestterritories” (1988) the problem of land ownership and culture, particularly *inummariaq* identity, and the manner in which these notions relate to one another, starting out with some poetic observations of her homeland:

O arched homeland of tensed wonders  
Your ice-eyed beauty  
Captures the strong hearted  
With the privilege  
of nesting in your heart

O tenderland, uniquely north  
Your fate is much discussed  
By distant men who sit  
And watch your primal lovers  
Slowly dying (qtd. in Petrone 273; see Ch. VII. p. 209)

Carpenter Lyon, as many Inuit activists, expresses the primacy of the Inuit understanding of the North, styling Ottawa officials as “distant men” in “granny capital,” perhaps forgetting that it was Southern activists who urged the formation of an independent Inuit voice with the foundation of Inuit Tapiriit (earlier Tapirisat) Kanatami. The Southern engagement with the fate of the North and its inhabitants, however, shows consideration for Inuit as an autochthonous people, and this approach meets the emerging yearnings of Inuit for independence, culminating in the 1999 declaration of the new territory of Nunavut with an Inuit cultural border officially erected. Carpenter Lyon’s geopolitical stance featured in her poem echoes Bourdieu’s theory of generational difference. Having been born in 1943, she represents the generation that started life within the framework of contact-traditional camps transiting into a Southern way of life as a child, and eventually earning certificates from Rutgers University. Instead of Inuit and Southerners, the land itself is featured as the polar opposite of political decision makers in the South, however, her exploration of the complicated relationships inherent in a multicultural nation tends to be superficial. Carpenter Lyon’s relationship to her own cultural identity within

Canada, similarly to Aqqaluk Lynge's in the Greenlandic-Danish context, is but one type of highly politicized approach.

By no means can the contemporary Inuit experience be homogenized. There are a number of variables such as the nature of parenting and the location of one's upbringing that may influence the experience of cultural identity. As Inuit have gone through a cultural evolution, the sixty-five (seventy, according to some estimates) thousand Inuit are certainly more varied than the seven thousand that inhabited the same land just a few decades prior. With such large numbers and diverse linguistic, cultural, and geographic disposition, it would be a fallacy to regard all ethnic Inuit as the same. In fact, this diversity is one of the main obstacles of a unified Inuit literary scene (Chartier "The Social" 39, Chartier "Pani-Inuit" 48). However, it is fair to say, as it shows in the poems in *Eskimo Pie*, that Southern influences are naturally more pronounced for urban Inuit, especially mixed-heritage individuals, than Northerners. Conversely, the more polar and traditional one's environment is, the more likely that their identity will remain closer to the traditional understanding of *inummarig*. The Northern Inuit identity usually manifests in an understated manner, while Southern Inuit are often more vocal about their roots. Since Southern-born and Southern-living Inuit lack the land on which heritage practices are played out, it is only through their voice that the legacy of their ancestors can eventuate.

Similarly to Dunning, a bicultural experience and deep longing is heard in the young generational cohort's spoken word artist Taqralik Partridge's 2021 collection entitled *Curved Against the Hull of the Peterhead*. Partridge's (1975) generational cohort is that of the young generation, however, she is Southern-born. Partridge's chosen genre connects her slams with the performance of singers from the oral tradition. A printed copy of her performances signifies the measures taken against ideas being forgotten, as the late Markoosie put it, "Much of [Inuit] oral history has been lost or is no longer told by those who possess such knowledge of [the] past (qtd. in Chartier "Pan-Inuit 48; "The Social 33). The inconveniences of Northern life that the artist may have experienced while visiting the Arctic is recounted in "After an Argument" by Montreal-born half-Scottish Partridge, typically of her generational cohort, reminisces with nostalgia based on experiences not lived recalling the past when Inuit acted like heroes, not afraid of anything, a time when they were masters of their environment. The poem includes the image of a canoe, which might refer to an *umiak*, a sort of canoe-like Inuit boat:

.....  
 I can tell you how we sat low in canoes  
 or slept curved against the hull of a peterhead  
 on long trips up or down the river  
 .....  
 calling up seals  
 .....  
 rifles raised and ears ringing as bullets whined by but  
*we were never afraid*  
 bobbing on waves and peeing in pots

with stars and aurora overhead (*Curved* 18; see Ch. VII. p. 234, emphasis added)

However, the amalgamated identity represented by Partridge herself manifests in the intense longing for the simple and pure Inuit life out on the land, but the land is a distant home now and the poet misses tasty food cooked on a Coleman stove. Instead of the tundra, the urban space filled with clocks, phones, and other gadgets is referred to as ‘home.’ But what Partridge portrays as traditional is not exactly that as Coleman stoves were imported from the South, introducing the idea of non-raw cuisine, not a wide-spread practice among Inuit:<sup>85</sup>

.....  
 heading *home* after weeks and weeks away from town and  
 clocks and  
 telephones and  
 mirrors and  
 everything  
 everything tasted so good boiled on a blue flames coleman stove (Partridge 18; see  
 Ch. VII. p. 234; emphasis added)

Partridge’s words reveal much about the change in habitus. Modernity is manifested in the vocabulary of poems riddled with the names of new technology, identifying Southern equipment used by Inuit as Inuit, showcasing the fusion of multiple cultural identities. All that which is brought from the South show up in the stanzas as belonging within the Inuit cultural norm, whether that be a Peterhead, a Coleman stove, or a ski-doo. The unadorned style, representative of both orature and spoken word, showcases the continuity of Inuit identity and the undisturbed nature of the *inummarig* character. As new vocabulary enters the register, such as “jet plane” and “ski-doo,” old expressions, such as euphemisms for several feared or sacred

<sup>85</sup> “...Inuit practice to dine on the fatty flesh of freshly caught seal..., obtaining key nutrients that prevented the onset of scurvy” (Lougheed 386). Inuit did use whale oil lamp (qulliq or kudlik) to make fish stew, but most game (land and marine) was consumed raw for health and practical reasons. Vitamin C and other nutrients absorb better through a raw diet, and a small *qulliq* (used for light and melting water) is not adequate to be used for regularly cooking for families, also often meat was eaten right after the kill as it was believed to be healthier that way and also due to excessive hunger; leftover meat was fermented having spent up to a year in underground meat caches.

animals and spirits, such as the “great white one” fall out of use. In fact, the incorporation of Southern elements—including the very genre of poetry—is another example of the plasticity of *inummarig*, the extraordinary level of Inuit adaptability is displayed at yet another level. However, it appears that the price of flexibility is failing memory, casting past traditions aside, letting them fade into oblivion.

Across Qikiqtaaluk, today connections to other Inuit are just as strong, if not stronger, than to Denmark. In *The Veins of the Heart to the Pinnacle of the Mind*, a thin collection of free verse, Kalaallit activist, poet, and former chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Council, early elders’ generational cohort member Aqqaluk Lynge’s (1947) “A Life of Respect” (2008) reverberates nostalgic notions of a once all-powerful Inuit:

In the old days  
 When we still lived our own lives  
 In our own country  
 We could hear  
 A faraway thunder  
 The caribou approaching  
 Two or three days in advance (87; see Ch. VII. p. 223)

Lynge starts off by recalling a time when Inuit “lived in [their] own country” (87). This past, however, is difficult to place in the continuum of the history of Arctic autochthony due to the fragmented nature of Inuit culture. As Inuktitut magazine founder, arctic anthropologist, and father of artist Laakkuluk Williamson-Bathory, Robert G. Williamson observes:

[Inuit] never had any strong sense of total ethnic-group loyalty, still less of a sense of identification on a pan-Eskimo or national scale. Social commitment is intensely toward the extended family, somewhat less as toward the camp group, which is a changeable constellation, and moderately toward the dialect group as a whole. Beyond the dialect group, the Eskimo felt very little sense of commitment. (31)

The political use of the term “Inuit” was only conceived in 1977 at a Circumpolar Council Conference in Barrow, Alaska:

Whereas the Inuit of Greenland, Alaska and Canada are *one indivisible people with a common language, culture, environment and concerns*; and whereas, the Inuit of the circumpolar region declares [sic] the oneness of its culture, environment and land and the wholeness of the homeland and that it is only the boundaries of certain nation states that separate us; (Northern Affairs)

Before the 1977 ICC conference, the generic term “Inuit” was used by *miut* groups when confronted with First Nations groups or with Europeans to set the people of the Arctic apart from them (Légaré 159).

Lynge’s activism is present in many of his poems; born in 1947, he represents Inuit of the transitional era most impacted by dual identity. One of his more optimistic poems entitled “From Early Morning ‘Till Late Night” (2008) addresses the flow of the past and present as he gazes into the future of Kalaallit Nunat (Greenland) that does not end with the presence of the Danes:

Ancestors, present and in the future,  
wear the amulets  
to the end of our lives  
and further to dawn  
Ai-ya Aay (125-127; see Ch. VII. p. 224)

Lynge’s finishing his stanzas with the wailing “ai-ya aay” reminiscent of a traditional *pisiq* showing his identification with tradition not only in his message but in form as well. However, his own life of politics and activism, and the nature of the profession of the poet itself is Southern to an extent, therefore, even Lynge’s traditionalist approach is far from being free from outside influence.

As poets bring forth dormant ideas representative of our times, with modern vocabulary, imagery, and abstract tropes, they represent a link between the ancestors’ way of thinking and the modern Inuit, and, as a result, a distinct polar identity emerges. This fusion is an *akutaq* of sorts like the Yup’ik dish, based on mixture several seemingly unrelated ingredients; the contemporary Inuit identity emerges as a dynamic manifold. The poems reveal the unconscious incorporation of received cultural items, such as a snowmobile or ski-doo, and the impact of imagination when dealing with a past steeped in an oral culture. Berry’s and Weinreich’s models of identity transfer show that through an interchange of cultures, parties have something to gain and lose. Inuit, in an effort to ease the harshness of Arctic life, and partially in acquiescence to whatever may come through the *ajurnarmat* approach, have gained a lifestyle that has been attempting to mirror the South, while through neglect, Inuit lost their traditional oral culture.

Tricultural British-Danish-Canadian, part-Inuk poet Laakkuluk Williamson-Bathory (1979) represents the young generational cohort. Williamson-Bathory hails from Kalaallit *Nunat*, but lives in Canada, and this is shown in her interest in Canadian politics, such as the

autochthonous representation on the face of the new Canadian bank notes. An imaginary scene of traditional Inuit life unfolds in Williamson-Bathory's poem about artist Qinnuajuaq (Kenojuak) Ashevak's childhood (Fig. 19). Williamson-Bathory wrote the poem to honour the elder and elect her to become the new obverse side portrait on the Canadian ten-dollar bill. Southern-born Williamson-Bathory strikes a note filled with nostalgia:

I can smell the air around the camp where Qinnuajuaq Ashevak was born  
 The air is fresh upwind, cooling the tip of your nose  
 And tasting of a wild dash from the water  
 Downwind, you can smell the dogs, the burning seal oil  
 And worked skins.  
 It is not a bad smell—it is the smell of home (“Kenojuak”; see Ch. VII. p. 229)



Figure 19. Nunavut (Our Land), Kenojuak Ashevak, 1992, in commemoration of the signing of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement ([resilienceproject.ca](http://resilienceproject.ca)).

The idealized past shows a change of habitus in the most recent generation of median-age adults, similarly to Sandra Katsak's different attitude to her parents' and grandparents' generation. As Williamson-Bathory goes on to describe Ashevak's traditional life as she

imagines it, she juxtaposes it with the South that is described in exclusively derogatory terms. Katsak, too, wishes to experience the past that her forbears hoped to avoid:

They [the elders] always say negative things about back then. They talk about having lice in the hair, or they say it was too cold, or that they didn't have enough wood. They are always saying negative things about the way things were. I've always wanted to tell them that I wish I were given the chance to live that way. (qtd. in Wachowich 224)

Katsak wants to reverse time even when her parents warn her that she would have had to go without her favourites, as there was “no TV, no cigarettes” (qtd. in Wachowich 244), and in her “grandparents’s time [there] were people who were so hungry that they had to eat a dead person” (qtd. in Wachowich 244). Williamson-Bathory’s singularly one-sided vision elevates the past in the realm of myth, where everything is perfect, while the present must be discarded and those who advise caution should not be listened to. Regardless, there is some value in the present in the form of sharing, one of the key notions of *inummarig*. Williamson-Bathory, who was born in Saskatchewan, Canada, and now lives in Nunavut declares that “there’s sharing, even in the Inuit community. I’m Greenlandic but I live in Iqaluit” (Johnson, *CBC*, 28 Oct 2017). It is evident then, that her *akutaq* is mixed from similar flavours: her ideas about fusion rely upon collaboration with other Inuit artists or autochthony, therefore, cultural sharing is limited to intra-Indigenous channels.

### 5.2.2. Music and Words: *Pisiq*-based Song Lyrics and Performance

Modern Inuit popular music is epitomized by 1970s folk singing duo Charlie Panigoniak (1946) and his wife (both from the early hamlet folk generational cohort); Panigoniak wrote both traditional, *pisiit*-based and Christian-themed lyrics, first influenced by Western music, especially country, when he had spent time in Manitoba recovering from tuberculosis. *Pisiit* themes appear in contemporary Inuit poems (Hulan 94), but Christianity is a new addition in Panigoniak’s lyrics, meshed with Inuit spiritual beliefs. In a sort of medley, Panigoniak sings country-western songs in Inuktut about the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami; Rudolph, the red-nosed reindeer, and Jesus Christ. Panigoniak’s fusion of the old and the new with the North and the South exists peacefully within the songs, without losing *inummarig*, proving that the identity that one gains by coexistence can be more than the sum of its parts. The reliance on *pisiit* is apparent from the words of “Baker Lake,” (1973) as the song in its core delightfully reminisces about happy times, local places, and events:

From a tent I go back and forth in and out  
 opening water in the icehole I ice  
 It's the first time I saw a seal in open water  
 Everytime I tried to take the seal  
 I couldn't because it was talking.  
 We went to Baker Lake  
 We went to sing  
 Hee haw haw  
 It's funny  
 There are too many people in Baker Lake (qtd. in Whidden "Eskimo Music  
 in Transition" 38; see Ch. VII. p. 211)

Based on Lynn Whidden's musical analysis, both *pisiit* and Panagoniak's songs appear to have similar rhythmic pattern and through a thorough examination of the surface structure of the songs, "convincing similarities are achieved between Charlie's song and the traditional song" (39). Whidden believes that Panigoniak consciously attempted to sing in a traditional style, therefore, Panigoniak's songs are not traditional in the sense contact-traditional songs are. As she explains: "the most convincing evidence that Charlie's song is not traditional comes through a more intuitive, anthropological search of the deep structures of the song, particularly through an examination of Charlie's concept of time as it is manifested in the music" (Whidden 39).

Often a non-traditional upbringing was chosen by traditional parents, but the children as they grew up felt that they had missed out on being *inummarig*. Juno award-winning performer Susan Aglukark, who was also awarded the Governor General's Performing Arts Award and the Order of Canada, uses her songs to experience and mediate Inuit culture. Aglukark explains that she struggled to understand who she was from an Inuit perspective. While her parents' formative years were spent in traditional Inuit culture, her childhood was not, therefore, she felt disconnected from Inuit culture and only through her songs did she learn to identify with her Inuit self (Aglukark, *Speakers*). Her most recognizable song is "O Siem," a joyful calling in Inuktitut. The chorus features the emblematic lines: "O Siem, we are all family/O Siem, we're all the same," (Aglukark, *Qaggiavuut*; see App. 205-206) focussing on the brotherhood of all peoples, rather than singling out Inuit identity as special.

More recently, I argue that 21<sup>st</sup> century Inuit popular music serves as today's version of *pisiit*. The syncretism of ancient and modern emerges in the music and lyrics of Inuit popular singers who build their foundation on oral tradition either thematically, structurally, textually, or in their singing technique. Singer Rita Claire Mike-Murphy (1996) of the young generation, popularly known as Riit, sings in Inuktitut to ensure that her Pangnirtung dialect remains alive: "my songs are a way of preserving the language" declares the performer (qtd. in Wheeler). She

covers Inuit classics on her record among the new melodies, singing about “forgiveness and the imprint of past on the present, and personal disconnection” (qtd. in *riitmusic*), the latter being a reoccurring problem for Inuit youth. Disconnection, a likely consequence of marginalization, one of Berry’s terms, occurs in a generation alienated from both Inuit and Western values. Riit’s popular song entitled “Imiqtaq” (“Water”) addresses Sedna’s home, the origin of much of Inuit subsistence:

If I’m asked to get water,  
 Even if I’m scolded,  
 I would want to leave  
 Down there, down there, down there.  
 While I (finally) go get water,  
 If you want to follow,  
 Do follow  
 Down there, down there, down there. (lyricstranslate, ”Imiqtaq;” see Ch. VII. p. 225).

Her lyrics are as personal as in *pisiit*, sometimes only the singer understanding the references.<sup>86</sup> Riit’s incorporation of the guttural *katajjaq* in her songs is a further promotion of her Inuit background and a way to preserve Inuktut (Wheeler 1).<sup>87</sup>

The fusion of Inuit and Western music in the songs of three outstanding members of the young generational cohort: Songstress Riit, the band Silla and Rise (dates of birth unknown), and popular singer Kelly Fraser (1993) provide an example for the autochthonous and settler cultures intersecting and influencing each other in a natural process. Silla and Rise hail from Igloolik; their music also mixes *katajjaq* and traditional themes, expressing the desire to keep traditions alive; even in their choice of name (referencing *Sila*) they pay hommâge to their roots. Their popular song “Anirniq” (2017) refers to breathing and singing in Inuktut and is a full-length, word-free appreciation of several *katajjaq* techniques. Similarly, Igloolik’s late Kelly Fraser’s Western melodies are complemented by Inuktut lyrics (“The Guardian”) in an effort to reaffirm her own Inuit heritage, evoking an old ritual by singing in her song entitled “Sedna” (2017) by referencing the deity’s habitat in “Sedna, I spent my whole life in the ocean, safe in the sea...Sedna, come with me” (Lyricstranslate/Kellyfraser; see App. 209-10).

The multiethnic Iqaluit-based band, The Jerry Cans took a different route in incorporating North and South in one, both Inuit and Southern musicians joined the band, whose most well-

<sup>86</sup> Having talked to Igloolik residents in 2020, they have explained to me that they do not understand Riit’s dialect.

<sup>87</sup> Throat singing or *katajjaq* is practiced by Inuit women singing in pairs.

known song entitled “Northern Lights” (2016) characteristically blends a few lines of English with an Inuktitut chorus. Thematically, the emphasis is placed on remembering the ancestors:

You find yourself travelling among the Northern Lights  
 Cold winds howl, hear the sled dogs cry  
 Don't you never ever forget, to the ones who live there  
 .....

Nalligilaurakku (*lyrics*; see Ch. VII. p. 227)

“Northern Lights” and other Jerry Can songs are sometimes written in both Inuktitut and English, vocally supplemented by the often-used *katajjaq*. Language preservation appears to be a goal of the band as they have even published a bilingual children’s book entitled *Mamaqtuq!* Singer Andrew Morrison explains the background of the band’s preservationist stance:

Nancy and I have two daughters together and her late father insisted that I learn Inuktitut and learn how to hunt...he would wake me up at 5 a.m. to go seal hunting, or always make fun of me when I spoke English...he was making sure that his future granddaughters would have every opportunity to learn Inuktitut and be brought up in their culture. I guess the band is one expression of this (“20 Questions”).

Morrison’s effort to learn Inuktitut and Inuit traditions is reminiscent of efforts of the early Moravian missionaries and understandable if his place of residence is in Nunavut.

### 5.2.3. The Dichotomy of Identity within Contemporary Short Genres: A Summary

The duality of traditional and contemporary influences is inherent in the songs of most Inuit popular artists, therefore, artist, and Inuit as a people, carry the legacy of Inuit culture and at the same time internalize Southern culture to a considerable extent. Dunning explains this duality that exists between official and private functions, as previously described by Arends Tóth and Van der Vijver (“Multiculturalism” 249):

Inuit Canadians do not place a high value on the written word. Instead, we come from a culture with roots that lie within the passing on of stories orally; this is what lies within our blood and genetic memories. When I operate outside of my own circle of family and friends, I operate in a different fashion. (*The Conversation*)

Poems, and, in fact, spoken words and song lyrics that also come out in print signify the aforementioned “outside of one’s circle” space by their very virtue of being in the written mode. Thus, deviating from orality, a different *modus operandi* is employed as a delivery tool for

culture and as an expression of identity. Writing is a natural development and a way of expressing the identity of a new generation, and it illuminates *inummarig* if examined together with intellectual artifacts from Inuit oral culture. Inuit poetry today is a part of the Canadian literary heritage in all of its uniqueness. In fact, Inuit serve as “that of the ultimate of identification and the ultimate of difference” (Hulan 95) in Canadian culture, as they are actively engaged with both their past *inummarig* and their present, amalgamated Canadian identity. In his study of traditions in the Nunatsiavut community of Nain, Tom Artiss remarked upon this dichotomy while observing traditions and the acquisition of new trends adding that “more [W]hite does not always mean less Inuit” (1). It is everyone’s best hope that the way Inuit incorporate new influences in their traditional culture is identical in nature to the Yup’ik dish, *akutaq*, in which by adding an extra ingredient, the flavour is not lost but enriched.

## VI. CONCLUSION

My study of Inuit intellectual culture focuses on song tradition, poetry, and modern song lyrics to investigate indicators of changes relating to *inummariq* characteristics and world view, as it relates to Inuit cultural identity. I examine orally composed and disseminated song lyrics because of the primacy of orality in Inuit culture. This is the reason for introducing a literary framework, that I term ICCA, based on establishing orature as a new genre within which the sub-genres of song texts are organized. The distinction between orature and literature is marked; rather than categorizing autochthonous orature in a Euro-Western system, a new framework is designed respecting the context in which these texts were once created and enjoyed. I systematize Inuit orature employing a new set of terms in order to create a framework that reflects Inuit culture. The individual nature of songs proves most suitable to facilitate a study of Inuit cultural identity and the impact of enculturation—rather than acculturation—as opposed to origin stories and folk tales that have effectively remained the same, therefore, cannot reflect change, or contemporary Inuit prose that is too scarce to build on. Songs and poetry serve as the most articulate artistic way of expressing *inummariq*, yet an analytical study of Inuit identity using these texts has not been performed before my own research. Changes of cultural identity can be well observed employing the methods of cross-cultural psychology, sociology, and human geography. Each of these fields that I have incorporated in my dissertation can offer insights into the evolving Inuit cultural character through a cross-disciplinary study of Inuit culture, I take a discourse-centered approach to culture and to orature and literature presenting a qualitative analysis that in its tools may be characterized as literary ethnography.

The texts have revealed that Inuit identity is interlinked with the land and land-based traditional activities. Hence Inuit living in the South and the transportation of Southern culture to the North slowly alter the autochthonous character of the people. Inuit poetry is deeply rooted in the land, it is, therefore, surprising that most prolific Inuit poets are located not within the homeland, but in the South. Observable nostalgia for the once land-based identity is revealed in both Norma Dunning's poems and Taqralik Partridge's spoken word performances. The manner of land occupancy has changed and with it the style and limits of agency of Inuit over their own fate. Inuit were at one point in the past uniquely able to survive and thrive "out on the land," but this skill is not needed anymore. The role of territory, therefore, has diminished and it inhabits a place of myth in the Inuit psyche. As the many examples of the present study show, until the new "city" skills are acquired, Inuit poetry is riddled with melancholy.

Sociopolitical changes, such as the establishment of settlements, borders, cultural boundaries, the cross-pollination of Western values, bilingualism, and biculturalism have been changing Inuit cultural identity. Fortunately, as shown through applying the lens of Bourdieu's concept of generational difference as evidenced in personal interviews with Inuit living on the land, identity—irrespective of enculturation— is understood as a dynamic concept prone to changes whenever the individual and community sees fit. This, however, does not mean that Inuit *inummarig*/identity is lost. Yet, change is most palpable for Inuit artist who have never inhabited the identity of the nomadic past. The analyzed texts disclose a deep-set longing for an idealized past. One of the main themes is the imagined traditional activities of camp life present in the work of most major Southern-born Inuit poets. Poets who grew up in a Western environment, in a modern age, harbour nostalgia for a once glorious Inuit life in the Arctic. Conversations with elders reveal that the very same idealized time period is remembered by them—the generation that experienced the transient lifestyle—as harsh and not preferred to Southern modernization. Without practicing traditional activities, the reigning memory culture reassesses and negotiates the reality of the past. The distance between the culture of the generation that grew up on the land and the one thereafter is enormous; this gap is apparent in most of the poems. The elders, the bearers of the old culture in the comfort of warm villages and Southern homes appear to have let their tradition fade into oblivion. The generations thereafter cling to the notion of *inummarig* without the necessary skills to become one.

The new borders of Inuit *Nunangat* set up to demarcate Inuit within Canada in hopes to emphasize *inummarig*, but the scarce artistic reflection of this notion in both poems and popular song lyrics authored in the North shows that the idea of inhabiting traditional identity through borders has yet to happen. The continued effort to impart knowledge through *unikkausivut*—sharing stories—is needed so that the new generation is cognizant of the past on which a future may be built. The notion of *inummarig* represents a cultural boundary without a geographical aspect, it connects to the habitus of Inuit and the cultural capital that makes up an ethnic character that dynamically modifies itself. The recurring generational struggle is visible in both Dunning's and Partridge's poems, if we compare them to the text of traditional songs that contain similar elements, albeit *pisiit* are rather more fixed in their world view and thinking. Some of the writing, such as popular song lyrics, exhibit trends of Berry's marginalization, expressing the lack of robust and authentic knowledge about Inuit autochthony, but they do not fully identify with the mainstream Southern Canadian culture either.

The different kinds of songs examined within the realm of Inuit song tradition showcase different angles of the Inuit cultural identity. The similarity of the lyrics authored by various performers from distant locations allows for the conclusion that these texts do display the innate cultural character of Inuit. Ancient *pisiit* had become the foundation stones for spoken word artists and popular singers alike, whereas other performers find their channel for expression in church hymns and gospels. Many of the elements, such as the significance of the land, the joy over good weather, the celebration of a successful hunt, the observation of the environment, and the knowledge of survival techniques continue to be the main themes in the written era. New themes arise as well, such as the difficulty of biculturalism, anxiety about the survival of traditions, the bafflement over modernity, the overall sense of aimlessness and a notion of being dislocated.

By examining texts from the standpoint of the imprints reflecting change in human geography, it is clear that Inuit have been impacted by the rearrangement of populations and the changes in land use. Moreover, Inuit have left behind their nomadic lifestyle and picked up Southern customs their man-land relationship inevitably changing. From the skills taught by *qallunaat* teachers, literacy has become the single greatest tool in tackling culture in the form of producing literature and entertainment that relay the *inummarig* identity. The result of such efforts evidences the formation of an amalgamated form of Inuit cultural identity fused with mainstream Canadian customs and values into which most Inuit children are enculturated.

In the style of oral tradition singers, poetry has so far yielded a handful of casual poets. Additionally, over the past few decades, artists, such as Alooook Ipellie, Norma Dunning, and Taqralik Partridge have distinguished themselves with regular publications in some form. Ipellie's drawings and Partridge's spoken-word YouTube videos, in particular, have articulated more than the identities of the poets themselves but their people as well. The *inummarig* concept is present in the themes and the manner of their oral or visual dissemination. Building specifically on *pisiit*, popular songsters such as the late Charlie Panigoniak and Kelly Fraser are examples of the emerging composite identity manifesting itself multimodally, just as *pisiit* once did. Panigoniak mixes Western and traditional styles both musically and textually, while Fraser sings Western melodies using the musical instruments of the South as accompaniment to her lyrics embellished with traditional *katajjaq*.

The translation of oral tradition into writing by Rasmussen has impacted the understanding of Inuit orature and through it, character; it has single-handedly allowed future

generations—among them Inuit—to experience what Inuit intellectual culture and identity used to be like. My study of the continuity between oral to written tradition reveals the dynamic forces of *inummariaq* through the words of artists across time. It is by far not a complete experience, but as traditions are dying out with the elders, it is the only tool to look back in the past. The voice of the singer is heard, but the cadence, the melody, the beating of the drum, in short, the performance part is forever shrouded in oblivion. The act of transliteration from one language to another, one culture to another, and one mode of transmission to another limits our understanding. Furthermore, a sociological investigative reading of the texts shows that a perpetual change manifests in the altered habitus of subsequent generations. Even though Inuktitut dialects are the most used among all autochthonous languages in North America, the once obvious references—like the frequent use of epithets, along with the language of the song tradition—become difficult to understand for modern Inuit. Through thorough examination carried out in my research, it is apparent that traces of *inummariaq* identity are present in the work of contemporary poets, albeit evidence for the presence of nostalgia rather than the understanding of what living off the land entailed for their forebears appears in the texts of contemporary poets throughout.

Changes in values and lifestyle are obvious if the texts from recorded orature to poetry are evaluated. The manner in which *inummariaq* is conceptualized has also changed, evidenced by the work of popular singers and poets alike. However, diversity within Inuit culture is well represented in both orature and poetry, exemplified by the fact that professional Inuit poets all hail from the South, internalizing the profession of the poet, while Northern Inuit express *inummariaq* in a habitual manner in single poems in the manner of *pisiq* singers and manifest a less stark contrast between tradition and modernity, with which they come across less frequently.

Impacts of the outside world, such as settlement, the welfare state, multiculturalism, Christianity, the act of writing, bilingualism, tv, and the internet have all influenced the Inuit psyche, well-being, daily life, and economy and as an extension shaped Inuit identity in such a way that it can be observed in song lyrics and poetry at the level of vocabulary, themes, and even the choice of language in which the writing or performance is conducted. Post-settlement, Canadian Inuit composite cultural identity appears in both poems and song lyrics, with increasingly nostalgic yearning towards what is regarded as traditional, while the recorded orature of the contact-traditional era is a manifestation of a more traditional *inummariaq* identity insulated from outside influences. At the time of the first ethnographic era, *inummariaq* identity

was but a manifestation of one stage of the constantly changing cultural capital which would naturally yield an altered set of values representing *inummariq*. Orature oozed tradition without wishing to, while modern artists hope to reconstruct tradition from a contemporary standpoint, but such efforts are less authentic than those of ancient performers whose songs were not self-aware expression of their character.

I regard my investigation of poems that indicate change in cultural identity as having an aspect of salvage ethnography, since many of the poems would have all but vanished if not for searching for them for recording, analyzing, and categorizing purposes. Beyond this aspect, my primary goal was to develop a new set of terms and create a new cultural theory in assembling Inuit Identity Composition and Change Analysis (ICCA) and using it for analyzing poems, thus, systematizing the examined texts. Additionally, I intended this process to yield a history of Inuit orature and poetry contained within an anthology. By introducing the term “orature,” and building up an oral and a written component in Inuit intellectual tradition a new, structured collection of orature and poetry can be achieved. Enculturation, as a phenomenon, has made such an impact on Inuit culture, that my aim was to track the manner of change through orature and literature and explore Inuit cultural identity in the midst of the paradigmatic shift that moving off land to settlement had created. The examined texts, like a piece of amber, capture Inuit cultural identity and immortalize a changing tradition. As film director and now elder Zacharias Kunuk explained in 2001 during the making of *Atanarjuat*:

I’m sitting down with elders asking them, ‘How did you get married, what is Inuit kissing like? That’s what we’ve been using the camera for. How much trouble they went through to get us here. To capture it now because ten years down the road, most of the elders will be gone. (qtd. in Shepherd 84)

Through the wide array of texts representing traditional Inuit songs, contemporary popular songs, spoken word performances, and poems, I set out to examine the alterations to cultural identity and bring forth Inuit perspectives locked in these texts. By applying a rich tapestry of theoretical approaches, a solid look at the cultural history of Inuit, and a reshaping of the fundamentals of how Inuit orature and literature are categorized and interpreted, I intended to indicate the instances and the nature of change across the turbulent times of a people transforming themselves from arctic wayfarers to arctic denizens.

## VII. THE ANTHOLOGY OF INUIT ORATURE AND POETRY

### 1. THE AGE OF ORATURE (1884-1950): *Erinaliutiit*, *Pisiit*, *Iviutiit*, and *Ikiaqtagait*

Ethnographer Franz Boas's *Central Eskimo* was published by the Bureau of American Ethnology in 1889, and it represents his research among Inuit between 1884 and 1885. While classical contact-traditional orature is placed between Knud Rasmussen's Fifth Thule expedition and the formation of the post-World War II. Inuit hamlets, prior to this, Boas' research was regarded as a milestone in examining the oral songs of Inuit. Orature goes back to times immemorial, *tainmanganit* in Inuktut, but actual observed and recorded material was first collected and publicly disseminated by Boas; this is why I selected the start of his research trip that yielded *Central Eskimo*, as the starting date of the age of orature.

#### Aua (late 19<sup>th</sup> c.—mid-20<sup>th</sup> c.)



Figure 20. Aua. Photo credit: *Intellectual Culture of the Iglulik Eskimos* (Knud Rasmussen)

Aua (or Avva) was an Igloolik elder, singer, and shaman who had an encounter with Knud Rasmussen upon his ethnographic journey across the Canadian Arctic (Rasmussen, *Iglulik* 48). His *erinaliutiit* (shaman songs) were recorded by Rasmussen.

#### **Words to Stop Bleeding** (see in-text p. 125)

This is Blood from the little sparrow's mother.  
Wipe it away!  
This is blood  
That flowed from a piece of wood.  
Wipe it away

**Words Which Make Heavy Things Light** (see in-text p. 128)

(to be uttered beside a heavily laden sledge)<sup>1</sup>  
 I will walk with leg muscles  
 which are strong  
 and the sinews of the shins of the little caribou calf.  
 I will walk with leg muscles  
 which are strong  
 as the sinews of the shins of the little hare.  
 I will take care not to go towards the dark.  
 I will go towards the day.

**Falling Tears** (see in-text p. 129)

Falling tears  
 Falling tears  
 The old knee down there  
 The old knee down there  
 It splashes on it  
 It splashes on it

**Ikinilik** (late 19<sup>th</sup> c.—mid-20<sup>th</sup> c.)



Figure 21. Ikinilik. Photo credit: *Intellectual Culture of Netsilik Eskimos* (Knud Rasmussen)

Ikinilik was an Utkuhigjalingmiutaq hunter and singer from the Back River area with whom Knud Rasmussen had an encounter during his Fifth Thule Expedition between 1921-24 (Rasmussen, *Netsilik* 508). His *pisiit* (hunting and mood songs) were recorded by Rasmussen.

**The Song of the Trout Fisher** (see in-text p. 103)

Oft do I return  
 To my little song.  
 And patiently I hum it  
 Above fishing hole  
 In the ice.  
 The simple little song,  
 I can keep on humming.  
 I, who else too quickly  
 Tire when fishing  
 Up the stream.

Cold blows the wind  
 Where I stand on the ice.  
 I am not long in giving up!  
 When I get home  
 With a catch that does not suffice.  
 I usually say  
 It was the fish  
 That failed—  
 Up the stream.

And yet, glorious is it  
 To roam  
 The river's snow-soft ice  
 As long as my legs care.  
 Alas! My life has now glided  
 Far from the wide views of the peaks  
 Deep down into the vale of age—  
 Up the stream

If I go hunting the land beasts,  
 Or if I try to fish,  
 Quickly I fall to my knees,  
 Stricken with faintness.

Never again shall I feel,  
 The wildness of strength,  
 When on an errand I go over the land,  
 From my house and those I provide for—  
 Up the stream.

A worn-out man, that's all,  
 A fisher, who ever without luck  
 Makes holes in river or lake ice  
 Where no trout will bite.

But life itself is still  
 So full of goading excitement!  
 I alone,

I have only my song!  
Though it too is slipping from me.

For I am merely  
Quite an ordinary hunter  
Who never inherited song  
From the twittering birds of the sky.

**Ivaluardjuk (late 19<sup>th</sup> c.—mid-20<sup>th</sup> c.)**



Figure 22. Ivaluardjuk. Photo credit: *Intellectual Culture of the Iglulik Eskimos* (Knud Rasmussen)

Ivaluardjuk was an Igloolik elder and singer who had an encounter with Knud Rasmussen upon his ethnographic journey across the Canadian Arctic (Rasmussen, *Iglulik* 16). His *pisiit* (hunting and mood songs) were recorded by Rasmussen.

**Cold and Mosquitoes** (see in-text pp. 108; 132)  
(transl. William E. Calvert and William Worster)

Cold and mosquitoes.  
These two pests  
Come never together.  
I lay me down on the ice,  
Lay me down on the snow and ice,  
Till my teeth fall chattering.  
It is I,  
Aja—aja—ja.

Memories are they,  
From those days,  
From those days,  
Mosquitoes swarming  
From those days,

The cold is bitter,  
 The mind grows dizzy  
 As I stretch my limbs  
 Out on the ice.

It is I,  
 Aja-aja-ja.

Ai! but songs  
 Call for strength  
 And I seek after words,

I, Aja-aja-ja.

Ai! I seek and spy  
 Something to sing of  
 The caribou with the spreading antlers!

And strongly I threw  
 The spear with my throwing stick  
 And my weapon fixed the bull

In the hollow of the groin  
 And it quivered with the wound  
 Till it dropped  
 And was still.

Ai! but songs  
 Call for strength,  
 And I seek after words. It is I,

Aja, aja—haja, haja!

**A Hunting Memory** (see in-text pp. 133-34)  
 (alternative translation of “Cold and Mosquitoes” by Tom Lowenstein)

Cold and mosquitoes  
 Are torments  
 That never come together.  
 I lie down on the ice,  
 I lie down on the ice and snow  
 So my jaws chatter.  
 This is I!  
 Aja—aja—ja.

It is memories  
 Of the seasons,  
 Of the seasons,  
 (mosquitoes swarming)  
 Of the seasons

(ice paralysing)  
 make the mind swoon,  
 as I stretch my limbs out  
 on the ice?  
 This is I  
 Aja—aja—ja.

Ai! But songs  
 require strength  
 and I search  
 for words. Yes, I!  
 Aja—aja—ja.

Ai! I raise my head and see  
 the subject of my song:  
 The broad -antlered reindeer!  
 Powerfully I hurled  
 the spear and throwing-pole,  
 my weapon tethering the bull  
 right in the middle of the loin  
 He trembled, and he fell  
 And then lay still.

Ai! But songs  
 require strength  
 and I search  
 for words.  
 Here is the song.  
 Here is the memory.  
 It's only I who sings.  
 Aja—aja—haja—haja!

**Akjartok** (late 19<sup>th</sup> c.—mid-20<sup>th</sup> c.)

Akjartok was an Ahiarmiut singer; his song was collected by Knud Rasmussen. His song lyrics for “When I Call to my Mind” can be found in John Robert Colombo’s *Poems of the Inuit* published in 1982 (out of print), and “An Old Woman’s Song” is located in Rasmussen’s *Eskimo Songs from Canada and Greenland* and in *Songs are Thoughts: Poems of the Inuit* by Neil Philip.

**When I Call to My Mind** (see in-text p.135)

I call forth the song  
 I draw a deep breath  
 My breast breathes heavily  
 As I call forth the song.  
 When I call to my mind the olden days  
 When I had strength enough  
 To cut up mighty bulls

I call forth the song  
While the sun was on its upward way

**An Old Woman's Song** (see in-text pp. 137)

I have grown old,  
I have lived much,  
Many things I understand,  
But four riddles I cannot solve.  
Ha-ya-ya-ya.

The sun's origin,  
The moon's nature,  
The minds of women,  
And why people have so many lice.  
Ha-ya-ya-ya.

**Uvavnuk** (late 19<sup>th</sup> c.—mid-20<sup>th</sup> c.)

Uvavnuk was an Iglulingmiuq woman; her song was collected between 1921-24 and published in Knud Rasmussen's out of print collection entitled *Eskimo Poems from Canada and Greenland* (1973) and can be found in the Neil Philip-edited *Songs Are Thoughts: Poems of the Inuit* (1995).

**Moved (Song of Joy)** (see in-text pp. 141)

The great sea stirs me.  
The great sea sets me adrift,  
it sways me like the weed  
on a river-stone.

The sky's height stirs me.  
The strong wind blows through my mind.  
It carries me with it,  
So, I shake with joy.

**Ulivfak** (late 19<sup>th</sup> c.—mid-20<sup>th</sup> c.)

Ulivfak was a Caribou Inuit man, his *pisiit* song was originally collected by Knud Rasmussen and included in Richard Lewis's *I Breathe a New Song: Poems of the Eskimo*, now out of print (Rasmussen, *Eskimo Poems* 37; Lewis 112).

### **The Spring of Youth**

(alternatively titled “Ulivfak’s Song of the Caribou” (see in-text pp. 138))

Sadly I recall  
the early spring of my youth:  
the snow melted,  
the ice broke  
long before usual.

I stood scenting game  
in the hot sun,  
muscles taut,  
sweat dripping from my face.

Look! Someone’s out there  
on the slapping lake-water  
slowly dragging reindeer  
behind a kayak,  
or noisily taking leave  
for a dangerous sea-journey.  
Could that be me?

As a hunter on land  
I was undistinguished.  
My arrows seldom reached  
the reindeer in the hills.  
But from a kayak.  
hunting in the wake  
of swimming bulls,  
I had no match.

Thus, I still relive  
the early spring of youth.  
Old men seek strength  
in the thaw of younger days.

Eye-aya  
I call to mind  
And think of the early coming spring  
As I knew it  
In my younger days  
Was I ever such hunter!  
Was it myself indeed?  
For I see  
And recall in memory a man in a kayak;  
Slowly he toils along in toward the shore of the lake  
With many spear-slain caribou in tow  
Happiest am I  
In my memories of hunting in a kayak  
On land. I was never of great renown  
Among the heard of caribou.

And an old man, seeking strength in his youth,  
Loves most to think of the deeds  
Whereby he gained renown

**Piuvkaq** (late 19<sup>th</sup> c.—mid-20<sup>th</sup> c.)

Piuvkaq was an Utkuhikjalingmiuq singer; his song was collected by Knud Rasmussen between 1921-24 (Rasmussen, *Eskimo Poems* 68).

**The Wide Road of Song** (see in-text p. 144)

Eager to breathe out,  
I have prepared  
this little bit of song:  
mocking in expression,  
well composed,  
pointed in words,  
out west, out west!

Here I am,  
yes, fresh awake,  
and ready for defence!

It was a winter night in the dark season.  
While others lay asleep,  
a sound approached:  
it hit my ear,  
it hit my ear,  
out west, out west!

It said my kinsman,  
nick-named Tight Belt,  
started raving,  
made a frenzied scene,  
on the firm winter ice.  
Petty and ill-tempered.  
he gabbled about stolen food,  
when everybody else was starving.

Here I am,  
yes, fresh awake,  
and ready for defence!

In a bitter spell  
of hopeless winter hunting,  
we tried to save our lives  
with a little meat from your store.  
That was all!

Should hunters  
 be so miserly?  
 Out west, out west!  
 But out you came,  
 with a knife in your hand,  
 meat-mad, raging!

In my innocence,  
 I didn't understand  
 what you were shouting.  
 Murder never crossed my mind!  
 Foolishly, I quite forgot  
 that—aj—a miser's mind  
 could be obstructed like that!

but here I am  
 to douse you with my mockery,  
 to deluge you with laughter:  
 a cheap correction,

easy punishment.  
 I weave together  
 bits of song to answer you  
 The voice must ring out clear  
 to drown that voice of yours!  
 I'm strong enough:  
 just feeble at inventing wickedness.  
 Fist-fighting's more my style  
 than shouted tongue-disputes.  
 Words all too often disappear:  
 words disappear like hills in mist.

**Anonymous** (late 19<sup>th</sup> c.—mid-20<sup>th</sup> c.)

Song text collected by Knud Rasmussen between 1921-24 in Arctic Canada (Rasmussen, *Eskimo Songs* 47).

**I was out in my Kayak** (see in-text p. 139)

Aja-ha aja-ha  
 I was out in my kayak  
 Making towards land.  
 Aja-ha aja-ha  
 I came to a snowdrift  
 That had just begun to melt.  
 Aja-hai-ja aja-hai-ja  
 And I knew that it was spring:  
 We'd lived through winter!  
 Aja-haj-ja aja-hai-ja

And I was frightened  
 I would be too weak,  
 Too weak  
 To take in all the beauty!  
 Aja hai-ja  
 Aja-hai-ja  
 Aja-ha.

**Anonymous** (late 19<sup>th</sup> c.—mid-20<sup>th</sup> c.)

Song text collected by Knud Rasmussen between 1921-24 in Arctic Canada (Rasmussen, *Eskimo Poems* 53, Philip 26).

**Love-Making** (see in-text p. 136)

Ajaija-ja  
 my playmate  
 ja-ja-jai-ja  
 fingers me  
 between the legs  
 hajaijaja  
 she gives her body  
 haijaijaja-jaija  
 and tears the leather bracelets  
 from my wrists

**Anonymous** (late 19<sup>th</sup> c.—mid-20<sup>th</sup> c.)

Song text collected by Knud Rasmussen between 1921-24 in Arctic Canada (Petronne 50).

**Winter's Exodus** (see in-text p. 140)

Winter, let's get divorced!  
 Your parting, truly,  
 holds little sorrow.  
 I don't care,  
 if you distance,  
 far, far away.  
 If you don't leave,  
 the spring thaw shall destroy you.  
 You, winter,  
 let's be parted!

**Anonymous (late 19<sup>th</sup> c.-mid-20<sup>th</sup> c.)**

Song text collected by Knud Rasmussen between 1921-24 in Arctic Canada (Rasmussen, *Eskimo Poems* 54).

**A Little Song** (see in-text p. 145)

I sing a little song,  
 someone else's worn little song,  
 but I sing it as it were my own,  
 my own dear little song.  
 In this way, I play,  
 with a second-hand song,  
 and give it life again.

**Kilime and Eqerqo (late 19<sup>th</sup> c.-mid-20<sup>th</sup> c.)**

Kilime and Eqerqo were men from Angmagssalik, East Greenland; their song of derision was collected by Knud Rasmussen between 1921-24 (McGrath 98; Rasmussen, *Eskimo Poems* 75).

**The Abduction** (see in-text p. 142)

Kilime sings:

Let me cleave words,  
 sharp little words,  
 like the firewood  
 that I split with my axe!  
 A song of old times,  
 a hush of soul from ancestors,  
 a song of oblivion for my wife,  
 a song to soothe the longing  
 overwhelming me!  
 This loud-mouth's  
 ravished her, belittled her:  
 a wretched cannibal  
 who loves to eat man's flesh,  
 in times of scarcity!

Eqerqo replies:

Shameless impudence!  
 Half-hearted coward!  
 You want to put the blame on me  
 and scare me, with your mockery?  
 But I'm indifferent  
 to the risk of being killed/  
 Look: it's *my* wife that you sing about.

She was yours once,  
but you weren't quite so loving  
at the time.

When she was all alone,  
you never praise her  
in your fighting-challenge songs.  
Now she's mine,  
and won't go visiting  
false lovers, womanisers,  
singing beautifully  
in strange tents.

**Kangitsuak and Kuitse (late 19<sup>th</sup> c.—mid-20<sup>th</sup> c.)**

Kangitsuak and Kuitse were men from Angmagssalik, East Greenland; their song of derision was collected by Knud Rasmussen between 2021-24 (Rasmussen, *Eskimo Songs* 71-74).

**Song of Derision About Wife Swapping** (see in-text p. 144)

A gust of air hangs over me!  
I'm like this,  
I can't help it,  
Sing, I must,  
and open up my mouth  
to words and notes.  
Perhaps it may turn out a useful song,  
a song that finds its mark  
in somebody who needs it:  
useful to some easily disgusted man,  
a man who breaks a friendship suddenly,  
a man who's soon disgusted with the friend  
he swaps his wife with!

You are such a man, my enemy!  
Isn't it true  
you quickly broke with Angutange,  
with whom you'd shared  
the pleasant game  
of putting out the lamps with women?

Isn't it true  
you soon got bored and sick of him—  
and since then, been a lonely man,  
with no one to swap wives with you?

But look at me!  
Good man flock around me

and present their women  
 in exchange for mine.  
 They come in trust  
 because they know  
 I'm not a reckless man,  
 rejecting women,  
 separating man from wife.

This is how I am:  
 I won't get hurt,  
 I won't rick witchcraft  
 and revenge.  
 I love women.  
 I'm a woman-lover.  
 I don't let them pass me by.

Evil news was often  
 brought us from Cape Dan,  
 when men in kayaks came and visited.  
 It was pleasant things one hear!  
 It has been said  
 (Yes, a little rumour reached my ear)  
 that my opponent  
 nearly killed his wife-swap friend!

The reason?  
 They say it was a dog  
 he had presented to his friend  
 a token from the days  
 they'd happily swapped wives.  
 But later, he forgot those joys,  
 and tried to kill his gift,  
 to kill the dog.  
 Yes, this is what he's like,  
 my contest-enemy.  
 And as I sing  
 amusing little details  
 come to mind:

I was out at sea, on winter ice  
  
 travelling by sleight outside the village,  
 hunting bear.  
 I saw a mother with her cub,  
 come wondering,  
 the young one in the mother's tracks.  
 I caught up with them  
 and while my barking dogs  
 forced them to stop,  
 I quietly  
 sout the adult out.

His dogs never would approach  
 that sort of game:  
 that wretched team  
 is hardly trained to hunt.  
 They'll never even see  
 a living bear:  
 pitiful bag of skin and bone they are,  
 with coats which could at most  
 be used for covering kayak.  
 Yes, this how my song of mockery turned out.  
 I hope it reaches folk  
 who want to be entertained!

Kuitse answers:

Look at him!  
 Just look at what he's like, my song-adversary!  
 Listen to his rant,  
 and how he uses that great mouth,  
 like everybody in his village!  
 He finds nothing difficult,  
 nothing difficult to call to mind.  
 But I'm more careful in my choice of words,  
 and wouldn't dare to sing of everything that passed.

Now, there were my male cousins,  
 and all my dearest female cousins,  
 who sailed off on a long journey,  
 and never returned.  
 All my loved ones  
 this man mocked in song,  
 this thin-shitter, this fat-belly!

So what remains for me to sing about,  
 now you roared your head off  
 about things, I'd rather not recall?  
 You always were so amiable,  
 always had such gentle ways:  
 you haven't got an evil reputation to expose.

And yet...what was it I heard...  
 What was the rumour  
 that *did* reach my ears?

It was you who tried to kill Migssuarnianga  
 The man with crippled legs  
 When I heard the talk; I had to stop and ask myself:  
 could such a carcass-eater,  
 fat of belly, round of loins,  
 have strength in him to kill?

Well, it was cunning of you  
to pick a paralytic,  
being such a lazy-bones,  
whom no one equals dozing  
on the hot fur-covers of the bench!

## 2. TRANSITIONAL PERIOD (1950-70): CHRISTIAN HYMNS AND GOSPELS

After World War II, Inuit traditions, such as that of the songs performed at *qaggiq* festivals, were influenced by Southern culture, therefore, it is not surprising that gospels from composers like the Knowles Shaw, Joseph Scriven, and George Bennard became popular in churches across Inuit *Nunangat*.

### Knowles Shaw (1834-78)

Shaw was American Disciple of Christ gospelist composed the original “Bringing in the Sheaves” that served as a basis for the Inuit hymn. (Source: Hymnal.net; McGrath, *Canadian Eskimo*)

#### Bringing in the Sheaves (see in-text p. 154-55)

1 Sowing in the morning, sowing seeds of kindness,  
Sowing in the noontide and the dewy eve;  
Waiting for the harvest, and the time of reaping,  
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves.

Bringing in the sheaves,  
Bringing in the sheaves,  
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves;  
Bringing in the sheaves,  
Bringing in the sheaves,  
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves.

Sowing in the sunshine, sowing in the shadows,  
Fearing neither clouds nor winter's chilling breeze;  
By and by the harvest, and the labor ended,  
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves.

Going forth with weeping, sowing for the Master,  
Though the loss sustained our spirit often grieves;  
When our weeping's over, He will bid us welcome,  
We shall come rejoicing, bringing in the sheaves.

Shaw's original text was modified by Inuit communities, reflecting the spiritual experiences of each specific community. It can generally be ascertained that most hymns had several different versions. In most cases the local version was preferred over the official one

(Piercey-Lewis 371) as they were more relatable to members of a congregation from the same hamlet. The Arviammiut Inuktut version in English translations reflects the life of the Arviat community. In the localized version new devotees are referred to as 'things' rather than 'sheaves,' which would not make sense in an Arctic environment.

**Bringing in the Sheaves** (Anonymous Inuktut version; see in-text p. 155)

We will come bringing things  
 And we'll be happy  
 With our Lord Jesus  
 We will come  
 We will come  
 We'll be happy  
 With our Lord Jesus

**Joseph Medicott Scriven (1919-86)**

Plymouth Brethren minister and Canadian poet composed the original hymn that later was modified and translated to Inuktut. (Source: hymnal.net)

**What a Friend We Have in Jesus** (see in-text p. 157)

What a friend we have in Jesus,  
 all our sins and griefs to bear!  
 What a privilege to carry  
 everything to God in prayer!  
 O what peace we often forfeit,  
 O what needless pain we bear,  
 all because we do not carry  
 everything to God in prayer!

Have we trials and temptations?  
 Is there trouble anywhere?  
 We should never be discouraged;  
 take it to the Lord in prayer!  
 Can we find a friend so faithful  
 who will all our sorrows share?  
 Jesus knows our every weakness;  
 take it to the Lord in prayer!

**Matilda Sulurayok (mid-20<sup>th</sup> c.-)**

Sulurayok is an Inuit woman from Arviat; her rendition of "What a Friend we have in Jesus" was collected by Mary Elizabeth Piercey-Lewis in 2006 (Piercey-Lewis 288).

**What a Friend we Have in Jesus** (see in-text p. 158)

Inuluktaat naglingnirmut-All the people are  
 Jisusip piulivait-Blessed with love by Jesus  
 Ikajuqtaujumavuq-He asked for help  
 Ilinniaqtiminut-From his Disciples  
 Tilivaillu nunalingnut-He asked them to go to a different city  
 Ajuqiturlugit-To preach  
 Uqausirijaminik-And talk about  
 Tusarniqtuluktaarnik-His wonderful words  
 Naalakkamik Jisusimik-All of his disciples listened to Jesus  
 Tamarmik aullaqput-All of them left to go to a different city  
 Quviasullutik aglaat-They are still happy  
 Aksururnaqtuqaqpat-Even when there are hard times  
 Uppitsiarniup miksaanut-Teaching/preaching about faith  
 Kajusiinnarlutik-And they did not give up  
 Nunalingnit ninalingnut-From one city to another  
 Ingirrarinnarlutik-They did not give up

**Anne Paedlo (early 20<sup>th</sup> c.-)**

Hymn 478 in the Anglican hymn book is Paedlo's only recorded composition (McGrath 106).

**Hymn 478 (see in-text p. 154)**

My father in heaven  
 Is my only source of confidence  
 I am extremely happy  
 I have someone who feels for me

My father told me  
 How he was making a place for me  
 I am extremely happy  
 To be saved

**Jo Ellen Pameolik (mid-20<sup>th</sup> c.-)**

Pameolik is an Inuit musician from Arviat, Nunavut. She now lives in the capital of Iqaluit and her compact disc released in 2006 was successful locally (Piercey Lewis 334).

**Never Failing** (see in-text p. 154-55)

Deep inside her heart she felt alone  
 And the soul in her life faded like a light

And the days seemed so long  
 Even though she hasn't realized  
 That the dark side has told her not to go  
 But all it takes to bring a heart of life to love  
 Is a dream of hope to meet Jesus Christ  
 And here I am never failing.

On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross,  
 The emblem of suffering and shame;  
 And I love that old cross where the dearest and best  
 For a world of lost sinners was slain.  
 So I'll cherish the old rugged cross,  
 Till my trophies at last I lay down;  
 I will cling to the old rugged cross,  
 And exchange it someday for a crown.

A cross that is from the tree  
 A wood from the tree that I saw  
 Jesus was hanging there  
 Because he loves people in the world  
 I stopped near the cross  
 I give all my sins  
 He loves me so much  
 I want to follow Jesus

### **George Bennard (1873-1958)**

Bennard was an American Methodist preacher and hymn writer and composed the original version of "The Old Rugged Cross" ([hymnal.net](http://hymnal.net)); his work was generally influential in protestant Christianity.

### **The Old Rugged Cross** (see in-text p. 155)

On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross,  
 the emblem of suffering and shame;  
 and I love that old cross where the dearest and best  
 for a world of lost sinners was slain.

So, I'll cherish the old rugged cross,  
 till my trophies at last I lay down;  
 I will cling to the old rugged cross,  
 and exchange it some day for a crown.

O that old rugged cross, so despised by the world,  
 has a wondrous attraction for me;  
 for the dear Lamb of God left his glory above  
 to bear it to dark Calvary.

In that old rugged cross, stained with blood so divine,  
 a wondrous beauty I see,  
 for 'twas on that old cross Jesus suffered and died,  
 to pardon and sanctify me.

To that old rugged cross I will ever be true,  
 its shame and reproach gladly bear;  
 then he'll call me some day to my home far away,  
 where his glory forever I'll share.

### **Anonymous (early 20<sup>th</sup> c.-)**

The author of the Inuktitut version of the hymn is unknown; but Arviat residents singing it were recorded in 2006 (Piercey-Lewis 88).

### **The Old Rugged Cross** (“*Sanningayug*,” see in-text p. 158)

A cross that is from the tree  
 A wood from the tree that I saw  
 Jesus was hanging there  
 Because he loves people in the world  
 I stopped near the cross  
 I give all my sins  
 He loves me so much  
 I want to follow Jesus

### **Keith Green (1953-1982)**

Psalm 51:10, starting with “Create in me a Clean Heart, O God!” (hymnal.net) became a popular hymn for Sunday services in Inuit *Nunangat*, sung with modifications to the original.

### **Create in me a Clean Heart, O God** (see in-text p.160)

Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
 And renew a right spirit within me.  
 Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
 And renew a right spirit within me.  
 Cast me not away from Thy presence;  
 Take not Thy holy Spirit from me.  
 Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation;  
 And renew a right spirit within me.

### 3. THE AGE OF LITERATURE: POETRY (1970-)

#### Willy Keataniak (early 20<sup>th</sup> c.-)

This is Keataniak's only published poem, which is now out of print (Duvicq 57).

#### **Lost in Time** (see in-text p. 162)

I've been living here for almost two decades,  
 I'm still young but life is a fatigue,  
 I don't recall much of the past life,  
 Except it was a good life,  
 I often wonder of the future  
 But Life's all the same, even tomorrow

Right now I don't care if  
 I'm a bum, a thief or a pharaoh,  
 I'm still moving, still flying like a sparrow,  
 But, I'm bound to live in sorrow.

#### Lucy Evaluardjuk (early 20<sup>th</sup> c.-)

This is Evaluardjuk's only published poem, now out of print (Lewis 108).

#### **In the Spring When the Sun Never Sets** (see in-text p. 163)

In the spring when the sun never sets  
 And the calm glassy waters roam the morning seas  
 Oh, those were the happy times.  
 When the birds and seals,  
 Lived only for playing,  
 Oh, those were the happy times.

When we would stay up all night,  
 Looking for birds' nests,  
 Oh, those were the happy times.

When the sun began to warm the morning air,  
 And my sister could no longer keep her eyes open,  
 Oh, those were the happy times.

When I, too fought the coming of sleep,  
 But my dreams would win in the end,  
 Oh, those were the happy times.

**Mary Carpenter Lyons (1943-)**

Carpenter Lyons was born on a schooner on the Beaufort Sea. She received a certificate in education from Rutgers University and went on to become a teacher in Tuktoyaktuk, Inuvik Region, Northwest Territories (Petronne 273).

**Nunavut? - Denendeh? = Northwestterritories** (see in-text p. 172)

O arched homeland of tensed wonders  
Your ice-eyed beauty  
Captures the strong hearted  
With the privilege  
of nesting in your heart

O tenderland, uniquely north  
Your fate is much discussed  
By distant men who sit  
And watch your primal lovers  
Slowly dying

Who sit and build  
invisible, governing walls  
Suborning your children without consent  
you hum disgust  
But your crowning skies forgive  
Granting oppressors safe journey south

O mighty land strike now  
Show your true heart  
Bear fruit again and mother us

Granny capital has heard your pleas  
From men who sincerely dishonour you  
Deceiving your innocent fire-watchers  
How long will you allow it?  
The tenders despair

O greatland, you are leached by white lies  
Lip-serviced, not loved.

**Vicky Simigak (Mid-20<sup>th</sup> c.-)**

It is Simigak's only published poem, wich appeared in Tumivut Magazine in 1994 (*Tumivut*).

**Untitled** (see in-text p. 169)

A delicious taste of misiraq  
You walk on it  
You cry on it  
Never know what's going to happen  
While you're there

It doesn't match the pristine model  
on the cover of the magazine  
You wake in the morning;  
feel the cool, hot air in your room  
Wind going through your window  
you look out and see a unique,  
magnetic, beautiful scene  
Nothing is in your mind  
except the beauty  
Shopping is forgotten  
Meeting despised  
Dust swept off by the hanger;  
for the rare gift of nature

You don't mind the bitterness of cold  
Yest you wish you were in cozy quniguq blanket  
Listening to the water as it charges against the land  
Smoothly speeding on water  
You feel like the SonY OU wonder:  
Is it you going by the land?,  
Or than land passing by?

Settling down for your night time spot  
Watching the colour of the sky  
Walking on the hardness of the rock  
Stepping on the softness of the moss  
Forcing against the slightest chill of the wind  
You get water before dark  
Sipping  
You feel the fresh water going down your throat

How refreshing?  
Isn't that all what nature is all about?

### **Charlie Panigoniak (1946-2019)**



Figure 23. Charlie Panigoniak. Photo credit: NNSL Media

Charlie Panigoniak, born in Arviat, then NWT, was a celebrated country western and folk singer. He worked for the Canadian Broadcasting Company in Rankin Inlet and lived for a time in Brandon, Manitoba. In 2012, he was awarded the the Order of Nunavut (The Canadian Encyclopedia).

### **Baker Lake** (see in-text p. 179)

We went to Baker Lake  
 From a tent I go back and forth in and out  
 opening water in the icehole I ice  
 It's the first time I saw a seal in open water  
 Everytime I tried to take the seal  
 I couldn't because it was talking.  
 We went to sing  
 Hee haw haw  
 It's funny  
 There are too many people in Baker Lake

### **Luke Issaluk (1944-)**

Issaluk was born in Chesterfield Inlet and later worked as a translator in Rankin Inlet. This is his only recorded poem, and today it is regarded as one of the first Inuit love songs (Lewis 85).

**I See Your Face** (see in-text p. 165)

I see your face,  
 It is always near me, though I  
 Am days away from you.  
 In dear memory, I always see your face.

I see your face.  
 Alone, in the dark night  
 I turn down the light and  
 In the darkness, I see your face.

I see your face.  
 You did not want to cry, but I  
 Remember now, tears as we say goodbye.  
 That is how, I see your face.  
 I will see your face.  
 Only wait, when spring bird fly  
 Hope to nest and mate, so shall I,  
 And I will see your face.

**Jimmy Patsauq Naumelauk (1951-84)**

Naumelauk was born in Resolute, Nunavut. He froze to death on a hunting trip at the age of 33 (Petronne 164).

**Wondering in Silence** (see in-text pp. 166)

A seagull if flying high in the summer breeze,  
 A seal is swimming the calm, cool sea,  
 A caribou feeds on the mossy tundra,  
 And I'm sitting here wondering about yesterday.

A jet plane flies high in the winter breeze,  
 A ship travels the stormy sea,  
 A snowmobile crosses the stormy tundra  
 And I'm sitting here wondering about today.

I see not the seagull or the jet plane  
 I see not the seal or the ship  
 I see not the caribou or the snowmobile  
 And I'm sitting here and wondering about tomorrow.

**Dorothy (early 20<sup>th</sup> c.-)**

This one is Dorothy's—whose last name is shrouded in mystery—only published poem found in Robin McGrath's 1988, and Penny Petrone's 1988 publication, both of them now out of print.

**Old Woman's Song** (see in-text p. 166)

I am old now, I must die  
 Me in my chair  
 My body is tired I worked so hard  
 Old age is coming to kill me.  
 I cannot work for now I am old.  
 Me in my chair.  
 Death is waiting for me outside.  
 Old I am, old I am.  
 Death is here.  
 Old I am, old I am.  
 Me in my chair.

**Alexis Pamiuq Utatnaq (1951-)**

Utatnaq was born in Baker Lake, Northwest territories. He was well-known in the 1980s and 90s across the Arctic as a singer and composer (Petrone 165).

**Blood-thirsty Enemy** (see in-text p. 167)

Our enemy  
 Our enemy  
 They're so many  
 Our blood they spill  
 They make us ill  
 Help us, oh god  
 From their piercing rods  
 Our sworn foes  
 The mosquitoes

### Alootook Ipellie (1951-2007)



Figure 24. Alootook Ipellie. Photo credit: The People and the Text

Alootook Ipellie was an illustrator, poet, and writer whose art celebrated Inuit culture. Born in a camp in Qikiqtaaluk Region Nunavut, Ipellie spent his childhood on the land. He moved to Ottawa, in his teens to attend school. His writings and drawings appeared in the now-defunct *Inuit Today*, the *Inuit Quarterly*, *Nunavut Newsletter*, and the still available online news source *Nunatsiaq News*. Ipellie's book *Arctic Dreams and Nightmares* (1993) brought together his interpretations of Inuit myths and modern life ([inuitartfoundation.com](http://inuitartfoundation.com)).

#### **The Dancing Sun** (see in-text p. 164)

There were times in the Inuit land  
 When the sun danced for us  
 All the Inuit stopped their daily routines at work  
 And sat to watch the sun dance the Inuit way.

The Inuit would sit and admire the smiling sun.  
 The animals, too, it's been known would do the same.  
 "I'm a happy sun," he would say. "Come dance with me."  
 All the Inuit would join hands and dance, and dance, and dance...

The dance would enlighten the minds of the people  
 And prepare them to face the day in joy.  
 It was great to have a sun who danced for us,  
 Make you laugh and have a wonderful time.

Sometimes the clouds would come and cover the sky  
 So, we couldn't see the dancing sun for several days.  
 But as soon as the clouds were gone with the wind,  
 the sun would appear again and say,

“Come dance with me!”  
 All the Inuit would come and dance in joy  
 With the dancing sun who danced the Inuit way  
 In the Inuit land.

**One of Those Wonderful Nights** (see in-text p. 164)

It was one of those wonderful nights  
 When we gathered at the dance house.  
 I recall the familiar sights  
 When everyone laughed and danced  
 And had a tremendous time.  
 The great drums were booming,  
 Hands were clapping,  
 And happy faces were rocking back  
 And forth with the rhythmic dancing  
 Of the woman who had four legs.  
 Happy were those days when this  
 Woman danced all night long without  
 Resting for a moment  
 She gave us so much joy,  
 So much feeling for life,  
 That the hazards of the land were  
 Forgotten  
 On one of those wonderful nights  
 When we gathered at the dance house.

**Walking Both Sides of an Invisible Border** (see in-text p. 165)

It is never easy  
 Walking with an invisible border  
 Separating my left and right foot  
 I feel like an illegitimate child  
 Forsaken by my parents  
 At least I can claim innocence  
 Since I did not ask to come  
 Into this world

Walking on both sides of this  
 Invisible border  
 Each and every day  
 And for the rest of my life  
 Is like having been

Sentenced to a torture chamber  
Without having committed a crime

Understanding the history of humanity  
I am not the least surprised  
This is happening to me  
A non-entity  
During this population explosion  
In a minuscule world

I did not ask to be born an Inuk  
Nor did I ask to be forced  
To learn an alien culture  
With an alien language  
But I lucked out on fate  
Which I am unable to do

I have resorted to fancy dancing  
In order to survive each day  
No wonder I have earned  
The dubious reputation of being  
The world's premier choreographer  
Of distinctive dance steps  
That allow me to avoid  
Potential personal paranoia  
On both sides of this invisible border

Sometimes this border becomes so wide  
That I am unable to take another step  
My feet being too far apart  
When my crotch begins to tear apart  
I am forced to invent  
A brand new dance step  
The premier choreographer  
Saving the day once more

Destiny acted itself out  
Deciding for me where I would come from  
And what I would become

So I am left to fend for myself  
Walking in two different worlds  
Trying my best to make sense  
Of two opposing cultures  
Which are unable to integrate  
Lest they swallow one another whole

Each and every day

Is a fighting day  
A war of raw nerves

And to show for my efforts  
 I have a fair share of wins and losses  
 When will all this end  
 This senseless battle  
 Between my left and right foot

When will the invisible border  
 Cease to be

### Norma Dunning (1959-)

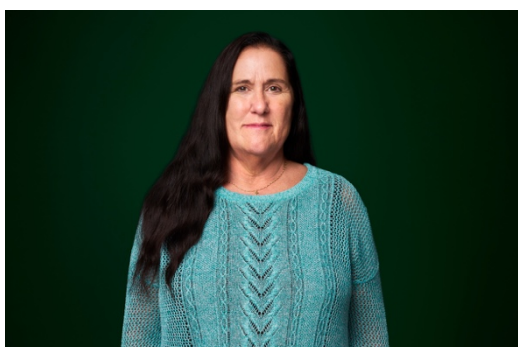


Figure 25. Norma Dunning. Photo credit: The University of Alberta

Having completed her PhD in 2019 at the age of 60, Dunning is now a professor at the University of Alberta, Edmonton. In 2017, *Annie Muktuk and Other Stories* was published; the stories blended contemporary and traditional Inuit life. In 2020, *Eskimo Pie: A Poetics of Inuit Identity*, her first collection of poems received publication, in which Dunning analyzed the difficulty of literary production without betraying her oral culture-based origins. Her second book of short stories under the title *Tainna*, was published in 2021, and received the Governor General's Award, after which her second collection of poems, *Akia, the Other Side* was released in 2023. Dunning's poetry has been the subject of numerous public readings ([inuitliteratures.com](http://inuitliteratures.com)).

### **Polar Opposites** (see in-text p. 143)

The green spongy couch sags at one end,  
 The end where the Inuit auntie sits.  
 Her bellybutton rollercoasters across her kneecaps  
 like a big marble as  
 chuckles beside my mom.

Mirrors of another world, dark hair, slanted black eyes,  
 skin the colour of soft suntans.

Their heads tip to the same side when they laugh,  
but they are different.

My mother is slim.  
her left hand pinches a home-rolled  
cigarette, waves of smoke paint nicotine brush stroke  
stains against her long, A-shaped nails.

Auntie doesn't smoke.  
Her hands are square.  
Her fingernails short.  
They are talking about what a nuisance ground is.  
Auntie says she wants to go there, to see that party  
Mom is giggling and telling her it's the dump,  
the garbage dump.

Auntie's belly breaks into tsunami waves of laughter,  
her marble plopping to the floor.  
"I thought it was a place to go make noise," she spits out.  
I thought it was a place to go be a nuisance!"

They look the same at a glance but  
Auntie bothers Mommy.  
Auntie brings with her all the memories of the north that  
are never spoken or shared.

She brings with her bad and sad times.  
The convent. Being orphans.  
She is the one link to the real world of my Mother.  
The world Mommy keeps hidden in glasses  
of daily red wine.

They laugh like two old white bear women when they  
are together, their eyes crinkle, their heads  
sway in unison but inside they are  
polar opposites.

**"I don't Want to Know"** (see in-text pp. 170)

I don't want to know what it's like being Eskimo.

I live in a world of iPods and iPhones  
all my communication is done in text.

I Wear D&G glasses in my high towe apartment  
where I can look out over the city.  
I got PS1 and PS2, Xbox and I love you Mom,  
but I don't want to know what it's like being Eskimo.

I have street lights and sirens to take me through the night

maybe it isn't right, but...  
I don't want to know what it's like being Eskimo.

Don't talk to me about Angaviadnak,  
or Grandma's northern ways.  
I got hip hop nonstop and rap to fill my days

What would it give me to travel back in time?  
A big quip, a little sip of tea to warm my spine.

I hear the geese; I look up I know they're heading north  
but I got iPods and iPhones.  
Hip hop nonstop and rap to fill my days.

They honk down at me, asking me to come along,  
But Mom, I got a laptop and a real job and  
you don't know what you're talking about.

because in the end:

I don't want to know what it's like being Eskimo.

### **South of It** (see in-text p. 171)

I grew up in the north  
but not in the north north  
other Canadian would call it North  
not Inuit though.

Every summer we were camping.  
My father was transferred  
by the military  
every second year.

he was a good hunter and  
our main food was and food.  
From the land we were living on.  
Moose, deer, and caribou.

Berry picking was a seasonal event.  
Blueberries and Saskatoon berries were  
turned into jams, jellies, and pies.  
Fish filled the freezer each year.

This was how we lived  
but we were not in Nunavut.  
We were south of it.

**Kudlik** (see in-text p. 146)

There is more to this lamp than the lighting of it.  
 Shared in its shadow are laughter,  
 Crying, and the tears of so long ago.  
 The tears of sickness changing us forever.

Echoes of tuberculosis.

Once we were well and gathered *manniq*  
 We slept in peace under spring stars.  
 Hearing our giggles and sighs mixed  
 Only with the sound of the earth.

Disease took us from home and away, far away  
 To stay locked in prisons of white walls.  
 Coughing up the blood of *puvak* and longing for home.

No more the *qulliq* to warm our spirits, to warm our hearts,  
 heat our lives, feed our stomach.  
 Our revolution came in Kabloona Bacteria,  
 and the light of the kudlik grew dim.  
 Black wisps answered our cries,  
 Blowing out the wick of what we once were.

**A Stand-Alone Inuk** (see in-text p. 170)

I've learned this from anaana:  
 to be who I am without anyone's blessing or nod

I've learned that a plastic card is not what defines an Inuk  
 no matter where I stand, I am only Inuit

I've learned that the language doesn't make me better  
 or more or less

Many children haven't been taught Inuktitut especially after  
 your great escapes south on the arms of the white men

I won't be accepted inside northern igloo-shaped minds  
 your social harpoons baited with lateral violence

I speak from what I know  
 how she taught me.

Can I be rejected for not being "traditional?"  
 What does that word mean?

I do not eat muktuk, and remember, our ancestors did not  
 dip it into Soya sauce or Ketchup.

Many Inuit never lived inside the  
tundra or hunted seal.

There comes a time, to put all that away  
and accept each other with love and understanding.

I am waiting for that time, and for now and perhaps  
forever I will remain

### **Emily Novalinga (1954-2009)**



Figure 26. Emily Novalinga. Photo credit: Avataq Cultural Institute

Emily Novalinga began her professional career as a teacher in Puvirnituk and over the years, she earned recognition as one of the most talented poets, writers, and story-tellers. A poem by Emily is an integral part of a work by the sculptor Michel Goulet, which is on permanent display in the Place de la Gare du Palais in Quebec City. “Sparkling Igloo,” was featured in 2005 short film directed by Brigitte Lebrasseur ([avataqculturalinstitute.com](http://avataqculturalinstitute.com)).

#### **Sparkling** (transl. Rita Nandori; see in-text p. 168)

Je suis née dan un igloo  
La neige était comme moi: blanche  
Quand le soleil brillesur la neigej’y voistout les couleurs  
Le jaune étincelantje suis née pir la claret  
Le blanc étincelantje suis née pur la finesse  
Le bleu étincelant née pour la caresses  
Le roug étincelant pour qu’onm’offre des roses qui ne blessent pas

Le vert étincelant je suis née pour l’amitié  
Le noir étincelant pour ne pas désespérer  
Le brun étincelantqui laisse ma peau bronzer  
La rose étincelant pour être embrassée comme une belle fame  
Le pourpre étincelant jamais on aurait dû batter mon corps  
ni l’emurtrir  
Je suis née étincelante pour recevoir chaque etincelle

de nos amours. (qtd. in Levasseur *Étincelante*)

I was born in an igloo  
 The snow is just like me: white  
 But when the sunshine breaks on the surface of the ice, I see all the colours  
 Sparkling yellow, I was born for clarity  
 Sparkling white, I was born pure  
 Sparkling blue, I was born for an embrace  
 Sparkling red, so that I'm offered roses that don't prick

Sparkling green, I was born for friendship  
 Sparkling black, so as not to despair  
 Sparkling brown, that leaves my skin tan  
 Sparkling pink, to be kissed like a beautiful woman  
 Sparkling purple, never should have been beaten or bruised my body  
 I was born sparkling to receive every spark of our love

**The Echo of the North (transl. Rita Nandori; see in-text p. 167)**

Écoute-moi, car j'entends  
 tes sons, mes sons  
 Sons de vert, bruits de tempête  
 J'entends tout, j'entends le bonheur  
 Puisque j'entends le aurores boréales"  
 On m'appelle l'Écho du Nord.

Listen because I hear  
 your sounds, my sounds  
 The sound of the wind, the noise of the thunder  
 I hear everything, I hear good luck  
 Since I hear the northern lights  
 They call me the echo of the north (qtd in Duvicq 187)

**Aqqaluk Lynge (1947-)**



Figure 27. Aqqaluk Lynge. Photo credit: Dickey Center

Aqqaluk Lynge is a politician and poet born in Aasiaat, Greenland in 1947. Lynge attended the University of Copenhagen, Denmark and returned to Aasiaat to work as a social worker and professor; he was also a journalist for Kalaallit Nunaata Radio (KNR). Lynge has become a prominent politician, a defender of Inuit rights and a prolific Kalaallit author and poet, writing in Greenlandic, Danish, and English. He also served in the leadership of the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), both as vice president (1995-1997), and as president (1997-2002). He was Dickey Fellow at the Institute of Arctic Studies at Dartmouth College ([inuitliteratures.com](http://inuitliteratures.com)).

**A Life of Respect** (see in-text pp. 175)

In the old days  
 When we still lived our own lives  
 In our own country  
 We could hear  
 A faraway thunder  
 The caribou approaching  
 Two or three days in advance

Then we did not count the animals but knew  
 that when the caribou herd arrived  
 it could be seven days  
 before all the animals crossed the river  
 We did not count them  
 We had no quotas  
 We knew only  
 that a child's weeping  
 or a seagull's cry  
 could frighten the animals away

Then we knew  
 that there is a balance  
 between the animals and us  
 lives of mutual respect  
 Now it is as if we are under arrest  
 the wardens are everywhere  
 We are interrogated constantly  
 In your hungering after more riches and land  
 you make us suspect  
 force us to justify our existence

On maps of the country  
 we must draw points and lines  
 to show we have been here  
 and are here today  
 here, where the foxes run

and bird's nest  
and the fish spawn

You circumscribe everything  
demand that we prove  
we exist  
that we use the land that was always ours  
that we have a right to our ancestral lands

But now it is we who ask  
by what right are you here?

**From Early Morning 'till Late at Night** (see in-text p. 176)

Our journey across life continues  
daylight swims into the darkness  
the sun goes up then down  
Ai-yaa Ai-yaa

On my own experience  
I could tell in a few words  
To wear the burden with dignity  
and the happiness with pride  
Ai-yaa Ai-yaa

The man with the drum  
with sweat running down his skin  
an angry outburst  
on his lips this son  
Ai-yaa Ai-yaa

The reel is being played  
the dancers tramp on the floor  
the harmonium flows  
and is off tune  
some drift apart and others  
move together  
Ai-yaa Ai-yaa

The choir is singing  
the national anthem  
The bass is weak  
sopranos are shrieking

Our effigies and art are for sale  
as souvenirs for tourists  
the rockmusic plays all night  
at "Aasivik,"—the summercamp  
Ai-yaa Ai-yaa



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If I'm asked to get water,  
 Even if I'm scolded,  
 I would want to leave  
 Down there, down there, down there.

If I'm asked to get water,  
 Even if I'm scolded,  
 I would want to leave  
 Down there, down there, down there.

While I finally go get water,  
 If you want to follow,  
 Do follow  
 Down there, down there, down there.

If I'm asked to get water,  
 Even if I'm scolded,  
 I would want to leave  
 Down there, down there, down there.

While I finally go get water,  
 If you want to follow,  
 Do follow  
 Down there, down there, down there.

### The Jerry Cans (2013-)



**Figure 29.** Photo credit: Aakuluk Music

The Jerry Cans are a band from Iqaluit, Nunavut who combine traditional Inuit *katajjaq*-style throat singing with folk music and country rock. Their music is largely written in Inuktitut ([thejerrycans.com](http://thejerrycans.com)).

### Northern Lights (see in-text p. 181)

You find yourself travelling among the Northern Lights  
Cold winds howl, hear the sled dogs cry  
Don't you never ever forget, to the ones who live there  
She once was true, a true love of mine

Woah oh woah oh oh woah oh woah oh oh  
Nalligilaurakku  
Woah oh woah oh oh woah oh woah oh oh  
Nalligilaurakku  
Woah oh woah oh oh woah oh woah oh oh  
Nalligilaurakku  
Woah oh woah oh oh woah oh woah oh oh  
Nalligilaurakku  
Woah oh woah oh oh woah oh woah oh oh woah oh woah oh oh  
Nalligilaurakku  
Woah oh woah oh oh woah oh woah oh oh woah oh woah oh oh

I find myself traveling among the Northern Lights  
I'm always left to wonder, always wonder why  
No I'll never ever forget you, this is part of our lives  
There once lived a true, a true love of mine

Woah oh woah oh oh woah oh woah oh oh  
Nalligilaurakku  
Woah oh woah oh oh woah oh woah oh oh  
Nalligilaurakku  
Woah oh woah oh oh woah oh woah oh oh woah oh woah oh oh  
Nalligilaurakku  
Woah oh woah oh oh woah oh woah oh oh woah oh woah oh oh  
Nalligilaurakku

Oh woah oh woah oh woah oh oh oh woah oh woah oh woah oh  
 Woah oh woah oh oh woah oh woah oh oh woah oh woah oh oh  
 Nalligilaurakku  
 Woah oh woah oh oh woah oh woah oh oh woah oh woah oh oh (<https://genius.com/The-jerry-cans-northern-lights-lyrics>)

### Kelly Fraser (1993-2019)



Figure 30. Kelly Fraser. Photo credit: Global News

Kelly Fraser was a pop singer from Sanikiluaq, Nunavut. Following the release of her first album *Isuma* in 2014, her sophomore album *Sedna* was released in 2017 and went on to be nominated for Indigenous Album of the Year at the 2018 Juno Awards and Best Pop Album at the 2018 Indigenous Music Awards. In her music, Fraser mixed pop with traditional Inuit drum-dancing and throat singing with lyrics about contemporary issues Inuit face ([inuitartfoundation.com](http://inuitartfoundation.com)).

### **Sedna** (see in-text p. 154)

ᓄᓕᓰᓴᓂᓄᓂ, ᑕᓴᓂᓄᓂ  
 ᓂᓄᓰᓴᓂᓄᓂ ᑕᓴᓂᓄ ᑕᓴᓂᓄᓂ  
 ᑕᓂᓴᓂᓄᓂ, ᑕᓂᓴᓂᓄᓂ  
 ᓰᓂᓄᓂᓄᓂ ᓄᓂᓄᓂ ᓄᓂᓄᓂ  
 ᓄᓂᓄᓂᓄᓂ  
 ᓰᓂᓄᓂᓄᓂ  
 ᓄᓂᓄᓂᓄᓂᓄᓂ  
 ᓄᓂᓄᓂᓄᓂᓄᓂ, ᓄᓂᓄᓂᓄᓂ  
 ᑕᓴᓂᓄᓂᓄᓂᓄᓂ

I spent my whole life in the ocean, safe in the sea  
 Now I wanna show the whole world my devotion to you and me



And tasting of a wild dash from water  
 Downwind, you can smell the dogs, the burning seal oil  
 And worked skins.  
 It is not a bad smell-it is the smell of home.  
 I can see Qinnuajuak as a small child  
 Her dimpled brown hands waving at the sky  
 And her fat feet digging into the curves of her mother's back  
 A tangle of hair at the back of her toddler's head  
 Turns sharply  
 as she takes in the vision of an uppiq  
 For the first time in her young life.  
 That was all that time ago,  
 When people still crossed the Atlantic by ship  
 and hardly anyone owned cars.

I can see the swirls of snow around the illugiaq  
 Where Qinnuajuak first started sewing  
 Her young hands steadfastly holding on to her needle and thread  
 And her eyes darting over to the work of her older womenfolk  
 Outside, the glow of light and warmth is beckoning within the sparkly darkness  
 It is an aquamarine hue of family  
 That was all that time ago,  
 When there was barely a railroad,  
 Let alone highways  
 As colours and animals and sewings and words  
 Filled Qinnuajuak's vision,  
 she was also witness  
 To the clash of shamanism and Christianity in the Arctic.  
 It took her father away  
 That was all that time ago,  
 When the clash of  
 dogmatism took many fathers away  
 during the Second World War.  
 It would be dangerous to say that Qinnuajuak's life was idyllic  
 Idyllic because she lived on the land until she was in her thirties,  
 Already long married and a mother of many children  
 She merged and re-emerged from death and sickness many times  
 And that is no different from what we endure today,  
 But it is safe to say that Qinnuajuak's life was resilient  
 She used art to heal  
 To express  
 To love the world around her.  
 In her own words: There is no word for art.  
 We say it is to transfer something from the real to the unreal.  
 I am an owl,  
 and I am a happy owl.

2.

There is a myth that Inuit did not have a concept of art before the modern age  
 That there is no three-letter word for it, no full-time profession devoted to the creation of it.  
 That the introduction of paper transformed everything.

Allow me to defy this notion by saying this:  
 There was no such thing as Canadian art before Qinnuajuaq.  
 Canada is hand drawn by Qinnuajuaq  
 The lines that swooped in and rushed out at the same time,  
 The bulbs of power, the circles of light  
 The kimmernaq red  
 sungaq yellow  
 tungu purple  
 outline and colour our modern identity.  
 Her deft fingers created images that were catalysts:  
 You see,  
 before Pierre Trudeau and his dancing feet  
 there was no Canadian unity, just Canadian confusion.  
 This country as we know it was still basically a British colony,  
 with no nationalism of its own  
 It was a place that smacked of imperialism, residential schools and assimilation.  
 In those 1960s days  
 We got the Canada flag  
 100 years of existence  
 French immersion schools  
 the Montreal Metro and its rounded bucket seats  
 The National Arts Centre and its octagons  
 An Expo '67  
 And the Enchanted Owl  
 And Inuit art  
 It was an explosion of Canadian celebration,  
 A blooming of Canadian togetherness  
 A time when people were allowed to express their love for land  
 and modern aesthetics  
 Qinnuajuaq and her owls and birds burst into the international scene.  
 When Canadians needed someone from the land,  
 with indigeneity to give a non-verbal identity.  
 Not only did she give us this identity.  
 She gave us a whole new world to gaze upon.  
 Little did the art world care to realize that they were creating the myth  
 that Inuit did not make art before it was marketed to the south.  
 Here was a genius who never admitted to seeing her own artistry,  
 here was an artist who thrived on collaboration,  
 here was a woman devoted to her family, her loves,  
 here was an Inuk who travelled the world only speaking Inuktitut.  
 From the outside looking in many people saw a traditional person  
 entering the modern world.  
 because they could not understand her modesty, her methods, nor her words  
 But from the inside out, we know that her modesty made her soul rich  
 that her community believed in her  
 we know she helped create modernity.  
 And it is our job now to make sure that our art, our words, oqaatsivut,  
 piqquisivut are always challenging us to change the world.  
 Aren't we so lucky that we can still look at all the light of happiness she gave us?  
 And still be able to ask her dancing forms,  
 Qanugooq Qinnuajuaq? Qanugooq?

### Susan Aglukark (1967-)



Figure 32. Susan Aglukark. Photo credit: The Canadian Encyclopedia

Uuliniq Susan Aglukark is from Churchill, Manitoba and she is a Juno Award-winning singer and songwriter. Her blend of pop and world music is distinguished by her lyrics sung in English and Inuktitut. Her record *This Child* (1995) sold more than 300,000 copies in Canada and the lead single, “O Siem,” became the first top 10 hit by an Inuk performer. She was made an Officer of the Order of Canada (The Canadian Encyclopedia).

#### **O Siem** (see in-text p. 153)

Oh Siem, we are all family  
 Oh Siem, we're all the same  
 Oh Siem, the fires of freedom  
 Dance in the burning flame

Siem oh siyeya, all people rich and poor  
 Siem oh siyeya, those who do and do not know  
 Siem oh siyeya, take the hand of one close by  
 Siem oh siyeya, of those who know because they try  
 And watch the walls come tumbling down

Oh Siem, we are all family  
 Oh Siem, we're all the same  
 Oh Siem, the fires of freedom  
 Dance in the burning flame

Siem oh siyeya, all people of the world  
 Siem oh siyeya, it's time to make the turn  
 Siem oh siyeya, a chance to share your heart  
 Siem oh siyeya, to make a brand new start  
 And watch the walls come tumbling down

Oh Siem, we are all family  
 Oh Siem, we're all the same  
 Oh Siem, the fires of freedom  
 Dance in the burning flame

Fires burn in silence  
 Hearts in anger bleed  
 Wheel of change is turning  
 For the ones who truly need  
 To see the walls come tumbling down

Oh Siem, we are all family  
 Oh Siem, we're all the same  
 Oh Siem, the fires of freedom  
 Dance in the burning flame

Oh Siem, we are all family  
 Oh Siem, we're all the same  
 Oh Siem, the fires of freedom  
 Dance in the burning flame

Oh Siem, we are all family  
 Oh Siem, we're all the same  
 Oh Siem, the fires of freedom

### **Taqralik Partridge (1975-)**



Figure 33. Taqralik Partridge. Photo credit: Inuit Literatures

Taqralik Partridge is a writer and spoken word poet from Kuuujuaq, Nunavik, Québec now living in Kautokeino, Norway. Partridge's writing focuses on Inuit life in both the North and in the South. She incorporates throat singing into her performances. Her short

story “Igloodik,” published in *Maisonneuve Magazine*, won first prize at the 2010 Québec Writing Competition. Her first collection of poetry entitled *Curved Against the Hull of a Peterhead* was published in 2019 (inuitartfoundation.com).

**After an Argument** (see in-text pp. 88-89, p. 174)

we went out at low tide with mending line to square up holes and  
came back with legendary catch of four fish and no proof left  
but bones after supper

even those the dogs might have choked down hacking throats

I can tell you how we sat low in canoes  
or slept curved against the hull of a peterhead  
on long trips up or down the river  
or out into the bay  
where the boy at the prow was a spring and a watchdog  
looking for rocks to guard against and  
scrapingoars on boat-side  
calling up seals

rifles raised and ears ringing as bullets whines by but  
we were never afraid

bobbing on waves and peeing in pots  
with stars and aurora overhead  
heading home after weeks and weeks away from town and  
clocks  
and telephones and  
mirrors and  
everything  
everything tasted so good boiled on a blue flamed coleman stove  
I'll give you me at my uncle's Jacob camp  
a perfect place for us to pick seaweed and see shrimp swimming in  
small salty pools  
where across the inlet he shot a caribou and  
let it down gentle

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